

Loose Id

Marie Soutien

*Two's
Company*

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Published by
Loose Id LLC
1802 N Carson Street, Suite 212-2924
Carson City NV 89701-1215
www.loose-id.com

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ISBN 978-1-59632-654-5

Available in Adobe PDF, HTML, MobiPocket, and MS Reader

Printed in the United States of America

Editor: Vanessa Lillie
Cover Artist: Scott Carpenter

Dedication

For my husband. Here's to another twenty-five years, sweetheart.

Chapter One

I stared out into the darkness beyond my computer screen and pushed a recalcitrant blonde curl out of my eyes. The sun had set half an hour ago, and the orange glow of the street lights shone through the window, casting strange shadows into the room.

The road outside the house lay quiet. The rush hour happened even in the quiet English backwater of Lower Ashleigh village, but our neighbours in the cottages across the street had returned from work long ago. I loved living here, so close to the countryside, but sometimes when the night closed in, Ashleigh House felt too large and empty, and I longed for the bustle and bright lights of the city.

I ought to get up and draw the curtains, but I switched on the desk lamp instead, before flicking through my notes. What was the point in shutting out the night when I could feel the darkness restless within me? It was difficult to describe, but it was something essential to my nature. It could be a source of great happiness and wonder. But these unfulfilled days had gone on so long that I wondered if I would ever know that joy again.

I sighed, feeling restless and edgy. If I kept busy, its siren call could be ignored, but recently the velvet voice inside me had become stronger and more persistent. It was insistent and coaxing by turns, waking me up in the small hours with a yearning in my soul.

There's a hole inside me that only one thing can fill. Dominance, control, discipline, call it what you will. Without it I am like a rudderless craft drifting aimlessly through my life.

The computer beeped, rousing me from my reverie and banishing the bleak thoughts that floated round in my head. I turned my attention back to the screen. Squinting at the Web page, I jotted down a few notes before moving on to the next site.

My tongue curled up in disgust as a foul taste flooded my mouth. Grabbing a tissue from the box on the desk, I spat into it, cursing my absentmindedness. That would teach me to bite the end of my pen. I stuck out my tongue and squinted at my reflection in the window. The desk lamp beside me cast my image onto the glass, but it wasn't bright enough for me to see if I had left a telltale mark.

Did it matter if I could see it or not? I had disobeyed a direct order. I grimaced and then shivered with the realisation that I was in trouble. Perhaps I could hide until it had worn off?

I shook my head. The ingrained habit of total honesty made me shudder at the thought of deception. I might as well get it over with. "C'mon, Cassie," I murmured to myself, "You know that confession is good for the soul."

I threw the ruined pen in the wastebasket and switched off the computer. Waiting for it to power down made me twitch with nerves, but nonetheless, I was thorough and made sure my desk was as tidy as when I'd begun work. I forced myself out of my room and glanced at my watch. My Master would, no doubt, still be toiling away. I frowned. In my humble opinion, Mike worked too hard; it would do him good to finish early.

So why, just a few moments later, was I still hovering outside the door to his study like a nervous schoolgirl? *Are you afraid you're going to get a caning? Or are you more afraid that you won't?* The velvet voice whispered in my head, and I felt an answering tug in my loins.

Desperate to quell my knowing subconscious, I plucked up my courage and tapped on his door.

“Yes?” The voice that answered sounding preoccupied.

I squared my shoulders. Depending on Mike's mood this could be unpleasant. He hated to be disturbed if he was deeply involved in his work, as it altered his train of thought. He had been putting in long hours at the studio for the last couple of weeks and getting home late, only to retire to his study to do even more work after dinner.

“Excuse me, Mike, I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I need to report an infraction.”

“One moment.” I watched warily as Mike swivelled his chair round to face me. “Is it important?”

“No, sir, it can wait.” I hovered anxiously in the doorway.

I saw him suppress a grin, and I shivered. It seemed he always knew just what was going through my mind. I knew that he'd be able to read the conflict within me on my face. He'd see the remorse warring with the desire to get the punishment over and done.

“Now what has my perfect slave been up to that makes her come here in fear and trembling? Perhaps she should wait until a more convenient time to make her confession?” Mike raised an eyebrow, and I glimpsed the steel under the tone of velvet amusement.

He allowed a smile to cross his face as I tried not to show just what I thought of that idea. Patience has never been one of my virtues, and I couldn't bear the idea of stewing over my mistake while I waited on his pleasure.

“I think I'm going to enjoy this.”

His words hiked my heartbeat up a notch. Had he noticed that catch in my breathing?

“Come in and wait there.” He pointed to the spot just to the side of him at his desk. He half swivelled his chair back into place, and I began to relax. Abruptly, he swung back again to face me. He had timed it to perfection, his sudden change of direction making me jump. I

saw the glint of satisfaction in his eyes, and I hastily looked away, choosing instead to stare down at the carpet.

“Perhaps you’d better tell me what the infraction is, my little lawbreaker. I’ll decide whether to leave the punishment until later.” He’d have to be blind to miss the quiver that ran through me at those words.

It had been a long time since he’d seen that response from me. How had we allowed ourselves to become so complacent? I thought back over the last few months and the number of times Mike had felt it necessary to correct or torment me, simply for his own pleasure. I was alarmed when I realised how few those times had been.

I licked my lips nervously as I noticed he was scrutinising me from the top of my head to the tips of my toes. I didn’t think anything about my appearance had changed for the worse. My honey gold hair cascaded over my shoulders. It was long enough for Mike to wrap his hand or his cock in, as I remembered with pleasure.

I still had striking green eyes that I knew darkened when aroused. Mike had also once said that my mouth begged to be kissed. I noticed that his inspection continued to my cleavage and rounded breasts. I blushed as his gaze lingered, growing more heated, before progressing past my hips, along my long, jean-clad legs to my bare feet. I even tried to keep my toes perfect, the nails covered in a pretty pink polish.

Oh, yes, I knew that Mike thought I was a very sexy woman, but appearances weren’t enough for him. It was the hint of uncertainty that showed in my eyes -- a reaction that couldn’t be faked, at least not by me -- that really seemed to stir him. Mike had always said that my face was an open book for anyone with half a brain to read. Could he see what I longed for, or had I hidden it too well out of courtesy for his needs?

I found it so hard to ask for what I wanted, a legacy from my childhood as a clergyman’s daughter. As a child I was taught to put others before myself. I had overcome or ignored many strictures from my early life, but demanding fulfilment was still beyond me.

So I begged silently as Mike's prolonged examination of my body continued, and I felt my heartbeat quicken with anticipation.

Chapter Two

Mike saw the pulse fluttering in Cassie's throat and wondered when he had last felt that cruel twist of desire. He'd knocked her off balance for the first time in what must have been months. He hadn't realised how much she had withdrawn from him. They met at the breakfast table, were polite and even affectionate with each other, but anything deeper had disappeared, buried under the mundane routines of everyday life.

How boring we've become, Mike thought with horror. He refused to allow this to happen to him again. This time it would be different.

Mike had been married once, when he was in his twenties and still trying to fit into society's idea of "normal." His wife had been charming and devoted to him on the surface, delighting in turning their little house into a home.

But once the novelty had worn off, he'd realised that she only wanted him for the security of a marriage. They had both been too young to work out what they wanted from each other. There was no seeing below the surface froth and bubble of newlywed life to reveal their deeper, more personal needs.

Mike had found he couldn't take making love with the lights out, and then, it was only ever in the missionary position. His wife wouldn't or couldn't lose her inhibitions for him,

and in the end, Mike had given up trying to persuade her. He'd wanted more from the woman he loved than a chaste peck on the cheek before he left for work in the morning. After a year of recriminations, he had felt nothing but relief when they went their separate ways.

With a shock of fear, Mike recognized that he and Cassie were in danger of slipping into a similarly superficial relationship. The last time they'd had sex, he had been content with simple lovemaking. But he'd sensed something wrong, although Cassie had appeared to enjoy herself. She'd come, whimpering in his ear, but there had been no connection between them. Cassie had drifted into a faraway place, and more to the point, it was a place that held no room for him, except as a mechanical adjunct to get her there. Well, that would change, starting right now.

"Why are you dressed, slave?"

Cassie jumped. "I beg your pardon, Master."

His blood ran hot as he saw the way her fingers trembled when she stripped. He watched as she folded her clothes and placed them in a neat pile on the floor beside her. She took several cautious steps towards him before subsiding gracefully to her knees.

Mike felt such a jolt of arousal that he had to press his lips together to keep from groaning aloud. How could he have forgotten how it felt to see a woman quiver at his feet, attentive to his every whim?

As she knelt on the floor in front of him, her gaze demurely downcast, Mike could see the pulse in her neck beating faster with every second. It had been so long since he had been harsh with her that he wondered if she'd forgotten the delights of arousal and fear combined. The blood began to pool in his groin as he studied her posture. She was holding herself alert for his next request.

"Tell me of this transgression, slave."

“My pen, in my mouth...” Cassie faltered. Mike saw her gulp before she opened her mouth and stuck out her tongue.

Mike took hold of the end of it and pulled gently, but firmly, turning her head towards the pool of light from his desk lamp. He grinned as he watched the struggle between fear of what could happen and the desire to obey flicker across her face.

Cassie had always found it hard to hide her emotions; every thought was displayed openly on her face. He knew that she was one breath away from panic. After all, he was leading her around by her tongue. One tug too hard and he could injure her, catch the tender flesh on her own teeth.

His smile turned to a frown when he saw the ink on her tongue.

“What’s this, slave? I gave you strict instructions not to bite the ends of your pens.” His own emotions surprised him as he felt genuine anger. He’d been trying to break Cassie of this habit for her own good. She tended to put things in her mouth and chew them when she was deep in thought. She’d gone through two pairs of sunglasses, an expensive fountain pen, and numerous Biro’s and pencils. Apart from the expense, he was afraid that she was going to hurt herself. He inhaled slowly, and taking hold of his anger, harnessed it.

His voice iced over and became distant. “You’ve disappointed me.” He knew it was the harshest thing he could have said. If she had been a child, perhaps he would have smacked her bottom, but he knew from experience that Cassie would’ve enjoyed that.

Cassie gave a sob. Mike ignored the tear that trickled down her left cheek and released her tongue. He was annoyed with Cassie for disobeying his orders, but he was angrier with himself. He had let her down by allowing this habit to continue unchecked. It was his privilege and his duty to correct her behaviour. Something drastic would have to be done.

“Bring me your toothbrush.” He swivelled his chair back to his desk and pretended to read the papers in front of him.

Only a slight movement of the air beside him indicated her absence.

Chapter Three

I ran light-footed down the hallway and took the stairs in inelegant bounds. It wouldn't do to keep Mike waiting. I knew my body portrayed the very image of instant obedience, yet the emotions in my mind were at war with each other. On the one hand, I felt stomach-churning distress at disappointing Mike, but on the other, there was delight at his undivided attention. I couldn't help wondering how he was going to punish me.

Why did he want my toothbrush? I could think of half a dozen scenarios ranging from the unsavoury to the erotic. By the time I had found it and rushed downstairs again, I'd managed to convince myself that I was so unworthy of his attention, I would be scrubbing the toilets with my toothbrush for the rest of the night.

Mike was waiting for me when I got back to his study, his chair facing the door, his face stern. I swallowed hard. He looked so angry. He had never shown that face to me before; the last time I'd seen it, he had caught some youths tormenting an elderly neighbour. The boys had quailed before his fury just as I did now, kneeling before him.

I presented the toothbrush on open palms as I'd been taught. He looked thoughtful as he turned it over in his hands.

"Come with me." When I moved to get up, he growled, "Did I tell you to rise?"

“No, Master,” I whispered, eyes downcast. “Sorry, Master.” I crawled after him on all fours, the carpet burning my knees. It was uncomfortable and humiliating. Still, was that a trickle of moisture I felt between my thighs? I bit back a whimper and followed him down the hallway. The journey to the guest cloakroom had never seemed so long.

“Pay attention, slave.” Mike wet my toothbrush under the tap and then rubbed a generous amount of soap into it. I widened my eyes in shock. Was he expecting me to agree to this? Wouldn’t soap on my teeth make me vomit?

He interrupted my horrified thoughts. “Open your mouth, slave, and put out your disobedient tongue.”

For a split second, I balked; then I took one look at his stern face and any resistance melted away.

Mike held my tongue with one hand and brushed it with the other. I struggled to keep still, but despite my best efforts it was too much. The toothbrush scratched or tickled, depending on how hard Mike scrubbed. I flinched, and my tongue slipped out of his fingers. The soap coated the roof of my mouth, and I gagged.

Mike grabbed me by the back of my head, winding his fingers tightly into my hair. “Open.”

I obeyed him, partly longing to please him and partly desperate to keep the soap on my tongue away from the rest of my mouth. This time he left my tongue in my mouth, but he still carried on brushing. Though I would have begged for mercy anyway, I knew any speech was impossible. I was sobbing and retching, with drool and foam coating my chin, by the time he had cleaned my tongue to his satisfaction.

“That’s better. Now get yourself cleaned up. I don’t want your slobber all over the house. You may rinse the soap out of your mouth.”

“Thank you, Master,” I managed to mumble around the suds, full of gratitude that the ordeal was over. I turned on the tap and hitching myself forward, leaned over the basin. I

sucked in a mouthful of clean, pure water, not caring whether I looked ridiculous or not. Still sniffing, I washed my tear-stained face. I had learned my lesson. I was never, ever, going to suck another pen as long as I lived.

I jumped when a warm hand pressed against my neck.

“Open your legs, slave.”

I stifled a groan and followed his directions. Strong fingers glided between my lower lips, and I blushed at how easily they slid into my moist depths.

“Wet already, my slut?”

I bowed my head, mortified. My emotions were all over the place. I felt thoroughly chastened, and yet unbearably aroused. I wanted, no, I needed to show Mike how devoted I was to him, how I regretted my bad behaviour, and how desperate I was to make amends. I must have mumbled something to that effect because I heard him chuckle.

“That’s good,” Mike purred in my ear, “But you’ll have to wait for your pleasure. You still have some ground to make up with me. Don’t think I didn’t notice how close you came to refusing your punishment. Perhaps a taste of the cane will remind you of your place.”

I shivered with a combination of anticipation and fear. “Yes, Master.”

Chapter Four

Mike wrapped his hand in her hair, then tugged Cassie down the hallway, a mocking smile on his face as she trotted to keep up to avoid having her hair pulled. Blood sang in his ears, and he was so hard he thought he might burst the zipper on his jeans.

Tonight there was a pounding need inside him, a need to humiliate one whom he treasured above all else, in order to exalt her. He considered pushing Cassie to her knees in the hall and ordering her to swallow his cock, but he decided against it. More than anything else, he wanted to take her to that place where only they existed, Master and slave, hearts and minds entwined in one purpose. And for that he had to have time.

He hauled her down to the door at the far end of the hallway. How long had it been since he'd entered this room? He almost expected to see a layer of dust over all the furniture, but of course, his perfect slave would have cleaned this room herself. A trickle of guilt ran through him. He imagined her wistful face as she vacuumed and polished. Did Cassie dust the St. Andrew's cross, the whipping benches, and cage while wondering when she would be able to use them again? Well, now she would have her chance.

The savage beast inside him flexed its muscles, and in response, he propelled her towards a bench with such force that she almost stumbled and fell. Mike caught her upper

arm to steady her, and remorse quelled the animal within. He took a moment to calm down; he knew better than to play this type of game when he was irritated or overexcited.

Once he was sure he was back in control, he touched her shoulder lightly, pressing her down over the padded leather. Her buttocks were stretched taut at exactly the right height for caning. Mike ran his hand over one smooth globe, and Cassie quivered. Perhaps a warm-up first? He considered the thought and dismissed it. He could see the moisture glistening on her inner thighs already.

He stepped away from the bench and opened the nearby wall cabinet. Canes lay on narrow shelves, ordered by size. He chose a thin, whippy switch and swished it through the air.

Cassie twitched. Mike grinned. He'd deliberately teased her. He'd known that she'd been convinced the stroke was going to land on her exposed behind. The left side of her face was pressed to the leather beneath her. As long as he stood to her left, she was unable to see him.

"I think we'll start with six of the best and work our way up from there. What do you think, Cassie?"

The use of her name was their signal. If Cassie disagreed with how the scene was playing out, then now was the time to say so. Oh, she could stop him at any time by using her "safe word," but it would mean the end of any further play, and like many submissives, he knew she was reluctant to use her safe word. It would smack of failure on both their parts, and he was aware that she hated to admit the possibility that he could get it wrong.

It might be unfair to lay all the responsibility on his shoulders, but he understood that she liked to consider him omnipotent. When they played, it was up to him to watch her like a hawk and keep her safe from real emotional or physical harm. It was a heavy burden to bear, but one that he accepted gladly.

Cassie squirmed, and Mike watched her with pleasure. Though he knew she hated to start with the cane, at the same time, her body loved it. She was always torn if he asked her to decide. After a few minutes, he chose to end her torment.

“I’ll take your silence to mean ‘yes,’ and an enthusiastic ‘yes’ at that. Now I want you to keep very still for me, slave. I want you to show me how sorry you are for hesitating when I asked you to do something simple.” He teased her again by swishing the cane.

Mike heard her gulp. Her arms, which had dangled over either side of the leather pad, moved so she could clutch the legs of the bench with her hands. He swung the flexible rattan with skill, knowing that this time she would feel the air moving against her bare buttocks. Cassie tensed, and he chuckled.

Chapter Five

Mike sauntered in front of me and pulled my head back so that my eyes met his. He had that gleam in them that meant only one thing. I wasn't going to be able to sit down tomorrow.

Mike dropped a kiss on my brow and laid the cane on the bench in front of me. He unbuttoned his cuffs and rolled up the sleeves to reveal his golden brown forearms. His brown eyes appeared to darken as he concentrated, his generous mouth becoming fixed into a stern line.

I watched every movement with a dry mouth. Many would consider my Master a good-looking man, and I would agree with them. I loved his six feet of firm body from the top of his wavy black hair to the tips of his toes. But when he took control of me, then he became truly beautiful. In those moments he gave me everything I needed and so much more. I could feel pulsing in my loins at the thought of what was to come, and my nipples ached.

He picked up the cane and went to stand behind me again. "Ready, slave?"

I didn't get the chance to answer as the cane whistled down and bit into my buttocks. I yelped.

“Ah, music to my ears.” Mike brought the cane down again and again as I yowled. Despite my best intentions, I writhed, trying to get away from the stinging blows that had become my entire world. He had reached the count of six and gone beyond it. At ten, he stopped and sighed.

“You disappoint me, slave. I told you to keep still. I think I’m just going to have to carry on until you can learn to be as still as a statue.”

I gulped. Mike was a man of his word. We’d be standing here until his arm cramped and my backside was raw flesh if I couldn’t learn to control myself. Bracing myself, despite the knowledge that relaxing into the pain lessens it, I waited. And waited. At last my muscles loosened. It was only then that Mike began again.

The first strokes were softer than before. I relaxed and took up a firmer stance. This time I was going to keep still for him. After the first few strikes I began to feel a delicious heat. Each stinging stroke warmed my buttocks with a glow that spread through my loins. I didn’t even notice when my sobs of pain changed to moans of need. It was only when I began grinding my hips against the bench that Mike spoke.

“You moved, slave.”

I whimpered. I tried to apologise, but my speech centre seemed to have closed down. All I managed was a feeble moan. He stepped away from me and back to the wall cabinet where he swapped canes.

“Perhaps you need something more? I’ve been waiting to use this on you. Keeping it for a special occasion, you might say.” Mike hefted the dragon cane in front of me.

My eyelids fluttered open. The part of my brain that was rational, reasoning, and cautious had shrunk to a tiny voice. The sight of the heavy cane washed it away. Anything, I’d give Mike anything, if only he’d use that implement on me. It scared and excited me in equal measure.

A moment later I had my wish. The cane came down on my hot flesh like a rod of iron. The ripples of sensation spread outwards, up my buttocks, down my legs, and through my cunt. Good God, this had never happened before. I was going to come from caning alone! I gasped as my cunt clenched, perched on that high pinnacle of delight, unable to move.

"Master," I managed to force out of a lifeless mouth.

"Thank you for the warning. Good girl. You may come." Mike delivered another stroke, and I convulsed, yelling myself hoarse, as each rhythmic blow pushed me higher and higher.

Gradually the internal ripples died away and my body relaxed, but the cane impelled my mind onwards. The repetitive drumming throbbed through me, and I lost touch with reality. The only thing that bound me to the earth was my fragile mental tether to my Dominant. I could feel him surround me with his presence, and I felt elation.

After an eternity, I realised that the sensations had stopped. I opened my eyes. I was lying on our bed, wrapped tight in a soft duvet with Mike's arms around me.

"What happened?" My voice was scratchy, and my mouth was dry.

"Here, sweetheart, have a drink." Mike propped me up, before handing me a glass of water. I took it and gulped the refreshing liquid down.

My thirst quenched and my throat soothed, I raised my eyebrows and asked again. "What happened?"

"You were amazing. Beautiful, sexy, and so obedient. You stood still for me long enough for me to send you flying. That's what happened." The smug grin on Mike's face stretched from ear to ear.

I blushed at the compliments. "I've never felt that before. It was incredible, thank you." I took his hand and kissed his palm fervently until a yawn surprised me.

Mike pulled me back onto his chest and dropped a kiss on my hair.

"I'm sorry, Cassie. I've been neglecting you."

“That’s all right.” I was startled from my lethargy when Mike pushed me off him. Raising himself on one elbow, he looked down into my eyes, his face grim.

“No, it’s not all right, slave. This isn’t a normal, everyday, boy-meets-girl relationship. You know as well as I do that this type of bond needs extra effort from both sides. When were you going to tell me that you were unhappy? When you walked out the door?”

I looked away, ashamed. Mike was right that the thought of leaving had crossed my mind more than once. I adored him, but when the combined need for submission with masochism grew too strong in me, I was liable to do crazy things.

In the past I had taken stupid risks with my safety. I had even gone as far as meeting unknown dominants in hotel rooms. Now, whenever I looked back to that desperate time, I shuddered with a mixture of disgust and relief. I never wanted to be so needy again, but my frustrations had been building inside me for some time. I had known it all along; I just hadn’t wanted to admit it.

I should have known better after all these years. I was never going to be content with having only standard sex, sweet as it was on occasion. I was driven to be a submissive, to give my body and soul to someone who would dominate me, command me, and care for me.

I knew that to outside eyes this would seem like an unequal relationship, but my needs and Mike’s were perfectly balanced most of the time.

I felt sick. I’d been willing to throw away all I had with Mike for lack of communication. I slid off the bed to my knees and bent my head to the floor in remorse.

Mike sighed. “Kneel up, slave.”

I obeyed but lowered my gaze to hide the tears that threatened to overflow and spill down my cheeks.

“Look at me.” The command was soft, and when I lifted my face, Mike took it in his hands and smoothed the tears away. “I know you’re sorry. So am I. What I need to know is

whether we can both agree to work harder at this relationship. You mean the world to me, Cassie. I don't want to lose you."

"I don't want to go," I managed to choke out.

"Then promise me that next time you need something, you'll tell me. That's an order." His smile was strained.

I sniffed. "I promise, Mike."

"Good girl." He patted the bed. "Come on, sweetheart, back to bed. I'm getting cold." It was then that I realised that he was as naked as I was. I grinned, rose, and snuggled up to him, then flinched as he ran a hand over my bottom.

"Ah, excellent," he murmured into my hair. "I can feel welts, my dear. I'm afraid you'll find it difficult to sit tomorrow." His cock stirred against my hip, and I smiled.

"I'm glad I pleased you, Master. Would you allow me to please you further?" As I looked into his eyes, I saw them darken with lust.

Mike pretended to consider my request. "Hmm, I think so. Let's see." He gripped my buttocks and pulled me on top of him, grinning when I yelped as he grabbed a tender spot. "I think it's about time I saw you doing the work, slave. Sit up."

I knelt over him as he held his hard cock upright.

"Sit on me."

Positioning myself carefully with the tip of his erection nudging my folds, I let my legs relax. I groaned as I slid down onto his hot penis that filled me easily. There was still some of his cock left outside my body, and I forced myself lower until I was grinding my pussy against his pubic hair.

I was stretched to my limit, but I relished the sensation, knowing that Mike was aware how difficult this position was for me. It was my turn to show him how much he meant to me. I began to rise up and down, and it was Mike's turn to moan aloud.

“Faster, slave.” He lay back with his hands behind his head and closed his eyes as I rode him. I knew that it was exquisite torment for him. I wasn’t moving quite fast enough for him to come, and yet he would enjoy the waiting as my slick warmth gripped and released along his shaft. I paused for a moment and he was buried deep inside me, just as he liked. I savoured pleasing him.

At last, Mike opened his eyes. He cocked his head to one side and considered me. I knew that my face was flushed with the combination of effort and pleasure. I closed my eyes as my own desires began to take me over.

“Let me help you. You look half asleep, slave.” At the sound of his voice I began to open my eyes, just in time to see Mike’s right hand whip out and slap a breast. I gasped and my eyes widened as the shock ran through me, straight down to my clit.

“Faster, slave.” His left hand smacked my other breast. My nipples hardened even further, and I whimpered in agonised delight as the pain was transmuted into ecstasy. I rode him faster, my movements in time with his hands as he gave out stinging little slaps.

“Good girl, yes. Come on, sweetheart. Ah, such a naughty girl, such a pretty, wet cunt.”

I barely registered Mike’s words of encouragement. My legs were beginning to tire, yet I couldn’t stop or even beg to change position. I was so close to coming that all discomfort receded into the background. My one thought was to keep the pleasure going until we both reached that high pinnacle.

Mike gasped and grabbed at my hips. I tried to move with him as he adjusted both the angle and speed to suit him. It was the final thrust needed to tip him over the edge, and I grinned with delight as he pumped wildly inside me. As the tips of his fingers dug into the welts on my buttocks, the pain pushed me towards completion, and I joined him in orgasm. Groaning with pleasure, I ground my pussy and rubbed my clit against his pubic mound.

At last, with a sigh of contentment, I collapsed onto his chest.

“Oh, slave.” He nuzzled my hair and dropped a kiss on it. “You are in big trouble. Who said that you could come?”

Chapter Six

I served breakfast the next morning with a smile on my face. The radio was playing one of my favourite tunes, and I sang as I buttered the toast and poured the coffee.

Mike reached over the counter and tweaked one blonde curl. “Happy this morning, slave?” I nodded, and he grinned. “I’m glad. Come and eat with me; I’ve got a surprise for you.”

Obedient as ever, I laid another place at the kitchen table. I wasn’t hungry, I never was until I’d been up at least an hour or two, but I could manage to force down coffee and a small slice of toast.

Mike gave a contented sigh and settled down to fruit juice, eggs, and bacon, followed by several slices of toast and marmalade, all of which he washed down with a couple of cups of coffee. He didn’t seem to notice that I picked at my food. I knew experience had taught him that forcing me to eat at this time in the morning would only make me feel nauseous.

Mike put his knife and fork down on his plate. “I’ve been thinking. We spend too much time shut away from the outside world. I know it’s one of the drawbacks of working from home, and I’ve been far too busy sweating over the latest Diversion contract. It’s Friday, so let’s go out tonight.”

"Where do you want to go?"

"You've kept in touch with the old crowd, haven't you?" When I nodded, he added, "Find us a club. Let's dust off the satin and leather and go out to play." His eyes twinkled, and I beamed with delight. "And bear in mind, dear slave, there's a punishment owing to you."

I wriggled in my seat. "You want to correct me in public?" I put on a suitably horrified look, but I could feel the wetness gathering between my legs. I blushed as I realised that Mike was enjoying my predicament.

"I regret that it's necessary to do so." He frowned, and I had the grace to feel ashamed. "But, yes. Perhaps public disgrace will remind you how to behave in private." He pushed his empty plate away. "I'll have lunch and coffee at the usual times, but I want you to fix supper early. I don't like playing on a full stomach."

"Yes, Master. Thank you, Master." I stood when he did and gave a slight bow as he left the room. I caught myself and grinned. Mike didn't require me to bow or curtsy at his commands, unlike my previous dominants. In many BDSM circles it was seen as an outward mark of respect. Last night's fun and games combined with his attitude this morning had triggered an old learned response in my subconscious. It had been a long time since Mike had reminded me of my proper place in his life. I could feel my submission to him deepening with every abrupt order, and I revelled in the sensation.

An evening clubbing! As I whisked the dirty plates into the dishwasher and wiped up the crumbs on the table, my mind was whirling with plans. What should I wear? What would Mike wear? I ought to check his wardrobe and make sure everything was in order, just to be on the safe side.

When Mike had said that he'd had enough of playing in public, I'd tidied away the kit bags containing all the paraphernalia considered necessary for an evening's entertainment. The ropes, leather restraints, whips, and floggers were now hanging neatly in the playroom. I had followed his orders without a moment's regret, but that was six months ago. There were

friends that I missed, and catching up with the gossip on the Internet wasn't the same as talking face-to-face.

I hugged myself with excitement and danced my way down the hall to my own study. I'd better warm up the computer and find out where the usual crowd were going tonight.

It took just a few clicks of the mouse, and I had all the information I needed. Persecution was my favourite club, and tonight there would be a demonstration on fire-play. I grinned. Oh, yes, tonight should be fun.

Although I had some work to do, I left it; there was no hurry. During my free hours, I designed Web sites for schools and homeworkers. It wasn't a full-time job, so it suited me. Mike paid my board and lodging as his slave, and I was even on his private health plan. He was generous with his gifts; he gave me beautiful jewellery for my birthday and Christmas. When he required me to dress in a certain way, he'd either come home with an extravagant costume or send me shopping with his credit card.

When I had first accepted his collar as a mark of his ownership, we agreed that he'd never pay me money directly. I was uncomfortable with the idea. Only once had we role-played that I was a common street prostitute. He'd picked me up in his car and driven me to a wasteland where we'd had sex. For that, he had given me the princely sum of twenty pounds. I had laughed afterwards and hung the note in a frame on my study wall.

As for the amount of time I had to pursue my outside career, it was more than enough for my needs. As long as Mike's meals were on time, his clothes were clean, and his house tidy, then the rest of my time was my own. The only proviso was that I had to be available to him at any time, day or night.

Mike ran a software company, Diversion, designing the background sets for computer games. He had an office in the city and a small creative staff who relied on him for their livelihood. Despite being independently wealthy, thanks to a father who had been an

investment banker, Mike loved what he did with a passion that meant many hours spent away from home.

In reality, he worked so hard that he rarely took advantage of me, so I was more than willing to drop everything when he asked.

In fact, I reflected, I had an easy life. If it had been lacking in discipline over the last few months, then Mike appeared to be more than willing to make up for that deficiency now. I wondered if this would happen every time he had a big project to handle. Perhaps I had been remiss in my duties as his slave, allowing him to forget my existence? He certainly seemed more relaxed after last night's diversion. I grimaced at the unintended pun. Yes, Mike needed diverting from Diversion.

It was hard for me to misbehave on purpose, but if that was what Mike needed to spur him into action and give his mind a holiday away from his work, then I would have to bite the bullet and take the punishment along with the pleasure.

I grinned. If Suzie was at Persecution tonight, she would be able to help out with naughty ideas. If ever there was a more wicked and impudent submissive, I had yet to meet him or her.

I wasn't about to turn myself into a brat, even for my beloved Master. But a little naughtiness when the time was right? Yes, I could do that for Mike.

Chapter Seven

Persecution was tucked away down a side street. To a casual passerby, the discreet entrance looked like any other restaurant back door. Its blank face was locked against intruders during the day, but at night, it was a different story. When anyone knocked, the door swung wide to reveal warm lighting and sultry music.

The entrance foyer was presided over by one of the biggest men I have ever seen. Not only was he tall and muscular, but tattoos covered him from the top of his shaved head to his fingertips, and even his toes, which were visible under the leather kilt and sandals that he wore. He was a formidable sight, and it was enough to deter the casual vanilla visitors.

“Evening, Julius.” I grinned up at the big man.

“Cassandra! Long time, no see!” The big man bent down and enveloped me in a hug that, combined with my tight corset, took away my ability to breathe. I dropped the bags I was carrying and gasped. He released me with an apologetic smile.

“We’ve missed you, both of you.” He included an amused Mike in his greeting. “Come on in. I’ll see you at the demonstration later.” He grinned with what appeared to be a touch of nerves, “I’m going to be showing off my flameproof skin. Dragoness has decided that she should live up to her name and breathe fire.”

My eyes widened. "That should be something to see." I tried to visualise the tiny, dark-haired Domme swallowing a flaming torch almost as big as she was, and failed.

"We wouldn't miss it for anything," Mike promised and then slapped Julius on the back. "I've got a demo of my own planned for later, if you'd care to watch."

I felt my face fall, and I suppressed a pout as Mike laughed out loud. A small part of me had hoped that he'd forgotten his promise to punish me in public.

I sighed quietly, the sound lost in the background music as we entered the main area of the club. I should know by now that Mike always kept his word. However, there were varying degrees of public. I only hoped that whatever he had planned would take place in front of a select group and in one of the private rooms. I wasn't sure that I could cope with the mortification of sharing my punishment with every stranger in the club.

The atmosphere inside was as welcoming as always. Mike and I soon found ourselves surrounded by old friends.

"Where the hell have you two been?" Jake demanded as he hugged me and shook Mike's hand warmly

"Yes, come and tell us what you've been up to." Suzie winked and slid my arm into hers. "I want to hear the story of every single bruise. What has this wicked Master of yours been doing to keep you away from us?"

"Why, he's kept me bound in chains -- I've been tied to the kitchen sink!"

Suzie laughed and rolled her eyes. "Don't tell me you've gone all domesticated on me?"

"Fraid so. I bake a mean pie, and you should *see* me wiping the pots."

"Lying again, Cassie?" Mike tweaked a curl. "We have a perfectly good dishwasher. She only gets to wash the pots when she's been really, really bad." He lowered his brows and tried to look fierce.

I was delighted that Mike was having fun. It was like old times again. We took a seat at a table near the dance floor and ordered drinks. Time flew as we caught up on the local

gossip, and we were only recalled to our surroundings when the dungeon monitors came around the tables, informing everyone that the demonstration was about to start.

Everyone turned their chairs towards the dance floor, which for once, was empty of most of the pieces of play equipment. All that remained was a large rectangular metal frame. Dragoness and Julius stood with their backs to us. Dragoness was dipping brands into a bucket, then lighting them and passing the flaming torches to Julius. Her submissive was completely naked, and I was able to admire the tattoos that snaked their way down over his buttocks. When he turned sideways to me, I could see that even his penis was decorated.

Well, that was new. I did some mental arithmetic and realised that it must have been almost a year since I had last seen him naked. In fact, it was also at the caning demo when I had first met Mike. Was it really that long ago? I shook my head in disbelief.

Dragoness did indeed swallow fire and gave a small display of fire-eating, followed by a brief lecture on how to play with fire with a submissive. She explained the safety aspects, using Julius to demonstrate some of the finer points. Once she reached the end of her talk she grinned.

“And now, dear friends, I’d like to introduce you to Zeke, who is going to show you how to use a fire whip on the lovely Mira.”

I perked up. I had seen Zeke play before; the tall thin blond was a master with a whip, but I’d never seen a fire whip used, except in the movies. I didn’t know anyone called Mira though. Was she Zeke’s new submissive? He had a reputation for changing play partners almost every week.

Dragoness and Julius moved aside to reveal Zeke fastening the last cuff to a woman’s wrists, both of which were bound to the metal frame above her head.

I stared at Mira, my heart leaping in my chest. She was beautiful, with lush curves and a stunning fall of auburn hair. Her pussy was completely shaved, and even from where I was sitting, I could see the sheen of moisture on her thighs. I swallowed hard, a pulse of longing

pounding between my own legs. Mira stood quiet and still; only flexing her hands now and then.

The lighting dimmed to leave only one spotlight on Mira's face and the demo began. I lost all sense of time. Zeke played with a couple of flaming torches, passing them over Mira, even between her legs. The submissive groaned and writhed. I watched her face and wondered how it felt. Did it sting or tickle? She looked so sexy with her feet planted wide apart, her thighs quivering with tension. Did she want to move closer to the flames or farther away? I wondered if she knew the answer to that herself. I wished I could ask her.

The brands swept and flicked over her breasts; she and I gasped in unison. Her nipples were hard nubs and mine ached in counterpoint under my clothing. Each time I thought that Zeke had pushed things too far and burnt Mira, he'd move the torches away, and it appeared that the submissive's perfect skin was unmarked.

For the grand finale, he doused the torches in a bucket of water and brought out his fire whip. I watched open-mouthed and with a wildly beating pulse as he cracked it alongside her. The whip roared through the air with such ferocity that I looked around for the fire extinguishers. I was relieved to see Julius and Dragoness standing by in the wings with the safety equipment. The spectacle excited and scared me at the same time. Mira apparently felt the same way too as she moved her feet as far away from Zeke as her bonds allowed. At last the flames died away, to leave the audience sitting in stunned silence. Zeke bowed, and the room erupted into enthusiastic applause. I joined in and clapped so hard that my hands hurt.

Chapter Eight

Mike shifted in his chair and slid a hand into his trouser pocket to adjust himself. His erection was most uncomfortable. That new submissive was something else. He longed to hear her crying out under his own whip. He wanted her to explore with him that delicious cruelty he could convert to kindness. He yearned to feel her naked body writhing under him in his bed.

When the brands caressed Mira's breasts he heard Cassie give a gasp. As though it was a cue she slotted into his fantasy, stroking his back and shoulders as he made love to Mira.

Then he caught a glimpse of the real Cassie from the corner of his eye, and he came down to earth with a bump. Guilt swept over him. What kind of man was he to be lusting after another woman when the one he loved was sitting beside him? As he watched her, his much-loved slave gave an unconscious wriggle of excitement. What would Cassie say if she knew what he had just contemplated?

Love? There was that word again. Where had that come from? Mike took a shuddering breath and accepted what he should have understood months ago. Cassie wasn't just important to him because she wore his collar and was his slave. He loved her, but did she love him? Perhaps he should ask her?

His heart froze as he contemplated her possible replies, from an adoring “I love you too,” to outright rejection. She’d never signed up to be his life partner. If he suggested anything more permanent, would she leave him? Would she think it too much of a commitment? He didn’t want her to feel obligated to love him back. Perhaps he should let it go for now. There was plenty of time to let her know how he felt about her.

The thoughts whirled round in his head until he looked again at Cassie. Even in the dim candlelight he could see the arousal on her face. He smiled fondly. There was nothing to feel bad about; this show was intended to stimulate and arouse, and it had certainly succeeded in doing that.

Chapter Nine

I caught sight of Mike watching me, and I blushed. My lust for Mira must be as plain as the nose on my face. How could I feel like this when I was sitting beside the man I loved and adored? The man who had just last night given me the most amazing climax I had ever had.

But he didn't love me. To him I was just a slave that he was fond of. Someone to cherish, yes, but love? I sighed. Perhaps I'd be better off cutting my losses and moving on. It would be painful, but how much more painful would it be when he asked me to leave in a year or two, when he was tired of me?

It was something to think about, but not right now. Zeke was waving at someone, and moments later, I saw him head our way along with the new girl Mira.

"Great show, Zeke," Mike stood and congratulated him.

"Hey, Mike, good to see you," Zeke slapped Mike's back and shook hands with Jake. "Did you see the fire-eaters at the Circus School last month? Now that was a display!" When Mike and Jake shook their heads, Zeke launched straight into an enthusiastic description of the circus act.

Mira shook her head and grinned. Close up, this woman was even more gorgeous than she had been on stage. I couldn't keep my eyes off Mira's full breasts, with their pink nipples.

Her fair skin gleamed in the light from the table's candles. At that moment the house lights came up, and to my surprise, they revealed she was covered in thin black stripes from head to foot.

"Oh, you're all sooty," I couldn't help exclaiming.

"Yup, and thirsty too. It's hot work with a light shining on your head, let alone when someone's waving flames around you. I'm usually cold after a scene, but not when we play with fire."

"Here, take my water." I handed her my bottle. "I haven't opened it yet."

"Thanks." The redhead took several large swallows. "That's better. I'm Mira."

"Cassie." Then I pointed around the table. "That's Suzie and Jake, and this is Mike, my Master."

"Pleased to meet you." Mira smiled politely at Jake and nodded to Suzie, who had a knowing grin on her face. There were times when my friend could be too perceptive.

Mira winked at me. "Your Master's a lucky man." I flushed under her scrutiny. Mira tipped her head back and eyed Mike from head to foot. "Come to think of it, you're both well blessed."

I smiled with pleasure at her frank admiration of Mike. I never minded when other women lusted after my Master. In my opinion, it was a compliment. "So, where do you hail from? I couldn't help noticing the American accent."

Mira pulled a face. "Everyone says that, but I've been here for five years now. I lived in North Carolina, met a guy on the 'Net, and came over to meet him, but it didn't last. By then, I had a job. I like it here, so here I'll stay as long as your government will let me." She took another gulp of water. "I guess I'd better go get changed. Hey, Zeke." When he turned to her, Mira gave him a quick peck on the cheek. "Thanks. It was an honour to play with you."

"No, pretty lady, the honour was all mine. Sure you don't want to carry on?"

“Sorry.” Mira shook her head. “You know I’m looking for something else.” Then, she posed and fluttered her eyelashes. “Why, sugar, you know I’m not the kind of girl to go for a one-night stand. Besides, I need to wash this soot off before I rub it off on someone’s clothes.”

The way she looked at Mike when she said this made my toes curl. Her meaning was obvious, and I was powerless to resist the image of Mira twining her naked body around Mike’s clothed one. I felt my clit pulse with desire.

I took a deep breath and cleared my throat, trying to regain control. “I’ve got to go to the ladies room. Would you like a hand with getting the soot off your back?”

“Thanks, that would be great.” Mira turned back to Zeke, but he’d plunged back into enthusiastic conversation with Jake. She sighed. “Hey, Suzie, when Zeke comes back down to planet Earth, could you find out where he put my clothes?”

Suzie nodded. “No problem.”

“Thanks. See you boys later.” Mira blew the men a saucy kiss. I almost choked with laughter at the look on Mike’s face. It was a combination of lust and sheer envy. So, why didn’t it make me feel jealous? I took one look at Mira’s naked behind as it sashayed into the cloakroom and grinned smugly.

Because I get to check her out first.

How would I feel if Mike had been in my position? I almost stumbled in my high heels when I felt the answer sink into my heart. I would have been green with envy, but not because Mike was checking out just any woman. No, it would be because he’d beaten me to this particular one.

It must be several years since I’d last played with a woman. When I had started in the BDSM scene, my first long-term dominant had been female, but I’d liked men too much for the partnership to last beyond a few months.

I watched as Mira ran a sink of hot water. The redhead's breasts swayed with her movements, and I couldn't bear to take my eyes off them. I was in a daze of lust as I squirted some liquid soap into my hands.

I moved around Mira, stroking the soap over her shoulders and flanks, which had taken the brunt of the flames. Mira stood still and hummed softly.

"Ah, that feels good, Cassie. You've done this before?"

"My first mistress used to like me to bathe her." I smiled in reminiscence. "I loved washing her hair. We used to get in the tub together, and she'd let me massage her head while I washed her." I wiped the soap over Mira's breasts praying for the strength to resist the urge to fondle them. As if to mock me, her nipples sprang erect as I palmed the soap over them.

"But you're with a man now?" Her words temporarily distracted me from her body.

I smirked. "Oh, yes. Some things I can't do without."

Mira laughed. "I know just what you mean." She took up a stance with her legs farther apart. "If you look down, you'll find you've missed a bit."

The soot lay in a sweep across the front of Mira's upper thighs. A lick of soot had even landed on her shaven mound. I squatted before her, wet my lips, and inhaled as I stroked my hands over the blackened skin. I could smell Mira's scent, and my heart beat faster in response. I heard Mira sigh, but despite the temptation, I kept myself focused on the job. It helped that every few minutes we were interrupted by the cloakroom door opening and closing.

I dampened a paper towel and began the difficult job of wiping off all the soap without flooding the cloakroom carpet. "You should have brought a sponge with you," I complained as the water trickled up to my elbows and dripped onto my skirt.

"I would've if I knew what I'd be doing tonight. I'm a last-minute replacement. Zeke's regular girl's got the flu."

I was startled. "Zeke's got a regular submissive? When did that happen?"

"Oh, when she cornered him one night and turned the tables on him. You've never seen anything so funny. She gave him a mouthful about uncaring and fly-by-night dominants, and then she dragged him into one of the private rooms. No one knows what happened then, not really, but I heard that she tied him up and gave him a damned fine flogging. Now, when he forgets to treat her with the respect due to a loyal submissive, she apparently switches on him and treats him to a night of domination."

"Wow. I'd never have imagined it!"

"Well, you didn't hear it from me, mind." Mira grinned. "It's only a rumour. You know how touchy he can be if his dominance is questioned."

I didn't reply. Damp paper towel in hand I knelt to wipe the last of the soap off Mira's mound. Leaning closer, I inhaled again and was rewarded with the clean scent of soap and fresh musk. Hypnotised by the sight and scent of Mira's pussy, I was just about to kiss it, when the door banged open again.

"Hey, Cassie, Mike's wondering where you are." Suzie grinned, as she took in the scene before her. "Do you want me to tell him that you're busy?"

I blinked and sighed regretfully before I got to my feet. "No, we're finished here."

"In that case, I guess Mira will want her clothes." Suzie handed over a bulky purple leather bag. "Zeke'd stashed them under a table, but he couldn't remember which one. It's taken me all this time to find them."

"Thanks, honey. It was real sweet of you to bother." I watched enviously as Mira gave Suzie a hug. "Could one of you give me a hand with my corset?"

"Sure," I volunteered hastily before Suzie could open her mouth. My friend raised her eyebrows but thankfully held back from openly teasing me.

Mira upended her bag and a corset slithered out onto the counter beside the sinks.

Suzie groaned in open appreciation. "Wow, that is fabulous! Where did you get it?" She stroked the dark blue silk longingly. "I want one!"

"I made it," Mira picked it up and shook it out. The corset flowed from a boned waist down to a little ruffled skirt. "It's one of my favourites. I'm starting a lingerie business. I'm not planning on making corsets, but for you, I'd make an exception."

"Give me your card," Suzie demanded, "And I'll be in your shop tomorrow."

"Sorry, honey, I'm going to be online only. That is if I can figure out how to set up a Web site." She gave a little gasp as I cinched in her waist.

"I know someone who could help you with that." Suzie dug me in the ribs with a sharp elbow, and I pulled my attention back to the conversation and away from the contemplation of Mira's hourglass figure. It wasn't an easy task.

"I design Web sites." I volunteered the information breathlessly as I tied the corset laces in a final neat bow. The corset encased her, showing off her perfect curves. "Come by tomorrow if you like." I eyed the way her hips flared out from her waist. The ruffled skirt barely covered her naked buttocks.

"You finished there, Cassie?" Suzie caught my eye. I blushed and nodded.

"In that case, Mike said to prepare yourself and come with me."

"Ah." Mira's presence had driven everything else out of my head. I had forgotten about my impending punishment. "Who else is going to be there?"

"Not allowed to say." Suzie was at her most mysterious. "But you're invited, Mira, if you aren't doing anything else."

"What's this, then?"

I grimaced. "Public humiliation for me."

"Oh, poor you," Suzie mocked, and flung an arm around my shoulders. "Can't fool me, girlfriend. You're loving even the idea of it."

I squirmed a little and giggled. It was true. Overlying the arousal I felt around Mira beat a steady pulse of excitement. Mike could be very inventive. What had he planned for me?

Chapter Ten

Suzie ushered us into the private room. “Shut the door behind you, Mira. This entertainment isn’t for the masses.”

I shivered and looked around at the smiling faces in front of me. It didn’t matter that they were my friends. I still trembled with a combination of nerves and anticipation. I focused on Mike who was standing in front of me, a frown on his handsome face.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you a slave who disobeys her Master’s orders.” He cupped his hand around the back of my neck and gave me a gentle shake. “Her crime is so heinous that I feel an appropriate public punishment should be witnessed.” He turned to me and smiled. “Tell the nice people what you did, bad girl.”

I stared at him, horrified. “Mike, please,” I begged in a whisper, my face no doubt scarlet with embarrassment. “I can’t.”

“I’m waiting.” His voice was a threatening growl. He twisted my long hair around his hand and gave it a warning tug.

It was enough to break through my surface humiliation and send me down into the place where my submission lives. It gave me the confidence and strength to submit to Mike’s wishes.

"I came without permission."

There were amused sounds of disapproval from the small group.

"Are you going to spank her now, or can I?" Jake heckled.

"Oh, no, something much worse than that." Mike laughed and tugged me over to the St. Andrew's cross that stood in the middle of the room. "Strip, Cassie."

My fingers shook a little as I unfastened my corset. I didn't think to refuse or stop the unfolding scene. I was nervous, but I wanted this as much as Mike did. I turned my back on our audience as I slipped off my skirt. I wore no panties and I heard someone murmur, "Nice marks."

Of course. I had forgotten about the cane welts on my behind. I bent to remove my stockings, but Mike stopped me.

"Leave those."

As if in a dream, I allowed Mike to help me onto the cross. The metal X-shaped frame leaned away from me, a few degrees from the horizontal. It was covered with leather pads and surprisingly comfortable to lean against. Attached to the centre and each leg of the cross were leather straps, designed to adjust to fit a variety of body sizes.

Mike arranged me so that I faced inwards, before he tightened the leather straps carefully, pulling the deep waistband extra tight. I lay spread-eagled, unable to move, my heart almost leaping out of my chest. What was he going to do that was so awful?

I shivered as the tails of the first flogger whisked over my skin. It felt delightful. Soft strands of suede caressed me, and I recognized that Mike was working two-handed, using alternate floggers. I sighed and relaxed.

After several minutes, my skin was glowing and I felt as though I'd been stroked all over. I was warm within as well as without, with a hot wetness between my spread thighs. Mike picked up the pace and the force of his strikes increased. I groaned. This was heaven. Almost without realising it, my hips were rocking within the restraints. I had forgotten

about my audience. All I could think about was the connection between my body, the floggers, and Mike.

A harsh blow made me whimper, and I realised that Mike had changed floggers. He struck me again, and this time he spoke, punctuating his words with blows that fell across my already sore buttocks.

“You. Will. Not. Come. Without. Permission.”

I groaned as each blow pushed me higher, arousing me even further. He stopped and stepped around in front of me, a feral smile lighting his face. His hand slid between my open legs, and he stroked my clit.

His touch felt strange, cold, hard, and plastic. I gasped. An unfamiliar buzzing sound throbbed through my body. It was intense and exquisite and drove me to the brink of orgasm in seconds.

“Come for me, slave.”

And I did, in racking, gasping waves. I sagged against the leather bands that Mike had so thoughtfully tightened to provide enough support for this moment.

“Good girl.” He took the vibrator away from my clit and slipped it back in his pocket.

To my disbelief, he picked up the floggers, moved back behind me, and began once more. This time, it didn't take as long for my hips to give away my arousal. Again, he stood in front of me and stroked my clit with the little vibrator. He was methodical and almost clinical in his technique...and it turned me on like crazy.

His harsh commands for me to come rang through the room. I obeyed him time after time, as he alternated between flogging my back and stroking my pussy with the vibrator. At last, in an exhausted hoarse whisper, I begged to be released.

The rest of the room was silent by now. Our audience had watched with amusement and understanding, but this was the serious part of the game. No one wanted to be the one to break the spell that Mike had woven around me.

“No.” Mike’s blunt reply didn’t even shock me; I was too tired. I hung from my bonds, sweat trickling down my back, juices coating my thighs. My hair was plastered to my forehead, and my legs trembled with exhaustion. I was so focused on Mike that he had become my whole world. Nothing existed outside our little bubble.

I dimly understood that I had missed something important. I struggled to get my weary brain into gear, and then it dawned on me. I licked my dry lips.

“Master, this slave would like to apologise for stealing what is rightfully yours. I’ve learned my lesson.” My voice wobbled. “I’m sorry, Master. I won’t do it again.”

Mike stroked my lank hair back from my face. “Thank you. You’re such a good girl, such a good slave,” he crooned in my ear. “Come again one last time, just for me, because I want you to.” He barely touched me and once more I convulsed, screaming out his name in a terrible combination of agony and ecstasy.

The instant I sagged against my bonds again, he was there undoing the thick leather straps, aided by more than one set of willing hands. It was Mike, though, who lifted my cramped body from the cross and wrapped me in a soft blanket. It was Mike who held me as I shuddered and shook and finally cried tears of release.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry.” I sobbed and tried to wipe the tears up, but more kept falling. “It’s just that I’m so happy.” I buried my head in Mike’s shoulder and wailed.

“I’m glad to hear it.” His voice was full of amusement and tenderness. “I’d hate to think that I made you miserable.”

I giggled weakly and gave a watery sniff. I raised my head and looked around the room. The others were still there, and when they saw that I was once again *compos mentis*, they gathered round.

“That was some show, Cassie.” Suzie winked and grinned when I flushed.

"Here, let me return the favour." Mira passed over a bottle of water, which I gulped down greedily. "You need to fix your face, honey. You've got bigger rings under your eyes than a panda."

I yawned and stretched. The blanket fell off my shoulders. "I think perhaps I need to get dressed first."

"Don't bother on my account." Mira ogled my bare breasts with an obvious leer, and Jake joined in.

"No need to get dressed at all, Cassie. We're all friends here."

"Are you hitting on my slave?" Mike gave a mock frown and laughed when Jake put on an innocent expression.

"Never. It's just that we know perfection when we see it. You're one lucky man, my friend."

"I know it." Mike gently hugged me. I yawned again and cuddled deeper into his shoulder. "Time to go home. I think my slave and I need some private time alone."

I wriggled on his lap. I could feel his hardness pressing through his trousers against my sore buttocks. I smiled. I wriggled again just to tease him and was rewarded with a growl in my ear.

"Enough." Mike nipped my earlobe and I yelped. "Go and get dressed. I'll pack up for you."

Suzie and Mira helped me struggle back into my corset, and I found it hard not to purr under their ministrations. I was on such an emotional high that I felt drunk with happiness. It was painful to kiss them good-bye, and I almost cried again.

"Don't leave it so long next time," Suzie admonished me. "E-mail me. We'll have coffee together if you can't make another club night. Now, go home and give Mike a kiss from me." She winked. "It's not often that we get such fabulous entertainment."

* * * * *

"Come back soon. We've missed you." Jake slapped Mike on the shoulder. "Don't forget all about us for another six months."

"I won't," Mike promised. "Once I've got this contract out of the way, I think we'll have a party to celebrate."

"Great, you can count on us to be there. Just let me know when."

"I will, don't worry." Mike raised his voice. "Cassie." She hurried to his side. "The bags." He watched as she picked them up, but she showed no sign of strain, so he turned his back on her, and with a final farewell to everyone, he left, leaving her to follow in his wake.

What was it about this woman, Mike mused as he strode through the club towards the exit. She made him feel like a king. Other submissives would be put out if they were made to carry their Dominant's bags after such an intense play session, but not her. They fit together so well. She knew how he liked to show his mastery of her in subtle ways, like making her carry the bags, and she was happy to comply with his wishes. He had seen sometimes how Cassie relished these simple acts of submission so much that they turned her on.

Not tonight though. Mike grinned when he saw her shoulders sag a little. He had worn her out. Well, there was still a task ahead of her tonight, so he'd leave her some energy. As soon as they stepped out of the club, he took the bags from her, ignoring her murmured protest.

"I need you to save some strength -- for later."

Cassie gulped, and Mike laughed aloud. God, he loved this woman.

Chapter Eleven

We barely made it through the front door before Mike had his hand on my shoulder, pressing me down.

“On your knees, my slave. You know what I want.”

I dropped the bags, and they landed with a crash on the tiled floor. My eyes widened at the tone of his voice, and my legs folded beneath me. My Master had clearly run out of patience, and he needed my complete and undivided attention right now. I traced the outline of his hard cock with a finger, and he growled, tightening his hand on the back of my head. “Get on with it.”

“Yes, sir.” My hands went to work unbuckling his belt and unzipping his fly with practiced ease. His erection sprang free, and I bit back a moan of adoration. I opened my mouth and swallowed the hard hotness wrapped in silky soft skin. His first thrust made me gag, but then I accommodated his length and timing.

My jaw ached and my throat was sore by the time Mike came. Despite his arousal, he had teased us both by going almost to the point of no return several times. Each time, I had felt an answering throb between my thighs and knew that I was getting wetter. When he finally came, filling my mouth with his seed, I was squirming with need.

“Up.” Mike gestured brusquely, and I rose as fast as I could. “Lift your skirt, my slut.” I blushed, but I did as I was told. Mike slid a finger along my wetness, and I quivered. “Good girl.”

I glowed with pleasure at the praise, then whimpered as he withdrew his finger. “Quiet,” Mike frowned and held his hand to my mouth. “Clean me up.”

I sucked his finger clean of my juices, using my eyes to beg him for more.

“Oh, no, my girl. You’ve had quite enough for one night. Bedtime now, I think.”

I saw Mike suppress a grin and sighed internally. I knew it would be a waste of time to pout and stamp my feet when he was in that sort of mood. He was flexing his dominance, pushing the limits of my obedience to his desires. I would have to wait until tomorrow to sate my greed for him. He yawned and I fluttered around him, offering hot drinks and a hot bath.

I lay awake for some time listening to Mike’s deep breathing beside me. I almost groaned with frustration, but I also laughed at myself. How many times had I come tonight? And still I wanted more? No one had ever aroused me like that before; normally two orgasms in one session would be more than enough. Thinking about it only inflamed me further. Almost of its own volition, my right hand drifted down to my mound and began to caress my clit. I clenched my teeth against the moan of despair that threatened to escape.

What was I doing? Barely two hours ago, I had promised Mike never to come without his express permission, and here I was, about to disobey him. What kind of worthless slave was I? I sighed and folded my arms, tucking my hands under my armpits to keep them away from temptation.

“Cassie, if you can’t keep still, you can sleep on the floor, chained to the end of the bed,” Mike growled. “Now go to sleep.”

"Sorry, Mike," I whispered, trying to erase the exciting vision that he'd just put in my head. Would he really chain me up? Wouldn't I be cold on the floor?

I shuddered and turned over, stuffing both hands under my pillow to keep them away from my pulsating clit. My hips thrust into the mattress, an unconscious movement that I failed to quell.

Light abruptly flooded the room, and I blinked.

"Fine, if that's what you want, then I'm only too happy to oblige," Mike snapped. "I'm tired and I want to go to sleep. Every time I drop off, you wake me up again. Perhaps lying on the hard floor will calm you down."

"I'm sorry," I gasped as Mike rummaged in a drawer. "I didn't mean to wake you."

"Too late." His eyes were hard and unrelenting. He pulled out a collar and leash, then pointed to the floor near his feet. I gulped and knelt down, my head bowed in shame. He fastened the collar and pulled me on all fours around to the end of the bed.

"Sit," he snapped at me as though I was a disobedient dog, and I sank to my haunches. He pulled a throw from the back of a chair and tossed it in my direction. "Now you can toss and turn as much as you like without bothering me." He looked me up and down and his face softened. "You look so cute like that, Cassie." He petted my head, "We should be beyond this sort of discipline by now. Will you be a good girl and go to sleep? Can you do that for me, Cassie?"

I nodded humbly, accepting his punishment, then watched forlornly as he turned his back on me and climbed into bed. He was right, I had been naughty. Look at tonight; he had been really pleased with me until I'd spoiled it. But hadn't he set me up to be naughty? He was the one who had aroused me and then left me high and dry, desperate for more.

My head spun. I didn't understand how this had happened. How did I end up on the hard floor after such a meeting of mind and body as we'd enjoyed only a few hours ago? I shivered and wrapped the throw around me, curling my body into a tight ball.

It occurred to me that all I had to do was say my safe word and my punishment would be over. That would be cheating though. I was Mike's slave, and whatever he wanted, I would do my best to achieve.

There was the answer. I wanted to make Mike happy, and if doing so meant lying on a fakir's bed of nails, then I would oblige. I grinned in the darkness. Now that would be something else. All those little pinpoints of pain from the top of my head to the tips of my toes. I shivered at the thought and pressed my thighs together.

Damn, this was sheer torture. I yawned and stretched, before huddling up into my throw again. Perhaps if I counted sheep? Eventually, I fell into a fitful sleep to dream of red-haired submissives and flaming whips.

Chapter Twelve

Mike woke, reaching for Cassie's warm body, but she wasn't there. He came completely awake as he remembered where he had left her last night. She was still there; huddled in the throw at the foot of the bed, fast asleep.

What had he been thinking? She had given him the most wonderful evening of his life, and he had ended it by pushing her away as though she was an overexuberant dog. He stared up at the ceiling. What was going on in his head?

It was not in Mike's nature to be introspective. He had learned to understand his motivations and accept the methods he used to achieve happiness in his and his submissive's personal lives, but it hadn't been easy for him. It had taken years for him to find the perfect submissive, someone who was willing to be treated like a slave in order to feel like a queen.

Sighing, he examined his feelings and realised how relieved he felt that she hadn't fled in the middle of the night. Had he been subconsciously testing her? He grinned. There was one way to ensure that she never left him.

Mike always believed actions spoke louder than words, so he slipped out of bed and padded down the stairs to the kitchen.

* * * * *

I woke with a start when a foot nudged my shoulder. I groaned as I rolled over, my muscles cramped from the cold, hard floor.

“Good morning, slave.”

I stared up at Mike and managed with a heroic effort not to growl back at him. I contented myself with a grunt of acknowledgment.

“Tut, tut, feeling grouchy this morning, are we? Bad girl.”

Mike’s cheerfulness was abrasive, and I barely resisted snarling at him. There was a rattle of chain, and then my leash was unsnapped from the bed, but not from my collar. He tugged at it, and I grasped that I was supposed to follow him.

What the hell was he playing at? I was stiff, sore, and thirsty, not to mention tired, yet he still expected me to obey his every command. I tried to crush my rebellious thoughts. Hadn’t I decided only last night that I’d do whatever I had to, to keep Mike happy? Unfortunately, noble resolutions made in the depths of the night had a sad tradition of breaking in the cold light of day.

It was habit that got me up onto my hands and knees and allowed me to follow him into the bathroom. He bent to unfasten my collar.

“Get in.”

The command confused my sleepy mind until I saw that the bathtub was full of hot, scented water. I stood up and climbed in carefully. With a groan of sheer pleasure, I lowered myself into the steaming water. The heat took out some of my stiffness, and I was able to move into a more comfortable position that took the weight off my aches and pains.

“Here, drink this.” Mike pressed a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice into my grateful hands. He allowed me to finish the glass before he soaped up a washcloth and began to scrub.

I wriggled and yelped as the cloth passed over sore spots, but Mike was relentless. He didn’t stop until he had washed every inch of my skin and I glowed all over.

“Better now?”

I managed a rueful smile. “Much better, thank you.”

He kissed the tip of my nose. “Good. I’ll leave you to finish up. There’s still hot water in the tank to wash your hair. I’m going out. I’ll see you at teatime.”

Before I could say anything else, he’d gone. I lay back in the water and frowned. What was he up to? We usually spent Saturday afternoons together, but then, the last two days had differed from our usual routine too. I washed my hair while pondering the changes.

I hissed when my right shoulder muscle cramped as I stretched to reach the showerhead. That was what lying on the floor did for you. I grinned and shook my head. I must be nuts. Not only had I acceded to Mike’s demand to sleep on the floor, but in a masochistic way, I had enjoyed it.

I laughed out loud at that thought. Yes, I was a masochist. Mike understood and appreciated me because of it, rather than despite it. I loved him for that alone.

By the time I was dressed, I had given up trying to fathom what Mike was up to. I was too busy to waste time on idle speculation. It was our tradition on Saturday afternoons to eat afternoon tea, before going out for a late supper at a restaurant. Mike had said he’d be back for tea, so I would bake a cake and some scones. I glanced at my watch. It was only nine-thirty. I groaned. What time had Mike woken me? It must have been early.

Some of my clients worked full time, so they were unable to meet me during normal working hours. Mike didn’t like them coming to the house in the evenings, so I occasionally arranged to see them on a Saturday morning. Since I had no clients booked for this morning, I had all the time in the world.

I had just taken the scones out of the oven when the doorbell rang. I glanced in the hall mirror to check that I looked presentable and hastily wiped a smudge of flour off my nose before I opened the front door.

My mouth dropped open when I saw who stood on my front step. "Mira! What are you doing here?"

Mira looked a little startled by this reception. "Am I too early for you, honey? You said to call round this morning."

"I did?" I cast my mind back to last night. "Oh, I did! I'm so sorry, please come in. How did you find me?" I was flustered and knew that I sounded unprofessional.

"Suzie gave me your directions. I hope you don't mind? Shall we start again?" She held her hand out and I shook it automatically. "Hi, my name's Miranda Rawlings, though my special friends call me Mira." She winked, then continued briskly, "I'm badly in need of a professional Web site designer."

I took a deep breath and tried to relax, but it was impossible with my heart leaping around my chest. It didn't help when Mira looked me up and down and ran her tongue over her lips.

"You look just as delicious with your clothes on, Cassie. Especially when you blush." She patted my arm. "Is there anyone else around? I wouldn't like to embarrass you in front of your kids."

I gulped and managed to shake my head. "No, no. Mike and I live here alone."

"Oh, is Mike here, then?"

"No, he's gone out."

"That's a shame." Mira grinned "I wouldn't mind seeing him again."

I bit my lip as a vision of Mike and Mira entwined swam through my brain. I held back a groan by sheer willpower and managed to conduct Mira down to my office without saying anything inappropriate. At last we were seated, and I forced my mind towards work and away from the soft warm body sitting beside me. I cleared my throat.

"Now, what sort of Web site did you want me to create for you?"

Mira groaned. "One that I can work. I'm a computer idiot, but the Internet seems to be the best way for me to sell my lingerie."

The corset I saw last night had been a prime example of her skills. It appeared that Mira created handmade lingerie, delicate confections of ribbons and lace in a variety of colours and sizes. I exclaimed over the photographs of her work.

"Who took these pictures? They're excellent."

"Thank you, I took them myself." Mira beamed. "That's my day job. I'm a freelance fashion photographer, but I like to sew and design as well. I've got quite a bit of stock now, so I think I can launch myself on the 'Net without worrying that I won't be able to fill the orders. Of course, there'll always be room for individual one-offs."

"Uh huh." I was distractedly scribbling notes and was startled when Mira suddenly slipped a tape measure around my bust.

"Stand up, honey. I won't get the right measurements if you're sitting down."

I gulped. "No, Mira, it's really not necessary. Besides," I blushed, "Mike doesn't let me wear lingerie in the house."

"Really? Why's that?"

"He likes to know I'm naked under my outer clothes. Jeans aren't so much fun, but in the summer I usually wear skirts." I burned with embarrassment, but it didn't occur to me to refuse to answer her.

"Ah." Mira nodded her understanding. "I'll speak to him and get permission for you to wear these. They'll be so special that he won't want you to take them off. Now, be a good girl and stand up."

It was the hint of steel in her voice that convinced me to rise; in fact, it compelled me. I stood still as Mira fussed around, taking measurements. My nipples were hard and my pussy wet by the time Mira had finished brushing against my body.

"I expect to be billed properly for my Web site work." Mira shook a finger under my nose. "And *only* for your work. This underwear is a gift for a special friend, one that I'd like to get to know better."

"I'd like to be your friend, too, but I'm not sure that it would be such a good idea."

"Because?" Mira prompted.

Because each time I see you, I want you to drag me into bed, and I owe loyalty to Mike. How'd he react if I told him how you move me? And I couldn't bear to disappoint him. I couldn't bring myself to voice my jumbled thoughts aloud. I shrugged. "It's complicated."

"I see. I'm sorry if I've upset you. If you change your mind, you've got my home address. You can call me and leave a message if you like. I live alone, never married and no kids." Mira gave me the bare facts of her life. I wondered why the luscious redhead hadn't been snapped up long ago.

She sighed and picked up her bag. "I'll leave you the prints. I've already got the originals on my computer. Let me know if you want me to send a copy. I know how to do that much via e-mail."

I looked at her disappointed face and couldn't bear it. Without thinking, I slipped to my knees. "Don't go, Mira."

I heard Mira's breath catch in her throat, but her face was as calm as ever. "I'm sure you can beg much more prettily."

I bowed down until my lips were level with the top of Mira's shoe. I kissed the leather upper. "Please, Mira, I'd be honoured if you'd eat lunch with me."

* * * * *

Mira didn't expect the delicate little kiss to travel straight to her heart. She stared down at Cassie's bright hair and wondered how she had let things go so far, so fast. Mira had never poached someone else's slave, and she wasn't about to start now.

She liked to think that she was well-mannered. You had to be doubly courteous if you were a switch, as she was. She took one look at Cassie's high colour and said the first thing she thought of to ease the situation.

"How well you do that. I'm never able to get up off my knees without looking ungainly. You're so graceful."

"Hah, you'd be graceful too, I promise, if you were taught to do it as I was." Cassie shuddered.

Mira made sympathetic noises, while at the back of her mind she wondered if she could get Cassie to shudder with pleasure.

"That was long before Mike. Sir Charles was my biggest mistake. I was new to the scene, and I didn't realise how much he was taking advantage of me, until I made friends with Suzie. She soon put me right. I actually think she saved my life. Sir Charles was a dangerous man for an ignorant sub like me. Do you know, one day I actually let him tie me so I stood with a noose around my neck? Then he left the room." Cassie shuddered. "He told me later that he'd gone out for a walk. Can you believe that? If I'd fainted, I'd've hung myself."

Mira dared to slip her arm through Cassie's and was rewarded when the blonde snuggled up to her. "We've all had our adventures, honey. How about we fix lunch together, and I'll tell you about a few of mine?" And maybe, just maybe, while they were eating, Mike would come home.

Mira regretfully, but firmly, squashed down her rising libido. Those two were a couple, and if she wasn't mistaken, they were very much in love. There was no room for her in such a cosy twosome. Even as she told herself this, a small part of her couldn't help but hope that things could be otherwise.

Chapter Thirteen

The aroma of fresh baking drew Mike into the kitchen.

“Mira, what are you doing here?” Mike wanted to bite his tongue off the moment he uttered the words, they sounded so unwelcoming.

Mira grinned and raised her wineglass in salute. “Just drinking your cellars dry, lovely man.”

Mike almost blushed under her scrutiny, but years of practice kept him calm under fire. Instead he cocked an eyebrow at her.

“I invited Mira to come over, so I could help her with her Web site; then she stayed for lunch.” Cassie glanced up at the kitchen clock, and her face dropped in a look of comical dismay. “Oh, Mike, I’m so sorry. I didn’t realise the time.”

Mike tried to make his voice stern, but his eyes were no doubt dancing with amusement. “Then perhaps the two of you should make my tea. I didn’t have time to stop for more than a hotdog for lunch. I’m ravenous.” He flung himself into a chair. “Feed me, women, or it will be the worse for you.”

Cassie and Mira leapt up from the kitchen table, trying unsuccessfully to stifle their giggles. After a muttered conference in the far corner of the room, Mira put the kettle on and

got out the teapot, while Cassie sliced bread and buttered it. If the slices of bread were a little crooked and the cream for the scones a trifle overwhipped, Mike ignored the faults. He watched the way that Cassie and Mira worked together with fascination.

Although this was Cassie's territory, he noticed the subtle ways in which she deferred to Mira. Cassie would've spread the scones with cream ready for the table, but Mira preferred to leave the cream in a bowl, and the table beside him was laid accordingly. The only time that she overrode Mira was when the redhead got strawberry jam out of the larder. Cassie knew all his likes and dislikes, and one of his pet hates was strawberry jam. Cassie only kept it in stock for guests.

Mike strained to hear their conversation, but all he caught was his own name. Minutes later, his favourite raspberry compote arrived in a small glass dish.

If the women could work this well together when they were merely serving afternoon tea, then what would the two of them be like in a more intimate setting? Mike's cock hardened at the thought. *Could it work?* He'd seen last night how taken the two women were by each other, and Mira had made it obvious how interested she was in him. How would the three of them operate? He didn't want to do anything to jeopardise what he had with Cassie. Would Mira expect to be an equal partner in dominating his slave? Or would she accept his direction?

Mike knew that the former wouldn't work. Intellectually and in the workplace, he had no trouble seeing women as equals, but sexually, he expected and needed his women to be submissive. He grinned as he watched them work. There was only one way to find out.

Once the table was set to the women's satisfaction, Mira approached his chair demurely. "Your tea is ready, Mike."

"Thank you, Mira. I think you girls had better join me; you both look as though you need something to soak up the alcohol."

“Yes, Mike.” Mira lowered her eyes, but Mike could sense the laughter bubbling up inside her. Now would be a good time to discover how she’d respond to him.

“Mira” -- he let his voice suddenly cut the air like steel through silk -- “I’d ask you to remember that this is my house. I prefer not to eat with laughing hyenas. Please behave with the proper decorum.”

Mira lifted her gaze to his and clapped her hands over her mouth as a giggle shook her shoulders. “I’m sorry,” she spluttered.

“I think you will be. If you want to stay, then I expect you to apologise to me in an appropriate manner. Otherwise, leave now, and come back when I’m not here. Cassandra can have her own friends. I have no objection to that.”

Chapter Fourteen

Mira sobered for a moment and caught Cassie's eyes. She saw the hope in them and the corresponding gleam in Mike's. Here was the invitation she had wanted to receive since she'd met them at the club last night. Mike had worded it so obliquely that all parties could save face if it should be rejected, but it was an invitation nonetheless.

It was also a demand for her to recognise Mike's authority over her. That suited Mira. She had no desire to dominate him. All those feelings were reserved for Cassie. However, if she consented to his ultimatum, would he understand that she needed to top Cassie? She shuddered as she contemplated the alternatives. How would she feel if it was Cassie tying her up, at Mike's order? She wasn't sure. She only knew that the uncertainty both scared and excited her.

Time slowed. It was as though she stood on the precipitate edge of an abyss. Mira savoured the moment and felt the familiar thrill of fear that was so necessary to her life. She took a deep breath and stepped off into the unknown.

"I beg your pardon, Mike. I'll take whatever punishment you feel is necessary."

"Thank you." Mike pushed his chair away from the table. "What's your safe word?"

“Red.” Mira began to feel alarmed. Surely he wouldn’t go so far that she’d need a safe word?

“Drop your trousers, Mira.”

She fumbled with the zipper of her expensive slacks and tugged at them. The soft fabric slid down and bunched up around her ankles. She trembled as Mike stared at her crotch.

“Panties? They may be delightfully pretty, but you won’t wear them in my house. Cassie, fetch a sharp knife.”

Mira gulped and was barely reassured by Cassie’s smile.

“How do you feel about knives, Mira?” Mike asked as he took the blade from Cassie.

“Nervous,” Mira whispered. Her pulse quivered in her neck, but she felt moisture gathering between her legs.

“Good. Keep quite still and you won’t feel a thing.” Mike slid the cold steel between the waistband of the panties and Mira’s warm flesh. The sharp blade cut twice through the fabric, each time as though it wasn’t there, and the ravaged silk fluttered to the floor. “Get rid of that, please, Cassie, and you can put the knife back.” Mike slid the blade onto the table.

“Bend over my knees, Mira.”

Mira shuffled into place, her slacks making movement difficult. She leaned down, the blood running to her head and singing in her ears. Mike’s hand was warm on her naked flesh as he caressed her buttocks.

Crack! His hand hit her upturned behind with force. Mira gasped and bit her lip. He hit her again and again. This was awful, humiliating, and painful. So, why was her clit throbbing in counterpoint to his blows? Between the harshness of Mike’s smacks and the pulse between her legs, Mira struggled to remain still, gasping and flinching by turns.

At last, he tipped her back onto her feet. “Well done. Stand up straight, hands behind your back.” She obeyed him with difficulty as the blood pounded in her ears.

Mike slipped a finger between her legs. “Nice and wet. Good girl.”

Mira's cheeks were hot, though whether it was from embarrassment or excitement, she couldn't decide.

Mike flicked her clit. "Good girls get rewarded in this house. Can you come like this?"

Mira nodded, her thighs quivering with the strain of standing when she urgently wanted to sit or lie down.

"Come for me, sweetheart."

Mira gasped and rubbed herself against his probing fingers. Her face burned as fiercely as her behind. She felt embarrassed and exposed, standing as she was in a strange kitchen with an eager audience of two. However, she was so aroused that it only took another pass of Mike's fingers; she came, gritting her teeth in her efforts to remain upright with no support, her cries swallowed before they left her mouth. She sagged and dragged herself back to attention by sheer effort of will.

"Lovely."

Her cunt was still pulsing when Mike withdrew his hand, and he laughed at her dismay. "You can have more later, if you're good. There's room for improvement though. Next time, I want to hear noise."

He held his hand out to Cassie, who knelt beside him and tenderly wiped Mira's juices away with a damp cloth. Mira watched without embarrassment. To her relief, she felt no envy as, evidently overcome with emotion, Cassie kissed his hand.

"Ah, dear slave, you liked that too, didn't you?" Cassie nodded and Mike stroked her hair. "I'm glad, sweetheart." He slipped a finger under her chin and tipped her face up. "You'll get your turn."

Mira grinned at the mixture of emotions that flitted across Cassie's face, and she sighed as Mike dropped a kiss on the kneeling blonde's forehead.

Mike turned back to Mira, and she struggled to pull herself upright under his critical gaze. "Get dressed, Mira. Then we can have tea."

“Yes, Mike.” Her hands shook as she slid her slacks up over her sore flesh and carefully adjusted the crotch. She blushed again under his scrutiny, then took a deep breath in an attempt to regain her composure.

“What have you learned from this afternoon’s lesson?” Mike gestured at a chair and she gingerly slid into it, while Cassie poured a cup of tea.

Mira took a sip and pondered her reply. “I need to practice more self-control.”

“Really? I thought your control was admirable.”

“Oh. I thought you didn’t approve of laughing hyenas?”

Mike grinned. “My dear that was just an excuse.”

“Ah.” Mira frowned in bewilderment until Cassie caught her eye. She dropped her eyes to Mira’s crotch. “Oh, I know.” Mira bounced upright in her chair like an overenthusiastic pupil in front of her favourite teacher, then winced as her bottom reminded her of the last ten minutes. “You don’t like panties.”

“Correct, although you shouldn’t have needed Cassie to remind you. And Cassie” -- Mike suddenly rounded on the other woman -- “should not have given you any clues. I can see I’m going to have my hands full when you two are around.” He gave a long-suffering sigh then grinned as she and Cassie burst out laughing.

“I really ought to be going.” Mira looked out of the window at the darkness. They had sat around the kitchen table swapping stories about their pasts and laughing like old friends for hours. Mike and Cassie stared at her glumly.

“I know. I love you guys too, but rushing things isn’t a good idea. And you should know that I’m not looking for occasional play partners. I need some stability in my private life.” Mira sighed. “I want someone to come home to, not just a quick thrill. I don’t want to fall for you two and then find that I’m nothing more to you than a new toy.”

For a moment she wondered if she had been too blunt and honest, but Mike nodded his understanding “I think we all need to have a breather and decide what we want to do next. A polyamorous relationship wasn't in my life plan either.” His grin took the sting from his words.

“Nor mine, but when I saw the two of you last night...” Mira shook her head and grimaced. “Something about you just called to me.”

Cassie laughed. “I bet it said ‘Run, run for the hills!’”

The joke relieved the mounting tension, and they all chuckled.

Mira stood and picked up her bags. “When can we meet up again?”

“Next weekend?” Cassie was all hopeful eyes. “I should have some work done on your Web site by then.”

Mira grimaced. “I can't, honey. I've got appointments that I can't break. How about in two weeks?”

“That should be fine.” Mike made a face. “It'll give us all time to get tested.”

Mira nodded. “You're right, Mike. Don't feel awkward about suggesting it. I'm sure none of us want to come away with more than we've brought to the occasion.”

“In that case, make it a fortnight on Friday,” Mike suggested. “Bring enough stuff for a weekend, and if things don't work out, you can always leave early.”

“It's a date. Oh, and I'll have something for you, Cassie, the most beautiful cat o' nine tails. You'll love it.” Mira grinned at Mike. “So will you.”

“Minx. I've got a few things I'd like to show you too.”

“I'll just bet you have.” Mira rolled her eyes and Cassie giggled.

Chapter Fifteen

I lay in bed, my cunt throbbing, completely relaxed. Mike had been very thorough in his attentions tonight. My muscles felt soft and loose as though they were made of cotton wool. I quietly moved into a more comfortable position for sleep. Mike was already snoring softly. I smiled. If Mira was going to have this effect on the two of us, even in her absence, then what would the weekend with her be like? I hugged myself with excitement, amazed that the thought had enough power to arouse me, despite my earlier exertions.

Mira had certainly stirred things up again between me and Mike. I felt the heat of Mike's handprints across both buttocks and wriggled luxuriously. He'd spanked me for tipping Mira off about the panties, and he'd been harsh enough for me to beg his forgiveness with total sincerity before he kissed away my tears.

Spanking was very intimate for me. It always made me cry and pushed me down into a very submissive state where the lightest touch could set off an orgasm. It was irrevocably linked in my mind with something that only happened to "bad" girls. And yet it always turned me on, whether it was a playful slap or something more thorough.

I sighed. It was very confusing, but I had given up trying to analyse my feelings long ago. I was as I was; nothing could change my sexuality now. I'd fantasised about being

dominated since I was old enough to masturbate and too young to know that there were words to describe my feelings. I was a submissive masochist just as Mike was a dominant sadist. We meshed well together, our fantasies blending into a perfect whole.

So, why should the addition of Mira into the equation excite me? Would I ever be tempted to leave Mike for Mira? I grinned up into the darkness with a sudden realisation. Never in a million years. Even if Mike never raised a hand to me again, I wasn't going anywhere. I loved him.

Perhaps if he suddenly decided that being my Dominant was too much, I would have to go elsewhere for that fulfilment, but after the last few days I doubted that would ever happen. There would be dry spells in our relationship, just as there were in any other, but now I had my orders from Mike; I wouldn't feel guilty about bringing my needs to his attention. I yawned, and while I contemplated the future with pleasure, drifted into sleep.

* * * * *

I looked around the guest room one last time. It was immaculate. The sheets were crisp and clean, the fresh flowers added a graceful touch, and the carafe on the nightstand was ready to be filled with cool water. I glanced at my watch again, willing the minutes to tick away. A fortnight had never seemed so long. I double-checked the small en suite bathroom for toiletries and towels. Mira would be comfortable here.

I tried to suppress the thought of us all together in Mike's bed. Mira might not like sleeping with other people; after all, some preferred to sleep alone.

I heard Mike leave his room, and I slipped back into our bathroom. His wet towel lay in a crumpled heap, and I shook my head as I tidied up after him, putting out fresh towels and nervously rearranging them. What if Mike came to prefer Mira over me? Or perhaps I wouldn't be able to cope with having two dominants controlling me. Was inviting Mira here an invitation to disaster? My stomach suddenly roiled in protest, and I felt sick.

The doorbell rang and I froze. It rang again, jolting me out of my stasis. There was a murmur of voices from the hall, and then Mike's rose up the staircase.

"Cassandra!" His tone left no room for doubt that he was angry. I trembled and scurried down the stairs. "Where were you? You left an honoured guest standing on the doorstep, and I had to open the door to her myself."

I hung my head. "I'm sorry, Mike."

He took a breath, but before he could remonstrate further, Mira spoke, her voice quietly sympathetic. "I think your slave is frightened, Mike."

He exhaled slowly, and his tone gentled. "I think we're all nervous." I heard the change in his voice and looked up. "Cassie, take Mira's luggage upstairs and put it away for her." He dropped a kiss on the top my head, "It's okay, sweetheart; I'm tense too. Nothing's going to happen until we're all ready."

By the time I'd unpacked Mira's bags, I had lost some of my apprehension. I began to feel a rising excitement. Mira hadn't brought much in the way of clothes and no underwear at all. Most of the bags' contents were toys.

I carefully laid away the dildos and butt plugs in a drawer, but the items that really interested me were the whips and floggers. Mira had a beautiful collection. I hung them from the pegs in the wardrobe that were specifically designed for that purpose.

I stroked one flogger in particular, allowing the plaited leather thongs to run through my fingers. Technically, it was a cat o' nine tails. Nine fine, supple braids fell from a thick, weighted handle which was so beautifully balanced that it would be effortless to wield. This was more of a whip than a flogger. I eyed the little knots at the end of each braid with a mixture of anticipation and horror. What would it feel like on my skin? I shivered and closed the wardrobe door firmly. I wasn't sure that I wanted to find out.

"At last," Mike grinned when I slipped back into the living room. "I thought you'd run away."

I blushed and shook my head. "I'm sorry; I was just admiring some of Mira's toys."

"Ah, did you like my new cat?" Mira sat up straight in her armchair. I saw her eyes light with interest.

"Yes, no; I don't know." I giggled and shivered. "It looks fierce."

"Hmm," Mira nodded judiciously. "If you used it really hard, I'm sure it could cause some serious damage. You don't need to worry though, sweetie. I can give you a lot of pain with it without leaving more than a minor welt."

I shivered again. I tried to hide how I felt, as the deliciously wicked combination of fear and desire rolled over me. I saw Mira grin with satisfaction, and I wondered with a degree of confusion what had given me away.

"Come here." Mira beckoned, and I went to her. "Sit down by me, sweetie. Drink your cocktail and be quiet. Mike and I haven't finished talking, yet." I did as I was told and folded up neatly at Mira's feet. There was a tall glass of something cold on the table beside the chair, and I obediently sipped at it and nibbled pretzels while listening to the conversation above me.

The talk was innocuous chat about work, the weather, and the latest world events. I gradually relaxed, aided by the small amount of alcohol in my white wine spritzer. I wasn't a big drinker, and I knew from experience that if Mike expected me to play tonight, he wouldn't allow me more than the one glass. I glanced at my watch.

"Excuse me, Mike, Mira, but the meal is ready now if you wish to eat. If you'd prefer it to be later, may I be excused to turn off the oven?"

Mira stroked my hair, and I leaned into the caress. "I'm not hungry for food yet. How about you, Mike?"

Mike shook his head. "I find it weighs me down if I eat too much before a good workout." His eyes danced although his tone was serious, and I shivered. I knew only too well what that expression boded for me.

"Go and do what you need to in the kitchen; then run upstairs and fetch down my cat, sweetie." Mira gave me a little push. "Let's see what you can take for me, hmm?"

I had never moved so fast in my life. Whether it was from eagerness or a desire to not anger the wielder of that dangerous piece of kit, I don't know, but the pleased smile Mira gave me when I returned didn't reassure me one bit.

Mira cast an experienced eye around the room. "Nice high ceilings you've got here. Is it all right if we play in here, Mike?"

"Be my guest; just give me a minute to fetch some stuff of my own."

"Of course. Cassie, give me a hand to turn this chair around."

Mira pointed to the chair that she'd sat in. "I want you to lean over the back."

The rounded back of the chair was too high for me to bend double over, but I could reach over it and grasp the arms to give me some support.

"Hmm, that looks good," Mira purred in my ear. "Up you get. Okay, Cassie, strip for me."

I shivered and pulled my t-shirt over my head. Unzipping my jeans, I wriggled out of them, then picked up my clothes and laid them neatly to one side, out of the way. My eyes slid away from Mira and towards the door as Mike returned. He grinned when he saw me naked.

"All right, Mira, let's see how you work. Remember what we discussed earlier; I want her back in one piece."

Mira nodded and I saw her bite her lip. "I won't get it wrong, Mike; trust me."

"I do, otherwise I'd not let you anywhere near my girl."

The knowledge that Mike would be watching over us like a hawk warmed me through and through. It gave me the courage to turn my back on Mira and lean over the chair as directed. I was still tense though, and I flinched when Mira ran her fingernails gently down my spine.

"Tsk, sweetie. You are one bundle of nerves tonight. Let's see if we can do something about that. Close your eyes; nothing bad is going to happen here."

As Mira murmured in my ear, she began to rub my shoulders. She didn't stop until some of the tension had left me. She changed her technique and using featherlight caresses she stroked her fingers along my ribs. I giggled.

"That tickles."

"I know. Stand still now." She repeated her actions.

I did my best to obey, but despite using every technique I knew to suppress my reactions, I couldn't stop the occasional shudder and squirm. Her delicate touch was the most subtle of tortures. To my surprise, I realised that I was becoming aroused. I whimpered. This was not what I'd expected at all.

"Poor honey, can't you take it?" Mira's voice was gleeful. "I guess we'll have to try something else then."

I felt Mira's body warmth disappear. I braced myself for whatever was to happen next, but for a long time all I could hear was the murmur of voices from the far end of the room. After a while, I began to get bored and shifted restlessly.

I gasped as my ribs suddenly caught fire, tiny stings setting the skin alight.

"I said, keep still."

I gasped again, as the cat stroked across my shoulders. Mira's touch was delicate but sure as she covered me in pinpricks of heat from my shoulders to my hips. I stood obediently still, luxuriating in the sensations.

One corner of my mind registered that Mira had turned the power of the strokes up a gear, and I sighed with contentment. The heat on my back was reflected in the heat between my thighs, and I didn't quite register when my hips began to move of their own accord.

Mira was not so unobservant. "I *said*, stand still." The flogging stopped, and I whimpered in protest.

"Bad girl." Mira nudged my inner thighs with the whip handle. "Spread your legs further apart."

I gulped, but did as I was told. Something in Mira's voice told me that things were going to move up a notch. I yelped when the next blow fell on the delicate skin of my inner thigh. A ripple of panic flowed through me. The blow had landed barely inches from my pussy. Was she going to whip me there?

Despite the fear, I felt the ache of need in my cunt become an overwhelming flood of desire. With each blow on my tender flesh, I shifted my legs further and further apart, silently begging Mira to whip me *there*, just there, in my most delicate and intimate of places.

"Good girl."

I could hear the desire in Mira's voice and shuddered.

"I'm going to whip your cunt now, honey. Are you ready?"

I moaned aloud with a throbbing combination of fear and need. Normal speech was impossible.

The whip whistled through the air and hit me with its tiny stings on my open pussy. The sane part of my mind realised that Mira had pulled her stroke. This was the gentlest of blows, but that didn't seem to register with the rest of my body. I arched my back as Mira hit me again. Then I felt the tidal wave of an orgasm rushing towards me.

"No." I moaned and struggled to quell the sensations. Hadn't I learned the hard way not to come without permission? I was startled when my face was seized from the front. My eyes flew open to see Mike kneeling on the seat of the chair.

"Come for us, Cassie. Good girl, come for us."

My eyes took in the desire in his; then the next blow sent me soaring. A tsunami of sensation crashed over and through me, washing away all restraint. I shook and screamed as I came, my face held tightly in Mike's warm hands, his eyes taking in every detail of my ecstasy.

"Good girl." Mike released me abruptly, and I sagged against the chair back, my knees trembling. He strode around to my side; I could see from the look on his face and the bulge in his jeans that the game wasn't over yet, not by a long way.

Mike ran his hands down my sides and I saw him grin when I flinched.

"Sore, sweetheart?"

"A little," I admitted.

Mira slid her hand between my thighs and tweaked the soft flesh of my left leg. "Don't worry, honey; there won't be a mark on you tomorrow."

I made a moue of disappointment, and Mira laughed. "Maybe next time I'll leave you something to remember me by, if Mike allows."

"I think I can agree to that." He cupped one of my breasts in his warm hand and pinched the nipple. I jumped. I was always more sensitive to pain just after I'd come, and Mike knew it. What had he planned for me? I trembled.

Mike pinched my breast again, and I moaned. This time it felt good. As though the noise had been a signal, Mike released me. "Turn around, Cassie."

I wobbled around until I was facing outwards, my back leaning against the chair.

Mike patted each breast gently. "Mind if I try your cat, Mira?"

"Be my guest."

I shivered as Mike stood before me, swinging the whip back and forth. “Look at me, Cassie. Watch how I whip your breasts. I thought Mira was far too gentle with you. I know how much you like your marks.”

I gulped at his sinister words and all that they implied. I looked into his eyes and saw darkness. I braced myself for the first blow, quivering inside at the cold blankness of his eyes.

For a moment I was truly afraid as the rational part of my mind began to close down. There were always moments when we played hard, when part of me forgot that this was just a game. I would forget that I held the key that would halt everything instantly with one brief word. I involved myself so deeply that I believed I was a prisoner, with no free will of my own. I was the slave and captive of a sadistic maniac. It was contradictory and confusing, for if I didn’t trust Mike, heart and soul, not to harm me, I wouldn’t be standing here, shaking with fear and anticipation.

I saw the wide smile on Mira’s face and came back to reality. I was safe. Then I looked beyond her smile and saw the same hunger for pain reflected in Mira’s eyes. I suppressed a hysterical giggle when it occurred to me that I’d willingly agreed to play with not one, but two sadists. They would demand everything that I could give them, and more, laughing while they did so.

At that thought, I fell back into the game. My arousal jolted up a notch even as my body trembled. I looked longingly at the door.

Mira licked her lips. “I think she needs tying, Mike.”

I gazed imploringly at Mike as he ran the tresses of the cat through his fingers. “You could be right. She does look as though she’s about to bolt, doesn’t she?” He looked around the room. “I think that chair in the corner would work better for bondage.”

Mira dragged the ladder-back chair from the writing table into the centre of the room. “Over here, Cassie.” When I hesitated Mira flew across the room and slapped my left leg, hard. “I said move, slave.”

I flushed and bit back a sob. No one had ever slapped my legs as though I was a recalcitrant child. I scurried over to the chair and sat down gingerly, aware of all my sore spots.

Mike approved. "That looks good, but I want her breasts thrust forward." Mira stood behind me and pulled at my shoulders until Mike nodded. "That's it. Can you tie her like that?"

It was only a matter of minutes before I was firmly bound to the chair, legs apart, chest out. It was an uncomfortable pose, and I struggled against the ropes at first, while Mira and Mike watched with delighted interest. When I realised that my struggles were turning them on, I sighed and relaxed into the ropes, allowing them to support me.

Mira chuckled and whispered something to Mike, who then slid a finger between my legs. I groaned and tried to rub against him, but I couldn't move.

"That seems to be about right, then. Let's get on with it, shall we?" Mira nodded and withdrew to safe distance. Mike shook out the leather braids on the flogger and retreated a few paces. He drew back his arm and let fly. The cat hit my upper chest; I flinched and closed my eyes.

"No!" Mike snapped. "Watch me, slave. I won't hit your face." He softened. "Trust me."

I took as deep a breath as the ropes allowed and opened my eyes. I watched the next stroke fall and gasped as one braid flicked a nipple, which sprang erect.

"I like that. It calls for more, I think." Mike let the tresses fly again and again, the blows alternating between stroking and stinging.

My breasts were afire, and my nipples ached in rhythm with the pulse between my legs. I watched his face and saw the controlled coldness in his eyes. His eyes seemed to go darker and darker as he caressed me with the cat, covering me with pinpricks of heat. He moved his blows lower and lower, flicking the tails over my open thighs.

He was using more force than Mira had, but then he knew just how much I could take. I groaned aloud when he caught one tail on my mound. I felt the tremor in my hips. It was an infinitesimal movement, but both my Dominants noticed it.

“Untie her.” Mike’s command was brusque, his voice thick with desire. Mira released me from the ropes as quickly as she could, given that every other minute she stopped to kiss and nibble my lips. Her mouth felt soft and warm, and I kissed her back as passionately as my confinement allowed. She toyed with me, breaking off every time she thought I became too excited, to undo another knot. As a way of keeping me aroused, it worked well. I hummed with desire by the time I was finally free.

“I think Mira deserves your appreciation, Cassie. Let’s see. Mira, can you perch here?” Mike pointed to the writing table that was just below my hip height, a solidly built piece of furniture.

“Cassie, I expect you to please Mira by whatever means she requires.”

I licked my lips and swallowed, “Yes, Mike.” Could I please Mira as I longed to?

I waited until Mira had settled herself, then slid my hands under her skirt and up her warm thighs. She was wearing stockings but nothing else, and my fingers could feel the heat radiating from her cunt. I bent my head and kissed Mira’s mouth with passionate fervour, while my fingers stroked and smoothed their way from the soft flesh of her thighs to the humid warmth of her pussy.

Mira moaned against my mouth and gently nibbled at my lower lip before gasping, “Enough of that.” She wrapped my long blonde hair around one hand and tugged downwards. “Put your tongue to work down there, slave.”

I was about to kneel on the floor when I felt a hard hand on one thigh.

“Keep your legs straight and apart, slave.” I quivered and did as Mike ordered. It was a strain on my neck, but I soon forgot that when my tongue touched the sweet warmth of

Mira's cunt. I licked and nibbled my way along Mira's pussy, losing myself in the heat of the moment.

I revelled in the effect I was having on Mira. I could hear her moaning above me. Full of confidence now, I slid my hands up and held Mira's flesh apart, so that all of her pussy was available to my busy mouth. My tongue worked overtime, lapping and flicking alternately, as Mira writhed and gasped at each caress.

"Good girl." I barely registered Mike's voice as I worked on Mira. I was brought abruptly back to full awareness when I felt his hands hold me open in turn, and his cock nudged at my opening. I lifted my head and moaned aloud as Mike pushed his way inside me.

"Don't stop now. Keep that tongue working." Mira twisted her hands in my hair, forcing my mouth back down. I could barely breathe with the combination of excitement and physical restraint. My head was held firmly by Mira and my hips were under Mike's control, his fingers digging into my sore spots as he moved rhythmically at a speed designed to arouse himself. I was confined. I realised with almost unbearable excitement that at this moment I was merely a toy for their pleasure.

This realisation pushed me to the verge of coming again. I writhed frantically as my Dominants held me. How was I going to ask for permission to come, clamped as I was between their bodies? I needn't have worried.

Mira tugged my head up and laughed at my desperation. "You may come, but only after I have." Then she pushed me back down to the moist heat between her legs.

I groaned and resolutely clenched my muscles. I would *not* come. I concentrated on the hard little bud in front of me, flicking my tongue over and around it. Mira moaned above me as I sucked the bud hard, urgently tugging it between my teeth.

Mira screamed and came in a flooding wave of wetness that soaked my face. It was enough to trigger my own orgasm, and I came too, clenched hard around Mike's cock, shaking and gasping, my face still held against Mira's cunt.

"Well done, Mira." I could hear the smile in his voice. He was still buried deep inside me. I sensed he had waited for his moment. He gave one last firm thrust and came with a roar, giving one luxurious groan after another as the ebbing ripples of my orgasm receded around his cock.

He must have felt my legs going. He caught me round the waist as I slid to the ground. "Thank you, slave." He kissed my wet face and licked Mira's scent off my lips.

I tried to smile back at him, but my mouth was too tired. I was suddenly cold and shivered.

"Here." Mira wrapped the throw from the back of the sofa around my naked body. "Come and sit down, darling. You too, Mike."

The three of us cuddled together on the sofa. I was wedged firmly between Mike and Mira, while they waited patiently for my shivering to stop. I could hear them murmuring over me, but I was drifting in and out of my own thoughts too much to take much notice of what they were saying. I was only conscious of their hands gently petting and stroking me, bringing me slowly back to myself and reality.

Dinner was a quiet affair. We were all ravenous. I had begun to serve my Dominants, but my hands shook so much that Mira had taken over. It seemed quite natural that we should all be seated round the kitchen table, half dressed and smelling of sex. I thought the scent added piquancy to the meal.

Mike pushed his plate away at last and sighed with contentment. "That was good, Cassie. Thank you." He picked my hand up from the table and dropped a kiss in the palm. "Thank you for everything, sweetheart."

I blushed. "It was my pleasure."

Mira giggled. "We noticed." I felt my cheeks turn a deeper shade of red and gave them both a pleased smile.

"Perhaps it's time for Mira to stop looking so smug though." Mike ran his fingers down my arm. "What do you think?"

I melted, not only from his touch, but from the consideration in his voice. He was giving me a chance to back out of the arrangement, to refuse to allow the other two to play together as Dominant and submissive. I held his hand against my cheek and caught his gaze.

"I think you're right as always." I heard Mira take a sharp breath and grinned. "What do you want me to do, Master?"

"Hmm. I think I'd like to see Mira get a taste of her own medicine." Mike grinned as Mira and I shuddered in unison. "Go and open up the playroom, Cassie. I want to use the block and tackle."

"Yes, Mike." I fled down the hall, my heart pounding in time with my feet.

Chapter Sixteen

Mike opened the playroom door. Cassie had switched on the lights and now cranked the handle of the block and tackle. A hook slowly descended from the ceiling, chains clanking.

“Good, that looks about the right height. Fetch the leather cuffs, Cassie.” He turned to Mira and pointed to a chair. “You can leave your clothes over there.” Mira undressed quickly and calmly, without making a striptease of it. Her serenity excited him. He would enjoy disturbing her composure.

Mike accepted the cuffs from Cassie and began to fasten them around Mira’s wrists.

From the corner of his eye, he saw Cassie give him a complicit smile as Mira began to shiver. By the time Mike attached the cuffs to the hook dangling from the ceiling, Mira was quivering all over.

“Wind her up.”

As the crank turned, the chain rattled as it wound around the pulleys. Cassie worked slowly, no doubt giving Mira time to adjust her arms as they were pulled above her head.

“A little more.” Mike gazed at her handiwork critically. Cassie turned the crank again, and Mira gasped as she was lifted onto her toes.

"Please, Mike." Mira's feet scrabbled for purchase beneath her.

Mike grinned at her panic and allowed a few more seconds of fear to pass before he put his hands around her waist and steadied her.

"You can't fall. I was going to say that you're perfectly safe," he murmured in her ear, "but that would be a lie." He gave a mocking smile and felt his cock harden when she shuddered. "Fasten her off, Cassie."

Mike looked on with approval at the careful way she locked off the chain. He had to hide a smile. Cassie was concentrating so hard that she had her tongue poking out of her mouth like child. Turning his attention back to Mira, he ran the braided lashes of her whip through his fingers.

"Ever had this used on you, Mira?"

"No."

"No, *what?*" Mike snapped out the question like a rifle shot. It had the desired effect.

"No, Sir." Mira gulped, and he smiled as her cheeks flushed with the combination of fear and excitement that can lead to arousal.

Mike prowled around her, admiring the way the tension of the chain was transmitted through every muscle in her body, keeping them taut. Her breasts were two large, ripe apples sitting high on her ribcage. He licked his lips before casually flicking one nipple with a finger.

She yelped.

Mike made his voice stern. "Don't you think that this whip will feel worse than that? Oh, dear. I'm not sure if you'll be able to cope. Cassie, perhaps you ought to let her down."

Mira whimpered.

Mike stood ramrod straight in front of her, barking out his words like a drill sergeant on parade. "What? Speak up Mira."

Mira swallowed. "I said, please don't let me down."

“So beg me, sweetheart.” Mike’s voice softened, before hardening again. “Beg me to beat you with your own whip.”

Mira’s voice was so low that Mike had to strain to hear it. “Please, will you beat me with my own whip?” She closed her eyes and Mike recognised the look on her face. She was ashamed. Ashamed of her need to be dominated by him, and yet at the same time she was excited by her humiliation.

He grinned. It never failed to amaze him just how wonderful and complex human sexual relationships could be. Now he would push her a little harder.

“I can’t hear you, Mira.” When Cassie took a step closer, he frowned and waved her back. “Open your eyes, Mira. Look at me.” She did as she was told. “I want you to tell Cassie what you want. Tell our submissive exactly what you want me to do to you.”

He watched the struggle on Mira’s face, her expressions ranging between the desire to obey him and the embarrassment of appearing so needy in front of someone she had just dominated herself. As he expected, the desire won out.

“I” -- Mira cleared her throat, and tried again -- “I want Mike to flog me with my whip. I want him to whip me softly.” Her head dropped, and she swallowed before raising her head again. “And I want him to whip me hard.”

“Good girl.” Mike’s hand moved down her body, and then he dipped his fingers between her legs. Mira gasped and her legs shook as he gave her clit a gentle rub. “Since you asked so nicely, we’d better get on with it.”

He picked up a suede flogger and set to work, warming Mira’s skin all over, from front to back. Her nipples were hard and her hips were moving by the time Mike gestured for Cassie to hand him the cat.

He began with Mira’s buttocks, slowly working up from light strokes to harder ones, which progressed down her legs. Mira yelped and squirmed, and Mike grinned as every blow landed exactly where he wanted it to fall. The cat was a beautifully balanced whip.

He worked his way around Mira's body, occasionally allowing the thongs of the whip to wrap themselves around his willing target. Mike concentrated as he increased the force of his blows, listening and watching for any signs of distress from Mira. But her yelps of pain had turned into low growls of pleasure, so he allowed the whip to raise blood-filled welts where the little knots hit.

The sight of the tiny raised bruises aroused him and he longed to continue, but it was late, and his concentration was fading. He had no intention of pushing things too far tonight, but the sight of Mira hanging from the chains became irresistible.

"Arms getting tired, Mira?" When she nodded and tried to flex them he grinned. "I have the solution to that." He unzipped his jeans and lifted Mira off the floor by cupping her buttocks in his hands.

He heard her gasp in surprise and excitement as his hard, warm cock lay against her wet pussy. Then Mike slid inside her hot tightness and groaned with pleasure. He'd been looking forward to this since the moment he first saw her.

Then a pang of guilt shook him as he remembered Cassie. What was she thinking? What was she doing? He turned his head towards her and she gave him a beaming smile. He beckoned, and Cassie stepped closer.

Still holding Mira's hips, Mike let the chains give Mira's upper body some support, and took a step out from under the block. Mira leaned back, and her legs tightened around his waist reflexively.

"Kiss me," Mike demanded of Cassie, and she obeyed him, leaning into the kiss with a passion that delighted him. Mike licked his lips. "Give Mira a kiss too, sweetheart. We don't want her feeling left out."

Mike watched as Cassie gently pushed the bound woman's hair from her face, leaned over her raised arms, and kissed her lips. Mira groaned, so Cassie kissed her again and again,

while Mike thrust gently into Mira's wet cunt. "Brace her shoulders," Mike gasped. Cassie slipped behind Mira.

Mira whimpered and laid her head on Cassie's shoulder. Mike watched with delighted excitement as Cassie fondled the redhead's breasts, while she provided support.

"Pinch her nipples," Mike ordered and was rewarded with a writhing gasp from Mira as Cassie followed Mike's instructions. "Again." Mike groaned; then as extra moisture flooded Mira's cunt, he came, thrusting firmly into her slick heat, his fingers holding her buttocks so tightly that bruises were sure to show by morning.

He eventually disengaged himself and gently lowered Mira back to the floor. Her feet scrabbled for balance, and he could see the quivering in her arms. Keeping an arm around her waist, he nodded to Cassie, who had removed her support, and now stood poised and ready by the block's handle. His slave turned the crank, and Mira's arms were slowly lowered to a point where they could be unchained. Mike would have released her from the chains, but Cassie was there, and he was exhausted.

He yawned as he adjusted his jeans, then sat on a whipping bench. His heart swelled with pride as he watched how Cassie took care of their guest. She unfastened Mira's hands and then gently led her to sit next to Mike, where she rubbed Mira's arms to help ease any stiffness. Then she trotted across to a small cupboard where they kept cleaning materials for occasions such as this. Taking out a soft cloth, she returned, and kneeling, she tenderly wiped Mira's thighs clean of their commingled juices. Mira was virtually purring under her ministrations.

Cassie's fingers were creeping further and further up Mira's thighs. She gave him a quick glance; when Mike nodded his consent, she continued, sliding her fingers between Mira's labia. Mira sighed and thrust her hips gently against the stroking, probing fingers.

Mike shifted so that Mira's head dropped to rest on his shoulder, then slid his arm around her back and ran his fingers down her welted ribs. Mira shuddered. Encouraged,

Mike repeated his actions. Mira writhed against him as he pressed her bruises, while Cassie stroked her clit. He watched with delight as her orgasm overtook her, her face and neck flushing as she cried out incoherently and shook in his arms.

Cassie gently withdrew her fingers, leaving a trail of little kisses along Mira's right thigh, but she stayed where she was, kneeling at Mira's feet until Mike snapped his fingers.

"Good girl, Cassie. Come here." He tapped his thigh, and she shuffled around to rest her head on his leg. Mike tightened his grip on Mira's waist, then ran his free hand through Cassie's blonde hair. He wondered what went on in his slave's head. He could feel her humming her pleasure through his thigh muscles as he stroked her, so he guessed that she was happy. Sliding one finger under her chin, he tipped her face up and was greeted with a smile.

Something inside him relaxed. Never mind that she had agreed to everything and had even instigated some of it. After all, emotions were fickle, fragile things that could change at the drop of a hat. To see his slave so overwhelmingly happy relieved his mind. It made his decision even easier. He never wanted to let this rare and wonderful woman go.

Mira stirred in his arms and shivered. Now was not the time to be thinking of his future with Cassie. He had more immediate issues to contend with, starting with two naked submissives who were rapidly becoming chilled.

Mike gave Cassie's hair a final stroke with a light heart. Once Mira had gone home, then they would talk.

Chapter Seventeen

Mike chivvied the two of us upstairs to bed with Mira's flogger. We ran hand in hand ahead of him, giggling wildly, trying unsuccessfully to outrun the flying braids. I suppose we weren't really trying too hard, for he caught each of us several good strikes on the back of our legs. I headed for the master bedroom, tugging Mira inside when she appeared uncertain.

"Please?" I begged her. "Come and sleep with us tonight. That's okay, isn't it, Mike?" I belatedly reminded myself whose bed it was, but I needn't have worried.

Mike shrugged. "Sure. If it's too cramped, I know someone who would be only too happy to sleep on the floor."

I pretended reluctance, but even as my bones protested that the floor was hard, a little trickle of excitement ran through me.

I saw Mira grin and knew that my face had given me away again. "Oh Mike," she crooned, as she stroked my hair. "I always wanted a pet. I'm afraid that I'd be a terribly indulgent owner. I'd let my pet sleep on the bed by my feet. On top of the covers, of course. In her collar and leash."

Each additional phrase had its effect. I stood both hypnotised and aroused by her voice. If I were a dog, I'd have been frantically wagging my tail. Somehow she knew instinctively

just how and where to push my buttons and turn me into a wet puddle of lust. Then the lateness of the hour overtook me and despite my increasing desire, I yawned.

“Enough.” Mike turned the covers of the bed back. “Time for good girls to get their beauty sleep. You girls go and use the bathroom first. I want you back here in five minutes, or I’ll come in there and get you.”

We grinned and ran to brush our teeth. Neither of us had any doubt that Mike wouldn’t follow through with his threat.

* * * * *

On Saturday afternoon Mike had to retreat to his study for an hour to answer some essential e-mails. He saw us cuddled together on the living room sofa and grinned. “Have fun with her while I’m busy, Mira. We can’t let Cassie get bored.”

Mira smiled lazily, her eyes hooded. “Thank you, Mike. I’ll keep her entertained.” With those few words I saw her dominant persona slip over her like a mantle, her face smoothing out to hide her thoughts from me. It was as though a switch had been thrown, and I couldn’t help but react to it. Suddenly awake to a million possibilities I sat up straight and regarded her with caution.

“Do you have a blindfold, Cassie?” I nodded. “Good. Run and fetch it, and get my jewellery box from my room. Don’t open the box.”

I did as she commanded, itching with curiosity. When I’d unpacked her cases, I’d put the little coffer on the dresser and hadn’t given it a second thought. What could it contain that was such a big secret?

I knelt at her feet with a prickle of unease between my breasts, and presented the blindfold and the box. She took them and barely gave me a glance. All her attention was for the small wooden casket.

“Now, what have we here, Cassie?” She raised the lid and showed me the contents. The upper tray inside was divided into two. One small compartment contained a couple of earrings. My mouth dropped open when I saw what lay on the other side. Half a dozen hypodermic needles in sterile plastic wrappings.

“No!” The word was out of my mouth before I could stop it.

“No?” Mira voice had dropped dangerously low. “Are you refusing me, Cassie?”

“No, yes, I don’t know,” I gasped, half paralysed with fear. I felt totally betrayed by the heat in my cheeks and the ache in my cunt. No, I didn’t want Mira to slide those sharp objects under my skin. I imagined the pain and shuddered. Yet I could see the desire on Mira’s face, and I desperately wanted to please her. Each hurt I suffered for her would thrill her, and I knew her arousal would stimulate my own in turn.

“I’m scared.” I whispered the truth, then hid my face against her knees.

She lifted my chin with one hand. “I know, honey. I won’t do anything to harm you. Will you trust me?”

I nodded mutely and gave myself over to her cruel mercy.

A few minutes later I sat naked and blindfolded on the sofa.

“Hands behind your head, Cassie.” Mira was brisk with her instructions, and I followed them to the letter. “I want you to keep your arms like that, no matter what happens.”

“Yes, Mira.” I could barely whisper her name, and my heart pounded so loudly it almost drowned out her commands. I felt the heat from her body as she approached me, and then her warm hands caressed my breasts. She felt the weight of each one in turn, and I moaned my pleasure as she suckled each nipple. She released me.

“Just there, I think,” she traced a line on my left breast with a fingernail and moved away. All of my senses were on alert and I clearly heard the crackle of plastic. I guessed that she was unwrapping the needles, and I couldn’t hold back a whimper of fear.

"Poor darling." Mira was instantly beside me, crooning softly in my ear. "It won't hurt for long, I promise. Now, are you going to be a brave little girl for me?"

I took a deep breath. I considered backing out for one millisecond, discarded the idea almost immediately, and fell into full submission. I managed to nod my agreement as my breathing slowed and I relaxed. I gave up independent thought and became her toy to use as she would.

"Ah, that's better," Mira murmured in my ear. "Here we go now." Sharp pain pricked my left breast. I groaned as the sensation transmuted into pleasure. "Good girl, lovely girl. Ah, another one I think." My right breast felt a spiky jab, and I guessed that she had slid another needle under my skin. "Another," she murmured, and the sensation repeated itself again, twice more on each breast. With each piercing I slipped farther from reality, floating on a sea of sensation.

"Cassie." Her voice called me back, anchoring me. "Pay attention."

I found a sharp point resting on my breast bone and my breath hitched. Surely she wouldn't puncture me there?

"I like to see what's under the skin." Mira's hot breath on my belly confused me. Where was she? What did she mean? More importantly, what was she going to do next?

A ripple of sharpness ran down my belly all the way to my cunt. I screamed with fright. What had she done? It felt as though she had sliced me open.

Her laughter rang out. "My God, Cassie, you're one gorgeous, suggestible creature." She ran her soft hands over my stomach and smoothed away the pain. "It's okay, honey, you're all better now." I felt a fumbling behind my head and the blindfold came free. I blinked in the light and my eyes slowly focussed on her amused face.

"Put your arms down and look at your breasts."

I gathered up my courage and prepared to see my skin pierced with half a dozen sharp slivers of metal. There was nothing there, just a few rapidly fading red marks.

"I don't understand." I was mystified. Where were the needles? I had felt them slide into me, so where were they now?

Mira took my right hand and dropped something in it. "Here's your needle, honey."

I stared, amazed. In my hand was a lowly cocktail stick.

"And this," Mira waved a pinwheel before my stunned gaze, "Is the knife that sliced you open." She dropped it in back in her box and purred smugly. "Do you want to know the best bit?" Not giving me a chance to reply, she leaned over me and cupped my face in both hands. "Throughout it all, you didn't move a muscle. So afraid and yet so brave." Her eyes shone with emotion. "Such a good, obedient submissive." She punctuated her words with kisses on my upturned mouth.

The fleeting embarrassment I'd felt at being fooled by her deception vanished in a roaring fire of desire. Heat swept through me, and I moaned against her lips. Her hands moved randomly over my flesh, alternating between caressing and pinching in quick succession. I panted and gasped as she pushed me higher and higher. She tweaked the skin on my mound and I spread my legs wider.

"Pain slut." She murmured the endearment with amusement.

I couldn't reply as she took my breath away by pinching my right nipple with one hand and rubbing my clit with the other.

"Come for me, Cassie." She increased the pressure on my clit. I squirmed and writhed as her grip increased, a naked butterfly pinned to the sofa by her finger and thumb. She released me; then, before I could become accustomed to the lack of sensation, she pinched me again, and this time I flew away.

Mira waited patiently, her fingers stroking me intimately as I quivered and shook. "Ah, Cassie, I love to watch you come." She gave my cunt one last pat and got to her feet, stretching out her back.

A deep voice came from the armchair at the far side of the room, startling me. "That has to be the best mind fuck I've seen in a long while."

"How long have you been watching us?" I asked.

"Since the blindfold went on. Mira wanted me around in case you freaked out. She knew we hadn't done any piercing play before." Mike came over and crouched beside me. "Darling." His face turned serious. "Would you like to play like that for real?"

"I don't know." For some inexplicable reason I felt shy. "Perhaps," I admitted.

"Then I guess Mira and I had better take some lessons in the technique, just in case." He grinned and straightened up.

"You mean you haven't used them before either?" I looked up at Mira who shook her head.

"Sorry, Cass, I had these from a friend a couple of months ago." She picked up the needles and crackled the plastic wrappers. "I've never used them. But if you want, I can learn."

Emotion flooded through me, and I sank to the floor at their feet, head bowed. They humbled me with their generosity of spirit. I was too overcome to make much sense, but I think they understood the gist of my mumbled words.

Mira had the sense to break into my ramblings before I got completely out of control. She snapped out my name and I froze. Was she angry? I raised my head.

Mike stood over me hands on hips, his face impassive. "Kneel up, slave." I obeyed his command, sitting back on my heels. "I think it's time for tea. You will serve it in the kitchen in ten minutes." His voice softened, "Run along now, Cassie, there's a good girl."

I took a deep breath and nodded. "Yes, sir. Thank you, Master, Mistress."

I was proud that by the time Mira and Mike arrived in the kitchen to offer their help, the work was done. Nothing was said about my near descent into hysterics, but I ate my tea sitting on their laps alternately, being fed by their hands. It was a comfort.

* * * * *

It was late on Sunday before Mira made it out the front door. The weekend had been one emotional high after another, and between us we'd created some wonderful scenes. I was sure we'd all have a favourite moment, a memory of the weekend that we would each take out, relive, and savour. I know I had mine.

As the front door finally closed behind Mira, I sighed. Mike pulled me into his arms and hugged me until my bones ground.

"Don't be sad, Cassie, she'll be back soon. In the meantime I've got something to say."

He sounded so serious that I looked up at him with some concern. To my surprise he looked embarrassed. "There's something I've never told you, but I should have mentioned it long ago. My dear sexy, clever slave, I love you so very much." He gently kissed the tip of my nose.

His tenderness filled my eyes with tears of happiness. "Oh, Mike." I hugged him fiercely. "I love you too."

"Really?"

"How could I not? I've never found anyone else who lets me be the person I truly am." I was filled with such enormous love and respect for him that I struggled to put my feelings into words. "You love me, and yet you let Mira come into our lives."

He squeezed my hands tightly between his own. "Darling, if you want us to stop playing with her, you only have to say."

"No, no, you misunderstood me. I love playing with her, I love watching you play with her. I'm so grateful that you allowed this to happen." I bent my head and kissed the hands that still clasped my own. "Aren't you afraid that Mira could come between us?"

"Sweetheart, how do you feel when you see me with Mira?"

"Excited, happy," I whispered.

"Do you feel jealous? Do you think I love you any the less?"

"No, oh no," I hastened to reassure him.

"It's the same for me too. Seeing you with Mira excites me." He smirked at me comically, and I couldn't help myself. I giggled.

"Darling slave, I love you. That's not going to change. Do you think that you'll ever want to live one-to-one with Mira?"

I shook my head. "No. I already know that's not enough for me."

"And I know that I need my main partner to be completely submissive to me. Mira is an amazing gift for both of us. We each need her, but without you or me, the relationship would be lopsided.

"You are so important to me. Without you, there's no point to anything. Cassie," he held my chin and ran his thumb over my lips. "No one knows the future. All I know for certain is that I want you in mine."

I heard the yearning in his voice and was powerless to resist it. "Dear Master, I will stay with you." I knelt and kissed his hand. "Mike, whatever you want, you know you only have to ask, and I will always try my best to fulfil your desires."

"In that case I think we should get on with the next phase of our lives. Stand up, Cassie, I'm about to do something that I'll never do again."

I gave his solemn face a startled glance and rose with a certain amount of trepidation. I stared at him in complete confusion as he recaptured my hands in his and sank to one knee in front of me. I blinked. His gesture was so unexpected.

"I'll never kneel to you again, so appreciate the moment." Mike grinned and then turned serious. "Cassandra Green, will you marry me?"

Time seemed to slow as his words sank in. In the end I couldn't bring myself to speak altogether coherently. "Yes, please, Master, I mean Mike."

He laughed as he got back to his feet and thrust one hand into his trouser pocket.

“Here, Cassie. I hope you like it.” He proffered a small velvet box, and I took it gingerly, only too aware of what had been in the last box I had opened.

I snapped open the lid and gasped. “Oh, Mike, it’s beautiful.” Nestled in the velvet was a diamond solitaire. He took the box back from my unresisting hands, extracted the ring, and slid it onto my finger. It fit perfectly.

Mike grinned. “You do realise that when we take our vows, I expect you to promise to ‘obey?’”

I giggled. “I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

THE END

Marie Soutien

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