



# *Transparent Illusions*

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Transparent Illusions

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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and occurrences are a product of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, places or occurrences, is purely coincidental.

*Special thanks to my friends and family who keep me sane as I spend hours at the desk and have to say, “Can we push back dinner time just a little?” Thanks to Tiff for all her friendship and support, especially through a year that has had some wonderful highs, and horrible lows.*

*This one is for B, who suggested the name *Fingertip Fantasies*. We’ll discuss some of your other ideas over sushi very soon.*

**Transparent** – (adjective) Easily seen through; clear

Synonyms: Visible

Antonyms: Secretive

**Illusion** – (noun) Deceiving with false impressions; being deceived

Synonyms: Invention, fantasy

Antonyms: Certainty, reality, fact

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## *Chapter One*

“Please let me pay for the dress.”

Saffron Tyler ran her hands down the full, satin material, letting her fingers linger over the lacy edge of the overskirt. She glanced at herself in the mirror and wondered if the dress had looked this good in the store. Or was it the fact she was standing in her bedroom that made her feel so sexy? Did people in the renaissance time dress like this? She thought they were a little more...discreet.

“Jenna, are you sure about this dress? It doesn’t seem to fit the time period.”

“I’m positive, because it’s absolutely gorgeous on you. I’ll feel much better, though, if you let me pay for it. Please.”

*Pay for it.* Saffron hit the mute button her earpiece and sighed heavily. She never should have told Jenna that her latest job had fallen through. Her friend was having a hard enough time paying for her wedding without adding a five-hundred dollar dress to the tab.

Well, it wasn’t really a wedding, was it? It was a ten-year anniversary present to her husband, who had just survived a bout with testicular cancer. For two years, Jenna had worried whether Holden would live. Saffron had held her friend close many nights while she cried and cursed the heavens for the fact that her husband was at death’s door. Now that he was in remission, she’d planned a reenactment of their wedding vows, set in the time period Holden loved.

Saffron would be the maid-of-honor, as she had been at their wedding ten years ago. Back then, she’d worn a taffeta creation that had been quickly shoved to the back of her closet. Now, however—she stared at the black satin petticoat with a red overskirt decorated with black embroidered swirls. The corset was also black satin, displaying quite a bit of Saffron’s ample

breasts. She glanced at the crimson bolero jacket lying on her bed. It would hide some skin, even if it wasn't exactly historically correct.

Maybe she should wear her hair down. A quick flip of her fingers released the clip that held her long blond hair on top of her head. It cascaded over her shoulders and she nodded in approval. That was much better. Of course, getting Jenna to agree to the hair-down part might be tough, but it could be done.

"Saff, are you listening to me?"

"Shit." Saffron unmuted the phone. "Sorry, I was just admiring myself in the mirror. You're not paying for this dress because I've already put it on my credit card."

"That was when you thought the sex job was coming through. Since it hasn't, you need to reconsider. I'll write you a check."

"Thanks for making me feel like a hooker. It wasn't a sex job, it was a writing job."

"It was a writing job at a sex club where you would be expected to have sex with men."

Saffron kept her mouth shut, knowing that anything she said would be taken wrong at this point. She hadn't completely been honest with her friend about the writing gig she'd tried to land. It wasn't exactly your run of the mill sex club she'd tried to get into. It was one that expected big bucks from its regular full-time members, and fulfilled every fantasy an applicant could think of, or so the owners claimed.

Saffron had applied as a submissive, and the psychological evaluation she'd taken said she had the perfect submissive soul.

She supposed she must not have been submissive enough in her interview to land a spot, or else she'd already be on the plane. The three men and two women she'd met earlier in the month had told her, if she'd been selected for a spot, they would let her know today.

Since it was almost eleven at night, it looked like she would be informing Ms. Francis Steele that her idea of doing an undercover piece at Fingertip Fantasies had gone bust, and it was all Saffron's fault.

That was five grand down the drain, money she would never see. And she was wearing five hundred dollars worth of it right now. Coming up with the money to pay next month's credit card bill might be a stretch. She'd never borrowed from her card to pay her bill, but she might have to do just that.

Perhaps tonight she needed to sit down and think up some proposals for area magazines



and newspapers. She could make up the money there, even if it wasn't the amount she would have made with Steele.

Going into the Steele offices had been tough. She'd done work for many of the major magazines exclusive to the Seattle area, but Steele's underground magazine, *Salacious*, catered to the world of sex and was distributed all over the US and Canada.

She'd hoped to use this job as a stepping-stone, letting other magazines across the country know she was up to doing work for them. True, it would be a story about the sex business, but it would show them her ability to propose, research, and complete a job.

She'd gone in with the idea of interviewing a few high-end hookers, discussing their lives and how their jobs had changed them. But Ms. Steele had proposed another idea: infiltrate the high-end fantasy service as a submissive, and come back with a story that would knock readers' socks off and offer some information on *Fingertip Fantasies*, which was a very private organization.

The publisher had tried to give her the usual thousand for this job, but she'd refused, saying she was sure she could bring back a whopper of a story. That wouldn't be happening now, since she wouldn't even be going to the club.

"Shit, what am I going to do?" Saffron winced when she realized she'd allowed the thought to slip past her lips.

"I'm putting a check in the mail to you tomorrow."

"Go ahead, I've had my service stopped for two weeks, remember? According to what I've told everyone, I'm going on vacation, and I think I'm going to follow through that idea. Two weeks of reading books, drinking lattes, and soaking in hot bubble baths. I'm not going to even answer my phone. To anyone."

*Except maybe prospective employers who will hopefully love the story ideas I pitch to them.*

"Not even to me?"

Jenna's plaintive wail made Saffron cringe. "Of course I'll answer to you, sweet pea. You know I love you, even if you did decide to renew your vows on New Year's Eve and ruin my chances of starting the year right by getting laid."

"It's the perfect time, new beginnings and all that crap. Besides, I'm sure you can find someone at the wedding to help you ring in the New Year with a bang."

They both laughed and then Saffron checked the time. It was now after eleven o'clock. Way too late to call Ms. Steele and tell her of her failure. She'd give the publisher a call first thing in the morning, and at that point, she'd have to return the ten grand the publisher already fronted her to pay for the services at Fingertip Fantasies.

"I've gotta go, sweets. I need to get this dress off before I sweat in it. Needs to be all nice and shiny for your wedding."

"Holden and I thank you very much. Call me tomorrow, okay?"

"Will do. Love you." Saffron clicked off after Jenna repeated the words, and removed the earpiece. She tossed it on the bedside table then took another look in the mirror. She really did look very hot in all this satin. Too bad the only time she would use it was New Year's, where her escort would be Holden's already-married brother.

"Life's not fair sometimes." She thought about the vanishing five grand again before sighing heavily. Getting paid to be a submissive would have been interesting. She'd always been fascinated with the idea, but too frightened to open herself up to a local club in Seattle.

This way, she would have gone in with people she knew she wouldn't run into at the local coffee shop. But that wouldn't happen now, would it? *Poor pitiful me.*

"Stop the pity party," she said, turning from the mirror. Her suitcase, packed for two weeks at Fingertip Fantasies, was near the front door. No time like the present to unpack. She'd pour herself a glass of wine and contemplate her soon-to-be-empty bank account.

Worse than that, though, she'd ponder the fact she wouldn't be able to explore the world of BDSM as she'd wanted to. One of the reasons she hadn't told Jenna about the complete experience was because her friend was a bit of a prude.

Nobody could ever accuse Saffron of being skittish about sex. She enjoyed trying new things and doing it with different partners. Sex fascinated her, and she was ready to try something different.

She'd done bondage before, but always with a boyfriend she'd been involved with for a while. Being tied to a bed always brought about incredible orgasms. But bondage wasn't something that was exclusive to the BDSM community. It was a kink that lots of people enjoyed.

It would have been interesting to see what the next two weeks had in store for her.

She was halfway across living room when a knock sounded at the door. Her heart leapt into her throat and she gasped. Two seconds later, a second knock filled the room. She stared at

the entrance as if it would open and a monster would step inside. Who would knock on her door so late?

“Miss Tyler. Open the door, please.”

The clipped British accent deepened her confusion. She knew that voice, but from where? She’d heard it just recently at...her Fingertip Fantasies interview. The realization slapped her in the chest and she took a step backward. It couldn’t be them. Not this late.

“Miss Tyler, I won’t ask again.”

Saffron hurried across the floor, turning the bolt quickly. She cracked the door and peered outside, hoping he didn’t notice her shaking hand as she clasped the frame.

“Mr. Straith.” She opened the door a little wider. “I thought you’d rejected me.”

He lifted one eyebrow and her breath caught in her throat. He really was a handsome man, tall and lean with light brown hair and green eyes. The stern look on his face, both during the interview and right now, made her think of the headmaster of an English boarding school. During the interview, she’d fantasized about him bending her over the desk and spanking her, sort of a test to see if she would allow it to happen. Unfortunately, that fantasy hadn’t come true.

“You will accompany me now.”

“Right now? I need to change and get my bag and—”

“Everything you need will be provided for you at the facility.” He inclined his head slightly as if he were addressing a wayward student. “You will leave your bag.”

*Leave her bag? What the hell?* “Why did you have me pack it, then?”

“To see how well you follow directions.”

She bristled at his statement. Asking her to pack a bag and be ready for them had been nothing more than their first act of dominance over her. Not exactly something she’d thought would count as power for a sexual fantasy.

“But my dress...” She held out the overskirt, unsure how to end her statement.

“Is lovely. A bit much for a Friday evening at home, but lovely just the same. Please get your keys and identification and let us be off. We have a schedule to keep.” He took a step back and waited.

Saffron grabbed her keys from the hook by the door and then moved to retrieve her computer bag and purse, grateful she’d kept both packed. He didn’t object to the purse, but when she reached for the computer, he made a tscking sound.

“Did I mention a computer?”

“Can I not take it?”

“No, you may not.”

Her stomach fell as she thought about the perfect story with no way to take notes for it.

“Mr. Straith, I was hoping to write about my experiences.” She’d lied on her application and told them she was a store clerk. Jenna, who worked the personnel office in a department store, had told her they’d called to confirm her employment. “I want to keep a diary, and to do that, I need my laptop.”

“You will be provided with a journal.” He took her purse out of her hands and opened it, rifling through it until he found her wallet. He removed it, then tossed her purse back inside the door—the purse held her recorder. Damn it!

She watched him open her wallet. “Where is your passport?”

“It’s in my purse.”

“Retrieve it.”

She did as he asked, her fingers passing over the slender recorder near her travel document. She could palm it, but there was nowhere to hide it on the dress. She dropped the idea and started to work out a code she could use for writing in a journal in case it was scrutinized, which she was sure it would be.

Straith put her passport in his jacket pocket, took her purse and tossed it back inside again, then headed toward the stairs. Saffron shut and locked the door and took off after him, lifting her skirt to keep from tripping. She was almost to the stairs when she realized she had no shoes on.

“Mr. Straith, I need to get...shoes.” He was already at the first landing, turning to tackle the descent to the bottom floor. He ignored her and kept walking. If she went back for shoes—and her jacket—would he leave her? She had no doubt that he would.

She hurried into the cold December night. A limousine idled at the curb, the back door open. Straith stood next to a short, dark haired woman who was smiling up at him.

“Miss Tyler, if you please.” Saffron hurried toward him, his tone telling her he was more than a little annoyed with her.

“I need to get shoes. You caught me off guard and I—”

“Miss King, your shoes, if you please.” The woman standing next to him kicked off a

pair of sandals and Saffron wondered about the woman's choice of December footwear. "These will do for now. Give Miss King your key. She's been assigned your home while you're gone. You are aware of that part? You did everything as instructed?"

Saffron bit back the urge to tell him he didn't need to treat her like a child. If she'd packed a bag, then yes, she'd followed the other instructions, stopping her mail and getting her home ready for a stranger to live there for two weeks. She nodded, then slipped her feet into the shoes. They were a little tight, but they would suffice for the trip, she supposed.

Miss King took her key, then headed toward the building. Saffron turned to Straith, who indicated the car. She climbed inside, surprised to have the door shut behind her. Once settled on the leather seat, she looked around. It was strangely bare for a limousine, with no TV monitors or other amenities one usually found in a luxury vehicle.

The door opened at the front of the car and she saw Straith slide into the passenger seat. The limo made a smooth exit from the curb and Saffron's heart lodged in her throat. She put her hand on her chest and wished for a bottle of water.

This was not what she'd expected tonight. She'd thought they would send her a letter, or a phone call, telling her when to expect a pickup. Instead, they'd caught her off guard, leaving her shaken, which was just perfect for them, she supposed.

She mentally wrote a lead for her story about how a woman was abducted in the middle of the night, taken away from her home and everything she loved only to be made a sexual slave. The idea was intriguing, but it still left her mouth dry.

As if reading her mind, Straith's voice rang out over a loud speaker. "You will find refreshment in the small refrigerator behind the driver's seat. You may help yourself. We have two more stops to make, and when the other clients come into the car, you will not speak with them. If you do, your time with us will end."

Saffron lifted her skirt above her knees, then crawled to the refrigerator where she took out a bottle of water. When she'd settled on the seat again, she took a long drink, then wondered exactly what she'd gotten herself into this time.

Ms. Steele's suggestion had seemed so innocuous. Attend Fingertip Fantasies for a week and bring her back a story for the underground sex magazine, *Salacious*. It had seemed like fun. When the interviewers proposed a two-week session, she'd told them no. She couldn't afford two weeks.

They'd told her they sometimes considered offering substantial discounts to qualified applicants and said if they'd accepted her, they would tell her sometime before today.

"Fine way of telling someone," she said, keeping her voice soft. She had the feeling Straith could hear her no matter how low she was talking.

While this idea was fascinating, she was still putting herself in a risky situation. She knew nothing about the club except for the pitiful amount of information she'd found on the web, which had been nothing more than a phone number for her to call and make arrangements for her interview.

Maybe this wasn't such a good idea. Straith had given her the perfect out, telling her that if she'd changed her mind to just let him know. Why hadn't she backed out?

She fingered the edge of her dress, knowing exactly why she hadn't backed out. Jenna had things hard enough lately and she didn't need to add the expense of Saffron's dress to her anniversary expenses. Plus, there was the idea that, if she did well on this story, Steele Publications would want to hire her again.

She just hoped she didn't have to pay for two dresses. The one she was wearing could easily be ruined if she didn't get it off soon. That would account for a grand of the money she would make from this story.

That thought was quickly replaced by another. For two weeks, she would be a submissive, bowing down to the wills of a Master, or a Mistress, or whomever Straith assigned for her. Someone she didn't know who would ask her to do God knew what.

While the idea was fascinating, she wasn't sure she had it in her. Was she that good of an actress? Could she do these things without blowing up in someone's face? And if she did blow up, would they throw her out on the streets of wherever the club was located and expect her to find her own way home to Seattle?

No, she couldn't think like that. The story required a submissive, and that's exactly what she would be. To keep the job, Saffron could play any part they wanted. After all, she told stories for a living, even if they were full of facts. She'd done enough reading on BDSM, both factual books and fictional ones, that she knew basically what was expected, didn't she?

This story would be a well-written tale about her foray into submission, and she had no doubt she could win an award after all was said and done.

She relaxed back in the seat and tried to breathe normally. She needed to look at this as

an adventure. One full of new experiences and, hopefully, more than a few orgasms.

## *Chapter Two*

She wanted her journal. Straith had promised one, but she hadn't seen it on the flight, or since they'd arrived at the club, wherever that was. They hadn't gone through any airport security, so she decided they were still in the United States.

The trip had been on a private jet, one that had been modified to give each passenger their own little cubicle. She'd been warned not to talk to anyone on board unless she was spoken to first, and that wouldn't be a hard order to follow, since she had no idea which cubicle anyone else was in, or how many of the spaces were occupied. There'd been one other limo, and hers had contained two men and one other woman. They'd been brought out one at a time and taken on board the plane.

When they'd shut the door to her space, she itched to have her laptop, or at the least pen and paper so she could make notes and not forget anything. That hadn't happened.

Now she sat in yet another cubicle, this one on the ground, in some huge building. They'd placed a blindfold over her eyes when they'd taken her off the plane, so she had no idea what time it was, nor had she been able to identify any landmarks that might give her a clue as to where they were. From the displeasure coming from her empty stomach, she was pretty sure it had been at least twelve hours since she was taken from her apartment.

"I could use some crackers or something," she said, wondering if someone could hear her. To take her mind off the silence and her growing hunger, she mentally wrote the lead to her story.

*"One thing they practice at Fingertip Fantasies, the BDSM edition, is keeping a person off their guard. New submissives are not allowed to talk to others on the plane, and are kept in*



*little rooms until... ”*

Until what? She had no idea what would happen later. For all she knew, they could come and expect her to service everyone in the next room they placed her in.

She didn't think that would happen, though. Not yet, anyway. A Master might test his sub's limits by asking her to perform things like that, but there would be training first. She'd learned that from the books.

The door opened and a pretty brunette stepped inside. She wore a leather skirt that barely covered her pussy. The only other thing she wore was a leather collar. Hard nipples adorned with gold hoops topped her bare breasts.

She sat a tray on a table, then left without saying a word. Saffron examined the offerings: grapes, cheese, crackers and two bottles of water.

"I'm a carnivore," she said aloud since she knew they were listening. "In case you need that information for menu planning."

The door didn't open, though, and the submissive didn't come back in with another tray full of roast beef or slices of ham.

"Pizza would be appreciated," Saffron muttered, taking a small square of cheese and putting it on a cracker before popping it into her mouth. "One with lots of everything on it."

She ate a grape and remembered the part she was supposed to play. A submissive wouldn't order food from a potential Master. They would eat what they were given and be happy for it. Wouldn't they? Is that how it was in real life? They wouldn't be the ones to plan what happened. She needed to remember that. Here at the resort, she was sure that was exactly what they would do, and she needed to stay in character.

"Don't screw it up," she whispered to herself. "You're a submissive." She repeated the phrase over and over in her mind, hoping it would help her focus on how she was supposed to act.

She finished the food and drank a bottle of water. Soon afterward, her bladder let her know of another need and she began to squirm in her seat. How long had she been sitting in here? An hour? Two? Three? Surely it hadn't been that long.

They'd allowed her bathroom privileges on the plane, but not since they'd landed.

"Bathroom?" The word echoed in the empty space and seconds later, the door opened. This submissive was blond, but she wore the same outfit the previous woman had. Where the

brunette had been tall and thin, the blond was shorter, and a little heavier. Her nipples were pierced just like the other one, and small chains ran from the piercings to her collar.

She indicated Saffron should follow her.

They walked two doors down the hall and the woman pushed open a door. Saffron stepped inside the bathroom and shut the door behind her. She expected to hear it lock, and when it didn't, she searched for a way to lock it from the inside. There wasn't one.

She made quick work of the facilities, working hard to lift her voluminous skirts in the tight space. When she was done, she washed her face and hands. The submissive then escorted her back to her cubicle.

"How long will I stay here?"

The woman put her index finger to her lips in the universal signal for quiet.

"What are we, monks?" The shocked look on the woman's face reminded Saffron of her part. She'd screwed up again. "Sorry, I'm a little nervous. This is my first time."

The woman's eyes softened and she actually smiled before indicating that Saffron should go back into the room. Once inside, the door clicked shut, then locked behind her. The tray of food was gone, but they'd left the second bottle of water.

She looked for the journal, only to find it was still just a promise. Then she sat down and closed her eyes. *Back to writing, Saffron, take your mind off things. Now where was I? Oh yeah...*

*"They keep you isolated, but on the good side, they do offer food and water, which means they don't intend to starve a person to death.*

*The purpose of this isolation is apparent. A true submissive would use the time to prepare themselves to serve their Master or Mistress, to clear their mind of the outside world and allow themselves to be transported to a place where only he, or she, mattered.*

*This experience could be likened to cramming for an exam. You're nervous about the test and think you won't do well, so you go over information, repeating questions and their answers in an effort to tattoo them in your mind.*

*That's pretty much what I'm doing right now, mentally reviewing the BDSM books I've read to remind myself what is expected of me in the next two weeks. I admit to being a little frightened. Not that I don't enjoy sex, and the thought of being tied up, again, is intriguing.*

*Spanking might be fun, but the use of crops and floggers? That's never been something I thought about before. I have to keep myself on the right track. If I screw this up I will—"*

Saffron stopped composing and fiddled with the top hook on her corset. She was so rattled that she'd gone from composing a lead to a magazine article to writing a first person journal entry about how she was feeling right now. She needed to get hold of herself, remember this was just a job.

A job that could lead to better things, which meant she needed to put her best foot forward. But to do that, she needed to leave this room, now, or she would go stir crazy.

"Come and get me." She focused her gaze on the door, willing it to open. It didn't. "Come and get me, please."

It took all her effort to keep from panicking. Surely they wouldn't leave her in here much longer. She started to compose again, watching the words appear in her mind as if written on a keyboard. She'd composed seven pages when there was a creaking noise and the door opened.

"Miss Tyler."

"Mr. Straith." Saffron clenched her sweaty palms together.

"Please forgive the delay. Two of your potential Masters had not arrived until just now, and I wanted to make sure everyone was in place for the auction."

"Auction?" Her voice cracked on the word. She imagined an arena with a large dirt floor surrounded by bleachers.

"The high bidder will have the pleasure of training you. Now, come along, let's not keep them waiting."

Saffron found herself in the position of, once again, trailing after the Englishman. She picked up her skirts and hurried her step, only to have him say, "Walk, please, Miss Tyler."

Did he have eyes in the back of his head? She hadn't been making that much noise.

She slowed her pace, focusing her attention on her surroundings. They passed several closed doors, but had seen no people. The floor was hard wood with a red runner in the middle. She'd accidentally left her borrowed sandals back in the room, and the carpet was soft under her feet.

After making several turns, Straith paused with his hand on the doorknob to a room and she felt his gaze on her. She stopped behind him and waited.

"While at the auction, you will remain silent unless a potential buyer asks to hear your

voice. You will follow instructions to the letter and be a good submissive, do you understand?”

“I’m not a child, and there is nothing wrong with my hearing.”

He did the one-eyebrow lift thing she’d never been able to master, letting her know that she’d screwed up yet once more.

“I’m sorry.”

“Do you need to sit for a while longer? It would be inconvenient for our guests, but it might help you to focus. I don’t want to turn a brat loose on our patrons.”

“No.” *A brat? Listen buster, I...* Saffron fought down panic at the idea of sitting in the little room again. She’d already felt as if the walls were closing in on her there. More time and she might feel as if she were being buried alive. That would be worse than whatever was ahead.

“I’m just so nervous. Forgive me, Mr. Straith.”

He inclined his head and opened the door. As he disappeared inside, Saffron gathered all her strength. *Think of this as an illusion, Saffron. It’s a magic trick and you’re the magician, not the assistant. Keep your wits and you can stay in charge. You’ll find a way.* Lots of things she’d read said a submissive had control, that a submissive could say yea or nay and a good Master would respect their wishes.

She took a deep breath, and stepped inside the room.

## *Chapter Three*

After rejecting the arena idea, she'd expected soft lighting and elevator music. The reality was a room with about twenty people inside. The number did not include the half-naked men and women kneeling next to them in the fully lit chamber.

The submissives were mostly naked, and all of them wore collars and had leashes attached, the leads held by the people sitting in the chairs. The only noise came from conversations, which ended as soon as she stepped inside.

Everyone was watching her, and there were a few soft murmurs of approval, which made her even more nervous than before. One of these people would buy her. One of them would think they owned her, could do anything they wanted to her. But that's what she'd agreed to, right?

*You're the magician.*

"Miss Tyler." She looked to Straith, who frowned at her yet again. It took her a few seconds to realize he'd probably been headed for the round stage in the middle of the room, expecting her to follow him, when she'd stopped to examine her new surroundings.

She hurried up the aisle, whispering, "Sorry," as he started forward again. A few titters of laughter made her stomach clench. He stopped at the bottom step and pointed up.

This command was easy to understand. She would go up first, be on stage by herself, on display for her potential owners. The crackers and cheese she'd eaten threatened to reappear. She swallowed hard to fight down panic, then repeated, "You're the magician," under her breath and took her first step up.

The next four came easier and when she was at the top, she looked around.

The people watching her seemed so normal. She wasn't sure what she'd expected, but it wasn't men and women you might see at the supermarket. They weren't even wearing leather,

which was something she'd anticipated. They wore suits, jeans, and button downs and dresses.

She made a circle, feeling much like she figured an animal in the zoo felt as the visitors watched it. The silence drew out as her potential owners examined her, and then Mr. Straith's voice rang out, making her jerk.

"What you see before you ladies and gentlemen is a novice, if somewhat willful, submissive. She's going to need a very firm hand, but I'm sure that won't be a problem for more than a few of you."

The laughter was louder this time, broken by a deep male voice that said, "I'll go five."

Dollars? Were they bidding in dollars, or in hundreds, or thousands? Where did the money go? Did these people have to pay for their fantasies the same way she'd have to pay for hers? Well, she didn't pay, Steele Publications paid.

"Very good," Straith said. "Do I hear six?"

Saffron jerked her head up and glared Straith. From the right hand side of the stage, a woman laughed. "Very willful indeed. I'll go six."

Numbers started flying around, jumping from seven to seventeen in a matter of minutes. When the bidding slowed, Straith held up his hand.

"We're at seventeen for Master Thomas. Do I hear eighteen?" Saffron glanced toward the middle-aged man who nodded in her direction, a smile on his face. Yes, she thought he would do quite nicely. He seemed as if he were easy going, and that's what she really wanted.

She began to reconstruct her story in her mind, wondering how she would put into words the feeling of being on an auction block. At any minute, she expected one of the potential buyers to examine her teeth or feet.

"It's nice that you've gift wrapped her for us, Straith." She hadn't heard this deep voice before. "Let's see what's underneath. Have her undo the corset."

A man stood up from the table near the back of the room. No, not a man, a giant. He was huge, well over six-feet tall, with a very broad chest and massive shoulders. He wore blue jeans and a dark blue T-shirt featuring the *Salacious* logo.

His thick, dark hair was cut short and surrounded a diamond-shaped face with deep-set eyes and a broad nose. His lips were full and looked at any moment as if they could turn into a face-splitting grin, or a deep, angry frown.

He wasn't classically handsome in the perfect, polished way. It was more his rugged

outdoors look that made it almost impossible to stop staring at him.

“Very well.” Straith’s voice seemed more clipped than normal. “Do it.”

Saffron shot him a go-to-hell look, then jerked her gaze toward the giant when he cleared his throat. Everyone seemed to go silent at the sound. “We’re waiting.”

Saffron’s fingers trembled as she grasped the two sides. All it would take would be one small flick and the first hook would be undone. After the first one, it wouldn’t be so hard, would it? The true problem, she thought, was the fact the tight corset was the only thing keeping her heart in her chest. If she loosened it, the organ might break free, and then where would she be?

“Perhaps I should ask for more than the corset. Would that speed your fingers, or would you run from the room, tail between your legs?”

Saffron sneered at him, then undid first one, then a second and third hook. No one would call her a chicken. When she’d undone the garment to her waist, she put her hand inside to lift out a breast, stopping when he stepped forward and shook his finger in a no-no gesture.

“I didn’t ask for a strip-tease, I asked for you to undo the corset. You need to listen to directions.”

“Let’s listen to this instead.” She blew a raspberry at him, certain that act of defiance would bring about rejection for not being submissive enough. She didn’t want this jerk, she wanted the other one who seemed so nice.

When the giant joined in the laughter with the other Doms and Dommies, she knew she was sunk. “I’ll take her for fifty, unless Master Thomas would like to continue bidding.”

“No, I’ll let you tame her.” Saffron gave the older man a pleading look. He shook his head, a smirk on his face. “I’ll play in the public rooms instead. Enjoy her.”

“Oh I shall.” The winner pulled his wallet from his pants as he walked toward the stage. He took out a fifty-dollar bill and handed it to Straith. Saffron had the distinct impression she should be insulted by the exchange of the relatively small amount. Was her submission worth so little?

Or maybe exchanging currency was something symbolic. Maybe there was a set limit on the amount of money that could be spent, and this was the limit. She dismissed that idea quickly. If that were the case, he would not have asked if Master Thomas wanted to continue in the bidding.

Thinking about the other bidder made her wonder why no one had given this winner a

name. Would she have to call him hey you, or giant, or would he tell her who he was. He was talking with Straith. When the conversation was over, he turned and left the room without giving her a second look.

*Great.* What the hell was she supposed to do now?

The other participants headed toward the doorway. Straith put a hand on her elbow and she turned her gaze on him.

“Anyone but him.”

“Too late for that. You will go with Miss Kitty and she will prepare you for your new Master.” An older woman, clad in the submissive’s uniform, stood at the bottom of the stairs.

“I don’t like him. He’s—”

“You do not have a choice. Your fantasy is to be a submissive, and you agreed to the terms and conditions when you signed the papers. Submissives do not question their Master.”

“Master? Is he a fantasy person, too? Is he playing at being a Dom?” That idea scared the crap out of her. If he wanted to be a Dom and didn’t exactly know how to use a crop, she was the one who would pay the price.

“No, he is not playing a role. I assure you he is quite skilled and you are safe with him. We screen our Doms and Dommes very carefully.”

“I don’t even know his name.”

Straith looked very aggravated and she thought for a moment he might relent and cancel the transaction. Right now, she would like that. She would go home and forget this ever happened. Screw the money.

Instead, he motioned to Miss Kitty, who came up the stairs. “It is up to your new Master to decide what you call him, and what he names you. You belong to him for the next two weeks.”

He walked down the stairs and Saffron looked out over the now empty room. Things definitely weren’t turning out the way she’d planned.

\* \* \* \*

“Over here, please.” Saffron walked toward Miss Kitty, wondering when her unnamed Master would pop out and say boo. This day just kept getting weirder, especially when she realized it had just been hours ago, although she wasn’t sure how many, that she’d been sitting in her apartment, worrying about paying her credit card bill.



Now that she'd been auctioned off, she knew there was no telling where this would go. The only thing for certain was her following Miss Kitty down yet another corridor.

The submissive led her to a large ballroom with sets of French doors lining one wall. White columns were placed at varying intervals and Saffron had no mistaken impressions about what those would be used for.

She wasn't sure she was ready for bondage just yet, but she obviously didn't have much of a choice. Miss Kitty had stopped in front of a post, waiting patiently for Saffron to join her.

"Please step in between here and spread your arms to touch each column." As soon as she followed the instructions, the submissive fastened a leather cuff to her wrist, then attached the cuff to a chain secured to the post.

When her arms were spread, Saffron tested the bonds. They stayed secured.

"Pull harder." His voice came from behind her, sending ripples of panic tinged with excitement racing up her spin. She did as he asked and her wrist left its leather bond.

"For tonight only, until you've relaxed a little." She turned her head to look at him. "You will be able to release your bonds if you panic, but I trust you won't feel that threatened. Miss Kitty, reattach her."

The woman followed his instructions, then went behind Saffron and started to untie the overskirt. For the first time since she'd bought it, Saffron wished it was harder to get in and out of the costume.

Watching Miss Kitty carefully lay the skirts on a table made her happy. The submissive was following the giant's orders, which meant he'd told her to be careful, and it showed he respected her things. That was something she was happy to see.

Miss Kitty stepped toward the doors, stopping with her head bowed and arms clasped behind her back. Saffron was thrilled she'd been allowed to keep her panties and the corset. She was intensely aware of the man behind her. Why wasn't he moving around so she could see him? Or had he left the room? She hadn't heard him when he came in, so he was obviously capable of being stealthy.

"May I ask questions?" A strong gust of wind rattled the doors and the smell of water drifted into the room; they were definitely near a lake or ocean.

"Not yet." He was closer now. She could feel what she thought might be the heat from his body. Either that or there was an air vent somewhere. "You're very beautiful."

She snorted in derision, then cleared her throat to hopefully cover up the sound.

“I don’t like that sound,” he said, his voice tickling her neck. “We’ll have to work on it.”

Saffron waited for him to move around to the front so she could see him, but he didn’t do it. She wiggled her shoulders, trying to ease the ache that was building up in them. “I want to ask questions.”

“Tell me why you’re here.”

“To be a submissive.” There was a long pause, and then he stepped in front of her.

“We’ll see about that. Tonight I’m going to analyze your limits with a very simple test.”

He looked toward Miss Kitty. “Please finish undressing her, then get the arm bands.”

*Arm bands? More bondage, already?* This really was going much faster than she thought it would. “Don’t I need a safe word?”

He held up a finger to indicate Miss Kitty should stay in place and a large smile brightened his face. She’d underestimated his appeal. He was better looking than she’d first thought. His eyes were a deep, brilliant blue, and right now, they were sparking with his amusement.

Her body reacted with hardened nipples and a tingling in her pussy.

“What better safe word than the ability to pull off your bonds? There will be no repercussions if you do, I promise you. Do you believe me?”

“Yes.” Somehow, she didn’t think this man was out to hurt her. Not in a bad way, anyway. There was the good type of hurt, or so she’d heard. Would she feel that tonight? Would she like it? Would he make her come? God, she hoped so.

“Good. Miss Kitty, proceed, please.” He sat down in a chair, stretching his legs out in front of him and locking his fingers over his stomach. She watched him even as the submissive approached her.

“So tense. Don’t tell me you’ve never been touched by a woman before.”

“Okay, I won’t tell you.” It was a total lie. She’d been touched by a woman before, in her experimental phase during college. But she was damned if she would tell him that. He didn’t have to know all about her to play Master.

“You’re an enigma; a woman who claims to be submissive who’s never experienced one bit of kink in her life. Well worth my fifty dollars.”

“Yeah, about that—” Saffron gasped as Miss Kitty hooked the waistband of her panties

and tugged them down, feeling shock even though she'd been expecting to be de-pantied.

"Nice and shaved, the first sign of real submission I've seen in you today. I like it, very much."

She didn't want to tell him that it was waxed, not shaved, and that it hurt like hell and had only happened yesterday. She also didn't want him to know that hearing him say he liked her waxed pussy pleased her. That made it worth the pain she'd felt.

"Whom did you do it for?"

Miss Kitty worked on the corset now. There were only a few hooks left, and when the pieces separated, the woman captured it and moved closer to Saffron, wrapping her arms around her so she could grasp the corset in one hand.

Saffron fought to hide her discomfort at being naked in the arms of a woman she'd just met, but by the chuckle that escaped the giant's mouth, she knew she'd failed.

Miss Kitty placed the corset on top of the skirts, then walked toward the back of the room.

"Now, my little enigma, that wasn't so bad, was it?" He stood in one fluid motion, his gaze raking over her body. Saffron's chest rose and fell in heavy gasps as he drew nearer. What would he do now?

"You really are striking, and you have the most stunning breasts. I see ropes in our future, enigma."

"What?"

"That's your name while you're here. Enigma. I think it fits you beautifully."

Miss Kitty was back, encasing her arm in a satin sleeve that had long strips of white cloth trailing from it. She finished one arm quickly, then did the other. All the while, the giant stared into Saffron's eyes and she got the feeling he was trying to read her mind. When Miss Kitty finished her chore, she bowed to the giant then left the room.

"What are these?"

"I use them when I do a bondage scene, but I thought of a different use for them tonight."

He traced a finger up her side. Saffron sucked in air nosily as the finger trailed over her breast, pausing to push in a hard nipple just enough to make her groan. He moved down the valley and over to the next one, tweaking it ever so gently.

"Gorgeous." He traced one finger around each areola, applying just enough pressure to

make her gasp softly.

“So, if I’m Enigma, what do I call you? I don’t even know your name.”

Saffron cried out sharply as he pinched each of her nipples between a thumb and forefinger.

“You are enigma with a lower case e, and I am Master with an upper case M. And that’s all you need to know right now.”

## *Chapter Four*

“Let me hear you say it.” He pinched harder and Saffron’s gasp turned into a soft mewl.  
“Say it.”

“Master.” The word came out sounding as if it were carried on a breath of wind, and he gave her nipples a harder pinch. A delicious sensation of pleasure mixed with sharp pain gathered in her chest and moved down.

“Once more.” He hadn’t let go and the feeling intensified, the pain centering in her pussy now.

“Please.”

He tightened more and the mewl turned into a cry. “That’s not what I asked for.”

“Master.” She clasped her eyes shut as he released her nipples, then grasped them once again, pinching even harder. “Ouch.”

“Yes, a nice, sweet ouch. Say it once more.”

“Master. Please, it hurts.” He released her nipples at once and the blood flowing back into them made the nubs pulse. The feeling was almost as powerful as the pinching had been.

“There, that wasn’t so hard, was it? And you didn’t even break your bonds. Good girl.” He stroked her hair and she wanted to scream at him to bare his chest so she could see how he liked it.

The ache in her nipples continued, the pain turning into a sweet burn that actually made her want to feel the pinch again. How was that possible? He wasn’t touching her anymore, though, beyond continuing to stroke her hair.

“What are we doing?”

“I’m giving you the chance to come to terms with the idea that you liked what just happened.”

She thought to disagree with him, but it wouldn’t do any good, because he was right. It had been painful, but the pleasurable aftermath was worth it. She’d never felt anything like it before. And if her body reacted to a little pinch, what would it do when he provided more severe stimulation, which she was very sure he would do within the next two weeks.

“Time to move on.” He strode toward the French doors, pulling them open. Cold air wafted inside and Saffron shivered.

“I’m naked here, you know.”

“Really? Well, let’s remedy that, shall we?”

She watched him retrieve an object from a chest. As he walked nearer, she saw it was another strip of cloth. He wrapped it around her waist, tying it behind her back, letting the ends trail over her ass. He patted each cheek before he reached around her, clasping a strip from each side and crossing them over her breasts. He tied the ends tightly behind her back, effectively squeezing her breasts.

The small strips provided no protection from the cold air coming in from outside, but she didn’t say anything to that effect. She was intrigued to see where this was going and whether or not he would use all the straps hanging from her arms.

He started to wrap her, taking cloth from the left and laying it over her body in different areas, securing them with the belt around her waist. He stepped back to examine his work, making an adjustment here or there with gentle tugs.

Then he went back over to the wall and came back with two more straps. He attached them to the waistband, then snaked them down between her legs, stepping around and pulling them tight. The straps slipped into her wet pussy, sliding along her clit and she gasped.

“Yeah, you like that, don’t you?” He placed his lips next to her ears. “And I like it that your cunt is nice and wet for me.”

Saffron didn’t answer him, because she wasn’t quite sure what to say. Saying “*Yes, Master,*” would feel strange to her, even if that was what he expected to hear.

She was happy he let the issue die, though, as she listened to his footsteps echo away behind her. There was the sharp, distinct sound of two champagne bottles being opened, and she smiled. Was he toasting their new union, one bottle for each of them?

That would be nice. But the alcohol would be cold, and she was already chilly, and getting chillier by the minute. The wind came in short intervals, some gusts heavy, some soft; either way she didn't care for the cold. She thought about telling him to shut the door, but that would break the spell he had woven around them.

He stepped in front of her, a champagne bottle in each hand. "Thirsty?"

"Yes."

He lifted an eyebrow in question and she said, "Yes, Master."

"Better." He took a drink then lifted the bottle to her mouth. The bubbles tickled her nose as he poured a small amount for her to drink. She swallowed as much as she could, then let the rest dribble down her chin.

She returned his smile, thinking that if her time here at Fingertip Fantasies included champagne and being bound and able to break her own restraints, then things might not be so bad.

"Grab hold of the chains and don't let go. I'm going to test your resolve to follow instructions."

"What?" What the hell was he up to?

"Promise me. This won't be painful, not in the classical sense anyway. No matter how uncomfortable this becomes, I want you to do it for me. Remember, this is a test of limits."

"Painful?"

He gave her another of his grins, then put his thumbs over the openings and shook the bottles. By the time she figured out what he was doing, it was too late. He sprayed her with champagne from top to bottom, the liquid soaking through the thin cloth, making it stick to her body.

Saffron started to shiver instantly, the mixture of the cold wind and the drink raising goose bumps on her skin. Her nipples turned into painfully hard pebbles and her teeth chattered.

He lifted the bottles over her head and emptied the remainder. It cascaded down her hair and over her shoulders. Saffron quivered but refused to break the bonds. If he wanted to see how much she could take, she would show him. She was in this for the two-week haul.

The chains were frigid, but she kept her fingers firmly clasped, determined not to let go no matter what.

"Maybe I was wrong," he said after a few minutes. "Maybe there is a submissive hiding

in there somewhere.”

He set the bottles down then crossed to her, roughly moving the fabric away from her breasts before capturing a nipple between his teeth, sucking and nibbling forcefully. Hot shock waves competed with the chill still racking her body as he suckled her harder, his teeth raking over the sensitive skin, causing a delicious sensation that made Saffron cry out.

He pulled on the cloth that snaked between her legs, the movement producing friction on her clit.

“Ride it.” She moved her hips instinctively as he pulled it even tighter. “Feel it slip inside that wet, hot pussy.”

“Oh, oh crap...I...” She could feel her orgasm building as his teeth continued to torture her nipple. When the first wave crested, she cried out and he released her nipple, instead taking as much as her breast into his mouth as he could, the sucking sound echoing through the room.

His hand released the material and slid to her pussy, finding her clit instantly. He pinched it as hard as he’d pinched her nipples and a second orgasm slammed into her almost before the first one had ended.

“You come very quickly. I like that, but we’re going to have to work on it, aren’t we? Orgasms are a privilege, and will be given only as a reward.” Saffron shook as he lifted his lips to her ears. “Enjoy it, enigma, because it is the last one you will get without asking first, do you understand?”

“Yes, Master.” The words came out effortlessly as he continued to rub her now aching clit.

“You’re mine until you leave here. I control your body, your movements, your food, your sleep, your very existence within these walls. Tell me you understand.”

This time there was a slight bit of hesitation before she said, “I understand.”

In moments, things had changed. She was no longer the magician. He was, and she was the scantily dressed assistant, willing to do his bidding no matter what.

“Try that again.” He sounded like an angry Master now and Saffron tried to pull away from him.

“I understand, Master.” Using the term Master would take some getting used to, but she could do it, she had no doubt.

“If you do not call me Master, you will call me Sir. It will keep you in a submissive



frame of mind. Now, I have things to do. Miss Kitty will return and release you. Do not let yourself down until she is here. After you clean up the champagne on the floor, you may shower, then go to your bed. Miss Kitty will show you where it is.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Good.” He stepped back and the look on his face made her feel as if he were proud of what had just happened, as if she’d passed her first test, which she supposed she had.

He started for the door, stopping to look over his shoulder. “Don’t leave your bed tonight unless I call for you, enigma.”

“Yes, Master.”

The door closed behind him and Saffron closed her eyes. Her shoulders ached and her arms cried out in pain from being held in the same position for too long. Miss Kitty had better hurry, and the giant needn’t worry about her leaving her bed tonight.

She was exhausted and ready to do nothing but sleep, hopefully in a very soft, very large bed.

## *Chapter Five*

Saffron lay back on the bed, her gaze turned toward the empty one across the room. The difference between the two was enormous. Hers was a four-poster twin bed, the frame made of metal, as were the screens that hung from the top of the frame to the floor on all four sides.

Trying to get out of this bed without alerting the person sleeping in the other four-poster, which she guessed to be a king bed from what she could see, would be near to impossible. She should test it now, since the other bed was empty.

At some point during her stay, she would want to try and find an office, or explore rooms on her own. She couldn't very well use only her experiences for the story. Ms. Steele would expect more, and she needed to give it to her.

She tried to remember the words when she'd proposed the story. *"You've heard of Fingertip Fantasies, right? I want you to see what you can find out. I think our readers would be interested in what you discover."*

She'd told her that yes, she was sure readers would be thrilled to find out about Fingertip Fantasies, but truthfully, she didn't know a lot about the magazine, since she'd never written for them before. This was a first that hopefully would turn into a regular job. Things had been tough in the free-lance world lately, and Saffron had heard Steele Publications was always interested in good copy.

Francis Steele was not what Saffron had expected from someone who ran an underground sex mag that was distributed all over the U.S. and Canada. The publisher had a take-no-prisoners reputation, so when she'd found a petite, yet beautiful and sophisticated woman in the office, Saffron had been amazed, until the publisher had started talking about the story. She'd been all business and more than willing to explain what made good copy for a story about sex.

The thought of the money made her sit up. She crossed her legs in front of herself and glanced around the room. Why would Francis Steele pay ten grand to send a writer she'd never used before to a sex club?

The woman had writers that were obviously on the payroll, ones whose names she saw in the magazine every month. Why wouldn't she send one of them? But better than that, why hadn't she thought about this before now?

Saffron had absolutely no idea where she was and no way to contact Jenna or anyone else to say, "I'm in trouble, come get me," if the need arose. No money. No cell phone. No computer. They had her wallet and passport. She'd not been allowed to bring anything else.

There was no telling where all those things were. All she had, really, was the toothbrush Miss Kitty had given her tonight along with various other toiletries needed to wash and moisturize her face and body.

Even now, she was naked as the day she was born, sitting behind an iron curtain waiting to see what would happen next.

The only thing that eased her mind even a little was the fact that she still tingled from the orgasms the giant had produced. Damn but the man's fingers were musical instruments, able to play her the very first time he'd touched her.

It had almost felt as if there were a manual about how to make her come and he'd read it just by looking at her during the auction.

The auction. That had been weird, and unexpected. The one thing she'd expected was the journal, and it still hadn't arrived. She could ask her new Master about it, but he wasn't here. Which brought up yet another question.

Where the hell was he? It was late at night, surely, although she hadn't seen a clock since she'd arrived. Had he gone to play in one of the public rooms Master Thomas had mentioned? And if he had, why hadn't he taken her? Had she disappointed him in some way?

She wanted a chance to see those rooms, to see what happened in them and use them in her story. It would add color that Francis Steele would love.

"Screw this." She clasped the edge of the curtain and nosily swept it aside. Her feet touched the cold wood floor. Good reporters didn't get stories by sitting around and waiting for information to come to them. They went out looking for facts.

The curtain made a loud rattling noise as she let it drop. What did it matter? No one else

was here. For all she knew, the giant slept somewhere else and that large bed would be used only for sex, maybe to bind her again.

Her nipples tingled at the thought and she crossed to a closet, flinging it open. It was full of men's clothing. She ran her fingers over the shirts, which varied from chambray or silk to cotton and linen, then focused on the jeans and suits. There was also a large pegboard full of ties of various colors and designs. From the size of the shoes in the bottom, she figured the clothes belonged to Master.

"Yup, definitely the giant's room."

"Why yes, it is."

She froze at the sound of his voice. She hadn't even heard a door open. Was it a coincidence that he'd appeared at this very moment? Somehow she didn't think so. How had he known she was out of bed? The room had to be wired with cameras. She mentally cursed herself for not considering that possibility.

"What are you doing, enigma? I believe my order was to go to bed and stay there."

"I was cold." She turned toward him, hoping her hard nipples would support her story. "Since I wasn't allowed to bring clothing, I thought maybe there was something in here I could wear, Master."

"There are sheets and blankets on your bed, are there not?"

"Yes, Master." Best not to antagonize him any more than she already had. He had his arms crossed over his massive chest and he looked down at her as if she were on her knees. What would it be like to look up at him while she was on her knees? She would find out soon enough, probably. Maybe even tonight; maybe right now.

"Tell me again why you were exploring my closet."

"I told you, I was cold. I'm not used to sleeping naked." His gaze hardened and she realized her mistake. "I mean, um, Master."

"I don't think I care for your tone of voice, or for the fact you threw my orders aside so casually." He continued to look her over, and she didn't say anything, afraid she'd make things worse by saying the wrong thing. "We're obviously going to have to work on your skill at following my directions."

"I'm sorry, Sir."

"So am I." She started to walk off, stopping when he tugged on her hair, just hard enough

for her to wince. “But since you’re here, you can make yourself useful and help me undress.”

“Yes, Sir.” She stepped in front of him and reached for the bottom of his T-shirt. She was a good seven or eight inches shorter than he was, and there would be no way she could get the material over his head, she knew. She released it, then reached for the button on his jeans, her hands shaking.

“Tell me, enigma, when you undress, what do you take off first? Your pants, or your shoes?”

A blush spread over her face, warming her down her neck and chest. She knelt in front of him and started to untie his shoes.

“Tennis shoes, I call them, but I think nowadays they’re called athletic shoes, don’t you?”

“Yes, Master.” She got the first shoe undone and she slipped it off his foot, putting it inside the closet next to the others.

“Tell me, when you were a child, did your parents, your teachers, have problems with you following their instructions. And please, tell me the truth.”

She winced slightly as memories of her childhood flashed before her. She started to untie the other shoe and murmured, “Yes, Sir, sometimes they did.”

“Give me an example.”

Oh good heavens, were they going to play “*This is Your Life?*” She finished the other shoe and put pressure on his heel. He lifted his foot and she slipped it off, placing it next to the other one.

“Well, I was suspended in my senior year.” She pulled off his socks, looking around for a hamper in which to toss them.

“It’s in the bathroom. You may take them later. First, I want to hear about your suspension. You went for the big stuff right off the bat. I expected to hear you say you pilfered penny candy from the supermarket.”

“Well, I did that, too, but my mother made me take it back. I had to pay for it, and I didn’t get to keep it, except for the ones I ate.”

“Good for her.” He tugged on her hair again. “Shirt next.”

She stood and again took hold of the hem. The problem still remained of how to get it over his head when she was so much shorter. She waited for him to give her a suggestion, but he remained silent.

Finally, she looked around the room and spotted a desk and chair near the outside window. She crossed to the chair and brought it back to him, standing up on it.

“Bravo,” he said as she lifted the shirt over his head and threw it on top of the socks. “You’re quick on your feet. Now, my pants, and finish telling me about your suspension.”

Saffron returned the chair to its position and stood in front of him. Her fingers shook as she grasped the top metal button and pushed it through the denim slot.

“I’m waiting to hear about your wild days in suspension.”

She released the second button. “My best friend, Jenna, and I we...well, we played a trick on the chemistry teacher. He’d given her an F on a project because he said she cheated, and refused to let her appeal the grade. We never did figure out why.”

The third button popped free, and then the fourth. Her hands brushed against the hard length of him and she fought the urge to grasp him. He’d gone commando, and the skin of his cock was soft, and he was missing pubic hair, she noticed. She thought only submissives shaved, but it looked as if she were wrong.

“Bare balls tingle wonderfully when they’re licked. Soon enough your tongue will provide me with great pleasure.”

Saffron gasped and looked away. She didn’t want him to see how much she enjoyed the thought of doing what he’d just described. Her hands remained at her side, afraid if she touched his jeans again, she would stroke him, and she was sure if she did it without permission, she would be in even more trouble than she was already in.

“I don’t like to wait. I believe I mentioned that earlier in the evening.”

A small laugh escaped her mouth as the memory of the trick flooded back. “We rearranged his room by turning all the desks upside down. We lined the beakers in pyramids near the chalkboards and then locked everything else in the supply closet and broke a key off in the lock. It took days for them to put everything back together.”

“What a naughty girl.” He sounded amused and she smiled along with him.

The last button on his jeans unsnapped. “We were kids and thought it was a fitting punishment for the way he’d treated Jenna. Two months of in-school suspension taught me differently, though. We should have taken our grievances to the principal.”

“Yes, you should have.” There was a pregnant pause. “Finish your job.”

Saffron tried to tell herself that this was like undressing any other man she’d been with.

She tugged his jeans over his lean hips, sliding them over his muscular thighs. His hard cock rose up and lay against his stomach as she removed the pants as slowly as possible, one leg at a time.

Rather than look at the treat in front of her, she gathered his clothes and took them to the bathroom, dumping them into the hamper before coming back into the room.

“You may go to bed now.” Saffron stared at him in shock. “I’m a big boy, and I have more discipline than to let you play with what you want. My cock is for good girls who behave themselves. When you learn that, you can taste it. Now go.”

For a moment, she thought to disobey him more, to cross the room and grasp him in her hands. If she started to jerk him off, he wouldn’t stop her. No man would push away a woman who offered him sex. At least no man she knew would. If she did that, however, it would heap more trouble onto her plate. If she spent all her time here being punished, she would never learn anything about the resort.

She headed toward the opening to her room, stopping when he called her name.

“When you get up in the morning, you may use the facilities, then go to that corner right there.” She turned to see him point to one near the bed. “Put your nose in it and keep it there until I say otherwise.”

“Excuse me?”

“You heard me. If you disobey me on this, there will be serious consequences. I hope you understand that.”

*What are you going to do, send me home?* She had no doubt that was exactly what he would do. Don’t give him the chance to end things before they get started.

“Yes Master. I’ll do as you ask.”

“I’m glad to hear that.”

She scurried across the floor, parting the iron curtain and laying down in her bed. She heard him moving around, heard the water running in the sink and then the shower.

Did he really mean for her to stand in the corner? That wasn’t exactly a punishment she’d ever imagined. Spanking, yes. But the corner? She wasn’t sure how long it was before she heard the creak of the large bed. He extinguished the light and the room plunged into inky darkness.

Being inside the tiny cell-like bed made the room seem smaller, and darker. Saffron thought about her trip to the closet and the fact that she hadn’t thought about there being cameras in the room. She needed to find out where they were so she could disable them the next time she

tried to snoop around.

She would learn from her mistakes and be more careful. After all, she had two weeks in which to discover the secret of Fingertip Fantasies. The way things were going, though, she was going to ask Steele for more money than five grand.

Ten sounded like the perfect number, and she was sure she would agree.



## *Chapter Six*

Last night, the thought of standing in the corner had been horrifying. In the light of morning, though, the idea did nothing more than piss her off. Submission wasn't about sleeping in tomb-like beds and standing in corners, was it? If so, *Salacious* readers were going to be sorely disappointed.

Saffron glanced toward the still-occupied bed where the giant lay sprawled out, his chest rising and falling in slow, even movements—meaning, she was sure, that he was still asleep. Either that or he was awake and faking it. When her back was turned, did he open one eye to watch her standing there? Was he angry because she hadn't followed his instructions yet?

“Oh hell.” She stepped toward the corner, wondering exactly what she was supposed to do. Was there corner etiquette? Was there a certain position she needed to be in? Was she supposed to recite one hundred times “*I will not disobey my Master.*”

She bounced from foot to foot, then put her hands on either side of her head and leaned forward, putting her forehead against the left wall. This was not what she'd imagined she'd be doing here at the resort. Maybe she should have asked for a different fantasy. The ad said they'd fulfill anything a person wanted, for the right price, of course. She'd give anything right now to go back to the day she'd been interviewed and change her answers just a little.

“No Monday morning quarterbacking,” she said, gasping when two strong hands clasped her head and pulled it back ever so slowly.

“Hands behind your back.” She obeyed immediately and he tilted her head forward until her forehead rested between the two walls. “Back up and bend over, keeping your face against the wall, then spread your legs.”

Oh, he was going to fuck her. She'd never had sex with someone she'd just met, but

damn she wanted it right now. Being naked in front of him, and remembering the explosion he'd set off in her body last night, made her want him very much.

"Good. Stay that way."

Moments later, she heard the creak of the bed and she wondered how a man so large could move so quietly. When had he crossed the room? The next sounds, though, she heard quiet clearly. He was applying lotion, or lube, to his cock and stroking it.

"Damn, I'm hard this morning. Must be the beautiful sight before me, your sweet ass high in the air, your face in the corner. You were a bad girl yesterday, enigma. I hope your behavior improves today so that tomorrow morning you can be the one doing this."

Saffron closed her eyes as his groans and grunts deepened, the sound of his strokes increasing. Oh damn, this wasn't fair. A gorgeous, huge dick behind her, and she couldn't play with it because she was standing in the corner.

Life sucked at this very moment.

Or did it?

Her mind might be rebelling but her nipples were harder than rocks, and her wet pussy throbbed. Behind her, she heard him groan and then mutter, "Oh, fucking good."

He'd come without letting her touch him. Damn. She heard him get up and go toward the bathroom.

"Now he makes noise," she whispered. "Fuck this isn't fair. This is my fantasy. I paid for it. Shouldn't I get what I desire?" She wanted nothing more than to touch herself, flick her finger over clit and try to bring about an orgasm. He was in the bathroom now, and wouldn't know, would he?

She wanted to do it, yes, but she didn't, his words from earlier playing in her head. "*I hope your behavior improves today.*"

He came out of the bathroom and she felt him move behind her. "I'm proud of you, enigma. I can see that you're fighting to stay in position. That's good. I like that very much. Perhaps there is some hope for you."

It was on the tip of her tongue to say she didn't give a flip what he liked, but the words would be false. His praise sent a jolt of happiness through her and she laughed. "May I stand up, Master?"

"Yes, you may. Thank you for asking, enigma, and thank you for following my

instructions.”

The thrill increased and she felt herself blush. “You’re welcome, Sir.”

“I don’t know about you, but I’m hungry. Some coffee would be nice. Or are you a tea woman?”

“Coffee, Sir.”

He went to the closet and retrieved a floor-length black cloak. He draped it over her shoulders and tied it at the neck. “When you leave here, take a left, then a right at the end of the hall. Follow that corridor to the dining room. They’ll have a trolley waiting for you there. Bring it back here.”

“Yes, Master.” Saffron exited the room, thrilled that he’d let her go on her own. This boded well for other trips during the day. Surely he wouldn’t be with her 24/7, and if she was out in the hallway now, others might not think it was so strange if she was out later. Now she was following her Master’s directions. Later she would be searching for the office, and a way to get inside, a way to find information that would give insight into this place.

She found the room easily enough. As soon as she entered, Miss Kitty motioned to her. Did the woman ever sleep? “Good morning, Miss Tyler.”

“Good morning, Miss Kitty.” She gave the older woman a bright smile. “How are you?”

“Fine, thank you for asking. You shouldn’t keep your Master waiting.” She indicated Saffron should leave the way she came.

Saffron moved toward the door. So much for asking the woman a few questions, like whether or not she was a guest or an employee, and how long she’d been here. Maybe there would be time for that later.

She put her hands on the cart’s handle, realizing when she did that the cloak spread wide, effectively leaving her half-naked in front of everyone in the room. She pulled her hands back and searched for armholes but found none.

Mortification spread through her. She’d never been a huge fan of her too-large body, and showing it off to everyone in the room wasn’t her idea of a great way to start the day. She tried wrapping her hands in the material before she grasped the cart, but that made the cloak too tight for her to walk.

She dropped it immediately then looked up to see Straith watching her, a smile curving the tips of his mouth. He walked toward her and she thought it was the first time she’d ever seen

the Englishman smile. Even during her interview, he hadn't done anything but frown.

"Is there a problem, Miss Tyler?"

"No." She pulled the cloak together.

"Then I suggest you hurry before the coffee gets cold."

"Oh hell, fine." She pushed the cart out of the room, very aware of the people watching her. But what did she expect? She was at a sex club so nudity was *de rigueur*.

Back in her Master's rooms, she found him on the phone. He covered the mouthpiece before saying, "You may set the table."

*Table?* She looked around, shocked to find a long table sitting in the far corner behind the door. She'd totally missed that last night, and this morning. What sort of a reporter was she when she didn't even notice the different pieces of furniture in a room? She really needed to step up her game and stop treating this like a vacation.

She wheeled the cart over and reached for the second tier, pulling out a place mat, plate, and set of silverware. A further search of the tray didn't turn up another place setting. The giant was still on the phone, so she set the table for one, placing the covered dishes near the plate.

There was a large carafe of coffee and two cups. She poured herself a cup, adding sugar and cream and was about to take a drink when she heard him hang up the phone. He crossed the room and sat down at the table.

"I'd like one of those." He pointed to her cup and she filled his mug. As she expected, he drank it black. "Please take off your cloak and have a seat."

Saffron cleared her throat and he looked at her with raised eyebrows.

"There are two problems. One, they only gave us one place setting, and two, if I take off the cloak, I'll be naked."

"Deliciously so." He took another drink. "And there are no problems. I will feed you from my plate. Now, please do as I ask."

"*Oh, hell no*" lingered on the tip of her tongue. *Focus, Saffron, focus. Remember his words about behaving. Besides, it's not as though he hasn't seen you naked already.* She undid the cloak, hanging it up in the closet before sitting in the chair next to him.

"Sit like a proper young lady at tea, ass on the edge of the chair, legs together, hands in your lap, back straight."

Saffron knew she'd had this lesson as a child, about the proper way to sit at the table.

Nowadays, she ignored it, though. Until now.

“You may drink from your cup as you see fit.”

“That’s very generous of you,” she said. She winced, then whispered, “Sorry, Master.”

“Duly noted.” He took a bite of the quiche on his plate, then nodded his approval.

“Delicious.”

“Did Miss Kitty cook it?”

“Why do you ask?”

“It’s just that she was in the dining room. She seems to be everywhere.” There was more than one way to find out information.

“Indeed.” He took another bite.

So much for that idea, since he obviously wasn’t going to tell her anything. She glanced at the plate then took another sip of her coffee. It really did look good. But when he put a bite on the fork and offered it to her, she jerked her head back.

“You don’t eat eggs?”

“I do.” She reached for the fork, but this time he was the one to pull backward.

“Hands in your lap.”

“But—”

“But nothing, enigma. There are no buts in our relationship. You will do as I say.”

“Or I’ll go back to the corner? What about across your lap? Are you going to stand me in the corner and then spank me?”

He stared at her for a long moment then he put the bite of food into his mouth and chewed. He reached for a second one and she watched him, surprised.

“What about me?”

“You turned it down. You have your coffee.” He pointed his fork toward her cup and then took another bite.

“Wait. I…” She wasn’t quite sure how to say she’d changed her mind, or her growling stomach had done so. She found that she didn’t have to, though. He forked up another bite and offered it to her.

“Stay in position, back straight, hands in lap. Lean into it.”

She took the bite daintily and he pulled the fork from her mouth leisurely. An explosion of taste filled her mouth and she rolled her eyes toward the heavens. “Yes, it is good, isn’t it?”

“Very.” He ate another bite and fed the remainder to her, mixing it with bites of sausage and pieces of toast. Eating the toast from his hand was more personal than taking food from the fork, and the difference surprised her. What would it feel like if he offered her a small bite of something and she had to take his fingers into her mouth?

A huge part of her wanted to find out. There was another that said the feeling would be too intimate, and she wasn’t sure she wanted to know what that felt like.

She’d just taken a sip from her coffee when there was a knock at the door.

“Come,” her Master said in his deep voice.

“But I’m naked,” she hissed out as the door opened.

“I thought we’d already established that fact.” He looked toward the door. “Mr. Straith.”

“Sir.” The Englishman placed two composition books and several pens on the table. “As requested for your submissive.”

The giant gave her a pointed look to remind her of her manners and she looked toward Straith. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome, Miss Tyler,” he said, then returned his gaze to her Master. “I hope everything is satisfactory, sir. Do you require anything else?”

“Yes, I have some business to attend to this afternoon. I would prefer to use one of the private guest offices. Can you please have one prepared?”

Saffron fingered the notebook as the two men talked. If he were gone, then she would have a chance to write, and hopefully an opportunity to take a look around. She looked around the room for the camera that had given her away last night. She didn’t find one, and when a finger tapped her knee, she turned her gaze to her Master.

“Daydreaming?” He was already standing, so she stood up next to him. She looked around to find Straith gone.

“I suppose so. Sorry, Sir.”

“Not a problem, not right now, anyway. I’ll be busy most of the day. You may write, but don’t leave this room.”

She tried to keep her voice seductive. “I can’t take a walk?”

“You may clear the table and take the cart back to the dining room. You may wear the cloak outside, but in this room, you will remain naked. When you return, you will stay here. As punishment for your attitude at breakfast, you will stand in the corner for fifteen minutes. There

is a timer on my dresser that you may use.”

He tipped her chin up, and for a moment, she thought he might kiss her. Then he patted her bare ass as he walked by. “Clean up before doing anything else.”

“Master?” She would not mention the punishment. It sounded easy enough and putting up a fuss would just earn her more.

“Yes.” He stopped in front of the door.

“What do you do for a living?”

“I work.”

She sighed in frustration. “Work at what, Sir? Last night you had on a Steele publications shirt. Are you a writer?”

“No.”

“Photographer?”

“No.”

“Copy editor?”

“No.”

“Janitor?”

“No.”

Saffron huffed in disgust. He hadn’t cracked a smile at the last one, or given any indication that he was going to answer her questions with a word other than no. “Do I get to know anything about you?”

“Know I’m your Master, and if you don’t clean up and do your punishment, or if you leave the room for anything but what I described, you will find that spending time in the corner is not the only option for dealing with your behavior.”

He winked and left the room, and Saffron stared at the spot he’d just vacated.

“He fucking winked at me,” she whispered. “What the hell does that mean, and who the hell are you?”

*Focus on what you know*, she thought. “Number one, you have a closet full of clothes, which means you’re not here for a two-week stay. Number two, you’re working this afternoon, which means you don’t have to be at your own office to do it, unless this is your office. No, that can’t be right because you asked Straith if you could use one. Are you so vain you have to carry a closet full of clothes with you everywhere you go? Or are you what I’m supposed to be

investigating? Do you own Fingertip Fantasies, or work here?”

Another thing she knew was that she wasn't going to the cafeteria in the cloak again. She went to his closet and selected a light blue linen shirt that she dropped over her head. It fell to her knees and she smirked. No naked table bussing for her this morning.

He hadn't said anything about not wearing his clothes. And he hadn't said how quickly she had to return after taking the cart back to the cafeteria, either. Just that she had to stand in the corner afterward.

“Boo, boo on you for not being more specific,” she whispered as she filled the cart with dirty plates. “I've got some exploring to do.”



## *Chapter Seven*

If her outfit surprised Miss Kitty, the woman didn't show it. She took the cart and nodded a thank you at Saffron. The dining room was empty now except for a few half-naked men and women wiping down the tables.

The only thing all these people had in common were the collars around their necks. Saffron put her fingers to her bare skin and wondered what it took to earn one of those. She'd thought it was standard, but since she hadn't received one yet, she supposed it was not.

Or maybe that was on the schedule for tonight. And what would that feel like, exactly? That would make an interesting addition to the story: writing about what it felt like to have a collar attached around your neck. It would be a strange to wear something that denoted her as the property of a man. But then again, she might like it. She wouldn't know the answer to that until he gave her a collar. If he ever let her ask questions, she'd ask one about the collar.

She glanced over at Miss Kitty. Since there weren't many people around, now might be the perfect time to ask the woman some questions. But doing that would take time away from her chance to scope things out. She made a mental note that the dining room was empty after breakfast. Tomorrow she would corner Miss Kitty and try to get some answers out of her.

In the meantime, the resort waited for her to discover all its secrets. She stepped into the hallway and looked around. Full-length windows at the end of the hall enticed her, so she walked toward them. They overlooked a body of water. The area was dotted with trees and the water seemed to contain numerous small islands at various intervals. A light mist hung low over the water and she had no doubt it was as cold today as it had been last night.

This was definitely a new place to her and she'd never seen anything like it. Where were they? She had a feeling if she asked the giant where they were, he would give her the same

answer as he had before. “Fingertip Fantasies.”

Her fingers itched for a computer where she could search for lakes. Of course, that would give her a thousand plus hits and she’d have to look at photos to see if she recognized the lake. One look out the window would make a tough identifier. She needed more information than what she had right now before she did a search.

What she needed was to find an office, then see if she could figure out if anyone was inside and if she could snoop. If she couldn’t do it now, then maybe she could find a way to sneak away from the giant tonight. Maybe the best time would be very early in the morning, say around four or five. He would be asleep then and not able to see her on the cameras in the room.

Were the cameras hooked to a recorder? If they were, would he go over them later to see if she’d stayed in her bed?

Tonight, before she went to sleep, she needed to part the curtain on the far side of the bed. Hopefully, she could find something to hold it open so it wouldn’t make noise when she got up. Too bad she didn’t have her cell phone so she could set an alarm.

If she planned to explore, then she needed to find the office now, while she could explain her being out as an “I have permission to be out” trip.

She hurried past the dining room, and instead of turning toward her Master’s suite of rooms, she went straight. The doors were all shut with no identifying numbers or plaques to say if they were private or public rooms.

She didn’t want to walk in on someone doing something naughty. Or did she? That might make a fun addition to her story. “*While strolling the grounds one afternoon, I found Master X paddling Submissive V, or I found Mistress Q riding Submissive J around the room like he was a pony.*”

Those were just a few of the things she’d read about in books, and seeing them in person would add color to her story. She put her fingers around a doorknob and turned. The knob clicked opened and she held her breath. This could turn out to be a really good move on her part, or it could turn out to be a really bad idea.

Disappointment raced through her as she opened the door to find an empty room. No decorations, no toys, no people. She closed the door and moved down the line, hoping she’d find something.

All the rooms were empty, and when she turned the corner, she found four more doors,

two on each side. All four of them were marked private and she thought maybe she'd found the office.

*Do it now*, she repeated to herself. There was a huge chance of discovery, true, but she could always say she got lost. The knob clicked as it turned and Saffron looked inside, her eyes widening in delight.

No office, but definitely a goldmine.

There were no people, but standing in the middle of the room was a life-sized St. Andrew's cross. She hurried inside and closed the door, searching the wall for a light switch. She twisted a knob and it clicked. Low, adjustable light appeared. The more she turned the knob, the brighter the light grew.

Her eyes widened in delight as she saw the treasure she'd found. The inside wall played home to many hooks, from which hung varied implements. She ran her fingers over crops and floggers, chains and clamps. This was what she'd expected to find. Some of the things she'd read about. Some she had no clue as to their purpose.

Maybe the giant could tell her. But she couldn't very well ask him, could she? *Excuse me, while I was disobeying you this morning, I found a really cool room. Can you take me there again?*

She moved away from the wall, walking around the St. Andrew's cross. It was made of polished wood of some sort. Saffron had never been able to tell the difference between woods.

As an experiment, she stepped onto the platform and put her feet in the openings, then stretched her arms up toward the bindings. She imagined herself naked, with the giant in front of her, a flogger in his hand. Would she enjoy it? Or would she hate every second of it?

The bigger question, she thought, was if she would get the chance to try it out, since he seemed to be moving like a snail. Perhaps there was something she could do to push him along.

Maybe if she pissed him with this little trek, he would punish her and she would get to see what it was like to receive a real reprimand. So far, his "punishment" had been making her stand in a corner, which had pissed her off royally. It was a penalty for being bad, true, but to her, it didn't have the flavor of being tied up and spanked. And that's what she wanted.

Thinking about the mild retaliations reminded her that he hadn't allowed her to play with his cock last night. That was definitely punishment. She wanted to taste that long, thick toy, wanted to wrap her fingers around it. She wasn't ashamed to admit she'd fantasized about him

riding her, his cock sliding in and out of her while she writhed in ecstasy.

Saffron fingered the leather bindings at the top of the cross, then put her hands into the position they would be in for someone to bind her.

Eyes closed, she again imagined the giant in front of her. He was wearing tight jeans and the shirt she had on right now, the material stretched across his chest. There was a leather flogger in his hand, the strips hanging down to the floor. He squeezed it then stepped toward her.

*“You want my cock?”*

*“Yes, Master.”*

*“Where do you want it?”*

*“Everywhere, Master.”*

*“Good answer, enigma; I’ll fuck your pussy, and your ass, after I whip it, that is. Make it nice and red, pretty little marks on that beautiful bottom. I’ll love to squeeze your cheeks as I fuck you. You’d like that, wouldn’t you?”*

Oh God, yes, she’d like it. She shivered in pleasure, then her eyes flew open as a creaking sound reached her ears.

The door was still closed, but there was a crack where it should have been latched. Had she latched it? Or had she left it partially open? She couldn’t remember. She’d been too excited about looking at the equipment on the wall.

She pulled the door open and peered both ways. The hallway was empty. The creak had been the wind, or maybe someone walking by who was already in another room. Either way, it was time for her to head back to the giant’s quarters before he caught her out and things turned nasty.

She was definitely intrigued by the St. Andrew’s cross and wanted to experience what it was like to be strapped to it. She needed to quit playing loose, or she would not get any good copy.

\* \* \* \*

Saffron worked most of the afternoon, making sure she put down thoughts that she could include in the story. She’d described the scene from last night, the wonderful feeling of being bound and the horribly frigid feeling that had still thrilled her as he’d played with her pussy. The tough part had been not making lists as she usually did when writing a story. If the giant looked at her writings and saw things he thought were out of the ordinary, things could turn out ugly for

her.

She glanced at her list, hoping that it seemed nothing more than an inventory of someone who was interested in trying BDSM.

1. *Collar*
2. *Punishments*
3. *Sex*
4. *Name of Master*
5. *Experience of Master*
6. *Occupation of Master*
7. *Home town of Master*

She looked over her list again: seven items and four of them dealt with the man who was her Master. Why hadn't he told her anything about himself? Of course, he hadn't really asked about her, either. But he had a file he could look out that told him all about the illusionary Saffron Tyler, a store clerk from Seattle. That made her think about Jenna, who was probably worried that she hadn't been able to get hold of her friend, especially after the conversation about the dress.

Maybe when she found the office, she could find a phone and make a collect call, reassure her friend that everything was fine.

She doodled in her notebook, her mind wandering back to last night and the Steele Publications shirt her Master had worn during the auction. Was he some sort of plant? Had Ms. Steele sent him to watch out for her? Or was he a fellow writer, looking to tell the other side of the tale? That might be interesting, to have a Dom/sub article in the magazine.

If that were the case, though, she would hope to be in on the whole plan. It would make the stories better, wouldn't it? Or would it be best for her to be surprised, to take things as they'd come?

When she'd asked him about his occupation, he'd answered each question with a no. "But people were known to lie, weren't they?"

"Sometimes."

She jerked in her chair, sending the journal flying across the table.

“Holy crap, quit sneaking up on me. How in the hell...are you a warlock or something? Does this place have magical powers I’ve yet to tap into? There’s no sacrifice at the end of the stay, is there?”

“Not that I know of.” His smirk made her nipples tingle. “And I just walk softly.” He leaned over, his hand tight on her shoulder, his lips pressed against her ear. “And I don’t appreciate your tone of voice, your lack of respect or your continued misbehavior.”

Panic gripped her as he hissed, “Why are you wearing my shirt?”

She relaxed a little, happy he hadn’t mentioned her trip into the room with the cross. “I was...I’m sorry, Master.”

“You were cold? Is that your excuse?”

“Yes.”

“It’s eighty degrees in here.”

“Yes, but I’m not used to being naked, Sir.” Why hadn’t she taken the damn shirt off before now? She knew he was coming back at some point, yet she’d sat here dressed, like a fool. She was beginning to think she had a screw loose somewhere, and the original pull on that screw had been when Straith had appeared so unexpectedly on her doorstep.

“I see.” He moved to the other side of the table and sat down. “And the cross?”

Her panic turned to fear. Shit. He knew. “Cross?”

“Please don’t insult me, or yourself.”

Saffron wasn’t sure exactly what to say, so she said nothing. She reached across the table for her journal, closing it and placing the pen on top.

“I told you to come right back from the kitchen. You did not. I told you to wear the cloak when you took the dishes back. You did not. I told you to spend the day naked in this room. You did not. Now what do you think I should do with you? In baseball, they would say three strikes and you’re out, would they not?”

“You didn’t say I had to come right back, Master.”

He looked as if he could pound nails with his fists. He stared at her for a long, silent moment, and then the edges of his mouth turned down in displeasure. “Are you arguing with me?”

Yes, Sir.” Her hands shook, even though she’d been honest. Would he send her away, or give her to the next highest bidder? If he sent her out, she’d never be invited back. And Francis

Steele would never accept one of her proposals again. “Would it help if I said it won’t happen again?”

“No, because I don’t believe you.” He put his hands together and leaned forward, elbows on the table. Right now, he seemed very calm, and she had a feeling that was a bad thing. “I have a few things to say, and I want you to listen very carefully. Do not interrupt me, or put in your two cents worth at the end.”

She nodded, afraid to say yes.

“BDSM is about trust, and about building a relationship. Since you’re a novice at this, and we have two weeks, my plan was to take things very slowly. I wanted to give us a chance to get to know each other, to do some exercises in trust building, to play a little, to fuck. The harder things would have come next week.”

Saffron’s mouth went dry at his use of the word fuck. She could only imagine what it would be like to have the giant inside her.

“You don’t just throw a woman on a cross and whip her. That is the sign of a bad Dom, of a man who doesn’t understand the mental connection that needs to be made between a Master and submissive.”

The words ‘I’m sorry’ were on the tip of her tongue, but she couldn’t let them go. If she disobeyed him on this...

“I’m going to give you one more try, with a punishment I devised after I learned of your explorations.” He drummed his fingers on the table. “If you fail tonight, you go home in the morning. I will not have a submissive I cannot trust.”

She wanted to ask why he wouldn’t just transfer her to someone else, like Master Thomas. Somehow, she thought fooling him wouldn’t be very tough. But she also thought being his submissive wouldn’t be as much fun as she could have with the giant.

When he didn’t continue to talk she said, “Yes, Sir, I understand.”

“Good. Get naked.”

Saffron wasted no time in following his command, giving in the harshest tone she’d ever heard him use. She stood and took off the shirt, took it to the hamper then hurried back to the table.

“Since you’re so interested in what’s outside this room, I’m going to use something similar to what you discovered today. You will wait here for someone to bring you along at the

proper time. In the meantime, you will stick your nose in the corner and stay there, in the exact position you were in this morning. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Master."

"If you deviate from the course your guide takes, or speak to them in any way, they will bring you back here and the night, and your fantasy, will be over."

"Yes, Master."

"Corner."

The tone of his voice told her she needed to hurry. She remembered the instructions from this morning: nose against the wall, bent slightly, legs spread, hands behind her back.

"Don't leave that spot."

"Yes, Sir." She heard the door close and she squeezed her eyes together, wondering what had caused her to take the chance of wandering around this morning. She should have done as he asked, let the adventure unfold without taking risks.

Yes, she wanted the story, but she would get one through him, too. She didn't have to snoop.

But she'd never been one to play follow the leader very well. She supposed that meant she wasn't a very good submissive, even if the idea had always fascinated her.

Her shoulders ached and her legs trembled. She wondered how long she'd been in this position. There was no clock in this room, and the windows were shut tight, which meant she couldn't tell the time from the position of the sun, or even if the sun was already gone from the sky.

A grumble erupted from her stomach, which surprised her. At some time during the afternoon, before the run-in with the giant, the ever-present Miss Kitty had appeared with a tray of food. Saffron had eaten the salad, chicken and vegetables quietly, and drank the two bottles of water that had been provided.

She shouldn't be hungry after that much food. Or was it nerves that were making her stomach ache? It could be that. Hopefully not, though. How embarrassing would it be to lose her supper while her Master was putting her through the paces for the first time?

Possible scenarios for the evening's activities were running through her mind when the door opened. Straith's voice rang out, making her cringe.

"Stand up." She did as he asked but kept her face toward the wall. She was determined



not to screw this up.

“Turn to me.” Miss Kitty and another woman stood in the doorway, right behind him. Straith nodded and they moved forward. They attached leather cuffs to her wrists and ankles, running a chain through a D-ring on each one until she was all hooked together.

“You know your instructions?”

Saffron nodded, afraid that if she said yes, it would break her Master’s command of not talking and the deal would be off.

He nodded to Miss Kitty, who went to the closet and retrieved her cloak.

“Your Master said you could wear this,” Straith said, taking it from the sub and handing it to her. “Put it on.”

Situating the cloth around her chained body was tough, but she eventually managed. She tied it around her neck, being careful not to train her gaze on him. Neither of the other two women would look him in the eyes, and since she figured he was the boss here, it was probably best if she followed their lead.

“You will come with us.” Straith took the lead with Miss Kitty behind him. The unknown woman indicated Saffron should go next and she did, feeling almost like a prisoner being led to the gallows.

Of course, the prisoners didn’t go naked. And she was pretty sure prisoners were nervous with no excitement mixed in. Excitement mixed with her nerves, which told her she had a great deal of faith in the giant, and she wasn’t exactly sure why. Maybe it was his use of the bonds she could break out of last night. Or maybe it was the fact that he hadn’t really touched her. Or maybe she was just crazy.

She didn’t think she was, though. In her research, she’d learned there was a fringe group of people who considered themselves Masters who were really more into harming the women or men they were with. Somehow, she didn’t think those people would do something like that here, in a very public place. But you never knew.

Saffron told herself that if he wanted to hurt her, he would have done it earlier. There had certainly been ample opportunity. He wouldn’t have given her a second chance with a threat to go home if she screwed up again.

Analyzing the situation wasn’t doing her any good, though. She needed to pay attention to what was happening, physically. He hadn’t given her a safe word yet and if she had to break

his imposed code of silence to get one, she would do it, even if that meant the scene ended and she had to leave the resort and lose her job.

A safe word was the most important thing in a scene, according to what she'd read.

The rattling of the chains was the only sound as they moved down through the building. They turned left at the end of the hallway, then moved past the room she'd explored that morning, which bothered her. She'd hoped to get another chance to look at the cross. It really was a fascinating item that she wanted to get a chance to try.

Straith stopped in front of a set of double doors and pushed them open. Saffron could hear low conversation and her excitement surged, making her stomach flop. She'd expected Straith and the two women with them, but she hadn't expected a crowd.

But when she stepped inside the room, she found that's exactly what she had. Not a crowd as at a sold out sports venue, but there were at least thirty people, some sitting in chairs, others naked and kneeling at a Dom or Domme's feet. There were more people here than had been at the auction.

Did they know she'd broken the rules? Or did they think this was a scene just for fun? Her throat felt as if it had closed off. Being in front of an audience was not exactly what she'd had in mind for tonight.

The giant stood before an apparatus unlike anything she'd ever seen before. It was a wooden frame, and it looked to be large enough to hold a man well over six-foot tall. The center of it was strung with ropes, tied at various places to create a rope bed. Four wooden poles that ran from floor to ceiling supported the whole thing.

As she drew closer, she could see the poles surrounded a sort of pulley system that would allow the bed to be raised or lowered.

The tightness in her chest grew painful and beads of sweat pop out on her forehead.

"Go to your Master." She hadn't realized Straith had stopped just inside the room and the women had gone to stand near the giant.

Saffron studied the man who had bought her. Part of her had hoped for leather and chains, knowing it would make better copy, but she was sorely disappointed. He wore faded jeans and a green linen shirt that made his eyes seem brighter than ever before.

The impassive look on his face surprised her. Why wasn't he showing anger, or at least a smugness that she'd followed his directions so well?

She moved slowly, stopping inches away from him.

“Your safe word is peaches. Can you remember that?”

“Yes, Master.”

“If you use that word, everything stops. It won’t start again, so make sure that you want to use it before you do and that you’re not just panicking for the moment. Try to calm yourself and make sure it’s exactly what you want.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Step with your back to the sling, legs pressed against the frame.”

He walked toward a table as she followed his instructions. When she turned toward the room, she saw him standing there with a flogger in his hands. The straps hung almost to the floor and the inability to breathe increased.

Why had she broken the rules? She should have let things go for at least a week before she started to explore the place. It wasn’t as if she were on a tight timeframe. If she’d just played by the rules, he would have taken things slowly.

Of course, he hadn’t explained that to her, had he? If he had, she might have been more likely to follow the rules. Maybe.

That asinine thought produced a mental head whack. The very definition of submission was doing as her Master said. And he had no idea she was up to something besides fulfilling her fantasy.

“Lie back on your back, please.” This came from Miss Kitty, and Saffron turned her head to look at the ropes. The holes were small enough that they should provide her with leverage to keep from losing her balance. She judged the best place to put her hand, then awkwardly climbed onto the frame.

“Secure her.” The women followed the giant’s commands, taking arms and legs and using the O-rings in her cuffs to spread-eagle her on the ropes. The bonds were pulled tight enough to make her wince just a little before they were loosened.

Within seconds, there was a whirling noise and the frame lifted between the posts. Saffron closed her eyes, trying to keep from crying out. When the giant’s face appeared above hers, she looked into his eyes.

“You will make a minimal amount of noise; grunts and groans are fine, but you will not call out questions or ask what is happening.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“The only word you might need to use would be...?” He gave her a questioning look.

“Peaches.”

“Very good.” He slipped a leather mask over her eyes and she gasped. There was a minimal amount of applause from the people watching. “Let us begin.”

Saffron battled against the loss of her eyesight, wanting to scream at him to take it off, yet knowing she really couldn't.

“You're such a naughty girl,” he whispered in her ear. “I hope this little lesson reminds you why you're here. You will follow my commands. Open your mouth.”

A plastic cock filled her mouth the minute she opened it. He pushed it inside hard, making her gag around it. Strands of leather fell over her face and shoulders and she knew this was the flogger he'd held. She'd seen photos of implements as she'd done her research, and this one seemed to be quite popular, a flogger with a dildo-handle.

“Get it nice and wet,” he said. “The crowd loves the noises you're making. Suck it, suck it hard. Be a little slut.”

The plastic slid in and out of her mouth, making her nipples tingle and her pussy throb. He pulled the cock out and she sucked in heavy breaths, only to have her mouth filled again moments later. He did that three more times before she felt him leave the area around her head.

She wondered where he'd gone, tried to mentally reach out for his presence, but she couldn't sense it. Then she felt the tip of the plastic cock at her pussy. It pushed in, then retreated, then pushed in again.

Saffron relaxed and tried to enjoy the sensation of being fucked. The plastic worked its way in and out of her, and when her Master's voice said, “Very nice,” right next to her ear again, she gasped. Who was fucking her with the cock if he was up here?

When the cock was fully inside her, he ran a finger down her cheek. “Your job is to keep that cock inside you. If it drops out, I will be very disappointed. You don't want to disappoint me, do you?”

“No, Master.” Saffron couldn't believe the word had come out of her mouth. What's more, she couldn't believe she actually meant it.

“You know, enigma, people think punishment means being hit, or whipped, paddled, spanked, whatever you want to call it. That, to them, is paying the penalty for their

transgressions. Other things work, too. Like being stimulated to the point of orgasm and not being allowed to follow through. Being denied pleasure can be painful, both physically and mentally.”

*Oh crap.* She closed her eyes against his words, the leather blindfold pressing against her eyelids.

“As I told you last night, you had your free orgasm. You won’t get another freebie, and you won’t get an orgasm tonight, period. You have two jobs, and both of those are to keep something inside you: the first is that large cock that fills you, and the second is your orgasm. And you’re going to feel the need to come. If you do, I will extend your sentence here tonight.”

Was the cock slipping even now? Her pussy grew damper the more he talked, and she grasped the cock with her muscles, trying hard to keep it inside her. The room seemed to spin as low voices reached her ears again.

A woman giggled and there was a loud smack, as if someone was spanking someone else’s bottom.

“Don’t expend your energies too soon. You’re going to need them.” He patted her shoulder, and then he was gone.

Saffron tried to see herself from the viewpoint of the people sitting around her.

She was a woman stretched out for everyone to see, a large, plastic cock stuffed into her pussy, the leather strands hanging down from its base. The frame moved again, taking her closer to the floor.

And then there was nothing. Breathing noises broke the silence from time to time, and several times someone sniffled as if they were holding back a sneeze. There was another smack, followed by yet another and a man’s groan of pain. Saffron used her senses to try to locate her Master. She could feel no one standing nearby.

How long would leave her here? This in itself was torture, knowing people were watching her, waiting for the cock to drop out. She gripped it tighter and groaned.

“Eat me.” The woman’s voice made her jump. It was quickly followed by deep moans of satisfaction and Saffron imagined a slave between the Domme’s legs, his or her tongue working to produce the sounds.

All the noise did was excite her more. Her wetness seemed to increase and she grasped the dildo tighter, pleading with her pussy to work with her, to keep it tight inside. And that’s

when the first brush of something very soft rolled over her breasts. She thought it was a feather duster, or maybe it was the strands of a flogger. She wasn't quite sure. All she knew was that the light touch made her quiver.

Her body jerked and the dildo slipped. She grasped it tighter, and this time the groan came from her. The crowd clapped and heat rushed through her. This was definitely torture.

Her nipples tightened as the caresses increased, and then a second person began tickling her pussy, using the same thing that was being used on her breasts. A third person began to stimulate her stomach, and then someone was running something very soft up and down her legs.

Saffron's body jerked as the movements increased in speed. It felt as if a thousand hands were tickling her, yet no one was touching her. The feeling was incredible, turning her on as nothing ever had before.

She wanted to...needed to...fuck. Her pussy muscles clenched and unclenched as she worked to keep the plastic in her. The urge to beg him to fuck her with the dildo was hard to swallow. She jerked her hips, hoping he would get the message, would help put her out of the sweet misery she felt.

"Stimulation comes in many forms." The giant's voice came from the bottom of the table.

*Yes, yes, yes, she wanted to scream. Fuck me with it. You're right there. Do it!*

The ropes holding her arms loosened and he pulled on her legs. "Come toward me and bend your legs."

That meant he would do it, she was sure. She did as he asked then felt the ropes holding her arms tighten again. They added a new rope, this one around her waist, securing her tighter to the frame.

His fingers were on her pussy now, pushing through the folds.

"My, someone's very wet." A clicking sound filled her ears and the crowd clapped. Saffron tried to wiggle, but the ropes held her in place. The clicking sound filled the room again, and then she cried out as something clamped onto her clit.

"This is painful stimulation," her Master said. "Very painful, I imagine."

Pain wasn't the word for it. The clip was right on her clit, the feeling replacing any amount of pleasure the caressing had caused.

"Yes it hurts, take it off, please, I'm begging you." The words were out of her mouth before she'd given it a second thought.

“Did I say you could speak?”

“No, Sir.”

Oh crap, she’d blown it. All this for nothing.

“Stop.” The implements of torture pulled away from her body. Only the clamp on her clit and the dildo inside her remained. The little nub throbbed painfully and she wanted to cry out. Instead, she rolled her head from side to side, trying to focus anywhere but on the pain in her pussy.

He jerked the clip away and Saffron cried out, her clit pulsing harder than it had when the clip was attached.

“Very nice, enigma. I enjoyed your reaction so much that I’m going to forgive your lapse in the speaking department.” The crowd clapped again and she tried to relax into the ropes. For a few long moments, no one touched her.

The room was silent again, and when her Master said, “Begin,” she wanted to cry out her safe word. She wasn’t sure how much more she could take.

This time, she knew the items caressing her were floggers. The strands moved across her body gently. She likened the movements to using a broom and she was the floor.

The giant was between her legs again, this time sliding the cock in and out of her in movements that would rival a turtle’s pace.

The need to climax was overwhelming. He fucked her harder, then flicked the pad of his thumb over her clit.

She was right on the edge, tittering so much that dropping off would be easy, and it would take her higher than any climax ever had, she was sure. Around her, people were talking; there were sounds of spanking and sucking, or at least she thought that’s what it was. It was obvious they had left their chairs and come closer to the frame.

“Look at how flushed she is.”

“Gorgeous.”

“She’s behaving quite well. If you can get her bad habits under control, she will make a beautiful slave.”

Saffron tuned the voices out, keeping her senses focused on holding back her orgasm. The feeling was agonizing, but she was determined to follow through with this, to let him know she wanted to stay.

Just when she thought she would lose her battle, she heard her Master say, “Stop.” Her pussy pulsed around the cock still buried deep inside her. His thumb brushed her clit again, then pressed the nub hard.

Her hips lifted off the table and she bit her lip, sighing when she heard him say, “Very good. I’m proud of you. I think we’ve had enough for now.”

*No! Make me come.* “Please.”

“You already know the answer to that.” He obviously understood her plea without being told, and she wanted to cry at his words. “You will not get to climax. Miss Kitty will take you back to your bed and she will secure your hands to the headboard to make sure you don’t give yourself an orgasm, because frankly, I don’t trust you quite yet, despite how well you did tonight. Miss Kitty?”

“Sir?”

“Make sure her hands are loose enough that she can move a little while she sleeps, but don’t make them loose enough that she can reach her pussy or breasts.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“When she’s secured to the bed, you may take off her blindfold.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Enigma?”

“Master?”

“Sleep well.” Shuffling feet and diminishing voices were the only things she heard now. When the room was quiet someone, she supposed Miss Kitty and the unknown woman who’d helped earlier undid her bonds and helped her to stand.

Her legs were like wet noodles and she grasped the posts to regain her balance. The women didn’t hurry her, and when she let go, they took her arms. She didn’t ask for her cloak. What did it matter now when everyone had seen her spread-eagle and being played with?

Once in her Master’s room, she was allowed to use the facilities, then wash her face and brush her teeth. Doing it blindfolded was an experience and it made Saffron laugh a little. This would make a great passage in her story.

Miss Kitty secured her wrists to the bedposts, leaving just enough slack so that Saffron could turn on her side, or stay on her back. When she was done, she lifted the blindfold away.

“Good night, Miss Tyler.”



“Miss Kitty?”

“Yes?”

“May I ask you a question?” The sub looked doubtful for a moment, and then she nodded.

“What is your real name?”

“Miss Kitty.” She smiled and then settled in a chair. Her movements confused Saffron and she said as much.

“A submissive is never let alone when bound to furniture. I will spend the night here unless your Master gives me directions to the contrary.”

Saffron nodded, then wondered why no one called her by the name her Master had given her. Or why no one called her Master by a given name, like Master Thomas had been called at the auction. Instead, everyone called him Sir in her presence.

She wanted to learn his name, learn more about him. In reaction, her clit vibrated as if it too wanted to know about the man who had played with it tonight.

Saffron wanted to come, badly, but with no way to reach her aching clit, that wasn't possible. She needed to remember this feeling the next time she got the urge to explore. She either needed to learn how not to get caught, or she needed to learn to obey. And she was pretty sure the last option would be the best way to earn an orgasm.

## ***Chapter Eight***

*I've been a submissive for three days now. It seems a strange thing to write, and an even stranger thing to read, but it is the truth. After the arousal scene and my subsequent night spent bound to a bed, my Master let me know that my life at Fingertip Fantasies would be on his terms, not mine.*

*Adhering to my new understanding of my situation, I have not strayed from the boundaries he has given me. There are several rules he set forth. I will speak when spoken to, and only initiate a conversation by holding up my hand, or a finger if I am bound, and waiting for permission to speak. I've been taught to follow Master's schedule. If he is still sleeping when I wake, I use the facilities, then stand in my corner waiting for him to awaken.*

*When he wakes, I bring him to climax, and then wash him down. After that, he showers while I fetch breakfast, which we always eat as we did our first morning together, with him feeding me.*

*Sometimes he disappears for the rest of the day and I often wonder where he's gone. During that time, I write and read the few books he's given me. Lunch always arrives on time, and sometimes Master comes to feed me. If not, I feed myself and then look forward to enjoying dinner with him, because he never misses dinner.*

*Activities after dinner have varied. Twice we've gone to watch scenes, and both times it reminded me of being tied to the rope bed, of being brought to such high arousal that it was painful. Most of the pain came later that night when I was tied to the bed and my body still pulsed with need. The pain heightened when Master arrived and Miss Kitty left. He watched me with interest, then stroked himself off very slowly while I struggled against the ropes.*

*When I thought his climax was imminent, he would stop and ask me innocuous questions about my work, about my hobbies, and about my family. Each time I answered one question, he would put a finger to his mouth to indicate I should be silent again.*

*Between questions, his hand went back to work and I watched, itching to beg for him, wanting to suck his cock deep into my mouth, bend over and beg him to fill me. When he finally allowed himself to come, his body quaked and he aimed his come at the bottom of the bed.*

*The smell stayed with me all night, teasing me, keeping me aroused. Miss Kitty came back when he went to bed, and at some point, I slept. When I woke, a woman I'd never seen before sat in the chair, reading a book. She released me from my prison and told me to go about my duties as normal.*

*When he woke up, he smiled and asked me how I felt. I answered fine, but in reality I needed to fuck, wanted to beg for it. Instead, I followed our routine and brought him to orgasm.*

*I shouldn't focus on that night, though, despite the fact I've been without an orgasm for three days. He hasn't touched me sexually since the scene, and I wonder when he will again.*

*The scenes we watched were interesting. Both featured submissives, one woman, one man, being whipped by their Dom and Domme respectively.*

*I have to admit that, after the first time, I had hoped to actually get a taste of a whipping, if not just a spanking, but it hasn't happened yet. Kneeling next to Master at these times was strange at first, but I also felt a strange sense of belonging as he stroked my hair and talked to the man sitting next to him.*

*Needless to say, the feeling frightened me. I know this is just for two weeks and don't want to get attached. I don't even know the man's name, much less where he lives. Part of me thinks this is his way of protecting me. He doesn't want me to fall for him so he keeps himself at a distance.*

*Another part of me wonders if that is why we haven't had sex yet. As I said earlier, I haven't been allowed to orgasm since the rope bed night, and when I bring him to orgasm, it's an almost painful feeling for me, knowing that I won't be allowed to climax. I keep waiting for it to happen, but so far I've been disappointed.*

*What I really want is to fuck. I can be blunt about it. Having the dildo inside me the other evening wasn't satisfying at all. I want his cock, want him to stretch me and slid in and out. Maybe it will happen soon.*

*In the meantime, he's taught me three positions to use to please him. In Present 1, I drop to my knees, spread my legs and put my hands behind my back. In Present 2, I bend over the nearest table, legs spread, arms behind my back. Present 3 is almost the same as Present 2, except I lie on my back, hands locked over my stomach, legs spread, pussy on display.*

*Even though I'd vowed to take my training seriously, I rebelled against these orders at first, saying I wasn't a doll to be posed. That earned me more time in the corner.*

*After the third time, Master reminded me that I have free will, and that any time I want to stop being his submissive, all I have to do is say the word. In that respect, I suppose I have a great deal of power, more so than most people would imagine.*

*And, after some thought, I realized I was doing what I said I wouldn't, and I relaxed and allowed the training to continue. It was fascinating, to say the least, but after three days of it, I am ready to move on. I just wonder if he thinks the same thing.*

Saffron read over what she'd just written. It read like a journal entry, and if the giant read her writings, which he assured her he wouldn't do, he would have no clue what her real reason for being here was.

Her body, now accustomed to being naked in this room, itched to be touched. Did she dare bring herself to orgasm? Did someone watch her through the camera constantly? It hadn't seemed so for the last three days, but then again, she hadn't done anything wrong for him to rush in and bust her for doing.

If she touched herself, he would know. And maybe it would bring about some relief for her. She needed more than fingers. She needed a cock—and not just any cock, his cock. There was a big part of her that wondered if he was getting sex from another submissive beside herself. After the first day, she'd entertained the idea that he didn't care for the fact she wasn't a small woman. But if that were true, he wouldn't have bid on her.

It wasn't as if the fact had been hidden. He'd seen her when he'd bought her. The contract she'd signed had said sex wasn't a given during participation in the submission experience at Fingertip Fantasy. But if he didn't plan on them having sex, why did he have her jerk him off every morning? Was it a form of torture, showing her what she would never get a taste of?

The thought was too horrible to comprehend. The giant had a wonderful cock, long and thick, and she wanted it inside her at least once before she left. She imagined him before her, his cock bobbing in front of her mouth.

*He held her head tipped just right as he slowly fed himself into her mouth. His cock filled her, stretching her lips wide, sliding over her tongue, awakening a sense of desire that drove her crazy.*

She sucked a finger into her mouth, wishing it was him. The salty taste of her skin made her wonder exactly what he would taste like. A second finger joined the first and Saffron closed her eyes as she weaved a third one into the mix, opening her mouth as wide as she could, sawing them in and out in a fucking motion.

“Someone wants cock.”

She immediately jerked her fingers out of her mouth, her body flushing as much from the excitement of being caught as by the idea he would be angry with her.

“Did I tell you to stop?”

“No, Sir.”

“Then continue.” She took her fingers back into her mouth, gagging a little as his hand pushed them deeper inside. “Fuck your mouth with your fingers until I tell you to stop.”

She moved them in and out, the sensual feeling that had been there before disappearing. She didn’t want fingers; she wanted cock. Now that his was so close, she wanted to beg for it. He watched her for a few moments, almost as if he expected her to fail. That gave her an extra push to continue.

When he smiled, she could tell her actions pleased him. “I think you’ve been denied enough. Would you like to fuck?”

She nodded, her eyes widening at the thought. She could almost feel him inside her.

“I’d like that, too.” He ran his thumb over her forehead. “Your pleasure is at my discretion, isn’t it?”

Saffron nodded as she continued to suck her fingers.

“When I say come, you will. When I say don’t, you won’t. It’s as simple as that.”

In theory, it sounded perfect. In reality, it wasn’t something she thought would ever come to fruition. She came easily, sometimes with just a few strokes on her clit. She considered herself lucky that way and didn’t want to hold back on it. Plus, she wasn’t exactly sure how she could.

“It’s all about discipline.”

Damn, could he read her mind?

“So many times people rush to climax, and you got a hot, hard feeling inside you that disappears soon afterward. But if you let it build up, ever so slowly, you will explode with the intensity of a firecracker, and the after burn will stay with you for a while.”

He pulled out the chair opposite from her. “Remove your fingers from your mouth and Present 2.”

Her heat level increased as she followed his instructions.

“Put your hands on the ends of the table and push up so your breasts hang down.” When she was done, she looked over at him. His expression was a mixture of desire and something she couldn’t quite read. Was it expectation? Or was it pleasure that she was doing exactly as he said? Either way, he stared at her for a few long moments then gave her a wicked smile.

“A perfect mounting position. I could take you now, play with your clit and those fabulous breasts.”

Her face brightened as she thought he might actually follow through on his words.

“But it would defeat the purpose of the lesson.” His gaze trailed down her body. “Touch your clit. Give it one, long hard stroke.”

Saffron closed her eyes as she worked her fingers through her wetness, rubbing her clit, savoring the feeling.

“I said one stroke, didn’t I?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Tell me, enigma, can you count?”

“Of course.” She frowned, trying to wipe the look off her face when he returned it.

“Let’s just see about that, shall we.” He stood and walked away. She was tempted to turn and watch him, but she knew she’d already angered him. Best to stay here than to spend more time in the corner when there was the promise of an orgasm lurking nearby.

“I’m sorry, Master.”

She heard a drawer open and close. When the hard, wooden surface of a hairbrush appeared before her face, she swallowed hard.

“Kiss the brush, enigma. Show me you accept what it will bring you.”

Her hand shook as she held it up.

“Yes?”

“What will it bring me, Sir?”

He moved the brush closer to her mouth. “Pain, mixed with great pleasure. Kiss it.”

The wood was cool under her lips. When he turned it around and ran the bristles through her hair, then over her back, she groaned. The bristles felt as if someone was scratching an itch on her body, and she wiggled her hips.

In response, he cupped a buttock. “In good time.” He moved the bristles in a circular motion, around her ass and thighs, stroking it over her pussy lips and making her suck in air heavily, the hissing sound filling the room.

“Oh that feels good.”

“Speaking out of turn makes you a naughty girl. Maybe I should stop the lesson until you’re better behaved.”

“No, Sir, I’m sorry.”

“What is the rule?”

“Silent until spoken to or given permission.”

“Very good.” He slapped her ass with the brush and she swallowed a yell. Damn that hurt. Another swat landed on the other cheek, and then the bristles appeared again, stroking the area he’d smacked.

“How many strokes was that, enigma?”

“Two, Sir.”

“So it was. I suppose you can count.” The brush landed again, catching the area where her buttock met her thigh. “There, that’s the three strokes that match what you gave your pussy when I said you could have one.”

*What the fuck?* How had he known she’d moved her finger more than once? Did he have cameras behind her? Or was he simply clairvoyant?

“Shall we try this again? You may stroke your clit—once.”

Saffron flicked her finger over her bud, touching it again gently on the upstroke. Two hard swats landed on each buttock.

“How many times did I slap your ass?”

“Twice more, Sir.”

“Why is it you can count those, but not number of times you stroke your clit?”

“I’m sorry, Sir.” She wanted to scream at him, let him know her frustration. How the hell had he known about the second stroke?

“Hands on the table.”

After she complied, he moved away from her, the sound of a drawer opening filling the room again. When he returned, he slipped cuffs on her wrists, then ran the attached chain down to the table leg, securing one before moving to the other.

When she was tied to the table, he moved behind her. She expected the brush to come down on her bottom again, but it didn’t. Instead, he ran one finger up her pussy, tickling her wet lips before swiping over her clit.

He moved his hand away and patted her ass. “That is one stroke, isn’t it?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Then why did you do three at first, and then two, when I asked for one?”

Saffron swallowed hard, wondering how he would react if she told him it was because she wanted to. “I don’t have an answer to that, Sir.”

His chuckle surprised her. “That is the perfect answer, enigma. If you had made excuses, I would have been very angry. Of course, you could have just told me the truth, that you’re horny and need to be touched.”

She glanced at him and he nodded, effectively giving her permission to speak. “I need it.”

“Need what?”

Her eyes seemed to close on their own as desire rushed over her. “I want to fuck, Sir.”

“I’m sure you do.” He ran his finger up her spine, making her shiver. “If you’re a really good girl tonight, I might give you a reward. It might include fucking. It might not. We’ll have to wait and see.”

The disappointment made her body go limp and Saffron slumped against the table.

“You’re so easy to read,” he said, his finger tickling her pussy. He slipped a finger inside her and she stiffened, fighting the urge to push back and take the whole, slender digit deeper.

When she didn’t move, he ran his free hand over her back. “Good girl.” And then he pinched her clit. Saffron came immediately, her hips bucking into the air, her pussy begging for a cock.

When it was over, her panting revealing the extent of her pleasure, she focused on the tsking noise he made as he stood behind her.



“So much for being a good girl.” His hands left her and she expected a swat from the brush, but it never came. Instead, he sat down in his chair and studied her carefully. “Did I give you permission for that?”

“No, Sir.”

“You can control that, you know. All you have to do is concentrate on the mental aspect of your climax. When it begins, you will yourself to stay still, to let it build until I give you permission to come.”

She held up a finger.

“Yes?”

“What if I can’t control it?”

“You can, and you will.”

Saffron was painfully aware of being tied to the table, on display for anyone who happened to come into the room. It seemed to be a habit with the giant.

“Tell me, enigma, did you masturbate when you were a teenager?”

“No.”

“Interesting.” He stretched his legs out in front of him as if getting comfortable for a nice, long chat. “Most people do. When did you start? And be truthful.”

“In college.”

“Tell me about it.”

Heat surged through her again, but this time from embarrassment. “I can’t, Sir.”

“You can, and you will. I won’t think less of you that your first experiences were with another woman.”

She stared at him, her mouth open in shock.

“As I said, you’re very easy to read. When Miss Kitty touched you during your first night here, I could tell it wasn’t the first time a woman had placed her arms around you. You were nervous because you didn’t know her. I can practically tell the story of your first time for you. You either woke up during the night and heard her pleasuring herself, or you walked in on her doing it. Which was it?”

Could he read her that well? Was that what made him such a good Dom that he could look at someone and guess the truth? That was a scary idea, one that sent another chill up her spine, and not in a good way. She wasn’t sure she wanted him to know all her secrets.

“Actually, it was in the shower in our room. I walked in, thinking I could just grab something and...well...she was...um...”

“Using the massage nozzle to do more than rinse off her back?”

He looked as relaxed as someone enjoying afternoon tea, while Saffron, still tied to the table, felt very much like a department store window display. And the more they delved into her sexual past, the more exposed she felt.

“Yes.”

“That particular bathroom implement does provide powerful orgasms when the spray is aimed right at the clit, as I’m sure you know.” There was a twinkle in his eyes. “Was it that evening that you first slept with her?”

*I don’t want to talk about this.* Saffron wiggled her fingers and he lifted an eyebrow. “Yes?”

“If we’re going to talk, could you turn me loose?”

“I’m happy that you asked for permission to make your request, but no. Answer my question.” He moved the chair closer to the table, then let his fingers dance over her ass. “And don’t make me wait too long.”

“No, it wasn’t that night. I left that night and went to my friend Jenna’s house. She and her boyfriend, now husband, were living together.”

“Tell me about the first time.” He was still caressing her, his touch light. The sensations were driving her crazy, making her already aroused body feel as if it might burst again.

“Why, Sir?”

His face appeared right next to hers, his breath hot on her cheek. “Once again, you prove I named you well. You do not question why; you answer my questions without hesitation. A good submissive knows that. If you continue to evade me, I might have to pull out the brush.” There was the slightest of pause. “But, that would be too easy for you, wouldn’t it? That would be action, and what is driving you crazy right now is being tied to that table. So answer me, or prepare to spend quite a bit of the evening in this position.”

Her mouth opened slightly in shock. When he stood, it opened more. “Wait.”

“Too late.” He thumped her bottom as if he were checking a melon at the supermarket. “Talk to me in ten minutes. That’s when your first time out will be over. And, if you talk before then, I will gag you.”

“Fine, but let me say right now that I thought we were going to have a lesson about delaying orgasms. What does my sex life have to do with that?”

He went to the drawer and Saffron shuddered. When he returned, he stroked her hair. “Open your mouth. Fight me on this and it won’t go well for you.”

Her excitement was gone. She didn’t want to be gagged. “Fine, it was three days after the shower incident. I—”

He put his hand over her mouth.

“You’ve brought this on yourself. Now, open your mouth and accept the gag before I think of more creative ways to get my point across.”

It didn’t take long for her to make her decision. As much as she hated the idea of the gag, there was no telling what he would come up with in its place. She opened her mouth, fighting down panic as he fit a rubber ball in the middle of her lips. It wasn’t big enough to block her air if necessary, but it was big enough to keep her from talking.

He wrapped the straps around her head and secured them in the back before patting her bottom yet again. “Fifteen minutes, which includes the original ten and five more for talking when I told you not to.”

A beep sounded and she imagined him setting a timer. When he sat down in his chair and opened a novel, she rolled her eyes. This was so not what she expected.

As the time ticked by, she tried to figure out why he would ask about her sex life. She could see if he were checking for possibilities to see about her risk for being exposed to diseases, but she’d had to pass a battery of tests before coming here. And to ask her about something that happened almost fifteen years ago. Why would he do that?

He continued to read, paying her no mind whatsoever. She wanted to scream, but the gag prevented that. She continued to ponder his reasons, not coming up with anything except the overwhelming need to break free of her bonds and run from the room.

Being tied to the table was not her idea of fun.

When the ding finally sounded, he closed his book and turned to her. “Are you ready to answer my questions, or should I set another ten minutes?”

Saffron shook her head, relief flooding her when he stood and undid the gag. Unfortunately, he didn’t undo the ropes holding her in place.

“Tell me about it.” He was caressing her again and her nerves settled just a little. The feeling was soft, sensual.

“I avoided her for days, but finally I had to see her. I mean, we lived together.”

“What was her name?”

“Kate.” She tried to focus on anything but the fingers that were drawing lazy eights across her buttocks and thighs. “She was embarrassed that I’d caught her, but when we talked, she realized I was an innocent, in every sense of the word, Master.”

“So she offered to lick your sweet pussy?”

“Yes, Sir.” She groaned a little as his fingers dipped between her legs.

“Did you like it?”

“Yes, Sir.” A finger moved inside her and she bucked against it, groaning when it immediately disappeared.

“And did you return the favor?”

“Yes, Sir.” She wiggled her hips. In response, he sat back down in her chair.

“How long did it continue?”

“The whole time we were roommates, four months. Master.” She added the last word almost as an afterthought.

He continued to study her, then winked. “Was that so hard?”

It took her a few moments to realize that no, it hadn’t been that hard. Why didn’t she just give him the information first instead of fighting it? The answer was apparent to her. She’d never even told Jenna about her relationship with Kate. Telling the giant that story gave him insight into her that she wasn’t thrilled about.

She treated it as a rhetorical question and continued to watch him.

“Now, enigma, shall we talk orgasms?”

## *Chapter Nine*

“Sounds like a plan, Sir.” She hoped her voice didn’t give away her excitement, but from the look on her face, she’d failed in that respect.

“Delaying an orgasm builds the pressure, makes a person come harder. Not coming because I’ve ordered you not to shows how much you want to serve me, to follow my instructions.”

“I get that, Sir. What I don’t get is how you expect a person to control their ability to climax. In my experience, the need to come is too hard not to let it happen.”

“Then let’s talk about discipline.” He moved behind her, standing in between her outstretched legs. She heard the zipper of his pants go down; her mouth went dry and her pussy grew wet.

She felt the tip of his cock at her opening and she groaned, pushing herself back at him. He slapped her ass and moved away.

“You have no idea how badly I want to be inside you right now. I’ve wanted it for days, yet I’ve held back until just the right moment.”

She had a feeling he didn’t expect an answer to that question, so she kept her mouth shut, afraid that if she talked out of turn, he would put his cock away. And she didn’t want that to happen.

The silence lingered and she wiggled a finger.

“Yes, enigma?”

“Is that moment now, Sir?”

“What do you think?”

“Yes, please!”

The tip of his cock entered her, the thick head making her gasp. She clenched her muscles, trying hard to pull more of him in. He put his hands on her hips, pushing her down, effectively stopping all movement.

“Control, enigma. Hold still.”

Saffron stomped her foot, pulling on the chains that held her down. “Please.”

“Do you remember me masturbating for you?”

“Yes, Sir.” She could feel his cock pulsing at her opening. Why wasn’t he pushing inside her?

“What did it take for me to stop and start so many times?”

*It took something I don’t have.* “Discipline, Master.”

“That’s correct.” He tickled her back and his cock left her. “You and I are going for a walk. If you behave and not climax, I will give you a good, hard fuck when we get back. If you misbehave, I will punish you publicly.”

The thought made her stomach churn. She nodded, afraid of what she would say if she opened her mouth.

“Good.” He undid the chains, then patted her bottom. “Stand up. You will walk behind me, keeping pace. When we stop, you will use a new position, Present 4, in which you will assume the position you use in the corner, only you will be against the wall with your back facing outward.”

“Yes, Master.”

“Come along, enigma.” He started for the door and she cleared her throat. “Yes?”

“Why do I not have a collar?”

He’d stuffed the handle of the brush into the back pocket of his jeans. He would spank her on the walk, she knew. The idea did nothing more than increase her desire.

“Collars are earned, they are a privilege, not a right. They indicate the submissive is bound to her Master, that she has given herself to him, placed herself in his care and under his rule, completely. Right now, you’re in training. If you complete your training to my satisfaction, I will gift you with one before you leave.”

“Is there not a training collar, Sir?” Every submissive she’d seen here, every last one, had worn a collar. Except her.

“There is, but I choose not to use it.” He took a step toward her. “I prefer to think you follow my instructions in order to earn your collar. Now, come along.”

They walked down the first hallway, turning right and then immediately turning left. Saffron started to think this place was a maze of corridors, and wondered once again where they were and how big the place was.

“Present 4, putting your hands on the wall as your support.” She stopped and placed her hands on the wall, sticking her ass out. He stroked her ass. She stiffened when he stepped up behind her and undid his zipper. He grasped her hips and lifted them. The tip of his cock touched her opening and she groaned.

Instead of pushing inside, though, he kept her still, the feel of his cock a pleasurable torment that she knew delivered a promise that would not be given.

“Stroke your clit. Once.” He emphasized the last word. His arm wrapped around her waist as she dipped her hand to her pussy, passing her finger over the hardened tip once.

She clasped her hand into a fist to keep from stroking herself again.

“Very nice.” Another inch of him slipped inside her. “Once more.”

He had to know how close she was. One more stroke would send her over the edge, especially with his dick settled at her opening. She couldn’t stand any more teasing!

“I’ll come, Master.”

“Not without my permission you won’t.” He stroked her thigh. “I know you want to please your Master, earn your collar. Do I say, enigma.”

Saffron unclenched her fist, then stroked her clit; she deliberately disobeyed him and let her finger move over the nub several times. She came instantly, bucking back into him. As if he’d anticipated it, though, he moved away, taking that which she wanted to feel.

“Naughty enigma.” The brush landed on her buttock. “Did I give you permission for that?” It landed again on the other side.

“I’m sorry, Master.”

“If you had followed directions, you wouldn’t have to be sorry.”

Her orgasm had done nothing to satisfy her need. If he continued to do this, taking her on this walk and stopping to toy with her as he was, she would come again and again, and he would never fuck her.

She stayed in place and she knew he was behind her, watching her. “Come along, enigma.”

Instead of turning back toward his room, he continued down the corridor, stopping twice more and ordering her to Present 4, altering it as she’d done before. Each time she anticipated the feel of his cock inside her, and each time she was disappointed.

He had her stroke her clit. The first time she held back, but the second time she couldn’t control it. In addition to her fingers on her clit, his hands were on her nipples, toying with them, pinching them, rubbing them.

When she came, he swatted her bottom with the brush, not letting up on the spanking until her orgasm had finished. Her bottom throbbed and Saffron felt a rush of failure. She really did want to do this. If holding back provided stronger orgasms, then she was all for it.

But how could she control it, really?

“Discipline,” he whispered in her ear. “That’s all it takes. Now, let’s go take care of your punishment, shall we?”

\* \* \* \*

It had never been harder to obey the Present 2 command than it had been when they’d arrived in the public room. She wasn’t exactly sure which surface to choose from, since he hadn’t said where to Present 2. He’s just told her to do it.

She glanced around the room, painfully aware he was watching her. Eight tables, facing each other two by two, set in the center of the room. Each table had an apparatus on it, and it took her a few minutes to realize the equipment were stocks.

Saffron glanced at him and he lifted an eyebrow. The meaning was clear; she was to spend time in the stocks. None of the places were taken yet, and before he could order her to one of them, she took one in the middle, hoping the others would fill up.

If being in the stocks included spanking, she wanted a spot that might be overlooked, provided the ones on the end ended up with occupants. It would be easier to smack a bottom on the end spot, wouldn’t it?

But then again, if she were the only one there... She put her hands on the table and waited. It was Straith who stepped up beside her and lifted the top of the wooden block. “Place your head and hands inside, please, Miss Tyler.”



She wanted to laugh at the way he continually called her Miss Tyler, especially now, considering she was naked. Instead, she followed his directions, trying to pull away when the block was placed over her neck and adjusted to fit her. When there was a click, she turned her gaze as much as she could. It was enough to see it was the giant who had snapped the lock into place.

“Half an hour,” he whispered to her. “There’s still a chance you can salvage this evening, which means if you behave, you can still taste my dick inside you. Remember that if you decide this isn’t the punishment for you and decide to kick up a fuss.”

He patted her behind and she wanted to scream at him to stop doing that. The only thing that saved this from being a horrible punishment that she couldn’t survive was the idea no one was watching her. This wasn’t like the rope bed experience where the room had been silent and it was obvious everyone was waiting to see what would happen next.

This time around the room was noisy. The loud laughter made Saffron wonder what was so funny. If they hadn’t been laughing when she’d come into the room, she might wonder if they were laughing at her.

But no one had seemed to notice their entrance, and no one had made a mention when she’d been placed in the stocks. She closed her eyes and tried to concentrate on how she was supposed to control her orgasms. Maybe she should try counting sheep, or thinking about something else entirely, like a football game, or the next story she would propose to Francis Steele. If her mind was on something else, then maybe it would slow things down. Or would it end it all together?

Crap, trying to figure this was like going fishing without bait. You wanted to catch something, but there would be absolutely no way to do it. She had no clue how to discipline herself like he wanted her to. She’d never been very good at control.

An ache settled into her back and she shuffled her feet, wondering how long she’d been in this position. How much longer must she stay here? As punishments went, this really wasn’t so bad. It was a little embarrassing, and would be more so if people were watching her.

As if on cue, a round of applause filled the room and a woman appeared across from her. A woman pulled back the top of the stock and pushed the woman’s head down, locking the stock into place before stepping behind the submissive.

The loud whack of a paddle hitting flesh made Saffron wince. The woman across from her closed her eyes, her expression serene as the Domme spanked her, the sound growing louder with each swat.

After fifteen smacks, the Domme leaned over and whispered in the woman's ear. The submissive's soft "As you wish, Mistress" sounded very genuine, more so than anything Saffron had ever said, or so she thought.

She needed to work on that if she wanted to get the full feeling of submission.

After a few short minutes, the woman looked at her, a small smiling lighting her face. "My name is vanilla. What's yours?"

*Vanilla?* "I'm Saffron."

The woman looked confused and Saffron realized she'd given the wrong answer. "I mean, my name is enigma. How did you get your name?"

"Mistress says I'm far too vanilla for her tastes. She's teaching me how to please her."

"I see." Saffron glanced around. The giant was talking with Straith and not paying any attention to her. She thought about his comment about her being able to salvage the evening. Did that mean he would fuck her if she behaved? Behaving would mean staying silent, she knew.

Two different sides of her went to war. The reporter screamed that this was the perfect time to question a submissive, someone who had paid to live out a fantasy as a submissive. The submissive side of her yelled that the most important thing was pleasing her Master, and by turns getting screwed later that evening.

"How long have you been here?" The question slipped out before she could think better of it.

"A week. I'm booked for a month."

A month? Someone could book as a submissive for that long? How much money would that take? And didn't vanilla have a job to go to? What about the Mistress? How could she do this for a month unless she was on the payroll here? Straith had told her they carefully screened their dominants.

Maybe these people were on staff. Maybe the giant was an employee. If he were, then he trained submissives like herself for a living. How would you list that profession on your taxes? Was it considered prostitution? Or was he a professional escort?

The questions kept mounting and Saffron glanced over at vanilla. "Where are you from?"

“Atlanta. And you?”

“Seattle.” Somehow, this conversation seemed so wrong. If the giant had planted vanilla across from her in an effort to get her to talk, would that make the evening bad? She’d allowed her reporter self to rule when she should have allowed her submissive self to take the lead so that she could see how things would turn out later this evening.

“I’m sorry, vanilla, but I think I should be quiet now.”

“Understand.” Vanilla winked. “Maybe I’ll see you later. I’m working in the pool area. Where do they have you working?”

Working? What sort of a fantasy was it when a person was expected to work? Nothing in the brochure she’d read said anything about doing a job. How sucky was that? You paid to come here and they put you to work.

“Do you get paid?”

The submissive laughed. “Paid? I do it to please my Mistress.”

“Hum.” Saffron opened her mouth, ready to ask why the woman would pay money to work. She closed it again when the giant leaned over her, his crotch riding over her ass.

“Are you behaving?”

“Yes, Sir. You didn’t say I couldn’t talk. This is my first time here and…”

“Shush, you’re fine. Five more minutes, though, no talking this time.”

“Yes, Sir.” She glanced at vanilla who had turned her gaze down. It took Saffron a few moments to realize the Domme was behind vanilla again, paddling her bottom. Why hadn’t she been paddled? And for that matter, why wasn’t her Master upset because she’d been talking? There was definitely something strange going on here. She just needed to figure out what it was.

## ***Chapter Ten***

*If I were a suspicious person, which I am, I would think the giant was up to something. He'd said the night could be salvaged, and yet last night, he hadn't fucked me, despite the fact that he knew I wanted it, and I was pretty sure he wanted it as badly as I did.*

*Instead, he'd put me in my bed and left the room. I felt like a child being sent to bed without dinner, and when he returned several hours later, I was still awake. I'd hoped he could call for me, but he hadn't.*

*He'd taken a shower and then gone to bed. Within ten minutes, his soft snores had told me he was asleep. I'd tried to join him in slumber land, but I couldn't fall asleep immediately. It had taken every piece of willpower I had not to get myself off. That would have been cheating and I was determined to behave myself.*

*This morning had been the same routine with an orgasm for him and breakfast for both of us. As far as I can tell, he isn't really teaching me anything. Which means I'm going to go back to searching for information. If I get caught, I will think of an excuse. If not, I hope it will lead to something that will make better copy than standing in the stocks. Although I can buff that up some, it still isn't riveting.*

Saffron considered xing out the last part, then changed her mind. As far as she knew, the giant never looked at her journal, and it really didn't matter that she was discussing copy. She meant to check for the office today, and she also meant to find the pool area where she could hopefully find vanilla. The woman seemed eager to talk, and it would make for a great sidebar to her story.

Hopefully, Francis Steele would pay extra for a sidebar. She had a little more than a week left, and she wasn't at all pleased with what she had right now. The plan was simple: pool first so she could talk to vanilla. Then tomorrow she would search for the office.

She'd just delivered the cart back to the dining room and was now headed back to the giant's rooms. Or so it would seem to anyone who was watching. She planned on going inside and putting on a shirt, then taking off in the opposite direction from where they usually went.

The door to the room was opened and she stopped in the doorway, shocked to find the giant standing in the middle of the room. He never came back in the mornings.

"Hello, Master."

"Hello, enigma. Present 3, please."

Saffron crossed to the table, hanging her cloak in the closet on the way. She lay back on the table, legs spread wide. What was he doing here? He never came back in the mornings.

He approached her slowly, running his fingers up and down her thighs. "You may not come without permission, enigma, remember that this morning"

"Yes, Master." Saffron gasped as his fingers dipped into her pussy. He teased her, stroking her soft folds but avoiding her clit. Her body tingled in response, and even though he hadn't touched the hard nub, she knew it would only take a few strokes to get her off.

Fortunately for her that never happened. She opened her eyes and stared up at him.

"Do you like horses?"

"Horses? I'm a city girl and have never ridden very much." What the hell was he talking about? And why the hell was he here? She had exploring to do today. She needed to try and find vanilla again.

He flicked his thumb over her clit. Saffron froze, keeping her body rigid as he touched it again, his touch varying from light to heavy. There hadn't been a command that she couldn't come, but she knew it was there, hovering over her.

"Sit up."

He took a nipple in each hand, twisting them ever so gently, making her mind scramble. What had she planned for this morning?

"Let's prepare you for our outing, shall we?" He kissed her forehead, something that shocked her more than him being here this morning. What the hell had happened last night to bring about this change in him?

He was at the chest now, pulling out the drawer. He'd said collars were for trained subs who were attached to their Masters, so that's not what he was getting. Unless he was going to hook her up to take her for a walk.

That would be too strange.

When he pulled out a plug, her eyes widened. It seemed large from where she sat. His other hand came down, holding a vibrator.

"I read your file last night."

"Yes?" She thought back to the papers she'd filled out at her interview. There had been numerous questions about her sex life, what she'd tried and what she'd like to try. That part had been easy to do and Saffron had been very honest.

"You might wonder why I waited so long, but I wanted our first week together to be sort of blind while we got a feel for each other. Now that we have it, it's time to try some new things."

In other words, now that she was comfortable in her life here, it was time to change things up. How fucking fantastic was that? On one point, she was excited to try something new. On the other, she'd just decided to try and find out more about Fingertip Fantasies.

He was back at the table now, a smile on his face. "I'm happy to see that you're a very, shall we say, adventurous woman. You enjoy sex, and you like to experiment. Your story about Kate proves that."

Her thighs tingled as he rubbed the vibrator and plug against them. "I'm going to fill you, and then it will be time for some exercise. I'm looking forward to seeing you take these. Present 2, enigma."

Saffron didn't hesitate. She rolled over, hiking her behind in the air. He smacked it hard, making her gasp. "You really do have a lovely ass. Tell me what you'd like inside it."

She shivered and whispered, "Your cock."

"I like to hear that, but for now, that won't work." Something cold touched her anus and she realized he'd brought lube with him, too. He coated the outside, teasing her but not pushing inside until she groaned. Saffron's eyes rolled in pleasure as he worked first one, then two fingers inside her.

When she pushed back against him, he pulled out. The cold plastic replaced his warm fingers and she gasped. "Hold still, sweet enigma."

The plug stretched her, reminding her that it had been a while since she'd taken something this way. The exquisite feeling heightened her pleasure and she rubbed her pussy against the edge of the table.

The giant slapped her ass and stopped the insertion. "You know better."

Yes, she did, but it felt so good. "Forgive me, Master."

"No." He thumped her bottom. "There will be consequences later."

He went back to work, carefully inching the plug in and out of her anus until it was fully seated. The wonderful, full feeling spread through her body. The only thing that would make it better was if it were his cock.

"Very nice," he said as he slipped the vibrator into her pussy. It slid in easily and Saffron clutched the edges of the table. "Dripping wet. You really are a nasty girl. I like that so much. Stay where you are."

When he returned, she lifted at his command so he could attach a thin chain around her waist.

"Stand up and Present 1, but stay on your feet, and make sure you keep your toys inside you." He crouched beside her and reached between her legs. The rattle of a chain competed with her heavy breathing and she heard a click. He fed the chain between her legs, attaching it to her waistband at the front.

"That will keep them inside you. Now come along."

He moved toward the door and she stared at him, her eyes wide.

"I don't like to be kept waiting, you know." He stopped at the doorway and turned back to her.

"But, people will know that I'm..."

"Full? Yes, they will. The chain gives it away." He studied her and then he laughed. "You amaze me, enigma. You earn your name at every turn. You gladly take a plug in your ass with no problem, but you don't want to go out into the hallway so people know it's there. You're very sexual, but you're not really comfortable with it."

"That's not true. I'm very comfortable with sex."

"Oh, it's very true." He leaned with his back against the door. "Your file tells me that you have only had a few lovers, and you only choose ones that allow you to set the pace. Once you

try something with them, you throw them aside, almost as if you're embarrassed to see them again after doing something so naughty."

Now that hurt, because he was right. She never allowed herself to get too close to the men she dated. She'd never analyzed it before, but he obviously had.

"Straith was right when he said you needed a firm hand. You've needed it for quite some time. I allowed you a week to become accustomed to your surroundings. Now this next week belongs to me. You will follow me, enigma, or there will be a cost, one that will keep going up the longer you make me wait."

Saffron stayed in place, pondering what he'd said. Being tied to a rope bed was one thing, but going into a roomful of people who knew she was wearing a plug and dildo was another thing entirely.

"Tell me what you expected from these two weeks."

She opened her mouth and closed it again, unsure what to say.

"Let me tell you what you thought. You expected to be tied up and whipped and fucked, and yet this is the first thing you've had inside you except the tip of my cock."

"Yes, Sir."

"I'm glad to see we agree. You will never know what to expect from me, enigma, not anymore. Your rigid schedule is over. Remember that. A good submissive anticipates what her Master wants and reacts accordingly. That reaction pleases the both of them."

"Yes, Sir."

"In that vein, you should consider your options very carefully. For all you know, I have something very innocent planned. I mentioned horses, remember?"

"You want me to ride a horse while wearing a plug, Master?"

"I want you to obey me without asking questions."

This definitely wasn't what she'd expected, but after some consideration, Saffron took a step toward him. He smiled at her and she took another step. This would definitely make interesting copy.

Outside the door, she expected him to turn left, instead he turned right, which was the way she'd planned to go this morning. She followed behind him, thinking this was perfect. When she got the chance to explore more she would know where to go.



The toys inside her rubbed together as she walked, a hard reminder of the man in front of her. He led her to a stairwell where they climbed two flights. By the time they got to the top, she was breathing a little too heavily for her liking.

He stopped in front of a door and she steeled herself for finding a group of people inside, waiting to watch what was going to happen to her next. When the door opened, however, the only thing she found was a large wooden horse sitting in the middle of the room.

"I assume this was special made, Sir?"

He laughed and patted her bottom as he walked by. She swallowed the words "*Quit patting my ass*" and followed him inside.

"Mount up," he said, grabbing the leather reins that hung from the horse's bridle. There was a series of wooden steps to help a person get on. She climbed them and threw her leg over the horse, the plugs inside her pushing in more as she settled onto the leather saddle.

The seat was huge and would accommodate more than one person.

"Feet in the stirrups." She settled into place as he indicated, rather enjoying the sensations seeping into her body. "Now, put your arms around the horse's neck."

He locked her wrists together and the horse under her began to vibrate. Since he hadn't moved, she knew it must mean he had a remote control on him.

The horse rocked, rocketing up her desire. If this was punishment for disobeying him, she would break every rule in the house.

"Submission is different for every couple," he said, his voice deep. She fastened her gaze on him. He was watching her intently. "One of my favorite things is something like this."

"I like it too, Master."

"Good." The horse moved faster, as if it were breaking into a canter. The urge to come was strong and she licked her lips.

"I know what you're feeling, and if you climax, you will be spanked." Saffron fought the desire, tried to hold it back. The horse sped up again and the dildo inside her pussy vibrated.

"Not fair." The speed increased again and she started to bounce. Her climax ripped through her and she screamed. The horse slowed and she looked down at him.

He smiled at her, then climbed the steps and mounted the horse behind her. Her body shook as he gently caressed her sides.

“So predictable,” he whispered in her ear. “I knew you would come, and watching it made me harder than a rock.”

He wrapped his arms around her waist and cradled her against his crotch. The horse started to rock again.

“Lots of women have fantasies about being fucked on a horse, but the reality of it different, unless it’s a wooden horse, one that I can control.” She heard his zipper going down, felt the length of him against her ass. His fingers dipped into her pussy and withdrew the vibrator.

“I told you once that I only gave my cock to good submissives. And you’ve been very bad this morning, coming without permission and all. That means if you want my dick, you have to take it. I’ll give you one minute to find it. If you can find it, you can fuck me.”

Desire coursed through her as she bucked against him. She tried to lift up and back into his cock, but failed, the tip of him going up toward her clit instead. Pleasure soared through her as she tried again and again to seat him inside her.

How much longer did she have? One minute? Two? Ten? Her movements turned desperate. She wanted him inside her, needed him inside her. If she had her hands, it would be easier and...ahhh.

“Oh yes.” He slipped into her, the satisfaction beyond measure.

“Fuck me, enigma,” he whispered. “Take it all inside you, ride me like you rode the horse.”

Saffron followed his commands, pushing back into him, swallowing the hard, full length of him inside her. She stayed still for a moment, and then she rode him, pushing back and forth, sliding on and off him. He clasped the plug that was still inside her and moved it along with her rhythm.

The intense sensations were unlike anything she’d ever felt before. An orgasm built but she held it back. She slammed back into him, her body tingling. She couldn’t believe he was giving her this much control. What sort of a Dom did this?

*Don’t think, don’t think, just fuck him.*

She continued to bounce, her climax building. What did it mean that he was giving her this control? It meant she desired to give him something in return. She wanted—no, she needed his permission before she allowed the sensations to turn into another orgasm.

He'd shown trust in her by letting her mount him this way. She needed to return that confidence.

"Master." She slowed her movements, hard as it was to do so. His cock pulsed inside her. It took every bit of willpower she had to stop fucking him.

"Yes, enigma?"

"May I come?"

He ran his fingers up and down her back. "Yes, you may."

She rode him harder, her orgasm slamming into her as he grabbed her hips and thrust upward, his first movement with his cock since she'd started to fuck him. She felt the warmth of his cum fill her and then she slumped onto the horse's neck.

"Thank you, enigma."

"Sir?" She turned her head as much as she could to gaze at him.

"I'm proud of you for asking. It's a big step. The first one you'll take of many." He climbed down from the horse. "I enjoyed having you fuck me. The next time we screw, I'll be the one doing the fucking. And you'll enjoy being fucked as much as I loved having you fuck me."

## *Chapter Eleven*

“In you go.”

Saffron watched as the giant held back the iron curtain that framed her bed. After the incredible fucking, the day had passed by in a blur. They’d eaten lunch as always and he’d left her to journal while he’d gone off for the afternoon.

For the evening, they’d watched a whipping, and the only touching he’d done was to her hair, as usual. It had been disappointing, but not near as disappointing as the idea that she would not be able to sleep in his bed with him.

“Something wrong, enigma?”

“No, Master.” She settled herself on the mattress, wishing he would change his mind. Her body craved more of what it had enjoyed earlier in the day. When he dropped the curtain and started to walk away, she cleared her throat.

“Yes, enigma?”

“Do you want me to...satisfy you, Master?”

“No. I have things to do. You’re a big girl and can go to sleep on your own. Stay where you’re at and I’ll see you in the morning. No masturbation, and no leaving the bed.”

She heard the door closed and she stared at the empty room, her mouth open in shock. What the hell? Things hadn’t changed at all. She supposed there was part of her that thought once they’d fucked, the relationship would change.

But it hadn’t, and it reminded her that she was there to do a job. Her Master wasn’t looking at this as the forming of a permanent thing. He enjoyed being with her, there was no doubt about that, but he knew this was a two-week thing, and he was keeping his distance.

What she needed to consider was that she had a job to do, and time was ticking away. That meant leaving her bed and seeing what she could find out. Tonight. Maybe during her exploring she could find vanilla.

She waited for a while, what she hoped was at least half an hour, and then pushed aside the curtain. The sound of it filled the room and she had the strange feeling that it triggered the camera.

Was that how it worked? Would he appear within seconds? Or would he be waiting outside the door when it opened? She stood in the center of the room, waiting. If the knob turned, she could dive for her bed, and hopefully make it back before he saw her.

When no one appeared, she opened the door and peered outside. The hallway was empty. Since it was evening, and every submissive she'd seen had been naked, she decided to stick to that uniform.

If someone stopped her she, could make the excuse that her Master was hungry, and that he'd sent her out for food.

The best place to look right now would be the playrooms. Hopefully, she could mix in and no one would notice the giant wasn't with her. They'd left the one near the dining room earlier, and she knew of the one he'd used while sceneing with her. Maybe she should try that one.

The door was open and she looked inside. Two subs had their arms tied above their heads, the ropes hooked to beams hanging from the ceiling. Doms were behind them both, flogging their backsides before moving to the front. No one noticed her as she watched the scene unfold.

Desire spread through her as the women's moans rose in intensity. She wanted to be those subs, wanted to know what that felt like. Should she come out and tell her Master what she wanted? But no, she thought he knew. Or she wished he did if he didn't. She looked around the room. The sub vanilla was nowhere to be seen, nor was any other person that Saffron knew.

It was time to keep going, to explore some more and see what she could find out. She checked two more places she knew were used during the playtime, but found nothing. She was about to give up when she opened a door at the end of the hallway and found a staircase.

She'd never seen this one before. She closed the door behind her and took the stairs slowly, expecting someone to jump out at any moment. At the top of the stairs, she cracked the door open, putting her hand over her mouth to keep from gasping.

Francis Steele stood near the office, a bunch of papers in her hand. *What was she doing here?* She was talking with Straith, but their voices were so low that Saffron couldn't hear what they were saying.

Had she sent Saffron here to spy on her employees? Or did they know why she was here? This was just too strange. When they went into a room, she would go into the hallway and eavesdrop at the doorway. Then maybe she could...

A scream tore from her throat as the world plunged into darkness. Hands grabbed her arms and handcuffs snapped around her wrists. She screamed again, the sound captured by the hood.

Two large males carried her down the stairs, her body supported between them. Neither of them were large enough to be the giant, though.

"Put her in one of the holding cells." Straith's voice came from up above. "I'll inform her Master of her transgressions, and he and I will settle on a suitable sentence for his wayward submissive."

The trip wasn't long, and when she heard the door open, the hood came off. She was pushed inside a small room that held no furniture. The door slammed shut before she could ask any questions.

Her heart thumped so hard she wondered if she would die. She had no one to blame but herself, though. He'd told her to stay put and she'd decided to disobey.

This sucked. And then she thought about Francis Steele at the top of the stairs. Her presence could only mean one thing: she owned *Fingertip Fantasies*, which was something Saffron was pretty sure no one knew.

If the woman wouldn't take her story, or if she thought it was lacking, then maybe she could sell it to someone else. There were rival publications that would be happy to have this story. One way or another, she would get work out of this.

There was no place to sit, no cushions or blankets or towels. She leaned against the wall and wondered how long she would have to wait. Of course, she wouldn't know, would she? She hadn't seen a clock since she'd arrived here.

She started to pace, wishing the door would open. When it finally did, she'd expected to see his angry, dark face. Instead, Miss Kitty stepped inside.

"Come here, please." The submissive took the handcuffs from her body and motioned for Saffron to follow her. They went up the stairs she'd been carried down and moved toward the door where Francis Steele had been.

The door was opened, and when Saffron stepped in front of it, Miss Kitty nodded toward it, then turned and walked back toward the stairs.

Saffron stepped inside to find her Master sitting on the front of the desk. His arms were crossed over his chest and an annoyed look made him look very menacing.

"Master, I..."

He held up a finger. "Were you given permission?"

"No, Sir." She held up her hand and he shook his head.

"I'm very disappointed in you, enigma." He crossed his legs at the ankle. "I expected you up here much sooner."

"Sir? I..." *What the hell was he saying?*

"I gave you every opportunity to explore, and you only did it once. Lots of time alone should have given you plenty of time to discover things. But you waited until your stay was almost over. Do you always do things so close to your deadline?"

"You threatened to send me home if I broke the rules. Now you blame me for not snooping around? That's bullshit." *Wait. Did he just say deadline?* "Deadline? What deadline? What are you talking about?"

His eyebrows shot up and he sat forward. "I am still your Master, and you will treat me as such. And as your Master, I expect you to follow my rules. But as your employer, I expect you to bring home a good story."

The door opened and Straith came inside. "Mr. Steele, the England office is on the line. They need to speak with you, and they say it's most urgent."

"Thank you, Mr. Straith."

The Englishman closed the door behind him and Saffron locked gazes with the giant. "You're Francis Steele? You lied to me. You said...you..." Angry tears filled her eyes.

"I didn't lie." He leaned forward just a little. "Present 1, enigma. Right now."

She thought about disobeying, but her body had become accustomed to kneeling when he said those words. Her knees had just hit the floor when he picked up the phone and said, “Francis Steele.”

It hit her as if someone had tossed a baseball at her head. It was why no one called him by his name. It was why Straith called him Sir. He was Francis Steele. The woman she’d met in Seattle had fooled her, lied to her. The whole thing had been a set-up.

She thought back to her interview with the woman she’d thought was Francis Steele. Saffron had been surprised to find the boss in the outer office, but when Saffron had offered her hand and said “Hello, Ms. Steele,” the woman hadn’t demurred. And partway through the meeting, the phone had rang. That must have been when the real Francis Steele, the man on the phone before her now, her Master, had proposed the trip to Fingertip Fantasies. He’d set up the auction and bought her.

She supposed she should be flattered, but the truth of the matter was the whole thing had been a lie.

She’d thought she was the one performing the illusion, that she was pulling one over on them by being here for reasons other than fulfilling her supposed fantasies. But she was the one in the middle of the illusion. She was the one who’d been told a lie, fed a line of bullshit. Her job was down the drain, and she had nothing to show for it.

That mother fucking son-of-a-bitch.



## *Chapter Twelve*

If she'd ever thought to do bodily harm to someone, now would be the time to do it. The son of a bitch sat behind his desk, his demeanor cool. On the other hand, Saffron felt as if her blood was boiling.

"Who was the woman I talked to in Seattle?"

"That's my twin sister, Francesca. She's the new editor-in-chief at *Salacious*."

Saffron tried to ignore the physical differences between the two people she'd talked to. The woman had been barely five foot five by her guess. "Did you steal all size genes while the two of you were in the womb? And what is this, your way of pulling the 'which twin is which' trick?"

Why was he so calm? She wanted him to get mad, to show some negative emotion of some sort. If he screamed at her, it would be easier for her to stay angry.

"No one lied to you, enigma."

"Don't call me that!"

"You assumed she was Francis Steele. When you shook her hand, you never called her Francis, you called her Ms. Steele, and she is Ms. Steele. You didn't wait for an introduction before you started your spiel about freelancing."

*Was he right? Please don't let him be right?* She thought back over that afternoon, how the petite woman had listen to her proposition for work, then taken the phone call.

"You look beautiful."

"You're a fucking liar."

"Language, enigma."

This time she did stand. "Language? Screw you! And I'm not your enigma."

“Oh yes you are. I named you the minute you stepped into my office back in Seattle and thought my brand new editor in chief was me. My photo may not be on our website, and the bio is ambiguous, I admit, but there are many people who know Francis Steele is a man. That makes you a reporter who really doesn’t do her research; which makes you a definite puzzle.”

“I did do research, I just... I’m just too trusting.” She put her hands on her hips. “I did research on BDSM, fat lot of good that it did me.”

“Present 1,” he said, keeping his voice low.

“No.”

“Present 1, enigma.”

“Up yours.”

For a minute, she thought he was going to burst into laughter. Instead, he just continued to stare. “Is that your way of telling me you’re breaking your contract with me?”

“Seeings as how you lied to me, I don’t think it should be a problem.” She crossed her arms over her body, pushing up her breasts. “I want to go home.”

“Do you? Well, there’s a plane leaving here at midnight. You could be home within a day.” He leaned forward slightly. “For the record, enigma. I want to say once again that I never lied to you. I might have mislead you, but I never said, ‘No, I’m not Francis Steele.’ And while you listed many employment positions at Steel publications when you asked me what I did for a living, publisher, owner or CEO was not one of them.”

She ignored his words. She didn’t care how he saw it. To her, it had all been one big fat fabrication.

“Good. I want my clothes.”

He nodded, toying with a pen on his desk. “I’ll have Miss Kitty bring your clothes to my room, and I’ll tell Mr. Straith to come and get you in time for the flight.”

“Good.” She turned toward the door, not looking back when she slammed out, the door banging against the wall in her wake.

She stalked toward the stairs, ignoring Straith’s strident, “Miss Tyler, stop at once.”

“Talk to your flipping boss,” she yelled over her shoulder, pushing open the door to the stairwell.

She’d made it down to the bottom when she stopped, wrapping her arms around her naked body.

“I can’t believe this.” She looked up at the door. He wasn’t coming after her. No one was coming. Had Steele called Straith into his office to tell him about her leaving tonight?

Now that she was alone, she felt calmer, and thought about what he’d said. The jerk was right. He’d never lied to her, and she’d called his sister Ms. Steele. Something told her that if she’d said CEO the other evening when she was quizzing him about jobs, he would have said yes. Why had she gone to the other end of the scale and asked him if he were the janitor?

And what happened now? She couldn’t leave this job without the money she’d counted on to keep her solvent for another month. She couldn’t afford to just walk away from it. And if she did, would Francesca Steele take her story for the magazine?

A chill pervaded her that had nothing to do with the idea of losing money. The stairwell was chilly and she needed to make a decision. She could go back up to the office and tell him she wanted to write the story, but that she didn’t want to serve him anymore. Or she could give up, go down to the room and dress, get on the plane and do what he’d said she’d do the first night, leave with her tail between her legs.

And she’d be damned if she’d let that happen.

She marched back up the stairs, making sure to slam the door as she entered the hall. Straith came out of Steele’s office, a frown marring his face.

“Miss Tyler, you will stay where you are.”

“And you need to get the hell out of my way.” She pushed past him into the office, her chest heaving.

Steele sat behind his desk, holding up a clock for her to see. “Six minutes. I expected you back a little sooner. You do realize you’re going to have to apologize to Mr. Straith for your rudeness.”

“Give me something to wear.”

“In the corner.” He pointed to a coat tree. She snatched a sweater off it and wrapped it around her body.

“I have demands.” That jerk was grinning at her, as if he were having trouble holding back laughter.

“Demands?”

“That’s right. You sent me here to do a job, and then you tricked me. I want an interview—several of them in fact. One with Miss Kitty, one with vanilla, one with vanilla’s Mistress and one with...you.”

“That can be arranged.” He turned his chair to the side and stretched out his legs. “You used the plural form of the word. Do those interviews serve as one demand, or several?”

“One.”

She was toying with the edge of the sweater, worrying the fabric between her fingers. She could call what she wanted research, but in truth, the last stipulation was just because she wanted it, wanted to know what it felt like.

“You can ask me anything, enigma, but you don’t have to tell me what you want. You desire another scene, or two.”

“One. I want to be...flogged.” There, she’d said it. And the world hadn’t cracked in two.

“I can do that, but I won’t just do one scene. You agreed to stay here as a submissive and I bought you. I paid my money, and I have demands myself. If you want flogged, then you will reconsider your decision to break your contract. You will stay here with me for the next three days as my submissive.”

“I...”

He held up a finger and she clamped her mouth shut. “During the day, you can work on your story. I will give you full access to the people you’ve asked about, as long as they agree to being interviewed. But during the next three evenings, you’re mine.”

“I just want the one.”

“That’s not your decision,” he replied, his voice level. “You have conditions and those are my terms.”

“I want my own room.”

He shook his head. “You will stay with me as you have since you arrived. Accept my terms, or I will ask Straith to hold the plane for you.”

“I counter with this: not four days, but one. One more day to do the interviews and the flogging.”

She felt calmer now that she’d issued her conditions. She might not get a full BDSM experience, but she would get enough to be able to finish her work, and make her money.

“I’ll settle for one day. But you have to leave the scene to me. I told you that you can’t just take a flogger to a submissive’s ass. It takes buildup, and skill, and it can’t be rushed. You let me set that up while you worry about your interviews.”

She considered his terms, watching his unflinching expression. “Fine. What about my money for the story?”

“I will pay you as we agreed upon, providing the copy is on Francesca’s desk one week after you leave here.”

“Excellent. I’ll do the interviews tomorrow and the scene tomorrow night. If you’ll have Straith show me to a room.”

He chuckled. “Your room is my room. That hasn’t changed.”

She thought about refusing, but part of her said if she did, he would call the whole thing off. “I’ll take that. But you don’t touch me until the scene, and the rules of me working during the day apply. Plus, I won’t have sex with you during the scene.”

He stood and offered his hand. “Miss Tyler, you have a deal. And I will see you tomorrow evening. You may interview me after the flogging.”

It amazed her that he used the F-word so casually when she’d had such trouble asking for it. She turned and left the room, keeping the sweater wrapped tightly around her. Behind her, she heard a deep, amused chuckle. It seemed to follow her down the hall and into the stairwell.

Damn him to hell. She turned around and marched back to his office.

“Under a minute this time. Why don’t you just sit for a while? We can talk.”

She stayed standing near the doorway. “Why didn’t you tell me who you were?”

She wanted to scream at him to stop looking at her like that. “Please tell me.”

“Part of the fantasy you and Francesca settled on was you submitting to an unknown Dom. My telling you who I was would have voided that. You would have reacted to me differently if you’d known I was, in theory, the man who’d hired you.”

Damn! That sounded way too good. “Fine, I’ll take that.” She marched back down the hall, well aware of the chuckle that followed her yet again. This time she would leave and go to the room. She was determined to be there and in bed, and hopefully asleep, before he showed up. She wanted to hold on to her anger as long as possible.

\* \* \* \*

The bed seemed like even more of a tomb tonight. She put her hands to her face and screamed into her fits.

“Son of a bitch! Jerk! Asshole!” She rolled over in the small space, then pulled at the T-shirt she’d found to wear for sleeping. Not even two weeks had passed and she couldn’t sleep in clothes.

She pulled the shirt over her head and tossed it to the floor, pushing aside the curtain as she did. The sound filled the room, reminding her she was basically imprisoned in there. That would have to do, though. He wouldn’t give her another room, and there was no way she was sleeping with him.

How could she have been so stupid? She’d read about Steele Publications, but when she’d seen the woman in the office, she’d just assumed...he’d been right about that. Still, he could have come in and introduced himself. He could have said something to her while they were in Seattle.

Except he’d made it clear that he wanted her. That thought made her body tingle with need. She remembered fucking him this morning, sliding back and forth on his cock.

“You son of a...” The door opened and she closed her mouth, almost holding her breath. The light near his bed clicked on and he moved toward the bathroom, whistling.

The jerk was happy. She wondered how many women he’d pulled this trick on, not letting them know who he really was. The shower ran and she wondered if he was hard. She could go in there, jerk him off, play enigma once more before tomorrow evening’s scene.

He whistled again as he came out of the bathroom.

“Who named you?” The question was out of her mouth before she’d really considered it.

“If that’s an indication of your interview questions, tomorrow will be a breeze.” He pulled back the curtain on her bed, and she gazed at him. He was naked, and he was hard, his long, thick cock an obvious invitation to her. “My parents named me, of course.”

“That’s not what I mean. I mean...Francis? For a boy?”

“Sir Francis Drake, St. Francis of Assisi. Francis I was a king of France. Would you question their parents about the choice of a name?”

She sat up, holding the sheet in front of her to hide the fact she was naked. She didn’t want him to know she was following what he’d taught her, about sleeping nude so she would be ready for him if he called. But he hadn’t called, had he? Not near enough.

“I’m named after my grandfather.”

“Do your friends call you Francis?”

“Most of them call me Steele.” He ran his finger up the length of his cock. “Here I am known as Master Francis. No one has teased me about my name since I was in grade school.”

She imagined they hadn’t, not with a man his size. “How tall are you?”

“Six-five. And before you ask, I weigh two-fifty, give or take five or so pounds according to the season.”

“You can go now.” She turned her back on him, closing her eyes, hoping to blot out the image of his dick, seeking to forget how it felt sliding into her.

“Can I?” His laugh was deep. “That’s very magnanimous of you, enigma.”

“That’s not my name.”

“To me it will always be your name.” His voice caressed her bare back and she licked her lips as it settled over her, arousing her even more than she already was. He rattled the curtain. “If you think turning your back on me will diminish my hard-on, you’re sorely mistaken. I’d love to fuck your sweet ass, too. And I know you would love it. I remember how you quaked with my dick in your pussy and the plug in your ass. We can reverse things, with a dildo inside you while I claimed your tight little opening.”

“Please remember our deal.” Her body trembled with need. If he stayed another minute, she would beg him to fuck her, to do exactly what he’d just described.

“I remember it and I’ll go to bed, for now.” He dropped the curtain and the sound made her shiver. “It’ll give me time to rest up for tomorrow night.”

The sound of his retreating footsteps didn’t stop the need she felt. All she had to do was call out and he would come. She had to use some of that discipline he touted, or else she’d give herself to him in a heartbeat, and she was afraid she would never want another man but him ever again.

## *Chapter Thirteen*

“You’re a naughty girl.” The sound of hand hitting flesh made Saffron jump. Vanilla’s Mistress, who wanted to be called only Mistress in the published story, was applying her hand to vanilla’s bare backside very liberally.

The interview had been over for half an hour, but Mistress had insisted that Saffron watch her spank vanilla. She’d taken the submissive over her lap and started to spank. That was sixty-two swats ago. Saffron knew it because vanilla counted each one, and begged her Mistress for another.

The submissive’s backside was redder than an apple, and from the tone of her voice, the pain was very pleasurable to her.

This was more of what Saffron had expected to see during her time at Fingertip Fantasies. This was classic BDSM, Mistress spanks submissive 101.

Saffron had told Mistress she didn’t want to stick around for the sex afterward and the woman had frowned at her, saying very primly, “Not all scenes end that way. Submission is not just about sex. It is about the giving and taking of power, submission is a gift a Mistress should treasure. If she does not, she is a very poor Mistress. The same can go for a Master.”

She read over those words again and thought about the woman sitting in front of her, another woman stretched out over her lap. Mistress was a thirty-eight-year-old accountant from Philadelphia. She was part of the BDSM scene there and had agreed to dominate vanilla as a favor to Straith, whom she’d known for quite some time.

Vanilla was a thirty-five-year-old attorney who enjoyed being spanked and dominated, but only by a woman. Saffron learned a new term from her, that of *switch*. In her life at home in



Kansas City, she was a Dominatrix who took the lash to her submissive boss' bottom as often as possible.

Their exchange of power, and the idea that vanilla was a Domme in her other life, fascinated Saffron, and vanilla told her how playing both parts helped her to feel centered.

Saffron felt she had a better understanding of BDSM after talking to the two of them. There was a great amount of respect shown, from both of them, and the trust they felt for each other was evident.

Mistress had finished the spanking; vanilla was on her knees now, her hands clasped behind her back. Mistress had a tight hold on the leash attached to vanilla's collar and she was bent slightly, whispering something to the sub that Saffron could not hear.

When vanilla answered, Mistress straightened and gave Saffron a very sweet smile. "I trust you have everything you need from us?"

"Yes, thank you Mistress."

"You're welcome, Miss Tyler. I'll look forward to your article."

When they'd gone, Saffron doodled on her notebook. Watching them together made her think of Steele. Damn his hide for lying to her.

She mentally head-whacked herself as she processed the thought. He hadn't lied to her. She'd never once asked him if he was Francis Steele, and she had assumed the woman she'd seen in his office was the publisher she was looking for; he was right in so many levels in that respect.

During the night, she'd tried to tell herself not to think about the fact that he'd seen her and wanted her, wanted her enough to call his sister and set up her trip to Fingertip Fantasies. The desire had stretched into the second time he'd seen her when he'd bought her at auction.

She wanted to hate him, but she couldn't. There was a huge part of her that wanted the session tonight to end in sex, but she would be damned if she would initiate it. If he suggested it, she might go along.

But if she did that, would she be able to give him up at the end of the evening? She thought about standing in the hallway, her against the wall with the tip of his dick pressing against her pussy. She grew instantly wet and she shuddered.

She was addicted to him; addicted to his size, his presence, and the discipline that allowed him to hold her still in that position and not thrust into her when she was going crazy with need.

She asked herself again if she would be able to leave him after tonight. It would be hard, but she could do it. He'd made it quite clear, though, that he'd like to keep her in his life. All she had to do was say the right words.

There hadn't been a steady man in Saffron's life in years. She'd practically given up the idea of finding someone who didn't care that she wasn't tiny. Most men she'd dated started to nag her about her weight a few months into the relationship.

Somehow, she didn't think Steele would do that. He was interested in more than just her body, although he wanted that, too. Or was he? They hadn't exactly had intellectual discussions during the days they'd known each other.

"Crap." She buried her face in her hands. "Crap, crap, crap."

"Miss Tyler." She turned her head toward Miss Kitty. "Your Master has requested that I help you prepare for your session with him. If you'll come with me, please. You may leave your notes and such here and they will be taken to your Master's rooms."

Saffron followed quietly, then cleared her throat before they reached the doorway. The submissive turned to her, a questioning look on her face.

"I know you told Mr. Steele that you'd rather not be interviewed for the article, and I respect that. But may I ask you a question, for my own benefit? I promise I won't use the information for publication."

At first, Saffron thought Miss Kitty would refuse. Instead, she turned and clasped her hands behind her back, the gesture an obvious acceptance of the request.

"Do you belong to Mr. Straith?"

"No. My Master..." Tears appeared in her eyes and she blinked them back. "My Master died last year. Mr. Straith was kind enough to give me a position here."

"I'm so sorry."

"Mr. Straith has offered to scene with me, but there is no bond there. I could never submit to anyone but my Master."

"I see. Thank you for being so honest with me."

Miss Kitty gave her a genuine smile. "We mustn't keep your Master waiting."

“Of course not,” Saffron said under her breath as the woman led her down the hall. She opened the door to a room Saffron had never seen before. Hot mist billowed out as they passed through. When they were inside, she felt the heavy, wet air surround her. A large pool took up most of the space in the small room.

Miss Kitty dropped her clothing and walked into the water.

“If you please, Miss Tyler. I prepared the bath for you and for your Master.” She nodded and Saffron turned to see Steele sitting in a chair near another doorway.

He wore tight jeans and a blue chambray shirt, which hung open, revealing his massive chest.

*So the scene begins*, she thought to herself. This was what she wanted, though. Obviously she would be bathed by another woman while he watched, and then he would flog her. She was already wet at the thought, even though she knew there would be no sex in the scene.

She undressed and followed Miss Kitty into the water. It was very warm, but not warm enough to produce the steam that filled the room. She was sure there was a mechanism somewhere here that she hadn’t seen when she came inside.

Saffron moved toward Miss Kitty, sitting on the stool in the center of the water, which was only about three feet deep. When she was seated, Miss Kitty poured warm oil over her shoulder. She then began to massage the oil into Saffron’s body, working along her arms and shoulders, the sensual feel of it lulling Saffron into a sense of peace she hadn’t felt in some time.

When the other woman massaged her breasts, she moved behind Saffron, doing it, Saffron was sure, to give Steele a perfect view of the other woman caressing her breasts. Her nipples hardened at Miss Kitty’s soft touch.

The submissive caressed her stomach and back, moving down to her thighs and buttocks, making Saffron quake with need. The oil soaked into her body, softening it, relaxing her. She drifted into a place that seemed to float onto the heavens, and when Miss Kitty dropped a dainty kiss on her shoulder, Saffron opened her eyes.

The submissive stood off to the side, her head bowed and her arms clasped behind her back. Saffron turned to find Steele watching her, his eyes droopy with desire.

“You may bring yourself to orgasm, enigma, if you so desire.”

It wouldn’t take much, she knew. Miss Kitty had aroused her as Kate never had. Her fingers found her clit and she stroked once, twice, and then... “Oh, so good. Please.” Her body

jerked and quaked and she thanked the heavens above for the stool under that kept her from falling into the water.

She seemed to float, the water caressing her body, her brain wishing for the man sitting so near to come into the pool with her and fuck her until she couldn't stand up.

She wanted to return the favor, to make Miss Kitty come as hard as she'd just come, but she knew the submissive wouldn't want it. She'd said it just a few minutes ago. She desired no one but her Master who was gone.

"Thank you, Miss Kitty," Saffron murmured, giving the woman a look that she hoped conveyed her true thanks.

"You're most welcome, Miss Tyler."

"Yes, Miss Kitty, thank you. You may go now."

She bowed toward Steele. "As you wish Master Francis." She then waded out of the water and walked through the door.

"You, enigma, will follow me."

Saffron's body still tingled as she bowed toward him. "As you wish, Master Francis."

He disappeared through the door near his chair, and Saffron made her way through the water, eager to see what was on the other side.

## *Chapter Fourteen*

It wasn't a St. Andrew's Cross she saw at first, and that disappointed her. She'd hoped to be bound to it for her whipping. What was in the room was a frame much like the one that surrounded the rope bed.

"Step on, please." She did as he asked, trying to keep her feelings in check as he secured her wrists and ankles to the posts, leaving her spread-eagled. "You're so beautiful, enigma. Do you remember what I said about your breasts at the auction?"

Saffron nodded.

"Tell me."

"You said you saw ropes in our future."

"That's right, I did." He reached behind him and produced thick lengths of steel blue cord. "I see them right now."

"But the flog..."

He placed a length of the rope against her mouth. "The scene starts right now. You will not speak unless I give you permission or you need to use your safe word. What is that word?"

"Peaches."

"Correct." He placed his body against hers, making her feel small and more than a little nervous. "If you wish to denote stress without using your safe word and ending the scene, you need to say, 'Master Francis, if you please, stop.' Repeat it."

"Master Francis, if you please, stop."

"Very good. If you use those words, I will stop and we will discuss your fears and discomfort, and then we will begin again." He caressed her face and she leaned into his touch, her head lying against his chest. "Do you trust me?"

“Yes, Master.”

“Good.” He kissed her forehead, then stepped behind her. Saffron closed her eyes and allowed the feel of the rope to soak into her body. He wrapped several lengths over and above her breasts, tying things in back and bringing them back around.

When he dropped the ropes over her shoulders and attached them to the ropes around her breasts, she moaned softly. Next, he attached the ropes above her breasts to the ones below, stopping at different intervals to ask her if the ropes felt too tight. His obvious concern for her relaxed her and she allowed herself to float again, giving her body up to his care.

She’d read about breasts harnesses, but she had no idea they would feel so sexy, make her feel so desirable and sensual.

When he was done, he patted her behind and she fought back a laugh. He did like to smack her ass.

“How do you feel, enigma?”

“Absolutely beautiful, Master Francis.” Her body hummed with anticipation, with the need to feel the flogger on her skin.

He stepped in front of her, his smile deep and masculine, full of pride and possession. “That’s a good answer, my sweet one, because that’s exactly how you look. You were made for this, made for me. Before this night is over, you will be mine, in all ways.”

Before she could answer, he snapped his fingers. “Miss Kitty.” The door opened and the mood snapped. Saffron’s body went into shock as he gave her an evil grin. “Take enigma to the cross and bind her for her Master’s pleasure.”

\* \* \* \*

While the first part of the scene might have been in private, the second part would be in public. Saffron was amazed at the number of people sitting around the room as Miss Kitty bound her to the St. Andrew’s Cross, the one she’d seen her first day there.

There were at least fifty people in the room, and one of the first people she’d seen was Mr. Straith, standing near the Cross, waiting for them. Miss Kitty bound her so that her backside faced the room, and Straith tested the restraints to make sure she would stay tightly in place.

The room was silent as the two left her, and Saffron prayed she didn’t have a panic attack or faint while she was here. She was excited, a good excited, but she was also very nervous.

The clicking sound of a door opening made her tense even more. Steele walked around her, going to the wall on the far side. He examined the implements and took down two floggers. She wanted to scream at him that she didn't want two, she only wanted one.

How could she tell him that without making a fuss in front of all these people? His instructions had been clear. She wouldn't talk unless spoken to, or to use the stress, or safe, words. And she didn't have the need to do either of those.

Master Francis stepped up behind her, pressing his huge body against hers. "Tell me what you would say for a pause in the action."

*What?* She tried to remember what they'd talked about. It seemed so long ago. "Um, I...wait, it's Master Francis, if you please, stop."

"Very good." He moved away and slapped her ass, the sound ringing through the room. Within seconds, he was back. "And your safe word?"

"Peaches." He moved away and slapped her other ass cheek.

"Very nice." He slapped her ass a few more times, stroking the cheeks afterward, moving his hands in slow circles. Then suddenly he was back, grasping her hair in his fist and pulling her head back. "You're a naughty girl, enigma. What happens to naughty girls?"

"I...I..."

"Answer me!"

"They get...spanked, Master Francis."

"Oh no, spankings are much too easy. Naughty girls get what, enigma? Tell me. Tell everyone here what you deserve."

"To be whipped." Her voice shook and she pulled on her bonds.

"Tell me you want to taste the flogger." He put his lips on her ear. "Tell us all."

"Master," she whispered, "I..."

"Say it, enigma. I have to hear it from your lips." His breath tickled her shoulder and she swallowed hard. Her body felt as if it would burst into flames at any moment. He grasped her hair again, turning her head so they were looking into each other's eyes.

"Tell me, enigma, or it stops. Right now."

"I want to taste the flogger." The words tumbled out of her mouth. "Please, Master Francis, I need to taste it."

“Excellent.” He stepped away. “Let’s give her a hand for admitting what we’ve known all along, that bad girls get flogged.”

Embarrassment replaced shock as the crowd clapped.

Suddenly, he was behind her again, his arms wrapped around her shoulders. “Kiss the floggers, enigma. Show me you accept the pain they will give you.”

She did it quickly, praying he would start the actual flogging. The handles were black and the strands black and red. She guessed them to be about an inch wide and perhaps two feet long. The anticipation was driving her insane. She wanted him to start.

“Now my hands, kiss them, too.”

His skin was warm and tasted salty. Her body quivered as he ran the floggers down her side, the soft strands caressing her skin. “They’re made of suede,” he whispered. “Good for a beginner. When you’re properly trained, when you’re truly mine and wearing my collar, we’ll switch to leather, and I’ll flog your ass, your breasts, and that tight, tight cunt.”

She gasped, surprised the soft mewls and sounds of need that accompanied his words were coming from her mouth.

“I think you’re almost ready. Are you ready?”

“Yes, Master Francis.” Were those sounds coming from her mouth?

When the warmth of him left her, she cried out, begging him to come back. Instead, he ran the strands up and down her back, caressing her, making her body jerk with need. He moved them over her ass and the back of her thighs.

When she thought she would die from waiting, her body shuddering with desire, he struck, the strands landing right across her ass.

Saffron cried out and a second strike landed, the sensations spreading through her, snaking to her nipples, tightening her fingers.

Her cries increased as a third, and then a fourth strike crossed her buttocks almost at once, coming from different sides. After that, the number of smacks drifted into each other. The pain was light, but the feeling was incredible, her body seemed to fly and she felt as if she were above them, watching him lay the flogger over her buttocks and thighs.

Was he still behind her? Were the strands still landing? It took her a minute to realize they weren’t. He was caressing them up and down her sides again, the touch light.

“Come back to me, my enigma.” He kissed her shoulder. “Are you all right?”



“More.”

“No, sweet one, you’ve had enough for the first time.” He ran the tip of the flogger down her cheek. “Next time. I promise.”

He wiped a thumb over her cheek and she was shocked to see it was wet. Was she crying? When had that started?

“Shush, my sweet one. Just breathe deeply and relax.”

“I want more.”

“You’re not ready for more, not physically. You have to build up to more.” He kissed her temple. “You’re mine, aren’t you Saffron?”

His use of her name made her shiver. “Yes, Francis, I’m yours.” The words slipped from her lips before she could stop them. “I’m scared.” She’d never felt anything like she was feeling right now, never thought to want to keep someone close to her. Never thought to enjoy having pain inflicted on her body.

“It’s all right, my beautiful enigma. Shush, just relax. It’s a bit much to take at first, but don’t worry, little one. I’ll take care of your every need, your every desire.”

He put one of the floggers in front of her face and she kissed it again. Then he stepped away from her.

“Let’s give enigma one more round of applause, shall we? Her first flogging and she took twenty-five strokes. Very nice, don’t you think?”

The watchers clapped again and enigma slumped against the cross. Within seconds, he was behind her again, stroking her sides, caressing her hair, whispering that she was fine, that he would make sure of it. That she was his.

The words wrapped around her much as the strips had cloth had done on her first night at Fingertip Fantasies. Then she’d thought to stay here two weeks. Now she knew she would stay with the giant for as long as he would have her, which she hoped was forever.

\* \* \* \*

Saffron toyed with the pen in her hand, thumping it against the tablet of paper, then threading it between her fingers.

Her ass and thighs ached, and it was the most wonderful feeling she’d ever experienced. She closed her eyes, reliving the sensation of the suede against her skin, feeling the giant’s hands on her, hearing his sexy voice in her ear, telling her she belonged to him.

When Miss Kitty had released her bonds, her Master had held her close, kissing her forehead gently, reminding her that she was his. She thought of the giant, the man she was waiting for. Her Master. Not one for two weeks, but one who would be with her no matter what.

He'd bought her for fifty bucks as part of a fantasy, and now she really did belong to him. The feeling made her tingle, although she wasn't totally sure about everything it entailed.

"What the hell have I gotten myself into?" This was usually the part where he would step up behind her, say something smart and remind her that she was his submissive. She laughed and turned the pen to the paper, doodling lazy eights on the page.

Was it right for her to do this story now? Could doing a story about your Master's business be considered nepotism? Or was it just a plain conflict of interest? Maybe this story wasn't such a good idea anymore.

"Good evening, Miss Tyler." She turned as Francis strode into the room. He sat in the chair opposite her and winked. "How are you feeling?"

"Sore." They were in his bedroom, sitting at the table where he'd fed her so many meals over the past few days.

"Good. Then you'll be thinking of me. I like that."

"Why did you call me Miss Tyler?" She hoped her panic didn't show on her face. Had him saying she was his just been part of the fantasy? Would he really just throw her over now?

"This is business, is it not? I never mix business with pleasure."

Pleasure. She was the pleasure. She giggled, then doodled on the paper again. "Maybe this isn't such a good idea. Maybe we should forget the story. If people who read it find out that we're..." She paused, trying to search for the right words to say something that was still so new to her.

"Master and submissive?"

"Yes, won't they think that it's wrong of me to write about my Master's business?"

"I had considered that, but if we market it as the way we met, then I think there won't be a problem. Ask me your questions, Miss Tyler."

She cleared her throat. "How long has Fingertip Fantasies been in business?"

"Three years."

She wrote that down, wishing she had her tape recorder. "Do you only do BDSM fantasies?"

“No, we’re open to anything.”

“Anything?”

“Well, anything that is legal. We won’t break the law to fulfill a fantasy.”

“That’s good to hear.” She returned the smile he gave her, wishing she’d left off her cloak. She didn’t really want to finish this. She wanted to have sex with him. But would he want to? Did any sex they had have to be associated with their new BDSM relationship?

No time for that now. Those answers will come later. “Where are we, exactly?”

“We don’t give out exact locations. You are in North America, on a lake. We have three locations: this one, one in England, and one in Asia.”

Saffron wanted to end it there, but she knew she didn’t know near enough. “How does one apply?”

“Through ads that we run in different publications. Right now, there is a waiting list.”

This surprised her. “Even with the cost?”

“Yes, even with the cost. We do have a program that helps defray costs for people that impress us with their application. Some people’s fantasies take less time than others. Some just want to live out the idea of being ravished by a Viking, or kidnapped by a handsome futuristic space bandit.”

“But everyone goes through the same process?”

“Yes, everyone goes through a battery of tests, both psychological and physical.”

She looked him in the eye. “Which brings up the subject of Doms and Dommes, like Mistress. Is she an employee?”

“You know that answer already, Miss Tyler. She is not a paid employee, no. She, along with some of the other Dominants, come here for vacations, to enjoy themselves training new submissives. That’s not to say we don’t have professional Doms on staff. We do. Sometimes, though, the need outweighs the staff, though, and we have to call in a few reinforcements.”

Saffron put down her pen. “Like Master Thomas? The one you were bidding against?”

“He’s on staff here, a professional. I guarantee you that, if I’d let him win you, he would have put you through the paces, much harder than I did. With him, it would have been like a two-week boot camp. You would have tasted the flogger much sooner than tonight.”

She stood and let the cloak drop to the floor, then crawled onto his lap.

He wrapped his arms around her, teasing her sides with his fingers. “Do you try and seduce all your interview subjects, Miss Tyler?”

“Drop the Miss Tyler part.”

“You’re being a bit of a brat. I like it. Gives me something to punish.” He tickled her chin, then brought her mouth down to his, kissing her gently, nibbling at her lips. “My enigma. So sweet and sexy.”

“Do I get a collar now?”

“Even more of a brat. Shame on you for asking that question.” He swatted her thigh. The sting made her wince, but it wasn’t enough for her to protest. “But the answer is yes. I don’t have the one here I’d like to use, so you’ll have to wait until we get back home. We’ll have a collaring ceremony, with just the two of us. Until then, you can be content with know I’ll get you a collar that fits our relationship.”

“How will it do that?”

“I’m thinking heavy leather for at home, one I select from a store in Seattle that I love. For out of home wear, I want something softer, macramé, maybe, that contains stones that match your beautiful eyes, but still has discreet rings for me to attach leashes and chains to; one that’s specially made just for you, a one of a kind.”

“I have to wear a collar out of the house?”

“You’ll wear one 24/7, to remind you that you’re mine.”

She snuggled into his chest. “I suppose I broke a huge rule by jumping into your lap just now.”

“Why yes, you did.” He smacked her bottom. “That ought to do as punishment...for now, anyway.”

She giggled and he kissed her again. “Is this normal BDSM?”

“There’s no such thing as normal, sweet one. Each BDSM relationship is different. Every Master, or Mistress, expects different things, and every submissive has unique things to offer. Vanilla relationships are not all the same, so why would someone expect D/s ones to be the same?”

“I’m not sure.” She toyed with a button on his shirt. “Francis, I...”

He waved his finger near her nose. “Would you like to try that again?”

“Master Francis.” He nodded, a mock serious look on his face, and she continued. “Do you...I mean...” This time she looked away.

“Enigma, look at me.” He grasped her chin when she was facing him. “Listen to me very carefully. There are two things that of the utmost importance in a D/s relationship. One is trust, the other is communication. If we don’t have those, we are in trouble. Promise me you will never be afraid to ask me a question. Promise me you’ll never keep something from me that is bothering you. And promise me that, if you’re angry, you will tell me about it. I won’t be mad at you for having feelings. I will be mad if you hide them from me.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“You promise?”

“I promise.”

“Good, then I guarantee you the same thing. You are my submissive, and you deserve my respect and care. Now, what were you going to ask?”

The words almost caught in her throat. “Does it bother you that I’m...large?”

“Does it bother you that I am?”

“No.” She rubbed his shoulder. “Men are expected to be large.”

“The only thing I expect is for you to be mine. We’ll set down house rules when you’ve moved into my home. Until then...” He nibbled on the bottom of her chin. “Present 3, enigma.”

She lay on the table, watching as he caressed her legs, moving up her stomach to her breasts. He rolled each nipple between a thumb and forefinger, then pinched.

“Who do these nipples belong to?”

Saffron thought about the stories she’d read. When a submissive gave herself to her Master he claimed her body and soul. Telling Francis that her flesh belonged to him was like the final step in the burgeoning bond between them. She already felt as if she was his, and reinforcing it with words would be perfect.

“To you, Master.”

She wanted to reach for him, but she stayed still, content to be passive, to allow him to lead her wherever they might go tonight. No, not just tonight. For the rest of their time together, which, she hoped, was a very long, long time.

“Very good.” He pinched them harder, then released them. Saffron gasped as his hands moved down her stomach. He upped her pussy with one, pushing aside her lips and thumbing her clit. “And this pussy?”

“Is yours, Master.”

His hand trailed to her ass, pressing against her entrance. “And this ass?”

“Yours.” She lifted her hips and he smacked her thigh.

“Try that again.”

“Yours, Master.”

“Better. Remember, enigma, respect is paramount in our relationship, for the both of us. You will always address me as...?”

“Master or Sir.”

“I love hearing those words come out of your mouth.” He pushed harder, taking his finger away before it penetrated her anus. “Go to the bed and Present 2.”

Saffron hurried across the floor, bending over the bed with her legs spread wide.

“You learn so well, sweet one.”

She rolled her eyes in pleasure as she heard him shed his clothes. She wanted him inside her, needed to feel the connection, not only of spirit, but of body. But it didn’t come and she thought about their walk through the hall, how he would hold her in place and put just the tip of his prick inside her.

“Please, Master, fuck me.”

“Turn over.” She did as he asked, shocked when he slapped her pussy.

“I’d slap your bottom, but I know it’s sore from the beautiful flogging you took.” He leaned over her, putting his face right next to hers. “Tell me once again who owns your body.”

“You do, Sir.”

“Then why would you ask me to fuck you? Who should make that decision?”

She was giving up every chance she had to ask for sex, wasn’t she? Could she do that? Would she never be able to say fuck me, or let me suck you, or I need it in my ass?

“Enigma, I’m waiting. Is something wrong?” He sounded so concerned that it warmed her heart. Was he afraid she would change her mind?

“Can I never ask you to fuck me?”

He stroked her cheek. "There will be times when I will want to hear those words come out of your gorgeous mouth. And you will know when those times are. But your days of taking the lead are over."

He leaned over and kissed her, placing the tip of his dick inside her pussy.

"Now, tell me what you want me to do."

"Am I going to get in trouble? You just said..." She bit her lip.

"Tell me, enigma." He slid out and then back in, giving her just a tiny bit more of him. Her body quaked with frustration as she held still. Her hips wanted to move, to take the lead and guide him inside her.

"Please Master, fuck me."

"Thank you for asking, enigma." He was looking down at her, his cock staying in the exact same spot. Why had he wanted her to ask when he wasn't going to fulfill her request?

"Are you going to mess with my mind all the time?"

"Count on it, sweet one." He slid into her, the hard length of him stretching her out. She groaned, pushing back into his thrusts. "I'm going to play with your mind, your body, and everything else that now belongs to me. Finger your clit, but don't come."

Saffron grasped her clit, rolling it between her fingers, bliss spreading through her. He thrust harder, making it near impossible for her to hold back. She tried to concentrate on everything except her clit. She thought about how things would change once they returned to Seattle.

He slammed into her harder, the sensation making her feel as if she were floating. Her just-flogged behind rubbed against the soft, downy comforter under her and she remembered sounds of the flogger hitting her behind.

And then his words came back to her. After she was trained, they would move on to leather. Her orgasm slammed into her before she could stop it, and she clasped him tightly, groaning loudly when he spanked her ass.

"Bad enigma. We're going to have to overcome that tendency, aren't we?"

"Yes, Master." She turned her head to him, savoring the feel of his hard cock inside her. "It's thinking about you that made me so excited, though, so it's your fault, isn't it?"

The stunned look on his face made her laugh.

“My, you are a brat, aren’t you? I’m obviously going to have to buy more rope. And invest in a larger gag than the one I used on you before. Or maybe I should take a riding crop to your ass next time. Would that make you less likely to come without my permission?”

“I hope so, Sir. I think I’m going to need lots and lots of lessons.” She wrapped her legs around his hips and he thrust harder.

He stared down into her eyes as he filled her, and Saffron knew she’d never felt anything like the connection she felt with this man right now. The giant had bought her, had claimed her and made her his. And she never wanted to leave his arms.

When he’d spilled his cum into her, she rubbed her cheek on his shoulder. “I’m going to need a lot of lessons, Sir. Will you teach me how best to serve you?”

“Enigma, I will be most happy to.”



## *About the Author*

Melinda Barron loves to explore Egyptian tombs and temples, discover Mayan ruins, play in castles towers, and explore new cities and countries. She generally does it all from the comfort of her home by opening a book.

Melinda loves to lose herself between the pages of a book. The only thing she loves more is creating stories from the wonderful heroes and heroines that haunt her dreams and crowd her head. She believes love is for everyone, not just those who are a size 2. Her books are full of magic, suspense and love, in all sorts of shapes and sizes.

Mel currently lives in the Texas Panhandle with two cats and a file stuffed with new ideas to keep her typing fingers busy, and your heart engaged.

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### ***Wish Me Up, Rub Me Down***

With no love life to speak of, BBW Anya Bartholomew lives only for her job. This dedication has paid off. As a successful advertising agent, she has risen in the ranks of her firm to be the top money-maker.

But at the insistence of her two best friends, who claim she needs a break from work, Anya takes a weekend vacation to the small town of Pleasant, Maine. While shopping at an antique shop, she rubs a lamp that looks as if it could belong to Aladdin himself.

Things will never be the same.

Back at work on Monday morning, Anya finds that her boss has given her a new account...for a lamp factory. However, her clients—two very handsome, very sexy men—are more than what they seem.

They're Pleasure Djinn. And they have come to fulfill five of Anya's most secret sexual wishes.

### ***Aliya Baban and the Cave of Pleasure***

Advertising agent Aliya Baban is beautiful with a capital B. Unfortunately, she's also a witch with a capital B. In her twenty-eight years of life, she's managed to offend almost every woman she has ever met.

But she doesn't care, really. That's just the way life is.

When her boss tells her to get the *Cave of Pleasure* account, or else get a new job, Aliya takes her party invitation—and the strange lamp she's received—and attends the nightclub's grand opening, ready to do battle for her livelihood.

Matuse is more than just the owner of the *Cave of Pleasure*...he's a pleasure djinni. And Aliya has rubbed his lamp. For the next thirty days, she belongs to him. Though he intends to bring intense pleasure to her body, it's also his job to make sure his "she-devil" changes her wicked ways.

Will Matusé be able to help Aliya overcome her painful past? Or will Aliya fail to make the five heartfelt apologies she needs to make to the five women she has hurt the most.

### ***To Rub, Honor and Obey***

Moreen McGee is a perfect example of how poor decisions made in youthful rebellion can haunt someone for life. Now on probation for ten years, she serves her court-ordered community service at a center for troubled teens in the hopes of stopping other kids from taking the wrong path.

But when one of her young charges pickpockets a wallet from her high school nemesis, Aliya Baban, Moreen decides to put the illicit skills she learned as a teenager to good use...by breaking into Aliya's apartment to return the stolen wallet, thus keeping the kid who stole it out of trouble and out of jail.

However, once she's in the opulent Manhattan flat, Moreen can't resist the urge to take one small token from the woman she still blames for her own downfall—an old, neglected oil lamp that she's sure Aliya will never miss.

Moreen accidentally summons a gorgeous demon-turned-pleasure djinni named Paran, and he's not too thrilled with the theft of his property. Moreen has rubbed his lamp, the contract is sealed. For the next thirty days, she belongs to him. And Paran intends to use this time to help his little felon learn some very important lessons, including the true meaning of the words *honor* and *obey*.

### ***Smoke, Fire and Desire***

Scientist Rhyllie Dawson works hard, but when it comes to play she's pretty reserved. Until her friends take her to the *Cave of Pleasure* in New York City. She's there to celebrate her birthday, and maybe, just maybe, get lucky.

What Rhyllie doesn't know is the *Cave of Pleasure* is run by Pleasure Djinn, and they're eager to show her that there's more to life than just work. On stage in front of a bevy of male dancers, Rhyllie is told to choose one for her special birthday dance.

She picks the fireman, and quickly learns that where there's smoke, there's fire, and a great deal of desire.

## *Handcuffs and Lace*

### **Resplendence Publishing's Erotic Romance Line of Law Enforcement Themed Stories**

#### ***Search Me Baby, One More Time* by Melinda Barron**

Wren Thornberry's life isn't going according to plan. She let her father talk her out of marrying Bryan Stockard, the man she loves, and moved halfway around the world. Now she's back home in Texas, babysitting her grandmother while grandma and her boy-toy work through their list of sexual exploits, making themselves the talk of the town.

But what Wren doesn't know is that things in her hometown are about to heat up even more, and it will have nothing to do with her grandmother. It seems that Bryan Stockard is still around, he wants to get back into Wren's life by any means necessary, and now he has just the tools to do it: a police uniform, handcuffs, and the authority to make Wren *assume the position*.

#### ***Ticket Me More* by Tia Fanning**

Hailed by the bridal flower world as an artistic genius, Meli works long nights making bouquets for women lucky enough to find love, while she herself lives a life of solitude. She yearns to share her heart and body with someone other than Bob, her *Battery Operated Boyfriend*, but acute shyness keeps her from engaging the "living" world.

However, Meli's quiet and predictable existence takes an unexpected turn when she is pulled over and ticketed by the most gorgeous cop she has ever encountered—Officer Michael Johnson. Though he doesn't seem to notice her as anything more than a traffic violation, Meli makes plans to overcome her timid nature and seize the police officer's attention...using any speed necessary.

#### ***Cuff Me Lacy* by Demi Alex**

Three months is way too long to wait for some simple, low-down, straight forward sex. It's not like Officer Chrissie Hansen is asking for prince charming to offer her the love of a lifetime. All she wants is a good orgasm that she doesn't have to work for alone.

At least with "The Bull" she knows what to expect. But when Patrick MacKlick returns to her life and tempts her with new options, she discovers that lace can imprison a heart better than handcuffs can.

### ***What the Cuff?* By Celia Kyle**

God really should have reconsidered making werewolves. That, or Lyssa needed to get better taste in men and stay away from those with wandering eyes—and other things. Drunk as a wolf, she stumbles to her best friend's house to sleep off her whiskey induced haze and wakes to...*cuffs*?

Caleb sees his chance and takes it. His buddies on the force ribbed him but good for buying silver plated cuffs. But with a werewolf in his bed, the woman he's yearned for since they were teens, he wasn't taking any chances. Lyssa was his. She just didn't know it yet.

### ***Going Commando* by Catherine Chernow**

Bounty hunter Shyra Lawrence listens to her favorite radio station one morning where the DJ's are discussing "going commando" —*a.k.a* wearing no undies. Captivated by their conversation, she decides to shed her panties in favor of the freedom that wearing no underwear brings.

Enthusiastic, Shyra sends an email to her best friend, Donna, detailing the delights of panty-freedom, but unbeknownst to Shyra, she's hit the send key...to the wrong email addy!

When Derek Grayson opens his emails that morning, he discovers that his #1 employee and top bounty hunter has sent him an erotic, enticing message about going commando. Derek has always been polite, professional, and so damned attracted to Shyra that it's almost painful. Working day in and day out with voluptuous woman has sent Derek's hormones into overdrive on more than one occasion.

Now, Shyra's shed her panties and Derek's got all he can do to contain his lust when she announces that she's... GOING COMMANDO.

### ***Handcuffs and Lies* by Bronwyn Green**

Sometimes promises to friends are the hardest to keep. Undercover police officer, Michael Tanner, promised his dying partner that he'd take care of the man's little sister. Trouble is, after her brother's death, Doctor Tori Spinelli wants nothing to do with Michael—or any other cop for that matter.

Tori has always fought against overprotective men and deception. Forced into protective custody with Michael, she's now faced with both in the same package. Despite their differences, Tori falls in love with him, but how can she trust a man who lies for a living?

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