



# THE RETREAT

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The Retreat

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**Warning:** This book contains sexually explicit content which is only suitable for mature readers. This story has been rated *Total-e-burning*.

# **THE RETREAT**

**Portia Da Costa**



## *Dedication*

With many thanks to Valerie, my wonderful critique partner.

## Chapter One

“Ooh!”

“Are you all right, Sarah?” he asked, his voice soft and powerful in her ear.

Was she all right?

She supposed she must be, but in the space of an instant she just couldn’t stop shaking.

Sarah’s heart fluttered and raced as she advanced into the spacious room. It was almost as if she’d just entered some kind of arena, before a huge crowd, with an ordeal ahead of her. Which was stupid, really, because this was the most luxurious and beautiful bedroom that she was ever likely to stay in. The Retreat was an exclusive country house hotel, a heritage listed building and five stars to boot, so it was about as far from a horrible ordeal as it was possible to get to stay here.

But it wasn’t the original beams, the open fireplace, or even the huge bed with its brass head and foot rails and traditional English chintz bed linen that had caught her breath, and made her pulse race...it was a simple, almost inconsequential thing that had just happened in passing that had made her gasp.

As they’d entered the room, Ben had tapped her oh so lightly on the bottom to encourage her forward.

It should have been nothing. It *was* nothing. Just a harmless, affectionate gesture from a man she really, really, really liked, and possibly more than liked. Something that by rights she should barely even have noticed.

But the tiny gesture, over so fleetingly, had almost pole-axed her. She was still trembling and she’d broken out into a sweat.

It was as if the world had just changed, and she’d changed with it, irrevocably.

“How do you like it then?” Ben’s hand settled on her waist as she stood looking around, not really seeing or appreciating the lovely room or the breath-catching view from the window, of the early evening sunset gilding the park outside. The porter was waiting just

behind them, and she fought for composure, hoping he couldn't tell she'd suddenly gone slightly mad, or work out why her face was suddenly bright pink and blushing furiously.

*Get a grip, woman!*

"It's gorgeous...I really like it. I love the chintz and the furniture and the view...it's all so...um...old English."

*I'm babbling*, she thought, trying to focus on the traditional furnishings and the gentle scent of cottage garden potpourri that filled the air.

She turned, hardly daring to look at him. Had he felt the change too? It had been so huge it couldn't just be restricted to her, surely?

Ben was studying her, as he so often did. His warm brown eyes were mild, yet intent and full of secrets. If he'd sensed the turmoil inside her, he wasn't giving any indication. But then, he was the sort of man who gave very little away at the best of times. He was so composed, so contained, always in control.

"I'm glad you like it. I hoped you would. This is one of my favourite places in all the world." Favouring her with a slight smile, he turned away to deal with the porter and their luggage.

*Don't you feel anything?* she demanded silently, watching and admiring and wanting him, as she always did.

Ben Chambers was perfect. Dark, beautiful, intelligent, successful. A boyfriend...no, more than that...a *lover* to die for. His thick brown hair was swept back from a broad, handsome brow, and his perfectly trimmed, somehow old-fashioned little goatee beard only emphasised the strong line of his jaw and his firm, passionate lips. And he had style too, distinct and quirky. She loved that he possessed this aura of an elegant yet bohemian Edwardian gentleman. He was always immaculately dressed and she very rarely seemed to see him in casuals. He was either dapper in a good suit, a waistcoat, pristine linen and a crisply pressed tie...or he was naked. There didn't seem to be an in between with him.

She watched his hands as he peeled off a banknote to tip the porter, smiling and cheerful with the man, almost as if they were old friends. Maybe they were? Ben's fingers were long, narrow and tapered, yet infinitely deft, like a magician's. She knew their capabilities and her sex warmed and fluttered just thinking about them.

He was fabulous in bed too. A little controlling, but that seemed to work a treat for her. She'd always liked men who took charge, and Ben seemed to do it so effortlessly, and more than most.

In which case, their relationship should have been as perfect as Ben himself was. Especially as he was wonderful out of bed as well as in. He was an interesting, humorous man, and kind too. Very kind. When she'd been ill at work one day, he'd taken her home, put her to bed in a completely platonic way, and taken care of her, even though she knew his own workload was immense. They'd spent an afternoon together, laughing at old movies that had turned out to be mutual favourites and drinking cup after cup of tea, and eating biscuits.

He'd made her well with his thoughtfulness and she knew he enjoyed her company. In many ways, she was more relaxed with him than with any man she'd ever been with, and shared more interests, more hopes and dreams...

So why had it seemed, in the past couple of weeks, that there was some giant piece of missing in the jigsaw of their relationship? She couldn't work it out...but still there was an absence, somehow, and no matter how she wracked her brain, she couldn't work out what it was.

At least she hadn't until a few moments ago. And now her mind was struggling to catch up with something that her body had already registered.

*No! Surely not!*

Her head whirled as she snatched at ideas and notions. Feeling vaguely dizzy, she walked unsteadily to the bed and sat down on the thick, down-stuffed duvet to recover.

By now, Ben had dealt smoothly with the porter, and judging by the sound of the man's enthusiastic response, he'd tipped him well. The man smiled discreetly, nodding to Sarah as he backed away and then left, closing the door behind him. Sarah nodded back, but could think only of that little tap on the bottom that Ben had given her, barely more than a touch, yet so exciting that she'd been forced to gasp out loud.

*Is that it? Is that what's missing? I...I don't even know if I'd like anything like that.*

But even if her head didn't, it was rapidly dawning on her that her body, and heart, did.

Smiling, Ben slipped off his long, dark coat and whirled it over a chintz-upholstered armchair with a flourish. Then he came towards her, lean and elegant in his dark waistcoat and tailored trousers, the sober formality of his white shirt and dark tie perversely sexy.

*My lover.*

Every time she thought of him that way, it sent a little silvery frisson along her nerves, right to her sex. And it seemed particularly appropriate to call him that, here in this quietly hedonistic hideaway in the country, where the word 'boyfriend' seemed inconsequential, trivial. The exclusivity – and cost – of a stay here at The Retreat seemed to suggest a leap to a new level of their relationship.

Oh how she hoped...oh how she hoped that were true.

Especially when Ben came towards her, took her in his arms, and kissed her.

His mouth was as teasing and tender as usual, but in the heart of the kiss there was that special quality.

His power.

Her eyes flew open as his tongue pushed between her lips, and she saw a bright, gleaming fire in his expression. A glitter, a fervour she'd never seen before.

He'd felt it too. He had! He had!

That little tap on the rump was no accident...not at all. It was all part of his carefully crafted plan.

Her body was all a-riot. Her pussy clenched and fluttered spontaneously, excited in a way she'd never experienced before. She'd never been this hot, this fast. The pat on the bottom had been a catalyst, a swift, psychic jolt that had inexplicably changed things. Winding her arms around Ben's strong back, she pressed forward against him, moving wantonly.

When he responded, pressing back, and laying her down on the bed, so he could move half over her, she discovered he was hard.

She could almost feel every cell in her body squeal, *oh goody!* Might they have sex straight away? It was still barely more than late afternoon, and they'd just driven down here from London, but were they going to go to bed immediately?

But after a few moments more of deep kissing, and the mastery of his tongue, Ben put her from him. Then he sat up, adjusting the knot of his dark tie back to perfection.

"I...um..." she stuttered, not quite able to ask if they were going to get undressed.

His eyes were still shining, alight with an odd quality of amusement, and something almost arch that she'd never seen before. If she'd thought him controlling before, it was nothing compared to the dominion he seemed to hold over her now.

*He knows everything and I know nothing.*

He didn't speak for a moment, but the impact of that thought gave her just as much a jolt as the pat on her bottom had. A sensation of weakening and floating, and a lightness in her head that was both confusing and as intoxicating as a hefty belt of brandy. Her sex rippled and pulsated like a beating heart.

"I think you should freshen up after our journey, Sarah." His voice was even, his gaze unwavering. "I think I'll go for a walk in the grounds...to give you some time to yourself. I'll be back in half an hour or so."

Sarah's stomach dropped inside her and the sense of loss was a different kind of blow. But then she saw the glint in his eyes increase, and for just a second, he touched his tongue to the centre of his lower lip.

*It's a game. He's playing a game with me.*

She didn't know quite what it was yet, but she was ready to play. Hell yes!

"Of course...what a good idea. That's very thoughtful of you, Ben."

Lifting her head, she held his gaze, taking it in, reaching for comprehension. A message seemed to pass between them, and the force of it made her lower her eyes again.

Because, suddenly, she wanted to.

Suddenly, she was in awe, total awe of this man.

"Why not have a drink while I'm gone?" he suggested, crossing to the antique sideboard. A tray of bottles and fine-cut glasses stood there. Nothing so crass as a mini-bar at The Retreat, although there was what appeared to be a small refrigerator set into the cabinet. From it, Ben took a half bottle of champagne, and without asking her, he deftly uncorked it and poured some into a crystal flute for her.

A moment later, he put it into her hand like a magic potion, an obscure erotic sacrament. He watched closely as she raised it to her lips, as if directing her every action, her every thought, even.

The wonderful wine was delicious, the finest she'd ever tasted. But its effervescence was nothing to the inner commotion she felt on looking into Ben's brown eyes.

She couldn't even speak to thank him, or bid farewell when he turned and went to the door. With his hand on the handle, he looked back at her, and winked at her so swiftly that she wasn't sure whether she'd imagined it.

She was still wondering when the door closed behind him, and he was gone, heading out for his constitutional.

Shaking again, she sat down, gulping at the vintage champagne as if it were pop.

She felt as if he'd confined her, and the crazy thing was, she liked it. She really did. There was a strange sense of being his captive, in a cell of some kind, even though the room was exquisite and had every luxury she could wish for.

The Retreat was a rambling old country house, set in perfectly manicured grounds that landscaped down to a slowly rambling river. The essence of English aristocratic living, distilled for the visitor of just a few days. Sarah had never heard of the place until Ben had presented her with the *fait accompli* of a long weekend there for two. And even when she'd done an internet search, eager to see where they were going, nothing had come up. It was as if it was a secret hideaway, special and rare, just for the *cognoscenti*. There'd been an odd note in Ben's voice when he'd spoken of it. Sort of knowing and mysterious, as if implying wonders.

There was more wine in the bottle, and she topped up her glass before taking a wander around the room.

She'd barely noticed the art on the wall when they'd entered, but now, on a closer look, she discovered it was eye-poppingly erotic. In eighteenth century engravings, lords and ladies frolicked and debauched in explicit combinations that left nothing to the imagination. And when Sarah saw a blushing and buxom wench, across the knee of nobleman in a powdered wig, she wished she had another bottle of champagne to cool and settle her. It was a spanking, and the delicate cross-hatching across the woman's bottom showed she'd taken plenty of blows already.

*Oh God...oh God...*

Sarah shot to the window. It was open to the garden-scented air and she drew in a lungful to calm herself. Ben was nowhere in sight, but she still seemed to see him, striking out along one of the paths with his long, determined stride.

Turning from the window, her eyes alit on a wickerwork box sitting on the low ottoman at the end of the bed. It looked like an old-fashioned picnic basket with leather fastenings and shiny brass fittings. Curious, she sat down beside it and opened it up.

Her jaw dropped. She felt hot again. Her throat felt dry and yet everywhere else seemed to feel fluid and sexy.

In keeping with the lewd artworks on the wall, and the general atmosphere of sophisticated decadence, the box was filled with a selection of explicitly erotic toys.

Sarah wasn't a prude, and she immediately recognised vibrators and dildos and what looked like nipple clamps, all sealed in cellophane, 'for the hygiene and convenience of our guests' it said on a hand-written note resting on top of the wicked cornucopia. She examined various items for a few minutes, without unwrapping them, not sure whether she wanted Ben to know she'd been perusing them or not.

But just when she'd decided to take the plunge and take the wrappings off a vibrator, the chiming of a fine ormolu clock on the fireplace told her it was time she was in the bathroom, and getting ready. Ben would be back soon, and she wanted to be prepared...although for what, now, she wasn't quite sure.

The bathroom was decorated with the same old world opulence, and there were more risqué prints upon the walls. The overpowering sense of decadence, and sexual naughtiness made her tremble. She supposed it was something of a cliché to take a scented bath while waiting for her lover, but what was wrong with clichés when they were so delicious and the awaited lover as special as Ben Chambers.

Lolling in the silky water, she still couldn't really believe he'd picked her out, even though they got on so well. He was relatively new to the company, some kind of elite trouble-shooter brought in to turn around the division she worked in, and the moment she'd set eyes in him she'd recognised his quiet but mysterious authority. And she'd wanted him.

And pretty soon she'd got him.

Within days they'd been dating, and in bed shortly after. Yes, once again, she admitted that it *should* have been a perfect dream, but there was still, sometimes that faint niggles of something crucial missing.

But she'd not really know what, until that pat on the bottom.

Sipping the last of her champagne, she closed her eyes, emptied her brain and let the scent, the heat and the alcohol take over.

Hazy visions formed in her mind. Strange fantasies that she'd often sunk into on the edge of sleep, that had haunted her since the days of her young womanhood.

Pictures of herself, naked. Sometimes kneeling down. Sometimes tied up. Sometimes, oh God, being punished. By a man.

She began to pant, imagining herself exposed, spread out, bared. Offered...for something.

For punishment.

By Ben.

## Chapter Two

She imagined his hands, so long and elegant. So strong.

She knew he could make her whimper with pleasure...but could he also make her weep and moan with pain?

Would he put her across his lap and spank her? Would he put her in bondage? There'd been a pair of handcuffs amongst the sexual paraphernalia in the box.

Before she realised what was happening, she *did* moan. And putting aside her delicate glass, she reached down into the silky water to touch her sex.

She was ready. Ready for Ben.

But to do what?

These were just fantasies. Wild, but kinky. Nothing real...

Even so, she decided to masturbate. But just as she was about to, she heard the outer door to the bedroom open, then close.

Oh God, he's back...and I'm still in here dreaming and just about to play with myself!

She didn't call out, just in case it wasn't him, but a maid, come to turn down the bed. She did rise from the bath, though, and quickly go about her preparations. The complimentary toiletries were exclusive and high-end, so just before she was done in the bathroom she dowsed her pulse points in a beautiful perfume she'd never normally be able to afford, then bundled herself into a fluffy, towelling bathrobe.

Her clothes were outside. Where Ben was.

Her heart thud-a-thudding, she opened the bathroom door.

Ben was lying on the bed, fully clothed, and reading a magazine. He had a glass in his hand, containing an inch of amber fluid that she guessed was whisky, and as she entered, he put it to his lips and took a leisurely sip. His eyes were on her though, staring over the rim at her intently as he swallowed.

He looked like a young god idly perusing his lowly subject.

"I thought we'd take a late dinner," he said casually, then took another sip of his drink, "Unless you're hungry now?"

*Only for you. Only for you.*

"I...er...I'm fine. Thanks."

The answer sounded woefully incomplete, as if there should have been more.

It was astonishing how easy it would have been to add the word "master".

"Good!" he said with a strangely satisfied smile, then he finished his whisky, set the glass aside, and sprang lightly to his feet. "I think I'll freshen up. I won't be a moment."

As he walked towards the bathroom, he paused and looked back pointedly at the magazine on the bed.

*He wants me to read it.*

Then, with another small, knowing smile, he disappeared, closing the door behind him with a decisive snick.

For a moment, Sarah was frozen in place. Why was she afraid of a magazine? What was wrong with her?

But the shiny pages seemed to reach out and taunt her from across the room. Still not looking at it, she grabbed Ben's glass, sloshed a little more whisky into it, and gulped it down, making herself cough. Panicking, she refilled it with water and sipped a bit of that, slowly. She didn't want to get tipsy mixing spirits with the champagne already in her.

When she sat down, and started to flick the pages, she discovered that the magazine was exactly what she'd feared – hoped? – it might be.

It was about bondage.

And erotic corporal punishment.

A high quality, beautifully produced publication, but a spanking magazine nevertheless.

As she perused an image of an exotic dark-haired woman in a black corset being spanked across a stern looking man's knee, the last piece of the jigsaw of her and Ben dropped neatly into place, and the tap on her rump made crystal clear sense.

*This is it. Exactly it. This is what he really likes.*

The sound of the bathroom door opening made her jump physically up into the air and sent the magazine slithering to the floor. Ben walked swiftly across, picked it up, and studied the same image that Sarah had been looking at for a moment. He'd removed his tie, she noticed, and unbuttoned his waistcoat and rolled up the sleeves of his shirt.

Her heart did a flip as he closed the magazine, set it on the bedside table, and sat down beside her.

"I guess you know what I want now, don't you?" His brown eyes were luminous, like the whisky with a brilliant light shining through it.

Sarah's tongue clove to the roof of her mouth, but after a moment, she managed to gasp, "Yes!"

Ben's eyes were unwavering upon her, searching, searching.

"It's your choice, Sarah...I don't want us to do anything you don't like. We can simply have a delightful weekend here...relax, walk, enjoy good food and wine—" he paused for a second, "—make love...Nothing more than that."

She found her voice again. "But *this*..." she gestured to the magazine. "This is what you want, isn't it?"

His shoulders lifted in the slightest of shrugs. "It is...it is..."

The air in the room seemed heavy and difficult to draw in. But Sarah pulled in a lungful of it, straightened her spine, looked at him as bravely as she could.

"Then I want it too."

"Are you sure? It isn't a frivolous game to me...I take this quite seriously. You need to know that before we start."

Sarah's heart leapt, galloped. But part of her was more sure of herself than ever before in her life.

"It's serious to me too. I want it. Now."

Again. A long look.

"Very well, Sarah." Relaxed, he steepled his long elegant fingers in his lap, and cocked his head on one side, his smooth brown hair gleaming in the lamp light. "Stand up, please, and take off your robe. Then place your hands on your head, and turn slowly, showing yourself to me."

Obedying him, Sarah felt as if she were floating, insubstantial, like a feather. As she shucked off the soft robe, she felt more naked than she ever previously had with him. More exposed than the times when he'd crouched between her thighs, licking her sex.

She was astonished that the warm air on her skin felt like a caress and the uncovered state of her body a slow, lascivious exploration. Her nipples had puckered to a state of hardness so intense it was painful, and to her embarrassment, as she moved, slowly turning, a sticky trickle of arousal welled from her pussy and flowed down the inside of her thigh.

Unbelievably, Ben's dark brows lifted as she completed her circle, and he was watching the oozing progress of the sexual fluid down her leg.

"You're eager, aren't you?" he observed softly, "You're wanton and wilful...easy to rouse."

She opened her mouth to admit it and he made swift, little chopping motion. "No, you mustn't speak. You must be still and quiet now. Obedient. Without ego."

Before she could react in any way, he cupped her breast, his fingers firm, authoritative. He gave her a swift, assessing squeeze, first one, then the other, as if he were judging the flesh of a fine horse or other prized animal.

A second later, his hand went between her legs and gripped her just as possessively.

A gasp escaped her lips, and Ben gave her a tiny warning nod, his lids lowering slightly as he tightened his hold on her sex. Lifting his hand upwards, he made her rise on her toes. Not to avoid the delicious pressure, but to try and ameliorate her uncontrollable reaction to it.

In the space of a few moments, she was almost ready to come. And he hadn't even begun what he intended to do to her.

But he was gently merciless. Beyond her conscious control, her body began to gather itself, and as if sensing her imminent crisis, he softly murmured, "Tut-tut. Pain first...then pleasure."

Sarah's insides fluttered. Not just her sex, but in her heart, her chest. She felt as if she was on a precipice above some great, secret valley. Ready to fling herself forward.

When Ben released her sex, it was as much of a shock as if he'd touched her clit, or even begun the spanking. The lack of his fingers against her was like a gouging void that she'd do anything to fill.

"Lie across the bed," he said quietly, "Face down, with your hands stretched out in front of you...You may look in my direction, or away...that's your choice."

Almost unable to move properly from excitement, she obeyed him. Her limbs seemed to be made of rubber and uncontrollable, but she managed to assume the pose he'd specified. She was afraid to look at him, so turned her face away, even though in her mind she could still see him perfectly.

"Good. That's very good. You're doing well."

*Am I? I don't think so...I'm all over the place.*

She felt the mattress dip and imagined Ben inclining towards her, his weight on one hand, while with the other he reached out towards her exposed bottom.

Expecting a spank, and braced for it, she gasped when the first touch was light and exploratory.

*It won't be so bad. It's my first time. I bet he barely does anything at all.*

And indeed, the second touch was nothing at all. Just a tap on her left buttock, barely more than the light touch that had started all this, close to an hour ago, yet in another lifetime.

Then...more taps. A little harder. Definitely making an impact, but still fine.

*I'm okay. I can take this. It's all right.*

In fact, it was more than all right. Her sex was glowing, becoming soft and pouched and wetter than ever. The slight impact of the little smacks was gently knocking her clit where she was pressed against the mattress.

"Oh!"

How had that happened? One minute, soft taps, and then, suddenly, with no discernable increase in effort, the taps weren't taps any more but full-blown spanks. And they were hard. They hurt. They really hurt.

"Oh!" she cried again, when Ben's hand seemed to catch a particularly tender spot on the under-hang of her cheek. Her whole bottom was glowing now, drenched in heat. It was uncomfortable, unsettling, quite painful, and yet the shivering warmth in her flesh was sinking down into her sex and firing it up in a way she'd never yet experienced. Her whole pussy seemed to be fizzing like the champagne had done. Effervescing with a delicious yet forbidden pleasure.

*How? Oh, how is this happening? He's hurting me, yet...yet... Oh God, I want him to hurt me more!*

To her astonishment, Sarah realised she was lifting her bottom in syncopation with the slaps, raising the target up to improve Ben's aim, and to invite and seduce more blows. Her clit was swollen, simmering on the edge of orgasm, and every time he hit her, he pushed her ever closer to the longed-for implosion of pleasure.

She cried out like a baby when he stopped, and she turned her face, to implore him with her eyes. To beg him to grant her more pain, more pleasure...oh, dear Lord, she hardly knew the difference.

Ben's eyes were beautiful, wise, and kind. Despite the fact that he was denying her what she wanted. But he seemed to understand, as he leant forward to press a kiss to her tearful cheek and whisper in her ear.

"You're doing beautifully, Sarah my love...Better than I could ever have wished. But you must wait a little for your prize. The waiting will make it all the more sweeter."

Even though she was sobbing with need, with frustration, and from the now extreme soreness in her bottom-flesh, she believed him. She believed him utterly.

He was Ben. He knew all. He was her sweet master.

Sliding a hand beneath her, he grasped her nipple between his finger and thumb, and delicately tweaked it while with his other hand, he ran the tips of his fingers over her reddened skin, making her hiss through her teeth.

*Oh, you're a devil...and you're an angel... Oh God, I love you.*

And it was true. He was inflicting torments on her, plying her flesh for his entertainment, his arousal...and yet, no man until now had ever even got near to sensing that this was what she wanted and what she needed to complete her.

She'd had no idea herself. Only faint intimations that she'd dismissed as dirty fantasies that just 'weren't right'.

It had taken quiet, mysterious Ben Chambers to look right into her hidden psyche and see the real Sarah.

The little pinches to her nipple were beautifully orchestrated, timed exactly to counterpoint the slow drag of his nails over her simmering bottom.

Sarah couldn't keep still, though she knew he wanted her to. But she sensed his patience, and his pleasure in her progress, and some cool sane part of her vowed she would do better next time, to make him proud of her.

As it was now though, she was right on the brink of madness...and orgasm.

Her heart whirling, and her bottom and her clit on fire, she listened almost from a distance to the sound of her own mewling and moaning. Observed from somewhere near the elegantly moulded ceiling, her own body writhing and squirming around on the beautiful chintz quilt as Ben dealt with her.

"Are you ready now, my dearest?"

His voice was like milk and honey in her ear. Sweet and calm, yet under-shot with a silvery thread of excitement that made her heart sing.

She nodded, against the quilt, gazing up into his brown eyes as he drew back and looked down on her.

“It will hurt...quite a bit...but there’ll be pleasure too. Great pleasure...I promise you.”

And with that, he slid his hand under her belly, flat against it, palm upwards, and found her clit with his long flexible forefinger.

A second later, he pressed, and pressed hard, and at the same time loosed the hardest slap ever against her bare and tenderised buttocks.

“Agh!”

Sarah’s cry was high and clear and ringing as a bell.

Just like the orgasm that accompanied it.

So perfect, so pure, so fiery, stirred to a shining peak of intensity by the inferno in her bottom.

Her legs kicked wildly, she shook her head, and she ground herself down hard onto the pad of his fingertip. Her orgasm flared again, rising to another level that filled her mind with white light and her body with utter joy.

Seconds, or perhaps hours, or even millennia later, she collapsed, as limp as a kitten, aware of Ben’s hands still upon her—between her legs and on her reddened bottom—but very little else. Yet within moments, her awareness came flooding back, bringing with it the soft, murmuring sound of her lover’s voice.

He praised her. He soothed her. He whispered the most enchanting nothings. And finally said, “I’d like to make love to you now...in fact I think I *need* to.”

Blinking, she rolled a little to one side, flinching at the tingling in her bottom, and looked up into his eyes. Which were astonishing.

Almost black with desire and scorching emotion.

He was proud of her. He did admire her. But their intensity said he felt much, much more. It was frightening, but she wanted to sing and kiss him senseless all the same.

Instead she said, “Yes! Oh yes! Please do!” although the honeyed lethargy in her body meant she could barely move.

Ben smiled, obviously aware of the state her spanking had left her in. He leant over, kissed her almost chastely on the brow, then reached into his waistcoat pocket and pulled out a foil wrapped condom.

Oh, how she would have loved to help him put it on himself, but she seemed to have not one calorie of energy left in her body. She only watched as he unfastened his beautifully tailored trousers and reached into his linen and drew out his penis.

*Oh my! Oh my!*

He was marvellous. He seemed bigger. He was ferociously erect. She'd never seen a more delicious, appealing sight. With a slightly desperate efficiency, he rolled on the contraceptive, then took Sarah by her shoulders and pressed her flat onto her back.

She was dimly aware of her abused bottom protesting, but as every other part of her was cheering and delirious with hunger for him, she ignored it.

And sighed with delight when, with no further ado, and because there was no mistaking the fact she was completely ready for him, he moved over her and pushed his glorious cock inside her.

It was like the first time with him, over again, but so completely different they might as well have been performing a different intimate act altogether. Her senses were magnified to the n'th degree, her perception of his body and the way it moved, infinitely more vivid.

The cock that thrust inside her was the same one as ever, but it touched her more sweetly, more poignantly, more powerfully. Her head felt as if it were filled with Ben's delicious cologne, and the slight but sharp odour of his fresh, sexual sweat. She couldn't have said which was the most intoxicating, but they both made her hunger and her rapture swirl and spiral.

His mouth moved over her face, her neck, her hair, the kisses as delicate and reverent as the thunder of his long, hard, fucking strokes was wild and animal. He was raw, yet sophisticated. A mysterious conundrum that she seemed to have known, in her bones, from the dawn of time.

Holding him, grabbing at his back and buttocks as she soared yet again towards climax, she bent her knees, tilted her hips, drawing him in deeper and deeper. Every movement was unconscious, purely instinctive, yet right. As he plunged in, Ben groaned loudly, his breath a zephyr against her throat. He grabbed her to him, his fingers blindly cruel against the soreness of her buttocks as he lifted her, yet the very pain-spikes only increased the gathering pleasure.

At last, Sarah could take no more. With a great cry, she surrendered to the dazzling sweetness, the searing orgasm. Her limbs flailed, her core pulsed, her heart thudded,

contracted, turned over, full of love. From a great distance she heard Ben's own shout of completion, and felt the thump, thump, thump of his last frenzied strokes.

*This was what I was waiting for...the thing that was missing...*

Sweet and clear the thought formed in her mind, some time later, as she lay in a haze beneath the still-clothed and still heavily breathing body of the man she knew she loved.

Eventually, Ben lifted himself clear of her and looked down into her eyes. His were luminous, shining, full of happiness, a mirror, she suspected of her own.

Neither of them spoke. Ben disposed of the condom and zipped himself up with quiet dignity, then draped a soft throw across Sarah's naked body. Then he sat a moment beside her, just gazing at her fondly for a while. He held her hand, lifted it to his lips, and slowly kissed it.

"We should get ready for dinner," he said presently, his finely modelled lips curving into a smile, "I wonder...would you like to bathe again? I don't know about you, but I've worked up quite a sweat, making love."

Sarah laughed. "Oh yes... Definitely... I need a shower...a bath...something."

"I'll run it for you. Rest a while." Dropping a kiss on her forehead, he rose and left for the bathroom.

The room seemed empty without him, and few moments later when he returned, her heart warmed again.

## Chapter Three

They prepared for dinner like an old married couple, comfortably sharing the space of the room, walking to and fro, selecting clothes, bathing and dressing.

Ben's eyes flared with heat at the sight of the dress Sarah had chosen. The Retreat was formal, and she'd relished the chance to buy a couple of new gala evening dresses. The long, slim black velvet shift clung subtly to her body, skimming over her curves, caressing her breasts and particularly her bottom. As she admired her reflection, and saw, in the glass, Ben doing the same, she wondered if the choice of dress was prescient. Displaying the shape of her buttocks to advantage had suddenly acquired a deep significance.

She wasn't sore any more, just sensitised. Aware.

"You look very beautiful..." Ben's voice was low, intense. His eyes flickered from her face, to her breasts, and to her bottom. Where they lingered.

You don't look so bad yourself, she wanted to say. In fact, in her eyes, he looked beautiful too.

His evening jacket was the epitome of elegance, long, dark and vintage. At his throat, he wore an Edwardian cravat and a high collar. He looked dramatic, mysterious, male...heartbreakingly wonderful.

"I have something for you." He advanced, reaching into his pocket and pulling out a small leather covered box.

Jewellery. She hadn't expected jewellery. Her heart fluttered.

Ben flipped open the box and Sarah gasped.

It was a pendant, simple but breathtaking. A softly gleaming cultured pearl on a delicate gold chain. Understated, rare, hypnotic—just like the man who offered it to her.

"I-I wasn't expecting a gift...this weekend is so perfect as it is...I don't know what to say..."

The exquisite silky jewel almost seemed to throb on its bed of blue velvet. She dared not reach out for it. She wasn't sure if she deserved it.

"You don't have to say anything. You just have to wear it," Ben said quietly, taking the pearl from its box and walking around behind her. Quickly, and in the deft, efficient way he

did everything, he fastened it around her throat, then returned to face her again, reaching out to position the pendant to his exact liking, nestled in the deep V of her neckline, between her breasts. "This is the least I could give you...the very least. This is nothing compared to the gift you gave me a little while ago." He reached out again, adjusting the set of the gem, his neatly manicured nails brushing the bare skin of one breast.

"What gift?"

What was he talking about? What had she given him?

As if he'd heard her thought, he said, "Perfect submission, my beloved. The gift of your body, to do with as I wanted...Allowing me to spank you and hurt you. That's something very precious that many women won't agree to."

*But I enjoyed it! I really did!* she wanted to say. The words wouldn't come out though, she was so dumbstruck by the pearl, the word "beloved" and by him.

Instead she just smiled and murmured, "thank you," and reached over to give him a kiss on the cheek, her lips brushing the edge of his immaculately barbered beard. This he seemed to understand and accept, and he gave her a strange little smile, then said, "Let's go down to dinner, eh?"

Descending the hotel's grand staircase, and entering the dining room, Sarah felt like a princess. Both in her own right, and as the companion of the handsome and distinguished man at her side. Ben had all the presence and confidence of a crown prince, and The Retreat had somehow become his principality.

Women stared at him in blatant, slack-jawed hunger, and Sarah couldn't blame them. His charisma outshone that of every other man in the room.

And it wasn't just Ben.

She felt transformed herself. From a moderately pretty young woman into a gorgeous goddess of sex and decadence. The faint glow in her bottom had found a way to transmute itself into a more all-pervading radiance. She felt truly beautiful, and completely and irresistibly desirable, for the first time in her life. And the men were goggling at her just as avidly and with just as much famished covetousness as the women were staring at Ben.

*You can look, but you'll never get to touch,* she told them, her head held high and her hips swaying as she walked. *Only he gets to touch. Only he can stroke my breasts or fondle my pussy...or lay his hands on the curves of my bottom.*

They were shown to a prime table by the window, looking out onto The Retreat's handsome park, and the sky which was full of drama, streaked with gold and midnight blue. The setting, the atmosphere, the man, could not have been more romantic.

Or more sensual.

The food they were served was delightful, but it was Ben that Sarah truly hungered for. She watched his long, clever hands as he ate, and imagined them on her. Wreaking havoc with both spans of pain and strokes of sensual bliss. He was so astonishing and so different to any of the other men that she'd ever known that she wanted to fall down on her knees, crawl between his, and give him oral pleasure, right here in the dining room.

He was a god to her. He was worth it. She loved him.

They enjoyed their dinner, they chatted and they laughed. In fact, even though she was so besotted with her companion that she could barely see straight, it suddenly dawned on her that even though they weren't fucking or playing spanking games, they were still having the best possible time.

Ben was funny. He was knowledgeable on many topics, but modest in the way he spoke of them. He listened too, drawing words and experiences out of her, his dark eyes intent with an interest that was shinningly genuine.

*He's the one.*

The words were simple but true. He was the man she'd been waiting for, and all of a sudden, she was desperate to give him all the gifts he deserved. In her mind's eye she saw herself draped over the table between them, across its pristine napery, while he lifted the skirt of her black dress and exposed her bottom. Because the gown fit closely, and plunged too low to permit a bra, she'd decided to give knickers a miss too. He'd be able to touch her immediately, and spank her. Hard. She had a feeling he might enjoy putting on quite a performance for the sexually sophisticated patrons of The Retreat.

Snapping back to reality, she found Ben's brown eyes upon her, and full of fire. Could he read her mind? It seemed increasingly that he could. He was looking at her as if he was fully ready to do exactly the things she'd been imagining.

So, it was no surprise when he softly asked, "Are you wearing panties, Sarah?"

"N-no...no, I'm not."

His mouth curved into a joyous smile, and he rolled his eyes.

"Oh, you've done it now...I won't be able to stop thinking about what's under your beautiful dress." He tapped the table lightly with his fingertips, and then reached for his wine glass and took a minute sip. "And imagining your pussy and your sumptuous bottom bare beneath the velvet. Oh, God, how I'd love to spank you again now!"

For a man so controlled, he was almost incendiary. His eyes flashed and there was a touch of hot pink high on his cheekbones. Normally almost preternaturally still, he shifted slightly in his seat and Sarah realised he was adjusting his position to ease his erection. It was a good job his stylish Edwardian coat was fairly long.

"I'd love to tease and taunt you until you were half out of your mind...pleasure...pain...pain...pleasure." He reached out and took her hand. "Did you see that box of sex toys back in our room?" She nodded, her entire body shaking. "I wish I had them here now...I'd like to peel down the front of your dress and play with your nipples, then adorn them with little silver clamps..." Beneath the velvet, the little crests he spoke of hardened agonisingly. "And between your legs...oh, between your legs...I'd like to fill you up...plug your pussy and your bottom with dildos, spank you really, really hard, then bring you off mercilessly with a vibrator."

*I'm going to faint. I'm going to faint.*

He was outrageous, and what he described was beyond her experience, way beyond it. But dear God, she wanted it, suddenly, every bit of it.

She wanted to be *his* toy, flesh to be played with and tested, for his pleasure.

"Does my talk excite you...or horrify you?"

His eyes were intent, and very serious for a moment, and she found it difficult to answer their challenge. She was excited, very much so, but also quite scared and nervous, astonished by her own reaction as much as anything.

"I'm excited...I think...it's all so new to me."

It'd come out, without conscious thought, the truth.

His fingers smoothed over the back of her hand, and he looked at her more quizzically, his head tilted. The glittering light in the dining room made his hair shine like mahogany.

"Would you like to learn more? Do you dare to?"

She could say "no", she knew that. She could play safe, and she knew he'd be kind and courteous and show no disappointment. He was that kind of man.

But inside she was a seething volcano of desire and need and confusion, and she could only be settled by knowledge, and experience, and the touch of this wonderful lover.

“Yes! Yes, I do!”

Ben glanced over the table, and the remains of their meal and the wine they’d barely drunk.

“Are you still hungry?”

“Not for any of this.” She inclined her head, matching his look, then reached beneath the table, plucked the napkin from her lap and then dropped it on her side plate.

“Good girl!” Ben’s smile was beatific as he helped her from her seat and led her away across the dining room. All eyes were on them again, as if the assembled diners, anticipating pleasures of their own, were fully aware of what was ahead of her.

They went up in the small, slightly antiquated lift this time, and the moment the doors closed on them, Ben was upon her. He backed her tightly up against the mirrored wall of the cab and began to kiss her, hard, his tongue pushing into her mouth, while his hands plucked at her skirt, raising it up. Totally intoxicated, Sarah wondered vaguely whether there was a CCTV camera, but she was beyond really caring. Especially when Ben’s hand went unerringly between her legs, and he began to stroke her clitoris in time to the thrusts of his tongue.

By the time they reached the second floor, she was already teetering on the edge of orgasm, and he waited until the last micro-second before the doors slid open to let her skirt drop and stop kissing her senseless. As it was, a couple waiting for the lift gave them a long, knowing look as Ben led her out onto the landing, murmuring, “Good evening.” And it was hardly surprising, she realised, knowing she must appear all flustered and dishevelled and that her cheeks were no doubt pink with confused desire.

She wasn’t sure how she got to the room without stumbling, except that she knew that if she had have faltered, Ben would probably have swept her up into his arms and carried her. His lean strength made him more than capable of doing so.

Eventually though, they were behind closed doors. Alone.

With the box of sex toys and Ben’s imagination.

Not to mention hers...

Immediately, he kissed her again, even harder if that were possible. And all the time his hands roamed her body, exploring and squeezing through the velvet of her dress. With his

tongue subduing hers, he eased the neckline of her dress down and bared one breast, then vigorously kneaded the soft orb while he conquered her mouth.

Sarah moaned and whimpered in her throat. She was beyond all previous limits of arousal and excitement. Scared of her own rampaging hunger and of the delicious erotic torments that lay ahead. Between her legs her pussy was beating like a heart.

"You're sublime," Ben proclaimed, abandoning her lips and tracking his mouth down over her face, her neck, her shoulder and down to her exposed breast. Then he sucked intensely on her nipple, flicking it with his tongue at the same time, and the shock and sensation of it almost made her come.

She let out a sharp cry when just as suddenly as he'd besieged her breast, he let her go again and took a step away from her, creating distance.

Slipping his hands into his pockets, he softly commanded, "Take off your dress."

Trembling like a willow, she made to step out of her high heels, but he stopped her. "Oh no, keep the shoes on...I think you'll look delicious in high heels and your pendant and nothing else."

Unzipping the frock, Sarah peeled it off and draped it over a chair, acutely conscious of the heightened state of her nakedness. Her nipples were hard as stones and dark, oh so dark, and her upper thighs were already shiny with the flow of her juices. She could feel her sweat too, gathering in the creases below her buttocks and in her armpits.

When Ben issued no further commands she just stood there. Nude. Shaking. Aroused. Waiting. He walked around her, in a circle, perusing her all.

"Exquisite..." he said, his voice barely more than a whisper, then, when he was behind her, he drew something that jingled out of the pocket of his coat. A second later, he reached for one of her hands, then the other, and like a magician, shackled them together in the pair of handcuffs she'd seen earlier in the box.

A jolt of pure, clear, terrified excitement pelted through Sarah's body, bouncing and rebounding off her every erogenous zone. He could do anything to her now, absolutely anything, and the idea of that made her arousal thicken and seep even more.

But then, while she was still reeling, he pulled a second item from his pocket.

And the impression of an illusionist was compounded even further when a black silk scarf appeared to unravel and unravel and unravel as if it were part of a trick. He held it by

two corners as if she were the audience and he was showing it to her, then rolled it up and secured it around her head, covering her eyes.

In total blackness she moaned, and not solely from desire. The reality of this game was so much more intense than any fantasy of it.

Again he circled around her, but this time she could only tell where he was from the faint sound of his steps on the thick carpet. What was he looking at? What was he planning? What was he going to do to her? She thought of some of the items she'd seen in the wickerwork toy box and her head went light.

And then she felt his breath on the back of her neck.

Oh God, she'd lost track of him, and somehow not even sensed he was so close. How could that be, when everything about him obsessed her?

His fingertips settled on her flank as his lips touched the side of her throat. His hand brushed the side of hers where it was caught at the small of her back, then cruised on down to cup her buttock and squeeze it, assessing its weight much as he'd assessed her breast a minute or two ago.

He held her lightly, just under her chin, rubbing his bearded face in her hair while the tips of his fingers explored the rounds of her bottom, then slipped into the soft cleft between them.

He tickled and probed, toying with the sensitive rosette of her anus again and again. Sarah felt as if she was going to faint with lust, astonished lust, because she'd never really enjoyed this kind of play before. With a lesser man she'd be troubled by it, but with Ben, she embraced it and relished it, pushing her bottom towards the source of the stimulation.

"Do you like that?"

Already blushing, Sarah felt hot blood well in her face again. To admit that...that she liked it, oh, it was so embarrassing, even with him, the man she had really come to believe she could tell anything.

"Do you like it?" he persisted, not crossly but in infinitely teasing tones. He was so in tune with her, he clearly knew what such an admission would cost her, especially when he rubbed more firmly, pushing wickedly against the little entrance.

"Yes..."

"Tell me then...say the words..."

Sarah whimpered in the darkness as he plagued her, flicking and teasing. He was the devil, yet at the same time a prince of love.

"I l-like it when you touch my bottom and stroke me there..."

"There?"

"Oh Ben, I can't!"

He laughed, highly amused, but somehow also kind.

"Very well, my love...we'll take that as read, shall we?" He paused, his fingertip resting right on the aperture. "But I think we should do something about that, before I spank you, don't you?"

Do what? Do what? Her mind ranged over his threats, his promises at the dining table and she mewled with fear and longing. Ben seemed to take *that* as read because before she could form a coherent observation on the matter, he gently manhandled her until she was face down on the coverlet, her bound hands resting at the small of her back. A few moments later, after some further rustling in the fearfully stocked toy box, he returned to where she lay and sat down beside her, placing the flat of his hand lightly on her thigh.

"Now this may feel a little strange to you, my darling, but you mustn't panic. Just stay calm, and relax, and you'll enjoy it more than you can possibly imagine."

Sarah could imagine quite a lot, and she wasn't completely convinced that what she was more or less certain lay ahead *was* actually enjoyable.

*And how do you know? Have you tried it yourself?*

The image flashed immediately into her mind, and she moaned aloud again at the way it made her sex flutter.

"Now...now... Don't fuss," instructed Ben, his voice almost merry somehow.

*And well he might be amused,* thought Sarah a moment later, suppressing her groans as he began to slather the groove of her bottom with something cool and wet and very silky. A lubricant gel of some kind that he administered abundantly to her anal furrow.

Then it began, the slow, infernal pressure upon her fundament as he pushed what she could only assume was one of the dildos or sex-plugs inside her.

It felt huge. Unforgiving. Unyielding. Her body resisted it, and Ben paused to apply more lubricant. Much more lubricant.

She keened and groaned, but he soothed her with his soft voice, murmuring sweet nothings, wordless encouragements, as if she were a naughty child being coaxed into taking her medicine.

And yet despite the shattering, dangerous sensations, her arousal began to rise and rise and rise, all wound around the ancient and mortifying subconscious guilt that she shouldn't be enjoying anything to do with that part of her body.

The little aperture was stubborn, but in a different strategy, Ben reached around under her and began to play with her clit as he pushed firmly on the plug.

"Oh no, no, no..." she moaned as her sphincter yielded and it slid inside.

If the sensations had been mortifying and perilous before, they were a thousand times worse now, dreadful messages streaking along her nerves, telling her brain the most awful things. But even as they did, Ben intensified the gentle teasing strokes against her clit, and almost before she knew it the messages changed, melted and flowered and she cried out loudly in a light and sudden orgasm.

Sarah writhed against the coverlet, squishing Ben's caressing hand beneath her. She couldn't believe that she was climaxing, and most of all it was mainly because her bottom was stuffed and plugged.

"Oh please...oh please..." she crooned, not really having any idea what she was asking for.

Did she want him to remove the plug?

No...

Did she want him to masturbate her even more?

Yes, certainly...sort of.

Did she want something else?

Her mind skittered away from the options, even while it presented them. And one, she could barely conceive how she was going to endure it, or why she wanted it.

"You must pay for that, my dearest," whispered Ben, leaning over her back, and Sarah sobbed, knowing he comprehended her utterly. "Do you understand?"

She made a sound, some kind of affirmation, although she wasn't sure it was anything that had ever been part of the English language.

"You are magnificent," he answered, his voice strangely rough, then he stepped away and there was silence for a moment.

*What are you doing? What are you doing?*

He was looking for something, casting around. Then, with a small sound of satisfaction, he found it, obviously.

“Be brave. Be strong.”

She wasn't sure she could be either, but she could endure, for his pleasure, and in a dark and twisted way, her own.

Then he smacked her bottom again, and she shrieked, both in pain and surprise.

Her mind went blank, white and numbed. Then after a gap of a few seconds, it started working, processing the fiery pain in her right buttock and trying to work out what had created it.

She got no further than that before he struck her other bottom cheek. And she shrieked again, this time attempting to muffle the weak and pathetic sounds in the bed covers.

“It's all right to cry out, my darling,” he said, placing his hand flat on one of the hot places for a moment and stirring it, stirring it.

Sarah made an incoherent kitten-like sound and ground her crotch against the mattress seeking ease for her astonishing and impossible arousal. Her bottom was flaming and yet her pussy ached for contact.

He smacked her more and more, settling into a slow, lazy rhythm. The impact of the blows was unimaginable, and yet somehow bizarrely soothing despite the growing craving in her sex.

And in a peculiar moment of clarity, it dawned on her what the wicked device was.

He was spanking her with his leather-soled bedroom slipper. One of the ones she'd seen lined up neatly by the bed.

“Oh please...oh please...” she began to plead again, against all reason begging for more of his disciplinary attentions as much as she was begging for ease of the burning itch of her desire.

As she moaned, he finally set aside his slipper.

“What do you want, Sarah?” he asked again, his breath gratifyingly coming in gasps. He was affected by her, as moved and roused and stirred as she was, in his own way. Despite her pain she smiled, anticipating her victory and his loss of control.

“I want you to fuck me!” she growled at him, writhing again, sinuous against the bedspread, taunting him with her rosy, fiery bottom.

"Where?" he demanded hoarsely, then pressed his fingertips to the base of the fat plug in her bottom. "Here?"

"Yes! Oh god!" she gasped as he rocked the wicked thing. "Anywhere! Wherever you want! Just do it!"

"Very well...very well..." he panted, unhanding her for a moment. She could hear rustlings, small preparations, his breathing.

Then, shockingly, he pulled out the plug. Her insides rioted a little, but he soothed her with more gentle fondling of her clit. Within seconds she was moaning for a different reason, almost coming.

When she was starting to rise again, he slathered her backside once more with the silky lubricant. Lots of it. Then, after a moment's more rustling, and the slick sounds of a condom being rolled on, he was at her rear entrance, pushing, pushing, as he'd done originally with the inert rubber intruder.

This time it was easier. This time the yielding was sweeter than sweet.

After a moment's effort, he was lodged inside her bottom, draped over her back, murmuring love into her ear.

His thrusts were measured, and shallow, yet the pleasure was deep, achingly deep.

Within seconds she was moaning again, whining like an animal, lost in a perverse and delicious ecstasy like nothing she'd ever experienced before. Soaring higher, she shrieked and writhed when he touched her clit.

Her orgasm triggered him. Everything was crazy. Ben was as mad and wild and lost to the world as she was.

The only sane thing were the words he groaned and gasped.

"I love you...I love you...my darling, I love you."

She answered him the same, because it was true.

## Chapter Four

A long while later, they lay in each others arms, in the bed now.

Slippers, sex toys, lubricants, handcuffs and blindfolds were all abandoned now. Not forgotten, but set aside in favour of the simplicity of freshly bathed bodies, cuddled close and fond and happy in the low, gilded lamplight.

*Is this heaven? It certainly feels as if it might be.*

Sarah breathed in, loving the fresh yet spicy smell of Ben's cologne and feel of his warm, clean skin where he was lying against her back, spooned along the length of her. They were both naked, yet the contact was peculiarly innocent. His cock was soft where it pressed against the heat that lingered in her bottom.

She no longer hurt, because, she realised, he was the most skilled of disciplinarians. There was just a warm glow left to remind her of the breathtaking tumult of their strange communion. She almost wished it was hotter. That it would last longer. That it was permanent.

If she had some sign of what has passed between them that would always be with her, it would be a talisman to cling on to whenever they parted.

The idea of that made her gasp, with a pain far more agonising than anything that could be inflicted by hand or by leather.

"What's wrong, my darling?" Ben whispered in her ear, his arm tightening a little around her middle. Possessively? "Did I hurt you too much? I'm sorry if I did...I become lost in the moment...and with you, more lost than ever before. But I didn't mean to truly harm you."

"It's all right, Ben." She closed her hand over his, remembering its strength and implacability, and the sweet kindness and generous pleasure it bestowed too. "I feel wonderful, actually...thanks to you."

They lay in silence, but she could almost taste his thoughts, and measure the sudden tension that had sprung up in him. What was wrong?

She opened her mouth to ask him, to ask what she could do to resolve whatever was bothering him. But before she could utter a word, he spoke again.

"I love you."

Where there had been relaxation, now there was whirling agitation. Almost euphoria. She'd known he cared for her and desired her and even apart from the sex, enjoyed her company. Men often made wild, exaggerated claims about love when they were coming, that proved to be nonsense in quieter, cooler times, so she'd not dared to make too much of his orgasmic cries. But Ben was so different to the men she'd cared for before, in every possible way. Could it be that he spoke the truth, even while coming? Despite their happiness together, she'd never been quite sure that she was special enough for him. At least she hadn't thought so until this weekend...Now she knew she was. That she was a match for him. Completely.

The thoughts raced and circled. Now she really *couldn't* speak for excitement.

"I love you, Sarah," he repeated, "and I want to be with you. All the time... Forever." She could feel him shaking against her. Or was that her shaking against him? It was probably a bit of both. She still couldn't speak, but she laced her fingers with his and squeezed tight in a clearer, simpler message.

"But...I know my sexual tastes are particular and I don't want to always impose them on you. Away from here, away from The Retreat, you might feel differently about all this..." This time it was his fingers that tightened. "But I can accept that...and I don't expect you to indulge me. I...I can suppress it." He kissed the back of her neck, and when he went on there was a wry note in his voice. "If you can accept that sometimes I might need to read the occasional magazine...and...um...deal with myself, I think we'll be okay." He nuzzled her, his mouth settling on the curve of her shoulder now, his beard a caress against her skin. "Fucking you is so mind-blowing in itself that I couldn't, and shouldn't ask for more."

Now, against her bottom, she felt him harden, and he moved slightly against her to reinforce her perception.

"If you can accept me for a wicked old pervert, Sarah, I'd love to be your husband...if you'll have me?"

His voice was so soft, so kind, so honest. Even if there had been no sex, and no kink, she could not have imagined a man she felt more comfortable with now. More complete, and more herself.

But still the enormity of his proposal sealed the words of joy within her.

She began to shake more, with sobs, her body wrenched as hard by simple happiness as it had been by the most intense of all the orgasms he'd given her.

"My love...my love...what is it? Please don't be upset. I'm sorry...I didn't mean to rush you." Gently, he slid back, pushed on her shoulder and laid her down, beside him. In the soft light, his sublime brown eyes were glistening with the same moisture that was gathering in hers.

Sarah reached up, drew his face down to hers, and then boldly took his mouth in a kiss that was both strong, yet as tender as she could make it. Befuddled by soaring joy, she told him everything with her lips that she was currently finding impossible to put into words, and when they finally drew apart, she could see from his smile, and the light in his gleaming eyes that he'd heard everything she'd 'said'.

"Oh, Sarah, my love...you'll have me then?" His white teeth glinted in the shadows as his smile widened. "You'll marry me? Is it 'yes'?"

Sarah reached up and touched his dear face, loving him, and loving everything about him. His fine eyes and the intellect behind them, his dear face and his thick brown hair, his soft, neat beard that felt so nice to her fingers. She loved his body too, and his heart, and his imagination.

And at last she found the words.

"Yes...it's 'yes'...but on one proviso."

"Name it!" His hand slid to her flank, and around the side of her buttock, holding her to him, but lightly as if he were still cautious of stirring up the heat of her spanking. She could see in his intense expression that he was longing to make love to her again, even if he hadn't been pressing his hard cock against her thigh.

"That you spank me whenever you think I need it..." She grinned at him, as his eyes lit up even more, and his beautiful mouth curved in the dark frame of his elegant whiskers. "Or whenever *I* think I need it."

"And how often do you think that might be?" His voice was rich with amusement as he pulled her tighter now, his fingertips pressing the cheek of her bottom as if she'd given him permission – and rights. Which she had.

Sarah kept him waiting a moment, then said, "Oh, about once a day, I think...maybe more often." Her voice was airy, but she'd never been more serious in her life.

Ben kissed her hard, his lips, his tongue, his entire body dominant.

“And how about now?” he enquired, all trace of their former mutual sleepiness vanished.

“Oh yes, definitely...but in a little while.” She squirmed against him, teasing his erection with her thighs, her belly. “But would it be possible to wait until you’ve fucked me first?” Daringly, she stroked his penis, adoring its heat and its silky size.

“Of course, my darling,” he purred, moving slowly in her caress, “But I must warn you...after I’ve spanked you, I’ll want to fuck you again, you realise. I won’t be able to help myself.”

“That’s what I’m banking on, my love... That’s what I’m banking on...”

And as he moved over her, she laughed softly, and added the words she’d almost forgotten to say, although meant, so sincerely meant, for quite some time.

“I love you.”

## About the Author

Portia Da Costa is a multi-published and award-winning British author of romance, erotic romance and romantic fiction. Her novels have been published in the US, the UK, and across the world, and translated into many languages including German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Norwegian and Japanese. Best known for her ten novels for the pioneering British publisher Black Lace, she has gained high praise and a strong reader following for her intense, sensual, character-driven fiction and the vivid emotional depth of her novels and stories. She enjoys writing books with contemporary, paranormal and occasionally futuristic settings, and has also written some historical-themed short fiction.

Portia has been writing for publication since 1990, and has had over twenty novels, for Black Lace and also for houses such as Scarlet, Heartline, X Libris, Headline Liaison, Ellora's Cave and Phaze. She has also had over 100 short stories published, and she has contributed to many different short story anthologies and women's magazines.

Portia lives in the heart of West Yorkshire, UK, with her husband and her cats. When she's not writing she enjoys reading, watching TV and movies, web design, blogging and online life in general. She was formerly a librarian and has also worked in local government.

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