



Talus: A Demon Story

By Carolyn Faulkner

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Chapter One

In-cu-bus. Is that a new type of minivan?

Grace Ferrentino wrestled the last suitcase into the foyer of her temporary home-away-from-home and just stood for a moment, hands on her hips, one wary eye on the rocking, hissing cat carrier and one on the beautiful horizon of nothin' but ocean. Out of the goodness of her heart – yeah, right – she'd offered to housesit for June, July, and August at a huge old beach house on Drake's Island. Tanya Hennessey was suffering through another whirlwind tour of Europe with Mr. Wrong, and she'd needed someone she could trust to watch her house. Some people had all the luck . . . well, in Tanya's case, maybe luck wasn't exactly the right word for it, but whatever she was doing, she must've been doing it right to be paid a teacher's salary and drive a Jag.

Of course, Grace's superhuman hearing in relation to anything beach-oriented had perked up immediately; personally she thought it was a horrible waste for anyone to live anywhere else . . . although the price of real estate along the coast translated into un-real estate, which is why she lived in a cramped little condo well inland. She carefully insinuated herself into the conversation the three teachers had been conducting in the small room at the back of the high school library that functioned as a break-slash-lunchroom for those who got neither breaks nor lunches. "What's this I hear about you needing a house sitter, Tanya, and do you want the bribe in small bills or will you take a check?"

Luckily, Tanya liked Grace, and Lord knows that, considering Grace's distinct lack of anything even vaguely resembling a life, the house would certainly be safe enough with her, if one ignored the puddles of drool that were likely to dampen the carpeting. Arrangements were made and emergency numbers exchanged, and now she was finally taking possession – well, temporary possession – of the property. She'd left her roommate so fast, once school was out for the year, that there were probably still skid marks in the driveway. But Lydia was one of the few people who seemed to truly understand her perverted obsession with this house.

Probably because Lydia had a good idea just how perverted Grace really was, she thought with a wry smile.

Grace was the librarian at the same high school where Tanya taught history. They had known each other for years, although not terribly well, but Grace had attended the annual holiday get-together that Tanya through for her friends on the staff every year. And, from the first time she'd stepped into it, there had been something about this place that had poked at her from the back of her mind ever since; a feeling – an aura that both attracted and repelled her at the same time . . . niggling at her like a loose tooth that you just can't keep your tongue away from when you're six years old.

Only Gracie was thirty-six years old, old enough to know better. Creaky, creepy houses that had been there since Noah was a pup abounded in New England, and they naturally had that "been around since dirt" feeling. Grace was enough of a house connoisseur that she should have just sloughed off the disturbing aura, but it wasn't that easy. Not at all. And she'd noticed that the feelings didn't recede until she'd left the house, dispelling slowly on the drive home as if severely reluctant to let go of her. She'd been teaching at the same school for almost ten years now, and had attended ten such parties at Tanya's beautiful house. That sense of nervous expectation, that mantle of uncomfortable, almost sexual awareness settled onto her and into her like a musty cloak every time she crossed the threshold.

And here it was again, only tenfold as strong.

Grace straightened her shoulders. She was not going to let whatever weird spooky things that might be haunting what amounted to her territory for the next two and a half months get the better of her. Before she loosed one very pissed off kitty from her crate, she got her stuff put away – the fewer things for Mouse to shred, the better. Once the litter box was in place in the downstairs bathroom – the better to chase away any guests with – Grace put the carrier in a quiet corner of the kitchen and opened the door.

Now, Mouse wasn't much of a cat's cat. Having been raised from kittenhood by her devoted Mommy, she was very attached to Grace, and, although she had a very demanding schedule which included at least sixteen hours of sleep a day, she also required plenty of loving attention, which Grace was more than happy to provide. But instead of tentatively sniffing her way out of the crate as Grace expected, Mouse literally race over her sneakered feet to dart down the cellar stairs in stark fear. Grace, a seasoned cat owner, just shrugged. She'd come up when she was hungry. Tuna-breath's food and water dishes took up residence next to a solid oak waste basket.

Grace shook her head. Tanya needed to float down to Earth with the rest of the humans and buy a butt-ugly Rubbermaid wastebasket, she thought. Who the hell uses oak for a waste basket, for God's sake?

Still mumbling to herself, she wandered out onto the screened-in, wrap-around porch and just stood there, taking huge, deep breaths of coolish evening, salty air, listening to the wonderful, soothing sounds of the waves and the gulls . . . As she stood there, though, Grace couldn't rid herself of the idea that someone was standing behind her. That was silly. She'd locked the door, she knew she had. But, paranoia reigning supreme, Grace went back and re-checked everything. Yup. Locked. Screen door: locked. Deadbolt: locked. Doorknob: locked.

Heck, this was backwater Maine, for God's sake – at least until the herds of touristas arrived in a couple of weeks. And even then. You'd think she was in an apartment in the middle of the combat zone in Boston!

Trying to laugh it off, Grace grimaced and headed back to the porch. She couldn't believe she was here until the end of August – heck, she could practically roll out of bed and onto the –

Something was rubbing against her clitoris, and it wasn't the seam of her jeans, because she was wearing gym shorts. Grace could feel her lips being parted, as if around a big, male finger as it granted itself access to that hidden nub of flesh . . .

She turned around, half expecting to find the owner of that finger standing behind her, but, of course, no one was there – hadn't she just checked the locks?

Flick – flick.

She had to brace herself against the wall of the house with one hand, gulping air as she did. That was a finger. Grace knew fingers and that was someone's finger!

Flick – flick.

Holy fucking Christ, she was standing alone on a porch getting brought off by a – by nothing! By something . . . invisible! Oh, God, her nipples were both being coaxed into livid, aching peaks by something hot and wet and slightly rough that suckled and tugged and pulled at her deliciously . . . relentlessly – Grace's knees almost gave away as she moaned, long and low –

And then it was gone. Nada.

Nothing but a very deep, faintly amused chuckle, but that must've come from next door.

Still shuddering, still pulsating, blood thrumming through now swollen flesh, Grace forced herself to stand up straight and walk back into the house.

Why the hell hadn't Tanya told her that this house was haunted by a perverted ghost?

All through the unpacking process, Grace kept looking over her shoulder and jumping at everything, including the phone when it rang next to her ear. When she'd come back from the heart attack, she picked it up. "Hello?"

"Grace?" It was Lydia, her roommate.

"Lyds!" Grace greeted, dropping bonelessly down onto the freshly-made king-sized bed.

Lydia liked to live vicariously through Grace - she might have spent the summer at the beach house also, but then Lydia actually spent more time with her boyfriend than at their apartment anyway. "Where are you now?"

"I'm in the master bedroom - it's freakin' huge! The bed and the room itself - you know, she's got a walk-through closet dressing area thingie and a bathroom that's the size of our goddamned apartment!"

"Well, we all knew she was a clothes horse . . ." Disapproval was rife in Lydia's tone. "Is there any room for you to put your stuff?"

Grace snorted. "Yeah, like I have the gowns and stuff she has. I can just see hanging my Jaclyn Smith's from K-mart next to her Diors - they'd probably curl up and die. I'd wake up tomorrow morning to find all of her stuff had segregated itself into one corner of the closet!" She figured she was pretty much done for the night, so she put the toe of one foot to the heel of the Reebok on the other and pulled each of her shoes off, flexing and stretching each foot as it was released from sneaker purgatory.

A thought struck her suddenly and she tuned out Lydia's story about her rascal of a boyfriend - should she mention the bizarre happening on the porch, or just write it off as an ode to the fact that she hadn't gotten some in a while . . . okay, an enormously long while? Lying stretched out on the bed had made her t-shirt ride up above her shorts, which she didn't usually allow, not being the skinniest of people, but what the hell.

She was alone.

She hoped.

Grace raised her head and looked around her furtively, just to assure herself that she was, truly alone. Then she relaxed back on the bed again, her hand landing on her bare, much too round tummy, rubbing lazily as she tuned back into Lyd's story, able to pick it up without missing a beat.

"- and then I said, 'Fuck, no, you're not gonna touch me there . . .'" Lydia was the world's youngest prude, Grace swore.

"Lydia!"

The snort that wafted through the wires was somewhat less than ladylike. "Well, not all of us are slut puppies like you!"

"I am not a slut puppy!" Grace protested, then relented. "Well, not in reality."

"I don't care that you haven't slept with many guys - when you do sleep with them, I'm sure they don't hear 'no' very often . . ." came the teasing comment.

"Bite me," Grace responded with no real rancor.

Lydia didn't hesitate with a comeback. "No, thanks. I'm not into that, but I'm sure you are . . ."

"Grrrrrrr."

Her best friend giggled like a little girl. "Well, I'll let'cha go - dipnod is coming to pick me up - we're going to see the new Star Trek movie. Wanna come?"

She knew that the offer was genuine, but Grace didn't want to be a third wheel, and regardless of how well she got along with Lydia and Rick, anyone who went anywhere with a couple that was romantically involved could rarely rise above that. "No, thanks, I'm kinda wiped and I think I'm gonna open the French doors onto the balcony and fall asleep to the sounds of the waves crashing onto the beach - " she teased mercilessly.

"Bite me."

"Isn't that what you have Rick for?" Grace replied sweetly. "Or isn't he quite up to the task?"

Lydia groaned. "That man is never down for any length of time, unfortunately – he's never down on anything, either. I definitely have that bone to pick with him –"

"– But not his bone, I take it?"

Grace could hear Lydia's grimace. "I've been pickin' his bone for far too long with no reciprocal consideration, if you know what I mean . . ."

"I do, I do. So tell him you ain't gonna give him any of your hot, nasty love until he settles up his . . . er, debts."

"Yeah. I guess I'm gonna have to." Lydia sighed heavily. "Well, I gotta go get ready."

"Okay, talk to you later."

Grace hung up the phone and fell into an all-out stretch that had her groaning like she was in the midst of the most torturous of orgasms. When she was done, she lay there panting for a long moment, then got up, pulled all the shades and the curtains over the balcony doors, and indulged herself in a hot, steamy shower. Tanya's huge garden bathtub was an entirely separate entity from the big shower stall, but she still managed to cloud up the whole room nicely. Grace took a long time in the shower, shaving her underarms and legs, even her mons – the pantyhose-pubic-hair demon had gotten her for the last time in college. Since then, she'd never let that hair get long enough to get caught in its clutches. Then she wet her unfashionably long strawberry blonde hair, washing it twice, with an unbelievably expensive shampoo that sluiced down her whole body and scented it lightly with wintergreen . . . while something vaguely man-shaped watched avidly through the glass, clearly outlined by the vapors– if she had known to look.

After shutting off the water, Grace stepped out of the shower, wrapped one towel around her hair, then dried herself off with a second luxuriously soft one, sprinkling Ralph Lauren's Romance powder liberally all over, then walking nude into the bedroom to flop down on the end of the bed and apply scented lotion to her horribly dry shins, arms . . . everything. Into a soft jersey-knit nightshirt that proclaimed "Hand over the chocolate and no one gets hurt", as well as a pair of little-girlish flowered cotton panties, and she flung open the doors to the balcony to invite the salty sea air and the natural rhythm of the waves to lull her to sleep.

Despite her usual neurotic tendency not to sleep the first time in a strange bed, she had no such trouble that night, except for the fact that when she awoke, she felt less rested than when she'd gone to bed. Her whole body seemed to tingle and ache, as if she'd spent the night making love . . . and the dreams! Grace lay half-awake in the morning sun, and her whole body flushed a bright red at the thought of how every dream she'd had last night had been entirely sexual in nature. Usually her dreams had some sort of story to it – occasionally fairly elaborate plots – but not these! It was as if she'd set her REM sleep television to the Spice channel – and then some!

Now, she'd had wonderful, sexy dreams before, and these certainly qualified . . . but there was an edge to these . . . for one thing, the man she was making love with didn't seem to have a face; it wasn't that she couldn't recognize the features, it was that there weren't any features! Oh, Grace could remember details about his body – how tall and broad and muscular he was – just like she liked 'em. And she could certainly recall exactly what he'd done with those big, ham hands of his – all that probing and plunging and pinching while his mouth – ooooooooooh God in Heaven his mouth– what mouth? – he was ravenous and almost animalistic with that thing! He'd kissed her everywhere he touched her, leaving no room for any sort of reticence on her part, as if he knew what she wanted and wasn't about to let her tell him "no" just because of some sort of false modesty on her part . . .

Grace shifted restlessly under the light covers, noting that the muscles of her inner thighs hurt, just as they would if she'd spent the night with a guy . . . Her nightie was somehow too rough on her well-used nipples . . . and her lips still felt swollen from where he'd –

But he hadn't! No one had! She had been alone, all night, dammit!

Just to satisfy her own sense of security, Grace threw the covers back and padded barefoot downstairs to the front and back doors. Locked up tighter than a drum, just as she'd done last night. Absently, she looked at Mouse's food and water, but it was entirely untouched. The door to the cellar was still open, but apparently she hadn't done any noshing in the night . . . That was unusual, too. Mouse wasn't the kind of cat to ignore the dinner bell in her tummy, whenever or wherever it went off.

As she padded her way back into the bedroom, Grace had to determinedly throw off the remnants of those dreams – they invaded her consciousness insistently, flashes of her climaxing repeatedly . . . of someone's head between her legs for the fifth and seventh and ninth times . . . a large hard dick taking her mouth while she cupped a heavy ball sack, squeezing gently, rhythmically, but he hadn't let himself cum down her throat. No, he would only cum – such as it was for him – in her pussy, he'd said in husky, snakey voice – but he didn't speak with his mouth – that was much too busy teasing or torturing her to explosion after explosion. Instead the words forced their way into her mind with lots of moans and groans and hissing that could have been from either of them, amplifying them into a constant sensual background in her brain, invading her brain like his big cock plunged into her slightly sore cunt.

Then he'd leaned forward, pushing himself even deeper up inside her until she thought he'd come out her mouth he was so big, collecting her legs over his elbows and forcing her to accommodate him in every way. "Until I take you hard up the ass, that is," he'd said in a threatening tone as he caught her eyes.

Only there was nothing for her to look into – no eyes, no nose, no lips that had suckled every intimate place she owned . . .

Grace could feel herself starting to swell and spread for him, as if welcoming him to take her again in the broad daylight. Out of a pure sense of self-preservation, she darted from the bed as if it was the source of her long night of sexual fantasies and grabbed her bathing suit. She was going to spend the day on the beach with a book even if she'd been fucked to death the night before – and she almost felt like she had.

About an hour later – after she'd had breakfast and gone down to the disgustingly immaculate basement to suss out where the kitty was holed up, satisfying her compulsive maternal concerns about whether or not the snotty little chit was okay – Grace sat in a comfortable, low beach chair with the waves lapping at her toes, a steamy not-quite X-rated-but-very-close romance novel on her lap, a Diet Coke in the sand next to her, and a tourist's cheap boom box playing seventies and eighties hits just behind her. This was truly the life!

It was funny, but now that she was a ways away from the house, her concerns about the dreams seemed overblown. After all, they were just dreams. No sexy young stud had snuck into the house and ravaged her in the night – she couldn't be that lucky, Grace mused wryly, ignoring the very real twinges of the muscles on the insides of her thighs as she shifted position. It was probably just her subconscious reminding her that she needed to either find someone to help her get there or she'd need to take matters into her own hands tonight, which was a more distinct possibility. All of those fantasies, which had, thank God, faded considerably in the stark morning sunshine, had definitely had an effect on her and she was, well, horny.

Of course, she'd bought the necessary accoutrement to take care of just that development. Grace liked sex, and since she was uncompromisingly picky about who she slept with, it had been a while . . . okay, a long while, since she'd slept with a man. Too long, Lydia always said. Lyds was always telling Grace that she needed to get laid, as if that was a news flash to Grace, for crying out loud. But, when the need arose, and it was arising with alarming frequency with the onset of peri-menopause, she could take care of things quite nicely herself without having to explain her particular likes and/or dislikes to yet

another man who inevitably slipped into that deer-in-headlights expression whenever she suggested anything other than vanilla, man-on-top-get-it-over-with-quick sex.

It was a lazy day, exactly what she wanted every day to be like for the rest of summer vacation. She didn't go anywhere, didn't see anyone; Grace wandered back into the house after only a couple of hours on the beach because she tended to burn easily even with SPF 90000 on her fair skin. Although she tried to put the thought from her mind, she did notice that the closer she got to the house the more prominent those erotic memories – fantasies became until they were almost the only thing she could think about when she was in the house. That sensation of uncomfortable familiarity was back, too, but Grace resigned herself to patently ignore all of it. She was not about to let anything or anyone – real or imagined – disrupt her time at the beach.

Lunch was a toasted tuna salad sandwich and some chips, with Pepperidge Farms coconut cake for dessert, and dinner was spaghetti with meat and pepperoni sauce and lots of fresh grated Parmesan cheese, garlic bread and a tossed salad on the side, and some more cake for dessert. As she patted her full tummy and switched on the television, Grace resolved that, as of tomorrow, she needed to start actively walking the length of the beach at least once a day, or she'd end up having to be rolled out of the house at the end of the summer.

It was only seven-thirty or so, and the sun was just starting to set. There was nothing great on, so she just set it on the food channel so it would play in the background, and opened up her laptop. Tanya had said that Grace could use her broadband internet connection during the summer, since Tanya was going to be paying for it, anyway, and there was nothing Grace liked better than to surf the 'Net for sites with pictures and fiction that dealt with her specific preferences.

But as she clicked from site to site, Grace started to feel uncomfortable. Someone was watching her, she knew it. Grace looked uneasily around the room, but there was nothing there. The hair at the back of her neck was standing up straight, though, and she had goose bumps although it was a balmy seventy-five or so in the house. Usually she just lost herself as she visited various sites – both old and new – read a little, tingled a lot, and became progressively more and more worked up. Not tonight. Grace just couldn't seem to quite let go enough to really indulge herself; she heard every creak and groan the old house emitted and jumped every time the refrigerator chugged on. When she looked up, the sun had set, but then she'd been looking up compulsively for the past couple of hours anyway to try – unsuccessfully – to reassure herself that she was, indeed, alone.

Finally Grace gave up. It was only about nine-thirty, but she was tired. With a wry grimace she realized, as she padded around locking up, that – imaginary lover or not – she hadn't gotten much sleep last night – or at least much sleep in which she was not performing apparently exhausting sexual gymnastics.

When she crawled under the covers about a half an hour later, the balcony doors were firmly shut and locked, the flower print curtains pulled. Hopefully, tonight she'd get some real sleep. She was too tired even to take care of her little "situation". Well, there was plenty of time to deal with that, anyway. No rush. Grace turned over onto her side and promptly fell asleep.

He stood at the end of the bed watching her sleep, male flesh rising as he noticed how the nightie had ridden up to her waist. Grace was on her right side, one hand under her cheek and the other arm under her pillow, bottom leg straight, top leg bent at the knee as if she was going to do the can-can in her sleep. A silent chuckle. He bet she felt like she'd been doing just that last night. Her inner thighs were sore, he knew, nipples almost uncomfortably rosy and red, as if someone had dragged beard-bristle over them deliberately a couple of hundred times . . .

Someone like him.

With just that thought, he was beside her in the bed, the image of his hands turning her – his mind reaching out to hers so that he didn't have to be careful not to wake her – until she was on her back as if presenting herself to him in sensual abandon. Her nipples were ripe and perfect when they peaked in his mouth, and he lapped up her guttural moans and delicate sighs like he lapped those buds up – relentlessly demanding that she give him more – that she yield more fully to him, that she hold nothing of herself back, taking all that she was and all that she had in the single-minded pursuit of pure, unadulterated bliss for both of them.

He was just this side of rough with her now, grasping a breast in each hand and squeezing, making them hurt, but hurt good if the way her head was moving back and forth on the pillow was any indication. She was so responsive to everything he did – he loved that! Each breast was massaged hard in a manner that had to be painful, each nipple pinched and pulled well away from her body as he twisted and twirled them with his fingers, practically lifting her by just those two delicate points, making her arch on moans that sounded like they started between her legs and filled the room with her tortured joy.

In an instant he flipped her over and pulled her back onto her knees, taking his rightful place behind her as she offered her dripping, lewdly displayed pussy for ravagement. But that was not quite enough for him. He nudged her knees further apart, making her whimper, grabbing a hand-hold in that mane of curls and using it like a rein to force her to hold her head up and back so that he could nuzzle and bite her neck if he was so inclined while he plunged into her – and he would be before he was through with her – making her arch her back uncomfortably. What was she thinking about all of those naughty uncomfortable positions – and so much more – if she didn't want someone strong enough to see that she submitted to them?

Finally satisfied with her subjugation, a wave of his hand made the wall behind the headboard into a mirror, displaying their coupling for his enjoyment alone now . . . eventually she would be forced to watch as he positioned her in this submissive manner, ripe for the taking, presenting herself to him and mewling for him, indeed dripping on the cock he rammed up into her. Grace's eyes were still tightly closed; she was deeply asleep. He felt almost as though he was raping a blind woman. His hold on her hair wouldn't allow her to rock very far forward, and this was exactly what he wanted – he wanted her hips up tight against him, so that he practically hit her cervix with each time he roughly rammed himself inside her.

He rode her for a long time, rode her hard and fast and entirely to his own pleasure, knowing that that, too, would pleasure her in turn. When he was getting close, he leaned over her and bit her exposed neck, as if in punishment for enjoying the rape . . . but then, you can't rape the willing. And Grace was definitely that.

As if to prove his point, he reached around to the front of her luscious cunny, at first just cupping it, then rubbing that impudent nub with a finger, her hips moving her own clit against him with each powerful stroke. He loved to make a woman cum as he fucked her, especially when she was getting fucked in such a subservient position. He knew she adored and desired exactly this; her body and her subconscious mind were his willing partners as he prodded and agitated her down that wild, aching road, setting her mind to thinking of his mouth and teeth on her nipples even though he was behind her, adding their stinging ache to her overloaded body and flinging her over the edge.

She surprised him when she threw her head back, mouth opened on a long, silent scream while her body convulsed violently around him. He didn't let up on her one iota, grabbing her breasts and stabbing into her forcefully, not letting her come down from that orgasm, but requiring that she ride that crest to three more peaks before he finally allowed himself a release of sorts . . .

It had been a while for him, too. A sad smile, or what passed for one when he was in this state. He had certainly been waiting a longer time than Grace.

But no more. He didn't need to wait any more, now that he had her.
She was his, and he would never let her go.
But maybe she could let him go . . .

Chapter Two

To Sleep, Perchance to Cum

Every night for the first week she stayed at the house – except for Friday night for some strange reason - Grace awoke in the morning feeling . . . used. Like she'd been ridden hard and put away wet, as one of her boyfriends used to say – only he was not very likely to do so, unfortunately. The area between her legs grew and remained very puffy and ultra-sensitive, and even naked she was particularly aware of it when she was sitting or standing. The hot shower spray seemed entirely too much on her raw, delicate skin, so her showers were almost tepid, and even the wash cloth seemed to irritate her so she often had to soap herself up using just her hands.

Grace had always been very sexually responsive, but it seemed she could think of nothing else no matter how hard she tried to divert her mind. She took to spending time every morning walking from one end of the beach to the other, then sitting for a while in the ocean, taking the occasional dip. The obsession was less overwhelming if she was away from the house. Afternoons were spent napping, and it was really the only undisturbed sleep she got. Instead of being able to catch up on her soaps like she'd planned, once her meager lunch was done she was usually sound asleep downstairs on the comfy couch. For some reason, she couldn't bare the thought of sleeping in that bed upstairs during the day, certain that she'd end up sexually satisfied but even more sleep-deprived than she already was. So from about twelve-thirty to four- or five-thirty virtually every day, she napped like a little girl who had been soundly punished and sent to bed by her strict but loving Daddy.

That thought made Grace's whole body contract with a yearning that almost frightened her, it was so raw. What the hell was happening to her, anyway? It was her second weekend of house-sitting and she was beginning to think that A, the house was haunted by the ghost of some terribly randy sea Captain, maybe. Some guy who hadn't had a woman in decades when he was alive, but was getting some as a spirit? Perhaps she was caught in an unearthly remake of an X-rated Ghost and Mrs. Muir? Nah. And B, she was wondering if she needed to get a hold of an exorcist or something, but then, what could she tell him about what had been happening to her that wouldn't leave her blushing for the next forty decades?

No, no. A priest was out. And telling the majority of her friends was out – they already thought she was a pervert for her preferences and Grace was extremely reluctant to give them any more fodder to bolster the idea that she was a freak. So what was left to do about it?

Research it online. As she sat down kind of gingerly on the floor with her laptop on the coffee table in front of her, Grace checked her watch. It was nearly eight-thirty. Just to be absolutely sure, she went around and locked everything that stood still long enough, only leaving the screened windows open for cross-ventilation of the wonderfully cool sea breeze. After she changed into a pair of loose gray gym shorts and a t-shirt – deciding that perhaps wearing more clothes to bed would help - she took her place in front of her computer again, typing "sexual spirits" into Google's search box.

"I believe the word you're searching for is incubus."

Grace whirled around so fast and hard that she practically dumped the computer onto the floor. "What? Who said that?"

There was no one there.

No one.

But Grace was not one to just slough something like that off and blithely go back to exploring the Web. She knew what she'd heard, and it was scaring the fuck out of her.

Or maybe it was scaring the fuck into her - all night, every night.

So she left the computer entirely and huddled into an overstuffed armchair that backed up against a corner where there were no windows. She figured that it was the most defensible position. But . . . what was she defending herself from? If it was a vampire, at least she'd know that a cross and garlic and holy water would repel it - not that she had any of those items handy. But this thing, whatever it was . . . what should she use? Salt peter?

A deep chuckle filled the room the instant after that thought, as if he/it had read her mind and was laughing in response. "Salt peter won't help." Unless it had the same effect on women and she took some, but he wasn't about to suggest that. His stubborn Gracie might just do that.

Grace was going out of her mind. She knew it. Some women just couldn't handle the change of life, and apparently she was one of them.

"No, you're not going crazy."

"Wh-who are you?" her voice was shaking as badly as it had that time the Choir teacher had made her sing alone in front of the class. Grace glanced around her furtively, but there was nothing but an innocuous matching set of feminine furniture around her.

"Do you want to see me, little one?" came the deep, gruff question.

An area about three feet in front of her face - in the middle of space - started to wave and shimmer and glow. And then suddenly, he was there.

One second she was alone, the next there was the man of her dreams, standing stark naked in front of her. He had to be about six-one or two, broad as a barn, with a truly impressive set of upper body muscles and washboard abs that any athlete would envy. His arms were nearly as heavily muscled as his thighs, but he still had a wonderful Y-shape that literally had her mouth watering, making her lean a little bit towards him to get a better look despite her inherent fear. And, damn, he was huge! No wonder she'd been sore! After she'd taken a heartily appreciative leisurely tour, of the rest of him, Grace's gaze went compulsively to his face, which seemed entirely normal to her, if somewhat dark. He had a full head of feathered, short black hair and clear, lightly tanned skin. But his eyes . . . she didn't like his eyes at all. As relentlessly normal as the rest of him seemed, those eyes looked like he could tear her apart with one thought and not feel a shred of conscience about it. In some ways they made Grace more wary than she'd been before he'd materialized in front of her.

"Have I hurt you at all?"

"Huh?"

"You're all ready to be afraid of me. And I haven't laid a painful finger on you . . . yet."

Suddenly, Grace remembered to be indignant about what he had been doing to her. Her eyebrow rose. "But you're the one who's been laying all sorts of other fingers on me - " she swallowed hard and stared at the rug as she continued, " - and in me at night. Making me - making me - " She couldn't say it to a man she didn't think really existed, 'cause if this man really did exist, somehow, in some way, he already knew way too much about her intimate thoughts and reactions.

He took a step closer and Grace jerked back in her chair. A smile settled onto his face, as if on an afterthought, but it didn't reach those cold black eyes. "Relax, okay? You were getting all curious and I figured - "

Grace put her head in her hands. "Get out of my mind, damn you!"

That smile took an almost nasty turn. "Why would I want to do that? It's such a fertile mind . . . full of more things sexual almost than I could come up with! You have a wonderful playground between those two ears of yours."

It sounded like he was complimenting her for having a disgustingly dirty mind, for crying out loud!

He was shaking his head. "It's neither disgusting nor dirty, Graciana." His pronunciation of her real name was perfect, and it sent tingles down her spine.

No one – but no one – knew that that was the name on her birth certificate. She had been Grace or Gracie since before grade school.

"Yes, but Graciana is prettier," he proclaimed, entirely unrepentant that he was still reading her thoughts.

"Cut that out!" This was starting to piss her off!

Whatever he was, incubus or spirit or ghost - and Grace wasn't at all sure now that she wanted to know the specifics - he put his hands on his hips, smiling almost benevolently down at her, daring her to do something about it.

"Whatever you are, whoever you are, get out of my house!" Grace stood quickly and darted across the room.

"But it's not your house to throw me out of, Grace."

"I don't care! I do not give you permission to be here."

His smile deepened. "I'm not a vampire. I don't need an invitation. If anything, you should be asking my permission to be here, considering that I've been hanging around here for a long, long time – well before this house was built, actually."

"Get out of here and get out of my head!" She was becoming more and more hysterical, and he was starting to worry she might hurt herself in that state.

So he rushed her, not giving her time to think or react one way or the other, depositing her onto the bed upstairs.

Grace blinked. One minute she was downstairs in front of the door at the bottom of the stairs, the next thing she was laying on the bed. What the hell had happened?

"What the fuck - ?"

"Watch your language, Grace," came a deep growl from the big white wicker fan chair in the corner of the room. One second he wasn't there, the next second he was.

Grace's senses snapped to attention. That was something she'd always dreamed about being called on the carpet about – her language. Apparently he knew that, and had fallen right into the dominant role perfectly.

"It's not a role. It's me. It's the way I am."

"Do you think I give a flying fuck?" she asked, giving the word extra, added emphasis as she rolled to her left and grabbed the phone, her finger already punching in the "nine" of nine-one-one.

He hadn't moved one bit, sitting there with a small, sad smile on his lips. Maybe he thought she was bluffing. "I wouldn't do that if I were you." She pushed the one. "Think about it, Graciana." He disappeared and Grace blinked, then he reappeared before her eyes. "Do you think I'm going to appear to them when they get here? Do you really want the police thinking you're crazy? You're a woman living alone. What if you have a real emergency and they decide to take their time because they came out here before and it was just an insane woman saying that some ghost kept fucking her all night?"

She hated that he had a valid point. Grace slammed the phone down in its cradle and whirled on him. "Then get the fuck out of my house!"

"Third time's the charm," he muttered under his breath, launching himself towards her, catching her around the waist and twisting with her, just right, so that she ended up over his lap on the end of the bed. Grace began to struggle even before she realized the ignominy of her position, but the arm around her waist was at least as hard as the broad thighs beneath her well-rounded tummy. Grace felt her shorts

and panties being lowered at the same time, and it was much, much worse than anything she'd ever read about in the fiction or real-life accounts she'd found online. It was horrible – she was trapped, held firmly down, while someone – or in this case something – bared her bottom. And, if this entity knew what she fantasized about on a regular basis, she didn't think it was so that he could kiss it . . . which meant that she was in deep, deep trouble.

A soft chuckle floated to her ears, making her jerk her head off the bed to look at him. "I'm certainly not going to kiss your bottom before I smack it good and hard. And I'm not going to kiss it after your spanking, either, because I know how much you like that throbbing sting – " His hand slapped down onto her exposed flesh, making her yelp loudly, " – and I'm sure going to provide that for you in just a few minutes." Another swift crack, and another high-pitched bark.

"Let me go, you pervert!"

"If that isn't the pot calling the kettle a pervert . . ."

Grace struggled in earnest, practically exhausting herself in the effort to break free, but to no avail. She wasn't going anywhere until he released her.

"Now," he was saying, while a big hand rubbed all over her cheeks, sensitizing the flesh, massaging gently, familiarly, as if he'd done this before. "You've always wanted someone to curb your tendency to use bad language. And I'm that someone. If I can't do it, no one can. Believe me, you're going to be using 'darn' and 'sugar' well before the end of this summer, and the 'f-word' is not even going to come to mind because you're going to remember in exquisite detail every one of your punishments, of which this is only the first."

"I'll scream!" Grace threatened.

He remained terrifyingly calm as he began to spank her. "Scream all you like. No one outside this house can hear a thing. I won't allow it." His hand rose and fell in a relentless rhythm, each swat reddening the imprint of his palm and fingers onto her butt and making her cheek wobble with the force. "Just like I won't allow little girls in this house to curse. You will be spanked like this, or worse, each and every time I hear you say something even remotely naughty. I will never ever let you slide on any rule I set for you. You're going to be spending an awful lot of time over my knee this summer, or over a stack of pillows on the bed, or over the back of the couch, or bent onto the kitchen counter so I can take a wooden spoon to your disobedient rear end . . ."

He'd only given her about twelve smacks, but Gracie was desperate to get away from any more. "No – no – stop, please – I – ow – that hurts!"

Nothing she said or did disrupted him in any way – he was like a spanking metronome, roasting her bottom thoroughly all the way down to the middle of her thighs, then back again. Both of her hands had already tried to fly back and protect her seared nates, but he had merely caught them in one hand, just as if she was reading a story online, and diligently continued to discipline her.

The tears came naturally to her – her butt stung like he'd used a Bic on it rather than just his hand, but even then he didn't stop. "Pl-please – no – I – can't – no – more!" she barely got out through the hard sobs.

"I don't know, Grace. You're a pretty stubborn woman. I think you need to be dealt with more severely than most, just so you realize that your bottom is going to pay each and every time you disobey me. Even in something as small as this."

The area between her legs melted at his words. This was exactly what she'd always wanted – always searched for and saved when she found it on a site: a man who was never easy on his woman, who could be quite severe with her at times, when the situation merited, but who also loved her bone deep. He might not have the last requirement, but he certainly had the spanking part down well – too well! Her clit

had been throbbing from the moment she'd landed bottom-up over his lap, and she knew that if he looked or felt between her legs, her secret would be revealed.

Still spanking, she heard him chuckle. "What secret, Grace? That you like to be spanked often and hard? Do you think I don't know that? I know everything you like, everything you've thought about sexually in your life. What you've dismissed from your repertoire of sexual fantasies and what plays in your mind again and again whenever you bring yourself off – which is another discussion we need to have about how inappropriate it is for a lady to touch herself down there, but we'll get to that."

Finally, he stopped, but held her in place, listening to her sob and her hitching breath. Ahhh, there was little better in this life than having a woman over your lap and spanking her until she thought twice about defying you every time she sat down over the next several days. Man, he loved his work! Grace was trying to get up, but a sharp smack settled her down. "I'm not done with you yet, Graciana. Your position while taking a spanking is important and I want to show you how you will arrange yourself for each and every chastisement that I deem necessary."

Grace simply couldn't process what she was hearing. There were going to be more of these? Who did he think he was?

"Lots and lots more – more than you bargained for by a long shot, I'm afraid, but then, that's exactly what you want, isn't it?" He didn't wait for an answer from her, not that she could have organized one in her brain. It was almost as if his spanking her bottom had scrambled her mind a bit. Or maybe it was that she was just having a hard time dealing with the idea that she was getting a severe licking from a non-existent person! "Now, I want you to spread your legs," he pried her thighs apart by wedging one hand between them – the other still occupied holding her wrists immobile – then prodding the delicate insides apart. "Wide. I want your pussy to be gaping down between your legs, where it belongs. On display for me to see or touch, if I desire."

She balked at the idea of being so exposed to him. "No! I –"

Ten swift, hard slaps resounded in the room. He placed each very carefully, laying the first five over her bottom and down her legs, then slammed the last five down in exactly the same spots, putting a lot of strength into each strike. Each one made a wholly satisfying scream explode from her mouth. If he hadn't been hard before – which of course he was – he would have been hard after her first true howl of pain.

"Unless you want a second round of twenty much harder than what you just got," he informed her with the utmost calm, "you will do exactly as I've told you and make sure your legs are well apart."

Grace moved instantly, putting herself in an atrociously lewd position, terrified that she might not widen them enough and thus would be subject to the next round of punishment he was threatening her with.

But he seemed to be quite satisfied with her efforts. "That's a good girl," he said the approving tone one would use with a five year old who had just brought you the paddle you were going to be applying to her bottom. "It's very important that you remember to arch your back and thrust your butt out to receive the discipline that I'm giving you. That shows me that you're in the proper receptive, submissive frame of mind to learn your lesson. Arch now, and present your butt to me, Grace."

She whimpered the whole time, but did as she was told out of fear rather than any desire to submit.

"Good. Good. You're doing very well. The last thing is something that will help you remain that way. Put your toes on the floor and turn your heels out. This helps you not to clench your butt muscles and thus keeps you from fighting your punishment."

She was already showing him, quite prominently, everything she had, but turning out her heels would reveal just a bit more, as well as depriving her of the mostly psychological ability to tense for each stroke. It was awful, and Grace wasn't sure she could do it.

"Grace."

She knew without his telling her that he would not wait to spank her any longer if she didn't get into position immediately. Grace's understandable reluctance to submit to his last, humiliating rule was making his body thrum with excitement, especially when he saw her move onto her tippy-toes and turn out her heels as he required.

"Very good, Grace. Now I'll finish your spanking and tuck you into bed. I believe I'll give you another twenty." Without another word, his hand began to fall again, at least as hard as he'd spanked her the second time, if not harder.

Grace was caught off guard by the pain, and automatically took herself out of the careful position he had taught her, wiggling and struggling and kicking her feet.

"Where are those feet supposed to be?" he stopped and asked. "Grace, I'm going to continue spanking you until you get back where I've told you you need to be when receiving a punishment and none of those swats will count towards the final twenty."

And he was as good as his word. All in all, once he'd proclaimed that she'd only be getting twenty more, Grace probably received more in the neighborhood of fifty – not including the twenty itself or what she'd been given before he'd arranged her in that debasing manner.

Before he was finally done with her, Grace had been reduced to a sobbing mass; the quintessential picture of a well-spanked girl.

She'd learned the hard way – the very hard way – and had remained in place for the last seven tremendous strokes, shivering and shaking and fairly vibrating with both indignation and intense pain, but she'd done it.

Now she found herself gathered up and stroked soothingly by the very same arms and hands that had hurt her. But he was at least as gentle now as he had been fiercely determined before, wiping away her tears and cuddling her to his broad chest. He rocked her slowly and Grace started to whimper again. She adored being rocked, and he – of course – knew it. She didn't know how but he just did.

After a long while of soothing movement and the occasional smacked kiss on the top of her head, and holding her tight even when she tried to get down, he stood her up. By instinct alone, Grace immediately covered her pubic area with both hands, her innate modesty causing him to give her the first genuine smile she'd seen.

He turned and rummaged through her underwear drawer, where she kept her nighties, taking out one that said "Pampered Princess" and dressing her in it as if she was a four year old girl, but with no panties, she noticed. "No, you don't need to wear panties. Disobedient, willful little girls don't need to wear anything that would delay their Daddy's getting to their bottom when it needs a good warming, so from now on, you are not to wear any panties to bed." Grace frowned at that pronouncement, but then he continued, "Okay, honey, into bed with you." The bedcovers were turned down invitingly and he stood next to them, holding his hand out to her.

"But –" The protest left her mouth automatically. She hated to be put to bed, having been given a much early bedtime than she needed when she was younger because she was raised by early bird parents who liked to get up at the crack of dawn.

"Come, Graciana, and I will tell you a bedtime story before you go to sleep."

She obeyed his summons reluctantly, but ended up just where he wanted her, lying gingerly on her back under the sheet and a light summer blanket as he sat down next to her and played with her hair. "Can I ask you a question without getting spanked?"

His face darkened and Grace worried that she might have just gotten herself what she least wanted from him right now, but then he corrected, "I will not spank you for frivolous things, Grace. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Sir." It fell out of her mouth without a thought and he smiled again, another real one.

"Good girl. What's your question, or would you like me to guess it?" Grace frowned up at him. "You want to know what I am, right?"

"I want to know your name," she corrected softly, not looking at him.

"It's the same thing. My name is what I am." He drew a deep breath got up to stand in front of the balcony doors to stare moodily out them. For the first time since they'd come upstairs, Grace could hear the waves in the background. The sound of his voice – its deep, resonant timbre both excited and calmed her, teasing and soothing at the same time, lulling and enticing as he spoke. "I have many names – Zakun, Drail, Varcan . . . what I'm called depends entirely on what country you're in as well as what year." He turned back to her and looked deeply into her eyes. "I'm getting ahead of myself here. Once upon a time – " a small smile flashed on his face at the way she snuggled down into the bed at those words, just like a cherished little girl would. "a long, long time ago, there was a great warrior. He won every battle he mounted, and he conquered many lands, had lots of money and several beautiful castles. But he was an unhappy man who tortured and maimed and killed thousands of people – even those closest to him. He didn't know how to do anything but destroy and rape and pillage. And one day, he invaded a small, lazy village by the Rhine because he had heard tales of the beautiful, virtuous woman that lived there – the daughter of the chancellor of that town. She was supposed to be a favorite of the gods that existed at that time, and was said to be as pure and innocent as a babe.

"It wasn't much of a battle, as battles went. The small hamlet had never been anything but peaceful and had no defenses to speak of – nearly all of the inhabitants were killed – men, women, and children – during the first pass through." Grace could see his face tighten at the thought. "But the chancellor and his daughter were spared and brought to the warrior in his encampment. Their clothing was cut off them to increase their humiliation. The father was bound and forced to watch as the warrior defiled his daughter in the most vicious of manners, and then the girl was forced to watch as her father was beheaded. He kept her alive, just barely, and raped her at will, then, when he tired of her, he gave her to his men. She died several days later, cursing his name.

He remained still, lost in thought for a long moment. "Cursing my name. When I awoke the next day, I was dead to everyone but myself, doomed to wander the Earth forever, unloved and unloving as I was in my lifetime, always wanting but not having, lusting but not experiencing any true satisfaction. Doomed to exist in perpetual frustration, only able to feel any sort of sexual culmination when I give it to another." He stared pointedly at her. "Like you."

"But my name to you is Talus. I'm a demon."

Chapter Three

A shiver of fear ran up her spine. Wait a minute. Did she even believe in demons? Grace wondered.

The big man snorted, but did not turn to look at her. "It doesn't matter if you believe in me. I exist – such as it is – independent of your beliefs or anyone else's for that matter." He drew a haggard breath. "I am what I told you I was earlier this evening when you were going to search the Web to try to find out about me. I am an incubus."

Grace searched her knowledge of demons and mythology, coming up with some bare scraps of information that he interrupted. "I'm a male demon who thrives on sexual energy," he said matter-of-factly and took several steps towards her, close enough to lift a lock of her hair from her shoulder. "And you, baby, have enough of that in you to keep me going for another thousand years or so. You could practically wear me out, and that's saying something. I'm going to eat you up every single night I can until you're inside out with pleasure and then I'm going to start all over again. I'm going to tear up that round bottom of yours with my hand and paddles and canes and straps and switches . . ." He could feel the panic begin to rise in her at his words and it fed his desire. "Your butt's gonna wear my marks for days and I'm going to be here to refresh them every night if your behavior deems it necessary. You're not gonna sit comfortably for quite some time, love."

She blushed furiously and looked down as his fingers tucked a stray strand of hair behind her ear. Everything he'd said was right out of her sexual fantasies. "But why are you here? You're the presence in this house that's made me feel uneasy since I've been coming here, right?" He nodded. "So you attack any woman who stays in this house?"

"No," he tried to interrupt but she kept right on talking, growing disproportionately agitated at the thought.

"– so you've been . . . servicing Tanya like this since she bought the house? It's a wonder she ever had the strength to leave the house in the morning, for God's sake –"

An impatient wave of his hand and a strict order. "Don't talk, just listen." Grace opened her mouth to respond, but found she was unable to make even the smallest of sounds. She put her hand to her throat – as if that would help – but even an out and out scream wouldn't come. She glared up at him to find that he was just sitting there, watching and waiting for her to settle down and deal with the fact that he'd struck her dumb. "Tanya Hennessey's interested in sex only as a way to control whatever man she's with. Beyond that, she could care less. She's just about asexual. But you, Graciana, are a true hedonist – your likes are varied and extremely interesting. Your sensual dislikes are few and entirely understandable." His voice reverberated inside her mind and along her skin as he spoke. "Of course, it's your likes that we're going to concentrate on, although we are going to push those limits to the fullest extent possible."

He made it sound like the word "hedonist" meant that she was Queen of the World, instead of basically slutty in nature. But it was a dead on description of her. Grace had never thought of herself as a bad person –

The chin that was making a rapid descent to wallow in the last remnants of shame and guilt she still retained from her more Puritanical upbringing was caught by a curled index finger and forced upwards. "You're not a bad person, believe me. I've seen bad. Hell, I was evil as a human and I still am."

Enjoying the pleasures of the flesh was never meant to be a bad thing – that’s just what society has decided, not what Nature intended.”

Grace’s eyebrow quirked as she thought pointedly while she stared into his eyes, as if trying to project the thoughts to him, This from the incubus? Like you’re going to tell me that my sexual obsession is bad?

He chuckled. “I may be somewhat prejudiced in that area, true, but I try to be straight with my women.”

Women? She frowned.

Another long-suffering sigh. “Women in the past. I can only deal with one of you at a time – and, Graciana, with you I’m happy to survive the night!” Grace blushed all over, watching in horror as her nightie melted away from her body as if it had never been, the demon’s eyes greedily following the rosy shade that illuminated her skin.

She couldn’t quite cover herself to her own satisfaction, generous breasts overflowing the arm that unsuccessfully hid them, her pussy contracting in greeting at the hand that cupped it.

And he sat there wearing a grin that was truly wicked as he watched her try to arrange herself so that he couldn’t see anything she considered important. “Why do you even bother? I’ve touched and licked and fucked nearly every inch of you already – “

You have not! Grace shouted at him with her mind.

“ – and you’ve thoroughly enjoyed every second of it. You moaned and whimpered and came apart beneath me like the most accomplished courtesan . . . “ The provocative, arousing words and his wandering, insistently possessive fingers made her squirm.

No! Don’t! she thought even as the intimate places on her body became swollen and excruciatingly sensitive, readying themselves for his possession in ways it already knew he appreciated.

He moved slowly forward, overwhelming her with his presence until her back was flat on the bed and he lay on top of her, his legs insinuating themselves between hers despite her wiggling protests. He was so strong; she had no hope of being able to stop him from doing anything – literally anything – he wanted to do to her. She was at his mercy, and Grace was fairly certain that he didn’t know the meaning of the word.

Her body was uncomfortably tense beneath him. Now that she knew what he was, she was afraid – and not without good reason. His lips nuzzled her neck, making Grace arch it to try to escape his mouth, but the movement only served to offer up more of that delicate column for his ravagement. Very near her ear, he growled, “I’m not going to do anything that you don’t want,” then he waved his hand again and Grace couldn’t control a moan of defeat.

There would be the rub – and that was saying a mouthful in more ways than one – she knew: there was very little that he could do to her that she didn’t want.

He grinned hugely at her thought, his lips nibbled hers so gently it almost tickled. “Say my name, Grace.” He drew back and stared down at her intently. “Say my name.”

Somehow, somewhere, she knew that there was power in that – in saying a name or a word at a particular time, and for some reason she balked at the idea of giving this – this entity any more power than he already seemed to have over her. As if she still couldn’t speak, she resisted him silently, her head whipping back and forth, mouth and eyes firmly closed to shut him out as best she could.

Her moan was answered by his own as he began to lick his way down her body, leaving a hot wet trail from his lips and tongue. “Ahhhh, baby, I love it when you’re naughty and try to resist me even though you know, deep, deep in your heart and your soul that only I can give you what you want. Your body has already accepted that fact and it’s very eager to submit to me, isn’t it?”

She shook her head vehemently, struggling against this entity – this force of Nature or whatever he was, unable to make any headway towards escape . . . not at all sure that she wanted to be successful.

His mouth was at her bare delta. “Mmmmmmmmm.” Lips and tongue smacked over her tender, swollen flesh, settling right over her clit for just the barest of moments, but it was enough to make her lift her hips up off the bed. “That’s my girl,” he praised. “Look at me, Graciana. You will wish that you had obeyed me when I told you to say my name. You will learn – the hard way - not to make me repeat myself.”

Grace was trembling, shaking with the twin wars of trying to deny what he was making her feel while experiencing every touch, every lick with a sensitivity that was a thousand fold the normal. What was he doing to her? How could she feel this way? Sex had always felt great to her, but this was – this was unbelievable! She didn’t have the mental ability to divorce herself from what he was doing, and her body was already an eager convert.

“Look at me!”

The command screamed in her ears and in her brain, totally undeniable. She could not resist him when he lay between her wide open legs like this – holding her captive with his weight and superior strength, forcing her to submit to his will and accept the pleasure that that brought, as well as the pain wrought by defiance.

Slowly, not wanting to surrender and fighting all the way, Grace opened her eyes and glance down at him, mesmerized in horror at what she saw: it was still his darkly handsome face that hovered inches above the heart of her desire, a hand holding each of her lips well apart, exposing that tightly swollen bud. But then he smiled and there was no amusement, just pure evil as a long, dual tipped tongue snaked out from between his lips for a second. Then he reeled the long, writhing red thing back in. Terrified, Grace struggled to remove her most sensitive, intimate parts from his grasp, but found herself suddenly paralyzed – the only areas on her body that she could move were her head, neck, face and the cleft at which he was now poised, waiting to defile her but wanting her to see what he was going to be using on her, to make her more afraid, to heighten her senses to a fever pitch.

Grace couldn’t look away, it was too terrifying. He rolled that obscenely long dual tongue out onto the top of her mons, each tip wandering about her almost lovingly, and then he bent his head and they followed, dipping into her and over her, one tip slipping deep into her waiting, sobbing cunny, the other writhing vigorously over her clit.

And she was loving it! Her body was instantly close – so very close to orgasm that he backed off, keeping her awake and alive and screaming with that ultimate tension. She could feel him drinking in her reactions, feeding off her sexual energy, reveling in her body’s fleshly delights as if he was devouring a ten course meal.

Grace couldn’t take her eyes off the top of his head, and eventually he looked up at her again, his eyes a fiery, blood red. The tongue hissed out at her again, crawling along her belly, then as he watched her with his head up, as he held her gaze, it shot back down to her clit and beyond, forcing its way up inside her, filling her and fucking her vigorously as the other tongue lapped eagerly around and over her engorged flesh. Somehow, she felt the same mouth suckling at each breast, adding another torment to her mounting desire.

He wasn’t going to stop this time, she just knew it. And she was going to die from it. All this pleasure was going to kill her outright. Her body was going to implode and explode at the same time and she would dissolve into tiny bits of obscenely satisfied flesh.

She couldn’t stop it. It was coming, rolling undeniably through her, sweeping away her mind and her breath, near to stopping her heart as it crashed over her in searing waves of aching, tortured ecstasy, and she had to scream it or die in the act . . .

“Taaaaaalllllluuuuuuuuuusssss!”

Chapter Four

It was mid-morning before Grace would even allow herself to acknowledge what had happened last night, and even then she consciously skirted the issue. Maybe she had been too long without a man, and she was letting her fantasies get the best of her. She would just have to lay off the sex for a while, let herself cool down a bit. All she needed was to invent some imaginary demon guy who came to her at night and fucked her till she fainted - she snorted at the uncomfortable ring of truth, then laughed it off in her mind. How ridiculous!

At least she had slept all night last night - after - after she'd masturbated to the usual culmination while thinking of that whatever it was she'd made up - he was damned good looking, Grace had to agree, but where the hell had she pulled that tongue thing out of - a Gene Simmons interview gone bad? Now that was truly freaky! Whatever it was, she'd certainly come hard enough; her pussy was still all throbby and achy, as a matter of fact. Grace squirmed on the bar stool where she was eating her lunch. Well, no more of that fantasy - it was just too creepy. She mentally tossed it into the slush pile of used plots that her fertile mind conjured when she was in "the mood" - it landed on top of the idea of masturbating in front of a sellout crowd at Fenway Park and just to one side of her bad-boy, drug-dealing, hygiene-challenged high school grope friend, Nick LaGrange.

As diligently as she tried to avoid it, though, and pretend she was wholly unconcerned, the awareness that had always been there weighed even more heavily on her today. It was as if she was no longer alone in her mind, as if she could feel another presence watching over her remotely, taking notes about her thoughts and feeling to be used against her during the night hours . . .

But that was idiotic. She didn't believe in ghosts or spirits or . . .

Demons.

Apparently, though, one believed in her, and Grace didn't think that was necessarily a good thing. That night, she spent some time in a chaise out on the balcony, just relaxing and enjoying the gorgeous view as the sky darkened and the moon began to reflect off the restless water. As night approached, she grew more and more tense, as if dreading the inevitable, and for some reason she didn't want to examine too closely, she did not want to get into that bed. Eventually, though, she called it a night and crawled under the covers in a light nightie, but she just could not seem to get to sleep. The weather had definitely taken a turn for the warmer, but Grace was loath to shut up the house and turn on the air, but the temperature was not the problem. Not at all.

Calling herself twelve kinds of fool, Grace got up, locked the balcony doors in the master bedroom and went into the biggest guest room in the house, hoping that that would be the magic trick to getting to some sleep tonight.

Just at the point where she was starting to drift off, she heard a rumbling laugh. "Did you think you could run away from me by switching rooms, little one?" came the incredulous question.

Grace sat straight up in bed, only to be immediately taken over someone's knee. But he hadn't appeared yet and she was over a non-existent lap, her heart starting to pound with fear at the remembered pain of last night's spanking, as he lifted up her nightie to reveal the pink flowered panties she was wearing. They fell off her ankles seconds later and the smacks began to fall not long after, providing the background music to the lecture he delivered like a pro, touching all of the right points that excited her the most, saying things in just the perfect disappointed-Daddy tone of voice. "Didn't I say that naughty

women like you are not allowed to wear panties, Graciana? Apparently your last spanking wasn't enough to help you to learn to mind me when I give you a rule. We'll have to fix that, won't we, and make sure that your punishments from this point on are thorough enough so that you learn your lessons and don't forget them the next night. You're the one who feels her behavior could benefit from a strict dominant, and I'm not about to fail you in that, even if it means beating your butt crimson every single night . . . just before I makes you feel much better in that special way."

That hand – if it was a hand – seared her flesh with each stroke, and she hadn't much recovered from the night before! Her flailing and kicking was controlled with humiliating ease, and he never missed a painful beat.

Still panting and sobbing, Grace found herself stood up and marched into the master bedroom, an unseen hand on her upper arm brooking no resistance. Her big wooden hairbrush floated off the counter in the bathroom to be grabbed out of the air as she was upended yet again, her bottom well up into the air, and Grace knew that all of her secrets were completely on display to him.

"Position, Grace," was all he said as he laid the brush to her bottom vigorously.

Her moan was heartfelt, making him tingle with awareness and come to full engorgement as she tried to remember everything he'd said last night – her butt was high and her back arched as if begging for the next fiery swat, and she tried to work her legs further apart but the pain of the spanking distracted her.

Talus tried to provide some motivation, saying casually, in a soft, loving tone, "None of these strokes count, since you're not in position yet."

Grace was mindless with the pain already and what he'd done to her so far wasn't even being taken into consideration? Her desperation to avoid more unbearable swats with that horrible implement made her spread her legs to the point of discomfort, barely able to function enough to turn her heels out.

How had she come to think that once she was presented in the manner that he required that the spanking would stop? Instead she found that the intensity of the strokes at least doubled, each crack against her vulnerable flesh jiggling the lips of her pussy until she felt the telltale wetness gurgle from between them as he decorated her rump from stem to stern, warning her and threatening dire consequences when she leaned out of the pornographic pose he required.

By the time he finished, Grace was a sobbing mass of bruised and swollen flesh. She was immediately flipped over onto her back on the bed. He still hadn't appeared to her, and apparently didn't intend to do so, at least not in human form. Her arms were pulled above her head, and she instantly found that not only could she not move them back down again, she could not move them at all. Her legs were bent and wrenched back, as if she was in a sadistic gynecologist's office. Again, there was no moving those legs although there was nothing holding them that she could see.

Alone in the darkness, suddenly unable to move any part of her body on her own, Grace began to whimper. Then she began to scream when he formed above her – not as a human, but as a red hot mist that settled down onto and into her at the same time, ultra-sensitizing every millimeter of her skin including her already sore and swollen backside, as if a thousand mouths had attached themselves to her, some with sharp little teeth, like those she felt around her nipples. It stung like bees, making Grace want to writhe in sensuous agony, but she couldn't lift a finger or twitch a toe. Her clit was covered with the same bee-mouths, and her pussy was full of them, stretched near to bursting and enthusiastically fucked by them. She could breathe and cry and feel everything in excruciating detail, but she was completely vulnerable to him.

An evil chuckle wormed its way into her ear, but when lips slid from her ear across her jaw line to her mouth, it was human lips that felt comforting in stark contrast to how he was making the rest of her body feel. Talus kissed her deeply as she became more and more aroused. As the minutes wore on, the

pain lessened – or had she just become used to it? – and those tiny mouths became more lustful in their suckling than hurtful.

Talus' tongue felt completely normal when it penetrated her mouth in rhythm with whatever was raping her between her legs. Grace's breathing quickened – every possible erogenous zone on her body was being stimulated to the nth degree, and her body was being forced towards an incredible, all over orgasm that scared the crap out of her.

The fear in her mind was rapidly gaining ground over her body's pleasure, eradicating some of it amid concerns about whether or not she would really survive this type of explosion.

"I would never let any harm come to you, my Graciana. Never. Let go. It's coming, welcome it. Use it. Relax. This is yours. It's all for you." He leaned closer to whisper in her ear, "And there's nothing you can do to stop it anyway, lover."

In the end, as she was beginning to understand about a lot of things, she had no choice but to bear it as he'd said.

The orgasm came on her like a freight train, rolling through her body as if it had a life of its own, forcing every cell to attention, to swell and tighten and contract over and over, squeezing every last ounce of pleasure from every part of her. Her screams of absolute pleasure must've been heard up and down the coast.

Exhausted, mentally and emotionally, Grace collapsed on the bed.

Talus remained, surrounding her with his warm, the touching now soothing and comforting as she tried to recover and gather her scattered senses about her.

But as soon as she tried to climb back to herself, tried to recover her identity as anything other than a sexualized, incredibly responsible being, he did it again.

And again.

And again.

Until, sometime before dawn, she fainted dead away and didn't awaken.

With an almost satisfied smile, Talus faded away.

Grace couldn't take it another moment. She had never behaved in such a completely . . . slutty manner in her life. That man – that thing, whatever he was, was making her obsessive about sex. She thought about him – it – in the middle of the day. Sometimes she contracted with the force of the memories of him wringing ecstasy from her with his hand and his mouth and those tongues! Yes, she'd always been a fairly sexual being in the past, but this was ridiculous. Grace was going through two sets of panties a day!

And he'd quite gleefully informed her one night, after the time she'd changed bedrooms to get away from him, that he had access to the whole house, and a lot of area around it, and that if she wanted to get away from him at night then she'd end up sleeping on the beach. Which Grace, of course, being the stubborn type, had tried to do – only a little too late. He was already there, and, after silently watching her gather up her stuff to leave, blocked the front door with some sort of invisible force that she couldn't get through. Grace tried the back door, and found the same problem. The bulkhead in the cellar – same thing. Frustrated and near tears, she found herself herded back up to the bedroom, crowded up the stairs by invisible arms that were strong and steady, and, for once, entirely non-hurtful. At the top of the stairs, Grace was lifted into those arms, and he materialized as he was carrying her into the big bedroom, setting her down on to the bed and then following her down to make incredibly sweet, tender, wildly sexy love to her.

Who the hell was this man – thing – man? She wondered, somewhat concerned at how obsessed she was becoming with him.

In the past week he'd been at her every single night – except for Friday night again. She wondered if there was some particular significance to that, and tried to tuck the thought away to remember to ask him tonight – not that they spent much time talking. Grace wiggled in her seat, her body tender in all of its most intimate areas from his frequent abuse – both pleasurable and painful. He certainly did like to spank her, almost as much as he liked to make her cum.

It seemed he couldn't get enough of her, but although she remained hyper aware of his . . . presence during the day, he never touched her until after the sun went down. Apparently he was a "creature of the night" very much like a vampire.

She'd decided she needed to do something about it. The problem was: what?

Finally, she settled on having a psychic come to the house – which cost two hundred dollars. It was a total waste of time. The woman came in wearing a ridiculous headdress, flowing robes, and even more flowing beads and bells that jingled harshly when she walked. Madame Drucilla never asked Grace one question about what kind of manifestations she was experiencing. She did a ten minute walk-through and pronounced that the spirit haunting her was that of a young girl who had died tragically in the sixteen-thirties.

Grace had sighed, handed her the money and escorted her to the door. Only if the little girl was over six feet tall, extremely muscular, and had a bass voice . . . Later that night, Talus alluded to the woman as he wrung her twelfth explosive orgasm from her not-entirely-unwilling body. "The lady with the bells was a riot," he commented, his big hand claiming her tummy as she tried to get her breathing under control, tried to come down from that frightening high he always hurled her to.

She folded the sheet under her armpits and frowned. "Is there a little girl there with you?" Grace didn't think she liked the implications if there was.

"Not that I've ever seen. Besides my lovers over the years, and whoever occupied whatever are I settled on, I haven't seen anyone or anything else."

"Huh. C-may I ask you a question?" Talus was trying to get her to remember to say "may I" as opposed to "can I" when asking permission. He said it was more grammatically correct, and that he liked how submissive it sounded.

He smiled one of those not real ones that she was rapidly learning to fear. "Good catch. What would you like to know, Miss Curiosity?" He was busy kissing the backs of her fingers.

"How come you leave me alone every Friday night?"

"Sabbath," came the answer. "No holy days or Sabbaths."

Grace's face lit with comprehension. "Ahhhhhhh. Ok."

He snorted. "That meets with your approval, does it?" His fingers began to rub the sore muscles of her inner thighs, then he rolled her over onto her tummy and began to massage down the backs of her legs, working each individual muscle with those strong movements. Suddenly the scent of lily of the valley, one of her favorites, drifted into her nose and mind, and Grace groaned on a hard stretch, surrendering herself to him as always. "I won't be here for the next eight days or so, either."

Curios, she asked, "Why not?"

Talus bit the back of her neck as her reached around her to grasp her breasts. "You're going to get your period and it's the down phase of your cycle."

Grace raised her eyebrow but said nothing.

Of course, he knew what she was asking. "Lower hormones, would be my guess. I can just tell. Less sexual interest – in your case, pretty much none. You, my dear, are sexually manic."

She frowned. "Is that good or bad, I wonder?"

He was licking at the middle of her back while he squeezed the healthy globes of her tits. "It works for me. You're darn near insatiable – it's natural that you would need some time off from that."

“Where do you go if you’re not – if we’re not – “ Grace didn’t quite know how to phrase it.

Talus pulled her back onto all fours, then bound her around each spread knee and wrist with tight, rough ropes, attaching a buttery soft leather collar around her neck then tying that to the bed such that she was bent down with her butt in the air. His voice surrounded her, soothing and exciting at the same time. “I’m here. I’m always here, even in the daytime although I can’t appear to you. I’ll be watching and listening. You’ll still feel me, but nowhere near as much as normal.”

She barely heard his response. “Ropes?” Grace barely got out before she found a soft plastic bit between her teeth held in place with a leather harness that buckled tightly around her head, forcing the bit back in her mouth, stretching her lips uncomfortably around it as he buckled the last buckle.

Grace tried to escape, but there was no way out. The ropes felt very real – itchy and scratchy on her tender skin – and the leather around her head drove her crazy. She wanted that thing off her and out of her mouth, now!

He stroked her hair, just as he would stroke the mane of a nervous horse before battle. And this was a battle of sorts. Talus waved his hand just as a feral grin came over his face and the wall behind the bed became a huge mirror again, treating Grace not only to the sight of herself bound and gagged on her knees, but to the terrifying display of that smile under those freaky red eyes, which made her struggle all that more fiercely, but to no end.

Nosing her ear, he whispered in a voice that had suddenly gone an octave or two lower, almost animalistic, “Aesthetics, my sweet. Sometimes the real thing is the best thing for you.” Seconds later, his nose dove between her legs and she could hear and feel him taking a good, deep whiff of her pussy. “You are at the peak of your cycle tonight, Graciana. This is going to be the hardest night yet, I promise you.”

Chapter Five

As she was nosing through her book, not really paying any attention to it unfortunately even though it was by one of her favorite authors, Grace started to stretch, then contracted back in on herself. That was not a good idea. Even the huge fluffy pillow she was sitting on in the beach chair only dulled the pain from the angry red and purple mass of welts that was her bottom. Despite that, or maybe because of it, she wiggled her toes where they had been absorbed under the sand by the tide, and even that sent a delicious ache to the center of her body. The icy cool water might as well have been bathwater. It wasn't cooling her ardor at all this morning, and Grace wasn't surprised, considering last night's debauchery.

Last night Talus had . . . had . . . she shuddered at all of the things he'd done to her, maliciously . . . coldly, with total concentration on every painful or pleasurable response. Her lips still hurt from being tugged back by that unforgiving bit, and Grace shook her head compulsively as if to reassure herself that she was no longer restrained by that awful contraption. That was one of the things that he did that had an incredible effect on her – she truly hated to have her head strapped in like that, and if she knew that fact, then he knew it. Grace was sure she'd be seeing a lot more of that harness over the summer, dammit.

She was in that terribly revealing position for the longest time, her chin pressed into the mattress, unable to raise or move her head because of the leash at her collar, forced to stare straight ahead at their obscene images, her knees wishboned and a belt added around her waist almost as an afterthought so that she had no choice but to arch her back and present her bottom to him for whatever he wished to do with it.

When he'd posed her the way he wanted, Talus had walked around the bed, administering a touch here, a slap there, none of which could she escape despite her valiant attempts. It took him a while to notice that Grace's eyes were squeezed shut, but when he did he began to apply his hand to her upturned buttocks. "Keep your eyes open, Grace. I want you to see as well as feel what I'm going to do to you. It'll make you come even harder and it's so much fun for me to watch you dissolve into a mindless mass of pulsating nerves . . . you're so responsive to everything I do . . . and this is one of your deepest, darkest wishes, isn't it? To be overpowered, bound, beaten, and taken? Forced to submit? Most of your fantasies run along those lines, cara, and I'm only too happy to help you live them – over and over again . . . all of the pain and all of the pleasure."

Grace could do nothing but moan incoherently through the bit, so in her mind she sobbed at him, No no no! She did not want to open her eyes and see the wicked, gloating but emotionless smile on his face, and she especially hated seeing his eyes. They frightened her.

His chuckle had nothing to do with humor and it only served to increase her shaking and shuddering. It was times like this that she remembered that although he'd never done her any permanent harm, he was, as he'd always claimed to be, an evil demon. "I love it when you fight me, Graciana." Please continue to do so – it just gives me more and more reasons to beat your bottom good and hard. It only makes the ecstasy I'll always give you in the end that much sweeter."

An oak paddle with holes appeared in his hand, and it had Grace screaming bloody murder from the start. Even after she opened her eyes, only five or six strokes later, he kept bringing it down on her defenseless butt in a horrible, unstoppable rhythm that had her cheeks throbbing and glowing fiercely well before he moved down to the backs of her thighs. As he continued to whack away crisply, Talus murmured, "I guess you'll eventually learn to do something the first time I tell you to, won't you? I

wouldn't have thought it would have taken such a smart girl so long, but . . . ahhh then, I'm forgetting how much you love to have your bottom roasted like this by a big, strong man. And I used to be a big strong man, so I'm perfectly willing to fill in . . ." And with that he redoubled his efforts, raising welts on that tender skin.

Tears cascaded down Grace's cheeks as she gulped air and bawled her eyes out, but her nipples were hard as pebbles, and she knew that he knew how wet she was getting from everything he was doing and saying to her. As soon as she thought about her nipples, a wooden press appeared around her breasts, squashing those rounded melons to an atrociously painful extent. Grace went wild with the horrible ache of being abnormally compressed – it was like being perpetually trapped in the machine they use for a mammogram. She tried to buck and writhe away from the awful pressure, but then another tether appeared, running through the middle of the bed somehow, so that every time she pulled upwards, it tugged down on both breasts, increasing her discomfort. Each nipple sported a smaller version of the breast press, and was also tied down.

Through all of this torment, her backside was attended to with excruciating thoroughness, and when he finally stopped all Grace could do was stand there, her sides heaving with each breath, shuddering and shaking and trying desperately not to move too much. Every tremor in her body hurt her somewhere, though – her butt, her breasts, her legs, her nipples . . .

Talus, reading her thought, bent down to whisper in her ear, "And this is only the beginning for tonight, my dear."

Grace blinked at the picture he made, standing so tall and broad behind her with his impressively broad chest lightly sprinkled with fur, that unholy grin on his face and eyes alight from inside somehow. And then she saw a good sized cane appear in his right hand and Grace let out a blood curdling scream before it'd even touched her. Talus made the slim rod whistle through the air several times, landing it with a tremendous thump on the mattress next to her calf. Grace jerked as if it had laid a stripe on her bottom instead, using her whole body's strength to heave against the rough bonds. Another frightening thump landed on the other side of the bed; he was just playing with her, wanting to make her as fearful as possible before he began.

The demon had stood directly behind her, one large hand resting possessively on the flesh he was about to decorate with layers of throbbing weals from that very cane. He caught her gaze in the mirror. "Ahhh. Your eyes are open, I see."

Despite her fear, Grace glared at him. He had certainly known the moment her eyes had opened. He knew everything she thought or felt, good or bad.

"Yes, I do. And I know you're afraid right now, and that is as it should be. Fear is making your juices flow, and that is also the way it should be." Two thick fingers wandered down her cleft to pierce those bare, bee-stung folds while Grace writhed and bucked against their inevitable invasion. Talus merely watched avidly as he discovered the inherent truth of his words, those stiff digits sliding into her with ridiculous ease, their way paved by her copious, gushing tribute. Then he jammed his fingers up into her with no thought to gentleness, rooting around inside her as if he was looking for something he'd lost deep in there, wiggling his fingers and rubbing the walls of her cunt until he'd sensitized every portion of it.

Grace had had no choice but to watch as he violated her, seeing the portrait he deliberately painted of himself behind her, controlling her, doling out ecstasy or agony as he saw fit, one hand covering her sore red behind and the other delving between her outstretched legs, fucking her vigorously until she started to try to ride those thrusts, at which point he withdrew and brought his fingers to his nose, smelling her scent then licking each finger scrupulously clean. Grace whimpered when she saw that eager forked tongue doing its job with abominable eagerness.

Then the cane was rescued from the bed where it had been abandoned, and Talus stood to one side, laying the implement along the crest of her butt. "Call me master," he commanded softly, obviously expecting her to balk at his command.

Grace didn't answer instantly; she was still struggling with the way her insides were throbbing and missing how his hand stretched and filled her. She wasn't even trying to resist him actively, but with no warning, his hand rose and fell, cracking the rod of correction with dreadful accuracy against her already swollen, taut skin, repeating the action furiously more times than Grace could count. She was suffered mindlessly from the first unbearable stroke. Grace truly thought that if he didn't stop that she would go crazy with it, until she heard his gravelly chuckle above her shrieks, "On, no, my Graciana, you can take much, much more than this, believe me."

Please - no - more - m- master! she begged wordlessly as she shrieked and groaned aloud.

"Too late," came the calm, emotionless answer as the cane whistled and whipped with his inexorable rhythm.

Much, much later, when her bottom wore a coat of livid red welts criss-crossing the once bisque-colored flesh, and every muscle in her body hurt from straining and hurling herself against the ropes that bound her as each weal was conscientiously applied, rising in livid, furiously stinging relief. Talus had stood again behind her, holding a large guilt framed mirror so that she could not help but see the blatant results of his attentions, still pulsing with pain.

Then the mirror had disappeared. "Ask me nicely for more, Grace."

Her mind flared and surged with that order, but, as quickly as possible - fearing the worst - she thought at him in utter defeat, Please give me more, Master. If she had been physically able to, she would have hung her head at that moment.

"You see," he said as he'd brought what looked like a stiff leather strap down over the field of welts, making them and Grace sing his terrible tune of humiliation and unutterable pain until she was quite hoarse with the twisted screams that had been torn from the back of her throat to escape out around the cruel bit. When he made the strap disappear, the next torment was immediate - the unforgiving wooden clamps on her poor abused nipples were twirled and tugged all on their own as Talus bent down behind her to wash her bruised flesh with that hideous tongue of his, one part of it snakily rubbing over each individual, inflamed badge of torture, agitating it further, while the other part delved between her legs teasingly in stark contrast to its brother's duties.

The dual sensations were making Grace mewl for more and beg him to stop at the same time, futilely either way, as she knew. He would never stop until he wanted to, or dawn came. His eyes held hers over the curve of her back while his tongue did the nastiness for him, the way her nipples were milked and pinched and the miserable discomfort of her deflated breasts merely adding to the overall sensations. That mischievous tongue of his had found her creamy white center and moved beyond to tease over and over her love button, making her breathe hard and try to arch against it, but playing coy each time and softening it's delicate licks until she appeared not to care any more then chafing her furiously in an endless cycle of erotic torment.

Finally, Talus rose behind her, looming larger than ever as she eyed him warily. He reached down and grabbed the reins to her bit, yanking back hard, gathering her hair in the same hand, pulling her head up and back as she fought him with what little strength remained in her. "Ahhh, my sweet, sweet cunny, you know how much you want this, exactly this," he hissed as Grace's eyes widened first with denial then with the shame of the absolute truth of his words.

Then his hand wandered down his own body to his already swollen manhood, covering it for a second. When he removed his hand, it was to reveal something that Grace's mind could not comprehend - she'd heard about at least one human in the world who was so endowed, but had never, ever expected to

see it in her lifetime: just as he occasionally sported dual tongues, tonight he had gifted himself with two good-sized phalluses, one nearly on top of the other, spaced just right for dual penetration. It looked like he'd adapted the design from one of the dildos she'd been looking at online that did just that – only the plastic version was much smaller, and much less threatening!

“Mmmmmmmmm. But that one isn't here right now. And that one you would have full control over, wouldn't you, Grace? Giving up control is what this is all about, though, isn't it? You like me controlling your body – you love that element of fear of the unknown. For some people it's roller coasters that provide that thrill. For you, it's this –” he gestured to his engorged manhoods. “Both of these are going deep, deep up into you – at the same time. You're not gonna get away from it. I'm going to pound them both into you until you beg for mercy – and I'm going to ignore your pleas and rape you hard in your pussy and your butt . . . and I'm gonna make you cum and cum and cum . . .”

As he spoke, Talus held up a hand covered in a rubber glove. His index and middle fingers glistened as if covered by lubricant. Before she could emit so much as a peep in protest – not that it would get her anywhere anyway, the tip of his forefinger was at her rosebud. It wasn't quite a virgin rosebud, but it had been a very long time since anything of any size had ventured into that particular territory. Anal play was not something that Grace indulged in frivolously. It was far more intimate to her than regular sex, as far as she was concerned.

Her agitated whimpering made him swell with excitement. Talus loved to hear a woman weep and wail over pleasure or pain – it didn't much matter to him. He adored the subjugation, the submission of her will to his. And with Grace he got to hear it to his heart's content – almost – in both situations. He could feel her body tense as he circled that little ring of flesh, taunting her with the rape she knew was coming, both digital and phallic. She knew that before the night was through, before he let her slip into the oblivion of sleep, she would be full of him in both of her tight little spots, where he belonged, stretched wide around to accept him inside her, like her legs were stretched to accommodate his presence behind her.

The tip settled right in the center of that entrance, pressing very gently. He hadn't used her bottom at all yet, wanting to delay the inevitable. Grace heaved away from him to try to avoid the inevitable invasion, but she was tied in so many ways, her head held up at an uncomfortable angle, back arched, she was inviting him to take her as far as he was concerned. She wanted it, and she was definitely going to get it. The ring of flesh was enticingly tight, daring him to see if he could force it to yield, and of course he could and did, listening to the muffled groans of hypocritical protest with a tsk as he slid in to the first knuckle, then the second, bending his finger and twisting it as Grace tried to convince him with her whines and moans that she didn't want this, but it just sounded to him like she wanted more.

“Do you want more?” The question vibrated through her body, through the walls of the room.

She knew the answer he wanted to hear, and feared answering in any other way. Y-yes, Master.

“Then you shall have it.” Talus rammed that digit into her as far as it could go, giving her barely a few seconds to grow use to it before he removed it and added his middle finger to the mix, taking time to spread her cheeks humiliatingly and probe and tease to heighten her anxiety. Then a light pressure began, pressure that Grace knew would not let up until she'd absorbed whatever he presented to her bottom hole up into her rectum.

“That's right, Graciana. There is no part of you that's safe from me. None,” he hissed over her back, making goose bumps rise wherever his cold breath touched her. When she was at her tensest and it was most likely to be uncomfortable for her, he pushed forward, watching with a passionate expression as he was absorbed up into her, slowly but undeniably. She could do absolutely nothing to keep him out of her body. The thought flashed through his mind and into hers, making her almost cum at that moment.

Talus smiled at her response. She was so submissive; it was fantastic! Grabbing the reins and her hair again, he fucked her, deep and slow, watching her all the time, locking his eyes with her, forcing her to watch him take her as her mind rebelled against it and her body quivered in indignation and fright. In direct contrast to what his hand was doing, his voice soothed and encouraged, just the way she liked. "That's it. That's a good girl." They'd forced her open to almost the first knuckles, and he wasn't stopping. "I'm gonna put more than my fingers into you, you know that, so you'd better just settle down and accept it before I get out your favorite – the paddle." She contracted around him at the threat. "Then be a good girl and let me in, because I'm gonna do it regardless of what you want . . . which is just exactly what you want to hear, isn't it?"

"Uhhhhh-ahhhhhhhh!" Grace moaned as she was penetrated to the fullest, as far as those long, broad fingers would go, but then he began to pump them out of her – all the way out, and all the way in, jabbing into that winking orifice, hard, every time. Her moans increased in volume and frequency, and Talus watched avidly as all of her muscles tense while he defiled her. She was going to have an anal orgasm! He'd never seen one before, but he knew he didn't want to gift her with that yet. It was interesting to know that she was capable of it, though. He filed that thought away for future reference.

He stopped plunging into her and stayed deep, pressing rhythmically into her, amazed to see that that was bringing her very close to culmination, also. God, this woman was impressive! He thought.

Maybe, just maybe, it was time.

The demon straightened, his hand no longer gloved in rubber. He reached over her, and suddenly Grace's hands and neck were free, although the collar remained in place. Talus had grabbed a hold of her arms just above the elbows, pulling her back. Grace could feel him rooting around at her cleft with those two big heads of his. He wiggled his hips, slapping her pussy with his erections, watching and feeling the surge of fear rise again that had been replaced for a few moments by incredible desire. The desire would come back again and again that night, he promised her silently, and with an incredibly wicked grin he positioned a penis at each of her opens and plunged them into her to the hilt, both of them at the same time.

He was big – bigger in her pussy than her bottom but not by much, big all around in both places, and she hadn't found it easy to accept him, not that she was being given a choice one way or the other. He was raping her, and she was being raped . . . and loving every second of it.

"Ask for permission before you cum, slave. I might not want you to right now."

Her answer was a wailing sob that originated in her toes. It wasn't two minutes later when she could feel the tidal wave of sensations building to a breaking point. May I cum please, Master? Grace asked, but he just continued to smile and force himself into her repeatedly. Please, Master! Please! She begged. Grace didn't think she would be able to hold back –

"You'd damned well better if I don't say yes, little girl!" he ground out, nearing what passed for his own severely diminished culmination; it was part of Talus' curse that he never truly experienced an orgasm, yet he was perpetually engorged and horny.

He pulled back on her arms, forcing her to take even more of him, slamming himself into her violently with each staccato thrust in a manner that consciously lacked a steady rhythm, so that she could never tell when the next flash of pleasure would shoot through her. It was while he was fucking her in that unpredictable manner that he granted, "You may cum, slave." His comment rumbled into her ear as if his lips were pressed against it. "I bet those titties are getting a bit sore by now, aren't they? But then, you get off on that, too, don't you?"

Something started to jiggle her agonizingly compressed breasts, and it was the last straw. The world started to spiral away from her as stars danced before her eyes. Rapture enthralled her from her toes

to her hair, loosing a scream that died away almost the instant it began because her voice broke from the sheer force.

But she didn't lose consciousness, unlike a lot of the other times. Grace could feel Talus' mind supporting hers, denying her the evasion of a faint.

He continued to pump into her. "No, Graciana. You're going to hang around and experience every single second of this explosion; you're going to feel every inch of me lodged up inside you while you contract around me." Thrust . . . thrust . . . thrust as he pulled her tight against him again.

Another guttural moan as she continued to spasm, just like he'd said, carried into a second and third culmination by his insistent attentions.

And that was only the first round.

"Ms. Ferrentino?" Someone was calling her name. Someone real, and standing at the edge of the marsh grass, shielding her eyes as she looked directly at Grace.

That's right! Dammit! Grace thought. She'd asked another psychic to come to the house – this one came fairly well recommended by Lydia herself, who had had a very positive experience with her several years ago, and had believed in her faithfully ever sense. With a dull sense of dread in her stomach, Grace rose and turned to greet her guest, a blatant lie for an apology on her lips. "I'm so sorry – I got entirely lost in my book."

Mary Ellen Warton smiled benevolently. "That's no problem. I saw your car in the driveway and took the liberty of coming around back." Grace caught up to her and they shook hands then Grace led the way towards the back porch. "If I lived here, I'd spend all my time on the beach, too."

Grace chuckled. She had a good feeling about Mary Ellen. She held the door open, and the older woman took it, but not without a certain hesitance that she seemed to dismiss after a few seconds.

"What would you like to do?" Grace asked as she made her way to the kitchen. When she stopped and turned to ask Ms. Warton if she wanted something to drink, Grace realized that she was alone.

Retracing her steps, she found the woman standing on the porch, looking somewhat dazed, almost weak-kneed. "Are you okay, Ms. Warton?"

The response was absent-minded. "Mary Ellen, please." She was turning her head to the right and left, looking all over but apparently not seeing what she expected to see.

"Is there anything I can do? Anything I can get you?" Grace asked anxiously.

The woman seemed to float through the rooms. "No, thank you. Do you mind if I look around?"

Since she already was, it seemed unnecessary to answer. Grace wandered around after her, watching Mary Ellen react to the house was extremely amusing. She certainly didn't look like the last psychic – she looked almost too normal, as if Grace probably wasn't going to get her money's worth out of her. Mary Ellen looked like the quintessential soccer mom, middle-aged and slightly pudgy – no flowing robes for this medium – her ensemble was comfortable and practical: shorts, sneakers, and a loose t-shirt, not unlike Grace's own outfit.

But apparently, innocuous though she appeared, Ms. Warton was picking up on something. When she entered the living room and wandered into the foyer, she whimpered slightly, holding her arms out as if feeling the air, using them occasionally to steady herself on the furniture when she got noticeably weak-kneed. Talus was alive and well in this house, although not blatantly during the daylight, or, according to him her "down" cycle, and it seemed he was playing a little game of "touch the psychic in entirely inappropriate places and see how long she can keep a straight face."

Red-faced to the point that Grace was a little concerned that she was going to have a heart attack, Ms. Warton looked into every room, and even went down to the basement, then, visibly girded her loins – which Grace was sure Talus was ready to see to, also – and mounted the stairs. By the time she'd been through the two guest bedrooms and the two bathrooms, Mary Ellen was emitting a low-pitched hum, not unlike a vibrator, Grace thought inappropriately. The psychic stood at the threshold to the master bedroom, wavering physically, as if she knew she really didn't want to go in there, but she was going to satisfy her own personal sense of curiosity even if it killed her.

One tentative, dingy New Balance sneaker and then the other ventured mechanically into the room until she was standing in the middle of it, facing the bed with an absolutely horrified look on her face. Grace would have laughed if she hadn't understood that her own face had born just that expression on more than one occasion before Talus had "introduced" himself to her more fully. Mary Ellen looked like she'd seen the devil and reached the ultimate sexual peak, all in the space of two seconds.

Grace didn't doubt either one of her diagnoses, knowing Talus.

Mary Ellen was already on her way out the door and down the stairs two seconds later, but she did grab Grace's wrist before she launched the two of them out of the house. She wouldn't stop and talk to Grace until they were halfway down the block, and even then she danced nervously from foot to foot.

"There's something evil in that house."

"I know," Grace confirmed calmly. "What can you tell me about h- it?"

The older woman caught that slip, eying Grace shrewdly. "He's an incubus. The oldest being I've ever -" she blushed brightly. "- touched. But I wasn't the one doing the touching, and I'm sure you know exactly what I mean."

It was Grace's turn to color, but she nodded in acknowledgement. "Yes, I know."

Mary Ellen swallowed hard, as if trying to recover a little of the dignity she'd lost in that bedroom. Grace had been trying to do just that, unsuccessfully so far, but then she was much more involved. Their eyes met. "Exactly why did you bring me here? You know him. He knows you. You're a good match, from what I can tell."

Grace drew a sharp breath. "I'm not evil, though."

The older woman gave her a hard stare. "No, you're not. And you need to stay on your toes with him. He's going to use you all he can, but it'll never be enough."

"Will he -" she stopped. It was entirely ridiculous to ask if Talus would hurt her. He already had, in more ways than one, and she had asked for each and every one of them. "Is he dangerous?"

"Much more so than any real man you'll ever meet, because this one becomes exactly who you want him to be. He'll take everything you give him, and he has absolutely nothing to give in return."

Thinking of the tremendous orgasms she was experiencing nightly, Grace had to disagree silently, then she sighed, asking the ultimate question. "Is there anyway that I could . . . help him?"

Mary Ellen looked incredulous.

"You know, maybe get him absolution for his sins, or whatever? Is there a way to fix the curse?"

"I could probably find one, with some research, but are you sure you don't just want to have him exorcized?"

"Well, it's not my house." Visions of pea soup and flies at the windows and walls dripping blood flitted through Grace's mind.

"It's not in the house, dear. The house is irrelevant. He's been waiting such a long, long time for just the possibility. He was drawn here, to you. I got the impression that whoever lives there now leaves a bad taste in his mouth . . ." she left off vaguely, as if lost in her thoughts. "Probably a frigid dried-up old thing."

A chuckle bubbled out of Grace's mouth at that disparaging but essentially accurate description of Tanya Hennessey – well, except the old.

Mary Ellen patted Grace's hand. "Go and get my car for me, would you? I'm not going to let that thing get his fingers – " She stopped and blushed again, but Grace just nodded and got her car.

Just before she drove away after patently refusing Grace's money, Mary Ellen said something cryptic that stuck in Grace's head. "I think you're his last chance, Grace," she'd whispered, then sped off like the devil himself was chasing her.

Well . . . almost.

Chapter Six

It was a little more than a week before she saw him again – and he was depressingly right in that she did get her period –such as it was – the next day, and Grace always did experience a . . . less-than-interested timeframe right afterwards. It was disgusting that he knew so much about her, but then he existed for no other reason than exactly that.

The idea of just up and leaving during the day had occurred to her, but she just couldn't seem to make herself do it. Grace didn't know if it was Talus' influence, or her own body, which was only to happy to allow her to be lead around by her clit. Physically, she was enjoying this dalliance – if that was what one called a liaison with a demon – almost too much, even the fresh marks he laid onto her rear nearly every evening.

As luck would have it, though, she ended up getting a horrible summer cold a day or so before he was due to reclaim her, and she spent most of her time in bed. That was where he found her when he appeared, lying in bed with a box of Kleenex permanently attached to her hand, a sore, hoarse throat, and a nose as red as he usually made her bottom.

"Graciana, I'm so sorry you don't feel well." Talus stretched himself out next to her on the bed, his hand splayed on her tummy.

"Stay away frub be," Grace whimpered petulantly.

Blatantly ignoring her, he asked, "Did you take whatever medicines you needed to? Is there anything I can get you?" He held up his hand and a mug appeared in it. Talus sat her up and leaned her back against him on the bed, between his legs, her back to his front. Grace found the mug at her lips, but she refused to drink.

"Whad is dis?" She wrinkled her nose and made a face.

"Now, Gracie, don't you even think about getting all stubborn and bratty – you know how I would deal with that, don't you?" he chided sternly.

Grace glared and frowned at him and the world in general. She hated being sick. "Yes, I do. I don't feel good, ad you'd beat be adway."

His lips nuzzled the back of her neck through her hair; she could feel his hotter-than-normal breath against her skull. "It's just a soothing, healing broth, little one. Sip it slowly and it'll help you relax and breath, I promise. I've told you I would never do anything to hurt you, haven't I?"

"Yeah, well . . ." she responded, full of petulance and ill-humor.

As Talus began proving himself adept at more than just sexual shenanigans, Grace took a cautious mouthful from the mug, finding it contained a wonderfully warm, fragrant liquid that coated her throat and settled her finicky tummy. Within minutes, she was breathing easier and felt marvelously relaxed, sinking back into Talus' arms, a bit startled to find that they weren't arms any more, but that she seemed to be floating on his soft red mist. "Settle down," came the familiar bossy whisper in her mind and ears when she tensed at the thought of not really lying on anything concrete. "I'm here and I'm going to take care of things tonight for you. Hopefully you'll feel better in the morning if I can just get you a good night's sleep."

Suddenly, Grace was suffused with warmth, all around her – every inch of her skin, inside and out. She felt what it must be like to be suspended in amniotic fluid in utero – she was several inches above the mattress of her bed, the soothing fog that Talus had become supporting her . . . it was everywhere – in

her, around her, under her, in her very lungs. She felt him comforting her, dampening that incessant need to cough and/or sneeze, taming the roughness of her throat. Breathing became infinitely easier as he permeated her with his strength, floating and rocking her buoyantly, cradling her within himself.

"You feel like you're burning up, cara mia," Talus commented worriedly. "Perhaps we need to see if you have a fever." Before Grace had even a thought of protest, her jammies disappeared and she was turned over onto her tummy, looking down at the bed she should have been laying on. She was buffeted wonderfully, floating on a cloud, but she could not move. "Talus!" she whined as she felt her bottom cheeks being gently parted.

"Shhhhhhhh, honey. Stay still."

"I dode hab ady choice!"

Talus chuckled unrepentantly. "That's right. I'm in charge, and that's the way it's supposed to be. That's the way you like it."

Grace humphed indignantly.

He stuck what Grace assumed was a slim glass thermometer up into her bottom, making her whimper with its penetration until he seated it well within her. "I've forgotten how miserable a cold can make you feel. You looked terrible until a few minutes ago. Do you feel any better?"

"Dod't talk to be while you're do-ig . . . that!" she squealed, flushing much more with embarrassment than with any fever, which she rarely had.

"Doing what?" he asked innocently, but then he ruined his act by twirling the thermometer where it sat, making Grace moan in protest because that was the most she could do. "Now, I do have to make entirely sure that you're not running a fever, don't I?"

"Do, you dod't," Grace said through gritted teeth.

But Talus merely chuckled again and retained his control over her, his presence heavy on the end of the small glass tube, giving Grace an idea. With a tremendous heave, she managed to move that thing an inch or two, but he knew it instantly and scolded her. "Now, Graciana, I don't want to have to spank you while you're sick, but I will. Behave and submit to me, or I'll tan your hide good and proper."

Tears began to trace down Grace's cheeks, and he hadn't really lifted a finger against her. It was hardly torture to have your temperature taken, although it certainly did heighten the humiliation. Despite the fact that she was sick, her body reacted to him as it always seemed to, ripening and readying itself for his possession.

Her tears were dried instantly, even before they fell from her jaw. "Shh-shh-shh," came the soft murmur. The thermometer was removed, and a thought popped into Grace's mind that she wondered how exactly it was that he was reading it, just before she was gently turned onto her back. "There you go. Don't go crying on me - you'll make yourself feel worse."

Her sobs tore at him. "Th-thed dod't do that to be addybore."

Grace felt amusement suffuse through him at her fractured pronunciation, but just then he started to rock her very slowly and carefully, humming himself along her skin in a manner that was both soothing and arousing. She was able to move again and did, restlessly, as his caresses became somewhat more pointed.

You just relax and let me do everything, Graciana. For once don't fight me. I know what's best for you, he thought to her.

And of course, he did as he pleased regardless. Talus was gentler with her than he'd ever been before, lulling her into arousal very, very slowly, so that she was practically asleep before the orgasm snuck up on her and blew her world apart while he kept her safe and snug, monitoring her temperature multiple times through the night, bringing her to gentle completion each time he woke her, so that she almost felt like both the temperature taking and the orgasms were merely parts of a fevered, night-long dream.

For the next couple of nights, that was all he did with her until he was absolutely sure that she'd recovered. Grace commented on his over-protectiveness in the middle of the night while she was leaning back against him in the bed. This was the first night that Talus had taken her more passionately, as he had prior to her illness. He was endearingly tender with her, though, and she felt him searching her consciousness and to read how she was feeling all the while. Mostly, he encouraged her to sleep, which surprised her.

"Why would you be surprised?"

Grace snorted and Talus punished her for her impudence by pinching her nipples tightly between his thumbs and forefingers as his hands held them plumped out from her body. She wiggled and struggled against the implementation of his discipline, but there was nothing she could do and she knew it. That was half the fun. "Because you're always spanking me or caning or paddling me. Why should you care that I'm sick?"

Talus looked affronted. "Well, for the first thing, when I was alive a cold could kill you, and likely did. Secondly, I keep having to repeat myself, but I never want to do you any harm, Grace. You don't seem to believe that, just because I don't let you get away with everything you try to –"

She blustered and protested, but not very hard, making him give her a real smile, one of the few she'd seen from him.

"And third, I hate to see you sick and I think it's natural for me to want to help you feel better."

Something in what he'd said triggered a memory of what Mary Ellen Warton had said. "It's natural for you?" Grace half turned and lay back against him. "Aren't you just about as un-natural as things get?"

Talus frowned down at her. "No, I'm not. And that's not the question you wanted to ask me, either, is it?" He was unnaturally still behind her.

"No, it wasn't." Grace decided to delay the inevitable a bit. "You had yourself a little fun with Mary Ellen, there, didn't you, as she wandered through the house?"

He looked entirely unrepentant. "Damn right. If she were a little younger and living in this house, she'd be almost as fun as you."

"Humph." Grace wasn't sure if that actually was a flash of jealousy or not that went through her as he mentioned Mary Ellen being as much fun as she was, but regardless she wasn't about to explore the feeling too closely – it made her uncomfortable just to think about it. If she was jealous, did that mean that she had feelings for him that went beyond a tremendous lust for his body?

He squeezed her in an almost-hug. "I loved the look on her face when I goosed her as she was standing at the end of the bed – that was priceless. She's almost as psychic as you are."

He could not have said anything more likely to surprise her. "Huh? Me? I'm not in the least psychic."

"If you were truly unable to see spirits and other-worldly figures, you wouldn't be able to see me. You and I have the most complete relationship that I've had with any woman since I was cursed."

Grace was noticeable skeptical. "How do I know you don't say that to all of your girls?"

Talus shrugged as if he didn't care, but somehow she got the feeling that he did care. A lot. "You don't. But why would I bother to say it?"

"To butter me up."

He looked truly puzzled, eyebrow raised almost to his hairline. "And why would I need to do that?"

Grace sighed. "You wouldn't."

"I know," he replied smugly.

They were quiet for a moment. "So, am I your last chance?" she ventured, and before she knew it she was over pillows at the end of the bed, listening with fear and trepidation to the snick of leather through worn belt loops.

He was wearing a belt? Grace thought first, but then her next thought was YEOW! THAT HURTS!

If he wasn't wearing one, he'd conjured one, and either way it burned her butt like the dickens.

He totally avoided answering her question, and with a non-response that was as painful as that belting, Grace wasn't about to push her luck and ask again. Talus was his usual insatiable self, and Grace slept a lot of the next day trying to recover. But she did make the mistake of mentioning to him the fact that she was going to have some friends over towards the end of the week . . . maybe Saturday night. Talus had pounced on that statement and rebuked her for deciding to invite people into his house without first asking his permission.

Within the wink of an eye, she found herself standing naked at the end of the bed. She was held immobile by some sort of pillory, to which she was attached by stocks that held her head and her wrists. Talus bent her just slightly, careful to provide support for her back, but leaving her bottom jutting out as if she was inviting him to punish her, which was just about the furthest thing from the truth. Her legs were bound and spread to an obscene extent, leaving the very insides of her thighs and - to a disturbing extent - her private area and the secrets of her cleft open and exposed to his harsh discipline.

He stood in front of her, his arms crossed over his chest, looking like every angry boyfriend she'd ever had, Grace thought.

Talus snorted in a very undemon-like manner. "Boyfriend? What man could keep up with me?" He shook his head with a rueful smile. "I pity the poor men who tried to keep you satisfied. You wear me out, and I do this for . . . well, a living, sort of."

Grace frowned, watching him warily out of the corner of her eye.

He began to pace in front of her. "Now. Just so you know and there are no further misunderstandings: you must ask permission to do something like invite total strangers over to my house. In the future, you might want to consider asking before deciding things like this all on your own - it'll save your butt."

"Please please please may I have some friends over Saturday night?" Grace asked in a pleading voice.

Talus smiled. "Too late. You're already in trouble and there's nothing that you can do about it. I'm going to give you a lesson to remind you the next time."

"But how was I supposed to know to ask you?" she whined.

The huge, dark man stopped and caught her chin, forcing her to look up at him. "You're a submissive. I'm your master. Ergo you should ask permission."

"For what? I don't know what the rules are, so how can I avoid the punishments!" Grace yelled in frustration.

His evil smile melted over his face. "That's part of the idea, Graciana. In a true slavery situation, you would never know, truly, what you might be beaten for. You could - and would - be beaten at any time, at the whim of your owner, even if you were perfectly behaved."

"No! That's not right!"

He began to circle her, considering her from every angle, reaching out to touch various intimate parts - hefting her bare, full breasts, patting a well-rounded flank, then searching rudely between her legs from behind, which made her struggle the most. His chin rested on her taut shoulder as he molded himself to her from behind, hairy, broad chest to smooth-skinned back, fitting her bottom back into his hips, his ever-present erection lying along the top of her butt crack in silent threat, powerful thighs

cradling slimmer, more rounded ones. When he spoke, his breath stirred the baby hair at her ear. "Right doesn't have anything to do with it. If this was my time, and you were my slave, I'd be on you all the time – anytime I wanted. If I found out that you were responsive, I might make you cum, but then I would probably become bored with that and I'd take you only for my own pleasure – maybe I'd even command that you were not allowed to cum unless I gave you permission."

Her nipples hardened at his words, making her wiggle as his arms enclosed her, stilling her movements of protest against her own arousal from the picture he was creating.

"And if you disobeyed me and came, I might use something like this on you." Talus stood where she could see him, holding a long, thick leather strap.

Grace squinted slightly, then caught her breath at the sight. She recognized that very implement – it was something she'd seen on a bondage and discipline website for a company that sold them. She had been reading a story that contained a reference to a Louisiana Prison Strap, and had wanted to see exactly what it looked like.

She'd found it, and had shuddered over it at first sight. It was a humongous, lethal looking leather strap, approximately three inches wide and about twenty-six inches long, including the solid wooden handle. It looked hard to handle and heavy to lift to her, but of course Talus would have no such problems. And even though it looked like it would take big gaping chunks out of her butt, a fissure of desire had flickered to life in the back of her mind, and she wondered whether or not she could stand it.

Grace was beside herself with the idea that he was going to apply that to her bare, defenseless bottom. One swipe and she'd be blown into next week!

His grin was truly evil – he was thoroughly enjoying her complete and total fear of that implement – of him wielding that implement against her butt. To tease her, threaten her and increase her agitation, he began to swing it a little, still keeping it away from her bottom, but Talus knew that the anticipation of a beating was almost as bad as the beating itself. "Not into next week, my dear, but maybe it'll knock some sense into you." Walked around her and stood directly in front of her, catching and holding her eyes. "You have such a capacity for pain, little one. I just love to push your limits and hear you scream. It's so satisfying."

"Noooooooooooo – please don't – not that – pleeeaaassee – " Her begging was becoming bothersome, and Grace abruptly found her mouth gagged by a swath of rough burlap tied tightly at the back of her head, which muffled her but left her head quite mobile, unlike the leather harness that he favored a lot lately.

After he'd demonstrated a couple of good swings where she could see them, and her fear was heightened to a fever pitch, Talus slowly circled back around so that he stood behind and just to one side of her. His disappearance from her field of vision and what that boded for the immediate future condition of her rear had Grace frantic to escape her inescapable bonds.

The first touch she felt made her jump, though and it was only his hand dragged along the line of her back, then down over her prominently displayed bottom and the backs of her thighs. He was "tsking" as if mourning the loss of such unblemished perfection in pursuit of her obedience to him, but it certainly didn't deter him at all. "Well, Graciana, let us see if we can endeavor to remind you that you need to ask permission for things around here. Your submissive demeanor has been sorely lacking lately, and I intend to rectify that situation if I have to beat your bottom like this every night for the next week . . ." his hand drifted back up her flanks possessively. "Hmmmmmmmm. That's an interesting idea."

Her mind was driving her crazy with dread at what he was going to do to her – tonight and possibly the next several nights. She writhed and fought her captivity to the point where before he'd even raised the strap for the first stroke she was already half exhausted and had fewer defenses against the searing pain as it lanced through her bottom. A horrible burning welt covered almost the entire of her

backside in one tremendous swat, and Grace could already hear the implement of her correction singing through the air to crack across her cheeks for the second time, well before she'd had a chance to recover from the first incredibly painful assault. Her breath still expanded every available space in her lungs but it wasn't until the forth strike that she was able to let it out in a howl that was fit to wake the dead.

He never missed a beat, but did comment dryly, "It's a good thing that the neighbors can't hear you – they'd thing I was flailing you alive."

It was news to Grace that that wasn't exactly what he was doing – indeed she felt as if he was tearing strip after strip of skin off her from the top of her butt to just above her knees.

"Believe me, a flailing hurts much worse than this, baby." He drew his arm back further than usual and released an extra-harsh one, so he could then stand back and glory in her moans and wails. She'd only taken six strokes, but had dissolved in tears on the first. Part of her misery was the magic of anticipation. Grace's mind had built her fear of this very strap from the moment she'd begun reading that erotic story on the Internet – and then she'd seen it and it had perked him up from a lethargic day. Her body had hummed with sensual concern and anxiety over whether or not she could take the very implement he held in his hand, and the worry was almost – almost – worse than the actual punishment.

No, the actual punishment was a lot worse than anything she could have imagined, he was sure. When he was alive, he'd felt quite a few straps and whips on his butt and his back in his time, from his strict father through the severe discipline of his military training. This strap was actually intended to be used on a man, but he loved the contrast of it against what had been her milky-white skin, but what was now mottled, swollen bruised flesh with several raised welts from the kiss of that leather monster. Talus had only intended to give her ten or so licks, and he told her so as he spoke to her in a stream of consciousness narrative.

Grace almost heaved a sigh of relief, but she knew him well enough that she heard the unspoken "but" . . .

"You are so beautiful when you're writhing in pain – almost as much as when you're shuddering and shaking with an orgasm, but I feel like I have even more of a part in this, and I don't quite know why – maybe because you can't do this to yourself, and there's even more trust involved in my disciplining you than giving you pleasure. Pain is more intimate, somehow, isn't it, especially when it also leads to desire?" He kept smacking her with bold, crisp strokes that wore her voice out from the screams, but she was so divine in the throes of her delicious agony that he ended up giving her more than forty hard stripes, beating her relentlessly, using his own mind in support of hers when she would have fainted from the pain, not allowing her any form of escape from the anguish, making her stand there and take it as he leathered her backside again and again . . .

Chapter Seven

“Grace? Grace are you all right?” Jody squeezed Grace’s arm, looking into her glazed over face.

She’d bent slightly over the table as she’d refilled the chips and been caught by the memory of being slightly bent on the pillory while he laid into her with that horrible strap. Could it have been almost a week ago? Grace felt as if it was just yesterday, and her bottom clenched spasmodically in agreement.

He hadn’t ended up doing it for a week, but he had done almost the same exact thing the next night, after she’d spent the day trying desperately not to sit down. It was horrible! Even the big cushy recliner was uncomfortable on her tush, and she ended up spending a lot of the day lying on her tummy on the sofa, watching television. It had been a rainy, boring day, and when he’d appeared to her she was already in bed, on her tummy again, watching television. She’d glared up at his smile, and he’d stripped her with his look, wanting to see the condition of her marvelous bottom. It was still bruised and swollen and looked very painful.

Talus had laid down beside her on the bed, asking in a teasing, pedantic tone, “And what lesson did we learn from last night’s discipline, Graciana?”

“To always ask permission before inviting people here,” she answered hoarsely by rote, not really paying any attention to him. Despite the skyrocketing pleasure he’d brought her to afterwards, Grace was still not happy with him.

In the wink of an eye, she’d found herself in exactly the same position as she’d been in last night, and he was standing there with his arms folded across his chest, the same strap dangling from one hand innocuously, only this time the anticipation was a thousand-fold worse – she knew now exactly how much that thing could hurt her, and had begun whimpering immediately behind the gag.

Talus had stroked the leather against her cheek as he’d buried his hand in her hair. “Kiss the strap that’s going to roast your rear for the second night in a row.”

Instantly dry lips had done as she was told, and then she’d been treated to a second round of unbelievably painful volleys from that atrocious implement. Her voice disappeared on her yowl of complete agony from the very first time the leather caressed her still-mottled and swollen skin, leaving her mouth open and gaping with each of the next forty descending smacks of unforgiving strap against yielding bottom.

When he was done, he’d moved the pillory such that she was still bound, but when he squatted down he was right at the best angle to apply his eager, open mouth to her unbelievably wet pussy. Talus’ mouth had settled over a somewhat peaked bud as his fingers invaded her drenched cunt. I can’t believe you. You must hate that your body loves this, he whispered into her mind. He’d proceeded to bring her to the edge, repeatedly, all night long, until she was as desperate for an orgasm as she’d been to avoid the fall of that horrid implement . . . and he didn’t give her one.

Talus had left her that night with a long, slow, deep kiss and more swollen, aching areas on her body than Grace would have thought she’d owned, as well as stern admonitions that she was not to bring herself off under any circumstances.

But he’d left her entirely unfulfilled.

It was an atrocious torture, and, he knew, it was just perfect for her.

“No, I’m fine,” Grace responded with an absent smile, having to mentally grab her own collar and drag herself away from those hot, heaving memories. She had guests to see to.

Grace's friends were kind of an eclectic group – some teachers, some bankers, some stay-at-home moms. But they all knew each other through their association with her and jobs they had been at, so everyone got along great. Food and conversation flowed equally well all evening, and, although she was a little concerned, Talus seemed to behave himself totally – he didn't even bother her, which was saying something. She could feel his presence, as always, and sometimes his amusement, especially when she sat down somewhat gingerly even a week later, but he wasn't in the least blatant as far as she could tell.

Lyds stayed late afterwards to help her with the cleanup, bless her heart.

"Well, I thought everyone had a good time," Grace commented as she brought the stuff from the casual buffet she'd set up in the dining room into the kitchen to be shoved into Tupperware and probably forgotten at the back of the fridge two days later.

"Oh, yes, I agree." Lydia stopped while drying a dish. "You've been staying here for a while – have you still feel that there's something weird inhabiting this house?"

Grace was floored. For some reason Lydia was the last person she thought would be aware of Talus' presence . . . then she rethought that opinion. No, Tanya was the least likely, actually. But Grace was curious. "What do you mean?" she prompted.

"Oh, I don't know. I've always felt uneasy here, myself, and I figured it was just Tanya, really. She's not what one would call a warm and friendly person."

Grace rolled her eyes and made a sound of total agreement.

"But even with just you, there's something about this place that's not right, you know? It feels . . . almost evil."

She couldn't quite respond to that. "Evil?" she gulped.

Lydia looked at her questioningly. "You know what I mean – there's a presence in this house – you must feel it, too; you're the one who called me asking about psychics. You're the least likely person I know to go to a psychic, and you've mentioned to me before how eered out this place made you – you used to say that by the time you came home you felt like you'd been felt up so thoroughly you figured it was all over but the after-sex cigarette."

Grace's smile was telling, but Lydia had returned to the dining room to grab more stuff and she didn't see it. That was such a prophetic remark! Grace wasn't at all sure what she wanted to share about Talus, if anything. She had a feeling that the depressingly pragmatic Lydia would think that she'd gone around the bend. "There's definitely a presence."

"A malevolent presence," Lydia shuddered.

Unable to really contradict that statement with any surety, Grace remained silent, puttering about the kitchen.

Lydia touched her arm. "Are you okay, Grace?"

Although she'd been avoiding just such a confrontation about how she felt about living in a house that was haunted by an . . . entity such as Talus, Lydia had a way of cutting to the heart of the matter. Grace leaned back against the counter with a dishtowel in her hand and considered the question for a moment, then lifted her eyes to meet her friend's inquiring gaze. "Yes, actually, I'm fine."

"Are you sure? You've been awfully reclusive this summer, and that's not like you."

A huge grin settled over Grace's face, animating it and making her seem more like herself to her concerned old friend. "Awwwww, Lyds, you miss me! That's so cute!"

Slipping into the familiar routine of put-upon pseudo-significant other, Lydia returned dramatically in a high-pitched whiney voice, "Yes, of course I do! I'm all alone over there and you don't appreciate how I work and slave my fingers to the bone – " Grace reached over and grabbed Lydia's plump, soft hand to hold it up between them, mock-glaring at her with a raised eyebrow. Lydia retracted

her hand quickly with a frown and continued her usual diatribe. “ – cooking and cleaning and washing and waxing . . .” Lydia hadn’t waxed anything besides her legs in years “ – and taking care of the children . . .”

“Children? Is there a star in the East?” Grace asked in all innocence, looking out the kitchen window while Lydia dissolved into giggles.

“I’m glad to know that you’re okay, though. I was a little worried,” Lydia confided in all seriousness.

Grace patted Lydia’s non-bony-fingered hand. “I’m fine. Really. I’ll call more often and we’ll get together. I’m sorry – I didn’t mean to neglect you. I’ve just been enjoying my time on the beach – “ and in the master bedroom, and on the floor of the living room and the dining room table, she said quietly to herself, hearing Talus’ soft chuckle in her head, reminding her of his eternal presence “ – and relaxing.” She leaned on her elbows on the counter. “Why? Do you think that I’m having unnatural orgies with the satanic being that inhabits the house?”

Well, they’re not orgies and they’re not unnatural . . . Talus whispered in her mind again, making her smile broaden.

Lydia snorted asking with false sweetness, “And that’s different from what you usually do – how?”

Grace smacked her best friend hard on the shoulder, and, once the place had been pretty much entirely cleaned up, she escorted Lydia to her car, hugging her goodbye fiercely with promises to keep in touch better. Standing back in the kitchen, looking out the window dreamily as she washed the last few dishes that had escaped the final sweep, Grace felt gentle, insistent probings between her legs. Her breasts were instantaneously surrounded by warm moistness that concentrated on her mauve tipped nipples, which ripened instantly into aching peaks that were greedily suckled by invisible mouths.

The sponge stick dropped into the sink from her limp hands. God, he got to her faster than anyone else she’d ever met!

“Yes, isn’t it wonderful? We have such a strong connection, Graciana – it’s the strongest connection I’ve ever had with any woman.” Something wet and hot licked up the side of her neck, making her arch her whole back with the sensual feelings he conjured within her body. “Pick up the sponge, Grace. You need to finish your chores.”

Grace whimpered but – having learned an extremely hard lesson or two about him and his penchant for discipline - she picked up the soap stick reluctantly, not wanting to believe that he was going to make her do the dishes while he fondled her intimately.

“Grace, if you cum before you finish the dishes I will give you one hundred strokes with the cane,” Talus promised, and he always kept his promises. Something big and feral was tickling its way past her plumped pussy lips and up into her, ever-so-slowly squirming and pushing its way up there. Grace, who was only half heartedly finishing the dishes now, tried to step a couple of inches to one side to make it easier for him to penetrate her. “Stop. Stand right there and don’t do anything but wash the dishes. I’m going to inspect them when you’re done – it wouldn’t be at all a good thing if I found that they weren’t completely clean.”

Man, he was too blasted good at this! How can I do something as mundane as this while he’s – he’s . . . I can’t stand it! “Y-yes, Sir.”

“Good girl.”

The few things she’d found to wash took an inordinate amount of time to get clean that night. The interruptions were long and varied . . . and torturously pleasant. The magical presence between her legs pumped into her with deliberate insistence, stretching and filling her completely to the hilt each time. Another something covered her swollen clitty, rubbing in gentle, teasing circles that tantalized but didn’t fulfill. Her breasts were far from left out of the equation – Talus was much too good and much too enthralled with his eager little submissive to forget such an all important erogenous zone. He knew she

loved to look down and see his hands cupping her from behind, so every time she looked down, that was what she saw – his strong, powerful hands laying a very physical claim to her body, milking and massaging her flesh almost painfully. But he didn't materialize to her fully at all, preferring to surround her with his presence and make it a more whole-body experience – it would be harder for her to resist the ecstasy he created within her. Talus literally seeped into her cute pink skort and tank top set, dissolving them and clinging to her as if he was the only clothing she would ever need, making sure that he rubbed her sensitive skin with every move she made like fine silk or sensuous velvet over hard bodied steel; his power and strength was apparent even when he was in a non-solid state.

By the time she got to the last cut glass bowl, Grace was beside herself, her body throbbing in time to his nasty molestations, breasts and pussy sore from all of the attention, her clit and nipples hard as little, unfulfilled pebbles.

When he began to tug hard and roll her nipples as he pulled them away from her body, so that it hurt just right, and the slippery part of him that had whispered teasingly over her clit forever began to rub its spindly fingers over that swollen bump more purposefully, Grace nearly dropped the small antique bowl into the sink, but caught it just in time.

My little girl shouldn't be so careless as to break anything, should she? Daddy would have to spank, he warned playfully before sinking his teeth into the back of her neck and growled, as if he was a tiger preparing to mount his chosen mate.

And Grace was definitely in heat. She rubbed her bottom back against nothing, whimpering in frustration, and dropping the bowl into the sink with a crash. Grace's whole body came to attention at the idea that she might have just earned herself a punishment, but the bowl was fine. She rinsed it off quickly – no thanks to Talus, who hadn't let up on her seduction one iota – and she was done. Finally.

After a thorough but fruitless inspection of her efforts, she was suddenly no longer in the kitchen, she was upstairs, instead, standing in front of the bed. Talus had materialized, and was wearing clothes, which was kind of unusual for him – he was almost always naked around her. Then she noticed the things that were laid out very carefully on the bedspread: a white cotton baby-doll nightie that was dotted with pretty pink flowers, a pair of "day of the week" underwear, and a large assortment of butt plugs, as well as enough enema equipment to open a colonic clinic.

Grace took several steps back. "Wh-what's that stuff for?" she asked, although she was quite concerned that she already knew the answer.

And Talus knew that she knew the answer, too. "Why, that's stuff so that Daddy can open you up good and clean you out."

"Daddy?" Grace raised an eyebrow at him, doubt rife in her tone and expression.

Talus ambled over to look down at her from his great height, wearing a "disappointed Father" face. "Watch your tone of voice, Grace Ferrentino."

That deep bass, those words . . . they threw Grace back into the seventies when her stern Father would say just exactly that to her in warning that she was pushing him just a bit too far. Sometimes Grace could control herself and turn her Daddy's frown back into a smile, but a lot of times just such a warning was only the precursor to a severe belting. A shiver ran up her spine, and she fell into the role she craved to play.

"Yes, Sir." Even her voice took on the high pitched characteristics of a seven year old, the very slight lisp she'd had when she was younger coming right back as if she'd never lost it. Grace looked at the floor and fidgeted.

Talus was entranced by the change in her, with how readily she took to this part and wallowed in the youthful headspace. Like the submission, he knew that it was something that touched her very deeply,

and it made him want to play his own part to the hilt – he figured he could really get into being Grace’s loving, strict father/lover. It was another layer of Grace’s sexuality that he savored peeling back.

“Good girl,” he praised, cupping her cheek in his hand and tipping her head up so that she had to look at him. “Such a shy little lovebug.”

Incredibly, Grace blushed at the nickname.

“Now, let’s get you changed into your jammies, honey.” Talus sat down on the edge of the bed and pulled her between his broad thighs, reaching for the button at the top of the little-girlish blouse that appeared on Grace at the sweep of his hand, along with a short plaid skirt, tights, and a head band.

“I can do it,” Grace’s fingers followed his.

Talus shook his head. “Let me do it, baby. Daddy likes to take care of you – that’s Daddy’s job.”

Grace’s hands fell to her sides and she let him do everything for her, just as if he was her Father. Seconds later, she found herself popped into the youthful pajamas, but the undies remained on the bed while Talus pulled her bottom up over his lap. Grace began to struggle immediately, until a huge hand came to rest on the back of her thigh. “Gracie, we’ve been through this before. Settle down or Daddy will have to warm your bottom.”

Drawing a ragged breath, Grace tried to obey, her body relaxing over his lap.

“That’s my good girl. I’m just going to take your temp and make sure you’re feeling okay.”

Grace couldn’t help it – she hated to have her temperature taken this way, and her legs began to scissor kick all on their own.

Two hard cracks fell onto those upturned cheeks leaving big, flaming handprints on her ivory skin and making her sob brokenly. “I don’t want to have to punish you, sweetie, but you know I will. Do you want to have to take your medicine tonight with a sore bottom? Hmmmm?” he prompted when there was no response from his recalcitrant little girl. “Answer me.”

Gracie sniffled piteously. “N-no, Sir.”

The small tube entered her bottom on a river of Vaseline with no further ado, and she was forced to lie there just like any other little girl would, over her loving Father’s lap. Talus’ fingers kept playing with it, twirling it and pulling it in and out, despite Grace’s protestations.

Finally, he pulled it out, very, very slowly, pronouncing that she did not have a fever. Then he moved her gently off his lap and arranged her on the bed on her left side, with her left leg straight and the right one bent in the classic Simms position. Grace tensed. She knew this position; it figured prominently in a lot of her fantasies . . . but she wasn’t at all sure she wanted to live them, especially not with Talus. He was just too damned good at what he did, and this type of fantasy was too close to her, to intimate to be shared with anyone.

He lay down behind her. “No, it’s not. I love this fantasy, and we’re going to see it through to the end.” He reached across her and grabbed a new tube of KY as well as the smallest of the butt plugs that were laid out in front of her, so that she would see each of them before he took them and inserted them into her bottom.

“No, please don’t!” Grace wept, knowing in her heart that nothing she could say or do would make him stop or change his mind in any way.

“You’re right about that, anyway. Nothing you say or do, just as if you were a child. You’re a helpless little girl, and I’m going to violate your bottom with every one of those butt plugs and dildoes, then I’m going to fill you up with a good, strong enema, because you need to be cleaned out every once in a while, and you’re going to hold it, too, while it stings and burns.” She could hear him rummaging around behind her, getting things ready. “You’ll hold it until Daddy says you can let it go, and then when you come back to bed from voiding, I’ll tuck you under the covers for the night and give you an orgasm to help you sleep.”

Talus arranged her again, making sure that her bent leg was kept good and high, exposing her little rosette fully to him for easy access. He draped himself over her hip, holding her cheeks apart with his left hand while he held the first, smallest butt plug in his right hand. "Okay, time for us to begin, Gracie." With that, he began to insert the little solid rubber finger, not going all that carefully because it was so small.

But the size, in this case, didn't matter to Grace at all. She felt totally and utterly debased and humiliated, and there was nothing that could be done. Sullen tears leaked down her face as he rummaged about with the plug for a moment, then withdrew it and reached for the next thing, which was a dildo about an inch around and about six inches long.

Talus nodded with approval. "Ahhhh. Now this one you won't take so easily, will you, girl?"

Grace whimpered and buried her face in the pillow as she felt the greased head of the phallus pressing against her bottom hole. Try as she might, she couldn't tense enough to keep the invader out and it popped into her with disgusting ease, pressed all the way to the hilt in one smooth motion that had her gasping.

Talus imparted some fatherly advice. "Don't fight it, Gracie. It's going to happen regardless – make it as easy on yourself as you can and relax. It doesn't have to hurt, although I know it feels a bit uncomfortable."

His little talk only made her start to wail. Talus grinned. His Gracie really didn't like to be told what to do, which he found very amusing in a submissive woman. The next implement looked like a bowling pin with a flange at the bottom; it had a small nipple-like tip, but the end flared quite nicely and would definitely make her think about accommodating it. Apparently, it did that just by him reaching for it. Her whines increased triple fold in volume as he deposited a good amount of lubricant on the top and around the base where it was likely to need it.

He took his time with this one – it was the first one that was actually going to challenge her a little, although Grace had a pretty good capacity to stretch back there. The tip entered quite easily as he'd expected, but he kept up a steady pressure that had her thrashing slightly as the widened part approached and forced her to open. Talus backed off one or two times, then seated the plug inside her carefully but firmly as she tried to reach down and rescue her already-filled orifice. Talus slapped her hand smartly as it tried to venture back there. "You know better than that," he scolded. "Do I need to tie your hands, naughty girl?" Nothing met his question but a lot of pouty little girl snuffles and sobs. "Do I?"

Grace sighed long and hard. "N-no, Sir."

"Then I shouldn't be seeing your hands back here again where they don't belong." Talus busily pulled the implement out of her, then pressed it right back in, keeping the widest part right at that tight ring of flesh and forcing it to open for him, at his behest.

While she was still wearing the bowling pin shaped one, he reached over and grabbed the next in line, which was almost bullet shaped, and purple in color. It was a good circumference the entire length, with really no smallish, introductory part at all, and would definitely make her squeal. This one would force her to stretch open quite a bit very quickly.

After removing the other plug, he placed the head of the purple one against her puckered hole, pressing slowly and firmly, every sense on high alert as he listened to her hitching breath and the whispered begging she was doing under her breath, as well as watching avidly as she was forced to accept the fairly large item. He adored this; he loved giving her no choice but to surrender to him in such an elemental way. That little hole expanded very reluctantly, yielding to him only with considerable pressure, especially once it reached the small flare at the bottom just before its size decreased for the stopper. Grace was moaning regularly, begging louder not to be violated by that thing he had in his hand, for him not to do it to her, please.

“Gracie,” he chided, “I’m your Daddy. I need to stretch you out good so that you can take your enema better. Stop making such a fuss, now, and accept it like a good girl.”

She wrestled physically and mentally with the inevitable imposition of his will moaning and writhing as that little instrument took over her mind and body, concentrating her whole being – her whole consciousness – on her ever-widening asshole.

“That’s it. That’s Daddy’s good girl . . . take it. Take it up inside you. It’s what Daddy has to do to you for your own good.”

He pushed it in a good ways, then backed it off over and over, taking it all the way out once only to lube it up again and press it back in. “Daddy’s gonna push this plug right up into your bottom where it belongs, Gracie,” he said, suiting actions to words, rising to full erection at her panicked squeal while he seated it completely within her.

She was still chanting “no, no, please” as he twirled the plug so that the broad end fit between her cheeks. “There, there.” It made such a pretty picture peeking out of her bottom hole.

It was only a few seconds later that he began to pry it back out of her, slowly, uncomfortably, as she continued to beg him not to do this to her.

He did it anyway, of course, only to turn around and force it back in. Talus did that several times, finally settling for fucking her with the plug as he kept at the widest point possible, forcing it in and out and in and out past that sensitive sphincter until he heard the change in her cries from moans of misery to those of desire and lust.

Then he went on to the next biggest plug, followed by a large sword dildo that he wasn’t even sure she’d be able to take. Grace amazed him, though; she was so into this headspace that he was able to – with a lot of parental scolding and coaxing, fit it up inside her. Talus almost relented and brought her off, he was so proud of her abilities – both physical in accepting the huge thing but also mental in her submission to him through this role.

But he stopped himself, remembering that there was another part to this fantasy – a good, big enema, complete with a Bardex nozzle. The mechanics of it amazed him – he slid the first balloon into her bottom – it went very easily after all that stretching work – then blew it up as she wiggled and squirmed. Talus put a steadying hand on her hip, saying sternly, “Settle down, young lady.” The second balloon blew up outside her body, sealing anything he ran through the tube into her butt until he decided to allow her release it.

Talus smiled evilly as he ran the soapy enema solution through the tubing to eliminate air. Man, he loved technology!

Her reaction to the enema was even more vocal than the anal preparation. She really didn’t want this enema – but then, she didn’t want to be spanked or strapped or fucked, either. And she was. Regularly. And she was made to scream with fulfillment at all of it. Every time he let her orgasm, she was right there.

So, Talus was thinking that his little girl was protesting a little too much.

He put her on her knees with her butt raised over some pillows, fingers laced at the back of her neck, cautioning her not to move them no matter what or Daddy would have to administer that long awaited spanking. Talus spoke to her through the whole thing.

“I’m going to release the medicine into your bottom now. You stay still and take this well for Daddy, little girl. It’s for your own good.”

Grace was just about as tense as she could be, waiting for that awful click. But it didn’t come immediately. Talus wanted to play with her – loving this lewd position particularly. Her pussy was cupped and rubbed, her breasts squeezed through the thin, youthfully decorated fabric while she whimpered and waited and dreaded . . . and became wetter and wetter and wetter, until her juices were

dripping back on themselves and pooling at the top of her pussy lips, where he dipped his fingers readily, spreading it back over a tremendously swollen little love button. Talus fingered her – touching her nowhere else while he stared down at the bottom he'd plugged with the Bardex, the big yellow external balloon mirroring the internal one that put pressure on her insides to force her to retain the enema he was going to administer – click – now. He felt her clit jump at the seemingly innocuous sound, and chuckled.

Talus kept the clamp in his fingers, but let go of her clit and stretched out next to her, whispering encouragement. “There you go. There’s the medicine Daddy made for his girl to take up into her bottom so that she could be cleaned out good and proper, like she needs to be. Maybe I’ll start doing these on a regular basis.”

“Noooooooo pleeeaaassee,” she moaned as the liquid raced into her, irritating all her internal nooks and crannies.

He reached out and stroked her hair gently. “Ahhh, but that’s good for you, and Daddies always do what’s good for their little girls.”

Grace wailed at the possibility that this was going to happen to her more often. Then the first cramping started, and she begged him to stop the flow, but he refused.

“No, little one, I’m not going to stop it. You pant and relax and the spasms will get better.”

She was bawling by the next set, getting so full that he put her onto all fours so that her expanding belly could hang down just like her tits did. “That’s it. That’s it. Maybe Daddy will be extra nice to you and fuck you while you’re getting your medicine? Would you like that?”

Not that it mattered whether or not she liked the idea, and he did want to feel how her insides had changed. Talus unzipped the unfamiliar zipper over his genitals and released himself, only to stab into her pussy seconds later. She was so tense and full of the enema that she was tighter than she usually was, and it felt wonderful to be surrounded by her like this. He pumped in and out of her steadily, forcing her to accept him just as she was forced to accept the uncomfortable sluicing of her insides.

When the traditional red bag had deflated, he stopped the flow and told her that she needed to hold it for ten minutes. Gracie was sweating, and not paying any attention to the broad invader between her legs. All of her intense concentration was focused on the twists and turns of her bowels; it was like they had formed a Rebel government of their own and were trying to secede from the Union.

Those ten minutes lasted at least five years, as far as she was concerned. She was never happier to see a toilet in her life, except on those rare occasions of stomach flu. Talus escorted her to the potty then let her take care of herself when she declined his offer of assistance. He turned on the shower spray for her, thinking she would probably want one once she was through, and he was entirely right.

When she finally returned to bed, he did exactly as he’d said he would after he put her back into her little baby doll nightie – he tucked her up under the covers like a precious little girl, kissing her cheeks gently. Then he faded out and into her, finding all her already humming spots and caressing them lightly, making her forget about the discomfort of the enema and only remember the pleasure of submitting to him in that fashion. His arousal and hers mingled within their minds, feeding off each other until they were both at a fever pitch. Talus concentrated on those areas that he knew brought her the most pleasure, coaxing her nipples to taut points that he could pinch hard enough to make it feel good to her, settling another big part of himself at her pussy – deep inside it, stretching and filling her just the way he knew she loved, but staying well away from her bottom hole. Some of him was kissing her lips – she adored being tongue-kissed while he played with her, and he was in an indulgent mood. The rest of his considerable attentions were focused on that lovely little bud of hers that he’d forced out of its hood by holding her lips wide apart. He’d put five mouths around it, all circulating gently, teasingly, not driving her towards her culmination, but rather making it an inevitable conclusion of all that eager licking and sucking.

He counted himself a lucky man when she screamed his name on her first and forth tremendous orgasms, and although he couldn't experience one himself it was almost enough to feel hers – they were truly wondrous things.

Finally, exhausted, she fell asleep in his arms. He didn't put her through anything else that night. His baby needed the sleep, and he was, after all, her Daddy. It was his job to see that she got exactly what she needed.

Chapter Eight

It seemed to Grace, when she stopped to think about it, which, admittedly she didn't do often because she was much too busy enjoying total sexual satisfaction, that Talus was almost systematically working his way through her predominant sexual fantasies . . . and enjoying himself enormously in doing so, not that she wasn't driven to writhing, screaming orgasms herself . . .

One evening she hadn't seen him all night, and had spent some time downstairs futzing restlessly, waiting for him to appear. Usually, as soon as the sky started to darken the slightest bit, she would begin to feel his presence weighing more heavily on her, as if he constantly had a hand on her – usually on her shoulder or her bottom or even sometimes her breasts or between her thighs, depending on how long it had been since he'd seen her. Grace had the feeling that he waited out the days of her period and her down cycle rather impatiently, as if he couldn't wait to get to her, even though he used her almost to exhaustion every night he could. Such was the insatiable sexual appetite of a demon, she guessed.

Occasionally, he would watch her eat a snack and they would talk as she got ready for bed. Grace would know that he was going to be there when she was done and that she wasn't going to get much sleep that night, which was fine with her. She thought sleep was highly over-rated, personally . . . It was like living in a long, hot, lusty dream where the positions kept changing, but the basic premise of the dream never did – sex. Hard, unapologetic, addictively frequent, howl at the moon, scream in your sleep sex. More often than not he just took her wherever he found her when he appeared for the evening, wringing more explosive orgasms out of her once they finally ventured onto the bourgeois comfort of the bed.

Tonight, though, she hadn't seen hide nor hair of the bugger. Grace thought hard. Was it a Friday night? Nope. Did she have her period or was she just getting over it? No. A quick check of the calendar didn't reveal any annoying holy days that Hallmark was aware of, anyway . . . she wondered what it was.

A thought froze her on the stairs up to the bedroom. What if he was with someone else? Her heart contracted and dropped onto her Birks, and she ended up having to force herself to continue up the stairs, trying desperately not to think of what she'd just come up with, which of course only made her worry the thought more and more within her mind. She didn't think it was possible for him to visit more than one woman at a time, but it wasn't as if he'd handed her a "Demons for Dummies" book that listed all of the commandments and rules to live . . . okay, exist by.

She stripped in the bedroom, intending to take a quick shower then go to sleep, since she seemed to have a night off she hadn't counted on, and frankly didn't want. The door to the bathroom was closed, which was funny. Since it was just her – and occasionally Talus, who had seen more of her than her gynecologist had, Grace rarely closed the door, even when she was using the facilities. Who was there to offend?

She shrugged and opened it, figuring the wind had blown it closed.

The light switch wasn't working, which made her grumble about having to find a ladder and change a bulb, but as she walked further into the room she realized that she wasn't going to have need of the light anyway – the huge sunken whirlpool tub was surrounded by scented candles – lilac, her favorite. Talus rose to greet her with a soul-wrenching, dew-making kiss, then he led her to the tub and she sank down into it gratefully. Even the water was scented and had a light layer of bubbles that she scooped up a handful of and blew at him like a playful little girl. He grinned at her as he wiped the foam off his face, his

expression promising retribution, but instead of throwing her over his lap he presented her with a flute of luscious champagne and held up one of his own to her in salute.

"To you. I just thought that you needed a little pampering."

Grace blushed at his toast, and clinked his glass with hers then took a small sip, noticing that he was not having any of it, which was what she'd come to expect. She was always the only one eating or drinking, which was a somewhat lonely pursuit. "Well, thank you. This is fantastic!"

Talus didn't chatter on or distract her from indulging herself in the hot, lapping water. After a few long moments of silence, he took up a velvety washcloth and soaped it up with scented foam, then washed her almost lovingly from head to toe. He even washed her hair for her, massaging her scalp with strong, steady fingers that worked their way down her neck to her shoulders as he tingled with her true and uncomplicated moans of ecstasy.

When she was clean, and just the slightest touch tipsy, he rinsed her off and helped her out of the tub to dry her with sure, soft strokes that set fire to certain unusually attentive areas of her body. But he seemed almost asexual while he was touching her right now, which, of course, went entirely against his nature.

He swung her up in to his powerful arms - even though he knew that made Grace feel uncomfortable - and carried her into the bedroom, which was again decorated with tons of candles, the balcony doors wide open to encourage the gentle sea breeze. Talus laid her out on the rose-petal-strewn bed on her tummy, and Grace immediately rose onto her elbows warily, worried that the next part of this scene was going to be a punishment.

His voice reverberated in her head and ears. "No, this is not going to be a punishment. I'm going to do you low and slow, so relax and put your head down, sweetie."

Grace did as she was told, somewhat cautiously, but the only thing she felt was his scented-oil slick hands as they began at her toes and massaged every inch of her all the way up to the scalp he'd rubbed while she was still luxuriating in the tub. "Your skin is so soft, Graciana." His lips followed the trail his hands blazed, nibbling at her toes and lightly biting and sucking at the sides of her feet, then running the edges of his teeth up that delicate skin on the backs of her calves where few people or things ever touched, beyond razors and moisturizing cream. He'd worked all of her over so carefully that he left the skin tingling and his teeth raised goose bumps and made her shiver convulsively, especially when that eager mouth dipped into the wells at the backs of her knees.

Talus shifted position, insinuating himself between those sweet smelling legs only enough to reach the insides of her thighs, for once not requiring that she spread herself as far open as possible so that he could get at her moist secrets. Until he laid his mouth on her, he hadn't once touched her in a manner that was in the least sexual, really. Every confident, probing move he made was designed to relax and soothe, not necessarily to inspire her lust, although it definitely had that effect anyway. By the time he rolled her over onto her back, Grace'd been pampered and powdered and massaged and kissed and licked and sucked so much that she thought all he'd have to do would be to blow on her clit and she'd fly into a million pieces.

But instead, he'd settled himself between her legs, noting with a satisfied smile how they opened on their own to greet him, then slid around his hips to keep him close to her as he positioned himself against her pussy. Talus had to keep a tight lid on his own desires, sublimating them in favor of bringing her what he thought she needed the most right now - tender care.

Talus deliberately caught Grace's eye as he penetrated her in one long, powerful stroke, each sigh and slight moan as her body did its pleasurable stretch to accept his invasion. When he was buried between those alabaster legs up to the hilt, so that his heavy balls tickled her bottom, he raised himself

onto his hands and looked down at her. Grace's pupils were very dilated, and her breath was coming just a tad heavily. "You are gorgeous, did you know that?"

Grace blushed enchantingly, and he knew it was in the back of her mind to argue with him, but she didn't, because he chose that moment to begin to move within her, making Grace catch her breath with each brush of his length into and out of that ultra-sensitized area. Balancing on his hands and knees, he drew himself out of her to swipe the glistening head of his penis over her raised clitty, making her writhe beneath him with the unbearable ache he created so effortlessly. With one more riotous venture up and over that taut nub, he slowly dragged himself down to her entrance, reseating himself deep into her waiting, fleshy glove.

He was driving her crazy with his little side trips to tease her throbbing clit, and then he would return to press himself up into her deep and hard, fucking her at such a leisurely pace that Grace thought she was going to die of it.

"Don't fight it, Graciana. Come if you want to. There's lots more where that came from," he encouraged, leaning over her as he plunged a little more insistently. Talus took each bobbing nipple in his mouth and suckling, flicking the hard tip up against the roof of his mouth with his tongue as he rode her, then he moved up her slit to polish that bundle of nerves with the broad head of his erection as he watched her head thrash on the pillow and her hips reach up for more of that delicious torture.

Finally, she was overwhelmed with pleasure; it swamped every fiber of her being and blotted out every coherent thought. The only thing she could think about was the completion that was barreling towards her. Grace felt like her very brain was on fire as her body began contracting so forcefully that her mind couldn't deal with the powerful emotions and she sank into a bliss of oblivion.

When she awoke naturally some minutes later, he was still there, above her and inside her. "Welcome back," he whispered in a tone that was practically reverent.

And then he began to do it all again.

It was a Thursday night, and she was just coming home from having dinner out with Lyds at a really good local Italian restaurant that the tourists hadn't discovered – yet. It was almost eleven, much later than she was usually out.

He hit her even before she had a chance to toss her keys into the bowl in the foyer, slamming her up against the front door and closing it with a bang. The packages she was carrying ended up crashing to the floor; it was a good thing that romance novels and biographies were not breakable. When he appeared to her, he was half-naked, fully capable from the obscene bulge in his jeans, and . . . dangerous looking. It was as if he was purposely amplifying everything menacing about himself – his height, strength, the breadth of his shoulders and his hugely muscled chest – even his face looked angry and dark, as if every smile she'd seen there had been wishful thinking.

Talus was purposely making her afraid of him. And he was succeeding a little too well.

Grace began to struggle against his hold, and he laughed. She wished he hadn't – the sound sent fissures of fear up her spine. She wrenched this way and that, kicking out at him, but even though he didn't appear to be using any special magic, none of her efforts were getting her anywhere, which was as she'd expected. Grace was entirely unable to escape, and equally unable to damage him in the slightest.

She was totally at his mercy, and tonight more than ever he didn't look like he knew the meaning of the term.

Talus did smile then, as he heard her thought, and she heartily wished he hadn't. The expression on his face had nothing to do with happiness or any sort of good feelings. It was a totally feral grin that exposed a lot of normal, sharp white teeth, but Grace found herself half expecting to see pointed canines descend as if he was a vampire. None did.

Instead he began to rub his body lewdly against hers, ignoring her protests and the beating of her small fists against his heavy shoulders, forcing himself between her legs, chafing his rough, denim-covered package against her vulnerable cleft. The slip dress she was wearing didn't leave a lot to the imagination; it was little more than a cream colored lace and flowered silk with seams up the sides and short, capped sleeves. It ended mid-thigh, pooling on his powerful thighs where he thrust against her, creating a wonderful contrast between delicate femininity and blatant masculinity, had she been in the mood to look.

But Grace was busy trying to stop him, anyway she could. She didn't want this and she would never surrender to him.

That smile was back, smug and self-satisfied. He knew her strength, and he knew his own. There could be only one outcome, and it wouldn't be in her favor.

With their eyes locked, he reached for the neckline of the dress and yanked, the frail fabric giving up the secrets of her body with minimal resistance. Her lilac lace panties suffered the same fate, and within mere seconds she was naked before him, trying unsuccessfully to shield herself from his leering eyes, despite the fact that he'd seen all she had to offer on more occasions than she could count. The way he was treating her was making her feel ashamed and dirty, and her actions were purely instinctive.

Talus bent suddenly, throwing her over his shoulder like a sack of flour and marching up the stairs with her, controlling her struggles fairly easily, although she did manage to almost throw him off balance on a couple of occasions with her exaggerated heaving and lurching, and he did take several sharp blows to the lower back from her free hand. Grace was busy cursing the ineffectiveness of her dull, thick artificial nails – if she'd had real nails she might have been able to rake a path up his back . . . not that that would have done anything other than piss him off, probably, but it would have made her feel somewhat better.

Before Grace had a chance to regroup on the bed, although she'd already begun lifting her legs to roll away from him, he fell onto her, knocking the wind out of her completely, separating her legs simply by the force of his weight and trapping her there beneath him, largely immobile, before Grace could really even comprehend what was happening.

"Mmmmmmmmmmm," he murmured as he licked his way wetly up her neck, ignoring the fact that her head was rolling back and forth trying to escape his rabid mouth. "This is right where you belong, woman. Beneath me, just waiting to get fucked like the little cunny you are. It's where you should always be."

Grace had never felt such mindless panic before. There was no magic at all in anything he'd done. Just brute strength, and that made it worse, somehow. She could feel him reach down to loose himself, could hear the rasp of the zipper then feel the pressure of the head of his cock against her pussy, and she knew he was going to rape her. She had to stop it!

Just as that thought passed through her mind, though, Talus positioned that huge, thick penis at the entrance to her body and thrust his way home.

He slid in like butter, because, to her own intense mortification, she was gushingly wet. Grace burst into hysterical sobs at her lack of control over her responses to him. She was terrified of him and what he was planning to do to her, yet her body had been busy preparing her to be raped. When he was seated to the hilt, he reared back on his arms and captured each nipple in turn with his teeth, chewing hard and pulling, worrying them like a dog with a particularly juicy bone. Talus was hurting her deliberately and she cried out, but he certainly didn't stop. He began to ram himself home within her, hard and fast and completely without a care to what Grace was feeling – although he had to know that her body was responding to him against her will.

Moving up as far as he could on her, forcing himself deeper into her with each thrust, Talus covered her sobbing mouth with his own, plunging his tongue past her lips as his hands groped and

grabbed her breasts, squeezing those tits and nipples brutally as she squealed and wiggled beneath him, trying to escape his cruel attentions.

“No, no, Grace, there’s no escape from this for you – “ his strokes in and out of her became more powerful, more demanding of her “ – this is what you need; to be subjugated, to be submissive, to be raped and taken and spanked and caned – hard - every day for the rest of your life.”

Her fists beat an angry tattoo on his chest, partly in protestation of his words and his actions but also in denial of her own lust. She was so attuned to him, and he was playing out one of her fantasies to such a perfect extent, that despite the fact that her fear of him was extremely real, her body was aiding and abetting the enemy at every turn. Her breathing grew more and more ragged as he stabbed into her again and again, rubbing deliberately against her most sensitive spot with each movement. Grace could feel that inevitable build up begin and she knew he would not stop until she convulsed beneath him – she had no choice but to obey the dictates of his body and hers as he looped her legs back over his arms, forcing her to open even further for his assault.

When she couldn’t hold the tide back any longer, Grace began to chant brokenly, “No-no-no-no-no-no!”

To which Talus replied as his hips pistoned his engorged flesh into her, “And I say yes – you will come from being raped as readily as anything else I do to you. You’re mine. You can’t deny me or the pleasure I bring to you, no matter how hard I beat you or how brutally I take you.” He put forth several tremendous thrusts as he spoke the last line. “You – belong- to – me.”

Grace screamed over and over and over as he fucked her through her first orgasm and right into her second and third, until stars began to dance in front of her eyes and her fingertips started to turn blue from the constant hyperventilation. But still he took her, driving her on to a fourth fulfillment, then finally allowing her to collapse, exhausted beneath him.

He fell onto her like a lump of lead until she pushed at him from beneath, poking him hard until he rolled to one side with obvious reluctance. Talus expected her to just lie there and try to recover, maybe roll onto her side which was really her favorite position on the bed – it was how she slept every night – but trust Grace to do the unexpected. She shot off the bed, grabbed her robe off the chaise and stalked out of the room.

He lay there for a moment, following her in his mind. Talus knew that she was very full of emotions, usually, after she’d been well-used, but he also understood her need for a certain amount of space, as long as he didn’t sense that she was being disobedient or disrespectful, or actively running away from him. Then, in his mind, he saw her walk to the back door and out onto the porch, then down the back steps and onto the beach.

Now, Talus didn’t like losing track of his woman. They did have a tendency to be headstrong little creatures; Grace more so than most. In an instant he was down on the beach standing directly in front of her. “Just where the hell do you think you’re going, young lady?”

Grace wasn’t thinking straight. The only thought in her mind was self-preservation – to get away from him. What he’d done to her tonight had scared her to death – not necessarily even what he’d done, exactly, but that she’d thoroughly enjoyed herself while he’d done it. What kind of freak was she, getting off being raped by a non-existent person? And this had not been a “play rape” – he’d taken her as if he’d been an intruder in the house until the very end, when he had to lord it over her and point out how much she was enjoying it . . . Tears began to track down her cheeks as she stood facing the ocean, her back to him.

She’d known he would come after her; her sensitivity to him had increased a thousand fold over the summer. Grace felt him materialize behind her, but it was low tide and she was able to stand far

enough away from the house that he wasn't able to completely pull it off. He was standing behind her, seething at his own limitations because he wasn't able to become solid enough to reach out and grab her.

"Grace, what's wrong?"

She could see him in her mind's eye, standing there behind her, probably with his hands on his hips, trying unsuccessfully to look all indulgent about the emotional little woman's temper tantrum. "Nothing."

"Nothing? Then why are you running away from me?" came the exasperated question – out here, with her out of reach, he was less able to read her thoughts, at a moment when he felt he most needed to.

Grace couldn't take her eyes off the lapping water. She cleared her throat, and began to trail a big toe through the sand. "I'm not."

His impatient growl would've had more umph if he hadn't been so far away from the house that both his image and his voice were faded. "Sure looks that way to me." Talus watched her hug herself, wishing it was his arms around her instead. She looked . . . lost, somehow. "Come back to the house with me," he said, trying but not succeeding, to keep the command out of his voice. He couldn't help it – he was used to giving orders to soldiers, not cajoling women. Not that he'd really had to do a lot of that with Grace, but he was still very out of practice.

She didn't make a move to obey him, which made him grit what there was of his teeth. "Grace, do as you are told and come back with me," he extended his hand imperiously, but it lost a little of its sternness when she turned and saw that his arm faded at his thick wrist and there was no hand to take. This fact didn't seem to phase Talus one iota, he merely took enough steps backward that his hand was fully formed, turned palm up to cup her fingers when she obeyed him.

He was so damned smug! So sure that she was going to do what he wanted. So fucking good at fucking, the bastard! It was . . . unreal. Unnatural. Grace began to pace back and forth in the shallow water, just out of his reach. Why this was hitting her now, she didn't know, but it was and she just couldn't deal with him right now.

"Do you know how much trouble you're going to be in when I get my hands on you again?" His voice was soft – not because of a lack of power, she knew, because he'd stood far enough back from her that he was solidly formed. It was soft because he was royally pissed, and Grace had no doubt that if she returned to him her bottom was going to pay a hefty price for both running away from him and refusing to obey him.

"I imagine I have a pretty good idea," she replied sardonically.

Just like a dom, he answered, "Then save yourself some pain and get your little butt over here. I don't like you being out here on the beach in the middle of the night practically naked. It's not safe."

Tears clouded her eyes as she stood and stared at him as if she'd never seen him before, although he'd known her more intimately than any real man on the planet. He knew all of the scary things in the dark corners of her mind, and yet he still appeared to like her . . . but then, she was just assuming that. This was just some sort of job to him, a duty that he had no choice in.

"Do you like me?" she asked him out of the blue.

His eyes narrowed and Talus looked like he wanted to crush something. "Yes, I do," he ground out. "Where is this coming from?"

Grace sighed, fiddling with her fingers restlessly, thinking, what else would he answer if he wanted her to stay around? "I don't know. You – the things you – do," she was amazed that she still had the capacity to blush after everything they'd done, but apparently she did because she knew her face was bright red.

"I've been doing them to you for almost two months now." His frown deepened. "Did the rape scene trigger some bad memories for you? Did someone hurt you like that?" Talus' anger at that thought made him want to put his fist through a wall, and, somewhat belatedly, want to comfort her.

"No, no. I haven't been raped . . . until tonight."

He swallowed hard. Her last two words had been strangled off by tears. "I didn't mean to hurt you, but I knew that being forced is a huge fantasy of yours."

Her smile was wan, her response tearful. "M-maybe this is one of those c-cases of 'be careful what you wish f-for'."

"Grace. Come to me. Let me hold you and make it all better." Even when he wasn't trying to be intimidating, somehow he still managed to convey that he expected to be obeyed. A lot of it was probably because his hand was still out to her, quietly imperious in its command.

The night air was cool and moist, and the water itself was only about sixty degrees. She shivered as she began to walk back and forth again, slogging through the deepening water. He almost lunged for her, forgetting that he would be gone before he got to her. Talus didn't think he'd ever been so frustrated in his whole existence, but then, Grace could do that to a man. Instead he rocked back on his heels, figuring that, unless she intended a midnight swim, the tide was coming in, and it would drive her right into his arms.

He didn't have a lot longer to wait – Grace was so preoccupied in her pacing that she wasn't paying attention to the fact that as the water deepened, she had to move closer and closer inland, thus putting her within his proximity.

Talus on the hunt was a man of infinite patience. He'd had to bide his time during many a campaign, waiting for just the right moment to ambush his enemy. Well, Grace wasn't an enemy, but she was certainly could be a source of pure annoyance. He waited until he knew that none of his parts would dissolve into thin air before he reached out and grabbed her up into his arms none-too-gently. Grace didn't struggle, really, but she was shivering so hard that it seemed like she was trying to tremble her way out of his grasp.

He transported them to the bedroom, but took a seat in the comfy lounging chair instead of on the bed, with her still in his arms. Talus arranged the light throw that was used as an accent on the chaise over the both of them, securing Grace between his legs, laying her on her side against his chest.

Suddenly, she rose up and looking him in the eye. "You never answered my question from a while ago: am I your last chance? Was Mary Ellen right?"

Talus sighed, hugging her to him, forcing her to relax onto him. His arousal was apparent, as always, nudging Grace's hip, but he wasn't doing anything about it, so they both ignored it. "I suppose you could say that."

"That's not much of an answer."

"It's all you're going to get," he snapped, obviously not liking the criticism.

"Is there something I can do to help you? To release the curse?" Grace'd watched enough "Buffy"s and "Charmed"s that she was kicking herself for not thinking of asking this question before. But then, they were always pretty much too busy doing . . . other stuff. Naked stuff. Writhing, seething, scream-the-house-down- Grace shook her head violently to try to clear it. She did not need to go there in the midst of a serious discussion.

Talus was shifting uncomfortably beneath her, as if she'd hit a nerve, but he remained stubbornly silent.

"What do I need to do?" she asked, matter-of-factly.

"Graciana . . ." he grumbled in warning.

She began to idly twirl a lock of his chest hair, and had a sudden flash of insight. “Ahhhhh. I have to figure it out for myself, huh?” Grace looked to him for a hint, but his face and his mind were carefully neutral. “Well, I’ll do my best, I promise.” Grace lay her head down on his chest with a long sigh while Talus absently stroked her hair.

“Don’t you ever run from me like that again,” he tipped her chin up and looked down at her sternly. “I think someone needs to be taught a lesson.”

Grace squirmed in his arms, knowing what kind of a lesson it was that he specialized in teaching. Before she knew it, she found herself naked, invisibly tied to the bed on her back, a small pillow beneath her shoulder blades, forcing her to arch her back and present her breasts in an extremely lewd fashion. Every other part of her body was covered by some sort of soft, protective material, but her breasts were left bare and exposed. To what, she didn’t know, and Grace was thinking that she really didn’t want to know, and she was right.

Talus stood beside her, also naked, but somehow he looked much more comfortable in that state than in any other, bronzed and muscled and seething with unnatural power. As she looked up at him, a silk gag lodged firmly between her teeth and lips, he seemed bigger – nastier and more lethal. But the thing he was holding in his hand made her blanch pale white. It was had a longish handle that ended in she didn’t know how many thin leather thongs that each seemed to have a knot tied at the end of it.

Grace gulped. Now that was lethal-looking, forget Talus!

“I think someone needs a good healthy reminder that she’s never to run away from me – only towards me,” he was saying as she couldn’t take her eyes off the instrument of her correction, and her inevitable deduction of where those whippy little lashes were going to fall –

Talus was merciless as always – he marked her breasts brutally, slashing those individual little thongs down onto that completely vulnerable breast-flesh as Grace screamed for him to stop and begged for a mercy he did not – could not – possess. Sometimes he targeted the blows so that a lot of lashes would land on her pooched-out nipples, making her cries increase a thousand-fold with the added agony. By the time he was through, her breasts were a mass of red welts and blue bruises, but the rest of her lovely skin was totally pristine.

He threw the whip to one side and it disappeared as if it had never been, although her welted flesh told another tale entirely. The first thing he did was take each worried, abused nipple in his mouth as he faded over her still bound and writhing body, alternating the two primary sensations that he generated in her mind – five seconds of pain, three of pleasure, ten of pain, fifteen of pleasure, so that Grace never knew what to expect of his touch as he insinuated himself into her everywhere – not just between her legs but into her very pores, as if he would have her absorb him into her very being.

Then, as his red-mist self began to ooze its way into her, he made his presence throb within her – everywhere he touched, not just to awaken her most sensitive spots, but every centimeter of her skin. Talus felt her fear of the whip fade away and slowly convert to lust as he melted himself through her hair and applied alternating sharp suckled to those red, seething little titties with gentle tugs of warm wet lips. Between her legs, he filled both of her holes entirely, to her absolute limit, stretching and plunging and prodding in a way he knew she found humiliating and yet it made her wet with need against her will. Talus loved that. With a truly evil grin, he set a large, greedy, itchy, pinching, suckling mouth at her big clitty.

Her sexy moans and whimpers told him that what he was doing was driving her crazy, and that was exactly what he wanted. Talus denied her permission to come for the longest time, wanting to draw this out as long as possible, scolding her occasionally within her mind like the naughty girl she was, reminding Grace that if she had behaved this evening she would already have been fulfilled several times.

Finally, he caught her frantically rolling head and forced her to look into his materialized face, as he said one word into her mind: "Yes."

Grace fainted on the first contraction, but Talus brought her back in time to bring her to five more helpless, violent orgasms before he left her to sleep.

Chapter Nine

Talus knew, though, that time was running short for Grace to fulfill the prophecy and release him from his demon existence. She was his last hope; and when she left at the end of the summer – which was rapidly drawing near, and Tanya returned, someone who was essentially of no use to him, he would begin to lose his ability to materialize. Not that he would cease to exist, his spirit would remain eternally damned to the everlasting torment of lust that he bore now, but at least now he had the distraction of bringing the ultimate pleasure to a woman. Once she had left and Talus was gone, there would be nothing left but the constant aching, passionate desire for any sort of fulfillment that he would never have again, and it would drive him slowly insane over infinity.

It all came down to the wire, to the last night she spent in that house with him. Talus could feel her dragging unhappily around, and even though he hated to see her so down in the dumps, it made his pulse quicken, wondering if she'd be up to the challenge. By the way she was acting, she just might.

Grace had all of her things packed and ready to go for tomorrow, but Tanya's flight wasn't due back until late in the day and then she had to drive up from Boston, so Grace didn't intend to vacate the premises until she absolutely had to sometime late tomorrow afternoon. She was practically in tears when she got a call from Lydia, asking if there was anything she could do to help Grace with the move.

"Nope," Grace answered, swiping her eyes with the back of her arm. "I'm good."

"It'll be great to have my roommate back again – there's nothing in the house to eat!!"

Grace grumbled. "Thanks. You only like me because I'm the only thing between you and starvation – or you and ten thousand packets of Ramen soup –"

"Damn straight!" Lydia agreed with a giggle. "I know what side my homemade Parker House rolls are buttered on, honey!"

Despite her sadness, Grace had to laugh, and in that exact moment she felt Talus' pleasure at her pleasure; she felt him lay a finger along her clit as well as several mouths on her breasts. Her laugh ended in a moan she struggled desperately to suppress, since she was still on the phone with Lyds, but it still came out like a satisfied "mmmmmmmm".

"What was that?" Lydia asked.

"Just having some chocolate pudding," Grace lied outright, trying to lurch off the couch, but something – or someone – was preventing her. What the hell was he doing?

"Oh. It sounded like something positively –"

"Cut that out!" Grace whispered, her hand over the phone, looking around her even though she knew he couldn't show himself during the day, and she knew that he was going to ignore her, anyway.

"Excuse me?" Lydia sounded affronted.

"Not you –" Grace replied weakly.

"Who else do you have there, Grace Ferrentino? Are you hiding a gorgeous, hard-bodied guy from the rest of us? Is he the reason you've disappeared so much this summer?"

Oh, God, why did Lydia have to be so right and yet so wrong at the same time? "No no noooooooooo –" Grace clapped her hand over her mouth to stop the "no" that had turned into a disgustingly sexy moan, one that she had no interest in her best friend hearing, thank you very much, but she didn't have much choice about emitting because more of Talus' talented fingers had worked their way deep into

her, plunging sharply every once in a while as those thousands of mouths he could command at will went to work on the peaks of her nipples and on that already flushed clitty of hers.

"Well! It sounds like I've interrupted your orgy," Lydia commented dryly. "I'll leave you to . . . it and him. But I want to meet him pronto!!! Happy orgasms!" She hung up the phone, giggling all the while, before Grace had a chance to say anything in her defense, or disabuse her of the notion that there was a new man in her life.

Hopefully she would forget all about this conversation by the time she arrived home tomorrow, otherwise Grace was in deep trouble . . .

"Aaahhhhhhhh-aiiiiiieeeee!" she moaned, because Talus hadn't stopped or even slowed what he was doing one iota while she was mulling over her mortification.

She felt him sigh as she writhed to his tune on the couch – if someone had seen her they would have thought she was possessed, and that probably wasn't too far off, technically. But right now, with her pussy stretched to the limit – almost uncomfortably – and her nipples on fire from a thousand nibbling mouths, as well as those whatevers that surrounded her throbbing clit – oh, God, she was going to die of pleasure!

His smile at her though whispered through every inch of her skin tingle, bringing together all of that luscious sensual input, making her whole body convulse over and over while she cried out and gave herself over to the feelings – there was nothing else she could do.

When she was done, he was still there, unable to appear to her yet, but his presence was comforting to her now rather than threatening as it had been in the beginning. Grace spent the rest of the day silently cursing his name for embarrassing her like that while she was on the phone with a friend, and she hear his soft chuckle at her mortification resounding in her mind every once in a while. Her modesty charmed him, apparently.

Later that night, as she was just coming in from the beach because the sun had set, he appeared in a tuxedo with several dozen pink roses in his hand. Talus waved his hand over her and she was in a gorgeous off the shoulder cream colored gown, with a matching set of necklace and drop earrings of large pear-shaped sapphires with diamonds set in gold. Her hair was in a long loose style, almost Grecian, and also dripping with gems.

Talus took her hand and kissed the back gallantly. Another wave of his hand and a candlelit dinner appeared in one corner of the bedroom, along with soft, romantic music. He didn't eat a thing himself, of course, but he enjoyed feeding her from the fresh fruits and vegetables – only those she loved – as well as her favorite prime rib, garlic mashed potatoes and fresh green beans.

"I can eat this stuff?" she'd asked skeptically, teasing him, as he held out a chunk of fresh pineapple he'd skewered with what looked like a solid gold cocktail fork. "Is it real?"

He made a face at her. "Is the cane I use on you real?"

Grace opened her mouth immediately. There was no doubt in her mind whatsoever that the implements he used on her were extra-real. She often bore the bruises to prove it. Mmmmmmm. She loved fresh pineapple.

"I know," he responded, offering her another piece.

Dinner was fantastic, after which he pulled her into his arms and danced with her, holding her close and nuzzling her ear, whispering how beautiful she was and how much he wanted her. Their bodies moved together in an entirely unhurried rhythm that was tantalizingly slow and sexy. Talus was treating her as if she was made of spun glass and innocent as a virgin. As a matter of fact, that was exactly what he was treating her like: a newlywed virgin on her wedding night, someone who needed to be handled very delicately and gently lest she be scared of what was going to happen to her, of what she might be asked to do.

“Shhhhhh,” he whispered into her mind and her ear at the same time. “I promise I’ll be gentle. It will hurt a little – it can’t really be avoided – but I promise I’ll make it good for you.” Talus stopped dancing and took her face in his hands to look deeply into her eyes. “Do you trust me, cara mia?”

Amazingly, Grace blushed and looked down, reacting as she might have when she was untouched. “Yes, Talus, I do.”

“Thank you,” he answered with uncharacteristic humility. “I will always take care of you, Graciana.” He lifted her up into his arms, carrying her to the bed.

Grace had never been treated so – so carefully by any man – human or demon, but his words brought tears to her eyes. Tomorrow she was leaving, and this was their last night together. He would never have another chance to take care of her after this.

“Shhhhhh,” he soothed. “Don’t cry, baby.” Since there was really nothing he could say to her that would alleviate her inner turmoil, Talus settled for doing what he wanted to do, anyway – loving her.

He stayed entirely himself through the whole session, wanting her to remember how he looked when they were no longer together. Talus cursed his fate for the umpteenth time, knowing that if this was his own time and he was human, he’d never, ever let her walk away from him. She was too special . . . she was too his.

Talus consciously made the entire experience fantastic for her – he even provided a small sensation of pain when he penetrated her for the “first” time.

Grace smile up at him. “You think of everything,” her fingers roamed over his broad shoulders tentatively, as if this was truly their maiden voyage into the sensual realms.

It was the only time that they were together that Grace felt that he was actually making love to her, not just having sex with her, and, although she tried to deny it, both her lust and her emotions were fully engaged. At the same moment when her orgasm took her, Grace had an earth-shattering thought that stopped the both of them in their tracks, quite literally: she loved him.

She loved him.

Talus reared back from her, and there was the strangest look in his eyes. It was something she’d never seen before – true and unutterable fear. He was afraid of her being in love with him, for some strange reason.

But before he could stop her, she whispered it out loud. “I love you.”

His response was not at all what she expected. Talus backed off her as if he’d been stung, his hands over his face, screaming, “NOOOoooooooooooo! Don’t love me – don’t love meeeeeeee!”

Grace sat up in the bed and stared at him as he began to transform before her eyes. He grew at least a foot in height, and another foot wider in the shoulders and chest area. His skin turned a burning, angry red, with large bumpy scales down his back, arms and legs. His face was distorted, his naturally heavy brow becoming exaggerated and lumpy, his head full of luxurious hair gone in favor of rough baldness and assorted horns. The dual tongue and genitals were back in full force, the twin cocks swaying heavily between slightly bowed, trunk-like thighs. His massive hands sprouted long, lethal claws as they closed over feral, glowing red eyes, shielding his true face from her stunned gaze.

“Don’t look at me! Go! Run, before I hurt you!” The words were garbled by his misshapen, fanged mouth and his hands, but they sounded at the top of his lungs into her mind, also.

But Grace was mesmerized and she stayed put, held in place by love more so than any misplaced bravery.

“GOOOOOOOOOOO!” the monster that Talus had become – the real Talus – roared fiercely, but still Grace did not move to obey.

Not taking her eyes away from the horrifying thing that he’d become, she slipped off the side of the bed and walked slowly towards him. Unbelievably, Talus took a step back from her, as if he was afraid

of her, but Grace kept coming until she'd backed him up against a wall of the bedroom. Then she reached out and cupped what she could of his cheek in her hand, moving aside his arms as one would turn aside a child's hands that covered a serious wound. Talus couldn't keep himself from rubbing his ugly, tortured face against the softness of her caress. She was everything good and kind in his world. Why hadn't she run screaming from him, like a normal woman would have? If she stayed around him too long, he would hurt her; in his pure state he was too much of an animal – a true demon – to control himself for long. She'd be hurt, and he'd do anything to keep her safe, even condemn himself to unredeemable eternal damnation.

"Go away – if I ever meant anything to you, if you ever obeyed me on anything, ruuuuuuuun!" he hissed.

But Grace didn't take one step towards the door. In fact, Grace-like, she came in closer to him, smelling the fetid breath that heaved out of his lungs and ignoring it entirely. She had to stand on her tip toes to bring her face near his, holding his ravaged but still beloved face between her hands. With her lips hovering over his, she whispered in a voice that never wavered, "I love you," then she kissed him, and it felt as light as a butterfly's wing to his rough, rubbery lips. There were tears coursing down her face as she pulled a little back from him. "Any way I can getcha. Red, blue, lumpy, bumpy, Sleepy, Dopey . . ."

As if she'd said some magical incantation rather than a bad play on words, the body she was leaning against and the face in her hands crumbled away, as his final words to her resounded in her head: "I love you. Thank you."

Just like that, he was gone and she stumbled a bit, falling against the wall where he had been. Her mind searched for him but there was no residual presence in the house, there were no stray finger-like touches; she was truly alone in the house and in her mind. She hadn't realized how totally he'd permeated her being, and now she could only feel bereft of the comforting knowledge of his constant presence in the background of her thoughts or the foreground of her bed.

Grace knew for sure that he was gone when Mousie-kitty, who had rarely made an appearance all summer long, and had never made it to her bedroom once in nearly three months, jumped up on the bed to snuggle with her. As she pulled the cat against her and stroked the sleek fur, a tear trickled down Grace's cheek.

She knew she'd done the right thing, even if the toad hadn't turned back into Prince Charming. Sometimes wishes just weren't meant to come true.

And she was back at square one . . . alone and hugging her cat, just the way she'd started the summer.

The next morning, Grace packed everything she could into the car except the cat then adamantly took up her last position on the beach, staking out her little area directly in front of the house with her low-slung beach chair planted firmly in the shallow end, cooler to one side, book in her lap and her toesies in the bathwater-warm water – well, for Maine, sixty degree water was downright tropical.

Somewhat restless, she watched the water for a while, taking deep breaths of the clean, salty air, knowing that they would really have to hold her this time because she was going to be stuck inland and inside for the next nine month school year. Finally, her book called to her, and she began to leaf through it until the sun went behind a cloud.

After a few minutes, Grace looked up absently, thinking that that must've been some cloud, only the sky in front of her was totally clear. Shielding her eyes, she turned back, and realized that it wasn't a cloud that had cast a shadow over her.

It was a man, and he stepped in front of her, into the water so that she could see him without craning her neck. Grace's book dropped out of her hand and into the receding tide.

Talus.

He held his hands out, palms up, helping Grace out of her chair. "I knew I'd find you here," he growled, bending to kiss the breath out of the startled woman.

Grace didn't know what to say but the first thing on her mind. "Are you real?"

"As real as the cane I'm going to use on your butt the first chance I get because you disobeyed me yet again," he grinned as evilly as only a human male could.

She threw herself into his arms, hugging him so tightly he thought his delicate new human ribs might break, but it felt that good, too. Grace nuzzled her nose against his thick neck, wetting it with her tears. "Whatever you do to me, it was worth it. I just wanted to free you. I wanted you to be happy."

"You did free me, honey, and I came right back here because this is where I'll be happiest. And I'm not about to let you outta my arms for another thousand years, or so."

Grace tipped her face up to his and Talus held her head in his hands, kissing her passionately again. Then, to her great surprise, he got down on one knee in the gentle waves, produced a huge, almost chunky diamond ring from his pocket, and slid it onto her ring finger. "You're marrying me." He stood and kissed her again, and to both of their surprise, the small crowd on the beach broke into applause.

She found herself in his arms, being carried into the house. "Don't I get a choice in the matter?"

Grace asked pertly as she wrapped her arms around his strong neck, not that she was going to say "no" to him anyway.

"No," he grumbled, not even winded by the trek, dropping her to her feet inside the house. "You get to spend the rest of your life doing exactly as you're told and getting your bottom striped if you don't."

Although she could no longer feel what he was thinking, and he could no longer read hers, she knew he was trying to tower over her threateningly, but she wasn't feeling particularly threatened. She was too overjoyed. "Promises, promises," she teased, racing up the stairs to the bedroom. "We don't have much time in this house," she warned, hearing him stomp up the stairs after her.

Some things had stayed the same though – as Talus entered the bedroom, Mouse exited it in a hurry. "House, schmouse." In three long strides, he'd pinned her into a corner of the room, blocking any escape with his fantastic body. Two large, rough hands were working their way up under her tank top. "I don't give a damn where we are, as long as you're with me." His lips descended on hers possessively. "I knew you were it the first time you walked in here, Graciana. You're my savior. You're my angel." Talus' hands were never still, pulling down their shorts so that he could lift her legs over his arms and sink into her, swelling at her whimper of pure pleasure and the wetness he was immediately surrounded by.

As he rode her, banging her shoulder blades up against the wall, he moaned into her mouth, "I'll never let you go."

Grace echoed that sentiment; she was quite content being his angel, and, human or not, he would always be her demon lover.

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