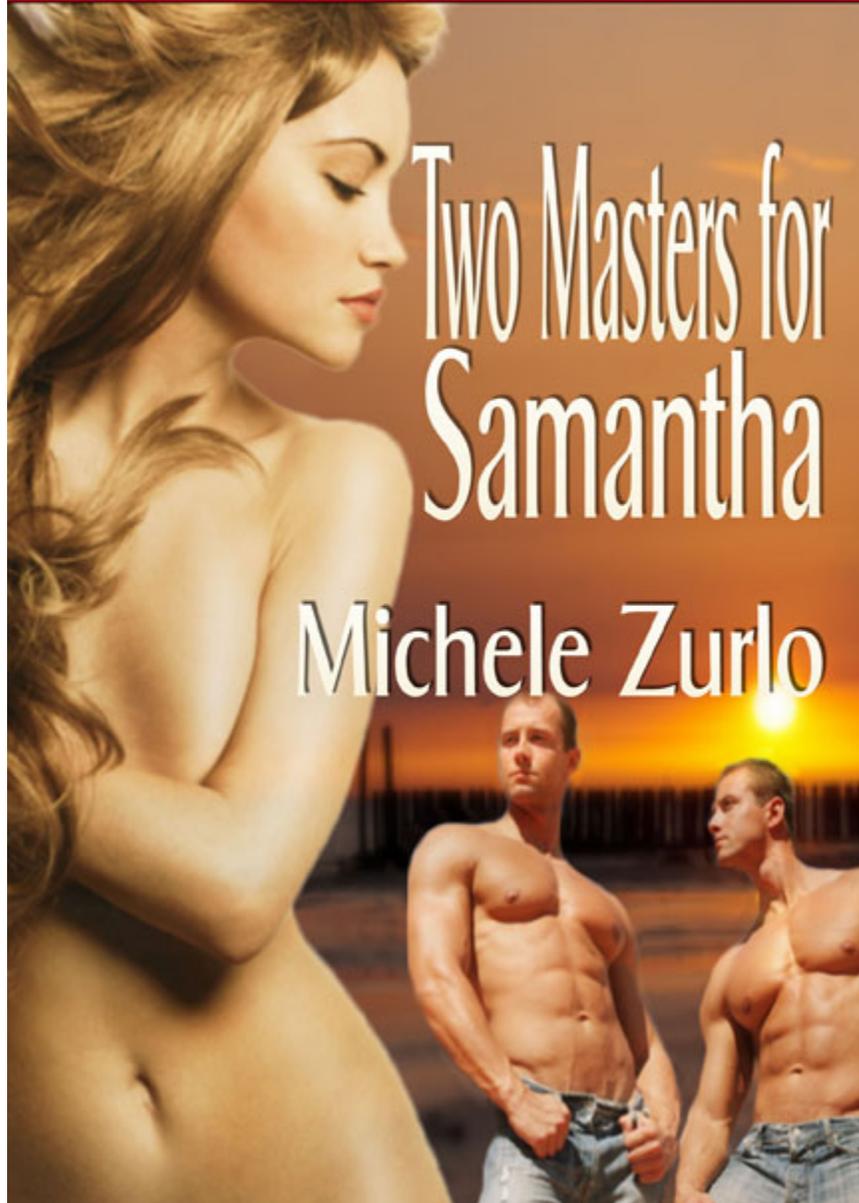


Siren Publishing

Ménage Amour



Two Masters for Samantha

Michele Zurlo

Awakenings 3

Two Masters for Samantha

Aspiring artist Samantha Spencer has been around the BDSM lifestyle for years, but she has never had a taste of it. When identical twins Alexei and Stefano Morozov propose a night of sensuous pleasure, free-spirited Sam jumps at the chance to experience something new, even though she knows it has to be just a passing fling. She's very close to her family, and she knows there is no way they would accept this unconventional relationship.

But one night isn't enough for the Morozov brothers. They've found the one woman who can complete them, and they're not willing to give her up. For her, they'll have to pretend to be one man.

Samantha isn't comfortable with this arrangement. It feels too much like a betrayal. Can she find the courage to stand up for what she wants and honor the two men who love her?

Genre: BDSM, Contemporary, Ménage a Trois/Quatre

Length: 100,432 words

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**Siren Publishing, Inc.
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A SIREN PUBLISHING BOOK

IMPRINT: Ménage Amour

TWO MASTERS FOR SAMANTHA

Copyright © 2010 by Michele Zurlo

E-book ISBN: 1-61034-084-1

First E-book Publication: November 2010

Cover design by Jinger Heaston

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PUBLISHER

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TWO MASTERS FOR SAMANTHA

Awakenings 3

MICHELE ZURLO
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Chapter 1

“Do you realize you’re the only one of us who isn’t married?”

The tone of the question relayed amazement more than anything else. Samantha Spencer grinned at the maid-of-honor with whom she shared the changing room mirror. Ginny Breszewski, sister of the bride, had refused the title of matron-of-honor because she said it made her feel like a prison guard or an orphanage director.

“Sophia isn’t married yet,” Sammy said. “Her wedding isn’t until next summer.”

Ginny snorted, a big sound coming from such a petite woman. Ginny was easily half a foot shorter than Sam’s five-ten frame. In the heels she wore, Sam even towered over her brother, the groom, by two inches.

“On the market, then,” Ginny amended.

Having ended an unsatisfying relationship six months earlier, Sam did feel the need to have someone in her life. The major problem she encountered was finding a man who could handle her. The last boyfriend called her “needy.” Nicer exes labeled her “high-maintenance.”

Sammy didn't think either of those descriptors fit. She was neither needy nor high-maintenance. She just had a lot of energy and a restless spirit. A man who could keep up with her was rare and, so far, elusive.

She blotted her lipstick with a tissue. "I just haven't met the right person."

Ginny turned to lean against the edge of the counter under the mirror, perusing Sammy thoughtfully. Before she could say anything, the door opened and the bride came into the private chamber set aside for just the bridal party.

Sabrina had technically been married to Sammy's brother, Jonas, for a little over a year. Once they hit the skids, it came out that their entire marriage had been an arrangement to help Sabrina get an inheritance. Sammy had seen the pair together too often to believe it was all about money.

Luckily, Sabrina was patient. That was good because Jonas had a stubborn streak that defied reason. Sammy had been unable to talk sense into Jonas, but she wasn't alone in that regard. Every member of their family had tried to talk sense into him, to no avail. Jonas hadn't reconciled with his wife until he was ready to do so.

"Ginny, I need you to do the bustle. I have to use the bathroom, and there is no way I can do it with all this material hanging loose back there."

Sabrina held the train of her dress over her arm and peered expectantly at Ginny.

Samantha looked between the sisters. Both were short, though Ginny was about an inch taller than Sabrina's five-two height. Both were petite, pretty brunettes with big, brown eyes.

When Sabrina's hair had been long, the pair sported a striking resemblance. Now that Sabrina had cut her hair shorter and Ginny had grown hers longer, the most distinguishing characteristic was the fact that Sabrina wore an elegant white wedding dress and Ginny was

dressed in the same tangerine and pink gowns as the rest of the bridesmaids.

As colors went, it suited each of the women in the bridal party surprisingly well. Sabrina had chosen different styles of dress for each woman, but she had insisted they be made with the same fabric. Sammy didn't mind matching Sabrina's favorite rose bush because the dress complemented her athletic build and Nordic coloring quite well.

The satin bodice was strapless and molded to her breasts. The skirt flared from her hips in a way that gave the appearance of curves where she was pretty much flat. It was something she would wear again.

Ginny pushed away from the counter. "I told you to go with a simple dress, but you insisted on traditional. Even when it's bustled, you have to be careful. You didn't have to go all-out. It's not like this is your first wedding."

"Don't start," Sabrina said. "The first one didn't count. Besides, you've been married seven times."

"To the same woman." Ginny scooted around Sabrina and took the train from her arm. "I can't help it if the laws are backwards in more places than not."

Sammy helped Ginny spread the train. Starting at opposite sides, they folded the voluminous material so that it was off the ground. "And she married the same man twice. It seems you both like weddings."

Sabrina lifted her head, meeting Sammy's eyes in the mirror and smiling her thanks. "I wanted something big and memorable. The first one was so quick and no one was there with us. We didn't even have our picture taken."

"I think this was a great idea," Samantha said. Her fingers fumbled with the tiny buttons, but Ginny was having the same issue, so Sammy didn't feel overly inadequate. "We all wanted to share this day with the two of you."

The sentiment was true. Over the past year, Sabrina had won her way into the hearts of the entire Spencer family. Samantha loved her sister-in-law.

The door opened again and the rest of the bridal party burst inside. Amanda, Sammy's big sister, was first. She swept a stray strand of sandy curls from her eyes and smiled at Sam. "Need help?"

More hands wouldn't fit to help with the tiny row of buttons spanning the curve of Sabrina's small bottom. Sammy smiled and shook her head. "We got it."

Sophia was next. Sammy didn't remember having met Sophia. It seemed the Italian beauty just showed up one day with Jonas and she'd been around ever since.

Lara followed. Lara was Ginny's wife. Tall, blonde, and sporting an athletic build similar to Sammy's, Lara was Sammy's favorite. The two hit it off instantly. Lara's easygoing manner and friendly smile were contagious. Like Sammy, Ginny could be considered high-maintenance and needy. Sammy wanted someone like Lara who, with a look or a touch, could quell the anxiousness and restlessness that sometimes overtook her.

As proof of her magic powers, Lara brushed a hand along Ginny's cheek. Immediately, Ginny's fumbling fingers calmed and she powered through the buttons even faster.

Ellen was the last to arrive. Technically, Ellen was Jonas's best friend. Sammy had known Ellen for almost eighteen years. When Jonas had first brought the strong-willed, curvy brunette home his first year of college, Sammy thought she was meeting the woman destined to become her sister-in-law.

Jonas and Ellen both disabused her of that notion. At the tender age of eleven, Sammy learned that friendship was genderless and that sisters did not need to be genetically related.

"I am so glad you didn't have the reception at your house," Ellen said to Sabrina as she leaned closer to the mirror and pulled at a stray hair. "You must have over two hundred people out there and the party

isn't supposed to start for another half hour. I would hate to be the one who has to write all those thank-you cards."

As Sammy and Ginny finished with the buttons, the swish of satin and the smell of beauty products filled the air.

Surrounded by family and friends, Samantha Spencer smiled contentedly. This was a good day.

* * * *

Alexei Morozov hated weddings. He was invited to entirely too many. Morozov Industries had been created thirty years ago by his father. Their holdings were widespread, which meant a huge network of friends and associates all over the world. That meant representation at a huge number of wedding, anniversary, birthday, and "just because" events.

He and Stefano often divided the required appearances between them. Being identical twins came in handy under these circumstances. He pretended to be himself for half the time and Stefano for the other half.

Even their mother had a difficult time telling them apart at first glance. Of course, she knew they were mirror-images of each other. Stefano was right-handed while Alexei was left-handed. The twins learned to remember these details when they impersonated the other around their parents and clients.

However, this occasion required both of them to attend. Sabrina Breszewski had invited him because their parents were old acquaintances. Though he hadn't seen her in years, he maintained her business interests and investments, so he spoke to her every few months. He hadn't been surprised to receive an invitation. It was a formality, something she did because it was expected. Alexei would have done the same thing in her shoes. It paid to maintain the old connections. In that spirit, the boys had decided to attend the reception only.

Plus, he wanted to connect with Stephen Galen to discuss some recent areas of interest they shared. His father assured him that Sabrina was still on good terms with the Galens. In fact, she represented their advertising interests.

“Hello, handsome.” Warm, champagne-enriched breath wafted to his nose.

Closing his eyes and suppressing a groan, Alexei turned his head to greet the drunken woman. Being the son of a wealthy man had inoculated him against the lure of a beautiful woman long ago. Even if the woman was unaware of who he was, Alexei was wary. Being six-two with an athletic build that wore a suit extremely well, a thick shock of dark brown hair, and cobalt blue eyes was a combination that attracted women to him since he had been too young to appreciate the fairer sex.

He had yet to find a woman who didn't want something from him. At thirty, he was definitely one of the world's most eligible bachelors. He and Stef had been the subject of numerous magazine articles on the topic. When they were younger and didn't know better, they posed for the pieces, granting interviews to pretty journalists. They didn't bother with that anymore.

Besides, no woman knew him from Stefano anyway. They'd traded dates before for fun, just to see if the woman professing her love and undying devotion could actually find the subtle differences between them. None had noticed.

“Hello.” He didn't ask her name. “Nice wedding we're having.”

A feminine laugh came from behind him, somewhere on the other side of the buffet table. A quick glance brought a frown to his face. The laugh appeared to have been directed at him, yet he could see no evidence of anyone listening in on the woman's pickup attempt.

The woman hadn't caught his joke, lame as it was. He wasn't used to having to try hard. People usually laughed at his dry jokes because it was expected, not because they found his comments witty.

The blonde cocked her head to one side, flashing a coy smile. “Would you like to dance with me?”

Alexei studied the woman. She was beautiful and she knew it. Blonde hair, pale blue eyes, and a flawless complexion combined perfectly. The neckline of her dress plunged almost to her belly button. Her breasts were perfectly rounded in a way that screamed falseness. This was a woman who was never turned down.

Alexei’s false smile was brief. “No.”

She sidled closer, sliding her hand across his ass and pressing her hip into his thigh. “How about we skip the preliminaries and head up to your room?” Her hand stopped at a stiffness in the region of his front pocket. A teasing frown marred her brow briefly. “What’s this?”

The question was leading, but Alexei didn’t bite. “My room key.”

She fished for it, but he stopped her with a firm hand on her wrist.

“Not tonight.”

The pout she used was no doubt effective with most men. Alexei hated women who pouted. He liked honest begging and screaming, but not pouting.

“There you are.”

A hand slipped through his arm to rest on his bicep. Alexei looked over to find another blonde he didn’t know. There was something different about this one. Her long hair cascaded down her back, curling in gentle waves. Cornflower blue eyes twinkled with mirth and coral pink lips curved with the same amusement.

Her skin was tanned. The muscles in her arms were long and clearly defined, identifying her as an active, athletic woman. Her high heels brought her to within inches of his height, but she would be tall without them.

The tangerine satin dress labeled her a bridesmaid. For the first time, he regretted having missed the wedding. The light in her eyes was sympathetic, not predatory. A genuine smile, the first of the night, lifted his mouth and his spirits.

* * * *

Samantha felt sorry for the man. Having been pawed by more than a few drunken men in her time, she knew the value of a good save. With a light tug on his arm, she gestured toward the dance floor.

“I saved this dance for you.”

His eyes, the darkest blue she’d ever seen, roamed her face and figure. The hard, bored look he wore slipped away, replaced by a brilliant smile that melted her knees a little.

Swallowing the sudden urge to press her lips to his, Samantha leaned forward to peer around the man at the drunken woman who had to be related to Sabrina because Sammy recognized all the people Jonas had invited. She smiled apologetically. “Excuse us. He’s been waiting all night for me to get a break from my bridesmaid’s duties.”

This time, when she pulled at his arm, he followed her to the dance floor.

The hotel Jonas and Sabrina had chosen for the reception featured a cavernous ballroom with a beautiful wood floor. A five-piece orchestra strummed a classical number that was perfect for one of the dances Sabrina had forced the entire bridal party to learn. They’d already danced the waltz.

In the middle of the crowd, she turned to her mystery man and smiled again. “I can lead if it won’t damage your self-esteem.”

He planted his right hand on her waist and gripped her right hand in his left. This was backwards from the way she learned in dance class. She rested her free hand on his shoulder. He felt firm and solid in a sexy, dependable kind of way.

“I know how to dance.”

With that, he swept her around the floor. Samantha had taken dance classes until she entered college. As an accomplished dancer, she appreciated his grace and skill. As a woman, she liked the confident way he held her.

“You’re pretty good,” she said. “I’m Samantha.”

“Alexei,” he supplied. “You’re a friend of Sabrina’s?”

Sammy laughed. “Did the dress with the same colors as the invitations and décor give me away? Or was it the fact I walked down the aisle ahead of her?”

His hand moved, repositioning higher on her waist. Somehow, it was a more possessive hold. His gaze flickered from her eyes to her lips and back again. “I didn’t attend the wedding. I just arrived from Miami.”

“How do you know Sabrina?”

Alexei’s brows lifted. “You assume I’m a friend of the bride?”

“Being the groom’s sister gives me an intimate knowledge of who he invited.”

His smile relaxed. “Sabrina and I sort of grew up together. Our parents were friends.”

“Ahh,” she said. “I know how that goes.” The parents probably forced their children to play together even though they had no common interests and their personalities didn’t quite mesh. They were friendly with one another, but not friends.

“I haven’t seen her around,” he said. His grip changed again, moving to her back and pulling her closer. “This is a nice diversion.”

“Saving your ass from a random intoxicated woman?” Sam laughed. “You’re welcome.”

Alexei leaned closer. She felt his breath warm against her neck. It sent tingles through the sensitive flesh not covered by her strapless gown. He hadn’t even touched her and she was unable to stop a tremor.

“I’d like to thank you properly, with a kiss you won’t forget.”

Her laugh came out a little huskier this time. This man was a serious flirt. “You don’t seem like the kind of man who asks for a kiss.”

He pulled back. The corners of his mouth quirked with amusement. “No?”

“No,” she echoed. “You seem like the kind of man who takes what he wants.”

His smile grew. “Are you the kind of woman who appreciates a man who takes what he wants?”

Sam shrugged. “I can’t say I’ve really met any. I think it would depend on the man and the manner in which he did the taking.”

“Well said.” He nodded appreciatively. “I am the kind of man who takes what he wants. However, I am not the kind of man who mauls a woman, especially one who has done me a favor, in front of her family and friends. I mean to show you appreciation, not disrespect.”

“You prefer to do your mauling in private?” The question was out before she thought about how it would sound. Embarrassed heat traveled up her neck and down to her breasts.

“You’re a very becoming blusher.”

She thought he might laugh or completely ignore her discomfiture. Yet there was no amusement in his voice and no hint he enjoyed her discomfort. It was an honest compliment. She wasn’t sure it was appropriate to thank him. Unaccustomed to not having the upper hand, Sam bit her lip and nodded.

Strong fingers gripped her chin. “None of that, Samantha. You’re very beautiful, more so when you blush. There is no shame in that.”

The heat receded as she realized exactly what kind of man she was dealing with. “You’re a Dom, aren’t you?”

The grin on his lush lips made his eye sparkle. “Beautiful, thoughtful, and intelligent. I think you just might be the perfect woman.”

“Yeah, well, my brother is a Dom, as is another bridesmaid and the best woman. It’s not exactly a foreign concept to me.”

Alexei’s head tilted and his eyes searched the ceiling as he thought. “Best woman?”

“Ellen,” Samantha said. “My brother’s best friend is a woman, so he had a best woman instead of a best man. He was the man of honor at her wedding.”

Jonas was seven years older than Samantha. He had done his level best to hide things from her, but Sam had figured out most of what he was up to by the time she was sixteen. At first, it had shocked her.

Ellen, who also owned the club where Jonas had worked as a Dom, had taken Samantha aside to explain the details of what Jonas refused to discuss. Still, she hadn’t thought about the concept in detail until she was in her early twenties and a boyfriend had wanted to experiment with the Dom/sub sexual dynamic.

It hadn’t been what she expected. To begin with, he stopped any time she asked and apologized profusely whenever she indicated something was uncomfortable, even when it wasn’t. It had been a deflating experience.

Alexei’s attention had returned to her, if it ever wavered in the first place. “What about you, Samantha? What are you?”

She shrugged. “I’m just me.”

His smile was appreciative, but she didn’t know if he appreciated her looks, her openness, her honesty, or something else. He pulled her closer, yet not close enough to touch.

Samantha wished he would close the space. Without consulting her brain, her body leaned into his. The layers of his tuxedo made the move less satisfying than she expected. Though she could feel the solidness of his chest against hers, that skin-to-skin contact was missing. She knew before she asked him to dance that he was built. From the way his jacket hung on his shoulders, that fact could not be missed by the most inebriated woman at the reception, and Samantha had not yet indulged.

Alexei’s hand played up and down her spine. The light touch penetrated the satin of her gown and shivers swam in waves across her skin. She wanted more. His lips were so close. She estimated his

height at a couple inches over six feet. Being a tall woman meant she could brush her lips against his with just the tilt of her head.

The hand holding hers for the dance shifted, pressing her palm to his shoulder. His thumb brushed over her waiting lips, and he peered deep into her eyes, capturing her with his look. "I think you're a sub who hasn't yet met the right Dom."

The moment was gone, the tension broken by his confident assertion. Samantha restored the inches between them. She laughed. "That's a come-on I haven't heard in quite that form."

Alexei frowned, probably at the unexpected cooling of her response. "In what form?"

"It's usually phrased to say I haven't met the right man yet. The assumption is that the man delivering the line is the right one. At least, it is on his part."

"I'm in town for a week," he said. "Is there any way you might consent to having dinner with me?"

The song ended, and the band leader announced a break.

Alexei didn't release her. His silent, steady stare reminded her that he had asked a question.

Samantha found him attractive, but she couldn't ignore the warning bells tinkling in her head. It wasn't a large alarm, but she had learned to trust her instincts. There was something he wasn't telling her. A glance at his left hand showed no wedding band and no lighter skin or indent to indicate he had removed it. Still, not all married men wore a ring in the first place. If Sam ever married, she resolved that her husband would wear a ring, or he would not have a wife.

The bells were minor, and Samantha was drawn to him. She tried for her most brazen smile. "Let's see how that kiss goes first."

Before Alexei could respond, an arm draped around her shoulder. Sam recognized Drew before the turn of her head could confirm her suspicions.

Drew Snow wasn't someone she knew well. He was a friend of Sabrina's, and Samantha had interacted with him in that capacity. He was also engaged to Sophia, who was friends with Jonas and Ellen.

"Sammy, I see you've met Lex."

Samantha frowned at Drew. He was a very handsome man with a highly magnetic personality. His professionally streaked blond hair brought out the warmth in his ice-blue eyes. He was a successful chef, with his own show on the Food Network, and he had won countless awards in various food art categories.

With her high heels on, she was a couple inches taller than him. Of course he and Alexei knew each other. Drew had known Sabrina since they were teenagers. It stood to reason he would know someone else who had also known her for that long.

Alexei released her. She briefly mourned the loss of his touch. A grin brightened his face. "Drew Snow. Why am I not surprised to see you here? Still sniffing around Ginny's skirts?"

The two men shook hands and hugged in that macho, masculine way men have of showing public affection to one another. Drew managed to do this without removing his arm from Samantha's shoulders. She wondered what message he was trying to send and why. Did it have to do with that instinctive warning in her head?

Ginny was a lesbian. Samantha drew her brows together in a frown. When they finished with their greeting, Sam turned to Drew. "Ginny?"

He shrugged. "I had a crush on her in high school." To Alexei, Drew said, "Gin and I are business partners. She's been happily married for seven years, and I'm getting married to the woman of my dreams next summer."

Alexei's eyes fell to Samantha and the arm Drew kept on her. His lips pressed together, and his face hardened. "I see."

Irritated by his insinuation and by Alexei's reaction, Sam shrugged out of Drew's possessive hold. "Drew, where is Sophia and why has she let you out without a leash?"

Alexei's features relaxed. "Sophia?"

"My gorgeous fiancée." Drew's grin was a little on the grim side. "Samantha is family to me, Lex. Tread lightly."

"I assure you," Alexei said with a gravity Sam didn't understand, "my intentions are honorable."

Drew's demeanor transformed. The seriousness disappeared and the lighthearted, jovial personality Samantha was used to seeing returned. "Great. Where is that brother of yours? Sitting this one out?"

Alexei shrugged. "He'll probably come down later. You know how he hates these events. If we weren't meeting with Galen Enterprises this week, we probably would have just sent our regrets and delivered our congratulations the next time we were in town."

His eyes flickered over Samantha as if to reassure her that he had no regrets about coming, but he said nothing.

Catching the look, Drew raised a brow at Samantha. He opened his mouth to say something, but Alexei cut him off.

"Sabrina, you look positively radiant." Alexei moved between Drew and Samantha to reach the bride. Leaning down, he kissed her cheek. "It's been far too long since we've seen you."

Sammy hadn't noticed Sabrina and Jonas approaching them. She had been too focused on Alexei.

Sabrina did look radiant, but that was nothing new. She had been glowing for months, ever since Jonas came to his senses and reconciled with her.

The white dress she wore was handmade. Satin and lace molded to her small curves. It was elegant and simplistic, simply stunning. Samantha knew Sabrina had paid an exorbitant amount to have it finished in less than two months.

Alexei offered his left hand for Jonas to shake. "Alexei Morozov. I'm an old family friend of the Breszewskis."

Samantha thought it was odd for Alexei to introduce himself instead of waiting for Sabrina to do the honors. His behavior wasn't

rude, but it was definitely assertive. Jonas accepted Alexei's handshake and said polite words of greeting.

"Did you come alone, Lex, or did you bring Stef with you?" Sabrina's smile indicated she knew the answer.

Alexei's response was the same one he used with Drew. "He's here somewhere."

"You didn't both have to come," Sabrina said. "I understand if it was tough for both of you to get away."

Something wasn't being said. Sabrina's statement hinted at more than she actually articulated. Samantha could tell from the way Jonas's brows wrinkled and smoothed that he was also in the dark. A glance at Drew showed that he knew what Sabrina wasn't saying.

Alexei laughed. "We're both here. I promise. I left Stef up in the room to finish a phone call. I'll make sure you see us both together."

Sabrina blushed, something she did quite often. Sam was sure Sabrina didn't know exactly how often her cheeks turned pink.

"There it is," Alexei said. His teasing tone made the blush spread. "I've missed how easy it is to do that."

Jonas's arm slid around Sabrina's waist, pulling her closer. He pressed a kiss to her temple and whispered something in her ear. From the way the blush deepened, Samantha knew it was something sexual.

Sammy rolled her eyes. "All right, you two, save it for later. You have a room full of guests."

"So, Sabrina, are you going to change your name?" The amusement in Alexei's eyes suggested he knew the answer.

While Sabrina had kept her name for the first year of her marriage, Samantha knew she had recently changed it.

"Yes," Jonas said, meeting Alexei's eyes with a self-satisfied grin. "She's a Spencer now. Her name reflects that."

It was a domineering thing to say and the tone Jonas used matched exactly. Sabrina's smile was indulgent. Samantha knew for a fact that Sabrina changed it because she had no real ties to the Breszewski name. It had been the name of her sister's father, not of her own. If

she had felt connected to the name, she would have kept it. Jonas knew this.

The look Alexei threw to Samantha alluded to their earlier conversation. Words weren't necessary. Samantha shrugged. She didn't really care about the complex dynamic of Jonas and Sabrina's relationship. Alexei's silent comment simplified it too much. Jonas might be a dominant personality, but Sabrina was far from meek and submissive.

Samantha was in a position to know that Jonas gave Sabrina everything she wanted. It seemed nothing made him happier than making sure she was happy.

If that was a Dom/sub relationship, then Samantha was all for it.

"Sammy!"

Startled from her thoughts, Samantha turned to find Aunt Heather behind her, arms spread wide for a hug. Obediently, Sam returned the hug. She wasn't sure exactly how she was related to this woman. The only thing she knew for certain was that her mother loved Aunt Heather and her father tolerated the woman for that reason.

Samantha didn't really know the lady. They had visited Heather's home several times when she was little, but it had been years since even a thought of the woman had crossed Sam's mind.

One thing led to another. By the time Sam extracted herself from this newest wave of relatives, close and long-lost, Alexei had disappeared.

The disappointment was stronger than it should have been. She had only shared one dance with him.

Still, the day had been long and Samantha was tired. She was very good at remembering names and faces. For that reason, far more of her distant relatives sought her out for conversation than she wished would have done it. There were also a good number of people from Sabrina's side who wanted to meet her because she was important enough to be in the wedding, and she had fended off more than a fair number of come-ons.

Spying a service entrance, she snagged a glass of wine from a passing tray and headed for it. Just a few minutes, she promised herself. Once Sabrina and Jonas left the reception, she would be free to head up to her room and sleep in that luxurious bed. If there was one thing Sabrina did well, it was to spend money on a quality affair.

The black-tie wedding was elegant. The food was incredible. The wine wasn't from a box. The orchestra was talented. The rooms in the hotel above were lavish, almost sinfully so.

The summer air had cooled from earlier that day, and some of the humidity was gone. August often brought hot weather, but Sam didn't mind that. She hated the oppressive humidity, and she was thankful it had vanished for this brief respite.

Sweet scents floated on the gentle wind, a combination of kitchen odors and the flower bed that surrounded the small area. Samantha closed her eyes and breathed it in.

A noise behind her startled Sam from her reverie. Whirling, she found Alexei. He closed the door and smiled at her, those full lips promising something.

"Nice night," he said. "I saw you duck out here and I couldn't resist following. I hope you don't mind."

He owed her a kiss she wouldn't forget. The look in his deep blue eyes said he meant to settle his debt now. He crossed the small space, closing the distance with two steps. Samantha smiled up at him. His hands came to rest gently on her waist. His thumb brushed the lower bones of her rib cage, just like he had done earlier when they danced.

Something wasn't right.

Sam's smile stalled. Uncertain as to the problem, she stepped backwards and out of his grip. Something was off about Alexei. She looked at him closely. Same face, same eyes, same hands. The clothes were the same, though all the men at the wedding were dressed in black tuxedos, and the hair was the same.

"Sammy?"

There it was. Alexei hadn't once shortened her name, though most people did. Twins. They were twins. Now the way Alexei introduced himself to Jonas before Sabrina could do so made sense. She hadn't used his name in her greeting. Sabrina hadn't known which brother he was, but Drew had. Drew warned Alexei about something. Sabrina had assured him it was all right if only one brother attended the wedding.

Samantha frowned. They must have a history of switching places. With such identical faces, it wouldn't have been easily detectable.

"You're not Alexei."

His brows rose high. "Why would you say that?"

She noticed he didn't deny it. "Because you're not."

"I know," he said. The surprise faded, replaced by an honest, open appreciation. "But what makes you think I'm not?"

Samantha shook her head. She couldn't quite put her finger on it. "You're just not. I don't know how to explain it. Who are you, and how do you know me?"

It was a valid question. He didn't just know her name, he seemed to know her. Before he answered, she realized that Alexei must have told his brother about her.

He offered his hand. His right hand. Alexei had offered his left to Jonas to shake. "Stefano Morozov, at your service."

The door behind Sam opened and closed again. This service entrance was far more popular than it should have been. Sam glanced over her shoulder to find Alexei inches away from her back. His hands came to rest on her hips.

He wasn't looking at her. He stared over her shoulder at his brother.

Stefano's smile didn't fade. "She knew I wasn't you. She wouldn't kiss me."

Trepidation made the few sips of wine Samantha had managed to drink churn in her stomach. She didn't want to cause a fight, especially not between brothers. Glancing back at Alexei, she tried to

turn to face him, but he held her in place with the pressure of his hands on her hips.

His smile matched Stefano's in brilliance and intensity. "I promised her a kiss she wouldn't forget."

There is was again, that subtext Samantha couldn't read.

"Alexei, I..."

Alexei silenced her with a finger to her lips. One hand held her, keeping her from turning. "There's no need to get upset. We're very pleased you could tell us apart."

Samantha's frown never had a chance to manifest. The finger on her mouth moved, and he gripped her cheek and chin. His lips descended.

She expected him to brush against her lightly, but this wasn't a cautious foray. His strong lips molded to hers. His tongue pressed against her lips as the hand on her cheek massaged the muscle of her jaw, insisting that she open to him.

Electric sensations flowed through her body. Sam wanted to turn, to press herself against him, and to feel his arms enveloping her body. The hands on her hips and at her waist prevented movement. Alexei's tongue swept into her mouth, tangling with Sam's and wrangling it into submission.

A soft moan sounded deep in her throat. He took that, too.

With one hand, she gripped a thick thatch of that deliciously black hair. She threaded the fingers of the other through the ones possessively holding her hip. Melting into him, she relaxed what was left of her guard.

As if sensing her complete surrender, the hands on her body moved, turning her at last. She leaned forward, wanting to feel him against her, but the hands pulled her back until a solid chest supported her that way.

Samantha stiffened. She had forgotten they weren't alone.

“Relax, Sammy.” Soft words breathed against her neck. Lips brushed against the sensitive skin there, fulfilling another promise. “Lex is going to give you that kiss now.”

“But I...Why are you still here?” The bliss of Alexei’s kiss faded as her lack of comprehension grew. There had been too many hands on her body for them to have belonged only to Alexei.

Stefano’s chest rumbled against her back, the low-toned laugh barely registering in the audible spectrum. “Lex and I share everything—our faces, our careers, our women. You won’t regret it, Sammy. Lean against me. Let me hold you while Lex gives you that kiss.”

Her brows drew together. “Hold me?”

This time, Stefano’s mouth closed over hers. His kiss was different from Alexei’s, softer and reverent, though no less demanding. Samantha responded to him on a primal level, opening to him without thought or internal struggle. It was the first time in her life she’d ever done anything as wanton as kissing two men in succession.

The hem of her dress lifted. Alexei’s hands slid up her legs and his fingers found the edges of her hose and underwear. The silk of both items skated to her ankles. He attacked the straps on her shoes next.

Stefano held her attention and controlled where she could see, but not what she felt. Wetness flooded between her legs as she realized the type of kiss Alexei meant to give. Sam imagined the heat of his mouth on her pussy and another moan escaped.

The gentle breeze she admired only moments ago, though it seemed like another lifetime, danced up her calves and around her thighs. Part of Sam wanted to protest, to cry out that it wasn’t right to let a man remove her underclothes while another held her in his arms. That part was lost to the waves of pleasure Stefano generated with his lips and those sure, strong hands holding her in place.

Alexei's hands were no less strong, but they were on the move, following the breeze up her legs to the place where she now dripped.

She felt his lips press against her mound. His hands pushed her legs apart, forcing Samantha to lean her weight against Stefano or lose her balance. Stefano locked one arm around her waist.

Stefano's kiss broke off suddenly. His breaths came rapidly, fanning against her face and flexing the muscles that pressed against her back. "You want this, don't you, Sammy? You want Lex to lick your pussy while I hold you, while I keep you from falling."

Did she want it? She was going to die if she didn't get it.

Her nod was brief, but it was all the permission the brothers seemed to need. Stefano pressed her head against his shoulder and his lips against her forehead at the same moment Alexei's thumbs parted the lips of her labia and his hot tongue invaded the folds of her pussy.

He licked her the same way he kissed. His tongue wrestled for dominance against no real opposition. His lips were strong, closing around her clit to suck and nip. Fingers rubbed against the slick skin around her vaginal opening, but he did not penetrate her, not with his fingers and not with his tongue.

It was a kiss only, a taste of what he offered, of what they both offered. Samantha understood this.

Alexei sucked her faster and harder. His fingers settled into a rhythmic path that made Sam pump her pussy into his mouth, demanding more.

Stefano's grip tightened on her hips, holding them still. "None of that, sweetheart."

In the back of her mind, it registered that they were both dominant. Samantha understood how this worked. They would give her what they wanted to give her as long as she behaved according to their rules. If she wanted the same things as them, then there wasn't a problem.

She wondered if they would discipline her for misbehaving.

Those thoughts were brief and gone before Samantha could judge them, act or react. She whimpered, arching against Stefano. She needed a kiss, a caress, something more. She wanted to raise her head, to beg for another kiss, but she knew he wouldn't give it to her.

Stefano's free hand slid into the bodice of her dress. He gripped her breast, kneading it until her nipple hardened. He pinched the peak he created.

Sammy moaned. Her tongue darted out to lick her lips.

"Like that, sweetheart?"

She nodded, and he tugged harder. Between her legs, Alexei increased the tempo of his rhythm. The sensations combined. Heat flooded her veins. She felt her climax approaching.

"I'm going to come," she said, gasping and arching anew.

The friction Alexei generated between his fingers and mouth and her pussy lessened.

"Not yet," Stefano said. "You don't get to decide that, sweetheart."

Samantha wanted to come. She needed to come. Damn men and their predilections. "Please?"

His laugh rumbled against her once again. "You don't have to beg this time, Sammy. You did something good. This is your reward."

She whimpered and buried her face in his neck. The subtle, spicy scent of his aftershave invaded her senses. "Then why won't you let me come?"

The hand that had teased her nipple caressed the hair away from her temple. "It's not time, Sammy. I'll tell you when it's time. You must trust me to do that."

For some reason, she did trust him to tell her when to come. She trusted that they wouldn't tease her and withhold orgasm. She wasn't naïve enough to think they were above doing that to make her do what they wanted, but she believed them when they said this was a reward.

She nodded and relaxed, giving herself over to the Morozov brothers and trusting that they would deliver on their promise.

It must have been the surrender for which they had waited. Immediately, Alexei's pace picked up. She didn't know how he knew, hiding under her full-length skirt like he was, but he did. His lips locked around her clit and those magic fingers rubbed faster.

Samantha moaned and thrashed her head, using all her willpower to hold off the pressing urge to come.

At last, Stefano's low voice whispered a command. "Come for us, Sammy."

She did. Stefano's mouth closed over hers, muffling the scream whose volume she couldn't control.

Chapter 2

Stefano held Sammy's limp body in his arms. Her long skirt rustled, the tangerine and pink colors appearing to swirl in the soft outdoor lighting, and Alexei emerged from beneath.

Lex licked his lips and his fingers, a satisfied smile curving his lips and lighting his eyes. He withdrew a linen handkerchief from his jacket pocket and wiped away the rest of the cream coating his face.

Without words, his brother used one look to let Stefano know he wanted more from this woman. Silently, Stefano agreed. It wasn't good form to have a discussion like this in front of the submissive. Thankfully, the two of them had always been able to communicate without using words or obvious gestures.

She stirred, shifting her center of gravity from where she leaned against his chest to her feet.

Stefano pulled her to him, tightening his hold. He was careful to keep her away from his cock, which was hard and pulsing, begging to be inside her. "Relax, Sammy. Let us take care of you."

"You have to be tired of holding me up." From the way she formed the words, he could tell without looking that she smiled as she spoke.

"If that happens," Lex said, "I'm here."

Lex stood before her. Leaning in, he brushed a soft kiss across her lips. The simple act of affection was designed both to praise her for submitting to them and to imprint the mingled taste of her scent on Lex's breath.

"You did well." Lex followed up the physical praise with verbal.

This time, Stefano didn't stop her when she shifted, pulling away from him to stand on her own.

A half step put her where she could see both of them. She looked from Lex to him and back. She laughed, a small, amused, and somewhat embarrassed sound.

"I think it's you who did well. I really didn't do anything."

Not many inexperienced submissives, which she clearly was, had the control Sammy seemed to have mastered. She had breathed through the urge to orgasm, holding it off until she had permission.

Stefano caressed her cheek. Her skin was soft, silk beneath his fingertips. "We want you."

Her mouth opened and closed.

Could she truly be surprised? He had been careful to keep his arousal from pressing against her. He didn't want her thinking about anything but what Alexei was doing to her. The goal was to create a need in her that only they could fulfill. However, Stefano knew the look on his face must mirror the stark desire written across his brother's features.

"Let me get this straight. You are proposing I have sex with the two of you. Consecutively." She pressed a hand to her forehead briefly before lowering it to her heart.

Alexei grinned, a rakish slant to his mouth. Stefano wasn't nearly as good at affecting that expression. It bothered him because women seemed to fall for it so easily. Of course, he had other expressions he used, some of them more effectively than Alexei.

"We do concurrently, too."

She stared at Lex. Stefano had no doubt the wheels in her brain were churning. From what Lex had told Stef about the conversation he had with Sammy while they danced, he knew she was aware of the dynamic they proposed.

"I suppose you'll want to tie me up and discipline me, too."

It was a question, a concern that must be addressed. Stefano nodded. “We’ve already restrained you, Sammy, and you’ve responded very well to discipline.”

Her eyes narrowed. “I’m not ignorant, Stefano. I know what kind of discipline Doms deal out, and I know you don’t need a reason to do it.”

Alexei’s eyes nearly glowed. “No, Samantha, we don’t need a reason. But we can promise you’ll enjoy it.”

She looked away from them. Stefano and Alexei had both been careful to not touch her. She had to make this decision without being influenced by their proximity or their physicality. She had to come to them of her own free will. Neither he nor Lex had a taste for forced surrenders.

* * * *

Looking at either of them for too long was difficult. She wanted more. More kissing. They both kissed exceptionally well.

More touching. Less clothes.

The longer she filled her eyes with a double dose of their sexy brand, the greater the danger she would agree to something she would regret.

This kind of thing had been on the periphery of her life since she was too young to fully understand what it was and what it meant. Though it appealed to her, Samantha had always refrained from exploring the submissive side of her nature. She knew it was a lifestyle some people craved full time. She was not one of them.

Samantha enjoyed her freedom. As a travel tester and an artist, she spent much of her time visiting places around the country. Barren fields held the same charm for her as a bustling city. She was working on a collection of sunsets and sunrises, both photographed and painted.

But these two were only in town for a little while. They weren't talking about forever.

Stefano held out a keycard. His smile radiated confidence. "This is our room key. We'll be expecting you fifteen minutes after the bride and groom depart."

Samantha stared at the card. "I'm not sure I want to do this."

Lex's mouth twitched. Sam couldn't tell whether he was amused or upset. "We use a safe word, Samantha."

She shook her head. "I'm not into the kinds of things you propose. I like sex, but the binding and the pain do absolutely nothing for me."

Well, that was sort of the truth. While it did appeal to her, she didn't know either of the men well enough to tell them what she really wanted. To be fair, she didn't know what she really wanted. For starters, she'd take a man who had enough stamina to really satisfy her. Maybe having two men was the answer.

"We don't have to do any of that," Stefano said. "You enjoyed what we did to you out here, right?"

Samantha nodded.

"We can't change the fact that we're Doms, but we can respect that some things don't turn you on. You'll be safe with us, Sammy. Nothing will happen that you don't want to happen."

She looked to Alexei to see if he agreed with his brother. Alexei nodded.

Air took on the consistency of water. Time slowed, as it seemed to do with all momentous occasions. Her hand reached out and took the keycard from Stefano. She stared at the card. Their room number was neatly printed on the paper cover in blue ink.

"I have to get back." The words were quiet. Samantha barely heard them. They weren't much more than the vibrations she felt in her throat. This wasn't the first time she had been approached by a Dom, though she would be the first to admit it didn't happen very often. Jonas was well-respected in the BDSM community, and that meant people steered clear of his little sister whether or not he

articulated a warning. He had once mentioned to Sam that he hadn't put restrictions on her availability, but he had told people who asked that Samantha wasn't into the scene.

She wasn't. She hadn't been. She wasn't sure she wanted to be. Parts of the lifestyle appealed to her, but she wasn't willing to embrace a completely submissive existence. She liked wearing clothes.

Turning, she fled back through the heavy door into the safety of the reception with its hundreds of guests to buffer her from the Morozov brothers and this spell they cast over her.

She hadn't yet made up her mind.

She could always return the key to the front desk and have them deliver it to the room. Nobody needed to know about anything that happened tonight. Maybe later, she could relate the story to Amanda or Ellen and they could all enjoy a laugh.

An hour later, she sat in the ornate powder room—nobody would mistake it for a simple bathroom—and sipped champagne.

Both Stefano and Alexei had avoided her since issuing their invitation. How was she supposed to take that? Each time she caught one of them out of the corner of her eye, which happened frequently since she couldn't stop herself from looking for them, there was no evidence they were even aware of her existence. They smiled and chatted with dozens of people.

Fleeing to the room where only women were allowed, Samantha parked herself on a comfortable couch and stared through the pale liquid in the long, fluted glass. The mirror across the room bent, shortening and elongating as she moved the glass to alter the perspective.

The door opened and closed. Weight pressed the cushion next to her. Samantha forced her attention to the person who sat too close to be a stranger.

The tangerine and rose dress was cut differently from Samantha's. She appreciated that, although Sabrina had insisted they wear the

colors of the wedding, she also insisted their dresses be designed to take into account their differing body types.

Sophia's dress was long and elegant in the skirt. The bodice consisted of a complex series of straps that both created visual interest and still managed to cover enough to continue the elegance that marked the entire affair.

Sophia raised a dark brow at Sam. "Penny for your thoughts."

The door opened and closed again. Sabrina and Ellen parked themselves on the chairs opposite the sofa.

Ellen's dress also featured a long skirt, but the neckline was cut dangerously low. If Ellen bent forward, her breasts were liable to fall out of the dress completely. Sabrina had tried to argue with Ellen's insistence that the dress needed to feature her cleavage, but arguing with Ellen was extraordinarily difficult. Even Jonas's intervention hadn't been productive.

"I'm fine," Samantha said. It was the truth. Indecision wasn't a sign of mental distress.

Her eyes searched all three faces. Sophia and Ellen both managed relaxed, friendly expressions that were also stern. Sabrina's eyes were soft with concern. She seemed to have a good poker face only when playing poker.

"Liar." Ellen smiled as she said it. Her brown eyes sparkled, an effect of her extraordinarily beautiful smile.

Amanda burst through the door. Thank goodness for small favors. If she was going to be subjected to Ellen's prying, at least Sam would have her sister on her side.

"Sorry I'm late," Amanda said. She pressed her hand to her chest and let loose a long stream of air. "The kids are staying the night with the babysitter. Rich wants to sneak off and get frisky."

Amanda's dress clung to her figure, showing off her assets attractively and elegantly. Samantha had always been a little jealous that Amanda had been blessed with those dangerous curves, while

Samantha had to settle for a tomboy build. At least she escaped those dirty-blonde spiral curls that both Amanda and Jonas sported.

With a wave of her hand, Amanda motioned Sophia and Samantha to move over so she could take a position next to Sam.

Samantha slid over, rearranging her skirt so that it wasn't twisted and bunched. Her brows drew together as she watched her sister settle onto the hard cushion. "I swear there is nothing wrong."

"You've been frowning for an hour," Amanda said. She squeezed Samantha's hand. "That's not like you, Sammy. You're the one who's always happy and bubbly."

"It was Lex."

Sam's gaze shot up in surprise, locking onto Sabrina. Her comment had been quiet and sure. She met Sam's shocked look with unapologetic sympathy.

"I noticed he had you in his crosshairs. Alexei Morozov always gets what he wants. He was like that when we were kids, too." Sabrina shuddered, most likely at some remembrance. Whatever the cause, Sabrina didn't share.

"There are two of them," Ellen said. Her fingertip circled in the air, but it pointed to Samantha anyway. "I noticed you disappeared for a bit, and so did they."

So her break had been noticed. Leave it to Ellen. Sometimes she was too observant.

Sam felt heat rising from her chest to her cheeks. She was close to each of these women in different ways. Amanda and Ellen were, literally and figuratively, her older sisters. Both looked out for Sam.

Sophia had come a long way from being that little lost soul Jonas began bringing around about five years before. At first, Samantha and the rest of the family thought Sophia was a rebound love interest. Jonas set them straight fairly quickly, and they welcomed Sophia into their hearts. It took Sophia a little longer to accept that welcome, but now she was a close friend.

Samantha had liked Sabrina immediately. Like Sophia, Sabrina took a little time to warm up to the Spencer clan. Sam mostly blamed Jonas for that. When he first married Sabrina, he seemed to go out of his way to keep her from being alone with any of them. All that changed as he fell in love with his wife and Sabrina stopped letting Jonas walk all over her. Now she was one of them.

Samantha sighed and spilled. Given what she was up against, it was going to come out eventually. “They invited me to spend the night with them.”

Amanda laughed. “You make it sound like a sleepover.”

Ellen let loose a short bark of laughter. “I don’t think they have sleep in mind.”

Sophia smiled. “They’re hot. I’ve always wondered what it would be like to have identical twins.”

“The same view no matter where you look.” Sabrina blushed a becoming shade of pink.

Right now, Sam had no doubt that Sabrina was picturing both Alexei and Stefano naked. That was the picture show playing in Samantha’s head.

“They don’t look that much alike.” Samantha’s objection was to the idea that Stef and Lex were the same. Yes, they were identical. However, something set them apart enough so that Sam had no trouble telling them apart.

“You’ve never had a threesome before,” Sophia said. “If that’s what’s holding you up, Sam, I have to tell you that having two men in your bed is not an experience you should pass up.”

Samantha bit her lip. After her experience with the pair of them, she was excited about the idea of having both men. That wasn’t the problem. She pinned Sophia with a hard look. “They’re both Doms.”

“Oh.” Sabrina clapped her hand over her mouth. It did nothing to hide the way her pink blush turned bright red. “That explains so much.”

Ellen patted Sabrina's knee. "Did you have the hots for them in high school?"

Sabrina shook her head. "Stephen and Drew were friends with them, and my mom was friends with their parents. I never liked being alone with either of them."

Sophia frowned. "Were you afraid they would hurt you?"

Sabrina's frown matched Sophia's. She shook her head as she thought. "No. They both had this way of looking at a person. It was like they knew all of my secrets and I hadn't said a word. Ellen does the same thing."

Ellen nodded. "It's a Dom thing."

This conversation was fast derailing. Samantha toyed with the idea of letting it go. However, she needed to reassure her friends that Alexei and Stefano were not forcing her to do anything. "They don't scare me and they didn't hurt me. They just kissed me a bit and invited me to their room. Honestly, I'm not sure the invitation still stands. Neither of them has even looked at me since then."

Sophia squeezed Sam's other hand. Amanda still had not released the one she held. "This has to be your choice. They won't coerce you or influence you, not until you consent."

Samantha leveled a look she knew betrayed a profound disbelief. "I have to consent to being coerced and influenced?"

"Yes."

"Don't be afraid because you haven't tried it," Sabrina said. Her eyes sparkled and her dreamy smile made her words slow. "I highly recommend it. I'm not saying it's easy, just that it's worth it."

Ellen and Sophia shared a laugh.

Amanda released Sam's hand. "With the right person, Sammy. You have to trust them, otherwise it won't work."

Did she trust Alexei and Stefano? Yes. There was something about them, something safe and reassuring, yet dangerous and sensual. The idea they might tie her up and spank her held an appeal

she didn't feel comfortable talking about just then. Besides, they had promised nothing would happen that she didn't want to happen.

Samantha sighed. "I have no idea what's even involved in sleeping with two men. When I asked them if they expected me to have sex with them consecutively, Stefano said they do concurrently, too. I have no idea what that means."

Sophia's smile grew. "Oh, Sammy. How is it you have known us for years, yet you're so naïve and innocent?"

"I have no idea what it means, either."

Sam looked over at Sabrina. Her blush had finally disappeared. She fingered the beads of her pearl necklace and bit her lip, no doubt trying to imagine the logistics.

A stream of air issued from Ellen. "It means you can expect oral, vaginal, and anal sex. A combination of any two of the three at any given time."

Sabrina's knees snapped together, and she sat up straight, staring at Ellen as if she'd lost her mind.

Ellen met the incredulous stare with her usual stoicism. "Let me guess. You haven't had anal sex yet."

Sabrina sputtered, but formed no decipherable words.

"I highly recommend it."

Samantha's head swiveled to shoot a look at Amanda. She knew Amanda and her husband, Rich, dabbled with bondage, but she never knew they took things that far.

"I second that."

Now Sam stared at Sophia. Anal sex didn't seem to be an activity in which a dominatrix would engage. Apparently, there was a lot Sam didn't know.

"I'm with them."

Nobody gaped at Ellen. Nothing Ellen said would ever surprise Samantha. She knew her too well.

Ellen, of course, wasn't done with Sabrina. As a submissive, she represented a tempting target. And Ellen was the type of friend who

stuck her nose wherever she wanted. She openly took credit for getting Sabrina and Jonas back together. She also gloated about getting Sophia and Drew together. Perhaps she was looking for a hat trick with Samantha and the Morozov brothers.

If it happened, it was only going to be for one night.

“I’m sure if you asked Jonas...” Ellen’s smile completed the statement.

Sabrina met it with a face twisted in disgust. “Ever since I got pregnant, he hasn’t done anything overly fun.”

The room fell silent.

Sabrina scrambled. Her blush returned in full force. “I didn’t mean it wasn’t fun, only that he’s very careful and I...Oh, never mind.” She buried her face in her hands.

“Congratulations.” Sophia broke the silence. Rising, she crossed the small space and hugged Sabrina, whispering something in her ear that Sam couldn’t hear.

After that, the topic of threesomes and sex was lost. They took turns hugging Sabrina and congratulating her on her pregnancy.

Chapter 3

Alexei paced the length of the room. Because they hadn't decided to attend the wedding until the last moment, the best rooms were already booked. The suite to which they'd been assigned earned that name by virtue of having a kitchenette.

It was a large room with two beds. The massive king would have been the subject of contention if there wasn't a woman to share. The loser of that argument would have been relegated to the smaller queen next to it.

On the other side of the room, a sofa and coffee table faced the bed. It was a piss-poor excuse for a room, but it was only for one night. The pair had secured better accommodations for the remaining four days of their trip.

"You're going to wear a hole in the carpet, and the people in the room below will be able to hear everything."

Stefano didn't bother to hide his amusement. It wasn't often that either of them was bothered by a case of nerves. He continued fishing equipment from his luggage as he chuckled at Alexei.

"I don't give a fuck who hears us, Stef. Sabrina left the wedding more than twenty minutes ago." She had been blushing a million shades of pink as her new husband whispered things into her ear. Alexei had a good idea the kind of things he whispered.

She looked happy. Marriage suited her, but it wasn't something he or Stef wanted. They liked their lifestyle too much to mess with the formula. With lots of traveling and their pick of women, life was perfect.

Stef headed toward the bathroom. “She’s a bridesmaid. She has duties, things to do. Plus, that place was packed with relatives and friends. You saw how popular she was. It seemed everybody there had a hug for her, something to show her, or some big news to share.”

She hadn’t seemed to hurt for company after he and Stef left her alone. Alexei snorted, more anxious than anything else. “I gave her fifteen minutes. She’s late.”

Stefano’s voice floated from the bathroom. “She’ll show. We hooked her good, Lex. She wants more.”

Alexei spread a towel on the coffee table. “I’m going to spank her ass. One for every minute she’s late.”

Stef strode from the bathroom. He stopped, parking his hands on his hips. “She’s not into that, Lex.”

“My ass,” Alexei said. He saw too much in her eyes to believe she wouldn’t respond to a good spanking. She had liked being restrained by Stef too much.

“Regardless, until she tells us that’s what she wants, our hands are tied.”

Alexei would have preferred to tie her hands, but Stef was right. He grunted.

Tapping sounded on the door. Alexei schooled his features until he was sure his anxiousness didn’t show on his face. She wasn’t using the keycard they’d given her. The knock had been firm, but light, meaning she had no plans to press her point. Lex hoped she wasn’t there to give her regrets. Somehow, he knew Samantha would be the kind of woman to tell a man she didn’t want to see him again instead of avoiding his calls and blowing him off in general.

He glanced to Stefano, and he knew Stef was thinking similar thoughts. Alexei moved to the door, but he didn’t open it until Stef nodded that he was ready. Of the two of them, Stefano was the one who wore his emotions more openly.

Her head turned as the door opened, a friendly smile already on her lips. She had been watching something down the hall while she waited, but now all of her attention was focused on Alexei.

She stood tall. Her bare shoulders were thrown back and her entire demeanor exuded confidence and sensuality.

“Hi, Alexei,” she said. “How are you?”

She wasn’t supposed to speak first, but he was glad she had. This was the second time she’d correctly identified him, and there was nothing hesitant in her manner. She knew exactly who he was. His heart beat a little faster. After years spent telling himself it didn’t matter if a woman knew the difference between him and Stefano, he finally admitted it was a lie. It did matter.

She held out the keycard. “Using this didn’t feel right. I hope you’re not upset, but it’s just not who I am.”

He opened the door wider, suddenly unable to utter a sound. This was a sign of submission. He couldn’t punish her for achieving the desired result without training.

Her smile grew. She brushed against him as she entered the room, her shoulder bumping lightly against his chest. She didn’t acknowledge the contact. He wondered if it was accidental, or if it was her way of marking her territory. Submissives could be very possessive.

The suite opened into the narrow kitchenette, something that bothered Alexei to no end. A suite should always open to the living area. He liked to breakfast outside, on the patio. August in Michigan did lend itself to eating outdoors, and he hated carrying food through sitting and sleeping areas.

“Have you made a decision?”

Stefano had come to the arched, doorless entryway leading from the kitchenette to the rest of the room. He parked one hand on either side of the entrance, blocking Samantha from entering the suite further. She was effectively trapped between them.

Maybe he did like this suite design after all.

Samantha's nod was less confident. She looked from Stef to Alexei. "I've never done this before, but I know if I don't, I'm going to spend the rest of my life wondering what I missed out on."

Alexei shot a look to Stefano. It was quick, but he and his brother rarely needed words to communicate. They closed in. Each of them stood next to her, their chests an inch from her shoulders. She was tall. In those heels, she had no trouble looking them in the eyes. He wanted to drop a kiss on her shoulder and work his way up her neck, finding all the sensitive spots and making her gasp.

Reaching behind him, he secured the door.

"Samantha."

Her body didn't move. Only her head turned to look at him. She arched a brow, probably at the gravity of the tone he used. He needed his tone to be serious. This was consent time.

"Tonight, you belong to us. This body," he ran a finger along her waist, "is ours. We're going to make you beg us to fuck you, and then we're going to have you until you pass out. If you pass out too soon, we'll wake you up until we're satisfied. When you fail to do what we say, you will be punished."

He watched her pupils dilate and blood rush to her face and neck. She had lovely skin. He wanted to taste every inch of her, not just the musky sweetness between her legs.

"Do you understand what's going to happen tonight?" Stefano asked. "We need clear consent, Sammy."

She turned to Stefano, addressing him now. "Is there a safe word?"

"No," he said. "If you tell us to stop, then we'll stop."

She opened and closed her mouth, questions forming behind those cornflower blue eyes and the crease that formed between them.

"We don't play games," Alexei said. "No means no and stop means stop."

Her smile returned. It was small, but pleased. It stole his breath.

"I like that."

Stefano moved to the side. He indicated the area between the bed and the sofa.

“Stand in the center of the room and undress.”

Head high, she marched to the middle of the room and stopped, glancing back with a grin. She knew she was attractive, and she knew they were attracted to her. Alexei wasn't sure if that was a good thing or not.

He and Stefano parked themselves on the edge of the foot of the bed to watch the show. She oriented herself so that she faced them. Lifting one arm, she reached for the zipper along her right side.

Ah, he'd wondered where that thing was hidden.

The tangerine and pink dress loosened, sliding down Samantha's long, lithe body to pool around her ankles. Alexei stopped breathing. Standing before them in heels, pale pink thigh-high stockings and a pink strapless bra, Samantha planted her hands on her hips. She had the body of a runner. She wasn't overly thin, which Alexei liked.

He hated to fuck a skeleton.

She had a strong body and smooth skin. Alexei's eyes were drawn to the tuft of hair between her legs and he longed to taste her again. Her panties were still in his pocket. It was a souvenir she would not get back.

Next to him, Stef's sharp inhale told him that his brother wasn't going to hold out for very long. Her entire manner invited them closer. Alexei fought the urge to go to her, to taste her lips and her skin, to delve into her pussy with his tongue and his fingers.

“Isn't she?” Stef muttered, shifting to relieve the pressure between his legs.

Samantha couldn't have heard him. He and Stef had long ago perfected the art of mumbling to one another.

Alexei's nod served two purposes. First, it answered Stefano. Yes, Samantha was beautiful.

Second, it indicated to Samantha that she should continue with her striptease.

Stepping out of the dress, she turned to the side and bent to retrieve it. Alexei could tell a woman with a background in dance. Samantha's grace only added to the growing problem in his pants.

She spread the dress over the back of a chair. He hoped she went for the shoes next. He loved a barefoot woman.

She stepped out of them, leaving them neatly next to the chair. Alexei felt a little ripped off. He fought the urge to bend her over his lap and make her ass match her lingerie. When they originally propositioned her, she expressly forbade violent contact. That rule would stay intact until she changed it.

The thigh-highs went next. She bent at the waist as she rolled down the left stocking, then stood and bent again as she lost the right one.

One hand disappeared behind her back and the strapless bra fell to the floor. She stood, proud and confident, in front of them. Alexei allowed his gaze to drink in the sexy sight before him.

Stefano stood. "Are you sure you don't want to be tied up and spanked?"

The smile that invited them closer widened. "I'm willing to let you call the shots, Stefano, but a girl's got to draw the line somewhere. After all, we just met."

Stef nodded. "Just checking."

Wordlessly, Alexei joined his brother. They moved around the low coffee table to flank her. She might not want everything they had to offer, but she had responded to their dominance earlier. It was a starting point.

Samantha breathed easier, pleased and relieved that Stefano accepted her decision without arguing. She didn't expect them to completely avoid alpha male behavior, especially after what they had done to her on that tiny patio. She trusted them to make sure everyone got what they needed.

Stefano bent his head and kissed her shoulders. His lips whispered a caress on her bare skin. She brought her hand up to caress his

shoulder, but he wrapped his hand around her wrist and held it next to her thigh. His right hand came up to cup her right breast. She wanted him to knead it, to play with her nipple, but he only held it in his palm.

On the other side, Alexei did the same thing, holding her wrist at her side even though she hadn't moved to touch him. His kiss began at the same point on her shoulder, but where Stefano's lips traveled along her shoulder to the back of her neck, Alexei's kisses headed straight for her mouth.

They turned her so that she faced Alexei. She opened her lips to let Alexei's tongue inside. Liquid heat spilled from his mouth into hers, riding on the tongue he thrust between her lips. Samantha moaned and opened to him even more. She relaxed her body, melding it to his.

Behind her, Stefano kissed a line down her spine. His hands rested on her hips and his thumbs traced patterns over her ass. She felt him shift to kneel behind her. The heat of his mouth fastened on the fleshy part of her rear end, and he sucked hard.

Samantha whimpered into Alexei's mouth. The sharp pinch had felt so damn good. She did like a forceful lover, but she didn't want to give these two permission to do all the things to her that a Dom did to his sub. She wasn't ready for that.

Hands moved over her body, and Samantha soon lost track of who touched her where. Sensations ran rampant. She relaxed into the dual embrace, forgetting to care who kissed where until one of them moved away from her.

Samantha protested the loss. She opened her eyes, fastening her gaze on Alexei's cobalt blue irises.

He caressed her cheek. "It's okay, Samantha. We're going to move you over to the bed."

Without another word, he guided her backwards across the room, his luscious body pressing against her the entire time. He stopped before her knees bumped the edge of the mattress.

“Get on the bed, Samantha. Kneel over Stef.”

Sammy turned her head to see where he wanted her. Stefano had undressed completely. Broad shoulders topped a defined chest. A light sprinkling of hair began at his nipples, thickening as it flowed to surround his fully erect cock. He lay across the bed with his feet resting on the floor. Holding out one hand, he beckoned her closer. Lazy bedroom eyes added a sensual layer to his order.

She climbed over the bottom of the bed to put her hand in his. Behind her, she heard the distinct sounds of Alexei undressing. She wanted to watch his striptease the same way he had watched hers, but Stefano tugged her closer.

“Up here,” he said as guided her to straddle his face. His hot breath caressed her dripping folds. “I’ve wanted a taste of this since the patio. Lex said you have an incredible flavor.”

He licked his lips and gripped her ass. His long thumbs reached around to part her lips. His gentle touch elicited a fresh gush of cream. He played with the folds of her pussy, releasing his hold on her rear end to run his fingers along the surfaces of her wet and waiting pussy.

She hissed when his questing fingers found her clit. He barely touched it as he ran the tip of his finger over the most sensitive part of it.

“Harder,” she said, fighting the urge to press down and force the friction she craved. “I need more.”

Below her, Stefano chuckled. “Honey, you’re going to get plenty, but not until we want to give it to you.”

Raising a brow in challenge, she pressed one finger to her clit and rubbed it back and forth. She needed more or she was going to go crazy.

A hand on the back of her neck pushed her onto all fours, forcing her to abandon her masturbation attempt. “None of that, Samantha. You’ll come when we say you can come, not before.”

She bit back her retort and swallowed her protest. She had agreed to abide by their rules. They made no apologies or excuses for being

dominant and controlling. They made sure she knew what she was getting herself into before anything happened.

Stefano continued playing with her pussy. Frustration piled up inside her, and she closed her eyes. It wouldn't have been so bad if she knew what kind of lover he was. In the past, too many lovers had promised fulfillment and not delivered enough. She couldn't count the number of times she had masturbated afterward, either sneaking off and locking herself in the bathroom or waiting until she was alone at home later that night. Samantha needed more than one orgasm. The first one was always just a starting point.

Just when she thought she could stand it no longer, his mouth opened and he clamped onto her. Teeth scraped her clit and his hot tongue plunged into her pussy. He sucked hard. The sudden change from gentle to rough sent her careening to the edge. A moan ripped from deep in her throat.

“Oh God, yes, Stef. Like that.”

She wanted to say more, to praise and encourage him, but the bed dipped in front of her. Alexei's thick fingers dug into her hair, cradling her skull a second before he fisted enough of a mass to jerk her head up. Samantha opened her eyes to find Alexei's thick cock inches from her mouth. His other hand gripped it tightly, pumping up and down the length.

Samantha licked her lips. She wanted that thing in her mouth. Her lips parted to draw in a deep breath. She meant to ask for it, but Alexei was one step ahead of her. He traced her lips with the soft purplish head, rubbing his precome over her like lipstick. Sam followed the path with her tongue, drinking in his salty flavor. She exhaled expectantly, the soft whoosh of warm air inviting him inside.

Alexei slid his dick between her lips. Samantha opened for him, taking him as deep as she could. He didn't force himself deeper like she thought he might. He seemed content to let her set this boundary.

Below her, Stefano teased. The mouth that had clamped to her so tightly eased suction. Now he licked her with long, wide swipes of his tongue. Her juices flowed, and he lapped at them, claiming his due.

Two fingers teased their way into her vaginal opening. He found her sweet spot. Fire burst from the places he touched, begging for attention. She moaned, the sound nothing more than vibrations in her throat. Above her, Alexei answered with a gasp and took over, increasing the pace of his thrusts.

“God, yes,” he said, his voice husky and breathless. “Stef, whatever you’re doing to her, keep doing it.”

The hand grasping her hip, the only thing holding her in place, dropped away. The fingers in her pussy slid out. Alexei had distinctly told Stefano not to stop. Why was he stopping? Before she could moan a protest, she felt them at her anus. Stefano didn’t wait for her to accept the idea. He plunged his fingers inside, thrusting them into her the same way he had been fucking her pussy.

Samantha bucked, but Alexei’s firm grasp on her hair and the hand he pressed into her lower back prevented her from moving away. Logically, she knew they were preparing her for something larger, but no one had ever touched her this way before.

“Don’t move, Samantha. Relax and enjoy what Stef is doing to you.”

He pumped into her faster, and she had no way to respond except to follow his order. The shock wore off fairly quickly because it felt so good. Fingers from Stefano’s free hand plunged into her pussy, replacing what she had lost. She wasn’t sure whether she should rock into it or stay still. Tension built, robbing her of conscious thought, and she moved her hips, grinding faster and harder against Stefano until it burst.

She came, shouting her climax around Alexei’s cock.

“Oh, God!” With one loud cry, Alexei came. Sam sucked him harder, prolonging his climax for as long as he let her. When he had enough, he pushed her head away. His cock popped out of her mouth

and he dropped back onto the pillows. His sated smile and half-mast bedroom eyes triggered a surge of pride through Samantha. She had done that to him.

The throbbing between her legs hadn't abated when she felt Stefano's strong hands sliding her body down his. He did it slowly, kissing his way up her stomach and pausing to suck and nip at her breasts. Samantha braced her weight on her hands the best she could so she wouldn't smother him, enjoying the sensations he evoked.

Stefano pulled her down a little more and kissed the sensitive places on her neck he had discovered earlier. The deep rumble of his chest tickled against hers as he spoke between nibbles at her earlobe.

"Ride me, Sammy. We want to watch your face when you come."

Samantha was ready for more. This was the point at which most of her previous lovers realized they couldn't keep up with her. She spread her knees and pushed her body up until she straddled him.

Looking down, she realized that Stefano had thought ahead. His dick was already covered with a condom. Samantha smiled, positioned herself over him, and slammed her body down. He filled her, stretching her walls pleurably.

His fingertips dug into her hips. "Jesus, Sammy. That was incredible."

Alexei returned. So wrapped up in Stefano's attentions, she hadn't been aware Lex had left the room. He wiped Stefano's face with a damp cloth before sinking down on the bed next to them. One hand caressed her thigh. She favored him briefly with a smile, and then she focused all of her attention on Stefano.

She lifted slowly. Air hissed from between Stefano's teeth. His eyelids shuttered to half mast, but he didn't thrust up or pull her back down. He was going to lie there and take it. The smugness of the grin curling her lips echoed in her chest.

She slammed him again. She played that slow game until he writhed under her and the tension coiled too tightly inside. She could stand it no longer. Leaning forward, she braced one hand on his chest

and rode him fast. In this position, her clit scraped against him. It swelled and throbbed. The heat between her legs spread, pulsing a storm through her body until she cried out.

Alexei caught her when she fell. He rolled her, positioning her on the mattress next to Stefano. His hands explored her skin. He ran them over her as if memorizing her contours through touch. Samantha's muscles twitched and jumped at the additional stimulation.

This was what she wanted. This was what had been missing for so long. She had been searching for one energetic lover when she should have been looking for two. Turning her head to the side, she watched Stefano's chest rise and fall rapidly. His eyes were closed, and his limbs were lifeless. The aftereffects of his orgasm had yet to wane.

Her legs moved apart. They trembled and shook in this new position. Her muscles weren't ready to support any kind of weight. Samantha turned her attention back to Alexei. He knelt between her legs, his cock hard and covered with a condom.

She drew a ragged breath. "I'm not sure my legs will work, but I'm ready for more."

His lush lips widened in a wicked grin. "Don't worry, Samantha. You won't need your legs for this."

But she wanted to use them. She wanted to wrap her legs around his body and hang on to his shoulders as he pushed her to a place she had been precious few times before. Achieving orgasm had never been a problem for Samantha. Finding exhaustive satisfaction was the thing that always eluded her. She knew without a doubt that Stefano and Alexei were going to fuck her until she passed out. They promised.

He touched her with his fingers, memorizing her that way, too. Just as Stefano had done, he kept a gentle, featherlight pressure. However, this time things were different. She was swollen and sensitive from having ridden Stefano. She didn't ask him to press harder. The tingling heat flooded back to her core, and she moaned.

Then his hand was gone. Alexei eased her legs farther apart and settled between them. Hovering over her body, he locked eyes with Samantha as he entered her with agonizing slowness. At first, she appreciated his thoughtfulness. As her pussy adjusted to the feel of him, greed took over. She wanted him all the way inside her, and she wanted it now.

Strength returned to her legs. She drew up her knees and planted her feet against the bed. She wanted to lift her hips, but he held them still with one hand. He was a strong man and she was still weak and drunk from pleasure.

She gripped his forearms. "Lex." His name came out on a breath thick with need.

He chuckled. Her plea had no effect.

Next to them, Stefano's laugh echoed Alexei's amusement. "He likes to hear you beg, Sammy. We both do. You won't get what you want until we decide to give it to you, but feel free to beg anyway."

Samantha tried to wrinkle her nose at him in disgust, but Alexei chose that moment to move faster. He thrust into her with far more tenderness than she expected, setting a pace that had her writhing in his arms, yet it didn't over-stimulate her sensitive tissues.

Heat built. Climax loomed within her reach. A slow smile landed lazily on her lips. One more thrust and she...

She opened her eyes and blinked up at Alexei. "Why did you stop?"

"You were going to come, weren't you?"

"Yes." She thrust her hips, but he ground his into her, halting her movement. "Alexei."

Her use of his name hadn't been a plea. It was a frustrated warning that she had nearly growled at him.

He frowned. "You'll come when I say you can come. Stef gave you permission before. I did not extend the same freedom to you." His blue eyes darkened. He looked like he was contemplating a punishment for her impudence.

Her eyes widened and juices flooded her pussy. She hoped he didn't notice. "I told you I wasn't into that kind of stuff."

"You indicated you weren't into bondage and that you weren't a masochist. However, you agreed to the terms before we began. Samantha, you've earned a punishment." His eyes sparkled, but she couldn't tell whether he was angry or pleased.

"Lex." This time, she begged. She wanted her orgasm. It was so close. Though he didn't move, he kept it near with the timbre of his voice and the unreadable expression on his face.

He nodded. "That's better. It's a start." One hand cupped her breast. The pad of his thumb brushed over her nipple until it hardened. He released her breast to pay the same attention to the other. With his other hand, he lifted himself, widening the distance between their bodies.

Samantha whimpered. Yes, she liked the way he touched her. It was stimulating and sexy, but it did nothing to make her come. She needed the heat to move a little lower.

Stefano's head eased between them. His hot mouth locked around her hard nipple. He sucked it deep into his mouth, stretching the areola. Sharp pleasure mixed with slight pain until she could stand it no longer. She cried out. Even then, he didn't release it. He merely stopped pulling.

His tongue and teeth flicked over her sensitized nipple. Samantha wove her fingers into his dark hair. It was short, but still long enough to establish a tight grasp. She didn't know if she should cradle his head closer or jerk him away, and she never got the chance to decide.

Alexei's hands closed around her wrists. He pinned them above her head with one hand and watched while Stefano tortured her other breast.

Samantha writhed, alternately lifting her torso closer to beg for more and pulling it away to make him stop. The contradictory feelings clashed within her. She fought Alexei's hold, but he was too strong. Something had to give.

“Oh God!” she yelled. “I’m sorry. For Christ’s sake, I swear I’ll ask next time. Just let me come. Please, Lex. Please fuck me.”

She was begging, something she never seriously thought she would ever do. Her pride and everything else deserted her. All she felt were the sensations they made her feel and the need that drove her desperation.

Stefano’s head lifted. Alexei shifted, and now Stefano pinned her wrists above her head. She didn’t care. She didn’t need her arms. She needed Alexei to thrust into her and to tell her to come.

“You can’t come,” he said. He withdrew and plunged back into her. “Not yet.”

Samantha tilted her hips to take him deeper. Her heels dug into the bedding. It was the traction she needed to meet his thrusts and to give him what he gave to her. She understood now that he wasn’t going to let her climax until he was ready to come.

She focused her attention on Alexei. His handsome face, twisted with determination and flushed with passion, hovered above her. On the periphery of her vision, Stefano waited, a promise in the wings.

Need pulsed, demanded, and insisted. “Please,” she whispered.

“No. Breathe through it.” His directive was delivered through gritted teeth and punctuated with harder thrusts.

Samantha inhaled through her nose and exhaled through her mouth, her years of athletic training coming back to help her now. It had never occurred to her to treat an impending orgasm like a muscle cramp, but she didn’t want to disappoint Alexei or Stefano. She wanted to show them that she had just as much control as they seemed to have.

“Come.”

The order came from above her head. She closed her eyes, hoping it would help reverse the flow of determination she had used to avoid orgasm.

“Open your eyes.”

This was from Alexei. Lex. He liked when she called him that. She saw the flicker of pleasure in his eyes whenever she used that name. She commanded her eyes to open. Slowly, they obeyed.

“Come for me, Samantha.”

With a loud cry, she did as he commanded. Her body went stiff and she lifted from the bed. Alexei’s weight wasn’t enough to counteract the violence of her climax. Colors exploded behind her eyes, but she kept them open. She kept them locked to his.

Alexei didn’t stop. She thought his orgasm would follow hers, but he held it off. He thrust into her, slowing his motions to draw out her climax. Samantha shuddered each time he filled her. Stefano had released her hands, and she clutched Alexei with no control over how tightly she held him or how deeply her nails dug into his skin.

The cry she uttered went on and on until it faded. Survival instincts forced her to inhale. It was an uneven, ragged breath filled with smaller gasps.

Alexei rolled until she was on top of him. She had no energy to move. Her head rested limply on his shoulder, and he stroked her hair. He was still inside her, and he hadn’t ejaculated.

Samantha frowned against his collarbone. “Did I do something wrong?”

“No, Sammy. You were perfect. We want you this way, nice and relaxed.”

Stefano had moved again. His voice came from somewhere near her feet. She felt his hands on her knees. His firm grip moved them, positioning them on either side of Alexei’s hips. This lifted her off Alexei a little bit. She whimpered at the sensations that rippled through her body even as she luxuriated in the fact that they weren’t finished with her.

Alexei spread his legs, brushing against the coverlet with a soft sound and widening her stance. The hands that had caressed her hair and traced circles over her back moved down to cup her ass. He squeezed and kneaded the cheeks before spreading them apart.

Samantha knew what was coming next. Despite the languor stealing her strength, she tensed as she felt the bed dip under Stefano's weight. Somehow, she knew he would be the one to take her this way first. Alexei, for all his gruffness, was a gentle lover. He took great care to not hurt her.

Stefano, on the other hand, liked it rougher. He didn't seem to mind doing things that caused small amounts of sharp pain that felt too good and made her want more.

She quivered when she felt the cold gel against her anus. "It's going to hurt, isn't it?"

She whispered too softly for Stefano to hear. Alexei pressed a kiss to her forehead. "Just for a minute. Once he's in, it shouldn't hurt anymore."

But what if it did? She didn't voice her question because she knew they would stop if she asked them to stop. Besides, she wanted this. She wanted to feel them both inside her at the same time. She wanted to know what made her friends sigh in remembrance.

She felt Stefano's finger massaging the muscle guarding that entrance. Sparks traveled through her entire abdomen. Samantha gasped and her pussy contracted.

"That's it, Sammy. Relax for me."

A finger slipped inside, massaging the gel everywhere he touched. Then it was gone, and she felt his cock pressing. It seemed impossibly large, but she was more curious than afraid. She breathed, relaxing as much as she could. Her cheek rested against Alexei's smooth skin and she inhaled his calming scent. The pressure increased and she felt the muscle stretch. It burned a bit, but in a good way.

"I'm in."

It hadn't hurt at all. The burning sensation was there, but she wanted to push against him. She wanted to feel him thrusting into her until the feeling burst into the flames of an earth-shattering climax. That, combined with the fullness of Alexei already inside her, had her panting with need.

“Yes,” she hissed as she pushed herself up until she was on all fours. The fire traveled, centering in her core and radiating outward. “Please don’t stop. Holy shit, don’t stop.”

Stefano’s strong hands grasped her hips, holding her in place and keeping her unsteady legs from collapsing. “Not yet, Sammy. I’m not all the way in. I don’t want to ream you until you’re used to it.”

“But it doesn’t hurt,” she said, ignoring the pleading note that crept into her voice. “It feels so good. You both feel so good.”

Alexei cradled her face in his hands and drew her down to him. When they were nose-to-nose, he changed his trajectory, angling his face to kiss her. The act took Samantha by surprise. Sure, they had both kissed her, but as part of foreplay. This was fucking, pure and simple.

Still, his lips were firm and demanding. Samantha had already surrendered to them both. She didn’t fight this show of affection. His tongue slid along her bottom lip and she opened to him. Stefano moved in her body, sliding deeper and deeper. Samantha moaned. Cream dripped from her pussy, coating the inside of her thighs and everywhere she touched Alexei.

They must have communicated using some kind of secret signal because they both started moving in her at the same time. At first, they varied the rhythm, one thrusting in while the other pulled out. It was like nothing she’d felt before. The orgasm blossoming inside her began where most orgasms ended. She knew she would be lucky if she didn’t pass out when she came.

Samantha whimpered. She wanted to move, too, but they wouldn’t let her. She might have been the novice in this scenario, but she knew what her body needed, and it needed to move.

Suddenly, she bucked against Stefano just as he thrust into her. It made his gentle stroke harder and deeper than he intended. He froze.

“Don’t stop.” She pleaded with him. “Please, I can’t bear it. I can’t stay still.”

He seemed to understand.

Alexei understood something, too. “You’ll come twice,” he said. “This time.” His thrusts came faster and harder. The rhythm he established with Stefano faltered as both men sought their own pleasure.

Pins and needles invaded Samantha’s extremities. She felt lighter, like she was floating, yet she could see where her hands made contact with the bed on either side of Alexei’s head. With an unrestrained howl, she came.

They didn’t stop. She felt like she was being splintered, torn into a million pieces, and still they didn’t stop. “I can’t,” she sobbed, not caring that her words were incoherent to her own ears.

Her back arched. Her knees dug into the mattress and her feet lifted until Stefano’s body stopped them. She felt Stefano’s shoulder against the back of her head. She froze, momentarily numb to all sensation. Every cell in her body seized for a split second, and then pulsed violently as she came again.

She heard their shouts, but they came from so far away and they made no sense. Her vision faded to black.

* * * *

“I think she liked it.”

Stefano withdrew from her slumbering body as gently as he could. She was going to be sore enough and he had no wish to add to her discomfort. “Yeah,” he said, agreeing with his brother. “She has a bit of a masochistic streak I’d like to know more about.”

“Stef.”

Lex was far too cautious sometimes, but in this instance, he was correct. Sammy had to want it. She had to ask for it, and not in general terms. She had to select some of the implements she wanted used on her and she had to approve the ones they wanted to use on her.

“At least we’re in town for a week. She’s gotta live close.”

Lex stroked her hair another time before he rolled her over so that he could pull out. “We’re not done with her yet.”

Stefano scooted to the edge of the bed and stood up. He raked his gaze over her naked body. That luscious body advertized danger on every inch of her sinfully smooth skin. She was so incredibly sexy. “No, but she needs a nap. Twenty minutes?”

“Yeah.”

“I’m going to hit the shower.”

Lex nodded. “I’ll clean her up.”

Chapter 4

She woke late. Being a morning person, Samantha's internal alarm clock usually went off at the crack of dawn. This was a good thing, since she was in the habit of photographing sunrises.

She liked sunsets, too, but nothing compared to the way watching the sun rise made her feel. The dawn was full of freshness, new beginnings, and eternity. It was a promise yet to be fulfilled, a chance for something wonderful to happen.

Secretly, she was working on a book of sunrises. Many of them were photographed, but an increasing number were painted. She was in the process of experimenting with watercolors and acrylics. The vision she had for her book had evolved. Where she first thought to have it consist of photographs, she now wanted it to mostly feature her paintings.

Her apartment didn't have the best light to support her pursuits, but she compensated by purchasing powerful lights.

Today, she missed the dawn by several hours. When her eyes flew open—she had never been one to wake slowly—Samantha knew she had missed her chance. It was something she expected. Even if she hadn't spent a few pleasure-filled hours with Stefano and Alexei, yesterday had been a big day and last night had been a late night.

Truthfully, she had been tired when she knocked on their door.

Bodies pressed against hers on either side. One curved along her backside, a little underneath her. Half her body rested on top of him. A hand on her shoulder and a cheek pressed against the top of her head belonged to him. The other body faced hers. His hand rested on her thigh and his face was buried between her breasts.

She squelched the beginnings of possessiveness that started to unfurl in her chest. It felt good to wake up sandwiched between two handsome men who had both proven to be fantastic lovers, but this was a one-time thing. She had no right to feel anything other than sated.

The scant light glowing from behind the heavy curtains gave her barely enough light to see them. The small differences that helped her differentiate between Alexei and Stefano disappeared when they slept. However, a bit of intuition told her that Stefano's head was the one in her breasts. She had no proof, but it didn't really matter.

Gently, she lifted Stefano's hand from her and eased his face back. He inhaled sharply, breathing deep before settling back into his slumber.

The sheet had slipped down in the night. She had no memory of getting under it, and her men had provided plenty of body heat to combat the coolness seeping from the air conditioner under the window.

Crawling from bed was simple.

She had a pressing need to use the bathroom, but she didn't want to wake Lex or Stef. The awkwardness of the morning after wasn't something she was eager to face.

Snatching her dress from where she had draped it over a chair, she pulled it on and zipped it up. She found her bra on the floor, but her panties were missing. Alexei had taken them on the small terrace when he had thanked her for saving him from a drunken guest.

She had no intention of looking through his pockets for them. If he wanted to keep her panties, he was welcome to them. Still, she glanced around the room, making sure they weren't lying in plain sight.

With a shake of her head, she dismissed it all. It was over. She glanced back at the bed. Their sprawled bodies were two silhouettes in the semidarkness. The sigh of longing was impossible to quash.

Closing the door as quietly as possible, she fled to the safety of her own room. It was down the hall and around the corner from theirs, but they couldn't know that.

A half hour later, she had showered, dressed, and packed. She might have dreams of being an artist, but it wasn't the job that paid the bills. After graduating from design school, she had hopped from job to job, trying to find something that suited her. While she was good at most of them, they didn't touch her soul the way photography and painting did.

Her current job was something many people would love to have. She had Sabrina's mother to thank for it. In a casual conversation at Thanksgiving the year before, Melinda Breszewski had mentioned she knew the owner of a large luxury travel company. She traveled extensively, letting them plan all of her trips.

When Samantha expressed a desire to travel like that, Melinda arranged a meeting between Samantha and her friend. Elizabeth Keyes and Samantha hit it off. The next thing Samantha knew, she had a job that required her to travel to different places to evaluate whether they were of a high enough quality to be included in one of the Keyes Destinations travel packages.

Today she was headed to Alaska. If she was lucky, she wouldn't miss her ten fifty-five flight. It was a long, long way to travel for a three night stay.

She slung her bag over her shoulder and rushed from the hotel. The blackened double doors swung open and swished closed behind her. Shoving her ticket and ten dollars at the nearest valet, she smiled sweetly. "I'm in a hurry."

He scurried off, seemingly unimpressed with her bribe.

"I thought you would already be gone."

Samantha whirled to face the amused voice.

Jonas smiled. His hands were thrust into the pockets of his jeans and he wore a rust-colored T-shirt with a blue, circular emblem on it.

The writing was so worn she couldn't make out what it might have once said.

He looked happy, which was saying a lot. After having gone through so much shit with his ex-wife, her big brother had pretty much given up on love. Samantha had become so used to seeing shadows of unhappiness behind his eyes that she forgot what he looked like without them.

Slept late," she said, tucking a stray strand of hair behind her ear. She met his eyes and grinned. "I hear congratulations are in order."

The sparkle in his eyes brightened. "Thanks, though it might put a damper on our honeymoon. Sabrina's inside right now puking her guts out."

Samantha shook her head. "You look entirely too happy about that. Why aren't you in there with her?"

He laughed and rocked on his heels. "The last time I tried, she cried and kicked me out. This way, she can maintain her dignity."

Dropping her bags to the ground, she held out her arms. Jonas stepped closer and wrapped his arms around her. Because he was the same height, her head didn't come to rest on his shoulder. She pressed her cheek to his.

"You deserve this, Joan." Slipping in the nickname he hated was dangerous when she was this close to him. He squeezed her harder. He might be approaching thirty-seven, but his solid musculature hadn't diminished.

She remembered when he started working out in high school, hoping to bulk up his lanky build. It hadn't happened. Because she was seven years younger and she had worshipped the ground he walked on, she had tried her best to help. She started out spotting him and ended up with the ability to bench-press the same amount.

Jonas hadn't said a word, though she knew it had been a blow to his ego.

She couldn't lift a hundred pounds repeatedly anymore, having traded in the time spent weight lifting for art and dance lessons. Even

then, Jonas had been a good big brother. Dancing hadn't come easy to her and Jonas had taken the time to help her practice in the basement. Both of them had come out of the experience with some good skills.

Jonas was also one of the few people who knew how badly she wanted to pursue art full time.

He released her and stepped back. "Where are you off to?"

"Alaska." She smiled. "I'm going to see big whales and fly in tiny planes."

"Sounds like fun." He inclined his head. "I bet you'll see some good sunrises. Maybe catch the Northern Lights?"

That had been high on her wish list. She nodded. "Maybe."

He gestured toward the baggage at her feet. "I hope your cameras aren't in there."

"No," she said. There was no way she would have dropped them like that. "I have to run home and grab my stuff."

"Sam!"

Sabrina's voice seemed a little weak. Turning, Samantha saw she was right. Dark circles ringed Sabrina's eyes. She had done her best to hide them under a layer of makeup, but she hadn't been overly successful.

Samantha scooped the smaller woman up in a big hug. The first time she had met Sabrina, she had done something similar. Her new sister-in-law had stiffened before returning the hug. It wasn't until later that Sabrina warmed up enough to let down her guard.

Now Sabrina returned her hug with warmth and affection, whispering a question in Sam's ear. "Did you have fun last night?"

"Hell, yeah."

She released Sabrina. Immediately, Jonas wrapped his arm around his wife's waist and pulled her closer. He planted a kiss on the top of her head.

"Feeling better?"

Sabrina bristled. "Do I look better?"

That was a loaded question. Samantha winced before Jonas answered.

“You look like shit. We can put the trip off, Mrs. Spencer. The doctor said it should pass in another month or so.”

Sabrina shook her head. “I took a pill.”

“Great,” Jonas said. His voice dripped with sarcasm. “You’ll sleep through the flight and be up all night.”

Sabrina giggled. A blush bloomed in her cheeks. “Then you’d better get some sleep on the flight, too.”

A minivan pulled up to the curb. Though she lacked kids and the things most people associated with that kind of transportation, Sam found the storage space to be a bonus. Canvases fit inside very well, and she had negotiated a great deal on it.

She breathed a sigh of relief. She could escape before Sabrina and Jonas got too gooey with each other.

She bent to pick up her bags, but Jonas beat her to it. “I got these, Sammy.”

A BMW pulled up next, Sabrina’s wedding gift to Jonas. Though she had never complained about the piece of junk Jonas had driven for the past year, Sabrina had developed a habit of pursing her lips and studying the car as if trying to figure out what in the world it was doing in her driveway. Then she would sigh and turn away, shaking her head. The gift had surprised Jonas, but nobody else.

The slamming of a door jerked Sam’s attention back to her own battered vehicle. Jonas turned back, beaming a smile at both ladies.

Sabrina’s hand crept around Sam’s wrist, and a gentle pressure drew Sam down to Sabrina’s level. “I’ll see you in Kentucky in eleven days,” she said. “I want details, Sammy. Lots and lots of details.”

* * * *

Stefano woke with a hand resting on his chest. Alexei's. Lifting his brother's arm by the wrist, he shoved it back to the other side of the bed. With a groan, he sat up, stretched, and yawned. Then he opened his eyes.

Hotel room. Stef hadn't drunk much the night before, but he was a solid sleeper and he almost always woke disoriented. Memories surfaced. Long, golden hair. Cornflower blue eyes. A light dusting of freckles across her nose that he hadn't noticed until she passed out and he had the chance to stare at her all he wanted.

His attention went to the chair over which she had spread her dress. Bare upholstery. Shit. She was gone.

A glance at the clock showed that it was after ten. Sleeping this late was an unusual occurrence for Stefano. He was a morning person. The freshness of a new day never failed to get his ass out of bed. Lex was a different story. If Alexei was up before they sky turned pink, then something important was about to happen.

It meant no competition for the shower. The warm spray woke him up and the aroma wafting from the mug of coffee Alexei set on the counter in the kitchenette roused him the rest of the way. Stefano drained his mug, loving the way the temperature of the warm coffee nearly scalded his throat.

"She's gone," Lex said, unnecessarily.

From Lex's tone, Stef knew his brother was upset. He turned, taking the half step necessary to lean his shoulder against the wall separating the kitchenette from the living area. Lex's dark brows were drawn together, and he frowned into his mug.

"She didn't leave a note or wake us up to say goodbye or anything."

No, she hadn't. Stefano might like to be up in the morning, but he wasn't much of a talker. Luckily, words were frequently unnecessary when it was just the two of them.

Alexei scrubbed a hand down his face, pinching between his eyes like he was fighting a headache. “Maybe she didn’t like something about last night.”

Stefano set his mug down on the low table in front of the couch and sat down. It wasn’t like Lex to worry about a woman’s reaction the next morning. “I think the fact she passed out from orgasming speaks for itself.”

He sounded a lot cooler and nonchalant than he felt inside. Now that the shower and the caffeine had time to work their magic, his mind was functioning again. That first reaction, dismay at waking up without Sammy’s soft curves pressing against his body, returned in full force. Sammy had been a beautiful and responsive submissive, whether she claimed the label or not.

“She passed out because she was tired. It’s not like she came to us fresh and well-rested. Remember when Anastasia and Lila were bridesmaids two years ago? They were up at the crack of dawn running errands for whoever the hell got married.” Alexei punctuated his flat and cynical delivery of his disagreement with swallows of coffee.

“Deanna,” Stefano supplied. He sipped at the hot liquid in his mug. “Hot little bitch who kept offering to give us blowjobs whenever she’d stay the night with Ana. She ended up marrying some poor son of a bitch connected to the Fords.”

Lex grunted. “I want her again.”

They both knew he wasn’t referring to Deanna. Having resisted that temptation at the tender age of sixteen, neither felt the need to revisit the idea. Deanna had been fifteen at the time, a whole year older than their little sister, Anastasia, and damn hard to resist. However, they knew if Ana ever found out they had messed around with one of her friends, her fury would not be worth the experience.

Stefano stared into his empty cup, wishing his insides didn’t feel just as hollow. “So do I.”

Without a word, Lex pushed buttons on his phone. A few seconds elapsed before a soft voice answered on the other end.

“Sabrina?” Alexei frowned. “Are you all right?”

Stefano listened. From the bits he heard, he surmised that Sabrina was pregnant and suffering some ill effects. Alexei conveyed congratulations from both of them and asked about Samantha.

Alexei sat up, scooting to the edge of the couch cushion and slamming his cup on the flimsy pressed-wood table. “Hello? Are you still there?”

For as long as he could remember, people assumed he and Lex had some kind of special twin connection. Maybe they did, but it wasn't of the supernatural variety. It came from spending so much time together, from having similar likes and dislikes. Right now, Stefano knew something was wrong, but not from any special vibe.

Alexei's expression darkened as he struggled to keep his temper in check.

“Why not?”

Very few people could withstand the steel in Lex's voice when he got like this. Stefano watched his brother's fists tighten.

“When?” Alexei listened, the knuckles on his fist tightening, and then he growled. When he spoke again, he had mastered his emotions. “I understand. Thank you. Have a great trip.”

Lex's tight tone had sent more than one woman to her knees. None of their tactics had ever worked on Sabrina Breszewski, not that they had ever seriously tried. She was the daughter of their mother's good friend, she was a year older, and she had been intimidating as hell. The woman was made from stern stuff. Her Dom definitely had his hands full.

Throwing the phone to Stef, he said, “Your turn.”

“Sabrina won't give you Sammy's number? Why?”

He sighed. “You know how she is. She said she'd give Sam our numbers the next time she sees her. In two weeks. It seems Samantha is traveling for work. She caught a flight this morning.”

Stefano exhaled hard. "I'll call Drew."

Five minutes later, Stefano stared at the ten digits he'd written on the hotel's stationery. What if last night was enough for her? She'd left without a word or a note.

"Is there a reason you're scowling at the number instead of calling it?"

"We should wait," he said. "If we call her now, we'll seem too eager, not in control. I'd like to see if she comes to us first."

Alexei frowned, but he didn't disagree. "This could backfire."

Yeah, it could.

Chapter 5

The wheels touched down on the runway at Detroit Metro. Despite the smooth landing, Samantha's stomach lurched. She didn't mind flying, but the takeoffs and landings sucked. Three days and four nights in subpar hotels had done little to sweeten her mood.

With a sigh, she thought about how the flight to Alaska hadn't been as bad. She had been thoroughly relaxed. However, by the time evening rolled around, she was horny again. One night with the Morozov brothers hadn't been enough. Briefly, she thought about asking Sabrina for contact information. Then she jettisoned the idea. Stefano and Alexei probably didn't lack for booty calls, and most of their partners probably lived in Florida with them instead of all the way across the country.

At least she knew now what the problem was. She was too much woman for one man. By the time she picked up her luggage and freed her car from long-term parking, she had returned to her earlier grim mood. Knowing she needed two men and finding two men willing to share her were two different things.

Because it was Thursday afternoon, the traffic on Ecorse, Middlebelt, and Eureka was merely heavy. It would only take thirty minutes to get to her rental in Wyandotte.

Her phone rang as she slammed on her brakes at the Allen Road light. This one was a killer. It meant the stoplights on the rest of her route would be timed so that she would hit them all. She didn't bother to check the expletives pouring from her mouth as she hit the green button to answer.

“I take it your trip wasn’t all you hoped it would be?” Ellen’s question was punctuated with chuckling.

“It was fine, just not up to Keyes’s standards.” That was an understatement. The pictures the hotel had sent must have been photoshopped or they had been taken when the place was new and in good repair.

“The potty mouth is because?”

“I hit a light.”

The other end was silent. Samantha might have thought the call dropped if she hadn’t heard Jake squealing in the background.

“Figuratively, right?”

Samantha sighed. Ellen was not from the Downriver area. Only people who spent any significant amount of time there could commiserate. She opted to change the subject. “What’s up?”

It was a valid question. Though she saw Ellen frequently, Ellen was like an older sister. She was there when you needed someone, but when she called, she always wanted something.

Ellen laughed again. “I hope you’re not busy tonight.”

“As a matter of fact, I am.” A shower was the first thing on her list. Then there would be Chinese food, delivered hot and ready to her front door. The remainder of her evening would consist of fulfilling her obligations to her illicit love affair with her DVR.

“I need you to come with me tonight.”

There it was. “Where?”

“A new club has opened up. They’re advertising classes.”

Ellen owned the Southfield City Club, known to its patrons as The Club. The main part of it was a swanky dance club. The members-only part of it was a bondage club where submissives paid to be whipped, spanked, bound, or whatever else made them happy. Samantha frowned. “Dance classes? I don’t think people learning to do the Electric Slide to Lady Gaga’s latest is really a threat.”

“Not those kinds of classes.”

Samantha was silent. Ellen had talked for years about hosting classes and seminars where people demonstrated safe bondage techniques, but she had never moved beyond the planning stages.

“Ellen, I don’t want to take those kinds of classes.”

A grunt came through loud and clear. “You don’t have to watch, just go with me. Ryan is busy and Jake is staying the night with my parents. If we look like two lesbians out together, people will leave us alone.”

It was Sam’s turn to laugh. “Not tonight, Ellen. I’m beat.”

On the other end, Ellen’s tone brightened. “Okay, I’ll pick you up at eight.”

“That’s not what I…” Samantha stopped. Ellen had already disconnected. Sam knew from past experience that Ellen was as good as her word. If she said eight, she meant eight. If need be, she would drag Samantha from the house forcibly. However, that wouldn’t be necessary. What was it about this woman that made it impossible to say no to her?

* * * *

The doorbell chimed at seven forty-five. Sam was in the bathroom putting the finishing touches on her makeup. She used a minimal amount. Her goal was to make it home by midnight. The rumpled sheets in her bedroom from her earlier nap beckoned, and Samantha sorely wanted to curl up there with a good book until her heavy eyelids took over. She wondered if Ellen would take the hint if nobody answered her knock.

Samantha sighed and went to the door, dragging her feet the entire way. No matter how interested she might be in the subject of bondage, she had no desire to watch someone else get tied up.

After greeting Ellen with a grim glare, Sam turned and shuffled away, dragging her feet across the wooden flooring.

“What crawled up your panties and died? Sabrina told me you had a good time the other night. You should be floating on clouds.”

Since the voice followed her into the kitchen, Samantha surmised Ellen hadn't taken the hint. That was no surprise. Ellen ignored hints she didn't like.

Samantha avoided the question. She grabbed her purse and keys. “Are you being an evil bitch because Jonas is out of town?”

“That's pregnant evil bitch to you.” She grinned, enjoying Samantha's foul mood. “And no, I'm not. If he were in town, I'm sure he'd want to bring Sabrina. There's nothing more fun than watching your favorite submissive watch someone else being bound. Ryan usually loves this stuff, but he has some kind of meet-and-greet going on with freshmen that he can't get out of.”

Ellen's husband, Ryan, was a high school science teacher. Samantha focused on Ellen's revelation.

“Congratulations. When are you due?”

“April,” she said. “One month after Sabrina. I'm not looking forward to telling Jonas. He's going to say something nasty, I just know it.”

Samantha rolled her eyes and headed for the door. “You handle him like no one else can, Ellen. If I know you, you'll tell him in front of Sabrina so she can get mad at him if he starts making inappropriate comments.”

“I don't know,” Ellen said as she followed Samantha to the car. “Now that she's pregnant, he'll only do light bindings and spankings with her. He won't whip her or bind her in positions that are uncomfortable. She's kinda pissed about that. I don't think I want to give her more of a reason to go off on him.”

They climbed into Ellen's minivan and sped off. Samantha silently cheered her brother. At least he had some sense in that thick skull of his. She didn't know the exact details of what happened in a BDSM bedroom, but she did know Sabrina pretty well. It was hard to believe she'd want to do something to jeopardize her pregnancy.

“Why?” The question burst from Samantha after a long silence.

Ellen glanced over from the driver’s seat, startled. “I need your untrained eye. It’s been years since I’ve been to one of these kinds of meetings. I’ll probably be picking apart the presenters instead of paying attention to what’s going on in the audience.”

Samantha had wanted to know why Sabrina was pissed about Jonas placing limits on their play, but this worked, too. “Why do you care what’s going on in the audience?”

“I want to know if they’re there for an erotic show or if they actually are learning. When my parents owned the Club, they used to have instructional demonstrations every other month. My dad thinks it’s a travesty that I’ve done away with them, but it seemed to me that it was one big horny convention. People watched, and then they headed off into the shadows. I don’t want people to mistake my club for a sex club. I run an honest establishment. The state hasn’t shut me down a single time.”

The evening summer sky wasn’t yet dark, but headlights from oncoming cars flashed, lighting Ellen’s face. Samantha stared at this woman she’d known forever in shocked silence. Rarely did Ellen climb up on a soapbox. She was usually too busy knocking other people down from theirs.

Sam wrinkled her brow in confusion. “So you want to know if I think it’s worthwhile?”

“I don’t know what I want you to look for. You always seem to have a unique take on things. I want that from you.”

Samantha thought about that for a few miles. This wasn’t her forte. How could Ellen possibly expect her to have an opinion that was helpful? However, that topic didn’t keep her interest. She wanted an answer to her intended question.

“So why is Sabrina mad about Jonas not whipping her? He adores her, and he’s always wanted kids. She has to know he’d never do anything to hurt her or that baby.”

Ellen grinned. “Because she knows damn well he could whip her without endangering the pregnancy. He’s always used a light hand with her, never doing anything that would leave a bruise or a mark the next morning.”

Samantha started. The idea of being whipped left the metallic taste of fear in her mouth, but she understood that some people liked it. “If it won’t endanger her, why won’t he do it?”

“I’d say it was a control thing, but it’s not.” Ellen stopped behind a long line of cars waiting to pay for parking. A tall chain-link fence separated the sidewalk from the parking lot. She frowned at the car in front of her. “That’s a lot of people.”

“Ellen,” Samantha prompted.

Her nostrils flared, but at least she didn’t pretend to have forgotten the question. “He’s scared. She works too much, and she’s tired all the time. Her career is taking off with this account she won a few months ago. She wants to work and he wants her to quit, but he knows he can’t ask it of her.”

The line inched forward. “Why can’t he?” If it was taking a toll on her health, it seemed the only sane and logical choice. It wasn’t like Sabrina had to work.

“It has to be her idea and her choice. As a Dom, he’s in a position of power over her. He could order her to quit or ask her to quit and she probably would. However, it would irrevocably damage the trust they’ve established, and it would ultimately destroy their relationship. Notice I didn’t ask Ryan to blow off his obligations tonight even though I really wanted him here. I love that man, and a relationship isn’t about one person.”

Samantha grinned as the minivan lurched to a stop inches from the bumper in front of them. “So you strong-armed me into coming.”

Ellen flashed her grin again. “I don’t tie you up and spank you, Sammy. It’s hardly the same thing.”

A fist tightened around Samantha’s stomach at Ellen’s use of that nickname. It wasn’t like people didn’t call her that all the time.

Samantha was used to people shortening her name. She didn't care whether someone called her Sam, Sammy, or Samantha. However, the last person to call her by that name had been Stefano.

At the time, it hadn't mattered too much. But now it seemed like a remnant of something special between them. Samantha shrugged away the feeling. It was a false intimacy. Ellen had been using that nickname for twenty years.

* * * *

Alexei paced inside yet another hotel room. He could have chosen to stay at his parents' house, but then he would forfeit privacy. Even before his mother passed away twelve years earlier, his father hadn't been a man who respected privacy. It was his house and nothing was off-limits.

He had the nerve to wonder why he and Stef fled the first moment they could. Dmitri Morozov was a domineering, controlling man. He had ruled the Morozov household with an iron fist that their mother had not once challenged for any reason. It wasn't that their father was abusive, just that he always got what he wanted. He had built Morozov Industries into a multi-billion dollar corporation, and he had used that position to surround himself with people who recognized his absolute authority.

Their mother seemed happy doing whatever her husband wanted. He controlled what friends she had, how she dressed, what she ate, and who she spoke to on the phone. Though she never complained, Alexei knew the toll it exacted on her. When she died from a stroke at age forty-five, he hadn't been surprised. She internalized every bit of stress. It had to come out somehow.

Alexei knew exactly who was to blame. It often puzzled him that Stefano could forgive their father so easily. After coming to blows several times, this was a point he almost never discussed with his brother.

He and Stef resolved to never be that totalitarian with whomever they married, and they never stayed at their father's house.

Stef emerged from one of the suite's bedrooms, rubbing a towel over his wet hair. He wore a pair of jeans and nothing else. "Are we dressing the same tonight or are we going to give the ladies a break?"

Alexei pressed his lips into a grim line. There was only one woman he wanted and Stefano wanted them to wait to see if she called first. "Dress the same."

Stefano rolled his eyes. "She's not going to be there. She's not into this kind of stuff, remember?"

"Not yet," Alexei said, bowing to the hint of sarcasm in his brother's voice. "We should call her."

Stef shook his head. "It's Thursday. We agreed to wait until the weekend."

That was one of the less intelligent decisions they'd made. Alexei wanted to blame Stefano for all of it, but he was equally culpable. "Fine. But I'm going to be horny after tonight. All that excess energy is going to cause me to turn into a dick."

Stef rolled his eyes and returned to his room. When he returned, he was wearing a T-shirt that was identical to the one Alexei wore. His socks and tennis shoes were exactly the same as well.

"There will be other submissives there. I bet some of them will even be tall and blonde like Sammy."

Alexei narrowed his eyes at Stefano. "There is no substitute. If you don't want her, bro, I'll take her all for my own."

When Stefano turned away with a scowl on his face, Alexei knew he'd called his brother's bluff. Stef didn't want a look-alike any more than he did.

A half hour later, they took the elevator down to the lobby and headed to the convention room in the back. This hotel was more like what they were used to. The suites were larger than many people's homes. The furniture was real and solid. The ceilings were high and the rooms were bright and airy.

The lobby was no less lavish. Crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling, filling the cavernous room with soft light. The intricate carvings in the crown molding were echoed in the chair rails and in the plush furniture scattered throughout the space.

Huge, uniformed security guards blocked the doors to the convention room. All five of them were dressed in black jeans and sleeveless shirts. With their shaved heads, there was very little besides skin tone to tell them apart.

A maze of heavy black curtains prevented passers-by from seeing inside the room. The windows on the outside walls would be similarly screened. This event was for an elite group of patrons. Alexei presented his invitation. Stefano did the same.

The guard grunted and turned to his side, barely allowing the brothers to slip past his body. Alexei knew better than to say anything. *Piss off the wrong person and no amount of money would buy his way back inside.*

Stefano lacked the same filter. “Thanks,” he said. “But I’m not into guy-on-guy action. Maybe the next one will be your type.”

The guard in question nodded and moved aside a little more. Alexei didn’t bother to comment. Stefano had always been the more brazen of the pair.

“You’re so oblivious to dudes who like you.” Stef’s voice came close to Alexei’s ear, his tone low enough to not carry in a quiet room, and this room was quiet.

No music was piped through speakers. A good-sized crowd of people moved about the large room. Conversation came to them as a sea of murmurs.

Large round tables were set up through the length of the room. A dais in the center was barely discernable. From this far away, it looked like a table that lacked one of the fancy, heavy linen tablecloths covering all the other tables. Servers wandered the room with trays of fluted wine glasses.

Most of the people in the room would not have any. It was bad form to mix alcohol with something that required such a high degree of mental control.

It was exactly like the many corporate events they attended. The only difference was the clothing. No power suits could be found here. Women and men dressed in a variety of styles. Some looked as if they were ready for a night on the town. Others, like Alexei and Stefano, dressed more casually in jeans and cotton shirts. And a good number of submissives wore leather or lace. Some were collared and some were leashed. The black corsets of the women never failed to make his dick jerk. Enough staring would make his pants uncomfortably tight.

It wasn't that the corsets pushed their breasts up. That was something Stefano liked. Alexei liked the posture it forced on a submissive—back straight, shoulders back, breasts pushed out. Samantha would look incredible in one. Alexei allowed himself a brief vision of her kneeling before him, her hands tied behind her back and linked to her ankles. Her knees would be spread so she could hide nothing from his view.

He shook his head, forcing the image away.

Because it was a public event of a serious nature, there was no nudity. There were some very short skirts and shorts, but nothing inappropriate showed.

Seats were not assigned. He didn't want to be too close to the dais. The pants and moans of a submissive, any submissive, never failed to arouse him. He scanned the room, looking for the best place to sit.

Stefano grabbed his arm, jerking Alexei from his thoughts. "Fuck me," he said, pointing across the room to a table in the very back.

Adrenaline pumped through Alexei's body, burning his heart and lungs, bringing a tide of lust with it. Never in a million years would he have thought Samantha would be there. He wished for it. He fantasized about it. He had even masturbated in the shower to the

image of Samantha here with them, but he never thought it would happen.

Samantha's attention was absorbed by the pretty brunette sitting next to her. Long, sun-streaked blonde hair fell over one shoulder, obscuring most of her face. She was turned away from them. He couldn't see whether she wore pants or a skirt, but her shirt was one of the ones with the thin straps that begged to be cut with a pair of scissors. It would slide down her torso and pool around her hips. Maybe it would catch on the tips of her hardened nipples first.

Without waiting for Stefano, he headed in her direction. Maybe she hadn't called, but fate was telling him something, and he wasn't about to ignore it. He pulled out the chair next to her and sat down without asking if she minded.

The brunette perked up, leveling a Dominatrix gaze that would have turned a submissive to jelly. He met her challenge with a cocky smile and a steady stare.

* * * *

Samantha watched Ellen's expression harden. Her eyes had been lit with laughter a moment ago as she regaled something funny her little boy, Jake, had done. Now they were steely with the look Ellen used to use on Jonas when he was being an ass. She'd long since given it up because he was immune, but it usually worked on other people.

She sat up and shifted her attention to her right side. Her jaw dropped as shock stole her ability to speak.

"You left without saying goodbye."

Samantha studied those cobalt eyes for signs he was angry. She found nothing. "You were asleep. I didn't want to wake you."

"Why?"

The question surprised Sam because the answer seemed obvious. There were several good ones. She opted to ignore his question.

Turning back to Ellen, she indicated Alexei with the sweep of her hand. “Ellen, this is Alexei. Lex, this is Ellen. I think you met at the wedding.”

Alexei stuck out his hand, extending it in such a way that his arm brushed her chest. The spark that passed between them had to be something only she felt.

“Best woman, right?”

Ellen laughed and shook Alexei’s hand. “It’s nice to see you again. I seem to recall that you have a look-alike somewhere.”

Alexei nodded. “He was right behind me.”

Samantha craned her neck to see around him, but Stefano was nowhere in sight. “He’s gone now.”

“Don’t worry, Samantha. He’ll be along. He wouldn’t miss this for the world.” Alexei leaned closer and slung his arm along the back of her chair, making his next words intimate. “I thought you said you weren’t into bondage.”

Pleasant shivers ran up and down her neck where his breath fanned her skin. Samantha leaned back in her chair. She was running out of ways to avoid touching him. Because his arm was already there, leaning back didn’t help. “I’m not. I’m here with Ellen. She’s into this stuff.”

Next to her, Ellen tilted her water glass up, caught an ice cube, and chewed on it. Sam didn’t think Ellen was listening until she spoke between crunches. “She’s ripe,” Ellen said to Alexei. “I was hoping she’d see it tonight.”

Anger surged through Samantha as the meaning of Ellen’s words sunk in. “You said Ryan was busy tonight.”

Ellen shot her one of those superior looks that made Sam want to smack it right off her face. “You don’t honestly think I have an issue with coming to a place like this by myself, do you? Not to mention that I’ve monetarily encouraged several of my Doms to come tonight. I can write it off as staff development.”

Samantha pressed her lips together. She would have shot to her feet, but Alexei's hand pressed down on her shoulder, keeping her seated. Before she could glare at him or say anything, a shadow over her other shoulder caught her attention. Ellen smiled up at Stefano and slid over one chair.

Stefano was dressed identically to Alexei in jeans and a light blue shirt. He leaned closer. Samantha thought he might say something, but he pressed his warm, firm lips to hers and smacked a loud kiss on them, generating a burst of electricity that left her wanting more.

"You missed us, didn't you?" A confident smile accompanied that cocky statement. If Sam hadn't been seated, she would have had to sit down. Just being near him made her knees weak. The kiss, brief as it was, finished her off.

She opted for partial honesty. "I've been busy."

He sat down and leaned against the back of the chair, affecting a relaxed air that didn't extend to his rigid muscles. He was a panther, ready to pounce on her at the least provocation.

Samantha shifted, uncomfortable under his steady, expectant stare. "I thought you lived in Florida."

His panther's smile was slow and predatory. "We're in town on business. We'll be here until Sunday."

"We have family here," Alexei added. Samantha swung her head to meet Alexei's less deadly gaze. "We grew up in Michigan, remember?"

Samantha nodded and wondered why the sound of his voice made her so wet. He wasn't saying anything sexy. She was beginning to think he could read a grocery list and bring her to the brink.

A pressure against her leg brought her attention back to Stefano. He had moved his chair closer. A similar pressure informed her that Alexei had done the same thing on her right. She questioned Stefano with her eyes, but she said nothing.

He wasn't smiling. His blue eyes were nearly grey with the gravity of the situation. "Tell us to leave you alone."

And they would. He didn't say it out loud, but she knew what kind of men they were. No meant no and stop meant stop.

"Just so you understand," she began. Her throat was suddenly dry. She sipped her water before continuing. "I'm not into this stuff."

"Noted." Stefano made no move to give her more space.

The lights dimmed before Samantha could say anything. She looked over to Ellen to find her friend's attention riveted on the door at the far side of the room.

A Dom followed his sub as she navigated the maze of tables that would take them to the central dais. He wore black leather pants and no shirt. Thankfully, he had the chest to carry it off.

The sub wore a shapeless white gown. It covered her from neck to ankle, revealing nothing about her shape or her outfit.

"He'll take that off of her onstage," Alexei whispered. His warm breath caressed her skin.

"She walks in front, a place of honor, because she has earned the privilege." Stefano supplied this on her other side.

Samantha had wondered about that. Most submissives seemed to wait somewhere behind their Dom until they were told to do otherwise. Her lip curled in distaste. Nobody would ever treat her like that.

"How did she earn the honor?" Sam wasn't sure she wanted to know what depths to which the woman had sunk in order to earn that privilege.

"It's likely she agreed to do this demonstration."

Sam snorted. "Like she had a choice."

The only Doms she knew who kept subs were Ellen and Jonas, but they seemed to have a bedroom-only policy. Anyone who didn't know them wouldn't be able to guess at that side of their relationships. She couldn't see Sabrina or Ryan putting up with being leashed or being relegated to the status of a pet.

Alexei's fingers traced a light trail along her wrist. "The submissive always has a choice."

“I’m not a submissive,” she reminded him. She wondered if her denial rang as hollow to him as it did to her.

The Dom lifted his slave onto the raised platform and followed her up. He drew her gown over her head, folded it, and placed it at the edge of the dais. The woman wore a skimpy black leather bra that looked more like a bathing suit top. The shoulder straps tied around the neck. Her short leather skirt matched. If he bent her over something, everyone would see whether or not she wore panties. Samantha searched the woman’s face for signs of intelligence. What kind of woman let herself be paraded in front of a crowd and treated this way?

The woman’s expression was expectant and nervous, yet she showed no signs of bolting. Samantha frowned, knowing she would never have entered the room if she were in the woman’s position.

“What do you mean, she has a choice? How so?”

“They negotiated what would happen beforehand. She might have chosen a type of punishment or a tool she wants him to use on her. He might have requested to use some of his favorites, but he can only do that if she agreed to it.”

Samantha tore her eyes from the woman and fastened them on Alexei. The idea that she might be able to ask for something, to request a fulfillment of her secret fantasies, brought tingles from her toes to her breasts. “Are you honestly saying she asked for this?”

Alexei grinned. “Can I kiss you?”

She hadn’t expected that question. Flustered, she couldn’t think of an answer. Did she want him to kiss her? Hell, yes, as long as he didn’t stop. On her other side, Stefano’s hand gripped her thigh under the table. The touch both excited her and calmed her down.

“You’re getting awfully nervous,” Alexei said. “We can fix that for you.”

“How?” The word came out as a croak, but she didn’t reach for her water.

He spread his fingers over her cheeks, sliding them until he cradled her head in his hands. His lips feathered across hers in a caress as light as his touch.

Though he didn't do much more than brush his lips against hers, he left her breathless and wanting more. When he released her, she turned her gaze away, giving her attention to the pair on the platform. The simple act had calmed her nerves, just as Lex said he could.

Stefano's questing hand slid down far enough to find out that her shorts ended just above her knee. She sucked a deep breath when his skin made contact with hers, and she hoped he didn't notice.

The woman knelt at her master's feet. Her bottom rested on her heels and her hands were clasped behind her neck, forcing her breasts to thrust forward. Her eyes focused on her master's feet.

"She has great posture," Alexei purred into her ear. "Her back is straight and her breasts are well presented. And look at the way her knees are spread. If she were naked, no part of her body would be hidden from his view. He's very pleased with her right now."

Samantha tore her gaze from the sub and focused on the Dom. He smiled down at his charge with fondness, affection, and pride. As she watched, the sub rocked back and rose without moving her hands. It was a flowing, graceful movement. Next to her, both Alexei and Stefano sucked air.

"That was hot."

She didn't turn her head to acknowledge Stefano's remark. She thought it was crude to say something like that when they were openly hitting on her.

"Yeah," Alexei agreed. "Not many people can do that without losing their balance."

Between them, Samantha snorted. She'd danced for enough years to know that the motion was deceptively difficult. It required strong thighs and iron abs. She hadn't executed a move like that in a few years, but Sam was relatively certain she could still do it.

She felt Stefano staring at her, and she did her best to ignore him.

On stage, the Dom lifted what looked like a metal rod. The sub spread her legs as her master knelt before her. He secured the bar to either of her ankles with leather cuffs. He spoke as he buckled the straps, giving instructions about how far to spread a sub's legs and how tight to make the buckles.

With a tiny movement of his hand, he motioned his sub to bend forward at the waist. As he tied her wrists to her ankles, he talked about flexibility. His sub was a yoga practitioner and very flexible. He moved her around to show variations on the knee positioning and slack in the rope for less flexible submissives.

Samantha was impressed as she listened to him address issues with joints and tendons. Across the table, Ellen sat in rapt attention, so focused on the demonstration that she ignored the crowd, just as she feared she would. Sam hazarded quick glances at the men on either side of her. Both Alexei and Stefano listened intently, seeming to absorb every word coming from the Dom. They nodded as they listened. Their eyes moved over the sub, but not with sexual interest. With a jolt, she realized how much they cared about the safety of the submissive.

She knew Jonas loved Sabrina and Ellen loved Ryan, but she never before realized the lengths to which they went to protect their submissive. Ellen's words about the tension between Sabrina and Jonas came back to Sam. Jonas was going to do everything in his power to protect Sabrina whether or not she liked it. The Dom on the dais emphasized safety and responsibility.

Alexei's hand lazily stroked her hair. Under the tablecloth, Stefano's hand touched her knee, stroking it the same way the Dom touched his sub.

Giving in to an impish impulse, Samantha leaned closer to Stefano. "Don't worry, Stef. I'm very flexible."

Stefano leaned back to whisper in her ear. "Good, but I plan to test your limits anyway."

Maybe baiting him wasn't a good idea. He didn't think her remark implied consent, did he? Samantha meant to clear that up, but she was distracted by the Dom bending down like he was speaking to the submissive.

"What's he doing?" She dropped the question into the air, willing to accept an answer from anyone.

Alexei tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. "He's checking to make sure she's okay and she still wants to keep going. She'll give him a signal. They'll have worked out verbal cues and hand signals ahead of time. When she's gagged, he'll watch for the hand signals. Otherwise, he'll stop every now and again to ask her how she is. If she wants him to stop or lighten up, she'll use whatever word they've pre-arranged for that."

She must have looked shocked. She certainly was surprised that a Dom would care about what his sub wanted.

"I told you, Samantha. This is her choice. This is what she wants."

The Dom stood behind the submissive, positioning the bulge in his pants directly behind her exposed rear end. "This is a good position for many, many things." Titters moved through the crowd. His implication wasn't lost on anyone. Samantha felt her pussy grow slick at the idea of Alexei or Stefano in that position while she waited, helpless and bound.

"If you have toys to use, this is the perfect time to attach them. Though she has limited movement, she can see some of what you're doing. If your submissive needs a punishment, make sure to keep the force light. It's easy to topple anyone in this position, especially while whipping the buttocks or genitalia."

"Of course, if you have two Doms, one of them can hold you up while the other whips you," Stefano muttered under his breath as if he were speaking to himself.

Sam gasped. It wasn't shock at the picture he painted, it was shock at the fact she wanted it to happen. Somewhere between the talk of attaching toys and pussy whipping, she stopped denying that

the idea of all of this appealed to her. She didn't understand why. It just did. Moist heat rushed between her legs and made her squirm.

Alexei mistook her reaction. "We'd only punish you if you deserved it, Samantha. For purposes of sex play, we'd only hurt you in ways you like."

He held her gaze until she nodded her acceptance of his assurance.

"We wanted to show you the inverted position as well, but it's not safe to set the rack up on this dais without bolting it down." The Dom directed the audience's attention to the area directly behind Samantha's table.

She twisted in her chair. Two men, dressed in midnight black, appeared from the shadows. They tugged a curtain aside to reveal a ladderlike contraption. It looked as if someone had crafted four ladders with two-by-fours and bolted them into a square shape. Additional two-by-four posts angled to provide more support and stability. Everything was bolted to a heavy base.

The Dom and his sub appeared in front of it. Though the sub had been released from her bonds, her wrists were bound together and the leather cuffs still encircled her ankles. Now that she was closer, Sam noticed the chain around her neck. It wasn't a run-of-the-mill collar. Someone had taken the time to find something special. It no doubt had an inscription on it somewhere. Sam knew what it meant. The pair were romantically involved.

She turned toward him and he wrapped a rope around her waist. He wound it so that it went around her thighs, over her shoulders, and under her arms. He placed knots at strategic locations. When he finished, he stepped back.

"You can purchase harnesses, but my slave prefers the homemade kind. I'm holding a class next month to show you how to wind a safe harness. Do not try this without proper training. There's nothing wrong with using the pre-made kind. It's easier, and it's safe."

A cushion with a wooden back was placed soft side up on the floor of the rack. Sam didn't see the Dom order her to move, but the

sub laid down on her back. Her legs were bent, and her feet rested on the base. If she had been naked, everyone would have had an eyeful. As it was, her wetness leaked through the cotton panties she wore under the skirt.

It was strange to share an intimacy like this with complete strangers. The Dom and sub were right in front of her. Samantha's chair lifted and turned. She no longer had to twist to see the demonstration. She murmured her thanks to Alexei and Stefano, both of whom have moved even closer.

Sam didn't know where this was heading, and that made it all the more exciting. She knew he would somehow bind his sub to the frame, but she didn't know how. He had mentioned an inverted position. Was he going to tie her upside down?

The Dom lifted the sub's legs and connected hooks at the end of thick leather straps to the leather cuffs on her ankles. Tossing the other end over the top of the frame, he secured them so that the sub was bound with her back on the ground and her legs in the air. Sam wondered how the sub had been able to walk with that metal bar forcing her ankles apart.

Next, he lifted her arms, separated the bindings, and retied them to the top of the frame as well. Except to wiggle, which the Dom made the sub demonstrate, she couldn't move at all.

Thick moisture soaked through the denim of Samantha's shorts and a spasm rocked through her body. The woman was exposed, but not in a position that made fucking easy. She knew this was a pose designed for foreplay and torture.

"This is a comfortable position for discipline as well," the Dom said. "She cannot escape the sting of the lash, and she can't wriggle out of any of the other kinds of torture."

He leaned down again, asking something of the sub. The low baritone of his voice traveled the short distance to Samantha. Though she couldn't make out his words, she heard the gentleness in his voice. He was praising her.

She said something, but the sibilance barely reached Samantha's ears. Then, without warning, she wrapped her wrists in the ropes holding them and pulled herself up. Because her feet had been bound in the air, she couldn't stand. It was an awkward position, but she held it until she was sure everyone could see what she had done and how. Then she continued hoisting herself until her hands found the rungs in the top of the frame. She stayed like that, crouched in the air.

Behind her, the Dom's smile grew. "If your sub is a little more athletically inclined, this position won't hold her for very long. Of course, what she's doing now is stressing her joints, and it isn't good for her to stay like that for very long. With subs like this, you'll need to use the whole frame."

"Damn straight," Stefano muttered. "Tie your arms to the top and your legs to the bottom. You won't be going anywhere."

Samantha pictured it so vividly that she could feel the rope around her wrists, biting into her skin as she pulled against it. "Would you whip me like that?"

She bit her lip as soon as the words escaped. She hadn't meant to say that. She hadn't meant to let either of them know how the demonstration was affecting her. There was a difference between watching something happen to another person who seemed to be enjoying it and having those things done to her.

"Whipping," Stefano began, shattering her hope that he had been so wrapped up in the demonstration that he wasn't paying attention to her, "sensitizes your skin so that you feel every touch magnified a thousand times."

"It hurts," she argued. "And I already have sensitive skin."

Stefano's hand, which hadn't staked a claim on her in this open position, moved to caress her wrist and the back of her hand where it rested on her thigh. "It stings, and it will make you even more sensitive."

On the other side, Alexei leaned closer. "We'd never hurt you, Samantha."

In the quick moments of their whispered conversation, the Dom had repositioned the sub so that she dangled from the top of the frame. The ropes holding her were shorter, and they seemed to have multiplied. Her wrists were inches from the wood and her ankles were bound just in front of them. She was bent completely in half with her legs spread, just as she had been on the floor. This was the inverted position the Dom had mentioned.

He pushed her pussy, setting her swaying helplessly back and forth. “No matter how strong she is, your sub won’t be moving from this position.”

The frame wasn’t much taller than the Dom. From the way the sub was positioned, he could still use her body for his own pleasure. Both her pussy and her anus hung at groin level.

Sam worried for the stress it put on the subs ankles and wrists, but the Dom wasn’t finished. He pointed out all the ways in which the harness supported her weight. The bindings on her wrists and ankles held her immobile, nothing more.

As he had done on the dais, the Dom demonstrated variations on the position for less flexible and less athletic submissives. He seemed to include male submissives in the less flexible category. Samantha didn’t know why. Anyone subjected to those kinds of positions on a regular basis couldn’t remain inflexible for long.

Then the Dom released the sub to the ground slowly. He massaged her muscles as he talked about the safety involved in releasing a submissive from this kind of complicated position.

Samantha was close enough to hear the whimpers and moans issuing from the submissive. When the demonstration finished and the lights came up, the Dom draped the shapeless white robe over the submissive’s body and led her out of the room.

Sam rose from her chair to turn it back to the table. She needed something in front of her to prevent her from feeling so exposed. The scene hadn’t seemed finished. There was something missing,

otherwise the submissive wouldn't have been whimpering and moaning like that.

"He'll take care of her."

Glancing sharply at Alexei, she frowned. "What does that mean?"

"It means he's going to fuck her." Ellen supplied this caveat.

Sam shifted her gaze to Ellen. She had completely forgotten about her friend. "I thought you said they were going to do a panel thing where they answer questions."

Ellen shrugged. "In about a half hour. She needs attention. You can't ask a sub to do everything she did and not reward her. That woman was amazing. Did you see how hard she fought to stay in the moment?"

On either side of her, Alexei and Stefano nodded in agreement.

"I think she needs more than just bondage." Alexei lifted an eyebrow at Ellen, asking her opinion, Dom to Dom.

Ellen considered it for a moment. "Yeah. I think she does, too. It's a rare sub who doesn't."

"Thank God," Stefano said. "There's something about a woman with pink skin that I find so attractive."

Heat crept up Samantha's cheeks. She knew they were both indirectly talking about her. Instead of sitting in her chair, she stood and gripped the back of it for support. "I'm going to the restroom." Without waiting for anyone's response, especially Ellen's, she fled.

Chapter 6

Public restrooms at upscale hotels weren't like public restrooms everywhere else. For starters, this one had a living room. One side of the room had a counter. A mirror extended from that ledge to the ceiling. Samantha leaned her weight on both of the hands she set on the counter.

The swishing sound of a flushing toilet drifted through the door. Water ran as someone washed her hands. A plump, little brunette emerged. She was dressed in a shiny pleather corset, a short pleather skirt, and matching high-heeled boots that extended high enough to disappear under the skirt.

She puckered her lips to the image of herself in the mirror next to Samantha, and then she fished around in her cleavage for something.

"I saw you out there," she said. She wasn't looking at Sam, but there was no one else around. "Those are two hot Doms you have on your hands."

Samantha stared at the woman, trying to figure out whether she was a submissive or a Dom. She wore no collar on her neck, but not all subs did.

The woman extracted a tube of lipstick from her corset and leaned over the counter. "Do they not let you talk to anyone?"

"They aren't mine. They have no say in my life."

She laughed. It was a soft, tinkling kind of sound and completely unexpected. She looked like her laugh should be raucous and loud. "They're certainly giving you the full-court press. I don't think you'll hold out too long. They did get you to come with them tonight."

“I didn’t come with them. I didn’t even know they’d be here.” And now she was trying to get herself together. Even if Lex and Stef hadn’t been here, the demonstration had been incredibly erotic. She ached to be tied up. She ached to feel their hands touching every part of her. She even ached to know what the sting of the lash felt like. Stefano had seemed so sure she would like it.

The door opened and closed. Ellen leaned against it and pressed a dramatic hand to her forehead. “Was it something I said?”

Samantha ignored Ellen’s attempt to lighten her mood. “You lied to me.”

With a heavy sigh, Ellen flopped onto one of the sofas. “It was for your own good. Sammy, you should have seen your face. You wanted to be that sub.”

“No, I didn’t. There’s no way I would ever let a man parade me in front of a crowd of people and do the things he did to her.”

Ellen laughed until she choked and it turned into a coughing spasm. She pounded on her chest until it passed. “Okay, you wanted to be her in a private room with Alexei and Stefano Morozov.”

“My God,” the plump brunette said. “I think every sub in the room wanted that.”

Ellen spread a hand in the direction of the woman. “Kathryn, I’m glad you could make it tonight. Samantha, this is one of my newer Dominatrixes. Kathryn replaced Sophia. Kathryn, Sammy is an old friend of mine. Can you give us some time alone?”

“Sure.” Kathryn touched Samantha on the shoulder. “Everybody has a first time. It’s okay to be scared.”

Samantha watched the heavy door swing closed behind the woman. Ellen patted the sofa next to her. Samantha leaned her rear against the counter, crossed her arms, and shook her head.

“Sammy, don’t be mad at me. I thought you might realize a few things about yourself.”

Air hissed from between Samantha’s teeth, mostly because she had learned a few things about herself.

“Remember when you told me that none of your lovers can keep up with you? The last one said you were too high-maintenance.”

He’d also said she had an unnaturally high libido. Sleeping with two men had certainly satisfied her the way a single lover couldn’t. “That doesn’t mean I’m a submissive.”

Ellen leveled one of those looks at Samantha that dared her to argue. “It means something is missing. Most men would be happy to be with a woman who wants to get laid every day.”

If Samantha had things her way, she would have sex several times a day. She could see the merits of having multiple lovers. Sleeping around was never an appealing alternative. Samantha didn’t like casual sexual relationships and dishonesty. Having a one-night stand with Alexei and Stefano had been her first foray into meaningless sex. She had to wonder if she wanted to sleep with them again because then it would seem more like a relationship.

Sam bit her lip and glared at the floor. She thought about her brother’s ex-wife. “Helene once told me that Jonas used to whip her until she bled, then he would pour buckets of icy water over her head until she stopped sobbing. She showed me some of the scars. And Ryan has one, too, from you. It’s on his arm. He said you cut him because he misbehaved.”

Ellen’s mouth dropped open. She stared at Samantha for a full minute in stunned silence. “You’re serious, aren’t you?”

Samantha nodded. Though she had never completely believed Helene, there was a reason she had lived around this lifestyle for so long and never tried it. The scars on Helene’s back had come from a whipping, whether or not Jonas had delivered it. “I love you both, but I promised myself that I would never be in a position for somebody to hurt me like that.”

Alexei’s voice echoed through her head. *We’d never hurt you.* She wanted to believe that was true.

Ellen pulled herself to her feet. She was a few inches shorter than Sam, but she managed to appear much larger. She stuck her chin in

the air. “I can’t believe you’d think Jonas was capable of doing such a thing. For the record, Helene was the one who pushed for the more violent punishments. Jonas is willing to do only so much. That was one of the reasons they fought all the time. She found other men who did those kinds of things to her. How do you think he found out she was cheating? He doesn’t have the stomach for something that would draw blood or leave scars. Sabrina is pouting her ass off because he won’t even spank her while she’s pregnant.”

Guilt seeped through. Ellen’s explanation made much more sense. Sam knew her brother better than that. Helene had been a bitch, and she had broken Jonas’s heart.

“And that scar on Ryan’s arm was a kitchen accident. I tripped, and he caught me. I happened to be carrying a large knife to the sink. He was kidding around when he said I did it on purpose. My God, Sam. Have you been carrying around these misunderstandings all this time? Is that why you stayed away from what you want?”

Samantha knew Ellen wouldn’t throw this in her face. It was one of the things she loved about her brother’s best friend. Ellen wasn’t petty or small-minded. “I’m sorry. I should have known better.”

A soft smile lifted Ellen’s lips and put a sparkle in her eye. “I just want you to be happy, Sammy. You’re a wonderful woman, and I hate to see you denying yourself what you need to be truly fulfilled. I think you’ll feel better after you get laid. Stefano and Alexei are waiting for you. I’m not saying they’re your soul mates or anything, but I checked them out after the wedding. They both have reputations for pleasing their submissives.”

The heat from another blush crept up Sam’s neck. They had pleased her greatly last time, and they had dominated her then, too.

Ellen held out a keycard. “They told me you’d know what to do with this.”

* * * *

Alexei had finally found peace. He had no doubt that Samantha would show up at their door. Ellen was right in her assessment that Samantha was ripe, and tonight was the night they would pluck her from that tree.

“Should I set these out in one of the bedrooms or in the living room?” Stefano held up an opaque plastic bag. When he had disappeared in the convention center, he had gone to pick up some items he thought they would need.

Alexei rubbed his jaw with his hand as he considered the dilemma. “I think we should set them out here and let her pick what she wants us to use. We’ll take those into the bedroom with us. Whose room did you want to use?”

“Mine,” Stef said. “It only borders one wall that isn’t in this suite. Your room borders two. Sammy is a private woman.”

“I was going to gag her. I think she’ll be more comfortable that way.”

Stefano nodded. “We’ll have to go light on her. This is her first time.”

That fact made Alexei even harder. He shifted his stance to ease the pressure in his jeans. “I’m not sure how long I can hold out.”

“Lex, we can’t touch her until negotiations are over. You know we can’t influence her decisions.”

The sound of a keycard sliding in the door halted the conversation. The door opened slowly. Samantha wore bleached white denim shorts and a pale pink halter. The shorts fell to mid-thigh, but they didn’t hide the fact that her legs went on forever. The halter hung from thin straps that would take all of his willpower to refrain from ripping. The neckline followed the curve of her breasts, dipping between them to show a little more, but not enough to satisfy Alexei.

She stood in the doorway with one hand on the handle of the door, letting the white painted wood frame her sexy body. She seemed completely unaware that she had stolen his breath.

Stefano recovered first. “Are you going to come in?”

She stepped forward and closed the door behind her. Alexei could tell by the stiff way she stood and the way she glanced between them that she was nervous. He wanted to take her in his arms and kiss her until her fears disappeared, but he knew he couldn’t, not yet.

With a sweep of his hand, he indicated the couch. “Have a seat, Samantha. There are some things we must discuss first.”

Her nod was brief, both accepting the order and agreeing with the need for a discussion. She settled in the center of the sofa, no doubt expecting them to sit on either side of her. Eventually, they would crowd her personal space, but not now. The decisions she made tonight had to be completely hers.

Stefano selected one of the wingback chairs directly across from Samantha. Alexei chose the couch situated perpendicular to where Samantha sat. A rectangular coffee table stood as a barrier, and they left her a clear escape route to the door.

He rested one arm casually across the back of the sofa. “What do you want to happen tonight, Samantha?”

She had been staring at the array of toys and accessories Stefano had arranged on the coffee table. They were all new toys, but there was nothing on the table the brothers hadn’t used before. Alexei wasn’t surprised with Stefano’s selections. Samantha’s eyes skipped over the two vibrators and the thick butt plug to land on the cat-o-nine tails, the riding crop, and the heater. The padded Velcro restraints were already connected to Stef’s bed.

Her eyes lifted to meet his. “I’m not afraid of being tied up. I’ve never done it before, but I trust you both. I honestly can’t tell you what I like and what I don’t like because I’m new to all of this. One hard boundary I have to set is no broken skin and no scars. While I don’t know what I like, I can tell you what I don’t want.”

Hard boundary. She did know the vocabulary. Hard boundaries or hard limits were non-negotiable. Breaking one of those was tantamount to betrayal of the worse proportions.

“What about soft limits?” he asked, shifting forward to rest his elbows on his thighs. “Do you have any of those?”

She glanced at the accessories on the table. “If I don’t like it, will you stop?”

“If you tell us to stop, Sammy, we’ll stop.”

Her eyes lifted to Stefano. She studied him intently. Alexei wondered what she saw in Stefano that was different from what she saw in him. She had never once confused them, and she spoke to Stefano differently from the way she spoke to him. It was like she knew Stefano tended to be blunt and Alexei tended to hold back his thoughts.

“If I ask you to stop, does that mean you won’t sleep with me?”

There was no way she was going to walk out of their suite without that happening. At the end of the day, they both wanted Samantha, with or without this kind of sex play. Alexei fielded this one. “No. If you decide you don’t like this, then we’ll revert back to the rules we used our first time together. Those rules still apply.”

Samantha ran a nervous hand through her hair and nodded her head once. “No coming without permission. I should warn you I’m already close. Sitting in there with the two of you is enough to drive any woman to the brink.”

Yes, well, if she weren’t new to all of this, she’d be naked and on all fours servicing both of them right now. Her kittenish moans would vibrate against the dick in her mouth as another impaled her from behind until they all climaxed.

“Shall I take off my clothes? I know how much you like watching me undress.”

Stefano laughed and lifted a hand, curling his fingers at her. “Come here, Sammy.”

She rose and rounded the table. When she slid her hand into his, Stef pulled her onto his lap. She braced her hands on his shoulders, her fingers moving slowly down Stef’s arms to caress his biceps.

Stefano's hand skated up her back until it landed at the base of her skull. He pulled her closer for a kiss.

Alexei watched Samantha respond to his brother. She melted into him, parting her lips to let him deepen the kiss. Her eyes closed and tiny sounds of contentment and arousal escaped.

Stefano's free hand roamed her body. He caressed her leg and thigh. He traveled higher to palm her breast in his hand. Was Samantha smiling into the lingering kiss?

Stef broke the kiss, but he didn't move his lips more than a quarter inch away. "Like that, Sammy?"

"Yes." Her smile grew. "But not as much as you do, Stef."

He trailed a finger down her cheek. "I'm going to ejaculate all over your breasts. What do you think about that?"

This was a test. Alexei remained silent, watching for her reaction. So many women disliked this part of Stefano, the part that needed to mark them this way. They didn't seem to mind semen in their mouths, but many drew the line about having it on their bodies.

"I think I like watching your face when you come. Just don't ask me to call you 'master' and we're fine."

Stefano smiled and kissed her again, long and slow. "I like hearing you say my name. It amazes me that you never seem to confuse us."

A faint blush stained her cheeks. "It took me a minute to figure out who was who when I woke up the other morning. I figured you were the one with your face in my chest."

Alexei couldn't resist. "Why is that?"

Samantha nailed him with a sweet, knowing smile that went straight to his dick and made it twitch. "Stef is a breast man. I haven't figured you out yet. You seem to have an equal appreciation for all parts."

Stefano laughed. "He's into posture."

That smile turned to a frown as her back straightened, pulling away from Stefano's embrace. "Posture?"

“Yeah.” Alexei crooked his finger at her. “Come here and I’ll show you.”

She planted one last kiss on Stefano’s cheek before abandoning him to stand in front of Alexei.

Alexei repositioned himself to lean against the back of the sofa. “Straddle me.”

Samantha planted her knees on either side of his thighs, but she didn’t sit down. Her hands hung at her sides as she waited for instructions.

“Put your hands on your ankles and let your head hang back.”

Her movements were quick and graceful. Golden hair streamed loosely, almost brushing the soles of her sandals. She kept her back and elbows straight, thrusting her breasts high. She was a perfect triangle.

Reaching behind her, Alexei removed her shoes. “You have dance training, don’t you?”

“Yes, but I haven’t danced in years.”

But it still reflected in the beauty and grace of her movements. “You’ll dance for us, but not tonight.”

Did she stiffen?

“Let’s not talk about more than just tonight.”

Yes, he hadn’t imagined it. “Why not?”

She held the pose while she spoke, impressing him even though he didn’t like what she said. “You live in Florida. I live here. I’m not under the impression this is going to lead to anything more than multiple orgasms.”

He let his hand explore her body instead of answering. The fact that she was right didn’t help set the mood. He met Stef’s gaze over the top of Samantha’s body. Silently, they agreed to table the topic.

She moaned when he pressed the heel of his hand between her legs. “If you keep doing that, I’m going to come.”

Alexei lifted his brow, but the gesture went unnoticed. Her chest rose and fell in rapid pants, and she pushed her pelvis against his

hand. He pressed harder. “If you come, I’ll whip this naughty pussy until you beg and scream.”

Samantha’s breaths came harder. He couldn’t tell whether she was working to stave off her climax or achieve it. “My God, Lex. It might be worth it.”

When she thrust against him, it settled the question for Alexei. He tugged at the fabric around the button on her shorts, jerking it free. She sighed as he unzipped, probably thinking he meant to give her relief. As much as he wanted to bury his face between her legs, he couldn’t reward her greedy behavior.

He slid the shorts down to expose her delicate lacy panties, pink to match her shirt, her nail polish, and her lip gloss. He noticed these details. He liked that she took the time to do these things even though she hadn’t expected to see him or Stef.

Lifting her, he repositioned her body so that she lay, stomach-down, across one of his legs. He lifted his other leg, bringing it down across the back of her thighs where he had pushed her shorts and panties to expose her ass. Stefano moved closer. He captured her wrists and pressed them to the sofa cushion above her head. Confused, she lifted her head to look up at Stefano. There were questions in her eyes that didn’t make it past her lips.

That was something they would have to work on with her. If she had questions, she needed to ask them.

Alexei planted a hand on the small of her back. “I’m going to spank you, Samantha. Do you know why?”

As expected, she squirmed. This would be the last time she let them maneuver her into this kind of position unchallenged. Alexei looked forward to the struggle. He preferred a spirited submissive. Perhaps that was why he was so drawn to her. She would fight him each time.

“I didn’t come!”

“No, but you were trying to, even after I specifically told you not to.”

“Lex.” It was a plea. She was too perceptive. She had learned what it did to him when she called him by the nickname reserved for close friends and family. “Maybe you want a blowjob instead.”

He laughed at her attempt to bargain her way out of her punishment. “That’s not a punishment. You like giving them.” She tried to say more, but he swung, delivering the first blow. It was hard enough to sting, but not enough to drive her away. Whatever she had been about to say turned into a yelp.

She went still, and he paused to let her process the sensation and the emotion. Some punishments were meant to be painful deterrents. This one was meant to reprimand and help her hold off the orgasm. From the way her panties were drenched, Alexei knew she needed the distraction badly.

When he saw her arms tense with the effort to break Stefano’s hold, he knew she was ready for more. “Count them out, Samantha. That was one. You’ll take ten.”

He swung again and her body jerked. They had a good hold on her. She wasn’t going anywhere. She didn’t count, so he swung again and again. Now she fought with her whole body, but she didn’t tell him to stop.

“They don’t count if you don’t count them out,” Stefano warned. “When Lex gets tired, I’ll take over. And, Sammy? I’m not as gentle.”

She froze and lifted her head, a defiant glint in her eye. “It’s okay,” she said. “If he keeps doing this, I’m going to come anyway.”

Alexei bit his lip to hold back a chuckle. He was being too considerate of her newbie status, centering the blows so that they stimulated her as well as stung the flesh. He wanted to train her body to equate the pleasure with the pain, but it looked as if she was already there. He centered the next blow so that it hit only one cheek.

The sharp sound that escaped her wasn’t voluntary. That defiant glint morphed into a murderous glare. “You suck.”

Stefano turned his head away to hide his amusement. If they weren’t careful, this could degenerate quickly.

Alexei managed to keep it together. He smacked her again, concentrating the force in the same spot. She yelped and bucked against him. “Count them out.”

“Two.”

She spat venom with each number, but she didn’t ask him to stop. When he finished, he caressed the angry red handprint on her left cheek and wondered how long it would take to fade. He glanced at the clock. They needed to know this about her body. If she had sensitive skin, the punishments would need to be lighter. If not, they might have to use heavier hands to achieve the desired results.

She drew a sharp intake of breath at the contact, but she didn’t fight him and she didn’t try to pull away.

“Still feel like coming?”

“Yes.”

Thank goodness. She had denied her ability to find pleasure this way so convincingly. “Still feel like you’re going to come?”

“No.”

Stefano released her wrists and Alexei released her legs from beneath his. With slow, careful movements that were no less graceful, Samantha knelt up. She didn’t move from between his legs, but she did stare at him with a curious expression on her face. He hadn’t pulled her panties or her shorts back up, and neither had she. Sam’s golden strip of hair glistened with evidence of her desire. Her posture was ramrod straight and his cock ached to echo the position.

“If you have a question, Samantha, you need to ask it.”

“I’m allowed to just ask questions?”

“Yes.” While he and Stef normally forbade their submissives from speaking without permission, something inside him didn’t want to extend this rule to Samantha.

She nodded thoughtfully. “I don’t think you can answer it.”

“Not if you don’t ask it.”

She tilted her head to the side. “I was wondering if it was actually possible to come just from being spanked.”

Alexei grinned. "It is, but you won't be coming that way tonight. Stef and I have other plans for you."

Stefano sat on the sofa next to Alexei. He had moved the coffee table from the center of the furniture grouping so that now it sat off to the side. The items on the table were accessible, but not in the way.

"Yeah," Stefano said. "Stand up and strip for us, Sammy. I like watching you undress."

With a grin, she rose to stand on those long legs. Stefano might be a breast man, but he was indiscriminant about size and shape. Alexei was finding out that he had a distinct preference for Samantha's shapely legs. He wanted to see them splayed and tied to his bedposts.

She dropped her jean shorts first. They slid to the floor when she stood, taking her panties with them.

The shirt disappeared second, revealing that she was wearing a strapless bra. Alexei liked that. He understood the necessity of wearing a bra, especially for a woman with nice-sized breasts like Samantha, but he thought it was tacky to let the strap show.

Her hand crept up her back slowly, twisting to unhook her bra. Her eyes met Stefano's as she crossed her arms over her chest, holding the cups of the bra over her breasts with her hands. A sultry smile settled on her lips as she held the pose.

Knowing she held Stefano in her thrall, Alexei found his voice. "Drop the bra, Samantha."

Her hands fell away, and the delicate pink scrap of lacy silk fluttered to the floor, landing next to her shirt.

Silence. She stood, proud and naked, in the center of the room, watching them as they studied her body.

Stefano pointed to the wingback chair he had vacated. "Sit there, Sammy."

She glanced at the chair and then back at Alexei, uncertainty hovering beneath an unasked question. Alexei said nothing. She needed to follow instructions from both of them. At last, she sat down.

“Spread your legs,” Stefano said. His tone was an octave higher than it had been a minute ago.

Those long, long legs moved apart. Alexei wanted to kneel before her. He was reasonably certain Stef had the same thought, but he wasn't willing to tear his eyes from Samantha to find out.

“Touch yourself, Sammy,” Stefano said. “But don't come until we tell you to.”

With a smile that was entirely too confident, Samantha lifted one leg and dropped it over the arm of the chair, opening her pussy to their view. With one hand, she spread the lips of her pussy. Alexei watched her fingers play over her glistening folds.

This part was instructional for both him and Stefano. While they had both pleased her before, they had done so on their terms. This was the part that told them exactly how she liked to be touched. It had been unnecessary before, but it was crucial now that they planned to spend a lot of time teasing and torturing. Distancing himself from her erotic display, he watched where she put her fingers and what kind of pressure she used. He noted where she teased and where she created the most friction.

He totally lost himself in the soft little moans she made and the way the color of her slick pussy deepened. She was so close to coming.

“Don't come,” he said. How long could she hold it off?

Her fingers slowed their movements.

“I didn't tell you to slow down.” He curled his fingers into his palms when all he wanted to do was touch her.

She stared at him like he'd just wandered in the room and changed the channel on a movie she'd been enjoying. “I can go fast or I can avoid an orgasm. I can't do both.”

Oh, yes. This was the feisty vixen they wanted to discipline. Alexei didn't have to throw a glance at Stefano to know his brother had the same grin on his face.

* * * *

They approached on either side of her, reached for her arms, and pulled her to standing. Their interference in her attempts to climax was becoming very frustrating. What was the point in having two lovers when neither of them was getting the job done?

Without speaking, they turned her and bent her over the chair. They planted her hands on the arms of the chair. She hung on and wondered whether they were going to fuck her or spank her. Either action was welcome as long as she got to come.

Hands touched her pussy, spreading her lips and probing deep. A thick dildo slid into her vagina. The fullness was a different stimulation from the one that nearly sent her on course for climaxing two separate times. It had the same effect as hitting the restart button. Maybe it would be easier this time because the trail was freshly blazed, but she still had to start over.

She groaned her frustration.

One of them smacked her on the ass, hard. That must have been Stefano. Alexei's blows had been lighter. She congratulated herself on not flinching.

"Stef," she said, taking the chance it had been him. "Why won't you let me come? I thought you wanted this."

The two of them had been a flurry of movement behind her. They halted.

"How did you know that was me?"

She bit her lip. "Wasn't I supposed to know? You don't want me to pretend, do you?"

"No," he said. "I don't want you to pretend. I want you to be completely honest at all times. If I let go of this vibrator, can you hang on to it without using your hands?"

Clenching her vaginal walls, she nodded. "I don't know for how long."

Alexei chuckled. "We'll find out, won't we?"

Stefano fiddled with something. The vibrator hummed to life on its lowest setting. It felt good, but not good enough. He set the remote on the seat of the chair below her.

“Samantha, tell me what you’ve done to earn this punishment.”

“I haven’t done anything yet. Turn up the vibrator and I’ll give you something to really punish.”

From the silence that greeted her response, Samantha deduced that they were trying not to laugh. However, she didn’t labor under the delusion that they weren’t in charge.

“Sammy, that mouth of yours is going to keep getting you in trouble if you can’t learn to stop shooting it off.”

She inhaled and clenched her pussy tighter to concentrate the vibrations. “I take it I said something you didn’t like?”

“When you’re given an order, you obey without question and without comment.”

She wanted to tell them they should stop giving her impossible orders, but she knew more about this game than she thought she did. They were looking for both a reason to punish her, and they wanted to test her limits. She understood this.

“All right, I’ll accept the punishment, but I won’t apologize. A girl has to have some standards.” She hoped they wouldn’t challenge her in this because she knew she wouldn’t be able to stop herself from digging in and refusing an apology.

They seemed okay with it. Alexei moved around in front of her, standing behind the chair. She looked up to meet his solid blue gaze. She noted the way his black hair fell over his forehead, too short to obscure his vision.

“Stop means stop. Yellow means lighter or pause. Green means change nothing. If you can’t speak to answer us, we will stop. Do you understand?”

Cold fear ran through her veins. Why would he say something like that unless he planned to do something really painful? And yet, she did nothing to stop the action.

“Samantha, you must answer.”

She cleared her throat. “I understand.”

“You’ll take five. Count them out.”

Long tongues of leather curled around her thigh, stinging a path around the outside, front, and inner parts of her leg. Sam’s breath caught as the sharpness faded and her skin cried for more. The hum inside her pussy faded in importance. She barely remembered to count. The word came out in a sharp exhalation. “One.”

Why did they make her count out loud?

The second caught her on the hip. The third and fourth blows fell in the same places, but on the opposite side of her body. The fifth landed squarely on her ass. With each sting of the lash, her body cried out for more. Endorphins rushed through her system. She felt like she was floating.

Alexei lifted her head and looked deep into her eyes. “Where are we, Samantha?”

“Hotel,” she said. How could he forget where they were? “Please fuck me now, Lex. I can’t take much more of this.”

As she spoke, she felt the pressure of fingers at her anus. Stefano rubbed lubricant into her. She moaned and spread her legs a little wider, careful to keep her vaginal walls clenched so she didn’t lose the vibrator.

“Samantha, you must answer me. Tell me where you are. Stop, yellow, or green?”

She groped in her memory, which was suddenly mushy and indistinct. “Green. Please don’t stop. Oh God, please don’t stop.”

Alexei lifted one of her arms out of the way and slid so that he sat in the chair while she bent over it. His large hand cupped the back of her neck and pulled her closer. He devoured her mouth with his kiss, sucking every bit of resistance from her body.

Stefano pushed into her. The pressure and stretching of that tight muscle sent spikes to her pleasure centers. The vibrations inside her

ped up as Alexei manipulated the controller. She moaned into Alexei's mouth and pushed back against Stefano.

He responded to her silent urging, thrusting all the way inside.

Alexei released her from the kiss. His fingers plucked at her nipples before wandering down to toy with her clit. The fullness, the vibrations, and now the stimulation where she had already primed the pump combined. She was so close. She closed her eyes and concentrated on her breathing to hold it off.

"Please let me come." She knew Alexei heard her breathless whisper, but she didn't expect him to grant permission.

"Yes, Samantha. Come for us."

That was all it took. She cried out as Stefano thrust into her one last time.

It didn't take long for Samantha to come down from her climax. Her eyes popped open in time to see the satisfied gleam in Alexei's.

"I need more," she said to him. The vibrator still pulsed inside her. He had turned it down so that over-stimulation didn't interfere with her orgasm. "It's not enough."

Surprise flashed through his eyes, but the next thing she knew, he and Stefano had traded places. Stefano sat in the chair in front of her. His jeans were pulled up but still unbuttoned. He had abandoned the shirt. She feasted her eyes on the sight of his wide, defined chest.

Samantha smiled. "You took off your shirt. I like you this way." Balancing her weight on one hand, she ran her other hand along his arm and across his chest.

Alexei made no attempt at foreplay. He paused only to roll on a condom, and then she felt him pressing against the rosette ringing her anus.

She relaxed against him and returned her hand to the arm of the chair to brace against his thrust. Stefano pinched her nipple hard as Alexei slammed himself completely into her. Sam's breath caught, but she couldn't tell if it was from the man who filled her or from the

man who was still pulling her nipple, stretching it impossibly long. The sharpness sent a fresh wave of moisture to her throbbing pussy.

“Do you like this, Sammy?” Stefano crooned as he released one tortured peak, exchanging it to wreak the same vengeance on the other.

“Yes,” she said.

He released the excessive force completely and caressed her breasts with soft, gentle fingertips. “Did you like having your ass whipped?”

If she was going to be honest with herself, she had dreaded that part. Though the spanking hadn’t been at all what she expected, she had been sure it would kill the moment when they used the whips. Instead, it intensified things. The heat sent her flowing juices into overdrive.

He hadn’t hit too hard, just enough to provide a different kind of stimulation.

“Yes. You were right, Stef. Both of you knew before I did.”

Stefano kissed her. She liked the possessiveness of the kiss he slanted over her lips. His tongue slid along her lower lip, commanding it to relax and open to him. Her body responded, giving him what he wanted because she wanted the same thing.

He turned the vibrator to maximum. Samantha flinched, fighting the increased intensity. Alexei held her hips still as he thrust into her again and again. He growled, and Stefano stopped kissing her mouth.

Sliding down to slouch in the chair, he turned his attention to her breasts. He kissed them. He kneaded them. He sucked and bit and pinched them. Samantha writhed under his onslaught. When she tried to lift away, to ease the pressure, Alexei’s hand on her back prevented her from moving up. His powerful thrusts kept her from backing away.

The violence and the restraint combined with the fullness inside as raw heat. The first waves of a powerful orgasm bloomed. “Oh, yes. Please don’t stop.”

Her words urged them both to keep doing what they were doing, but her body jerked and writhed uncontrollably. It wanted this, and it wanted to escape. It knew the coming climax would render her senseless.

Stefano reached for her pussy. She thought he might rub or pinch her clit, but he bypassed it completely. Grasping the base of the vibrator, he pulled it almost completely out before shoving it back inside. Blood left her toes and fingers. He did it again and again, timing his thrusts to oppose Alexei's.

Behind her, Alexei roared. "Come, damn it."

She hadn't known her orgasm was that close. As if her body had only waited for his permission, the fire intensified, burning out of control. Blood left her arms and legs. She cried out as she collapsed on top of Stefano. He caught her, turning her to settle on his lap and cradling her head in his large hand.

The next thing she knew, she was in a bed. She held Stefano in her arms. His head rested against her chest. Alexei's body cradled her backside. One arm curled under her to hold her that way. With the fingers of his other hand, he stroked her hair near her temple.

Samantha hadn't expected this affection from either of them, but she liked it, so she twined her fingers in Stefano's thick, dark hair and held him close. That position didn't last long. Once he realized she had regained her senses, he scooted up and devoured her mouth in a hungry, possessive kiss.

Alexei's hand caressed her leg, trailing up and across her hip and over her stomach. She broke the kiss with Stefano and looked over at Lex.

Alexei's lips brushed against hers, softer than Stefano's but no less possessive. Hands moved over her body. Stefano's fingers plumped and pulled at her nipple, teasing it to a hard pebble. She moaned into Alexei's mouth, and he kissed her harder.

Stefano's hot mouth closed over her nipple, sucking in hard, sharp bursts. The little moans in the back of her throat changed pitch. She

yelped as the tiny pricks of pain sent spikes of sensation traveling across her chest. She squirmed, unable to decide whether she liked it or not. Her body was so sensitive from the things they had already done to her.

Strong hands held her immobile. Even though he wasn't looking, Lex must have known what Stef was doing to her. Half his body covered hers, the rough denim of his pants and the cotton of his shirt a barrier preventing her from knowing what his skin felt like against hers. That bothered her more than not knowing if Stefano's teeth on her nipple created more pleasure or more pain, or if there was truly a distinction between the two sensations.

Samantha admitted that she liked the kind of pain they dished out. It was sweet and stimulating, yet it kept her hungry and needing more. She feared it and she craved it. Now she understood why Doms tied up their subs. Sometimes, choices needed to be removed. Plus, after being forced to stay in the bent position they had chosen earlier, she could use the break. Her body was ready for more, but she didn't know if her limbs were up to supporting her weight for much longer.

The mouth on her breast lifted, and Alexei released her from his imprisoning kiss.

Weight shifted. Samantha turned her attention to Stefano. She watched him shed his jeans.

On the other side of her, Alexei did the same thing.

Samantha watched in rapt silence, sitting up and pivoting her head so that she wouldn't miss anything. They both had glorious bodies. She wanted to make them lay side by side naked so she could compare every inch. They looked so much alike, but there had to be more than the few subtle, *behavioral*, differences she found so far.

"Are you okay, Samantha? Where are we?"

Unlike before, she didn't misunderstand the question. "Green. I'm ready for more."

"Then why the frown?"

She bit her lip as she decided whether or not to reveal what she was thinking. They had asked for honesty, so she opted to give it to them. “I was wondering if you guys had any physical differences. I can’t seem to find them.”

Alexei frowned over her, directing his attention to Stefano. “Stef has a scar on his leg from a snowboarding accident.”

“Yeah,” Stefano said with a hint of laughter in his voice. “Lex has the same scar on the same leg from a waterskiing accident.”

The brothers enjoyed a chuckle over the shared memories. Alexei turned his attention back to Samantha. “Sorry, there’s no easy way to tell us apart.”

“But you don’t seem to have a problem with it, Sammy. How do you do it?”

She shrugged, knowing full well it frustrated them to not have an answer, otherwise they wouldn’t keep asking. “Intuition, so far. You have different personalities in a lot of ways, but they’re not big differences. Sometimes you act exactly alike.”

Alexei nodded, and those warm blue eyes rekindled her passion. If she wasn’t careful, she could get used to this. “Lie back down, Samantha.”

She did as he directed. Lex grabbed one arm and Stef grabbed the other. In seconds, she was tied to the bed with nylon straps she hadn’t noticed, but they must have been there the whole time. She pulled, jerking hard to see if she could break free. The lines didn’t even stretch.

Hands on her ankles spread her legs apart, and then those same nylon cuffs encircled where their hands had just been.

Alexei disappeared for a moment. Stefano lifted her head, removing the pillows from beneath. Alexei returned with something in his hand.

“Open your mouth, Sammy.”

She kept her eyes on Alexei, worried about what they had planned. Both men seemed so serious and reserved. The passion from moments ago was forgotten. Obediently, she opened her mouth.

“Wider,” Alexei commanded.

She obeyed, and he popped an oval, rubbery ball into her mouth. It was attached to a series of leather straps that reminded Samantha of a harness. Stefano lifted her head again. Alexei secured the straps.

It was a harness. No matter how she moved, she wouldn't be able to spit out the ball.

“If we were in the playroom at home, this wouldn't be necessary. I'd love nothing more than to hear you scream and beg and threaten. But since hotels have notoriously thin walls...” Alexei shrugged.

Stefano pressed a ball into her left hand. Sammy squeezed. It was bean-filled and covered in cloth. It reminded her of one of those sacks her brother used to kick around with his friends until she and Amanda got in on the game and humiliated them all with their superior talent.

“If you drop the ball, that's our cue to stop.” Stefano pressed a quick kiss to her cheek. “Choices, Sammy. You always have choices.”

She stared at him. She was the one bound and gagged. Did she really have choices? She squeezed the ball in her hand again. Stefano's attention went to it.

“Do you want one for your other hand?”

Without waiting for a response, he nodded to Alexei. Another ball pressed into her right hand. Samantha turned her head to study his face.

Alexei had a wicked gleam in his eyes, rendering them an even brighter blue. Bending down, he pressed a kiss to her other cheek. “If you drop either one, honey, everything stops. Do you understand?”

Two safety nets. They did make her feel safer, more secure. She trusted them to live up to their word. She nodded, the only form of communication she had left, and the world went black.

Stefano had blindfolded her.

It was very much like a spa mask. Gelled edging sealed the contour lines where snatches of light might have peeked through. It was comfortable and effective.

Hands caressed her skin. They touched her everywhere. Samantha lost track of who was where. It bothered her for a minute because she knew that, even if they spoke, she wouldn't be able to distinguish one from the other. Their voices were as identical as their faces, and the sensations they set loose in her body destroyed any concentration she might have had.

Fingers parted her pussy. A hand brushed her inner thigh as something slid into her vagina. A motor purred to life as someone turned on the vibrator. It was a different vibrator than the one they used before. This one had no controller attached with a line. Sam tried to frown, but the ball gag that held her mouth open prevented the expression from forming. It was a skinny, little thing, and they had turned it to a low setting. It was stimulating, but there was no way she could orgasm from this.

Something tickled up her leg, caressing in long, smooth strokes. It seemed like it was made up of dozens of scraps of fabric. Leather. This wasn't the whip they had used on her before. She wondered if the increased number of falls would make it sting more or less.

She relaxed as the whip traced paths along her inner thigh and over her stomach, making its way across her breasts.

"I love a woman in pink."

That had been Alexei.

Stefano chuckled in response. "We'll make her pink."

The caress of the whip changed. It no longer slid across her skin. Now it moved in a circular motion, rising and falling to slap her skin lightly.

At first, Samantha didn't feel anything. It wasn't pleasurable, painful, or annoying. Then another whip whistled through the air, stinging a path across her inner thigh. It was the cat, the same whip Stefano had used on her before. She didn't know which brother

wielded it this time. Samantha jumped, crying out in surprise and jerking against the straps that held her wrists and ankles. The gag muffled the sound.

A second lash didn't follow the first. As the stinging subsided, Sammy relaxed. The soft whip resumed its motions, but when it came to the place that was still sensitive from the cat, it stung. A million miniscule nerve endings sent wild signals radiating in all directions. The moan originated deep in her chest. It was primal, not waiting for permission before it escaped.

The cat landed on her again, scalding a narrow path along her other thigh.

She cried out again, but her pussy responded with a fresh wave of moisture, lifting upward to offer itself as the next target.

The cat fell again, laying crisscross stripes on her stomach and breasts.

Samantha whimpered and squeezed the balls tighter in her palms. If they stopped now, she would die wanting more. She had felt sexual heat many times before, but this was different. Usually, the heat was inside her, building slowly or quickly as she edged her way toward orgasm.

This heat consumed her from the inside and the outside. Delicious tendrils of desire didn't originate low in her abdomen. They covered her body, ravaging her like nothing she had ever felt before. Sounds came out of her, muted by the gag.

The vibrator hummed inside her weeping pussy. The soft whip whispered caresses everywhere the cat had been. Her pelvis thrust against nothing, begging with words the gag prohibited.

Finally, one of them took pity on her and turned the damn vibrator to high.

The soft whip continued its exquisite torture while the cat fell in an unpredictable rhythm. Sweet heat built inside her. She wanted friction against her pussy. She wanted one of them to touch her clit. One touch and she would come. She was so close.

The whipping stopped and light flooded her eyes. Samantha closed her eyes and moaned in protest.

“Sammy, look at me.”

She did as ordered, hoping obedience would get her what she wanted. Stefano peered down at her, a gleam lighting his blue eyes and a relaxed smile on his lips. He reached around her head, undid the buckles, and removed the gag.

“Can you understand me?”

It took a moment for his question to penetrate the haze of pleasure permeating her mind. Sam nodded her head.

“Where are we?”

“Green.”

Stefano’s smile widened.

The straps holding her ankles in place loosened and fell away. A tug, and the vibrator was gone, too.

Had she dropped a ball and not known it? Flexing her fingers, she squeezed each hand. They were still there. They couldn’t stop now, not when she was so close. Her body was on fire and the thin vibrator humming between her legs had been doing its job.

“Wait,” she said, shaking her head because her wrists were still bound and she couldn’t grab his arm. “I didn’t want you to stop.”

“We’re not stopping.” Alexei’s voice floated up from the foot of the bed.

She angled her head to see him. Her eyes searched his for signs he wasn’t telling the truth. She couldn’t handle it if he wasn’t telling the truth.

He swaggered to the side of the bed in his navy blue boxer shorts. The fabric stretched across his thigh, drawing her attention to the powerful ropes of muscle there. “We’re just getting started, Samantha. Don’t worry. That was just the warm-up.”

The bed dipped on the other side. Stefano ran his fingertips up her arm and loosened the tie holding her wrist. “Are you feeling warmed up, Sammy?”

She nodded, unsure what to say or if she should say anything at all.

Alexei loosened the last tie binding her to the bed.

Stefano bent his head and flicked his tongue across the sensitized skin on the underside of her breast. Sparks shot through Samantha. She gasped. The hand he had freed tangled in his hair, gripping him hard to keep him in place.

A shadow blotted out the light. She focused on Lex's deep blue eyes, searching for a clue as to what her future held. The relaxed smile on his lips told her nothing.

He brushed those soft, luscious lips against her jaw and trailed a path of kisses to her temple before changing direction. His teeth grazed her earlobe. The soft shivers he elicited mingled with the harsher sparks from Stefano's tugs to her nipple.

Sam gasped. Her free hand responded to Alexei's gentleness. Her fingers traced light designs on the back of his neck.

"You're beautiful, Samantha."

The tone of Lex's voice invited her to ignore him, even as his lips and teeth teased along neck, searching for the sensitive places Stefano had found earlier.

"Tonight, you belong to us."

She muttered a sound of agreement. Stefano's mouth moved to her other breast. His hand wandered over her stomach, caressing her stomach and waist. She wanted him to venture lower, to where her need burned hot.

"Say it."

As one, both brothers stopped what they were doing. Samantha hadn't been aware that she'd closed her eyes, but the sharp slap to her inner thigh brought her eyes fully open. Her head jerked up and she glared at Stefano.

He met her glare with an expression that managed to be both stony and serene. "When you're told to do something, Sammy, you do it immediately and without question."

Confusion delayed her reaction. Gradually, the haze of pleasure Stef and Lex had spent so much time inducing faded. Her mind cleared.

“What did you tell me to do?”

Stefano smiled. “The first time is always difficult, Sammy. You’re untrained, and we’ll make some allowances for that. However, you have earned a punishment.”

Her mind spun. What they had just done wasn’t a punishment. Though she had only been at this for a few hours, she knew the difference. Alexei and Stefano went out of their way to make it clear. “Another one?”

He nodded. “Another one.”

She sighed, resigned to the fact that it was going to be a while before they let her orgasm again. With a small nod, she indicated her acceptance of his sentence.

Alexei pressed a light kiss to her forehead. “Say it, Samantha. Tell us you belong to us.”

“I belong to you,” she said obediently, her eyes darting from Alexei to Stefano and back again. “Both of you.”

Alexei shook his head, regret marring his posture. “She doesn’t feel it, Stef.”

“We’ll have to fix that,” Stefano said. He slid the hand resting on her stomach down to her pussy, pinching her clit sharply.

Sam whimpered and spread her legs wider for him.

He caressed her pussy, spreading her lips wide as he pressed down with all four fingers. She lifted against him, wanting more of that sweet friction. He stopped much too soon.

“Turn over, Sammy. Get up on your hands and knees.”

Breathing a sigh of relief, she did as Stef commanded. The bulges in their shorts indicated that this part of their game was almost over. She had no doubt all three of them would find a fabulous kind of relief very soon.

Alexei guided her so that her hands gripped the edge of the bed.

Behind her, Stefano nudged her knees wider apart. In front of her, Alexei lowered the front of his boxers. He lifted out his erection. It was thick and hard. She wanted to touch it, to take it in her mouth. She licked her lips expectantly.

Fingers brushed under her chin. Alexei forced her attention to his face. “You’ll get a taste, Samantha, but there are some rules.”

She fought the urge to smile. This wasn’t her first oral experience with Lex. He thoroughly enjoyed what she had done to him last time.

“You can’t stop until I tell you to stop. Even after I come in your mouth, you must keep licking and sucking until you’re given permission to stop.”

Samantha nodded. She had never done something like that before, but she didn’t see a difficulty.

“Stef’s going to do some things to you that are uncomfortable and possibly painful. And he’s going to do some things that are very, very pleasurable. Some of this is your punishment. You have to concentrate on me, Samantha. Don’t lose your focus.”

Lifting one hand, she grasped his shaft, lifting it to taste the underside with one long drag of her tongue. She teased him with short flicks until he moaned and tangled his fingers in her hair to pull her closer.

As she closed her lips around him, she felt Stefano behind her. Between her knees, the bed depressed with his weight and she felt his hand caressing the curve of her ass. Then cold leather replaced the warmth of his hand. It was the short paddle. She was sure of it.

He was going to spank her. Last time, Lex had used his hand. She wondered how this would be different. Her pussy clenched and moisture dripped down her thighs. She moaned. The vibrations made Alexei gasp and thrust into her mouth faster.

“Six for verbal disobedience. I’ll count these out for you since you’re busy.”

The feel of the cold leather against her rear end and the taste of Alexei in her mouth were the things that absorbed her attention. She

heard what Stefano said, but the meaning didn't penetrate until the first stinging slap of the paddle against her bare ass.

It was different from before when Alexei spanked her with his hand. This was harder, crueler, and impersonal. Alexei's hand had molded to her curves. The paddle didn't yield at all. Even the tongues of the cat had snaked around her thigh, conforming to her body.

She yelped. Her tongue stopped its dance around the shaft of Lex's cock, but she didn't stop sucking. His hand rubbed her cheek in praise. She sucked harder, determined to please him and take her punishment at the same time. This was a challenge she could meet. Besides, it distracted her from the pressing need to climax.

Each blow hurt, leaving behind a burning sensation that Stefano exploited by drawing the paddle across her skin between blows. Her pussy wept, and though it was painful, her ass lifted higher, wanting more of what Stefano offered.

Samantha had no way of knowing if Stefano hit her harder each time or if it just hurt more because he was revisiting flesh that he's already abused. Reality seemed to slip away. The only thing she could remember to do was to suck Alexei.

And she did. With each blow, she sucked him harder and faster, drawing him deeper and deeper into her mouth. His grip on her hair tightened. With a loud cry, he came, and she didn't stop sucking, not even when he went limp in her mouth.

The blows had stopped some time ago. Stefano's hot hands spread her ass cheeks wide and he rubbed more lubricant into her anus. The sudden temperature change shocked her out of the trance into which she had fallen.

Sam's body jerked, an involuntary reaction. She sent up a silent prayer that they would pay some more attention to her pussy and her clit. She loved the feel of each of them in her ass, but it wasn't enough to sate her.

"Relax, honey. This will go easier if you relax."

He penetrated her with something small and round, forcing it past the tight muscle ringing her entrance. Pain pinched her there, but only for a second. The bead was followed by something cylindrical.

Obediently, she licked Alexei. She did not want to give Stefano an excuse to stop.

Another bead, this one larger, entered her body. With each successive bead, she felt herself being stretched wider and wider as the cylinder connecting them grew in girth.

Her neglected clit pulsed and her pussy clenched. She moaned.

The penetration stopped, and she whimpered in protest. She knew better than to stop or to say anything. The fire on her ass told her she probably couldn't withstand another punishment right then and there, and she desperately didn't want to call a halt to their games.

Stefano pulled and one of the beads popped out. It sent ripples of pleasure pulsing through her entire body, and she purred in the back of her throat. Alexei's cock lengthened, hardening in her mouth. He stepped back, withdrawing from her.

"That's enough, Samantha."

She liked the way he said her name. It was soft, washing over her as both praise and a caress. Kneeling on the floor in front of her, Alexei gripped her shoulders and regarded her. Intense hunger radiated from him. He kissed her, taking possession of her lips and sending warm sparks shooting from that end of her body, too.

He stopped, pulling back just slightly. His breath fanned her mouth. "You belong to us, Samantha. Say it."

"I belong to you," she said. The unhesitant words were breathy and whispered.

Alexei's smile was genuine and proud. "Closer, honey. Almost there."

Almost there? Samantha had never felt so wholly like she belonged to anyone else. What more did he expect?

Behind her, Stefano's latex-covered cock pressed into her pussy. He pushed between her shoulder blades, and Samantha lowered

herself to her elbows. In front of her, Alexei sat back on his heels and watched. His eyes remained fixed on her face, studying her every action and reaction.

Stefano entered her slowly. He thrust into her, a little bit deeper each time. Between the plug in her ass and the cock in her pussy, the fullness created a heat unlike anything she'd ever felt before. She felt the first stirrings of a climax.

"She's tight," he said. "Her wet little pussy is clenching already."

Alexei's eyes lit. He propped an elbow on the bed next to her and rested his head on his palm. They were face to face. She wanted to run her fingers through his silky black hair, but she knew better than to move.

"Don't come yet," he said. "I'll tell you when to come, Samantha."

She was beginning to hate those words. The moment he ordered her not to come was the exact moment it became almost unbearable to hold it off.

A long, low moan escaped. "Please," she whispered. Moisture gathered in the corners of her eyes, frustration in the face of being denied the largest orgasm that ever promised release.

He kissed her again, thrusting his tongue inside her mouth and sweeping away the worst of the urge with his distraction. She kissed him back, begging him without words.

Stefano withdrew, halting for a second before burying himself so deep his balls slapped her pussy. Then his motions were fast and frantic.

Sounds, originating deep in Samantha's chest, vibrated into Alexei's mouth. She kissed him harder, sucking his tongue the same way she sucked his dick. His hand wandered down, fingers spread wide to caress the skin of her chest, fondle her breasts, and tweak her nipples.

Heat built everywhere. Sam bucked against Stefano and broke the kiss with Alexei. Pleas poured from her. Tears blurred her vision.

Finally, Alexei's voice whispered in her ear. "Come for us, Samantha. Now."

She did. Her vaginal walls contracted so powerfully she felt the waves in her labia, in her anus, and down her thighs. She screamed, but Alexei's lips here back on hers, and he swallowed the sound. If Stefano hadn't been holding her hips, she would have collapsed.

Before the orgasm waned, she felt her body lifted. The room shifted and she was on her back. Alexei pushed her legs apart, lifted her hips, and buried himself inside her.

Samantha's thigh muscles still pulsed, and she was too weak to wrap her legs around Alexei. The orgasm didn't fade. It went on and on, fed by each one of Alexei's powerful thrusts. Her senses became overloaded as the pleasure bordered on too much. She thrashed, fighting his demands until strong hands pinned her shoulders to the mattress.

Stefano's face, so similar to Alexei's hovered above her. His half-smile quirked up to the right, where Lex's quirked up to the left. Subtle differences, but something her artist's eye couldn't fail to notice. "Relax, Sammy. Don't fight it. You're not allowed to hold back any part of yourself from us, honey. You belong to us. We want to see you come again. Now."

The pulsing had yet to stop. Her entire body was jelly. Using all her energy, she focused on Alexei. His bright blue eyes were blurred with passion and the veins in his neck stood out with the effort it cost him to hold back. That full bottom lip was clasped between his teeth.

Suddenly, he hefted her legs up. Stefano's hands closed around her ankles, holding them high above her head. Her body split in two to open itself up to Alexei. His thrusts went deeper. The position and the pressure made her aware of each bead inside her ass.

Lights danced behind her eyes, white spots the blotted out her vision. Screams reached her ears and a hand clamped over her mouth. Her body bucked as much as it could with two large men holding it

down. She thought she had come before, but now she could see the place where they had been driving her.

To reach it, she would have to surrender completely. Alexei had been right when he said she hadn't completely given herself over to them. It was second chance at a one-night stand. Why would she?

But things were different now. Bliss was so close. With a breath, she gave up everything. Her body and her soul were in the hands of these Morozov brothers, and she could live with that.

Waves washed her somewhere else. She floated above her tingling, pleasure-filled body, watching as Alexei climaxed. His roar was muted. He collapsed next to her, his body creating a valley in the mattress whose gravity forced her to roll to him. He was warm, his skin covered with a sheen of sweat, and he felt so good next to her.

Stefano whispered in her ear. Praises, she thought. But that was muted, too.

Exhaustion claimed her. The last piece of information she processed before losing consciousness came from Stefano.

"It's not enough, Sammy."

Chapter 7

Sam stared down at the two best lovers she was likely to ever meet. She let her eyes wander over the curves of their faces, completely identical, especially now that they were relaxed in sleep. She memorized the ripples that made up their shoulders and chests, marveling that one of them wasn't the least bit larger than the other in that department. That was probably by design. She had no trouble picturing the pair of them counting out the repetitions on the weights they lifted to make sure they each did the same amount.

The sheet was pulled up to just above Alexei's hips. It was a little higher on Stefano. Otherwise, she would have compared them that way, too.

She had learned her lesson since the last time she woke up sandwiched between Alexei and Stefano. They didn't want her to leave without saying goodbye. She couldn't hurt them like that, especially not after what they had given her.

Last night had been incredible. They had spanked her, bound her, and whipped her. They had given her the largest orgasms she'd ever experienced. The only thing they hadn't done was to fuck her at the same time. She missed that. It now ranked as one of her top five sexual experiences. She was sure her time with Lex and Stef would round out the other four positions on the list, but she wasn't in the mood to think about that just yet.

A glance at the clock showed that it was only a little after six in the morning. Even if they were the kind of men who were cranky until they consumed caffeine, she reasoned they wouldn't mind being awakened by the kind of goodbye kiss she planned.

Her hair was still damp from the shower she had just taken. She dropped her towel and climbed up to straddle Alexei, tugging the sheet from his body as she moved up him. He started all of this, so she would bid farewell to him first. She bent her head and licked his unsuspecting penis. He still smelled fresh from the shower he had taken before joining her in bed last night.

His erection formed slowly. His leg shifted under her.

“You don’t have to do that, Samantha.”

Lex’s sleep-roughened voice rumbled across the short distance. She lifted her head to smile at him before resuming her actions. He moaned and thrust lazily into her mouth. She stopped, releasing him from her mouth with a soft popping sound, and sat up to kneel between him and Stefano.

Alexei raised his head from the pillow. His thick black hair was wild from falling asleep with it still wet. “Why’d you stop?”

She grinned at him. “You said I didn’t have to do it.”

“I was being polite. You can’t tease like that, Samantha. It’s not nice.”

“Oh, I think you teased the hell out of me enough for this to not be adequate revenge.”

He narrowed his eyes at her, and she wondered if her early morning effervescence was too much for him. People who hated the mornings usually found her hard to take this early in the day.

“Ignore him, Sammy. Lex tends to be an ass before 10:00 a.m.” Stefano didn’t bother to keep the amusement from his tone.

That was another difference. It looked like Stefano was more pleasant in the morning than Alexei. She looked from Lex to Stef and back before frowning apologetically at Alexei. “I can’t stay until ten. I have stuff to do, places to go, people to see.”

Alexei’s glare hardened, and he growled. Before he could say anything, Samantha wrapped her hand around his erection. Her other hand delved under the covers and found Stefano already hard.

“I wouldn’t leave you high and dry, Lex. I want you both at the same time.”

His demeanor changed immediately. While he didn’t smile, flames smoldered in his eyes. Her pussy flooded at the promise in his eyes.

Two sets of hands reached for her, touching her all over and situating her body how they wanted it. Samantha didn’t mind in the least. Last night, she found out she was a masochist after all, and the label of submissive no longer seemed demeaning and weak. It took strength, confidence, and determination to admit what she wanted.

Samantha was going to call Ellen to pick her up, but Alexei and Stefano insisted on providing transportation. While their morning dalliance meant they didn’t have the time to drive her home themselves, they did arrange a car and a driver.

She hadn’t been lying about having places to go and people to see. The first place on her list was the travel agency. She had a report to file.

The building that housed the Keyes agency was located in a strip mall. The brown brick façade and the sedate signs labeling each store were classy, which meant the agency was located in Oakland County. Nothing this nice would be caught dead in one of the Downriver communities.

“Hello, Samantha.”

Elizabeth Keyes was a few inches shorter than Samantha, which wasn’t surprising since most people fell into that category. Her hair was streaked with so many shades of brown and blonde that her original color was impossible to discern. At sixty-two, Elizabeth wasn’t into natural anymore, especially not if it would make her look like she was sixty-two.

Her warm brown eyes smiled every bit as much as her mouth.

“Hi, Liz. How are you?”

Elizabeth tilted her head to the side, studying Samantha. “I think I’m not doing half as well as you are, honey. Was the hotel that good?”

A slow blush heated Sam’s neck, and she hoped it wouldn’t travel any further. The hotel had been that good, just not the one Liz meant. “No. The resort in Alaska isn’t up to your standards. The beds were lumpy, the sheets had rust stains from the washing machines, and the rugs were threadbare. I found some kind of food stuck to one of the walls.”

Samantha took out the card where she stored her digital photographs. She loaded it into the closest unoccupied computer to show Liz the details of her trip. Out of everything, the only activity she could recommend was the plane tour of the Alaskan wilderness. The two companies she had used to take her on whale watching excursions didn’t pamper their guests the way Elizabeth would expect. They were fine for the average tourist, but they wouldn’t do for a clientele that expected their munchies to include caviar.

A half hour later, Elizabeth sat back and stared at Samantha. “You met someone, didn’t you?”

She’d met a couple of someones, but Sam didn’t know how to say that to someone who treated her like a daughter. She knew what she had done was pretty unconventional. Maybe Ellen and her friends wouldn’t judge her, but even the idea of telling her family or any acquaintances made dread pool in her stomach. “Yeah, but he lives in Florida, so it didn’t work out.”

Guilt stabbed her. Which of the brothers was she leaving out of that statement?

Walking to her van in the parking lot after she finished with Elizabeth, Samantha adjusted the straps of her sundress and wondered if Alexei or Stefano admitted to sharing women. They probably did. It was one of those things men would brag about that would make them seem like complete studs, while a woman would need to keep it to herself to avoid the slut label.

That stung, too.

Samantha blasted the air conditioning and rested her head against the steering wheel while the car cooled down. Elizabeth had assigned her to go back to Alaska. This time, she mandated a longer trip. Samantha was not to come back without finding an excellent hotel, several acceptable places to eat, and at least three excursions. The trip would take her away from home until it was time to meet her family in Kentucky for their annual Spencer family vacation.

This time, she was packing her paints as well as her camera equipment. It had been too long since she'd devoted time to her craft. First, the wedding preparations had stolen her time. Now, her job was interfering. Her art was soul food. She needed it.

She had time to visit her mother before she had to pack. Her flight left the next afternoon, but Sam still had a lot of things to do.

Samantha was cut from the same cloth as her mother. Alyssa Spencer was a leggy blonde with a toned body. Sam had inherited her athleticism from her mother. Her siblings and her father all had to work much harder to master physical skills. She was grateful for that gift.

When she pulled up in the driveway, only her mother's car was there. That wasn't a surprise. As a human resources supervisor for Ford, her father didn't usually get home from work before six.

She parked in the street and found her mother in the back yard, weeding her flower beds. Her long, golden hair was pulled back in a ponytail, and she wore a big, floppy, straw hat. Denim shorts covered her lower half and a bikini top did the rest of the job.

"I hope you're wearing sunscreen this time," Samantha said. "You got so burnt last year that you couldn't go outside for over a week."

Leaning back on her heels, Alyssa smiled up at her daughter. "Yes, and Jonas was too busy to help me out. You were so sweet to weed my flower beds."

Samantha knelt next to her mom and tugged at a patch of grass growing where it shouldn't. "Yeah, well, I have no time this year, so don't get burnt."

Alyssa threw an arm around her daughter's shoulders, squeezed her, and planted a loud kiss on her cheek. "How was Alaska?"

"It was nice. Warm, but not hot or muggy. I liked it. I'm heading back tomorrow."

Her mother had always been perceptive. She heard the sigh in her daughter's voice. "You didn't like it that much, did you?"

"I didn't find anything good enough. Liz is sending me back. She really wants to put this package together. I'll get back just in time to drive to Kentucky with Amanda, Rich, and the kids. I feel like I haven't seen Faith or Ricky in so long."

Samantha's niece and nephew were the loves of her life. She played the part of the busy aunt who traveled frequently, stopping to sweep into their lives with excitement and gifts every few weeks. Though she liked her life, Sam knew she longed for something long-term and stable like what her big sister had found with her middle school sweetheart all those years ago.

Alyssa expertly turned over a patch of earth and dislodged a weed. "You know Amanda's pregnant, right?"

Samantha shook her head. First Sabrina, then Ellen, and now Amanda. "I haven't talked to her, but I'm happy for her. I know she and Rich want three. When is she due?"

"The beginning of May."

"Ellen's due in April. Sabrina's due in March." Sam shivered. She felt an insane urge to travel for the entire first half of the next year. While she liked babies, she preferred them older, when they could walk and talk and blow their own noses.

Alyssa laughed as she wiped her trowel on the grass. "Don't worry, Sammy. Nobody is pressuring you. How about a glass of ice-cold lemonade? You can tell me all about your trip and what's put that sparkle in your eyes."

Sam watched her mother disappear into the garage. She wondered how she might explain away that sparkle. Her mother knew all about Jonas. After Helene's damaging accusations, Alyssa had demanded answers from her son.

It had taken her some time to accept her son's sexual preferences, but Alyssa had eventually come to terms with it. How could she get her mother to accept the fact that Sam needed two men in her life to put this sparkle in her eyes?

Inside the house, Alyssa washed her hands while Sam poured the drinks. It was the frozen stuff, full of sugar and exactly what Sam wanted.

"So, what's his name?" When Sam didn't immediately answer, Alyssa adjusted. "Or her name?"

Samantha rolled her eyes. Ever since her mother had met Sabrina's sister, she had gone out of her way to assure Samantha that she was okay with her dating women as long as she was happy. Apparently, Sam's inability to meet the right man meant she was a lesbian. Samantha didn't have a problem with it, but she did wish Alyssa would leave the topic alone. The message had been received.

If she said Alexei's name, what did that mean for Stefano? It wasn't fair. She could do this. She could tell her mother that she intended to pursue...No, she couldn't. Taking a deep breath, Sam chose Alexei because he was the first one she met. "Alexei Morozov. I met him at the wedding."

Alyssa slid into the chair across the table from Sam. "Tall, dark hair, blue eyes?" At Sam's nod, her mother grinned. "Oh, Sammy, he's very handsome."

"Yes," Samantha agreed. She felt like shit, not only for her lack of courage, but because of the slight she dealt to Stefano. "But he's heading back home to Florida this weekend. I think he lives someplace near Miami."

Alyssa swallowed a sip of lemonade and nodded. "You always did go for the ones that aren't local. At least you give your father impetus

to travel more than he'd like. It's still less than I'd like, but I'm not complaining."

Did Sam say something she hadn't intended? Why did her mother think she was going to up and move in with a man she just met? When she had moved to Toronto last year to be with her boyfriend, it had been after almost a year of dating. Even then, the lure of Toronto's art community had been the stronger magnet.

"I wasn't planning to move anytime soon," Samantha said. Sweat from the cold glass coated her fingertips. "I have a life here."

"Tell me about this man, Sammy. Besides the fact that he's cute, I don't know anything about him."

Samantha bit her lip. She had always enjoyed a special closeness with her mother. Ever since she had reached adulthood, they had been friends. If Sam was going to be honest, her mother was her best friend. Still, she was her mother, and Sam felt a daughter's reticence over sharing too much.

"He owns a company. I don't know what the company does. Sabrina said she's known him her whole life, but they aren't close. Their parents were friends, and Lex was friends with Sabrina's boyfriend in high school."

She fell into silence, wanting to say more, but afraid to do it.

"Okay." Her mother drew out the word. "What's wrong with him?"

Sam leapt to his defense. Her hand tightened around her drink. "There's nothing wrong with him. It's just...He's a lot like Jonas."

Alyssa froze, staring at Sam with a wary expression on her face. Finally, the wariness cracked. "Do you mean that he's been hurt and he's vulnerable, or that he has a great sense of humor, or that he feels the constant need to prove himself?"

A strand of hair fell forward as Sam's head dropped to hide her shame. "No, Mom. You know what I mean. He's a Dom."

From the tortured expression on her mother's face, Samantha guessed Alyssa would have preferred to hear she was a lesbian. Her mother had been ready to accept that.

Alyssa pushed her chair away from the table and crossed to the sink. She gripped the edge of the counter and stared out the window.

Samantha watched her mother's knuckles turn white. Her mouth was suddenly parched in a way that a gulp of lemonade didn't cure. "Mom, please don't be mad."

Alyssa's shoulders rose and fell with one deep breath after another. "I'm not mad, Sam. I'm dreading knowing more, and I'm dreading not knowing more. Please tell me he isn't one of those people who has to control every aspect of your life. I know a lot more about this lifestyle than you think I do. Jonas and Ellen live on the lighter side of things. I don't want to find out that you've spent your days chained to the floor or locked inside a cage."

Stones materialized inside Sammy's stomach. She didn't want those things, either. "I wouldn't consent to that."

"You don't always have a choice." Alyssa's gaze was firmly locked on something not in the room, but Sam had no doubt her attention was completely on Samantha.

"Alexei isn't like that, Mom. He's very conscientious of safety. He said that anything that happens is my choice." Technically, Stefano had said that. Sam flinched again as guilt pinched at her gut.

To assuage that guilt and to reassure her mother, Sam crossed the room and slipped her arms around her mother's waist. She rested her head on her mother's shoulder. "He cares about me, Mom. When I said he was like Jonas, I meant it. And Ellen had him checked out, too."

Alyssa put a hand on Sam's cheek to hug her close and she pressed a kiss to her daughter's forehead. "That makes me feel better. Ellen has mafia-like connections. If there's dirt on someone, she'll find it. Just promise you'll call if there's a problem. We'll come get you, Sammy. No judgments, no recriminations."

“I don’t think it’ll be necessary, Mom. I haven’t decided whether or not I’ll see him again. But I will call you if I need you.” She released Alyssa and returned to finish her lemonade. Now that the uncomfortable part of the conversation was over, Sam breathed easier. She’d give her mother some time to adjust to this before she told her about Stefano.

That breath was short-lived.

“Have you called Treva Andreas?”

Sam sucked on a piece of ice. She rolled it around her tongue. “Who?”

Rolling her eyes, Alyssa sighed. “Sabrina’s friend who owns that art gallery in Ann Arbor. Sabrina was telling me that Treva was impressed with the painting hanging in her foyer. She wants to see more of your work.”

It was coming back to Sam now. Sabrina had gushed over some of Samantha’s paintings and photographs. She had purchased two of them. One hung in her home and the other hung in her office. Samantha had been touched by the gesture, but she recognized it for what it was. Sabrina was a nice person. The purchase of art had been a show of support. That support would be forthcoming whether or not Sabrina thought Samantha had any real talent.

That support included contacting an acquaintance in the art community. Most of Sabrina’s art contacts were limited to graphic artists, which was a completely different arena.

“Mom, I’m sure she’s just being polite.”

Alyssa snorted and tossed her ponytail. She settled back into the chair across from Samantha, crossing her leg under her bottom and letting the other swing free. “You can’t know that until you call her. Samantha, chances like this don’t come along frequently. Take the chance. Call her.”

When she left an hour later to finish her errands, she didn’t feel much better. Though her mother seemed to accept her word that

Alexei was a good man and a loving Dom, she hadn't let up on her conviction that Sam needed to call Treva.

Samantha was divided on the issue. On one hand, she didn't want a pity showing. She didn't want to set up all of her work just to have people wander through the rooms, whispering bad things about her work, or worse, misunderstanding it completely. On the other hand, what if they liked it? What if she sold pieces? What if that showing launched her career?

Samantha was afraid of success. It changed things. Right now, she was comfortable in her life. Meeting Alexei and Stefano had changed a lot for her, but she was adjusting. She wasn't sure she could handle rejection, either.

She chose to deal with this the best way she could. She put it off. Procrastination had often worked for her in the past. It should do the trick now.

* * * *

"Lex?"

Stefano stared out the dark window of the car. It was their father's car, the same one in which they had sent Samantha home. Their reasoning wasn't completely driven by manners or upbringing. This way, they would be assured of having her address. Their father's driver wouldn't keep that information from them. If they wanted to pursue anything further with Sammy, they would need to follow up on their time together. They always sent roses first.

Alexei stared out the opposite window. "Can we call her?"

"I would rather she called us. She's vulnerable right now. We could influence her to make decisions she isn't ready to make." It killed Stef to say it, but it was true. He wanted Sammy every bit as much as Alexei did.

"What if she doesn't call?"

Stefano sighed. That was his fear, as well. They had asked to see her again, but she hadn't answered. The best they had been able to do was to extract a promise from her that she'd think about it. "How about we give it until we're back from New York? If she hasn't called us by then, we'll call her. We're going to be busy anyway."

Running the company they had inherited from their father was fulfilling, but it also demanded vast amounts of time. Their sister, Ana, had escaped responsibility because she was a woman. She had used their father's sexism to her advantage, arguing that she was cut out to be a NICU nurse. However, she still raked in one-quarter of the profits, and she had a corresponding vote on the board.

"I want to train her, Stef. I want her to be ours."

Stefano nodded. He understood what a huge step this was for Alexei. Ever since their mother died, Lex had blamed their father's style of dominating her for killing her. Stefano knew their father wasn't to blame. Their mother suffered from OCD. That forced the elder Morozov to be a little stricter with her. Otherwise, she would have washed the skin off her hands after using the bathroom, among other things.

"We told her we wanted to see her again. Now we wait. I want it to be her choice, Lex. I want her to choose to be with us."

Chapter 8

Samantha's excursion had been wonderfully uneventful. Though it had been a working trip, she found peace in the beauty of the unspoiled wilderness and in watching the whitecaps ripple across the frigid ocean surface, especially at dawn. Each morning, the sunrise only grew more breathtaking. She had taken a number of promising photographs, and she had sketched out a few paintings she couldn't wait to start.

Unfortunately, she couldn't start for another week. Now that she was home from her working vacation, she had a real vacation planned.

Her phone rang as she snagged her luggage from the claim area. For so much of her trip, her phone had been out of range. At first, the silence and lack of internet had been lonely. Now that she was used to it, the sound startled her.

She fumbled for it, not bothering to check the number. Amanda, her sister, was supposed to pick her up from the airport, and her mother had a knack for knowing the moment Sam arrived home from one of her trips. It was likely either of them.

"Hey," she said affectionately, her mouth stretching into a wide smile.

"Samantha? This is Alexei."

Sam froze, dropping her bag to the floor. For ten days, she had wondered about him and Stefano. They had asked to see her again. Samantha didn't know if she wanted the kind of relationship they offered. She didn't know how she would be able to face the world with a man on either arm. Doubts about their sincerity surfaced every

now and again, ruining parts of her trip until she had pushed away all negative thoughts and focused on the moment, nothing else.

“Samantha? Are you there?”

She realized she hadn’t answered him. “Sorry,” she said. “I was expecting someone else.”

His tone cooled, and his voice tightened. “Were you?”

Samantha was savvy to his tricks. She wondered why he felt the need to use them, but she refused to respond with an explanation. She wasn’t his submissive. Yet. “How are you, Alexei?”

“Answer the question, Samantha.”

She laughed at his Dom voice. It used to send her into peals of giggles when Jonas had spoken like that to Helene, his ex-wife, or when Ellen used it with her husband, Ryan. Surprisingly, Jonas didn’t use it with Sabrina. Not in front of anyone else, anyway.

“I already did,” she pointed out. “I told you I was expecting someone else before you even asked. I’m not into repeating myself. Now, are you going to answer my question, or did you want to just tell me the reason you called?”

Grabbing the handle of her suitcase, she extended the pulley handle so it could roll behind her. Knowing Amanda, she was waiting in the pickup area. It would be rude to keep her.

She heard a loud exhalation that told her Alexei wasn’t enjoying her brand of banter. The exit was near and he hadn’t said a word. “Look, I only have a minute. Did you want to call me back later?”

Putting the responsibility on him was a power grab action, but Sam didn’t care. She didn’t know yet if they were playing a game. The double doors swished open in front of her. Sounds of cars and buses assaulted her ears.

“We want to see you again. Have you thought about our proposal?”

He said exactly what she wanted him to say. They hadn’t reconsidered their offer. That threw her. In the back of her head, she’d

entertained the nagging suspicion that time and distance would dim their desire to see her again.

“Samantha? Did you hear what I said?”

She cleared her throat. He was calm and in control. This didn’t bode well. She bit her lip and scanned the line of cars for Amanda’s SUV. “I heard you.”

“And?”

She inhaled sharply, violently, suddenly aware she hadn’t been breathing. Amanda’s car screeched to a stop at the curb in front of Sam. “Lex, my ride is here. I have to go. Can you call back later? Around six?”

* * * *

Alexei stared at the phone. The screen read “disconnected.” Stefano’s plan to wait her out hadn’t produced results. In seven days, neither of them had received a single message from Samantha.

The phone call hadn’t gone at all the way he expected. She had been genuinely surprised to hear from him and downright shocked when he asked about her decision to see them again. Perhaps the fear that woke him at night, the fear she had her fill of them, wasn’t unfounded.

Was that impatience in her voice when she said she didn’t have time to talk? Or was it uncertainty?

He slid his phone into its sleeve and threw it on his desk. He was working out of the Miami office this week. Stef was in New York, due home later this evening at the exact time he was supposed to call Samantha back.

He sighed. It was best to say nothing. Stefano would find out soon enough that Lex hadn’t followed their plan.

* * * *

The phone rang at five. Samantha had declined Amanda's invitation to have dinner at her house. She'd be spending the next ten days with her beloved family. This was likely going to be her last chance to work on her art without distractions. Plus, she had an amazing amount of laundry to do before Amanda picked her up in the morning.

However, convincing her sister to leave her alone was proving difficult. Amanda had called twice and she had texted pictures of the food preparations six times. She glanced at her phone with every intention of turning it off, but the unfamiliar number made her hesitate. It was the same area code from when Lex had called earlier. She had been so nervous and caught off-guard that she hadn't quite known what to say to him. She hoped he wasn't upset by her abruptness.

Swallowing her trepidation, she answered.

"Sammy? Hey, it's Stefano."

She knew who it was. They were tag-teaming her. This was the trouble with dating brothers. Dating? No, not dating. Not yet.

"Hi, Stefano." She thought she did a great job keeping her tone light. "How are you?"

"Great. I'm about a half hour from home. It's been a long, long trip, but the Galens were receptive to our plans for merging some operations. It should prove sweetly profitable for both our corporations. But you didn't really want to know about that, did you?"

Samantha laughed. This wasn't the conversation she expected to have with Stefano. "I have no idea what you're talking about except in the most general terms. I'm glad things are going well for you."

"How are things going with you, Sammy?"

"Fine. I just got back from Alaska this morning. I'm knee deep in laundry and sorting through a huge pile of mail. My plants survived. The kid down the hall waters my jades for me and picks up my mail for the bargain price of five bucks a week." She sighed. "And I'll be doing the exact same thing again in ten days."

“Why?”

She laughed at Stefano’s confusion. “Because I leave tomorrow for Kentucky. My family does a vacation together every year at this time.”

“Oh.”

Samantha opened the utility closet that housed her washer and dryer. It had gone quiet, indicating the end of the dry cycle. She folded the clothes onto her kitchen counter and decided to get to the point. “Look, Stefano, I know you want to see me again, but I’m just not sure what I’m getting myself into with the two of you.”

Silence greeted her statement, followed by a soft chuckle. “What do you want to get yourself into, Sammy? We’re versatile.”

She folded panties and hung a shirt on a waiting hanger. “I’ll admit to being a masochist, but I don’t think I’m the kind of submissive you guys want. I’m not subservient.”

“Oh, honey, yes, you are exactly the kind of submissive we want. You’re beautiful and sensual and completely sexual. You’re so responsive. We barely pinked you, Sammy. I could make you come from the touch of the whip alone.”

Damn right he could. Samantha remembered the sweet sting of the cat and the amazing way the heater set her skin on fire. Her body tingled, yearning to have that again. “I don’t think I’m slave material, Stef. I have a life, and I like my life.”

Sam heard the gears of his thoughts churning. It came across the line as static.

“I’m just not the wait-at-home-naked kind of woman. I like my freedom and my clothes.”

Stefano sighed. “I know you’re not, Sammy. We’d like to train you, though. We’d like to help you figure out what you do and don’t like. How about you come down for a long weekend and try it out? I’d love to show you our playroom.”

Samantha was familiar with the concept of a playroom. Ellen had one in her basement. Though Sam had seen the different kinds of

spanking benches and restraint tables, she didn't have a full understanding of their various functions. The idea of being bound to one of those devices and totally at the mercy of Stefano and Alexei titillated her. Already her cream was collecting in the thin cotton of her panties.

"You don't have to make a decision right now," Stefano said. "In fact, I want you to take time on your vacation to think about it. Are you alone?"

She folded a pair of socks and modulated her tone to be teasing. The conversation was getting a little serious, and it made her nervous as all hell. "Why? Were you thinking of coming over to demonstrate to me how easily you can master my body?"

Stefano laughed. "If I weren't in Miami, Sammy, I would head to your house right now and show you how much you need a Master in your life."

She snorted as she started the next load in the dryer. Stacking her clothes neatly in the laundry basket, she carried them to her room. Some of them went into her suitcase. Others found themselves back in drawers. Kentucky wasn't going to have the colder days an Alaskan summer experienced.

"You have a high opinion of yourself, Stef."

"Answer my question, Sammy. Are you alone right now?"

"Yeah," she said, flopping down onto her bed. So many days had elapsed since she last slept in it that the mattress felt foreign under her back. "I'm alone. I'm lying across my bed. You want to have phone sex? I'm wearing sexy underwear. Black lace panties. It's not quite a thong, but it's not much more than that one, either."

She didn't add that she was wearing her black lace panties because they were the only clean pair she had. Now that the first load was done, she had several more pairs available.

"Let me pull over," he said, his voice thicker than it had been moments before. "Are you wearing a bra?"

“No,” she laughed. “These bad girls wanted to be free this afternoon. If I tied you to my bed, Stefano, I’d torture you by rubbing them in your face. I’d trace your lips with a hard nipple and tease the hell out of you.”

“Would you make me beg to suck them, Sammy?”

Pushing her white cotton T-shirt out of the way, she traced her areola. Her finger circled lightly, closer and closer to the nipple.

“You’re already begging,” she said. “What do you like about my breasts, Stefano?”

His ragged breathing told her so much.

“I’m going to warm your ass, Sammy. You’re earning a punishment right now.”

Her answering laugh was husky to her own ears. “I didn’t agree to be your slave, Stefano. I agreed to have phone sex with you.” She pinched her nipple, tugging at it sharply. The pull echoed deep in her pussy, a single wave of pleasure traveling between the two points. “Would the punishment include spanking? You have wonderful hands.”

The low answering growl had her laughing. This was going to be fun.

“Sammy, I can honestly say that not a day goes by that I don’t think about getting my hands on your ass. In my fantasies, you’ve already earned dozens of punishments.”

Though she laughed, his tone had a knot forming in her chest. “You’re not the kind of Dom who punishes his subs just for fun, are you?”

“When my slave is a masochist, yes, I would. Isn’t that what you want, Sammy? You want me to tie you down on my spanking bench, turn your ass pink until your cream drips down your thighs, and then fuck you slowly until you’re begging for an orgasm? You can’t begin to comprehend how beautiful you looked the other night, Sammy. You can’t understand what watching your body writhe and welcome

each flick of the whip did to us. I've masturbated to those memories for seven whole days now."

The smooth silk of his voice seduced her, and the picture he painted had her pushing the band of her sweats until they slid from her body to fall in a heap on the floor. She rummaged in her nightstand for her vibrator.

"Go into your kitchen and get a wooden spoon."

She snagged the vibrator, but his directive had her dropping the plastic case on her bed. "What?"

"Do you have nipple clamps?"

Samantha frowned. She had seen nipple clamps before. Sabrina had several pair in one of the drawers of her jewelry box. Her sister-in-law had laughed when Samantha had held them up to study them. The little plastic claws looked so painful. The metal ones had caused her to shudder with revulsion. Sabrina had insisted that they were one of her favorite accessories, and Samantha had kept her opinion to herself.

"No, I don't. Why do I need a wooden spoon? Stefano, I have a vibrator and a perfectly good hand, and I'm pretty good at talking dirty. If you think I'm going to do something gross with a kitchen utensil..."

His laughter cut short her tirade. "You are priceless, honey. I might be depraved and perverted, but I'm not that bad. Now, unless you have a paddle or a flogger stashed somewhere, go get the spoon. Don't make me tell you again."

The kitchen was a short walk. Her apartment was small and very utilitarian. It wasn't a real home, just a place to crash when she was in the area.

"I have three spoons. Do you have a size preference?"

"Choose the spoon with the largest surface area. Got it?"

"Yes," she said. Tendrils of nervousness didn't override her curiosity. Though he and Alexei had repeatedly told her that she was in charge that night, the ropes binding her to the bed and the bodies

holding her down didn't make her feel like she had any control. It had been a safe risk and an incredible experience.

Neither brother had abused her trust.

"Take off your clothes, slave."

Samantha closed her eyes. She knew language like that indicated a relationship, permanence. A pet was temporary. "Stefano, please don't call me that."

"All right, Sammy," he said, his tone regretful but not contrite. He didn't apologize. "Are you naked yet?"

She lost the shirt and panties. "I'm naked."

"Still in the kitchen?"

"Yes."

"Put the phone on speaker, Sammy. Set it on the counter and brace yourself."

For what? This wasn't Samantha's first experience with phone sex. She did as he directed. Only then did his intentions become clear. "You're going to make me punish myself for teasing you."

The huge grin on his face was evident in the timbre of his words. "I'm glad you know why you're being punished. You've earned five lashes. Count them out. I want to hear you counting, and I want to hear the wood hitting your ass."

Samantha stared at the spoon in her hand. This was absurd, wasn't it? Then why was she so wet at the idea of the smooth wood smacking on her ass that it was uncomfortable to stand with her legs together?

Tentatively, she swung once, whacking her backside with all the force she could muster. Given the logistics involved, it didn't come close to the force he had used with that paddle. It was a pale imitation of the real thing. Though it aroused her, it left her wanting more. Alexei's caress. Stefano's kiss. Resigned, Samantha counted out the strokes of her punishment.

When she finished, she threw the spoon on the counter and scooped up the phone, heading to the bedroom.

"Did it hurt, Sammy?" He sounded more curious than concerned.

“No,” she said with a sharpness to the word she didn’t intend.

“Sorry,” he said, and he meant it. “You’re going to need better equipment.”

Hell, yes, she thought, but she didn’t say it out loud. The equipment wasn’t the only problem. She needed him there to use it on her.

“Stand in front of a mirror, Sammy. Tell me what you see.”

His Dom voice was back. This time, it sent a thrill through Samantha. Still, she had no intention of giving him what he wanted. “I see a horny, naked woman. What are you wearing?”

“Samantha.”

The sharpness of the warning wasn’t what made her frown. “You never call me that, Stef. It doesn’t sound right when you say it.”

“I’m going to tie you to the spanking bench in my playroom and turn your ass bright red. I’m going to spank you until you’re close to coming, Sammy, then I’m going to stop. And when you beg me to fuck you, I’m going to do it, but in a way that will torment you even more.”

The vehemence in his promise and the picture he painted had her gasping for breath. Panting, she rubbed her finger across her clit. She flinched at the light touch before thrusting her hips forward. The woman in the mirror flushed pink with desire, the color Stefano and Alexei both seemed to like so much.

“Then I’m going to move you over to the penance table. Do you know what that is, Sammy?”

She didn’t, but he didn’t wait for a response. She pressed harder on her clit, flicking the tip of her finger across the hardened nub.

“It’s a table with extensions for strapping down the arms and legs of slaves. Your legs will be spread apart. Every inch of you will be open to me. I’ll put clamps on your nipples and your clit. I’ll fuck that luscious mouth of yours and come all over your breasts. I’ll tease you until you’ve learned your lesson.”

The entire time he talked, Samantha circled her clit. Now she rubbed lower, finding that place just outside her opening that drove her crazy. Delicious heat built.

“You won’t care what I call you then, Sammy. You’ll accept any name I choose to give you. Won’t you?”

“Yes,” she said. She had seen a penance table before, but she hadn’t known its name. The image of Stefano standing over her, his face contorted with passion as his semen shot out over her body, drove her to the edge. “Yes, Stefano, yes.”

“God, Sammy, I love the way you sound right now. You’re close, aren’t you?”

“Yes.” The word hissed through her clenched teeth.

“Stop touching yourself.”

Her hand stopped moving at his command, not bothering to pay attention to the way the rest of her body screamed for the release that had been so close. “Damn it, Stefano. Why?”

“It’s not time yet. Kneel on your bed with your knees spread two feet apart.” His voice came through the phone breathy and faint.

Samantha did as he said, but she frowned at the phone. “You came, didn’t you?”

“With those incredibly sexy sounds you were making?” He chuckled. “Hell, yes.”

Her jaw dropped. “Son of a bitch.”

Stefano’s groan vibrated through the phone’s speaker. “If I was there with you, I’d do something about that mouth of yours.”

“I bet you would,” she said. “Would you fill it with your cock or your tongue?”

“Rub your vibrator against your clit without turning it on.” Sam took solace from the fact that Stef had a hard time grunting out that command.

The thick wetness between her legs meant she didn’t need lubricant. She abandoned her attempts to wrestle control of the

conversation away from Stefano. Positioning the tapered head of her translucent blue vibrator against her clit, she did as he instructed.

“Turn it on the lowest setting”

Vibrations hammered her clit. Samantha whimpered. “Let me put it inside. Please let me come.”

On the other end, Stefano’s voice was tight. “Do it, Sammy. Put it inside and turn it up as high as you like it. Tell me what it feels like.”

She slid the slick silicone into her pussy. The circumference stretched her. The steady vibrations stimulated every straining nerve in her vagina. Still on her knees, she tilted her hips, pressing the point against her g-spot. Leaning back on one hand, she undulated. The only thing missing was the feel of a warm body beneath her.

“Sammy,” he prompted.

“It’s big, Stefano, almost as big around as you. I’m riding it and pretending it’s you.”

He groaned, long and low, swearing mildly. “I want to hear you come. Come for me, Sam. Come for me now.”

She did. She thought it would take longer, but the moment he gave the command, her body rushed to obey. She cried out her release.

“Don’t stop,” he said. “I want another one. Ride it harder.”

This was going to be a problem. Her knees shook, threatening collapse. “Stefano, I—I don’t know if I can.”

“None of that,” he said in a tone that brooked no argument. “Don’t stop until I tell you to stop.”

Samantha thrust against the toy. The remnants of her orgasm pulsed through her pussy, making everything extra sensitive, but she didn’t stop. Stefano’s voice, rough with passion, praised and encouraged her. Soon, the strength of the ripples increased. Her vaginal walls contracted. Cream rushed to her pussy and she came hard.

She didn't know what kinds of sound she made, but when she came down, her room was curiously silent. Weakly, she twisted, groping for the phone.

"Stef? Still there?"

"I'm not going anywhere."

"That was incredible."

"Yeah, it was."

Samantha closed her eyes. "It doesn't change my mind."

"I didn't expect it to," he said.

She heard his disappointment. "I won't wear a collar, not ever, and I won't have sex or expose myself in public."

"Those are hard boundaries, then. We can respect that. Sammy, you have final say in everything that happens to you. We won't do anything without your permission. That's one of our hard boundaries. You can stop the action at any time. We'll give you verbal and hand signals. We're not out to damage you. We want to hurt you in pleasurable ways. You said it yourself: You're a masochist. We're sadists. Perfect compatibility."

Samantha sighed. "You're Doms, and I'm not a sub."

"Sammy," he began.

"No, Stefano, really. I might like being tied up and whipped, but I'm not submissive. I'm not looking to have someone else calling the shots in my life." The more she thought about it, the more questions she had about her brother's relationship with his wife and about Ellen's relationship with Ryan. She knew Jonas was an exhibitionist and that Sabrina, as his submissive, went along with that kind of thing. She knew it was common for Doms to play with their subs in public at parties. She knew Ellen and Ryan did it every now and again. She couldn't see herself ever being comfortable with that kind of exposure.

He was silent for several heartbeats. Sam didn't know if he was angry or thinking. Finally, he exhaled. "Think about it, Sammy. You can call me at this number, text, or email me. I'll text you my email

address. Lex's, too. Let us know what you decide. When you're ready, we'll have a ticket waiting for you at the nearest airport."

He was taking it for granted that she would agree to what he asked, and that irked her. Though her body still hadn't cooled, she managed to keep her tone neutral. "I'll think about it. That's all I promise."

Chapter 9

The Kentucky sun beat down on the beach, showing no mercy to the mortals gathered for worship. Samantha surveyed the crowded area, wondering how it was possible to make so much sand completely disappear. She picked her way through the baking bodies, not bothering to apologize for dripping on anyone.

They probably welcomed the brief change in temperature.

Once she reached the grassy area, the crowd thinned considerably, probably because it was private property. The cabin her parents rented was becoming too small to accommodate them all, especially now that both Sabrina and Amanda planned to add to their numbers. Still, it was close to the lake.

She hopped up the seven steps to the deck and snagged the lounge chair next to Sabrina. A still-cold can of soda sat next to the chair. Jonas's, no doubt. Sam picked it up, pulled the tab, and took a long drink. Fizzy bubbles tickled her nose, but the coolness refreshed her insides.

Sabrina looked over, a wistful expression darkening her big brown eyes. "How was the water?"

Samantha smiled, suppressing a laugh. "With how much you love to swim, I can't believe you're letting Jonas boss you around. What's wrong with lake water?"

Sabrina shrugged and settled a protective hand over her abdomen. "The doctor said to avoid lake water. We're not taking any chances."

The strange quiet from inside the house caught Sam's attention. No children shrieked or squealed. "Where is everyone?"

“Your parents are at a quilting expo. They’ll be gone until tonight. Amanda and Richard took the kids to that water park down the road. Jonas is on the phone or in the bathroom, possibly both.”

Sam smiled. “And you want me to leave so you can be alone with my brother.”

“No,” Sabrina said, shaking her head emphatically. “I want to talk to you. I haven’t had a moment alone with you this whole time. We head back in two days, and I have no idea what happened between you, Alexei, and Stefano.”

To be honest, the passing of time dampened Samantha’s understanding of it, too. She frowned.

“You don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to,” Sabrina said. “It isn’t my intention to pry. I just...” She sighed. “I heard so many rumors. Good things, but...” Now she shook her head. “They were so mean to me growing up. I was always so glad my mom didn’t insist we hang out together. In high school, I had Stephen as a buffer, and they disappeared for college.”

Sam sipped Jonas’s drink. She couldn’t see either of the brothers being mean to anyone. “Why did you invite them to your wedding, if you didn’t like them so much?”

“They bought fifty-two percent of my grandfather’s company when his health went bad. Grandpa knew neither Mom nor I wanted to run it. Ginny had her hands full with Sensual Secrets. He didn’t want to sell it to someone who was going to dismantle everything he’d built. Stefano and Alexei paid fair market value for controlling interest, and they’ve done some pretty spectacular things with it since then.”

Her hand caressed her flat stomach. “I don’t have to work if I don’t want to. Even with the recession, we’re still in a good financial position. Mom, Ginny, and I each have sixteen percent of the shares. They tell us how to vote at board meetings. We generally follow their recommendations. It’s worked out well.”

Sam eyed the swirl of reds on the can. “So you invited them because they’re business associates.”

“And they came because they’re business associates. For the sake of family connections, they could have just sent a card like their dad and their sister did. Of course, they spent the rest of the week meeting with the Galens, so they had ulterior motives.” Sabrina laughed and leaned closer. “They’re hot, Sam. If they hadn’t been two years younger than me, I might not have been so grossed out when Stefano hit on me. I was ten and he was eight. A fifth grader does not date a third grader, no matter how cute he is.”

Picturing the exchange, Sam giggled. She had no doubt Lex and Stef were as assertive then as they were now.

“I had fun,” Sam said. She leaned her head against the woven pillow on the head rest. “They tied me up and whipped me. I didn’t think I’d like it, but... Wow. That’s the only way to describe it.”

Next to her, Sabrina sighed, a wistful sound. “I know exactly what you mean. That moment when everything blurs and reality ceases to exist. It’s you and your Master. Nothing matters but the peace growing inside, the feeling that all is right with the universe.”

Samantha stared at Sabrina. That had not been what she meant at all. “You make it sound like a totally Zen experience.”

Sabrina’s eyes flew open and her brown knit together. “That didn’t happen for you?”

“No, it didn’t. I have no idea how feelings of peace and tranquility can result from someone spanking and whipping you.” She did, however, completely understand what an erotic event it was.

“Subspace.” Jonas’s voice carried across the deck. He slid the heavy glass door closed and came closer. He handed bottles of half-frozen water to Sabrina and Sam before taking a seat at the foot of Sabrina’s lounger. Her short legs left plenty of room for his skinny ass.

He pushed a lock of curly hair out of his eyes. Sam wondered at that. She'd never seen him let his hair get this long. He spent most of his life hating the corkscrew curls and shaving them off.

Sam studied her big brother, noting the broad, muscular shoulders and the ripped stomach. Alexei and Stefano were wider, taller, and meatier, but they also sported broad shoulders and ripped muscles. She kept the skinny ass comment inside her head, knowing Jonas would throw her in the lake if she said it out loud.

"Subspace?" Sabrina's question echoed Jonas's statement.

"That's what it's called. A submissive achieves subspace when she's given complete control of herself over to her master. Because you're also a masochist, my love, you get there best through a good beating. Some submissives only need to be bound to get there."

Sabrina frowned, her bottom lip trembling with a pout the likes of which Samantha had never seen on her always-composed sister-in-law.

"Don't start," Jonas said. His warning contained a chilling steel that even doused Samantha's temperature, something difficult to do in the intense heat and humidity. "I'll tie you up, honey, but I won't whip you while you're pregnant."

As Sam watched, Sabrina's expression morphed back to the cool composure Sam was used to seeing. "Sam was just telling me the details of her night with the Morozovs. If you don't mind, I'll live vicariously through her."

Sam laughed, but Jonas just nodded. He picked up one of Sabrina's feet and pressed his thumbs into her sole. "Let's hear it, then. Ellen told us about when she took you to the demonstration."

The cap of the water bottle crackled as she twisted it loose. The icy water felt so good she sprinkled droplets on her chest, arms, and legs. Without anymore preamble, she related the details. If anyone could answer her questions, Jonas and Sabrina could.

When she finished, a blush stained Sabrina's face and neck. She fanned her face with a hand and rolled her water bottle over her cheeks.

For her own part, this wasn't the first discussion Sam had with Jonas about sex. Her brother was open and honest about his lifestyle. He always had been.

"It sounds like you had fun," he said. "But you don't sound too sure about it."

"They want to see me again. Stefano said he wanted me there for a long weekend. They want to train me." She related her discussion with Stefano, leaving out the part where they had phone sex.

Sabrina frowned at Jonas. "What is this 'hard boundary' thing? We don't have those."

"Sure we do," Jonas said. "Most people call them hard and soft limits. Hard limits are boundaries that will never be crossed. Soft limits are negotiable areas."

"What are our hard limits?" Sabrina stared at Jonas as if he'd lost his mind.

He put her foot down and took up the other one. "No threesomes, and I can't boss you around outside of the bedroom."

"And yet," she said, frost creeping into her tone, "you do."

She yelped and tried to pull her foot away from Jonas, but he held fast. "I don't make you walk around the house naked and I don't make you wear a collar. I don't choose your clothes or dictate your hairstyle. You don't have to ask permission to do anything you want to do. I don't even prohibit you from masturbating or coming without permission, and that's pretty much a basic rule in a D/s relationship."

The frost melted. Sabrina was again bright pink, but Sam was beyond caring. Alarm bells went off in her head. This was the part of the lifestyle that didn't appeal to her.

She clapped her hands over her eyes. "I knew it."

"Relax, Sammy," Jonas said. "Those things come with a relationship or some kind of commitment. They asked you for a

weekend. Think of it like a role-playing scene. When the weekend is over, you return to your life. They don't sound like possessive Doms or Doms with unrealistic expectations. If you like that kind of play, don't let aspects of the lifestyle with which you're uncomfortable turn you off. Take it for what it is. Have fun. Figure out what you like and what you don't like. That way you know what to look for in a lasting relationship."

She peeled her hands from her eyes in time to see Jonas drawing Sabrina to her feet.

"You're tired, honey. You need a nap."

From Sam's vantage point, Sabrina didn't look tired. Given the expressions on her brother's and sister-in-law's faces, she knew it was only a matter of time before that status changed.

As they disappeared into the house, Sam turned her chair around to face the water and moved it into the shade. The expressions on their faces had been both lustful and loving. Though she was fond of saying she wasn't looking for something serious, it was a lie. She wanted to find a man who looked at her the way Jonas looked at Sabrina and the way Richard looked at Amanda. And the way her father looked at her mother.

However, that kind of relationship took time to build and there was no one special in Sam's life. Shaking away all illusions, she grabbed her cell from her bag and called Stefano. Maybe he and Alexei weren't interested in her that way. They still offered her the opportunity to learn about herself. Jonas was right. She shouldn't treat it like more than it was.

* * * *

Alexei opened the hidden door that joined his office to Stefano's and stepped inside. Stef had paged him, as they had agreed, the moment Samantha called. He had been on his way out of the building

for a lunch meeting. That summons had him calling to postpone his plans.

Stefano sat at his desk. The black steel furniture was an affect of the modern décor that graced the entire building. The Miami office was their favorite. They had founded it five years before, their first official act at the helm of the company their father had started before they were born.

The relief on his brother's face spoke volumes. When Stefano had first told Alexei of his phone call to Samantha, Lex had been upset. She had been busy when he called. Her tone had been brusque. He had the impression she didn't want more than what they had already given her.

Then Stef told him how receptive she had been to him later that day, and he realized her tone hadn't been personal. She really had been busy. They had both been optimistic about the chances of a repeat performance.

But as eight long days drifted by without so much as a text or email, hope had waned.

"She said yes?"

Stefano nodded. Alexei understood his brother's inability to speak. There was something about Samantha. She was different from the women with whom they normally played. She was feisty. She had a commanding presence. She demanded attention and respect simply from the way she held herself. Lex liked her easygoing manner and her bright smile. Everything about her was genuine.

Lex sank into the leather chair across from Stef. "When?"

"This weekend. She said she can fly out tomorrow afternoon, and she can stay until Sunday afternoon. She needs to be home in time to take care of some things before Monday."

Lex processed that, running his weekend schedule through his head. Tomorrow was Friday. "Monday is Labor Day."

"She has plans for Labor Day." Stef studied a paper on his desk. "I asked."

“That’s too bad,” Alexei said. “We could have taken her to the party with us. I’d love to show her off.”

Stefano shook his head and handed Alexei the paper on his desk. It took some doing to decipher his brother’s chicken scratch, but Alexei figured out it was a list of Samantha’s hard limits.

No collar. No public displays of anything, especially her body. If they even took her out for meals, all bets were off until they returned to the privacy of their home.

Alexei stared at Stefano. “What about in the car?”

He smiled. “She didn’t say anything about that. Also, I asked her specifically about remaining naked in the house and she didn’t have a problem with it. She’s willing to be our slave, but only at home and only for the weekend.”

“Did you mention this was a trial run?”

“No,” Stefano said. “She’s skittish. I told her we want to train her, but I think she took it as a one-shot deal. She’s treating this weekend like a seminar. Let’s take it one day at a time for all our sakes.”

Alexei nodded in agreement. “I’ll clear our schedules this weekend. You reorder the lingerie. Her rule is no public displays, but that doesn’t mean she is against wearing what we tell her to wear under her clothes.”

Stefano grinned. “She’s going to balk.”

Alexei’s grin matched his brother’s. “We’ll all enjoy that.”

The next day and a half passed incredibly slowly and much too quickly. Rearranging their social calendar wasn’t easily done. The holiday weekend had been fully booked. Some cancellations needed to be rescheduled. Alexei issued apologies when other arrangements couldn’t be made.

When Lex poked his head into his brother’s office the next afternoon, Stefano was ready to leave. He straightened his tie and grabbed a stack of envelopes.

Inclining his head, Alexei nodded toward the stack. “Do you have the bag?”

Stefano held his other hand up. A pink plastic bag dangled from thin straps. The logo of an exclusive boutique graced the outside. “Are we going to make her change in the airport bathroom?”

“Yes. We need to establish dominance from the beginning. She may have a rule against public displays, but that doesn’t change the fact she’s our slave, even if it’s only for the weekend. She will wear the underclothes we bought for her or she will face a punishment.”

The ride to the airport took too long. Afternoon traffic on the Friday before a national holiday represented the finest mess Miami had to offer. They arrived at the terminal just as the board announced Samantha’s flight.

They found her waiting by the baggage claim. Looking out across the rows of circling conveyors, she hadn’t seen them approaching. Blonde hair spilled to the middle of her naked shoulder blades. The sundress she wore dipped nearly to her waist in back. A thin line of skin, lighter than the rest, announced that she had not sunbathed in the nude. Alexei wanted to run his tongue along that stripe.

The dress, edged in white, was a delicate shade of pink. The flowing design was light and carefree. Where it tightened around her hips and the way it ended well above her knees emphasized the length of her sexy legs.

She wore sandals on her feet, and her toenails were painted pink to match the dress.

“She’s wearing pink,” Alexei said. He wondered if the nails on her hands were pink as well.

“She’s damn sexy in pink,” Stefano said.

At that moment, Samantha turned. The ability to breathe left Alexei. He forgot about the nails. She wore a minimal amount of makeup. The frosted pink lip gloss on her lips captured his attention. He never understood what it was about a woman in pink that made him react this way, but the reaction was undeniable. Stefano shared his fascination with the color.

She smiled, greeting Stefano who moved forward with his arms spread. Slipping into his embrace, she returned his kiss enthusiastically.

Alexei's pants were becoming uncomfortably tight, and he needed to lose the tie if he was going to have any hope of breathing regularly.

Stefano pulled back. "How was your flight?"

She blushed, a tiny bit of color staining her cheeks. "You didn't have to buy me a first class ticket, Stefano. Coach is fine for me."

"Did you miss me?"

Alexei wasn't surprised that Stefano would ignore her protest. There was no way they would allow her to fly anything but first class. However, he was surprised to hear a question like that come from his brother's mouth.

Samantha laughed and ran her finger along Stef's lower lip. "You have a high opinion of yourself, don't you?"

Before his brother could shove his foot further down his throat, Alexei spoke up. "Stef, don't ask things like that. Don't put her on the spot."

Samantha tilted her head to the side, regarding Alexei curiously. Disengaging herself from Stefano's embrace, she closed the distance between them. Most of her lip gloss was gone, but the scent of strawberries remained. He wanted to nibble on her lips, working his way across her jaw to that spot just below her ear that drove her nuts.

Lifting to her toes, she braced her hands against his chest and brushed her lips against his. He wanted to resist. By rights, she should have asked permission to touch him. However, the reality of the situation was that he wanted her kiss. He wanted her to have missed his touch. It had been almost three weeks since his last taste of her.

Pressing his lips to hers, he coaxed her mouth open and slid his tongue inside. She tasted like strawberries and something uniquely Samantha. The problem in his pants grew. Snaking one arm around her waist, he pulled her closer. She melted, submitting to him. Her arms came around his neck and he crushed her closer.

With his free hand, he caressed her cheek. When the kiss ended, they were both breathing hard. Samantha's blue eyes fluttered open. Her smile was a quirky combination of bemused and wicked.

"Let's say I cherished fond memories of you, and I've been looking forward to seeing you again."

It took him a moment to register that she was answering Stefano's question. It didn't alarm him that she didn't admit to pining for them. She would have been lying if she had. He preferred honesty. It was vital to making sure the kinds of things they wanted to do to her and with her were the things she wanted done.

He ran his fingers through her hair, stroking the silky strands. "Nervous?"

Her chin dipped a millimeter with the brief, imperceptible nod. If he hadn't been running his thumb along her chin, Alexei never would have known she answered.

"Samantha, we require a verbal response."

Those cornflower-blue eyes had been turned away in shame. They snapped up to meet his. Spots of anger stained her cheeks. This was the little spitfire he liked.

"I'm not a child, Alexei."

He purposely used his most chilling smile. She paled under her tan and trembled in his arms, but she didn't pull away.

"Then you should have no problem articulating your answer to my question."

A sharp intake of breath had the tips of her breasts pressing into his chest. Slowly, she exhaled. "Yes."

"You should be nervous," he said. "Anxiety, not knowing what's coming next, it heightens the experience. You will learn to control your fears instead of letting them control you."

She licked her lips, a nervous gesture. "You can't know that about me."

Amusement sparkled in his eyes. He knew it was there and he couldn't stop it. Years of watching Stefano taught him that he wasn't

at his most intimidating when he was amused. His features softened, and the remote man became approachable. “Samantha, we know a great many things about you. You have the rest of the world fooled, but Stef and I know what you keep hidden. You showed it to us a little our last night together. Now, tell me how wet you are.”

She flushed pink, matching her dress, and buried her face in his shoulder.

Threading his fingers through the hair at the base of her head, he forced her to look at him. He knew he was pulling her hair. From the way her eyes turned opaque, he knew he had found another erogenous zone. “Have you ruined your underwear?”

That wicked smile resurfaced. “I’m not wearing underwear, Lex. Just this dress and my shoes. Nothing else.”

By the grace of a higher power, Alexei refrained from reacting. “Let’s get your bags.”

Samantha leaned down and grasped the strap of an oversized black bag. “I only brought the essentials. I figure you plan to keep me naked and at your house, so I only brought a couple changes of clothes.”

Stefano held out a hand. “Are you ready?”

“Yes.” Samantha gave him her bag, smiling brightly.

Oh, but she was going to pay for playing with them like this.

“From this moment forward, Samantha, you must do what we say. You are our slave for the weekend.”

She stiffened. “I don’t like that word.”

Alexei raised a brow, but he noticed Stef didn’t appear to be surprised. “It’s what you are, my dear.”

Her frown turned to a scowl. “I like the way you say my name, Alexei. I don’t care to be called by derogatory or demeaning names.”

In his world, it was a term of affection and respect. She would come to accept it in time. Then he frowned, matching her expression. By rights, she should be calling him *Sir*, but he liked the way she said

his name. He liked that she always seemed to know the difference between him and Stef.

“We will revisit the issue at a later time.” That was all he was willing to budge on the issue. “Have you eaten dinner?”

Chapter 10

Dinner was nothing like she expected. Given the snippets she'd heard about the D/s world, she fully expected them to take her home, strip her naked, and force her to eat kneeling on the floor. She would have had to impose another hard limit. After all, she had promised her mother she wouldn't let them make her do things like that.

Instead, they took her to an upscale bistro where her sundress fit in. They allowed her to order any entrée she wanted. The only restriction they imposed was the forbidding of alcohol. She ordered a margarita, something she drank all the time, but they amended the order so that it was a virgin drink.

They chatted about nothing in particular, letting the topics drift from the weather to sports to favorite television shows. When it came time to leave, Stefano steered her toward the bathroom and handed her a small pink bag.

"Put this on," he said, placing a peck on her cheek.

She waited until she was alone in a locked stall before opening the bag. Inside, she found a pair of pink panties. This was the first time a man had asked her to put on underwear. She frowned and fished them out of the bag.

They were heavier than a scrap of lace should be. Unfolding them, she found a strategically-placed dildo sewn into the liner. It was small, hardly more than four inches long, and thin. What did they hope to accomplish with that thing?

With a shrug, she put them on, making sure the fingerlike projection was where they meant it to be. One step had her halting in her tracks. The thing was slipping out. Unless she was sitting, she

would need to keep her vaginal muscles clenched or she'd lose it completely.

When she emerged, Stefano put his hand on the middle of her lower back to guide her to the front door. "Questions?" he asked as soon as they were outside the restaurant.

Samantha shook her head. She barely felt the tiny dildo inside her, but she knew they planned something with it.

Having gone ahead to the valet stand, Alexei waited with the car. Leaning against it in his blue suit and white shirt, he looked like a model arranged to help sell the car. She admired his broad shoulders and the way his body tapered to his slim hips. He grinned at them and tossed the keys to Stefano before opening the back door for Samantha.

It was on the tip of her tongue to make a snarky comment about slaves not meriting the front seat, but she refrained. The comment would have been the result of nervousness, and while she might like the punishment, she wanted to see what they had in store for her before she misbehaved.

She slid into the seat. Alexei closed the door. She thought he meant to get into the front—they *had* let her ride in the front on the way to the restaurant—but he rounded the car and got in the back seat with her.

Samantha stared at him. From the expression on his face, she knew the game had begun. He had far too much swagger to have nothing planned.

The car pulled away from the restaurant and the fingerlike projection in her pussy began to vibrate. The unexpected sensation had her jumping in her seat. Lex laughed, a quiet, evil chuckle. Wide-eyed, she shot him a look that asked what she knew better than to put into words.

"You had to leave us early last time, Samantha," Alexei said. "We didn't have much of a chance to talk."

Sabrina had warned her about this. Doms liked to talk things over. Subs just liked to give up control and feel. That was another reason Sam didn't consider herself a sub. She wasn't willing to give up control.

"What would you like to talk about?"

Alexei smiled. "Stef said you admit to being a masochist. That's a big step. Tell me what you liked and what you didn't like about being whipped."

Sam was ready for this. "I liked when you whipped me, but I thought you stopped much too soon."

He nodded. "You didn't achieve subspace. This time will be different. We have more time, more privacy, and better equipment. We'll use the same rules as last time. If you ask us to stop, we will stop. During the play, we will pause periodically to check you over. We'll use a color-coded system. Red means stop, you've had enough. Yellow means you need us to back off a bit, but you don't want to stop. Green means everything is good and we should keep going."

The vibrations between her legs, pleasant before, became distracting sometime during Alexei's reading of the rules. Samantha shifted to alleviate the diversion, and the tip of the vibrator pressed the edge of her G-spot. Her sharp intake of breath brought out that sensual smile Alexei tried so often to hide.

"The blindfold," Stefano said. His voice drifted back from the front seat.

"Yes," Alexei said. He shifted, bringing his knee closer to her and slinging his arm along the back of the long seat. "What about the blindfold? How did that affect you?"

Samantha shrugged. She didn't want to talk about the blindfold. She didn't want to talk. The vibrator was too short, too thin, and too gentle to bring her to orgasm. The teasing turned to need, and she struggled to keep the annoyance from her voice as she answered him.

“I would have liked to have seen you while you worked me over, but that’s your call. I’m not sure whether it enhanced the experience or not. Perhaps that’s an area for experimentation.”

Alexei frowned. It wasn’t the kind of answer he wanted. “You didn’t mind not seeing us? Did it help you concentrate on the feelings?”

She shrugged again, biting her lip. How could she tell them it hadn’t been enough? Lex’s finger stroked the ends of her hair, his touch so light it only added to the torment.

“Samantha.”

“I need more.” The words tore from her in a frustrated vehemence. “This isn’t enough, Alexei. It’s just not enough!”

The car stopped. Alexei clicked the release on his seat belt and slid closer. His fingers fisted in her hair, and he forced her face closer, holding her lips so close she could almost taste him but too far away to actually touch.

“Lex.” She was breathless, panting, and more desperate than she would have thought possible. Her attention bounced from his deep blue eyes to his lips and back. “Please.”

“You know better than to ignore a question, don’t you Samantha?”

She tried to nod, but he held her too tightly. “Yes.”

“I’ll always make sure you know the reason for your punishment before issuing it.”

Sam couldn’t bring herself to close her eyes or look away. The last time he’d punished her, it had been so pleasurable. She wouldn’t mind his hand on her ass right now. Tears pricked her eyes, a reaction to her hair being pulled, not the pain. The pulling sent shivers down her spine, a continuous ripple of sensation that didn’t hurt at all.

“It felt good, Alexei, but it didn’t go on long enough for me to know whether or not the blindfold made a difference. It was frustrating when you stopped. Just like this fucking vibrator.”

His lips moved, hovering over her cheeks, eyes, chin, and the curve of her neck, but he never actually touched her. It was a worse torture than anything else he'd devised so far.

"Alexei." His name was a desperate plea. "This isn't a nice kind of punishment."

He chuckled, releasing her when she wanted his kiss. "This isn't a punishment, honey. This is foreplay. You'll count out your lashes when we get inside. Don't worry, we'll warm you up first."

"Inside?" She blinked, noticing their surroundings for the first time. Stefano had parked the car in front of white steps that led to a sprawling ranch with lush landscaping. "This is your house?"

Alexei nodded.

"It's very nice." She meant the compliment, though she didn't pay it much mind. "Should we go inside now?"

Her door opened. Stefano held out a hand to help her from the car. She accepted it as graciously as she could under the circumstances. Her legs shook as she tried to stand.

Stefano's hand gripped her elbow. She looked up at him, smiling her thanks.

"Undress."

Her smile faded. "Out here?" Public displays were on her list of hard limits. Jonas had assured her these lines were never crossed.

He grinned. "This is private property. We own everything you see, including you."

Swallowing her trepidation and her denial of his claim to ownership, she lifted her dress over her head, shimmied out of the underwear, and kicked off her sandals. She might have been more relieved to get that thing out of her if one of them had replaced it with something better.

Alexei took her things from her, folded them neatly, and put everything except the underwear in her bag. She hadn't seen him come around.

"Your things will be returned Sunday when it's time to leave."

They allowed her to walk into the house. Jonas had taken her aside when Sabrina wasn't around to warn her about some of the more extreme customs. Apparently, Sabrina became extra pouty whenever he talked about the things he would no longer do now that she was pregnant. Samantha didn't understand why Sabrina would want to be forced to crawl into a house or anywhere else.

Samantha wasn't surprised when Alexei closed the front door behind them and perused her with solemn eyes. "Kneel."

In a practiced, graceful movement, she knelt on the floor in front of them. Her ass rested on her heels, her posture was straight, her hands clasped behind her neck, and she focused her gaze on the floor.

"You've been practicing."

Not really, but she had begged Jonas to show her the basic poses a submissive was expected to assume. She figured if she could pass muster someone as particular as her brother, she could impress Alexei and Stefano. Still, she heard the question in his statement.

"I wanted to please you," she said.

"Who do we have to thank for teaching you?"

She couldn't tell whether the question came from Lex or Stef, but the tightly controlled voice betrayed a hint of jealousy. "My brother."

A soft chuckle. That was Alexei. "Somehow, I can't see Sabrina doing something like this."

Samantha didn't respond. She wouldn't have thought it true, either, if she had never seen the dreamy way Sabrina responded to Jonas's Dom voice.

"Stay here," Stefano said.

Footsteps padded away, shoes slapping softly on the polished oak floor. The high-ceilinged foyer grew quiet. Samantha chanced a glance at her surroundings. In front of her, the wide hall opened to a large living area. Beyond that, floor-to-ceiling glass revealed endless sky. The heavy, salty scent of the ocean was so close. She knew if she could get to her feet, the view would be breathtaking.

But she knew better than to move.

To her left, curved stairs led down. She guessed at a walkout lower level. The majority of the house would be in the back where the view was the best. Part of her wished they had offered a tour. Most of her wished they would hurry with whatever they were doing. Just what were they thinking by making her hold this pose for so long?

After a long, long time, one set of footsteps returned.

“Rise.”

Helping hands accompanied the command. Stefano held her waist. Samantha’s legs were surprisingly weak and stiff, but she was careful to not move her hands out of position. Holding her close with one arm around her midsection, Stefano massaged her thighs. Warm and strong, his fingers dug into muscles that melted under his ministrations.

“You’re very good at this,” she said. “Thank you.”

She felt his smile against the back of her neck. He released her waist, but he didn’t step away. His hands worked their way up her back, chasing knots from places that were sore from sitting for so long on the flight. When he made it to her shoulders, he disengaged her grip and guided her hands to her sides.

Sam leaned against him, closing her eyes and groaning as her body relaxed under his expert care.

Gradually, his lips joined his fingers. Kisses pressed to the sensitive skin of her shoulders, working their way to her neck. She shivered. The need that had receded while she waited returned.

“Stef...” His name emerged, barely a whisper on her breath.

Suddenly, his arms banded around her, his face pressed into her neck, and he held her close. “How did you know it was me?”

Mumbled against her skin, it took her a second to decipher his question. “I don’t know, exactly. A combination of things? It’s in the way you touch me, the way you kiss me...” She shrugged. “I just knew it was you.”

“You’re amazing,” he said, raising his face just enough so that his words were no longer muffled. “You’ve never confused us, not once.”

Pride began to rear its ugly head. Samantha tamped it down. “I didn’t necessarily know which one of you used which whip when you had me blindfolded. And when I woke up both times, it took me a minute to figure out who was who.”

He turned her around in his arms, never letting go. “But you figured it out, didn’t you?”

Again, she shrugged. “Why does this matter so much? Aren’t you used to people mistaking you for one another? You’re identical twins.”

Abruptly, he released her and turned away. He had changed his clothes. Dressed in a pair of loose-fitting, light blue jeans and a black T-shirt, his look morphed from polished sexiness to rugged handsomeness. The jeans hugged his ass without being tight in the hips. The shirt stretched over his chest and shoulders, molding to him like a second skin. She gasped and he turned back. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing, I-I-I...” She stammered and trailed off.

Samantha’s eyes drank in the feast before them. His thick dark hair, neatly styled for a day at the office, contrasted with the bad-boy appeal of his outfit. A heady, yet earthy, feeling gripped her. She wanted to throw him on the nearest bed, wrestle him naked, and rub her body all over his.

“Sammy?”

She tried again. “I like the way you look in jeans.”

His smile made his eyes sparkle. He jerked his head in the direction of the hall that ran along the front of the house. “Your room is this way.”

She followed him down the hall, wondering what he meant by “your room.” While she knew it was unusual for a sub to sleep with a Dom, especially when they weren’t in a relationship, his tone implied that he was leading her to something that wasn’t meant to be a guest room.

The room was in the back of the house. It was large, but not enormous. Everything was white. Carpet, chairs, walls, molding,

furniture, and bedding. All of it was white. At the far end of the room, floor-to-ceiling windows opened toward the ocean. Samantha spied a balcony.

Stefano regarded her, an expectant expression on his face. “Do you like it?”

She took one more look around. “It’s very white.”

Stefano laughed. “A blank canvas. We don’t know what you like yet. We don’t know what colors best suit you. We like you in pink, but we’re not fans of pink-themed rooms. The better we get to know you, the more the furnishings will reflect your personality.”

They’d done this before. Sam stared at a chest of drawers painted white.

“The things we’re allowing you to keep are put away. You’ll find toiletries in the bathroom. Your clothes are somewhere else. You’ll be allowed to check your phone messages twice a day. Everything will be returned to you Sunday.”

Sam nodded. That answered one question. Not only did they plan to play all weekend, they made sure she had no choice but to walk around without clothes. As long as nobody else was around to see it, her nudity had never bothered Samantha.

“You may have some time to freshen up,” Stefano said. “Ten minutes.”

Ten minutes flew. Intensely nervous, she had need of the facilities. Then she had to inspect the drawers. They had left her a hairbrush and her travel set of shampoo and creams. With the exception of a tube of lip gloss, all clothing and makeup were missing. Samantha smiled. Affecting the natural look had been a good call.

She refreshed her lip gloss. A knock at the open door had her scurrying into the bedroom. Dressed in the same ebony shirt and light denim jeans, Alexei faced her.

Samantha looked him up and down. Unsurprisingly, he looked every bit as good as Stefano. She smiled and kept her distance, unsure

how he expected her to greet him. The grim set of his lips and the seriousness behind those electric-blue eyes made her nervous and a little wet. This dark look gave him a dangerous edge Stefano seemed to lack.

“Did you dress alike on purpose?”

Alexei’s harsh expression cracked, just for a millisecond. “It amazes me that you knew I wasn’t Stef.”

“Yeah,” she said. “I can tell.”

Perhaps her grin was a little too self-satisfied. His demeanor changed back, armor firmly in place. “It’s time for your punishment, Samantha.” He nodded to the bed. “Bend over the edge with your feet on the floor, shoulder-width apart, hands on the back of your neck.”

She did as he asked. With each step she took closer to the bed, the wetness between her legs increased. The last time they’d punished her, it had felt so good. Time had seemed to slip away. Standing next to the bed, she stopped suddenly. Subspace. She had been there, just barely, and she had tasted bliss. Need wrenched her gut, but she breathed a sigh of relief. They had taken her there once; they would take her there again.

A strong hand on the back of her neck pulled her from her thoughts and forced her to the mattress. Feet kicked at her insteps, forcing her legs apart.

“That’s two punishments,” he said. Was he growling through gritted teeth? He turned her head so that her cheek pressed against the mattress, and he smoothed her hair away from her face. “Tell me why you’re being punished.”

“I didn’t answer your question earlier.”

“And why is that a punishable offense?”

“It’s disrespectful.”

“No,” he said. “It’s unsafe. When we ask a question, if you don’t give an immediate response, how can we know if you’re hurt? How can we tell if your failure to give a red or green signal comes from

impudence or because you're too hurt to speak or form hand signals? We don't want to *hurt* you, Samantha."

She understood. As the Dom, he was responsible for her safety and her pleasure. He needed to be able to count on her to communicate.

"You are untrained, but that changes now. Tell me why you earned a second punishment."

That one threw her, but she was learning to not delay her answers. "I-I don't know."

"Failure to follow instructions. You came to the bed and stopped. I instructed you to bend over and assume a position. I expected to have to correct your posture because you're new to this. However, I still expect you to make a good effort."

She nodded, knowing he wouldn't care to hear the reason she hesitated. Weak excuses would not be tolerated.

"You'll count it out. Ten for each infraction."

He didn't use his hand. She definitely preferred his hand or the cat. She didn't know where he had been hiding it, but he was using the paddle. It was hard and cruel, sending a different kind of pain through her. It wasn't one she enjoyed. This wasn't going to take her to subspace. This punishment was designed to keep her rooted in reality. She counted out loud. By the time he reached ten, tears stung the inside of her eyelids. The cheeks of her ass were on fire. By fifteen, tears leaked from her eyes and she could no longer say the words without revealing evidence of them.

Alexei stopped. "Samantha? Where are we?"

She took a deep, ragged breath. "Yellow?" Was that an option under these circumstances?

His fingers traced through the heat on her ass. She flinched. He reached between her legs. She didn't stop him even though she knew he would find her barely wet. The tiny bit of moisture that was there had been generated by the sight of him in jeans and by the promise in his eyes.

“Tell me again why you’re being punished.”

Again, she breathed. “For not answering you and for wondering whether I would like this or not.”

Alexei threw the paddle onto the mattress and pulled Samantha, turning her so that she sat on the edge of the bed. One finger urged her chin up to look at him. He wiped away her tears with the pads of his thumbs. “Did you hesitate because you were afraid?”

Samantha shook her head. “I’m not afraid of you, Lex. I know I earned a punishment and I accept it. I just...Last time, I liked some of the punishment and the parts I didn’t like, it didn’t seem to matter for very long.”

He wiped away another tear.

“I’m sorry,” she said. “I didn’t mean to ruin this for you.”

With a quiet laugh, Alexei scooped her into his arms. Samantha nestled her head against his shoulder and accepted the comfort he offered. “Punishment while playing is mostly meant for small corrections or to help you hold off an orgasm. Punishment during training is to help you remember the rules. These responses need to become a part of you, Samantha. You’ll find that we’ll use this kind of punishment for infractions that could lead to compromising your safety.”

He held her in silence. His hand played up and down her spine, and her ass burned unpleasantly against the cool air in the room. The worst of the pain was subsiding and the heat of his body seeped through his clothes, branding her.

“We’ll forego the other five this time, Samantha. I think you’ve learned your lesson.”

Perhaps she had, or perhaps she hadn’t. Samantha wasn’t seized with a burning desire to please either man except for sexually. Nevertheless, she let the topic drop. She wasn’t eager to experience more of this brand of punishment.

Just when she relaxed enough to melt into his body, he patted her on the hip and set her on her feet. “Time to get dressed.”

“Dressed?” She thought being naked suited her purpose for being there just fine.

Alexei had already crossed the room. He opened a drawer in the painted white dresser and pulled out a stack of folded items. “Come here, Samantha.”

Heat flooded between her legs. The commanding tone in his voice set her libido back into motion. She obeyed.

He held a pink, silky corset up to her torso, checking the size. The corner of his mouth lifted, and he squatted in front of her, holding it open.

She stepped into it. The hand she placed on his shoulder was more because she wanted to touch him and less because she needed the balance support. Why did he want her to wear a corset? Samantha had always been a physically active person. Her weight and her shape were healthy. “Are you trying to tell me something?”

The softness of the silk whispered over her thighs and across her waist as he pulled it up her body. It stopped just under her breasts. Stiff material cupped the bottoms. It was enough to lift, but not enough to cover them. Though he didn’t answer her question, the burning in his eyes as he checked her over said enough. Samantha wondered how many outfits she would find in the drawers. She wondered how many other women had worn them.

“You’ll use condoms, right?”

Her question smacked of nervousness. She hoped he couldn’t hear the underlying jealousy that she had no right to feel.

The frown that flashed was brief. He turned her around and pulled the laces tight. “Yes. Don’t worry, Samantha. We’ll take all the same precautions we took before.”

Any further questions died in her throat. Flat, vertical pieces of plastic or metal forced her to stand very straight and thrust out her breasts. A single article of clothing accented the features each brother found most arousing.

As he worked his way down the ties, the tightness of the corset affected her in a curious fashion. Though she wasn't tied to anything, she felt bound, powerless, yet secure. He knelt behind her. Cold leather encircled her ankles. She didn't need to glance down to know the cuffs were thick leather bands that would allow him to secure and release her quickly from various restraint devices. It wasn't the first time she had seen these cuffs, but it was the first time she had allowed them to be put on her.

He stood in front of her now, lifting one wrist to secure a cuff there. Samantha watched his fingers work the tiny buckles. She had become sopping wet when he tightened the corset. Now strength and stability were leaving her knees. They trembled. She inhaled a shaky breath that had Alexei jerking his head up.

Lex studied her eyes. A frown furrowed his brow. "Where are we, Samantha?"

"Green." She didn't hesitate. The word burst from her lips, an automatic response. Thought she hadn't thought about it, she would die if he stopped now. "Please don't stop. You've barely begun."

He nodded. The frown faded, but it didn't ease completely.

She inhaled a few times, using her breathing to try to control her body's reaction to Alexei and what he was doing to her. "Really, Lex, I'm fine. This is just all new to me. Once I'm used to it, I promise I'll do better."

He finished buckling the last cuff to her other wrist. "Samantha, I'm not looking for you to hide your reactions. I need to know what they are so I know how far I can push you." Lifting his hand, he traced her brow with his thumb. "We are going to push you, Samantha. We're going to do things to you that you're going to love and you're going to hate. We're going to make you cry and beg for more. We're going to make you scream our names. You will submit to us completely, Samantha. Only then will you get exactly what you want."

Sam couldn't look away from the promise in his eyes. Then the flash of a longer leather band caught her attention. It wasn't as thick or as wide as the heavy cuffs on her wrists and ankles. Two metal loops hung like tabs from it.

"Alexei, I said no collars." She would not be a piece of property.

"No, you said you wouldn't wear one in public. That's fine, Samantha. We're not leaving the house, and you will wear this in the playroom."

Anger stopped the flow of cream to her pussy and snapped her out of the euphoria she felt from the way he was dressing her. "I said no collars. I didn't specify where because I meant no collars *period*."

His fathomless expression gave her pause. She wasn't going to get her way in this. As proof, his question was a demand that she justify her request. Samantha knew how these things worked. He was negotiating, but he wasn't doing it in a fair way.

"Why?"

Another deep breath helped. She was more afraid he would stop the play than that he would be angry at her for refusing to wear the collar. "I'm not a thing. I'm a woman, a person, not a possession. I know what wearing a collar means. I may not have done this before, but that doesn't mean I'm ignorant of the rules and the customs. I'm here to play and to learn, not to become an object."

Alexei's nod was brief. He lifted the collar. "This isn't that kind of collar. This serves the same function as the cuffs on your wrists and ankles. It's so we can attach and release your bindings faster. Plus, I like the way it looks on you."

Her anger deflated. That's why he was negotiating. He knew what she assumed, but he made her vocalize her reasons before telling her she was wrong. Still, she couldn't just give in. "You've never seen it on me."

He grinned. "I've pictured you in all the clothes we bought for you, Samantha. I'm very good at visualizing." His gaze raked down

her body and back up. “The corset fits perfectly. The moment I saw it in the store, I knew it was exactly what I wanted for you.”

That feeling of possessiveness flared again. Samantha tamped it down for now. Lifting her hair, she presented her naked neck to him. The leather was cool and soft. Its gentle weight had the same effect on her as the corset. The euphoric feeling came back with a vengeance.

“Kneel.”

Sam knelt, resting her bottom on her heels and lacing her fingers together behind her neck. One of the metal rings brushed against the sensitive part of her wrist, sending a shiver of anticipation down her spine. The corset forced her to sit up straight with her breasts thrust forward. She stared straight ahead, aware of Alexei, but unwilling to look at him.

Alexei’s shoe-covered foot nudged at the inside of her knees. “Wider, Samantha. Never hide yourself from me.”

Wordlessly, she shifted, spreading her knees until they were shoulder-width apart.

“When you’re given a command, you will not only obey, but you will answer with a ‘yes, Sir’ or a ‘yes, Master.’ Do you understand?”

Samantha raised her eyes to meet his. “Alexei, I...”

He cut her off with the wave of his hand. “No, Samantha. You may not talk. You can answer. You can plead, but you can’t talk.”

She wanted to remind him that she specifically said she wouldn’t call either of them Master. Biting her lip, she remembered that she hadn’t specified anything about the other title. She lowered her gaze and swallowed her pride for the sake of the game. “Yes, Sir.”

“When you enter the playroom, you will kneel in the center. There is a clearly marked space for this. You’ll see what I mean when you get there. There are three ways to kneel. Right now, you’re in a relaxed position. Kneeling at attention means you’re not resting on your heels. In the playroom, you will present yourself in the center, kneeling in offering. Do you remember the position I showed you last time we were together?”

Samantha frowned as she fought to remember. The corset and the leather bindings combined in a curious way to short-circuit her brain. Her body was primed and ready for anything they wanted to dish out. “No, Sir.”

From the edge of her vision, she noted the hands on his hips. He wasn't happy with her answer. “Kneel at attention.”

She lifted herself into the position she had assumed earlier when he had asked her to kneel.

“Hands on your ankles. Let your head fall back.”

Now she remembered. She had been kneeling over him on the sofa. His hands had explored her body. She altered her pose. “Yes, Sir.”

“This is now you will present yourself in the playroom. In this position, you offer your most precious gift. You offer yourself for our pleasure. You give your body to us to use as we please. You are a submissive, a slave. You are willing to serve your Masters in whatever way we want. Are you ready, Samantha?”

“Yes, Sir.” Even though he worked in the use of terms she didn't like, she didn't hesitate in answering. She was so ready that she was going to burst if he didn't do something soon.

“Rise and follow me.”

He didn't help her to her feet.

The house was massive. It was tastefully furnished with expensive things. Samantha ignored it all. The artist in her filed away statues and paintings to explore later. The submissive masochist in her eagerly followed Alexei down the hallway and down the stairs.

The playroom wasn't very far away from the guest room they gave her. The door was open. Even though Alexei stood with his palm spread, indicating she should enter, Sam paused in the doorway.

As far as rooms went, it was large, but then, all the rooms in the house were large. It had no windows, and the walls were thickly padded. She noted the soundproofing while her eyes focused on the equipment spread through the room. A rack, similar to the one used in

the demonstration, occupied one corner. A large bed, sans pillows and blankets, was centered against the wall to her right.

A table with extensions perfect for binding limbs was spread out along another wall. Another piece with a similar intent sat next to it, only it would require her body to be bent instead of lying down. From the way the bottom part jutted out, she wasn't clear as to whether she would be positioned bent over the device on her knees or seated on her bottom. Either way, it looked promising.

Stefano stood near a cabinet along another wall. One long door was open. She could see different kinds of whips hanging neatly inside. More equipment was in the room, but Alexei nudged her lower back, urging her to enter the room. He didn't use enough pressure to make his action anything more than encouragement.

Across the room, Stefano watched her.

Samantha understood that she was to enter the room of her own free will or they would not proceed with the play. Heat flooded between her legs. There was no way she was leaving now.

The place in the center of the room where Lex had instructed her to kneel wasn't clearly marked. It was the only empty space in the room, so she knew it was the place he wanted her to present herself.

Her thighs felt weak, but she forced herself to walk gracefully and confidently into the room. She knelt. The hard wood was an unyielding surface against her knees. Samantha shifted her weight back, resting most of it on the hands she wrapped around her ankles. The corset forced her spine to remain straight. The pose Alexei ordered would have been easier to achieve with a curved back.

She stayed there, her knees spread and her breasts jutting into the air, and waited for the next command. Her hair spilled down behind her. The tips brushed against her arms, hands, and feet, bringing a softness to the position that was sorely lacking.

After far too long, a shadow fell over her and a hand caressed her breast. She couldn't raise her head to see who touched her, but at this point, it didn't matter. The tingling feeling brought on by the bindings

grew as more hands touched her. She sighed, giving herself over to the caresses whispering across her skin.

Fingertips grazed her nipples, teasing them to sensitive rocks that sent signals straight to her pussy. Something cold and hard closed around one nipple, pinching it sharply. A tiny weight both squeezed and pulled at her peak. Samantha exhaled at the pain that didn't ease.

A twin pain gripped the other nipple. She closed her eyes against the flood of desire that surged through her entire body.

Two fingers traced her lips before plunging inside. Samantha wrapped her tongue around them and sucked hard, easing enough to let them rock in and out. Then they were gone.

“On your feet, Sammy.”

Two sets of hands hauled her up. Samantha frowned. She had wanted to show them that she could get up on her own, just like the woman at the demonstration.

“If you're going to pout, I'm going to give you something better to do with those lips.” Stefano's admonition was accompanied by the sharp crack of his hand on her ass.

Samantha flinched. She was still sore from Alexei's punishment. The frown melted away, forgotten in favor of the new kind of pleasure pulsing from her ass and from her nipples. Though it hurt initially, the shards of pleasure that shot through her body at regular intervals more than made up for that small sacrifice.

Stefano led her to the square-shaped ladder contraption. He positioned her in the middle. “Kneel.”

They had thrown a large pillow on the floor. She knelt on that. Behind her, Alexei attached nylon straps to the loops on her collar and to those on her wrist cuffs. Between the two of them, it had taken only seconds to tie her to the wooden beams at the arms and neck.

Arms spread to the sides, Samantha jerked with all of her might to test the strength of her bonds. She couldn't move at all. They hadn't left even a half-inch of give. Weakness seeped into her muscles.

Stefano stood in front of her, the bulge in his jeans announcing his arousal, and she was thankful he made her kneel.

He loosened his jeans and drew out his cock. Samantha licked her lips, wanting and needing to make him feel a little of what he made her feel. She opened her mouth without being told. Stefano held her head between his palms and pumped into her wet warmth. Sam made little sounds of pleasure in the back of her throat, knowing the vibrations would drive him crazy.

The sounds of Stefano's enjoyment were punctuated with encouragement and praise. "Oh, Sammy, you feel so good. It's been far too long since I've touched you."

She had closed her eyes to focus on his scent and on giving him the best blowjob of his life. Feeling Alexei's eyes on her, she opened them to throw a promise in his direction. He unsnapped and unzipped. Palming his dick, he masturbated as he watched.

Stefano's sounds of pleasure peaked as he climaxed. Samantha closed her eyes and sucked him harder. He came in her mouth, shouting long and low. At soon as he withdrew, Lex was there, demanding his due. Samantha couldn't move to wrap her arms around him, squeeze his ass, or draw him closer. She couldn't lean forward. She could only open her mouth and accept what he gave her.

She felt something release deep inside, allowing her to revel in this role. Stefano's hands caressed her shoulders and the bare skin above where the corset fastened in back. He lifted her hair, twisted it, and secured it out of the way.

They were preparing for what was coming next. Anticipation brought more heat flooding to her chest and between her thighs. She sucked Alexei faster and harder, not that she needed to hurry him along. He had been primed and ready before he slid his cock between her waiting lips. Two more thrusts and he froze, crying out as his hot semen surged to the back of her throat.

The straps holding her neck in place slackened just in time for Alexei to jerk her head back and kiss her hard. His lips sucked at her

while his tongue plunged deep to claim every inch of her mouth. Sam melted into him. She knew a reward when it came her way.

The tension pulling her arms to the sides shifted higher. Alexei lifted Sam to her feet without breaking the kiss. The tension returned as Stef tightened her bindings. When Lex finally released her, Sam panted from the lack of oxygen and from the anticipation building to a fever pitch inside her stomach. She dreaded what they were about to do, but she wanted it with all her heart.

Alexei tugged his zipper up as he crossed the room to the cabinet where Stefano had been standing when they first entered the room. He snagged something. When he returned, Samantha saw he held two bean-filled balls. He watched as Stefano finished securing her ankles. Samantha was bound to the rack at her wrists and ankles. They left her neck free.

He pressed a ball into each of her palms. Samantha closed her fists around them.

“Do you remember what these are for?”

These were the balls she held in the hotel when they gagged her. If she dropped one, it indicated she wanted them to stop what they were doing. Did this mean they were going to gag her? She hadn't seen a gag anywhere.

“Yes,” she said, answering in a voice so steady it surprised her. Sam's entire body trembled, inside and out, yet her voice was strong and even. “If I drop one, you'll stop.”

Lex nodded. “You have two ways to tell us when you've had enough, Samantha. You can say stop or red, or you can drop a ball. We're not going to gag you, honey. The walls are soundproof.”

“Scream as loud as you want,” Stefano added, the trace of amusement in his voice. His breath was warm on her neck. He pressed his body against her back. He had removed his shirt, and the warmth of his skin penetrated the silky corset. His hands wandered over her breasts, squeezing and kneading, drawing her attention to the

pinch of the clamps on her nipples. “I want to hear your reactions, Sammy. Don’t hold back anything.”

Holding back didn’t seem like an option. Reality had narrowed to include only them and what they were doing to her. “I won’t.”

The laces on her corset loosened. Alexei pulled it away from her body and tossed it to the floor. Something came down in front of her face. The blindfold barely registered before everything went black. Stefano’s long fingers brushed her cheek, urging her face to turn in his direction. Samantha did her best. The collar, though it wasn’t hooked to anything, limited her movement.

His lips claimed hers, ravaging with an intensity that belied the lightness of his tone. When he released her, his chest heaved as hard as hers and his voice was husky with desire. “Where are we, Sammy?”

“Green.”

So preoccupied with Stefano, she hadn’t realized how close Alexei was until he moved away, taking his body heat with him. She shivered at the loss.

They started much the same way they had in the hotel room, except they both used whips with lots of short falls. It heated her skin pleasantly. Tingles shot from everywhere they touched. Lex tended to the front of her, concentrating his blows on her breasts and her thighs. Stef crossed paths down her back and over her bottom.

Sam wanted to move closer to each of them, but the ties prohibited the movement of everything except her hips, and even those didn’t have much leeway.

Stefano had told her to scream, but what they were doing to her elicited moan after moan. Alexei altered his target. The falls of the whip landed between her legs, smacking loud against her wetness. Samantha jumped, her body moving away from the unexpected stimulation just as Stefano did the same thing from the back. They tag-teamed her, whipping her pussy from both directions.

She squirmed, twisting to get away from the whips and twisting to move closer. The stinging brought heat and a flood of cream to her pussy. Her breaths came faster and shorter. Heat suffused her core. She was so close to coming.

“I want you to climax like this, Samantha. Come for us.”

With a loud cry, she did. It wasn't the same as when they were both inside her. It didn't come close to the way they made her feel then. This was more of a starter orgasm.

The whips fell away. Samantha didn't protest because she knew they had more in store for her. The aftereffects faded, the pulses diminishing quickly.

Something flicked at the nipple clamp on her right breast, setting a fire there. Sam yelped at the pain, squeezing the balls in her hand so she wouldn't accidentally drop them. She was rewarded with the same fire on her left breast.

The sharp licks spread as they worked her over. Pinpoints of pain spread, sending a new level of heat and desire surging through her body. With the exception of when someone—probably Alexei—whipped her nipples, she absorbed the stinging blows silently. Instinct forced her body to move away from one lash and into the sting of the other. It was a brilliant tactic on their part.

As the pace of the whips increased, the fire spread. Sam wasn't allowed the time to get used to the feel of any of the blows. It was the aftereffects of the blows she liked, not the actual blows themselves. They denied her the opportunity to revel in that luxurious feeling, pushing her to deal with this treatment faster than she could.

Frustration welled inside. Samantha cried out as the pain overwhelmed her, but she didn't drop the balls and she didn't call a halt to their actions. There was something more here. She could feel herself heading toward it. Then, without warning, she was there. Bliss settled over her. The feel of the whips stinging her skin dulled as she felt herself floating away in the darkness. Each blow kept her there.

The next thing she knew, she was lying on the bed. Hands stroked up her arms and across her thighs.

“Come on, Sammy. Come back to us. We’re not finished with you.”

She opened her eyes to find Stefano and Alexei lying on either side of her. Their naked bodies pressed against each of her sides, spreading a delicious warmth that tingled through her system. Each man caressed her body and stroked her face. Samantha blinked. Why did she have no memory of being untied or of being moved across the room?

“What happened?”

Lex’s lips curled in a cocky smile. “You really are a masochist, Samantha. I don’t know how you held out for so long, but I’m glad we’re the first ones to master you.”

“Master me.” She mumbled, repeating him. She wanted to frown at his casual use of that word, but she couldn’t seem to find an objection to it. She sat up slowly, her muscles aching pleasantly. “What did you do?”

Stefano traced his hand lightly across her thigh. Sparks shot from every point of contact. Samantha glanced down to see if he was using something more than his fingertips. He was not.

Her body was a pink mass. Darker swatches crossed her chest, her stomach, and her thighs. She couldn’t imagine that her back looked any better. The blazing heat underneath her was being generated by her skin. The color must have drained from her face.

“Lie down.” Alexei put a hand to her forehead and forced her to comply. “It’s not as bad as it looks. Though, for the record, I think it looks amazing. You are so beautiful, Samantha. You look exceptional in pink.”

Samantha stared at the ceiling. Was this what she consented to let them do? Was this what her brother did to Sabrina? She’d seen her sister-in-law in a bathing suit, and the woman didn’t have a single scar on her. Panic twisted her gut. She closed her eyes. Maybe this

was what Helene let men do to her. Maybe this was what Sam was afraid would happen if she gave in to this dark need.

A thumb swiped at the corner of her eye, wiping away a stray tear.

“Sammy? Honey, you’re okay. It’ll all be gone in a few hours, though you’ll most likely be sore tomorrow. We did a little more than we did last time because you were so mad at us for stopping too early. And, honey? You got to subpace, so I know you enjoyed this.”

Had she enjoyed it? Yes. She had enjoyed it so much that she floated free from her body. Stef called it subpace. Samantha remembered the bliss.

“Look at me.”

Alexei used a tone she couldn’t disobey. She responded to it on a level she didn’t understand. His blue eyes regarded her intently.

“We would never hurt you, Samantha. You have to learn to trust us.”

She bit her lip. “I know, Lex.” Trust was earned, and they were steadily earning more. So far, they hadn’t let her down. She took a deep breath and looked over at Stefano. “It’s just a little shocking. I suppose I’ll get used to it.”

Sam didn’t know if that would ever happen. Alexei and Stefano lived thousands of miles away. She couldn’t see herself trusting anyone else to master her like this.

“Sammy? I know you’re a little disoriented, but you have to remember to call us Sir or Master. You’ve earned a punishment for not using that title with Lex.”

A pathetic laugh bubbled from her throat. She hadn’t liked her last punishment, but she couldn’t muster the strength to protest anything just then. “I take it that the novelty of the fact I can tell you apart is wearing off. Sir.”

She added the last part hastily, not wanting to earn another punishment.

“Yes,” Stefano said. “We’re taking that for granted now.”

Before she could think of a response, he kissed her. It was a tender kiss, full of affection. On the other side, Alexei pushed her until she rolled toward Stefano.

Stef lifted her leg, drawing it over his hip. The tip of his erection pressed against her stomach. Samantha arched closer, offering herself to him. Stefano's hand slid up her thigh to cup her cheek, spreading his fingers as far as they would go.

The tip of Alexei's hard cock nudged her anal opening. She tried to take a breath, to prepare for penetration, but Stefano's endless and demanding kiss prevented that measure. She thought Alexei might take things slowly, but she was wrong. He impaled her with one thrust.

Tears gathered in the corners of her eyes, but she didn't try to move away from him. There was nowhere to go, and she didn't want to get away from him. The pinch and burn faded in the face of the glorious fullness inside her. She moaned, and Stefano swallowed the sound.

Alexei pressed a kiss to her neck. His teeth grazed a trail to her shoulder. "You're so tight. God you feel good."

He withdrew almost the whole way before ramming himself into her again.

Sam gripped Stefano's shoulders. He kissed away the stray tears as his hand moved between them, finding her sensitive and abused nipples. The clamps were gone, but one touch brought them to pebbled points.

Alexei thrust into her again, harder and faster. Stefano reached behind him and produced an oval object about three inches in length. Alexei increased his pace. Stef inserted the toy into her sopping pussy. It was attached to a line. Stef slid the switch and it purred to life. The gentle hum vibrated against Sam's walls. It wasn't enough to get her anywhere. As much as she liked the feel of Alexei in her ass, it wouldn't bring her to orgasm. Samantha whimpered.

Stefano rolled away and Alexei pushed her to lie on her stomach. Bracing his weight on either side of her, he fucked her faster and faster. Sam gripped the sheet, digging her fingernails into the mattress, and thrust against him. She clamped her legs together tighter to focus the sensations. A small climax would be welcome, but it was frustratingly out of reach.

With a cry, Lex came. The condom prevented her from feeling his hot semen shooting into her. She growled.

Next to them, Stefano laughed and stroked her hair. “Punishment, Sammy. Have you learned your lesson?”

Sam lifted her head and stared into his electric blue eyes. This punishment hadn’t hurt, but it had been equally as effective. She wanted to come. She needed to come. “Yes, Sir.”

Lex withdrew and rolled away. He slapped her on the ass. “Thank your Master for teaching you a lesson, slave.”

The blissful euphoria of her whipping had faded completely. Sam’s head whipped around and she nailed Alexei with as malevolent a glare as she could muster. Given her current state of dissatisfaction, she thought she got her point across. “Don’t push it, Sir.”

He smiled, grinning like the well-sated man he was. “One day, Samantha, you’ll not only call me ‘Master,’ but you’ll revel in the way it feels to know that’s what I am to you.”

The low, huskiness of his tone sent shivers down Samantha’s spine even though she didn’t care much for what he was saying.

The bed dipped on her other side. “Lex, stop baiting her on my turn.”

Stefano tugged at the cord to the small egg-shaped contraption still buzzing away inside her. He didn’t dislodge it, but he did get her attention. She turned back to him.

“Straddle me, honey. You’re going to ride me until I tell you to stop.”

Samantha threw her leg over his hips and held still while he extracted the buzzing egg. His dick was already sheathed. She sat down on it hard. Stefano groaned.

“Go ahead,” Alexei urged. “You take it all out on Stef, Samantha, because when you’re finished with him, I’m going to tie you to that table over there and make you beg for an orgasm.”

Unwilling to think about Alexei’s promise, Samantha tuned him out. Leaning forward, she undulated her hips and ground her clit against Stefano. He reached up and pushed a lock of hair out of her eyes. When they had moved her, they had also taken down her hair. She marveled that they could do so many things while she was oblivious to them all.

“Come for me, Sammy.”

She moved faster. Her skin pulsed. Her core pulsed, and now her vaginal walls throbbed, contracting hard around Stefano. Samantha’s rhythm faltered as she cried out her climax.

Stefano gripped her hips, moving her faster. “Oh, no, honey. I didn’t say stop.”

Sam looked down at him. Her head had fallen back when her back arched during her orgasm. She curved her lips in a predatory grin. These were the kinds of challenges she liked. She wondered how long he could last before he couldn’t hold back any longer.

Leaning forward, she braced herself to go the distance. She focused on pleasuring Stefano, on making him break before she ran out of steam. While she preferred a hard, grinding motion, she knew he liked more of an in-and-out, thrusting motion. Soon, he writhed beneath her, his body bucking to the rhythm she set.

It didn’t take too long before Stefano realized her strategy. His blue eyes locked onto hers, challenging and warning at the same time. He held his hand out toward Alexei. His brother knew what he needed without words. The egg buzzed to life. Stefano yanked her lips apart and pressed it to her clit.

It distracted her enough so that she didn't notice Alexei until his hand pressed down on the back of her neck, forcing her flat against Stefano. A small bead penetrated the tight sphincter of her anus. Another followed, and another, each one larger than the last. Samantha counted six. When the last one was in, Alexei let her back up.

Sitting astride Stefano, she shot Lex the dirtiest look she could manage. With the egg vibrating against her clit and the beads stretching her ass, it was almost enough to send her over the edge. If she moved on Stefano, she would come.

Alexei's answering smile was downright devilish. "I'm adding it all up, Samantha. Come for us."

When she didn't move, he swatted her on the ass. It wasn't a playful tap, either. Her skin, sensitized from the whipping she received, responded with a violent heat. Samantha's eyes rolled back into her head, blanking out the world, and she climaxed. A low, keening scream escaped her lips. Alexei smacked her again, and Stefano pressed the egg harder. Their actions combined to make the orgasm go on and on.

The beads in her anus moved. Each time one popped out, it sent more waves through her, prolonging the orgasm. When the last bead was out, languor stole over her as the orgasm waned at last. She shifted, squirming to get away from the egg. Her clit was too sensitive and the stimulation was becoming painful.

"Stef, please. It's too much."

He sat up, forcing it even harder against her sensitive places. His chest brushed against her nipples, and his thumb caressed her cheek. "Sammy, honey, I'll say when it's too much. Breathe through it. You'll endure this."

She tried to lift herself away from him, but he snaked an arm out, winding it around her waist to keep her there. She struggled. She pounded on his chest with her fists. Except for causing Lex to imprison her wrists behind her neck, it did nothing to help her cause.

“You’re both bastards, you know that?”

Stefano chuckled. “That’s ‘you’re both bastards, *Sir,*’ to you.”

He kissed her, not bothering with anything light to placate her or calm her down. Liquid heat spread from his lips and tongue, radiating through her body. Sam melted against Stef, acquiescing to his skillful demand. Self-preservation kicked in and the vibrations between her legs ceased sending signals to the rest of her body.

When Stef released her, Samantha’s chest heaved from lack of oxygen and from returning passion. She rested her forehead against Stefano’s. “It’s numb, *Sir.*” She flung his title at him like a baseball bat.

She thought he might engineer a punishment like the ones she had received from him thus far, but she was wrong. Without warning, Alexei plucked her from Stefano and threw her face-down on the bed. Five stinging blows rained across her ass and thighs before she quite knew what hit her.

Grabbing a fist full of hair, Lex jerked her to standing. Sam had no choice but to obey. “Explain the punishment.”

“Sarcasm will get me out of situations I don’t like?” She knew it was the wrong thing to say, but she couldn’t help it.

He forced her to her knees. Sam eyed the bulge in his jeans. She licked her lips in anticipation. She loved the taste of him and the way he felt in her mouth. Before this, she had never been excited about giving head. Now it was the only power they allowed her to have. That increased her desire for it exponentially.

Fire flashed, ice-cold in his eyes. “Samantha, you’re not being very good, especially considering how nice we’ve been to you.”

She couldn’t stop herself. Though she hadn’t particularly enjoyed being punished, she still couldn’t halt the impudent words that flowed from her. She met his gaze, not cowed by the power radiating from him. “Perhaps you aren’t as close to mastering me as you thought.”

The hand tangled in her hair let go. Stefano stood before her, naked and erect. Samantha’s attention shifted. Her lips parted, and she

longed to lean forward and take him in her mouth, but she knew that kind of thing would push them both over the edge. She liked this dangerous air. She liked pissing Alexei off like this. His temper was so much more volatile than Stefano's. He was so easy to set off. Of course, dismissing Stefano was a mistake she wasn't going to make. She had the sense that his temper wouldn't be as enjoyable as Lex's.

“Offer yourself, Sammy.”

She lifted her eyes, wondering what brought on this step backward. Though she had bought herself some time, she hadn't called a halt to the action. Wordlessly, she let her head drop back. Her back curved, forcing her breasts outward, and her hands landed on her ankles. She walked her knees farther apart.

Nobody touched her.

The last two times she had assumed this pose, they had run their hands over her skin. They had caressed her, fawned over her. This time, nothing happened.

It dawned on Samantha that her infractions had been more serious than she thought. She had wanted to distract them, to give her clit some relief and to show them that she wasn't going to be mastered so easily. They moved out of her field of vision. Cold and metallic, fear coursed through her veins. Maybe challenging them like this wasn't the best decision she'd ever made.

She knew better than to move or to speak. The tension inside grew as she waited. She heard them doing something not far from her. They conversed in low tones, neither of them completing a full sentence. She had no idea what they were doing, but at least they weren't telling her to stand up and get dressed. Rejection would be the worst punishment they could devise.

At last, Stefano came to stand beside her. He had pulled on his boxer shorts. Evidence that his arousal hadn't diminished was difficult to miss. Samantha knew better than to speak. Her pussy forgot all about everything that had already happened. Though she

couldn't see his expression, she was sure it was firm. She dripped in anticipation.

“Stand up, Sammy.”

He didn't move to help her. Using her thighs and her ab muscles, she pushed herself to standing without righting herself first. Her movements were graceful and erotic, and she knew the way it would affect them. She vividly remembered their appreciation of the submissive at the demonstration. She would show them she was every bit as good as that woman.

Standing proud, she met Stefano's eyes. If he was impressed, he didn't show it. She turned to Alexei. He didn't seem to have noticed her feat. Before a pout could form, Alexei crooked a finger at her.

“Get on the penance table, Samantha.”

She crossed the short distance to Lex and glanced down at the table in front of him. The base of it rose to just below hip level. It had a short, flat surface covered in plastic like an exam table in a doctor's office. Her upper body would fit on it, but nothing else. Slim, flat surfaces extended from the sides and from the bottom, places for her arms and legs.

If the name wasn't ominous enough, the realization that they were going to strap her to the table and do things to her *as punishment* filled that void. She flung herself at Alexei.

“Lex, I'm sorry. Please don't be angry with me. I won't do it again.” She chewed her bottom lip and grasped at his shoulders before adding a hasty, “Sir.”

He hadn't caught her in quite the way she intended. He had taken a half-step back to brace himself for the impact and his hands gripped her waist, but he set her away from him before she finished speaking.

He shoved her toward the table. “You need to be taught manners, Samantha. The submissive at the demonstration earned respect because she was very well-behaved, not because of anything special she could do.”

Lifting to her toes, she slid onto the table. She paused, sitting for a moment and throwing a silent appeal to Stefano.

His hands rested on his hips, a relaxed pose she didn't think he should have been able to assume given the fact he hadn't had an orgasm. "Respect is earned, Sammy. You don't respect us, and we aim to change that."

Swallowing, she settled back on the table. It was narrower than it appeared. The edges barely extended the width of her shoulders. Alexei's strong hands grasped her ankles to slide her body down, positioning her so that her head was at the top.

Stefano buckled the first leather strap across her abdomen. Alexei secured her ankle cuffs to the table and locked more straps just above her knees.

At the head of the table, Stefano did something similar to her arms. He lifted her hair out of the way. The click of metal on metal told her he had secured the collar around her neck to the table. She didn't need to test the bonds to know she couldn't move any part of her body.

The extensions where her legs were tied moved apart. Stefano was near her head, so she knew Alexei was the one exposing her pussy to the room. She couldn't lift her head for visual confirmation. Instead of feeling helpless, peace and excitement coursed through her. Cream rushed to her pussy. The edges of her vision began to fade, and she felt herself going to that place they sent her when they whipped her. Bliss was seconds away and they didn't even have to touch her.

"Breathe, Sammy."

She took a breath, but it didn't change anything. Stefano seemed so far away. His handsome face loomed large, blocking the ceiling and anything else she might be inclined to look at. She focused on his blue eyes, the hue of which seemed to shift as she watched. That was okay. The smile she gave him was of the drunken variety. She was sure it didn't look quite right, but there was nothing she could do about it.

He stroked her hair. “Sammy, where are we right now?”

She tried to lift her hand, to run her finger along the line of his jaw and slip it past his lips, but she couldn’t move. “Green.” The word slid along her tongue and spilled from her lips, feeling foreign. “I feel like I’m floating, Stef.”

Fire exploded in her pussy, bringing her back to earth.

She blinked, her brain finally processing Stefano’s face. The floating feeling dissipated. “Green, Sir.” This time, her voice was strong and sure. She heard the difference in her response.

The fire exploded again, and she realized that Alexei was whipping between her legs. It hurt, and it felt so good. There wasn’t a damn thing she could do about it either way. All this time, she thought “pussy-whipped” was a term used to describe men who did whatever their wives wanted.

The whip hit again and tears pricked Samantha’s eyes. It hurt like hell, but she didn’t want him to stop. The other feeling, the one tingling behind the sharp sting of the whip, promised an orgasm she wouldn’t forget.

“Is it still numb?”

Stefano had moved from her field of vision. His words and his breath whispered against her neck.

“No, Sir.” Her body was so relaxed that speaking was a challenge.

“Good.” He stroked her hair near her temple. “Lex is going to deliver three more, Sammy. You will come for him.”

That tingling feeling grew at the sound of his voice. His order pushed her almost to the edge. Deep down, she wanted to please him. Her body tried to lift, to meet the next blow, but she couldn’t move. She came during the fifth lick of the whip, crying out Lex’s name at the top of her lungs. The sixth caress prolonged the pleasure.

Stefano disappeared. She felt his hands on her hips. The latex-covered tip of his cock circled her entrance. The light touch wrung a ragged gasp from deep inside. He impaled her before the gasp finished.

Alexei took Stefano's place near her ear. "This body belongs to us, Samantha. We give pleasure and pain. You don't get a say in how much of each, my lovely slave. You'll take what we give you and you'll thank us for it. You'll cry and scream and beg for more. You'll beg for something only your Masters can give to you."

The scorching, wet heat of Stefano's mouth closed over her nipple and he pumped himself into her. He wasn't gentle or patient. The selfish way he fucked her made Samantha realize how generous he had been up until now. His goal was his own pleasure, and he didn't care whether she climaxed or not.

And yet that insistent pressure built inside Samantha. Alexei had only stimulated her from the outside. By the time Stefano cried out his release and let go of her nipple, the need inside Sam had grown uncomfortably. If she could move, she would have leapt onto Alexei and rode him hard. She entertained brief fantasies of tying them both down so she could alternate riding their mouths and dicks.

Lex's breath brushed her neck again. "How are you doing, Samantha?"

She knew they were going to dish out much more punishment before they were finished with her. Part of her looked forward to it and part of her wanted to cry and beg now. He hadn't asked for a status report, but that was all she was willing to give him. "Green."

He kissed her temple and nibbled a path down her jaw. At last, he latched onto her earlobe. His teeth scraped, sending shivers straight to her pussy. "Are you ready to admit you belong to us?"

"Yes, Sir," she said. Hadn't she already assured him that she was his for the weekend? Dinner seemed so long ago. She couldn't believe this was her first night with them. "I belong to you for the weekend."

Something large pushed at the slick and dripping lips of her pussy, stretching her hole wide. It was harder and larger than any cock. Sam gasped and tried to wiggle away. It was too big to be comfortable.

Alexei stroked her hair and kissed her temple. She tried to turn her head away from him, but the restrains attached to her collar held her in place.

Unable to move, she gulped air. "It's too big, Sir."

He rose to stand over her. She watched his face as he watched Stefano force that thing into her. The furrow in his brow eased as the pressure between her legs increased. He smiled down at her. "It's in, slave. That thing is going to be your new best friend for the night."

"For the night?" Samantha reeled. They planned to leave her like this, tied down with an oversized dildo stuffed inside her vagina. On a purely reactive level, she wanted this. She wanted to show them she could endure anything they dished out. And she wanted to know if there was anything to the little thrill she got whenever Lex called her his slave. How could that happen when she had such strenuous objections to the use of that word?

Alexei kissed her forehead, and then he disappeared. A motor started and the huge dildo moved, pumping in and out slowly. The click of another switch sent periodic pulses through it as well.

Except for the hum of the motor, the room was silent.

Samantha closed her eyes. She wished they had blindfolded her. She wished she didn't know they had left her alone, tied to a table and unable to escape a fucking machine. It didn't take long for her body to become accustomed to the size. Though it was larger than anything she had previously experienced, it wasn't too big. The size proved to be an asset. It stretched her insides so far that every inch of her vaginal walls felt the delicious slide.

The need with which Stefano had left her grew. A low moan filled the room. It was hers and she was alone. Alexei and Stefano weren't there to appreciate the fruits of their punishment.

Samantha wanted to move her hips. The size of the dildo meant she didn't have to undulate to make it reach all the spots she wanted stimulated, but it didn't stop the primal need she had to move, to

participate in the making of this orgasm. No, the position in which they had left her forced Sam to be completely passive.

She fought it. The pleasure built. She wanted to control it. She wanted to own it. She wanted to submit to Alexei and to Stefano, not to a machine. The muscles in her shoulders and thighs jerked. She tried to raise her hips, which were not tied to the table, but she couldn't manage enough leverage.

The agonizingly measured thrusts were relentless. She couldn't stop the climax that was equally as slow and relentless. The machine didn't notice what it had done to her. It didn't stop or slow. She thought Alexei and Stefano might have been watching through a camera or a one-sided window, but nobody came to stop it. The orgasm went on and on, prolonged by the untiring lover between her legs.

Samantha lost count of the number of times she came. Post-coital languor was never able to gain a foothold. The valleys disappeared. Sammy bounced from peak to peak like an addict in heaven. Tension left her muscles and every part of her became jelly. She submitted completely to this punishment, to this machine.

They had been right. They owned her body. They owned her pleasure and the sweet pain they dished out that she knew she would crave for the rest of her life.

The sound of the motor ceased, but the absence of anything between her legs barely registered. Skin tickled against hers and the straps binding her to the table, which had become pointless when she lost the ability to move, fell away.

She felt herself lifted. Her head was cradled against a shoulder and a familiar masculine scent filled her senses.

* * * *

Alexei glanced down at Samantha. He had asked her where they were before he untied her, but she hadn't answered. His question

hadn't registered. The machine had done its job. Samantha had submitted completely. If she woke while he cleaned her up, he had no doubt he would be able to coax her into calling him Master and admitting that she was his slave. However, he didn't want a senseless declaration. He wanted her to come to that conclusion when she had her wits about her. He had planted the seeds, now he would watch them grow.

He carried her up the stairs and to her room. Stefano waited in the bathroom. He would make sure the water wasn't too warm or too cool. Their goal wasn't to rouse Samantha. They only wanted to clean her up before they put her to bed for the night.

Stef was naked and setting out the towels when he entered. They had taken turns watching Samantha, making sure she didn't panic at their absence. Leaving a slave alone was always a gamble, especially one as inexperienced as Samantha. She had handled it beautifully.

He and Stefano hadn't fared so well. Though they had both masturbated to the sights and sounds of Samantha's orgasms, it wasn't enough. If she had been awake, they would both be on her now, fucking her until the three of them fell into oblivion.

But they needed to be patient. They had a day and a half left to convince her that she belonged with them.

Stef looked up from his task. "Is she completely out?"

"Yeah. She hasn't responded to anything."

He handed her to Stefano and shed his clothes. Bathing her without waking her was a two person job. The shower was large enough to fit them all. He slid open the beveled glass door. Stefano went inside first, taking Samantha with him.

"I'm not sure I like that thing."

Alexei grabbed the nearest shower head and brought it closer to Samantha's body. Stefano didn't have to explain his statement because Alexei wasn't sure he liked that thing, either. "It did the job, Stef. She has to understand on her most basic, primal level that we control her pleasure. I think she took to the pain parts quite well. She

submitted to us. But then, when it came to the sex, she was no longer submitting.”

The whip marks that heated her skin and sent her to subspace had long ago faded. Stef moved his arm so that Alexei could wash under her breasts. “She doesn’t have to submit all the time, you know. I liked our first time with her.”

“Yeah,” Alexei agreed. “But she must submit in the playroom, Stef. She has to be able to do that.”

Chapter 11

Samantha woke alone in that big white room. The first fingers of dawn lit the gossamer curtains that covered the sliding glass doors to the balcony. Judging by the clean feel of her skin and the familiar scent of her lotion, Sam figured out that they had bathed her before putting her to bed.

Nobody had remembered to close the drapes, but that was okay. Sunrise was minutes away. It would come up over the ocean, and she had no intention of missing it. The frown that pinched her brows at having wondered why neither of them had slept in the bed with her faded. If they were here now, the sounds of her morning toilette would likely wake one or both and then she wouldn't be allowed to watch the sun rise.

She didn't doubt they had both been left wanting last night. After all, she was the one who had been subjected to multiple orgasm machine, not them. Once they woke up, they would beat down her door seeking satisfaction.

The sundress she had worn the day before hung over the towel rack in her bathroom, forgotten in light of their other activities. Samantha smiled as she realized Alexei and Stefano had been just as excited about their first private night together as she had been. She slipped it on.

They were good men, and if it had been an overcast morning, she would have explored the other rooms down the hall to make sure each of her lovers had a good morning. Though she was a little sore, she discounted the amount it would affect her ability to enjoy her men.

Sam wandered down the long hall to the foyer. They hadn't shown her the house last night. Though it was large, the layout made sense. The sleeping areas were at one end of the house and the social areas were at the other end. Because the back of the house faced the ocean, the most used rooms were located in the rear. The kitchen and breakfast nook sported floor-to-ceiling windows that had a breathtaking view.

Sam could have watched the sun rise without leaving the house, but she wanted to be closer. She wanted to hear the sound of the waves breaking on the shore and to feel the wind in her face. The sensory detail would make a huge difference when she painted this scene—and she would paint this scene, if only to commemorate a defining moment in her life.

The Morozov brothers offered a freedom Samantha hadn't found anywhere else. Like the sun rise, what they had done to her was blindingly beautiful. It stole her breath and her will. It touched her like nothing else ever had.

Was she a slave, as Alexei tried to suggest when she was most vulnerable? Perhaps, but not in the way he wanted her to be one. She couldn't see living like this all the time. She couldn't see giving anyone a voice in every little detail of her life, and that was what Alexei wanted. He wanted someone who would wander around the house naked and await his beck and call. That person wasn't Samantha.

Yes, she liked what they did in the playroom. She liked the way he had handled her beforehand, in her room. Even though the punishment had sucked, she knew he had only done it to make sure she would always be safe.

Now that the experience was behind her, Samantha could see where the things they had done could have become dangerous if she had developed a habit of not answering them. When Lex had put those bindings on her, the sight and the act had robbed her muscles of strength. When they whipped her, the same thing happened. Then,

when they bound her to the penance table, she had been unable to control the bliss that came from being completely and utterly at their mercy.

The pinks and oranges had already begun to make their appearance. A wall of heat greeted her as she stepped onto the balcony, but she didn't let that deter her. She skipped down the steps and crossed the grass to stand on the private stretch of sandy beach. Tilting back her head, she let the experience wash over her.

* * * *

Stefano woke later than usual. The previous day had been exhausting. Meetings had begun at eight in the morning, and he hadn't been able to fall asleep until well past midnight.

Dawn streamed into his room. As a devout morning person, Stef never closed his curtains. He liked to be greeted by the first fingers of a new day. He threw on a pair of shorts and a T-shirt before washing his face and wetting down his cowlick in a vain attempt to tame it.

He didn't hesitate outside of Sam's door. It was open and he hadn't left it that way. A quick peek confirmed that she was awake and about. Stefano smiled. Alexei wouldn't be up for several more hours. He was going to have Sammy to himself for most of the morning.

It wasn't that he minded sharing with Lex, it was just that he wanted some time alone with her. He would allow Alexei the same consideration later in the day.

As he made his way to the kitchen, he listened for sounds that would indicate she was there, replenishing the energy she had burned the night before and gearing up for another physically strenuous day.

He heard nothing. "Sammy?"

Glancing around, he didn't see her. He checked the patio, but she wasn't there. Panic clutched his gut. She hadn't left, had she? Had

they been too harsh with her? Had she decided she didn't want to be with them like this and left?

Then a lone figure in the distance caught his eye. Sammy stood on the beach, inches from the water. Wind pressed her dress tight against her body, exposing her curves to the sun and surf. The more aggressive waves reached out to caress her bare feet. As he came closer, he realized she was wearing the same dress she had been wearing at the airport when they picked her up.

Her arms were crossed over her stomach and her face was tipped back, drinking in the morning sunlight. She had the same blissful expression on her face that she had when they tied her up both times. One more stimulus and she would achieve subspace.

She hadn't seen him yet. Stefano stopped short, conflicted. On one hand, he was shocked to see that she could achieve this state without his involvement. On the other hand, he was pleased to see her happy, indomitable spirit intact.

Throwing caution to the wind, he shifted his trajectory so that he would come up behind her. He slipped his arms around her waist and planted a kiss on her shoulder near the strap holding up her dress. She smelled like soap and the salty air.

Sammy lifted her arms to accommodate him, and then she replaced them, leaning her head back against his shoulder and hugging him closer. "Good morning, Stef."

His heart jumped at the fact she knew it was him without looking. All of his doubts fled. "Good morning, sunshine."

She laughed, a quiet sound almost swallowed by the swish of waves under their feet. "You have one incredible view here. I've been all around the country photographing sunrises and I don't think I've ever seen anything so lovely before."

"No," he said. "There isn't anything this lovely anywhere." He wasn't looking at the rising sun per se. He was watching the way the light played over her features, highlighting the subtle shades of gold in her hair and the darker flecks in her pale blue eyes.

Without altering her gaze, she reached up a hand and caressed his cheek. He hadn't shaved, but the rough stubble didn't seem to put her off. "You're such a man," she said. "Using lines when there's no need for flattery."

"It's not flattery, Sammy. I think you're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen."

Now she tore her eyes from the horizon to look back at him. "Are you angry with me for last night?"

Surprise had him turning her around in his arms. "No. Why would you think that?"

A blush stained her cheeks. "I wasn't exactly well-behaved. I couldn't seem to help it."

Stefano laughed. "I like your spirit, Sammy, and your sense of humor. In the playroom, those things are going to get you punished more times than not. Outside of the playroom, hell, even inside, I don't want you hiding those parts of yourself."

She slid her hands up, caressing his stomach and chest. "I have no intention of changing who I am for you or anyone else, Stef. Last night, you showed me a side of myself I've denied for far too long. I meant to thank you, but I don't remember leaving the playroom or how exactly I made it to bed."

He was falling under the spell of her touch, not that it was difficult to do since he was already enthralled with her. "Lex carried you upstairs. We showered you and put you to bed."

The playful smile on her lips faded. "I woke up alone."

They hadn't explained that to her beforehand. He hoped she would forgive the oversight. "It's your room, Sammy. Neither of us will come inside there without your invitation or consent."

She frowned. He wanted to banish it with a kiss or a declaration, but he knew that now was not the right time for either.

"You need a safe space where you have all the control," Stefano explained. "Your room is your sanctuary. It's a space neither Lex nor

I will violate. Anything that happens in there only happens with your consent.”

Sammy tilted her head to the side. “You haven’t done anything without my consent, Stef. Every time you did something to me last night, you asked me for the green light first. That’s consent.”

He was pleased she understood that. A strand of hair blew across her face. He used that as an excuse to touch her. He wasn’t explaining this correctly. The other women they’d had in their playroom hadn’t been invited to stay for more than one night. Nobody put a premium on personal space when it was so short-term.

“You’re the boss in your room. If you were to come into my room, I would be the boss. Same thing with Lex’s room. In the playroom, we’re your Doms. In the rest of the house, we’re your Doms, only it’s toned down a lot.”

“Out here?”

Stefano shrugged. “Out here, nature is the boss. Look, Sammy, you said you weren’t going to change for anyone, and I’m fine with that. I like you the way you are. But you have to understand that Lex and I are who we are. We’re not going to change, either.”

The palms of her hands had been resting against his chest. She used them now as leverage to put distance between them. “It’s just a weekend, Stef. Nobody has to change for a weekend fling. We’ll just enjoy one another until my flight leaves tomorrow.”

Stefano looked toward the sun rise and back down before his retinas burned. He wanted to argue that this wasn’t just a weekend. It was the beginning of something wonderful that he wasn’t willing to give up. He held out a hand to her. “Let’s go for a walk.”

* * * *

Samantha let Stefano take her hand. She wasn’t sure about the strange expression on his face, but he didn’t say anything as they

walked down the beach in companionable silence. The swish of the waves sang a peaceful lullaby.

“You said you’ve photographed sunrises all around the country. I thought it was extremely difficult to take a picture of the sun.”

She glanced over at him. He wore cutoff jean shorts and a loose, white cotton T-shirt with a V-neck. Thigh muscles bunched and strained with every step he took. Like her, he was as barefoot. The beach bum look suited him.

“I use special lenses and filters. It works with sunsets, too.”

He changed the way he held her hand, twining his fingers with hers. “You didn’t bring equipment with you.”

It was something she regretted, but she hadn’t known how much time she would have without one or both of them demanding attention. “I wouldn’t make a difference. You guys took my things. All I have is this dress.”

Stef grinned. “Your things are in Lex’s closet. If you want to take pictures next time, you can bring whatever you want. Pack it separately and we’ll put it in your room.”

Samantha tried not to bristle at the casual way he treated her passion. Photography was a hobby for most people. She’d never explained that it meant so much more to her.

He mistook her unease. “Sammy, I didn’t mean to get ahead of you, but Alexei and I already know we want to see you again. It’s completely up to you, of course.”

It amazed her that she was supposed to be the submissive, yet they left everything up to her. Stefano’s soft assurance made a place deep inside Sam sing. This weekend had barely begun, yet she knew she wanted to be here again. “I’d like that.”

Stefano exhaled, and Sam realized he had been nervous about her response. Without missing a step, he scooped her into his arms and twirled her around. She hung onto his shoulders and laughed at his impulsive display of joy. Then he stopped and let her slide down his

body. The heat and the feel of his hard body against hers made her forget why she laughed.

When she was still a few inches from the ground, he kissed her hard. Fire ignited, stoked higher by the friction generated as she continued to slide down his front. The grainy feel of sand under her feet did nothing to tame the feelings she couldn't control.

He didn't bother with finesse, instead opting to thrust his tongue into her mouth to possess her completely. Samantha expected him to drop them to the sand and pound into her with a fury that put the surf to shame.

But he ended the kiss. His fist, entwined in her hair, held her forehead to his even as he held his body away from hers. "Sammy, I want you, but I'm going to wait until we get back to the house. I don't want you to think all I want from you is sex."

Panting, Samantha nodded. She didn't quite understand why he wouldn't march her back to the house and have his way with her. After all, that was the reason she had come all the way to Florida. She wanted him to want her for sex, for the special kind of sex he was so good at.

His fist dropped away, and his other hand came up to hold hers as he led her down the beach, away from the house. "Tell me about this traveling thing you do for Elizabeth."

Sammy peered at Stefano through narrowed eyes. The way he said her boss's name implied familiarity. "Do you know Elizabeth Keyes?"

Stefano nodded. "She was one of the few people my mom was friends with. Elizabeth was over my house quite a bit when I was little. She was kind of like an aunt to Lex and me."

Dots connected. Sabrina's mother, who had arranged for this job, was friendly with Elizabeth. She had known the Morozovs as well. Sam had forgotten that the Morozovs were connected to her sister-in-law's family.

"So," Stefano prompted. "What do you do for Elizabeth?"

“I travel around to wherever she sends me looking for high-end vacation experiences. She used to do it herself, but she said she’s getting old and she hates sleeping in foreign beds.”

Stefano nodded. His eyes focused on the endless expanse of sand stretching down the shoreline in front of them. “And you like to travel.”

Sammy shrugged. “I do and I don’t.”

Stopping suddenly, Stefano tugged her hand until she faced him. “What do you mean by that?”

It was Sam’s turn to look at the places where the water met the land. “I like to photograph and paint sunrises and sunsets. I’ve seen some spectacular things while I’ve had this job, and it pays the bills.”

“But?”

She turned to continue down the beach, but he tugged at her again.

“This is the end of our property. If we go any further, we’ll be in a federally protected wildlife preserve. I’d rather not crush an endangered species under my feet. Not only is it wrong, but some of them have a nasty sting.”

Raising a hand to her cheek, he closed the distance between them. “Sammy, I want to know things about you. I want to know what’s important to you.”

She shrugged, uncomfortable with the conversation. She had only ever discussed her artistic aspirations with a handful of people, and that had been so long ago. On their vacation, her father had expressed his relief that Samantha had finally pulled her head from the clouds and found a steady job. Sam didn’t mention the money Jonas had given her to help meet next month’s rent.

She swallowed, biting the bullet. Why not be honest? What was the worst that could happen? If he laughed at her, she could always leave and never see him again. That thought hurt a lot more than she thought it should.

“It takes so much time away from my art. For as long as I can remember, I’ve wanted to take pictures and paint. I bounce from job

to job, always something temporary to get me by enough so that I can make rent and afford equipment and supplies. I don't mind working for Elizabeth. I freelance for her, so I only work when I need to, but I need to pay the rent, so I'm working pretty much all the time."

Stefano stared at her, the thoughts winging through those blue eyes a complete mystery.

She continued, prattling on because she was nervous. "August was hard because of the wedding and the vacation my family takes together every year. Things will be more settled when I get back. I have a trip next week, but I think I'll be able to take a few days after that." She glanced over her shoulder. The sun no longer touched the horizon. "I think I'll paint this."

The wind whipped hair across her face. Stefano moved it aside, but his expression didn't alter. At last, he spoke. "I'd like to see your work, Sammy. Maybe you'll send me some of your pictures when you get back?"

He was humoring her. Samantha nodded because it was expected. "We'd better get back. Alexei is going to wonder where we are."

Stefano took her hand, twining his fingers with hers and holding it loosely. "Lex isn't going to wake up for at least three more hours. He did some work on the Galen deal last night. I'd be surprised if he got to sleep before four." Lifting her hand to his lips, he kissed the palm. "I have you all to myself until then."

Samantha wondered if that was where Alexei had gone when they left her alone, but she knew better than to ask. Stef would want to maintain a certain level of mystique about that kind of thing. That didn't mean she stopped wanting to know. She approached it as safely as she could. "I'm surprised he didn't crash. You guys worked yesterday, then you spent the evening with me. It was a full day."

Stefano laughed, his low tones washing over Sammy and eliciting an answering smile. "He was too wound up from watching over you, honey. It was that or molest you in your sleep, and he's not that kind of guy."

She peered at him through her lashes. "But you are?"

They had arrived back at the house. Stefano pulled her close. She melted into the contours of his body and submitted to his kiss. It wasn't hard or fast like before. He brushed his lips over hers in feathery caresses, teasing her senses into frenzy. By the time he finished with her, Sammy was ready to throw him to the ground and have her way with him.

He kept his arm around her as they headed up the stairs to the patio that would take them into the kitchen. "I knew I was going to have you to myself this morning. Sammy, you're going to pay many times over for making us watch last night while you learned your lesson."

From the way her face flamed, she knew she was blushing furiously. She was a little behind him as they finished climbing the stairs. She hoped he wouldn't glance back until the blush faded. "I didn't know you watched."

Her hopes dashed as he pushed her against the warm glass of the sliding door and caged her with his arms. Smoke steamed from his eyes, jolting electricity straight through her. His head dipped and his lips brushed those same teasing caresses along her neck and collar bone. She fisted her hands around the fabric at the hem of her sundress. Instinct told her not to touch him, not yet.

Sammy moaned, both from the way he imprisoned her body and the way he teased her senses. His skin and hair had absorbed the morning heat and the salt scent of the ocean. It combined with the tangy masculine aroma that was uniquely him to fill her consciousness and make her tremble.

"I couldn't look away," he said, breathing the words against her skin. He nipped at her neck and flicked his tongue over the tiny stings. "Have you ever watched yourself climax, honey? I don't think I've ever seen a more erotic sight than your body writhing and the expressions that cross your face when you come."

He hadn't waited for her to answer. Samantha wasn't sure her response would have mattered anyway. This was about Stefano, about the way she affected him. She laughed, a desperate, nervous sound. "I didn't think you would ever say something like that to me."

Stefano stopped teasing. He impaled her with the question in his eyes. "Why not?"

"I thought you wouldn't want me to know that I affect you, that I have power over you."

His thumb traced a path down her cheek and over her lips. It didn't seem like he would ever get tired of touching her face. "Sammy, I'm not ashamed of the way you make me feel." He leaned closer, pressing his arousal to her stomach. "I'm not afraid to let you know how you affect me. It's only a weak Dom who can't admit how profoundly his sub affects him."

This wasn't the first time a man had told Sam how much he wanted her, but this was the first time her thighs weakened from a confession. It could have something to do with the fact she was still caged by his arms and his body.

She closed her palm over his erection, feeling his hardness through the soft denim of his shorts. "Do you want me to take care of that for you, Sir?"

He stared at her for the longest time. She would give anything to know his thoughts, but he didn't share and she knew better than to ask. When he finally spoke, his words were strangled. "Get on your knees, Sammy."

She dropped as gracefully as she could in the small space he allowed between the unyielding hardness of his body in front of her and the glass behind her. He didn't move. His hands remained pressed against the door.

Sammy ignored the moisture between her legs. She knew if she pleased him well, he would reward her well. Besides, she felt short-changed from not being able to make him come last night. Oh, he had come inside her, but it wasn't something she did for him. She had

been a vessel for release, nothing more. He had resisted her best efforts. When she had begun to make progress, Alexei had been there to thwart her attempt.

Her hands didn't shake as she freed his erection. She handled him gently, taking him in her hands reverently. She licked her lips to make them moist, and then she devoured him. One hand wrapped around his base, and her tongue swirled around his cock. She varied her rhythm, alternating between a gentle and a forceful suction.

Above her, Stefano's moans and incoherent cries told her all she needed to know. He fisted her hair and thrust in time to the rhythm she set. Sammy reveled in her power, a power he allowed her to have. She had no doubt he could—and would—take it away later. But for now, she was in charge.

An idea popped into her head and she went with it. She figured that if she liked it so much, then Stefano would, too. With her free hand, she caressed his sac. He moaned. She worked her way back until she found his puckered hole. She didn't give him time to think, time to wonder what she was about to do. He had been so gentle with her that first time, so she gently inserted her finger into his anus.

"Fuck!" The oath fell from Stef's lips and he pumped into her faster. "Oh God, Sammy. Don't stop, honey."

She sucked him harder and inserted a second finger, stretching him wider. With a loud cry, he came. Hot semen shot to the back of her throat, but she didn't stop pumping her fingers into him until he collapsed against the door and his cock went limp in her mouth. She licked him clean before fixing his boxers and shorts.

The hand in her hair had fallen away. Samantha scooted out from her trapped position between Stef and the door. Standing, she looped her arms around his waist and slung his arm over her shoulders. "Let me help you into the house. Are you hungry for breakfast?"

Stefano's body shook and a weak laugh issued from him. "Enjoy this, Sammy, because I'm going to make you beg after we eat."

Sammy couldn't keep the cocky grin from her face. She couldn't think of a better reward.

Instead of using her as a crutch, Stef pulled her closer. His lips teased with promise and with some emotion she didn't expect. Then he released her, leaving her wanting more of something she couldn't identify. He slid the door open. "Come on, Sammy. I'm an excellent waffle maker."

He sat her on a high stool on the other side of the counter. Samantha watched as he pattered around, stirred batter, and poured perfect waffles into the waffle iron.

"Do you have an online portfolio?"

His question startled Samantha. She scrunched up her nose in confusion before she figured it out. He was asking about her art. She thought they had left that topic in the waves and sand. "Yeah."

Stefano nodded. While he worked and while they ate, he peppered her with questions about art and about her past. Samantha answered them, all the while wondering why he chose that topic. Uncomfortable talking about her art and her dreams, she changed the subject.

She pushed away her plate and leaned her hand on her palm, watching Stefano finish his meal. "Do you and Lex ever change places?"

The answering smile was devilish in the extreme. "When it suited us. We did all the normal things like go to each other's classes and stuff. We didn't switch when we both had to be in the same place at the same time. Our mother got really good at figuring out when we'd switch. I loved that she never told our dad when we did things like that. He's always mixed us up. We stopped correcting him when we were about seven or eight."

"He still mixes the two of you up?"

Stefano pushed his plate back. "Sammy, you're the only person I've ever met who doesn't mix us up. Some people wait and look for the obvious signs. I'm right-handed. Lex is left-handed."

She could see where it could be confusing. Sam nodded. “Your smile is crooked. Yours is a little higher on the right side, and Lex’s is a little higher on the left. You tend to smile more, whereas Lex tends to be serious.” Though she would be the first to admit that mood was a poor indicator of identity.

Sam grinned as his gaze dropped to her bustline and that grin stretched his lips. “You stare at my chest quite a bit more. Lex might like posture, but he does tend to check out asses. I think he’s not even aware he does it so much.”

Stefano got to his feet and gathered their dishes. In the back of her mind, Samantha honestly thought they would make her do the cooking and clearing naked. Not only hadn’t she cooked, but she was still wearing her dress, and Stef was clearing the breakfast dishes.

Sam shot to her feet. “I can do that.”

Stefano’s brows drew together. “You’re my guest, honey. I’ll take care of this.” He headed to the sink and rinsed the plates.

“But isn’t that a submissive’s job?” She wrung her hands, nervous because she knew what was soon to come. When she realized what she was doing, she dropped them to her sides and smoothed the skirt of her dress. Luckily, Stefano wasn’t watching.

He nodded as he wiped down the waffle iron. “For some people, it can be. Lex and I don’t operate that way. We grew up watching our dad treat our mom like a servant, and we had servants, by the way. He made her cook and clean and wait on him. He controlled who she talked to and what she wore. She did nothing without his approval. She died fourteen years ago from a massive stroke. My dad yelled at her when she fell. Lex and I were there. We vowed that we’d never treat a woman the way our dad treated our mom.”

Sam stared at Stefano’s tense back. She sensed this wasn’t information he shared with just anyone, and she treasured his confidence in her. Though she hadn’t expected anything like this morning to happen, she was thankful Stefano seemed to be taking a

break from their roles. The more she knew him, the more she liked him.

Though she was horrified at his description, she had to wonder if his father wasn't just a Dom who took things to extremes. After all, Stef and Lex had to get their propensities from somewhere.

"If your mother didn't like her life, why did she stay?"

Stefano shrugged. He had finished setting the kitchen to rights, but he faced the counter, leaving Sam to stare at his back to try to gauge his emotions. "Lex and I used to ask her that when Dad wasn't around."

"And?" Maybe it wasn't any of her business, but Sam couldn't help it. Why would he tell her these things if he didn't want her to know?

He faced her now. "She said she loved him. She said she knew who he was when she married him."

Sammy wanted to go to him. She wanted to put her arms around him and soothe away the pain of his memories, but she knew he didn't want that, not yet.

"It seems to me that he didn't love her back." Stefano shrugged and studied the floor. "I honestly don't know. Sometimes, it seemed like he did. Mostly, he was just a dick. I'm not like him, and neither is Alexei."

Sam came to him then, stopping just in front of where he stood. "What made it seem like he loved her?"

"Sometimes, it was the way he looked at her. Though he had plenty of opportunity, he never cheated on her and he doesn't really date now that she's gone. If he needs to attend a function, he usually goes alone." Stefano shook his head. "Lex and I spent so much of our lives mad at him that I can honestly say we don't know him that well. Nobody does."

Sam lifted her hand and caressed his cheek with her fingertips. He made his parents out to be two very lonely people. "It sounds like your mom did."

“I’m not mad at him anymore. Lex is.” Stefano’s fingers encircled hers, stopping her soothing touch. “Regardless, Sammy, we won’t treat you that way. If you want to help clear the dishes, you can, but that’s not something either of us will ever order you to do. We have a housekeeper. She’s not here now because we gave her the weekend off when we found out you were coming. Rosa tolerates us and she keeps the house in order. That’s not your job.”

Sam studied his face. His nostrils flared and color threatened to suffuse his skin. He was holding his temper in check, but just barely. It was another difference. Sam knew that Alexei would have let out his fury. Stefano’s eyes, usually a dark blue, were almost black. She wanted to soothe him so very badly. She wanted to take away his pain, but it ran too deep and it had gone on for too long.

“I like you, Sammy. Lex does, too. We don’t ever want you to be anyone other than who you are. Maybe we’ll strip you naked and paddle your ass every day, but we won’t do it because we have some warped sense of what kind of person you should be.”

Wetness rushed between her legs. Well aware that this was not the time for the kind of play he described, Sammy squeezed them together and fought her desire. “You’ll do it because I like when you do it.”

He kissed her palm and released her hand. Sammy was disappointed until he wrapped his arms around her and pulled her against him. His lips hovered an inch away. She wanted to close the distance, but she was already on her tiptoes. He had all the power. “Will you show me your website?”

Blinking her surprise, Sammy jerked away. She didn’t mean to leave his embrace, but he let go, allowing her the freedom to respond without dominating her senses or her personal space.

“Why do you want to see that?”

His gaze didn’t waver. “Your art is important to you. That makes it important to me. I want to know you, Sammy. I know you’ve only

agreed to give it the weekend, but I already know I want more from you.”

Samantha crossed her arms over her chest and backed away. The only person who ever hung her pictures or her paintings were her relatives. That didn't count. Sabrina had expressed appreciation for several of Sam's paintings, but Sabrina was polite and nice, and now she was family. She didn't count, either.

Then there was the fact that Stefano said he wanted more. More what? She focused on that. He would forget his request if she changed the subject. “I think I can do another weekend in about three weeks. I have to work.” She pushed at her hair. It wasn't in her face, but it gave her hands something to do. Airfare was going to kill her budget. She frowned. “Maybe five weeks.”

Stefano's smile was a study in arrogance. “Sammy, I'm not talking about a fetish weekend, though this will definitely happen again. I mean I want to see you. I want to talk to you on the phone and ask how your day went. I want to take you out to dinner and meet your parents. I'm pretty sure I met them at the wedding, but we weren't an item then.”

Her mind reeled. “Stef, I think you're ignoring two things. First, I live a long way away. Long distance relationships never work. Second, what about Alexei?”

Stef shrugged. “I haven't discussed this with him. If he wants to see you again, he'll have to tell you that himself.” He closed the distance, insinuating himself in her senses. “I have my own jet, Sammy. Maybe it'll take a little longer to get from here to there, but we can make it work if we really want it to work.”

Oh, the complications of what he proposed would make her head pound if she considered them now. She focused on the feel of his arms around her. “Let me think about it, Stef. The weekend isn't over and I'm still trying to wrap my head around this Dom/sub thing. I don't even know how this might begin to work as a relationship.”

He ran his fingers up and down her bare arms, sending tingles rocketing in all directions. “The key to making any relationship work, Sammy, especially one like this, is open and honest communication. When you have a question or a concern, tell us. We’re always willing to sit down and talk things over. And that doesn’t just go for telling us that you prefer the flogger over the paddle. That goes for everything. If you’re upset about something one of your friends said or did, we’re both here to listen. We’ll even offer advice if you want it.”

She leaned into his embrace, laying her head against his shoulder. “Why haven’t you stripped me naked yet?”

Laughter shook his body. “I told you I like spending time with you, Sammy. I meant it. And you haven’t shown me your website yet.”

With a single finger, she traced a path down his chest. “You don’t have to humor me, Stef. I didn’t come here to show you my art.”

When she tried to hook a finger into his shorts, his iron grip closed around her hand. “There’s time for that later, Sammy. Art first.”

She pushed herself away from him and turned to stare out the glass that made up the entire back of the house. The view was beautiful, but she saw nothing. What if he didn’t like it? Worse, what if he humored her about it?

“Come on.” The pressure of his hand on her lower back didn’t give her a choice.

Samantha frowned as images of the way her brother treated his wife flashed through her head. To an outsider, he looked like the perfect gentleman. Now that she was part of the couple in question, Sammy saw the truth in the gesture. It was a subtle, dominating move.

Stefano led her down the stairs and past the playroom. He stopped at the threshold of the room next to it.

“Why the frown?”

Stuck in her thoughts, it took Sammy a minute to focus on his question. She hadn't been aware she was frowning. "What do you mean?"

"We will make it to the playroom, Sammy, but not until later today. I wanted us to spend some time together this morning." He was no longer touching her, and he didn't try to crowd her.

Sam glanced back over her shoulder at the closed door to the playroom. Thick padlocks barred everyone who didn't have a key. She had loved every second of her time in there the night before, but she wasn't quite ready to go back inside. That room bared her body and soul. It pared her down to her most primitive desires, wringing her until she had nothing left.

There was no way she could spend all of her time there. While it sated her on a level she didn't yet understand, it also stripped away the complexities of who she was. When she was in there, she wasn't an artist. She wasn't a friend or a daughter. She was a vessel, a conduit for pleasure and pain. It was as exhausting as it was fulfilling.

However, she hadn't been thinking about the playroom. She searched Stefano's deep blue eyes for signs of anything that might reveal his true intent, but she found nothing. "I wasn't thinking about that. I've never shown my work to anyone before. I don't know if I want you to see it."

He turned his face away, but not before Sammy caught the hurt that flashed in his eyes. She realized he was serious about wanting more than sex from his relationship with her.

"Okay," he said. His voice was quiet and tight. "You don't have to show me, Sammy. I can wait until you trust me."

He tried to turn her around and head back the way they came, but Sammy stopped him with a hand on his chest. "I do trust you, Stef. It's just that sometimes I think my stuff is good, and sometimes..." She ended her statement with a shrug.

When he looked down at her, she saw that his upset manifested as irritation. "If you never show anyone your work, how are you going

to know what they think about it? I'm not going to blow sunshine up your ass, Sammy. If you like doing this, I would never discourage you, but I'm not going to tell you it's professional quality when it isn't. Lex might know a hell of a lot more about art than me, but I'm not at all ignorant on the topic."

His honesty gave Samantha courage, but it didn't settle the butterflies in her stomach.

"I'll show it to you."

He gathered her close to him, cradling her in his arms. She closed her eyes to better enjoy the way he made her feel cherished. Too soon, he kissed her forehead and led her into the room.

It was a media room. Flat screens of various sizes littered desktops. Some were mounted on the wall. Comfortable chairs were scattered around the room, situated to view different monitors. A lone sofa occupied the center of the room. It faced a screen that took up a third of the wall. The room was large. Outside of an auditorium, Sammy had never seen a screen that large.

One monitor in the far corner of the room was turned on. Samantha's eyes were drawn to it. Though it wasn't a small monitor, the size of the room meant she still had to move closer to see the image clearly.

"This room is perfect for watching movies," Stefano said. The click of a cupboard opening and closing revealed that he had moved to the opposite side of the room.

The image on the screen might have been a still life, but it wasn't. It was a camera feed. The clock in the upper right corner of the feed announced the current time, 10:42. In full-color and high definition, the penance table was in perfect focus.

Blood drained from her face and she couldn't look away from the now-empty scene of her punishment. "You recorded me?"

Stefano had been moving around, arranging equipment. Now he stopped. She felt the strong magnetism of his body behind her as he

looked over her shoulder. It took some willpower, but she refrained from leaning into him.

“No. Did you want me to?”

Did she? The idea intrigued her. She wondered how it would affect the experience. She wondered what would happen to the recording when she and the Morozov brothers parted ways.

“What would you do with it?”

A wicked smile curved Stefano’s lips. “I think I’d like to lock you into the stockade and fuck you while you watch it on a screen in front of you.”

The stockade was a device that basically locked her into a hands-and-knees position. The thigh cuffs were far enough apart to keep her legs spread and open to him. A metal rod connected to her collar to ensure her head couldn’t move. The image he conjured sent a fresh wave of longing through her.

“Would I be watching it live?”

Stefano shook his head. “We’re not set up that way. I’d have to set up a camera in the room to record you.” His brow lifted, the dawning of a realization. “Sammy, we would never tape you without your full knowledge and consent. The room is set up to monitor. Nothing is recorded. Watch the screen.”

He pointed at the monitor and left the room. Sam heard the scrape of locks opening, and then the image of Stefano appeared next to the penance table, waving at her. Samantha looked behind the monitor. She followed the cords. None of them led to an obvious recording device.

Stefano returned. He rested his hands on her shoulders. “That camera can record, but we don’t keep a memory card in it. I’ll take you in there and you can take it apart and look if you want.”

Sammy shook her head.

“Nervous?”

“Yeah.”

Stefano moved closer, pushing Sammy so that her ass perched on the edge of the table next to the monitor. His hand nudged her knees apart and his body slipped between her legs. Her dress slipped up, exposing her to his view if only he were looking in that direction.

He kissed her. His teeth nibbled at her lower lip, teasing and tasting. Then the tip of his tongue ran along all the places that stung from his kiss. Molten blood rushed through Sammy's body, heating every cell. By the time he claimed her mouth completely, plundering her with his tongue, need pressed everywhere.

Sammy reeled at the fact that he could do this to her with one demanding kiss.

His hand traveled along her inner thigh, smoothing over her skin and pushing the hem of her dress out of the way. He broke the kiss. Determination gave his face a hardness that the desire blazing in his eyes didn't dampen.

He watched her face as his fingers found her wetness. He caressed her folds as gently as he had caressed her cheek earlier. Sammy shivered. Her pussy clenched, and she struggled to stay still.

His touch was too light, too reverent. She whimpered, so close to begging for more.

Stefano pushed her back, forcing her to lean on her elbows. Kneeling down, he wrenched her legs apart as far as they could go. Sammy watched as best she could from the angle he had required her to assume. She could only see his thick black hair between her legs.

His tongue teased as lightly as his fingers had. Then he licked her with long strokes of his tongue. The heat pressed to her, further igniting her need. Then he clamped his lips around her clit and sucked hard.

Sammy's eyes rolled back, and she gave up trying to watch. As if he sensed the moment of her surrender, he sucked harder, pulling at her clit with his teeth and tongue. She moaned, and he increased his tempo. The urge to orgasm came on much faster than she expected.

"Sir, please, may I come?"

He stopped sucking and Sammy groaned. Tears pricked the corners of her eyes. She knew he had no intention of tying her up or of whipping her. This was all he offered. She wanted it, all of it, so badly.

“I’m going to put some things inside you, Sammy. You’re going to need to clench around them to hold them in. Don’t lose them, Sammy, or I’ll stop and you won’t get to come.”

She felt her entrance stretch. A round object slid up her sopping channel, guided by his fingers. When he had it where he wanted, Stefano slipped in a second one. Sammy had no idea what they were or what they were supposed to do to her, but she clenched around them. They were fairly large and a bit heavy.

When Stefano finished positioning everything the way he wanted, he resumed licking and sucking. In moments, Sammy was ready to come. Her pussy clenched around the objects. They vibrated when she thrust against Stefano’s face, intensifying her pleasure.

“Oh, God. Sir, please. I need to come.” She whimpered and moaned, begging with sounds and words.

He stopped long enough to give permission. “Come for me, Sammy.”

She did. Her body arched and tensed. She cried out loud, not caring if her cries woke Alexei. He was more than welcome to join them.

Strong arms encircled her, pressing her against Stefano’s chest. He stroked a soothing hand down her back and smoothed her hair away from her face.

“Sammy?”

“Yeah?” She was coming down from her orgasm. She was ready for anything he might throw her way.

“When my mouth is busy and I squeeze just above your knee, that’s permission to come.”

She nodded. This was why having another person around was helpful. If one Master was busy, the other could give her the verbal

responses and directions. That didn't mean she didn't like being alone with Stefano. On the contrary, she found she liked him a lot.

He released her, jerking his head toward the long couch that dominated the center of the room. "I have the computer hooked up there. Go get your website up on the screen."

She shifted, putting weight on her feet. The objects inside her pussy vibrated, sending a jolt through her hyper-aware tissues.

Stefano grinned. "Don't lose those, honey. You will be punished if those come out before either Alexei or I take them out."

Sammy breathed through the pleasure. She knew he wasn't going to let her come again so soon. "What are they?"

He moved away from her, heading for the door. "Smart Balls or pleasure balls. They're a pair of balls with weights inside that respond to your movements. Any time you move, you're going to feel them." He pointed to the keyboard on the coffee table in front of the sofa. "I'll be back in a minute. I want that up when I return."

Samantha made her way across the room by taking very small steps. Holding the pleasure balls in place while walking was challenging. She smoothed her dress down and sat on the Italian leather sofa in front of the keyboard. There didn't seem to be a computer.

As soon as she moved the mouse, half of the wall in front of her lit up. She gaped at the size of his monitor. He was going to see her work in larger-than-life size. Though she was nervous, he had alleviated the worst of it. Samantha clicked on the internet button and typed in her web address.

It was a free website, the kind that had premade templates and came already formatted. All that was left for her to do was to plug in the content. Samantha had more or less dumped it all there. She was searching through the thumbnails for one to show Stefano when he returned.

The couch dipped as he sat. The balls inside Sammy hummed as the new angle caused her to lean toward him. She didn't bother to adjust her position.

"This is your home page?"

"Yeah. It's not organized yet."

Stefano watched her scroll down the screen for a few seconds. His hand closed over hers and she let him have the mouse. She watched as he perused the thumbnails. Some he clicked, blowing them up to the size of the screen on the wall. Sam's fidgeting stopped when he did that, and her breath caught at the beauty of her work.

Staring up at the wide screen, she realized her paintings and her photographs were meant to be much larger than she made them. The way Stef displayed them, her sunrises filled the room with the promise of a new day or a warning of something yet to come. The gigantic sunsets evoked a sense of fulfillment, of promises kept, of regret. The feelings she sought when she created her works of art were there, filling the room.

Samantha rose from the sofa, her jerky movements making the balls vibrate. It distracted her from the nervousness threatening to make her vomit.

At last, Stefano leaned back, releasing his hold on the mouse. The image of one of her favorite paintings filled the screen. Rose and white shafts of sunlight pierced an ominous purple and black sky. It was a sunset fighting to be seen as the remnants of a thunderstorm cleared away. It was the fight between good and evil at the moment the tide turned in favor of good. Every time Sam looked at it, she saw something new.

"Sammy, you have real talent. Some of these are incredible." He paused, hesitating.

"But?"

"But some of them are prosaic. Your earlier work shows traces of brilliance, but your later work really captures that elusive quality you find in all great works of art."

Samantha bristled under the criticism. This was one reason she didn't actively pursue avenues to show her work. She didn't like negative feedback. "Not everything I do can be wonderful."

"No, it can't." He turned, twisting his body to face where she paced in the open area behind the sofa. "A writer doesn't show his drafts to the general public. I don't disclose details of my negotiations to my stockholders until it's done. You need to take down the ones that you don't love, the drafts, the ones that were practice for a later, brilliant piece. Then you need to organize them. I would advise organizing by the feeling evoked, happiness, foreboding, hope. Stuff like that."

She gaped at him. "So now you're an art expert?"

"Not at all. If you want to have a discussion about value or about some artist's impact on modern art, you need to grab Lex. I'm your friend, your lover, and your marketing expert."

He rose then, and came around the sofa. Sam crossed her arms over her chest, holding tightly to an invisible shield.

Stef gripped her upper arms, his touch so light it was a caress. "Sammy, I like your work. This is your dream, honey, so I'm glad to see that you have real talent. However, nobody is going to wade through the mediocre stuff to find the gems. You have to feature them. You have to make them stand out."

She could see his point, but the vastness of what stood between where she was now and where he thought she could be seemed insurmountable.

"Sabrina gave me the name of a gallery owner she knows in Ann Arbor." She stared at the floor between them. The edge of the large rug that covered the center of the room ran at a diagonal, severing him from her. "She liked the photograph Sabrina has hanging at her office."

"I'd work on the website first," he said. "You can't take your entire collection with you. I think you'd want to take several of your

best pieces, and then direct the owner to your newly redesigned website.”

Fear clenched her stomach, making those waffles seem like a bad idea.

In the silence, Stefano studied her. “You never called, did you?”

Sammy shrugged. “I didn’t see the point.”

His voice took on an authoritative quality that had her thighs quivering. “You’ll tackle the website first. I want you to call your contact by next Wednesday at the latest. It’s Treva Andreas, right?”

Treva was the name of the gallery owner. Samantha didn’t bother to be surprised that Stefano knew her, too. “Let me guess: you all went to high school together and your parents are friends?”

Stefano shook his head. “I’ve bought art from her on several occasions. She dealt art to my parents, too. That’s likely how Sabrina knows her. It’s good to have connections, Sammy. Use them. Favors will get you in the door. Talent will take you the rest of the way.”

Chapter 12

His hands played up and down her arms, but Stefano didn't move closer or attempt to dislodge her arms from the defensive position they had taken over her chest. He wanted to, but he didn't want her to feel forced or assaulted. He needed to show her that he respected her vulnerabilities and her boundaries.

The photographs and the paintings, even the raw ones, showed pieces of Sammy's soul. He was awed by her emotionality and by the fact she had trusted him enough to show him the site. She had been shocked when he asked to see her site, like she wasn't used to directing people there. Stefano would bet his house she had done nothing to promote her site.

"Are you mad?"

Sammy shook her head. The thin straps to her wrinkled dress had slid from her shoulders. Only her soft, round breasts held it in place. Stefano used all of this willpower to avoid staring there.

Gooseflesh broke out on her arms where he rubbed his palms over her skin. She shivered, but she didn't break his gaze. "It's all a bit much for me. I don't think I ever really took this seriously. I guess that's why my dad is always after me to settle down with one job."

Stefano nodded. "I think you can, eventually. Don't give up on your dreams, Sammy. The human soul wasn't meant to live without them."

Those big, cornflower blue eyes stared up at him. "What's your dream, Stef?"

He grinned. "I'm living it, Sammy. I love my job and my house. Now that I have you, everything is perfect."

Her eyes widened the tiniest bit, and her lips parted the same amount. She was struggling with wanting to believe him and wanting to keep her guard in place. Stefano didn't say anything more. It wasn't the right time to convince her that they belonged together. Besides, he needed to talk to Alexei about it. Stef was reasonably certain Lex felt the same way about their beautiful guest.

Stefano let his eyes drop to her breasts. He watched them quiver as her breathing became uneven. It was likely her nervousness over his reaction to her art was temporarily forgotten. He reveled in the fact that he could affect her with nothing more than a look.

He snapped his eyes to hers. His demeanor changed from that of the supportive boyfriend—he was already thinking of her as someone he wanted in his life—to that of a Dom. The transition was natural for him. The day he and Lex had found out about this lifestyle was the day a huge weight lifted from his shoulders. He didn't want to be one of those sick bastards who controlled a woman. Stefano liked women. He liked talking to them and laughing with them. He liked looking at them and listening to them. They were sexy and sensual.

But this was a necessary part of his soul that he couldn't deny. Finding a woman who was smart, strong, and independent, yet who was secure enough in her self-esteem and self-worth to cede control to him, this made him want to dance with joy.

Not now, though. Right now he had a sub quaking with need, waiting for him to take control.

“Sammy, go upstairs and put your dress away in your room. Find something soft and sexy in your dresser. I expect to find you kneeling in the center of my room in ten minutes.”

Her pupils widened and her nostrils flared. He waited for her to deal with her desire enough to comply with his command. The way she reacted to him now that she was openly submissive revealed her in a way nothing else could. Stefano treasured this precious gift. Even Samantha wasn't aware of the enormity of what she'd given.

Finally, her eyes refocused. “Stefano, if it’s all the same to you, I’d rather not wear the hand-me-downs from your other submissives. Also, I don’t know which room is yours.”

They hadn’t given her a tour of the house. It was an oversight he’d remedy tonight. Her request, couched in polite terms as it was, made him smile. “Sammy, those outfits were purchased for you. Except for the furniture, everything in that room is new. We had it painted for you. The linens, the bedding, even the mattress is new.”

She regarded him with a mixture of curiosity and bewilderment. “Everything is white. Is it a purity theme? Did you want me to act like a virgin?”

Stefano shook his head. “I want you to be yourself. I’m not into role-playing. Lex has more patience for that kind of thing, though he’s not into virgins. Neither of us are. We never have been.” He stepped aside and gave her a shove toward the door. “My room is right past yours. Eight minutes, Sammy. Late slaves earn a punishment.”

She walked from the room with small, mincing steps that had him frowning until he remembered the Smart Balls he’d put inside her. Those would have to come out for the kind of things he had in mind for her.

Sammy wasted no time. She wanted whatever Stefano had planned. Taking her cue from their expectations at the hotels both times, Sammy didn’t knock at the closed door. The knob made no sound and neither did the door as she pushed it open.

The room was massive, much larger than the room they had assigned her. With a quick sweep of her eyes, she drank in the simple masculinity of the furniture. Like her room, the walls were painted stark white. It contrasted sharply with the Japanese-style lacquer furniture. The drapes leading to the balcony were open, and sunlight flooded the room.

Near the foot of the bed, Stefano sat sprawled in an upholstered chair, his arms resting on the black lacquer frame. He had removed his clothes, but he wore a red silk robe. The pattern on it was

distinctly Japanese. It gaped open, baring a deep vee of muscles on his chest. The short robe fell almost to his knees. His legs were spread so that the robe was loose, prohibiting her from knowing if he already had an erection or if he was growing one watching her enter the room.

Sam wanted to pull away the silk cord holding it in place and taste every delicious inch of him. She wanted to inhale his masculine scent until she felt drunk on the promise of more to come.

He said nothing, watching silently as she knelt in front of him. The position hadn't been specified, but she thought this occasion called for her to kneel up. Part of her wanted to hear his stern voice demand that she offer herself to him. Just thinking about it made her pussy weep.

Sammy knelt, knitted her fingers behind her neck, and focused on a spot on the floor at his feet. She waited in silence, wondering what he thought of the lingerie she had chosen. He had requested something soft and sexy.

Two distinct styles of clothing filled some of the drawers. The first style was similar to what Alexei had dressed her in the night before. Stiff corsets, bustiers in a variety of styles, and what she thought might be a chastity belt filled two drawers in the dresser. The third drawer contained soft bras, matching underwear, and teddies. She took the chance that the powder blue bra that barely covered her nipples and the matching lace thong were items Stefano had chosen for her.

The silence stretched, wearing on her nerves. Those little balls inside her had vibrated the entire time she scurried around her room, washing herself and dressing as quickly as she could. The washing seemed pointless now. She could smell the musky evidence of her desire that the balls didn't let wane.

If he didn't say something soon, she was going to die.

“Stand up, Sammy.”

She rose.

“Turn around, honey. Let me see all of you.”

Sammy obeyed, turning as slowly, sensuously, and gracefully as she could. This was more than just an inspection. This was a dance meant to entice him into action.

When she faced him again, the flame of his desire left his face looking sharp and hungry. He beckoned her closer.

“Spread your legs, Sammy. Let me have the Smart Balls.”

He held his hand under her pussy, just out of reach. She entertained a brief vision of lowering her body and grinding against it. Breathing deeply, she closed her eyes and concentrated. She had been wearing them for a half hour by her calculation. They were a pain in the ass to keep from slipping and sliding, but it was more difficult to release them than she thought it would be.

Without too much of a wait, they fell from her body into his hand. He held them out in front of him, studying them for a reason unfathomable to Samantha. Then he lifted them to his mouth and popped them both inside. She watched his cheeks bulge and hollow as he moved them around, sucking them clean. He closed his eyes, appearing to savor the flavors. After far too long, one emerged from between his lush lips. The other followed in short order. He set them on the round table next to the chair that Sam had failed to notice until that moment.

“Come sit on my lap, Sammy. I want a kiss.”

She slid onto his lap. His arms opened to welcome her, and he held her close. She stared at his lips for a full second before she realized he expected her to kiss him. Only too glad to comply, she bent her head and brushed her lips against his, feathering across them in a teasing caress. She wondered how much he would let her get away with before he threw her to the bed, spanked her ass, and rode her hard.

The myriad punishments presenting themselves destroyed her panties. It also ruined any plans she had for teasing him to frenzy. She was losing control of her desires. Her tongue wanted to be inside his mouth, tasting and licking until they were both breathless.

He opened to her. One hand twined in the thick mass of her hair and the other slid up the inside of her thigh. She parted for him. There was no way she would even consider denying him access to what was his.

He played with her, running his knuckle over the drenched panties and teasing her sensitive mound. While she wasn't shaven, she had trimmed it short. All sensations there intensified. She moaned, and he captured the vibration in his mouth. Possession of the kiss reversed. Stefano was master.

As if he sensed the moment of her surrender, he gently pulled aside the crotch to her thong. His long, thick fingers parted her lips. Sammy let her legs fall open to give him full access. He circled her clit with his thumb while two fingers explored the inside of her sopping channel.

Sammy thrust toward his hand, wanting him harder and faster. Belatedly, she hoped he wouldn't pull away as punishment for her wantonness.

She moaned as he did exactly what she wanted. Pressure built low in her abdomen until it burst. Pleasant relief washed through her bloodstream.

He patted her on the hip. "Get up, Sammy."

Sam jumped to her feet, stumbling because her knees were weak and her legs were shaky. Stefano caught her easily. He didn't release her until she regained her balance.

"I'm sorry," she said, the words rushing from her mouth.

"That's okay." He smiled and pressed a kiss to her forehead. "I'd rather you didn't break your ankle."

The apology hadn't been for her lack of coordination. That was his fault, anyway. She risked direct eye contact. "I meant for coming without permission."

He tugged at the tie holding his robe together. The soft silk parted, whispering promises. She searched his expression for evidence he was disappointed or upset, but she found only arrogance and hunger.

Taking her hand, he led her to the bed. With the roll of his shoulders, he released the silk and let it slide to the floor.

Sam watched as he settled in the center of the bed, reclining back on the pillows. He put one hand under his head and gazed at her, his eyes heavy-lidded with naked desire. He held his other hand out to Samantha. “C’mere, Sammy. I want you to touch me.”

Kneeling on the bed next to him, she started with her hands on his chest. He was warm and hard under her fingertips. His skin was like the silk he so carelessly dropped to the floor. Sammy savored the feel of him. His muscles jumped and flexed. The hitch in his breathing told her that he liked what she was doing.

She expanded the area of her exploration, running her hands along his arms and legs. When she nudged his hip, he turned over to let her access his back. He groaned when she added her lips. “God, Sammy. I love the way you use your mouth.”

This was different from the way she thought he would be. Their first time together, Stefano had been the rougher of the pair. Now he reveled in the gentleness of this encounter. She added her tongue to her arsenal. Stefano held out for far longer than the groans and gasps coming from him indicated he’d be able to withstand her onslaught.

When he turned and grabbed her arms to draw her closer, he was tender, almost reverent in the way he handled her. His fingertips glided over her flesh, spreading more than desire through her body. Her lingerie fell away, and he continued caressing her with his hands and his lips until she lay beneath him, trembling with need and with the enormity of the moment.

Stefano was making love to her. Samantha hadn’t expected this, but she couldn’t find strength or reason to refuse this from him. He didn’t say the words, showing her with actions only. He slid inside her, dominant only in his control of the situation. In all other respects, they were equals, each giving as much as they took.

He held her hands as they raced toward the ultimate climax. Fingers entwined and eyes locked together, Sam and Stef fell over the precipice together.

Afterward, he held her close and stroked her hair.

He broke the silence much too soon. His hand stilled in her hair, mid-stroke. “Lex will be up soon. I need to prepare you for him.”

It was the last thing Samantha expected him to say. After the morning they spent together, after his declaration of...Well, he hadn’t actually declared anything.

Emotions churned inside Samantha. It seemed to her that she and Stefano had taken their relationship to the next level. Where, exactly, did that leave her with Alexei? She hadn’t walked on the beach with him. She hadn’t discussed art or shown him her website. He hadn’t made love to her.

Stefano rolled to the edge of the bed, snagged his robe, and put it on. He faced Sammy as he finished securing the belt. “Time to get up, honey. We’re going to dress you up pretty for Lex.”

His dark blue eyes were unreadable. Samantha rose from bed without his assistance, her emotions in turmoil. Either she successfully hid it or he chose not to see it, but Stefano didn’t react to her uncertainty.

She followed him to her door, stopping suddenly when he turned and paused at the threshold.

“Go clean yourself off. Is it all right if I come in to dress you, or would you prefer to meet me back in my room?”

Sam studied his fathomless eyes. Even when he dominated her, his eyes had always retained a hint of something—hardness, humor, surprise, *something*. “Who are you right now?”

One brow lifted. “What do you mean?”

“I mean that you’re not acting like yourself. Did I do something wrong?”

Stefano crushed her in his arms and kissed her forehead. “No, honey, you did everything right. I screwed up.”

Samantha was glad he held her so tightly against his chest. She didn't want him to see the way his admission hurt, but she couldn't stop the jerking of her body. It was a natural reaction to rejection.

He loosened his hold, but he didn't release her. Now there was something in his eyes when he looked at her. She wrenched free of his hold, wanting his sorrow and his regret as much as she wanted his rejection.

"Just tell me what I should wear for Alexei. I'm not a doll. I can dress myself." She wished she wasn't naked at that moment. However, it didn't stop her from standing proud and tall, and it didn't make her hide the fury roiling through her veins.

His jaw dropped and his lips moved as if he hoped to stumble on the right response.

"Never mind. I think I can figure out what he would like." One step put her inside the room they had given to her. As she slammed the door in his face, she wondered if he would rethink the idea that this was her sanctuary and he couldn't enter without permission.

She jerked the knob to turn on the water, not caring that it was cold. The icy temperature helped to jolt her away from hurt and resentment. She couldn't take this to Alexei. This was between her and Stefano. It wasn't fair to punish Alexei for something Stefano did.

Alexei deserved her best. He had been everything in a lover and in a Dom she could want. She would be everything in a lover and in a sub he wanted.

The soft knock on her door could only be Stefano. She opened it slowly in case Alexei had awakened and sought her out.

Nope. It was Stefano, dressed in slacks, a white shirt, and a tie. He was missing only a jacket. She shook herself away from admiring the way he filled out a suit. Stefano held out a box. Samantha recognized the box that held the Smart Balls, but she focused on the regret in his eyes.

"Sammy, please let me explain."

She didn't slam the door in his face. She wasn't sure if she wanted to hear what he had to say. Then Alexei's voice whispered in her head, repeating snippets of conversation about open and honest communication. Stefano had also echoed that idea.

Her nod was curt.

"Can I come in?"

She repeated the movement. Two steps put him inside far enough for her to close the door. He didn't stray too far into the room.

"Look, I'm sorry. I should have talked to Alexei before I said anything to you. I mean...I didn't expect...Sammy, you're special."

He shoved his hands in his pockets and looked at the floor. Samantha didn't move. These were break up words. She waited for him to continue.

"I mean, I always knew you were special. That's why I wanted to be with you. That's why I hounded people for your phone number until I got it. I didn't expect to feel this way about you, not so soon. I thought I would have time to discuss it with Lex first. We agreed that if either of us developed deeper feelings for you, we would talk about it and decide what to do."

Sam stared at him. He fidgeted, a nervous movement out of sorts with the suit he wore and the confidence that usually coated him like a second skin.

"Let me get this straight. You were going to discuss this with Alexei to decide what to do with me. Was I even considered for having a vote in my future?"

He smiled that grin that crooked a little higher on the right side. "Sammy, the final decision is always yours. But he's my brother and my best friend. I owe it to him to be honest. What if he also has feelings for you?"

Reality slammed her and it wasn't the nice kind. Society might look away when a woman engaged in casual sexual contact with two men, but it would not countenance them if they wanted more together. Look at how she chickened out when telling her mother about them.

Samantha was very close to both of her parents. The idea of fighting with them, of disappointing them, of doing something they couldn't tolerate, of not having them in her life, that idea terrified her.

"Would you...would you not have told me anything if Alexei didn't approve?"

Stefano shook his head. "I wouldn't have kept this from you, Sammy. Secrets are destructive in a relationship. I don't want to blindside him. I know he'll want to keep seeing you, but I don't know his exact feelings. Maybe he's already fallen for you, or maybe it'll take him a little while to realize he has feelings for you. I don't know."

Or maybe he would never develop the same kind of feelings for her. The thought made her chest ache, but she wasn't sure exactly why.

"You want me to keep this from Alexei until you've had a chance to talk to him."

Stefano nodded. "I don't like not telling him, but I think we owe this to him. I'll talk to him as soon as you leave tomorrow."

"All right." She didn't want Lex to be hurt. She didn't want to be the cause of that hurt, and she didn't want to come between them.

He brushed a kiss across her cheek, but that was all the contact he chanced. Backing away, he gestured toward the white, painted chest of drawers. "Can I dress you, Sammy?"

She followed him to the other side of the room and peered into the drawer he opened. He lifted out a set of tangled leather straps. Shaking them out caused a torso shape to form. Stefano held it at arm's length, turning it around until he found what he wanted to find.

"Step into it here," he said, indicating what Samantha could now see were openings for legs.

She did, and he pulled the straps up her body. The feel of the leather scraping her skin sent pleasant shivers through her body. Weakness, the kind that had gripped her the night before when Alexei had dressed her, invaded her shoulders, hips, and knees.

Stefano arranged the straps so that they ran in flat lines parallel to the slit of her pussy. Those straps connected in the front and back with bands that encircled her waist. More straps circled above and below her breasts. A strap ran between her breasts, and two more ran on either side, forming a box around the round globes that were growing heavy with need.

The straps between her legs ran all the way up in back, becoming shoulder straps once they reached high enough. Any movements she made with her shoulders pulled on the straps teasing just outside of where she wanted some friction.

Next, Stefano buckled thick leather cuffs around her wrists, thighs, and ankles. His clinical manner did nothing to quell the rising desire and the sense of peace that permeated her body. Finally, he put a high, stiff collar around her throat. The padding of the smooth, stiff plastic softened the constricting feeling the leather collar had made her feel. There were no rings to hook anything to it, but it forced her to stand with her shoulders pushed back, her chest open, and her neck held high.

“It’s a posture collar,” Stefano said. He slipped his smallest finger between the collar and her throat. It barely fit. “Can you breathe?”

Samantha tried nodding, but vertical movement was impossible. “Yes.”

Her words drew his gaze to her lips. The tip of his tongue darted out, moistening his own. For a second, Samantha thought he was going to kiss her. Then the indecisiveness vanished. He stepped back.

“Turn around slowly, Sammy. Let me see you.”

She did as he asked. The outfit hid nothing. Her breasts and her pussy were exposed to his view and to his touch. The straps served only to emphasize that nothing touched her where it would do any good. It teased and tantalized. Samantha wondered what Alexei had in store for her. He was certainly a master when it came to teasing.

When she again faced Stefano, the box he had been holding when he entered the room was once again in his hands. He opened it and

dumped the balls into his palm. “When you lose these, Lex will punish you”

As he spoke, he reached between her legs and inserted the balls, one after another. The way the straps between her legs were situated, they forced Sam to stand with her feet spread shoulder-width apart, providing all the access he needed. She gripped his shoulders for support, wrinkling his dress shirt under her palms.

“When?” He seemed to expect her to fail. Maybe he was right. Her voice was already quivery.

“You are forbidden from telling him they’re there until he asks or until he tries to put something else there.”

Stefano didn’t seem interested in her reaction to his edict. Given the tumult of sensations and emotions whirling through her, Sam wasn’t sure what kind of reaction she was showing.

“Isn’t that not fair to me?”

He smacked a kiss on her cheek. “That’s the price of having two Masters, Sammy. Some additional torture for you is a test for him. Will he notice your discomfort? Will he address your needs in time?”

She exhaled her ire over being an instrument in their sibling rivalry. “Stefano, this isn’t fair to Alexei or to me.”

“I know.” He grinned as he twisted and pulled at one of her nipples. “It’ll be interesting to see you at dinner tonight.”

Sam wanted to ask him where he would be for the afternoon, but all thoughts fled as he stretched her nipple so far she gasped and moved toward him to relieve the pressure. He pulled something from his pocket that looked like tweezers on a chain. Keeping her nipple taut, he placed the pincers on either side. He released the fingers on her abused nipple and used them to slide a tiny hoop up the tweezers. He moved it by degrees, pausing to gauge her reaction.

When he and Alexei had whipped her, the sharp sting dissipated into a general, pleasurable tingle. The nipple clamps provided a completely different sensation. It was the sharp pinch of when he

sucked hard multiplied by a thousand. There was no variation of pressure, no relief to be found by arching or wiggling.

Pain and pleasure combined to send so many sensations winging through her body that Samantha found it impossible to try to rationalize the complex feelings.

Stefano secured the clamp on the other end of the chain to the other nipple. The chain linking them wasn't made from tiny, delicate links. It was thick and heavy, dragging at her nipples. The cool links hung down to brush the skin between the leather straps of her bodice. The light touch of the links served in direct contrast to the constant ache that reduced her breasts to nothing more significant than her nipples.

She whimpered.

Stefano stood back. "Where are we, Sammy?"

It took her a second to focus on his question and even longer for her to figure out how to answer. Yes, this hurt. This was different from the things they had done to her so far. Part of her understood that Stefano was upping the ante. The bondage, the submissive poses, and the whipping were merely the beginning. The nipple clamps were a challenge. Used together with the Smart Balls, it required her to keep focused when she wanted nothing more than to slip into that blissful place that hovered just out of reach.

A hand tangled in the hair at the base of her neck, tilting her face upward. Stefano's face swam into view. She hadn't realized how narrow her vision had become. "Sammy?"

She wanted him to kiss her, to lay her down on the mattress and thrust into her until they both came, screaming out their climaxes.

"Green, Sir." The title came automatically. It was true and right. It defined who he was to her at that moment.

He released her hair, but he wasn't finished with her. Those talented fingers parted the lips of her pussy. Sammy sighed and opened to him, widening her stance as much as she dared with those damn Smart Balls inside. Her vaginal walls clenched around them as

they vibrated in response to her tiny movement. They moved faster when Stefano touched her.

Stefano's hand didn't stay there nearly long enough. He pulled her clitoris, subjecting it to the same twisting and pulling as her nipples. The chain dangling from her breasts was pulled downward. Sammy tried to glance down, but the stiff collar prevented her from seeing what he was doing.

When another clamp tightened on her clit, she knew why the chain seemed to have a pendant. Samantha whimpered as he connected her throbbing, weeping clit to her nipples. Now the slightest movement anywhere in her body sent waves of pleasure and pain to mingle and form alliances.

Her lips were dry and her throat was parched. "Why didn't you do this to me for you?" The question both tumbled and stuttered from her tongue.

Stef straightened to standing, the wry ghost of a smile lighting his face. Desire clouded his eyes. "We put you through a lot last night, Sammy. And we're going to put you through a lot again today. When I saw you standing on the beach this morning with the wind blowing your hair and your dress plastered to your body, I just...I wanted to talk to you. I wanted to spend time with you that didn't involve sex or submission. I don't regret the way we spent the morning, honey, and I'll more than make up for it tonight."

Sam's breath caught. He had jettisoned his plans for her that morning in order to walk on the beach and look at her website. She didn't know what to say. The bindings and clamps on her body prevented her mind from fully analyzing what he said and how he said it. She knew she would think of this later, when she was lying alone in her bed thinking of the way it felt to have his arms around her while watching the sun rise.

"This, my dear, is how Alexei asked me to dress you before I sent you to him." He tweaked a nipple. "His door is past mine at the end of the hall."

Samantha followed Stefano into the hall. “Should I knock?”
“No, honey. Make him wake up with a smile on his face.”

Chapter 13

The slamming of the door had awoken Alexei, not that he could have slept for much longer. Though his head hadn't hit the pillow until almost four in the morning, thoughts of Samantha doing her best to buck and grind against the fucking machine filled his dreams. The juices flowing from her pussy had been so thick he hadn't needed to stop it and apply more lubricant. No matter how badly he wanted to be that machine, she needed to be taught a lesson. He knew the moment she submitted to that machine, and that machine was the embodiment of his will.

He woke with a painful hard-on and the hope that Stefano hadn't said something stupid to piss off Samantha enough to make her leave. Stef could be stupid; there was no doubt about it. He often spoke without thinking, almost like he was verbally brainstorming.

And Samantha was quite a woman. She had spirit. He liked that in a woman. Alexei wondered what Stefano had done, but he wouldn't ask. What he did with Samantha during his time with her was none of Alexei's business, just as what Alexei did with her was none of Stefano's concern.

They would wait until she left to compare notes.

He didn't hear voices raised in anger, so he headed to the bathroom. A little while later, the sound of the doorknob turning and of light footsteps brought him back into the bedroom. There hadn't been enough time for him to finish dressing. He wore jeans only, and those weren't buttoned.

The sight that greeted him stole his breath and his ability to move. The drapes were still drawn, so the room was semi-dark. Sunlight

streamed in around the edges. Alexei never minded the light. He could sleep under almost any conditions.

Slivers of sunlight filtered across Samantha, illuminating her golden hair and making her skin seem to glow. She was outfitted exactly the way he had asked Stefano to dress her. Though she was turned away from him and her arm was in the way, he knew she wore the nipple and clit clamps. His jeans grew uncomfortably tight as the erection he just relieved demanded the real thing.

She crept toward the bed. He realized her eyes hadn't adjusted to the lack of light. Memories of the way she woke him in the hotel room surfaced.

He adjusted himself. "Are you looking for me?"

With a squeak, she jumped and turned to face him. He hadn't meant to scare her, but he couldn't keep the grin from his lips.

Two loud thumps sounded on the bare wood of his floor. Samantha's shock morphed to frustration as she bent her head to try to look down. The stiff posture collar around her neck prevented that from happening. "Fuck!"

Alexei studied the floor between her legs and realized what happened. A gift from Stefano. The asshole had made her walk around with Smart Balls inside her vagina. The balls were supposed to be a parting gift, something she would take home with her and wear during designated times. The vibrations would tease her and the exercises would work the muscles in her vaginal walls, not that she lacked in that department. However, the more muscle control she had, the more she would enjoy future torture sessions.

They weren't meant to be worn for long periods of time. He wondered if this was the reason the door had slammed.

She began with a large gesture, but she checked her movements immediately. Stefano wouldn't have tightened the clamps too much, but she wasn't used to wearing them. She would be extra-sensitive. "I'm sorry. That wasn't supposed to happen. You startled me. I meant to wake you up in a much nicer way."

Her last sentiment made up for the fact she blamed him for losing her balls. Alexei laughed at the situation and his thought. It was a short chuckle. She was in full bondage gear and she had forgotten her manners. Samantha had earned a punishment. He would make sure it left her begging for more.

“Sir,” he said, prompting her to remember how to address him. He sauntered across the room, closing the empty space between them. He stopped just short of the point of physical contact. “You’re sorry, Sir.”

She swallowed and licked her lips, all the while staring at his. He knew she wanted to be kissed, but he was going to make her ask for it. Today was the day Samantha would admit what she wanted. She would own it, ask for it, beg for it.

“I’m sorry, Sir. Will you punish me?”

Alexei nodded. “Pick them up and hand them to me.”

She bent slowly, gingerly stretching her arm down to grasp the evidence of her downfall. The posture collar prevented her from angling her head to direct her aim. A surge of pride brought a smile to Alexei’s face as he watched her deliberate, graceful movements and her perfect posture. He realized she did this on purpose. She maintained elegant poise because she knew he liked it.

He reached down and, with a steadying hand on her elbow, helped her rise.

She smiled up at him, a sparkle lighting her cornflower eyes. “Thank you, Sir.”

Alexei wanted to kiss her. His need to hear her ask for it was still greater. “Clear the bedding. Fold everything neatly and put it on the credenza.” Without waiting to watch, he turned and headed back to the bathroom, where he rinsed the balls and dug out the alcohol wipes. He would rather not punish her for this, but Stefano had obviously warned her it would happen.

Thinking of Stef brought a frown to Alexei’s face. Samantha didn’t have a single mark on her. No redness or soreness indicated that he had done anything with her. He couldn’t imagine Stef passing

up an opportunity to clamp, bind, and whip breasts as ripe and lovely as Samantha's. They were perfect globes with deep pink areolas. They were Stefano's idea of the ideal breasts. He had certainly talked about them enough over the past several weeks.

Had Stefano lost interest in Samantha? Was the strong, beautiful submissive in the next room suffering from neglect? Not for long. Stefano might have failed her, but Alexei would not. He caught a glimpse of his face in the mirror as he rinsed the balls again. His dark brows were drawn together and his eyes were darkly menacing.

It wouldn't be good for Samantha to see him this way. He wasn't angry with her. He was sorely displeased with Stefano, and that wasn't her fault.

He reconfigured his expression before rejoining her in the bedroom.

She had done exactly as he directed. The coverlet and the top sheet were neatly folded. Samantha knelt at attention at the foot of the bed. The black straps crossing her body emphasized her submissiveness. The chain connecting her nipples to her clit pulled at all three of her sensitive nubs. Since her hands were folded neatly behind her neck, each breath she took increased that pressure.

Alexei crossed the room, coming to a stop just out of Samantha's reach. Her eyes, which had been glued to the floor, came up to stare at the place where his jeans were not buttoned. Her pink tongue darted out to moisten those lush, kissable lips.

"Did you have a good morning?" He wasn't supposed to ask, but he couldn't help it. Samantha didn't look as if she'd been satisfied in any way. Her long, blonde hair wasn't puffy from time spent rolling around in bed, and her body bore no marks that she had received pleasure.

But he couldn't miss the catlike grin that pulled her lips into a wide smile, and he couldn't miss the glimmer of satisfaction in her eyes. "Yes, Sir."

“Then why did you slam your door?” Damn! It was another question that overstepped his authority. Well, too bad. A Master was entitled to know these things.

Samantha either recognized his authority, or she didn't mind answering the question. “I got mad at Stefano.”

“Did he punish you for this?” Was that why she was wearing the Smart Balls? It wasn't like Stef to pass off a punishment to anyone else.

“No, Sir.”

“Did he promise to discipline you later?”

“No, Sir.”

Stefano must have been in the wrong. He would never punish Samantha for being angry. Slamming the door would garner a punishment only if she had done it maliciously, like if she had wanted to prolong the fight.

“Are you still mad at Stef?”

“No, Sir. We talked before I came in here.”

Her eyes hadn't left the place where his cock strained against his jeans.

“Would you like me to take care of that for you, Sir?”

Alexei captured the hand that had darted forward to touch him through the soft denim of his jeans. “Stand up, Samantha.” He helped her up, though he knew she didn't need the assistance. “Turn around so I can see all of you.”

She turned slowly, seeming to savor the caress of his gaze on her skin. He was right. No marks decorated her smooth skin. By the time she faced him again, her breaths came faster and her chest was flushed.

He stared at her until she fidgeted.

“Are you going to punish me, Sir?”

“No,” he said. If Stefano hadn't determined a punishment necessary, Alexei wasn't going to impose one. “I'm going to tie you to my bed and torture you until you beg me to fuck you.”

Samantha frowned. "But I lost the Smart Balls."

Alexei reached out and tweaked her nipple. The way her arms would have had to stretch while she removed and folded the bedding would have pulled painfully at her nipples and clit. "I think you've had your punishment."

She nodded in agreement and palpable relief. She hadn't liked the last time he punished her. "Would you like me to lie on the bed?"

He hated that they hadn't touched yet. Screw begging. Alexei was too close to it himself. He placed one hand on her hip and the other behind her neck. She softened, surrendering to her anticipation of his kiss.

She tasted sweet and warm, like star-filled summer nights brimming with the promise of eternity. Her lips parted eagerly, and she kissed him back with unrestrained passion. He liked that she didn't hide it from him. Samantha wasn't a game-player. She was here because she wanted to be with him.

When he ended the kiss, they both trembled with the aftershocks. He ran his hands over her shoulders and down her arms. She was soft and pliant, yet strong and determined to take what she wanted.

"Lie in the center of the bed on your back."

Samantha turned to crawl onto the mattress. It wasn't more than a step away, and for that she was grateful. Lex kissed too well. It took him long enough to get around to it, but she wasn't going to complain. He had never disappointed her in the past. The muscles in her thighs were almost liquid. Through sheer force of will, she stayed on her feet long enough to do as he asked.

He rummaged in an armoire across the room. It was too far from the bed for her to be able to see exactly what he was doing, and the stiff collar around her neck prevented her from the simple, everyday movements for which she was developing a new appreciation.

It didn't matter anyway. As soon as he returned to the bed, he slipped a black blindfold over her eyes. Though he didn't touch her, she felt the subtle magnetism of his body hovering inches from her

own. She didn't speak or move, and she was soon rewarded with another breath-stealing kiss.

"You're a very beautiful woman, Samantha, in so many ways."

The pressure on the mattress next to her disappeared. Sam felt the vibrations of something shaking the bed frame at the four corners. He seemed to be attaching something. As he worked, she wondered if she was allowed to return the sentiment. Could she tell him how attractive she found him? Would it please him to hear the words? She did want to please him, desperately so.

Of the two of them, Alexei was more difficult to read. He hadn't seemed upset or annoyed when she came in the room, but the more he looked at her, the more displeased he had seemed. Her loss of the Smart Balls hadn't seemed to matter to him. Yet, Samantha couldn't identify the exact cause of his upset.

His warm hand wrapped around her calf, lifting her leg. The leather cuff Stefano had buckled to her ankle dropped away. Alexei massaged the muscles up and down her leg with his long, strong fingers before moving it closer to the corner of the bed. Soft velvety material encircled her ankle, and then his hands dropped away. Samantha tested the bond and found it secure.

Alexei repeated this routine with her other leg and with each of her arms. The firm pressure of his touch, the way he came close to her pussy and breasts without ever touching them, and the immutability of the bindings combined so that she dripped with need by the time he finished tying her, spread-eagled, to the bed posts.

He kissed her again, another of those lip adventures that left her limbs weak and her body pliant. His whispered words from the evening before came back to haunt her, and she understood that he was taking another step toward proving his mastery of her body. He demanded more from her than Stefano, and he always had. Samantha understood that he always would.

When he finished, he didn't move away. Though no part of this body touched her, she was acutely aware of just how close he was. If

he lowered himself one inch, his chest would brush her nipples that were already pebbling in anticipation. The clamps didn't keep them hard; they kept a steady pressure that both teased and hurt.

"Where are we, slave?"

His use of that term affected her differently than it had the night before. She didn't know why her psyche had shifted so much, but she didn't mind the word. It was more than a definition of his relationship to her. He used it the same way Stef called her "honey."

"Green, Sir." She had to force the entirety of his title out of her mouth. It came out a lot more sibilant than she intended. Part of her wanted to call him "Master," and part of her railed against it.

He left the bed. "I'm going to start on your right side, centering on your breast."

Samantha wasn't sure whether knowing where he was going to whip her was better than not knowing. He and Stef hadn't told her before. The location of the blows had been as much a part of the surprise as was the sweetness of the pleasure-pain mix.

The first blow landed. The instrument was thick and cylindrical. If her nipple hadn't been clamped, it wouldn't have hurt at all. Her body had acclimated to the pressure of the metal pincers. By the time she had finished clearing the bedding, they were on fire. That fire had faded to numbness by the time Alexei had begun to bind her to the bed.

Now it was back full force, and it let loose anything it might have kept in check before. Alexei didn't wait for her gasp to subside. His blows fell over her breast with regularity, only the angle of his trajectory changing. When the blow came more from the sides, the tendrils of the cylinder came apart, revealing the instrument as a whip. When the whip came straight down on her, they clung together, and the whip acted as a rod.

Sam wasn't sure which sensation she liked more, but she abandoned the thought as the range of the whip widened to include the sensitive areas of her upraised arms. When he moved lower, the

thick leather straps of the outfit blocked the force and the sting of the lash's licks, depriving Samantha of a feeling she craved more than anything else.

He moved down her leg and up the other side. He murmured words to tell her where he was going next, but Samantha was too focused on the fire he lit on every square inch of her body to understand anything. Now both of her breasts were on fire. Her skin tingled with warmth and the anticipation of more to come.

Then the tongues of the lash land on the mound of her pussy. Sam's body shot straight up off the bed, a reaction that surprised her and caused him to stop.

"Where are we, Samantha?"

She didn't hesitate. "Green, Master. Oh, please don't stop!"

"It's going to hurt a lot more with the clamp on, Samantha. Do you want me to remove it?"

Remove it? He hadn't technically whipped her pussy yet. She knew he was going to do it, and she knew she would love the sensations. Removing it wasn't an option. She would prove to herself and to her Master that she could take it.

"No, Sir."

"If you change your mind, call yellow and I'll take it off. Call red and I'll stop."

The softness and affection in his voice caught her off guard. From the first moment she met him, Alexei had been firm and dominant. He wasn't a man with whom many people argued. Sam wouldn't have a problem arguing with him, even though she wasn't sure how he'd take it.

"Yes, Master." Sam bit her lip. She couldn't believe that title slipped out, but it sounded so right. He had mastered her body. She would do anything, say anything to prevent him from stopping.

It took far longer for that next blow to fall than she thought it would. He struck so that the falls fanned out, covering as much surface area as possible. She knew he purposely diluted the force. He

was preparing her to take more. These bits of logic washed through her mind and vanished into the recesses. All that mattered right now was her Master and what he was doing to her.

Alexei's bed was huge. Binding her ankles to each of the posts exposed her completely, pulling her so far apart that her pussy lips couldn't have closed if they wanted. Samantha lost track of the number of times she felt the sting of the lash. She moaned and gasped. She twisted and writhed. She hated when he spread the blows out along her thighs, on her mound, and across her pelvis.

"Come for me, my beautiful slave. Give your Master the ultimate show."

His tone left no room for disagreement or failure. Sam hadn't realized how close she was to orgasm, but the moment he gave the order, she relaxed her body. She surrendered to him completely, screaming out her climax with the very next blow.

Master—his identity had shifted for her—knelt between her legs. His large hands with those long fingers explored every inch of her body. The straps holding her legs in place loosened and fell away. They were pointless anyway. Samantha had no control over her legs anymore. They were weak and useless.

He touched her in all the usual places, but he didn't stop there. He caressed her ears. He touched every inch of her face. His fingers slid beneath the mask to outline her eyelids. His possessive touch traveled down, finding the ticklish places in her armpits and the cleft at the top of her butt crack.

When at last he lifted her hips and rammed his hard cock into her, Samantha knew that every cell in her body had been marked, branded by her Master. Three times, he commanded her to come. Three times, she came for him.

He collapsed on top of her, and she wanted for him to never move.

A little later, he did stir. Samantha moaned when he lifted his weight from her.

"Where are we, slave?"

Thrills ran through her. This was more than she had been able to wring from any other lover. She thought he might be finished with her, but all doubt fled with his question.

“Green, Master.” She wished the blindfold was gone, but other than that, she was good for another round.

His chuckle vibrated through his chest, tickling her nipples. Gentle fingers eased the clamps away from her nipples and her clit. Sam hadn’t realized how sore they were until his tongue traced the paths, soothing away the ache.

“Sore?”

Samantha’s laugh startled even herself. It tinkled forth from deep inside, a truly happy bit of laughter that had been missing from her life for some time. “If I’m not sore after being with you, then it wasn’t a good night.”

“Afternoon.”

“Whatever.”

She whimpered when he touched her clit. The bed dipped as he shifted his weight. He didn’t bother to avoid touching her this time. His chest and his side rubbed against her as he reached toward her hands. The bindings on her wrists fell away, and then he eased off her blindfold. She clapped her hands over her eyes to shut out the painful glare. It took her a minute to adjust to the bright afternoon sunlight streaming through his gossamer curtains enough to take her hands away.

When his face finally came into focus, she found his grin cocky and his eyes soft. “I’m hungry, Samantha. I propose we take a little break and get us both something to eat. Then I’m going to bring you back here and show you what a Master does for his slave when she behaves as well as you’ve behaved today.”

Now that she wasn’t tied up and the afterglow of everything he did to her was fading, the titles of Master and slave didn’t sit well with Samantha. Sitting up, she crossed her arms over her breasts. The

leather straps that made up the totality of her outfit exposed her more than she liked. It hadn't bothered her before, but it bothered her now.

Alexei hadn't waited for her agreement. He had finished his proposal with a grin and then he had disappeared into the bathroom. Samantha heard the sounds of running water. Her hands went to the collar encircling her throat. It wasn't like the collar Alexei had wrapped around her neck the night before. It was taller and made from PVC. It didn't breathe and it didn't allow for movement. Thought she hadn't noticed it much for the past several hours, it stuck to her skin uncomfortably.

She took it off.

She did the same with the ridiculous outfit in which Stefano had dressed her, dropping it all to the floor next to the bed.

How could two little words, one of which she uttered, completely change her perspective?

Samantha opened the third drawer of Alexei's chest of drawers, reasoning that underwear and socks probably occupied the top two. Neatly folded stacks of shirts occupied that space. Before she could talk herself out of it, she snagged one and drew it over her head. It was big on her, but not too big that it drooped from her shoulders. The hem fell to mid-thigh, the same length as the sundress she had worn for two days.

The steady patter of water sounded through the open bathroom door.

"Samantha, come and get cleaned up."

She stared at the opening, knowing exactly what he meant. Yes, she wanted to jump under the spray of warm water and wash the scent of sex from her body. However, she knew he intended to be the one to do the washing.

Snatching the collar and outfit from the floor, she did her best to fold them neatly. They ended up in a stack next to the bedding on the credenza. At the last minute, she shucked the shirt and threw it at the foot of his bed.

When she appeared in the doorway to the bathroom, she found him waiting. Towels, brushes, and soaps lined the countertop, all set out with methodical precision. He lifted a hairbrush. “Come here, Samantha.”

A glimpse in the mirror behind him showed a woman who had been well-loved. Her skin was flushed, as much from the whip as from his firm, possessive touch. Enjoying his attentions didn’t shame her. Calling him “Master” did. Either way, her long hair was a rat’s nest from all the writhing and arching.

She did as he asked, presenting her back to him so that he could brush her hair. His motions were slow and reverent. He smoothed a hand over her hair with each stroke of the brush. He worked through the snarls with infinite patience. His stomach growled.

“I can finish this if you want to eat.”

He dropped a kiss to her shoulder. “This is hard for you, isn’t it?”

She snorted. “I’ve been brushing my own hair and taking showers since I was five.” She had been forced to share a shower with her older sister until she was eight and Amanda was nine. She was so glad when that custom fell by the wayside. The stall wasn’t big enough for both of them to maneuver.

Alexei’s shower was significantly larger. Steam poured from over the top of the translucent doors, coating them in a way that would distort the image of the body inside.

“I meant letting someone else take care of you. You’re very independent, Samantha. I like that, but you’re going to have to get used to this. A Master always takes care of his slave.”

She turned then, stepping out of his reach. Peering into the mirror, she lifted her hair and twisted it into a knot. Alexei handed her a hair tie.

When she tried to move past him to enter the shower, he grabbed her arm. “You’re awfully brusque for someone who just got thoroughly laid.”

He wasn't acting very much like a Master. Sam didn't know what disconcerted her the most. "I'm hungry."

"I'm hungry. You're angry."

She lifted her eyes to meet his. "Maybe your low blood sugar is causing you to over-react a little bit."

He released her arm, but the wary expression on his face didn't fade. "Wear my shirt when you finish, and then head to the kitchen. You can help me get dinner ready."

So he had seen her foray into his drawers. Sam watched him for signs that he was upset about her invasion of his privacy, but she saw none. She jerked her head in a vague semblance of a nod.

When she joined him in the kitchen, she wasn't any calmer. The shower had done nothing to help ease her mind. The sight of him standing in front of the stove wearing only boxer shorts made the muscles in her pussy clench. He stirred something in a pot, grabbed an apple from the counter, and took a big bite. How could that tableau make her horny, especially after the way they spent afternoon?

She desperately wished Stefano was around. "Where's Stef?"

Alexei glanced up from the stove to check the clock. "On his way home from work. He'll be here soon. I'm making soup. Rosa usually makes extra food on Friday so we eat well on the weekend, but we gave her yesterday off."

"Rosa?"

He stirred some more and took another bite of his apple. "Housekeeper, cook, general nag, maternal figure. We stole her from our dad when we moved here. She likes the warmer weather and the fact that we gave her an entire guest house."

Oh, yes. She remembered Stefano mentioning the housekeeper. "What can I do to help?"

He pointed to a cupboard. "Why don't you set the table? Stef likes milk with this. I prefer water. There's pop and lemonade in the refrigerator. I'm going to ask you not to have anything with alcohol in it."

She hadn't planned on it, but now that he prohibited it, she developed a craving for a Mai Tai. "Why?"

"Because Stef will be home soon, and we're not finished with you. He didn't take you to the playroom this morning, so I'm assuming he'll want to start there tonight."

Relief washed through her at the assurance that Stefano would soon be home and she wouldn't be alone with Alexei anymore. She had opened the cupboard and was reaching for the soup bowls when Alexei's arms came down on either side of her. She started and raised her hand to her heart, as if that motion could calm the racing.

"Samantha, what's wrong?"

She shook her head and resisted the urge to lean her body into his. She knew his arms would come around her and he would smooth back her hair and kiss her temple. Refuge was inches away, but the cost was too high.

"Nothing."

He exhaled hard, a stream of air hissing against her bare neck. She had left her hair up after the short shower. "Honesty and clear, open communication is important between us if this is going to go anywhere. A slave can tell her Master anything, Samantha."

She stiffened at his casual use of those terms.

He turned her around. His cage was much more intimate face-to-face. "You called me 'Master,' Samantha. It's an honor I earned, just as you earned the title of 'slave.'"

Her chin shot up, a stubborn set to it. "Earned? I told you I didn't like those terms."

"Is that what's bothering you?"

"Yes, I..." She trailed off, not sure how much she wanted to explain.

"You're angry at yourself for using a term you didn't mean."

If she hadn't meant it, she wouldn't be so angry. "No, not exactly." She pushed at his arm, wanting out of her cage. He lifted it, releasing her without hesitation. Sam crossed the kitchen. It wasn't

large, considering the size of the rest of the house, yet it could easily swallow half of her apartment.

She leaned against a counter and crossed her hands over her chest. He followed suit, leaning in the place she just vacated. He didn't say anything, but his eyes asked a million questions. Samantha responded to his bewilderment.

"I promised myself that I wouldn't get that deeply involved in this. I like you, Alexei. I think we're very compatible in bed and I even had fun with you not in bed. But I know what those titles mean, and I know that kind of thing isn't for me."

He didn't move and his expression didn't change. "What do those titles mean?"

"If I call you 'Master,' it means you own me. You'll tell me what to wear, where I can and can't go, what I can and can't do, maybe you'll insist on choosing my friends and when I can see my family—" She stopped at the evidence of anger growing ruddy on his neck and face.

"I am not a bastard like my father." Alexei's statement was quiet, all the better to deliver the venom. "Those titles don't mean that to me, Samantha. A Master cares for his slave. He puts her above everyone and everything in his life. She's the reason he gets up in the morning. Her smile, her happiness drives his every action. I might insist on your submission and obedience in bed, and yes, I might limit your actions, but no more than one partner inevitably does to the other in a relationship."

He took two steps closer. "But you, my slave, also limit my actions. There is nothing I would prohibit you from doing that you wouldn't prohibit me from doing. There is nothing I would ask of you that you wouldn't also ask of me."

Though he was still six feet away, Samantha felt oddly crowded. "I didn't ask anything of you, Alexei."

"You did when you gave me a title, Samantha. I insisted you call me 'Sir' because that's basic respect in a D/s relationship. You

escalated it by calling me ‘Master.’ If you don’t think I’m worthy of that title, then take it back. Talk to me about it, but don’t pout. Don’t pull away from me, and don’t pretend that something momentous didn’t happen between us.”

She shook her head. “You asked me for this. You insisted on it. You whispered suggestions in my ear last night when I was vulnerable. Then today, you stripped me of all control. I didn’t know what I was doing.”

“So, you’re taking it back.” He didn’t deny his tactics. He didn’t try to justify his behavior. He didn’t hide the hurt in his voice.

Tears pricked behind her eyes. She shook her head and braced her hands on the counter pressing into her butt. She didn’t know what the hell she was doing.

Alexei closed the distance. He grasped her chin between his thumb and forefinger, gently urging her to look at him.

Samantha tried to control raging emotions she could neither identify nor corral.

“Samantha, I would never limit your actions beyond the reasonable. I would never tell you who you can and can’t be friends with, and I would never, ever limit your access to your family. I might suggest things for you to wear, and I might buy clothes for you, but I wouldn’t dictate your outfits outside of the bedroom or playroom. I’m Dominant, not controlling. There is a difference.”

She studied his face, his eyes, and the tension in his shoulders. He was telling the truth. Still, he did leave some doors wide open. “How would you limit my actions?”

“I would insist on daily contact. I prefer to see you, but you live too far away. A phone call, email, or text ought to do it. I would prohibit you from seeing other people. But that goes both ways, Samantha.”

His voice washed over her, an unexpected caress just when she needed his tenderness the most. Like Stefano, Alexei was asking her for a relationship. She lifted a hand to his cheek, ignoring the way her

fingers trembled. “You can’t expect me to use that title when other people are around, Lex. And I don’t want you calling me your slave when we’re not alone. And you really need to have a conversation with Stef.”

Alexei smiled. “I know. We jumped the gun a little on this, but I don’t regret it. I can’t let you walk out of here tomorrow without the promise of seeing you again, of being part of your life.”

His lips devoured hers, laying claim to everything he mentioned and a whole lot that he didn’t.

Chapter 14

The weekend passed too quickly for Samantha. By the time she arrived home Sunday night, she was dead on her feet. A month's worth of chores and an urgent voicemail from Elizabeth awaited. She called to assure Alexei and Stefano that she was safely home, and then she fell into her bed and slept well past sunrise.

Those men of hers knew how to leave her sweetly exhausted and pleasantly sore. At the airport, Stefano had stuffed the nipple clamps into her luggage. He had brushed a kiss onto her cheek and told her a package would be delivered later in the week.

True to his word, Alexei called every day. He asked about her travels and they compared notes on places they had both visited. Stefano also called daily. He asked about her art and then what she was wearing. Samantha learned that it was best to be alone when Stefano called. He invariably wanted to have phone sex.

By the time Ellen called to insist she come over Wednesday evening, Samantha had caught up on her house cleaning and on her important bills. Some of them were going to be late, but she couldn't help that. Her two weeks of vacation in August hadn't included paid time off, and her bank account was looking anorexic. Since her sister-in-law, Sabrina, had supplied a cell phone prepaid for two years as part of her gift to Sam for being a bridesmaid, Sam didn't worry too much about the fact that her land line was turned off. She couldn't make the money materialize out of thin air, and the five hundred Jonas had slipped her earlier that month had gone toward rent.

"I can't, Elle. I'm knee deep in paint." The Keyes agency wanted her to leave the following Tuesday to check out a new resort in Idaho.

Sam didn't see it as a viable option, but she was looking forward to watching the sun rise and set there.

She sat down at the table in her tiny kitchenette and closed her eyes as a wave of longing washed through her system. Thinking about the sunrise had her thinking that it was nearly time for Stefano's daily sex call. She missed the sound of his voice and the way Alexei's hands felt as they moved across her skin. She missed waking up sandwiched between their firm, cuddly bodies. She missed the safety, the warmth, the security, and the way her soul felt utterly at peace when she was with them.

Ellen's husky laugh sounded on the other end. "They inspired you that much, did they?"

Samantha bristled. The Morozov brothers hadn't provided inspiration. The sunrise in her head that was slowly taking shape on canvas was the one she watched with Stefano. She wanted to communicate not only the richness and beauty of the natural event, but the simple affection that had developed between them. It would contain none of the complications sure to arise when her friends and family found out she was falling for two men. They might be indulgent about fulfilling fantasies of having sex with two men, but they wouldn't be singing the same song when it came time to reveal that she wanted them both in her life.

She could imagine the conversation with her parents in vivid detail. Her father, always a reasonable man, would stare at her as if he'd never seen her before. His hazel eyes would darken to brown, and he wouldn't have to say anything else. His expression alone would let her know how much she'd disappointed him this time.

Her mother wouldn't be so quiet. The recriminating questions would come, rolling from her tongue without waiting for answers. Samantha used to feel sorry for Jonas when Alyssa had done this to him every time he made a major decision with which she found fault. Sabrina might not have berated Jonas for leaving her that one time, but there hadn't been a need. Alyssa had more than addressed that

method of breaking him down. Of course, Jonas had just scowled and left the room each time their mother had started in on him.

Samantha wasn't like that. The optimist in her wouldn't allow her to leave until she talked some sense into her parents, and her desperate need for acceptance and approval would keep her there until she made them understand what Alexei and Stefano meant to her.

"Hello? Sam?" Ellen's questions echoed inside Samantha's head.

"I'm here, Ellen. Listen, I need to finish this painting before I leave on my next job."

Ellen must have heard the panic that underlined the determination in Samantha's voice. "Okay, honey, I'll leave you alone after you answer one question."

Sam closed her eyes. Ellen's questions were always too perceptive.

"Have you called the gallery owner that Sabrina told you to call?"

That wasn't the question she expected. Sam's eyes popped open. "Why would I do that?"

A stream of air issued from Ellen's end. "Sammy, Sabrina went through a lot of trouble to get you heard. She gave you that number more than a month ago."

Samantha sighed. Stefano had said pretty much the same thing. "Ellen, I don't want a pity showing."

"You won't get one, either." Ellen's tone gentled. "Sabrina's name gets the coordinator to take your call, Sammy. The rest is up to you. I'm starting to think you aren't serious about your art. Why else would you pass up this opportunity?"

Ellen's method of delivering guilt was far more effective because of what Stefano had said.

"Fine," she said through gritted teeth. "I'll call."

"Right now."

Calling right then turned out to not matter. The gallery owner, Treva Andreas, wasn't in her office. The receptionist assured Sam that she'd pass along the message.

Samantha pushed that dead-end to the back of her mind. She knew “out-of-office” meant that the owner didn’t want to be bothered by Sam’s plea for an appointment. Instead, she turned her mind to her work and lost herself in the creative process. After a long time, she became aware of a percussion rhythm that didn’t sync with what was coming from her headphones.

She tapped the pause button and listened for a minute, rubbing eyes that had gone bleary from the hours of concentration. The sound repeated. Someone was knocking at her door. Damn Ellen was probably acting like a mother hen again. If she brought dinner, Sam might overlook Ellen’s overbearing manner this time.

Who was she kidding? She always overlooked Ellen’s overbearing manner.

Now she knew why. It was the submissive response to a powerful Dom.

Sam whipped open the door and, without looking at her visitor, headed back to the part of her apartment she used for a studio. Most people called it a living room. “I called her, okay? Stop hounding me and tell me you brought something to eat.”

The door closed with a soft click. “I didn’t bring anything to eat, but we can order out. I haven’t had dinner, either.”

Samantha whirled at the masculine response, finally looking at her guest. He wore a suit and tie, managing to look fresh even though she knew he had spent at least four hours on a plane. He smiled at her shock, but her heart had already stopped. “Lex!”

She flew across the room and leapt at him, not caring if she knocked him over and they ended up a heap on the floor. He caught her, hitching her higher to wrap her legs around his waist and enfolding his arms around her to hold her close as his lips devoured hers. At last, he broke the kiss and set her back on her feet.

She reached up and ran her fingers through his short hair. “You cut your hair.”

“Stef did, too.”

Samantha frowned. She liked it longer. It was thick and black and she liked the way it felt tickling across her stomach. Still, it wasn't her call. He wouldn't presume to tell her how to wear her hair. She would afford him the same courtesy.

"Who's bugging you, Samantha? Do you want me to take care of it for you?"

She shook her head. "I can handle Ellen. What are you doing here?" Had he missed her as much as she missed him?

"A couple of reasons."

The front door opened into a short hallway next to the kitchen. Alexei pushed past Samantha, heading deeper into her apartment. Dread curled in her stomach, filling the place that no longer wanted food. She didn't know how upset he would be to find out about her art. She had shared this part of herself with Stefano, but she had never once mentioned it to Alexei. Everything in his life was ordered and planned. Sam was messy and impulsive. Part of her soul would wither if he laughed at her work.

She found him standing on a drop cloth, staring at the unfinished painting of the sunrise she had shared with Stefano. She picked at flecks of paint on her hands as he moved to the far corner of the room where her canvases were stacked. She lost her composure as rifled through them, pulling out the ones that caught his interest and holding them up for inspection.

"Are you looking for something specific?"

He returned the painting he had been holding. "I guess I'm looking for the reason you felt you could share this with Stef and not with me."

Sam flinched as if he'd slapped her, and not in a good way. "It never came up."

He muttered under his breath, repeating her words. "You told me about all these places you visited and about a ton of places you want to see, but you never once mentioned that the thing you wanted to see there the most was the sun rise and set."

“Lex, please don’t be mad.”

It wasn’t anger that put shadows in his deep blue eyes. Samantha swallowed guilt.

“Let’s get you fed, Samantha. You look like you’ve barely eaten or slept since I last saw you.”

He pulled his cell phone from his pocket and dialed a nearby Thai place. He ordered without asking what she wanted. Slipping the phone back into his pocket, he turned to Sam, a hardness coating his features. “They said it’ll take about forty-five minutes.”

She opened her mouth to apologize for hurting him, to assure him she hadn’t intended for him to find out like this. That wasn’t what came out. “How did you know who to call around here for Thai food?” They had discussed her love of Asian cuisine, so the fact he knew what she liked wasn’t surprising.

“I’m from Michigan, remember? My father still lives in West Bloomfield. Maybe I didn’t grow up Downriver, but I’m not unfamiliar with the area. Morozov Industries has an office in Trenton and a factory in Southgate.”

Neither Trenton nor Southgate were far from where her Wyandotte apartment was located.

Alexei took off his jacket and handed it to her. Samantha hung it in the hall closet and tried not to think about the fact that he was now looking through her photographs. She returned to the living room and leaned against the far wall to watch him and wonder what he was thinking. A comment Stefano made surfaced, bringing with it a renewed churning in her empty stomach.

He had said Alexei was knowledgeable about art. What if he didn’t like what he was seeing?

“Alexei, did you fly all the way here because you’re mad that I talked to Stefano about my art and not you?” She bit the ragged end of her fingernail.

“No.” He moved to the next bin holding her oversized photos. “I came because my asshole of a father wants me to meet his whore-of-the-month so she can audition for the role of step-monster.”

Samantha drew back at the bitterness in his voice. She knew Alexei’s mother had died over a decade ago. Nervousness made her a little less sensitive to his aggressive dislike of anyone who might try to replace his mother. “Is your father an asshole because he’s dating again now that your mother has passed? Hasn’t it been long enough, Lex?” She didn’t know what to make of his “whore-of-the-month” comment. “Or was he unfaithful to your mother?”

Alexei drew out one of her photographs. It showed a depressed cityscape with a bright, beautiful sunrise straining to be seen through the pollution billowing from a smokestack. “Most people who like to photograph or paint sunrises and sunsets don’t think to actually give them a setting, a purpose. I like this one. It conveys desperation and a hint of hope.”

That was exactly what Samantha had thought, but Alexei was the first person who had looked at her photographs to understand what she had been trying to do. Did it surprise her that a man who seemed to know her deepest, darkest needs could also see what was in her heart? Hell, yes. The men in her life who loved her—her father, her brother—didn’t understand her at all.

Lex set the photograph on the top of the stack and crossed the room. He lifted his hand and used his thumb to wipe away a tear Samantha hadn’t been aware she was crying. She sniffed and wiped its twin from her other cheek. “I’m sorry.”

“No, Sam, don’t be sorry.”

He called her Sam. He never shortened her name.

He wrapped his arms around her, pushing her face into his neck. “It’s in my nature to push, to be demanding. I need you to remind me to slow down. I have the rest of my life to find out everything about you.”

Samantha let him hold her. It felt nice to be with him like this. She knew Stefano this way, not Alexei, and a large part of her needed this from Lex.

“Stefano told me about your art. We talked about where we see this thing between you and us going. He showed me your website.”

That was too much information to take in at once. The buzzer sounded, arresting any question before she could ask it. “That’s the food.”

Sam was glad he had cash on hand. She had nothing in her purse and her credit cards no longer worked.

Alexei found his way around her tiny kitchen with ease. In no time, Samantha was shoveling a savory satay into her mouth. Sam’s opportunities to focus on her art were few and far between. When she had the chance, she didn’t take the time to do other things, like eat or shower. While she moaned over vegetables dipped in peanut sauce, Alexei picked up one of the threads of their conversation.

“Stef told you that our dad is controlling.”

Sam nodded. She remembered having that conversation. “Why didn’t she leave him?”

Lex’s smile wasn’t a smile. “I asked her that once. She told me she knew who he was when she married him. She said she didn’t go into her marriage with blinders on. She said she needed him.”

Sam closed her hand over his, wanting to make his pain go away. “It sounds like she loved him. Did he love her?”

“He didn’t cheat on her.” Alexei frowned. “He didn’t beat her or talk down to her or verbally abuse her. But when he didn’t like what she was wearing, he told her to change her clothes and she changed her clothes. I think that’s wrong.”

“And he treats his girlfriend like that?”

Alexei shrugged. “Stef is with them now. For some reason, he’s okay with the way that bastard treated Mom. We’re supposed to have cocktails with them tomorrow. Want to come?”

Samantha flinched. Did he mean to introduce her to his father as revenge? If Alexei called his father's girlfriend a whore, Sam could well imagine the opinion Lex's father would have of her, a woman who was falling in love with both of his sons. Falling? No, she was already there.

She threw out a feeler. "Is your father aware of me or of the fact that you and Stefano have decided to share a girlfriend?"

This time, his grin was real and cocky. "You never said you wanted to be our girlfriend. Does that mean you'll go on the Pill and we all get tested so we don't have to use condoms anymore?"

"I'll have to think about that second part," she said. They were both finished eating. She stowed the leftover takeout boxes in the refrigerator. "You said you talked to Stefano."

Alexei loaded plates and forks into her dishwasher. She liked that he wasn't helpless in the kitchen and that he didn't expect her to wait on him.

He pressed the door closed and started the cleaning cycle. "We're both crazy about you, Sam. We both told you that. The question becomes what do you want to do about it?"

This was the part of the discussion she dreaded. "I don't know." She ran her fingertip over the outline of the handle to her fridge. "How will your father react to the idea of both of you with me?"

Lex leaned his backside against the counter and folded his hands over his chest. "The only people who get to have a say in all of this are you, Stef, and me. I don't care what my father has to say about it."

She couldn't turn to face him. "I care. I care that your father would call me a whore and throw me out of his house. I care that my father would never look at me the same way again. I care that my mother will be furious and hurt. I care that my brother won't speak to me again. I care that my sister won't let me near my niece and nephew anymore."

The skin on the back of her neck prickled in the silence.

Finally, Alexei exhaled. “I can guarantee that my father won’t call you a whore. However, springing you on him maybe isn’t the best idea. It isn’t fair to either of you and it casts doubt on how serious Stef and I are about you. The other things, though...Have you told your family about us?”

Samantha shook her head. Her ponytail skated a sad dance across her shoulders.

“Then how can you know how they’ll react? I met your brother and I think I met your parents. They didn’t seem like the kind of people who would judge you so harshly. Samantha, people like you. There’s something about you that’s open and friendly. People are drawn to you. I can’t imagine you coming from people who would reject you just because you fell for two of the most handsome men in existence.”

That made her laugh. “And modest, too.”

“If the three of us are happy together, why do you care what other people think?”

“Because I do.” She sighed and looked out the lone window on the far wall that overlooked the parking lot. The darkening sky made her sad. The sunset was on the other side of the building, hidden from her eyes. “This is who I am, Lex. I always care about what people think of me, especially people I care about.”

More than that, she cared what her family and friends would think about the men she knew she couldn’t live without. She could deal with the fact that they would say she moved too fast. She could deal with upsetting her parents because this would eventually mean moving far away. But she wouldn’t be able to handle the recriminations and the rejection.

“Ellen would understand.”

Samantha turned to face him. Ellen hadn’t endeared herself to the family when she introduced Jonas to the world of BDSM. However, she had redeemed herself when Jonas turned his life around because

of her influence. She had influence with Sam's parents. She would be an ally when Sam most needed one.

"Yeah, she would."

Alexei wrapped his hands around her wrists and drew her closer until she bumped against his chest. "Samantha, I'm in love with you. I think it happened with the very first thing you ever said to me. It turned out to be prophetic."

She tilted her head to one side, trying to tamp down the trills of excitement running through her at his admission and to remember the first thing she said to him. "What was the first thing I said to you?"

"There you are."

The way he said the words gave them a poetry she hadn't intended when she saved him from the intoxicated woman at the wedding. He infused them with meaning and heavy promise.

Her body shook, and she didn't know why. Yes, she did. It was stark fear, but she couldn't let that keep her from facing facts. She had fallen head over heels for both of them over the weekend, and now she had to do something about it. "I'm in love with you, too, Lex, and I'm in love with Stef. This is a lot for me to deal with. I'm not sure how this can work."

His arms slid around her. He traced a calming path up and down her spine. "Stef and I are used to sharing, Samantha. Maybe it's a little more work than a traditional relationship, but I think the benefits outweigh the problems. Stef and I both work a lot. With two husbands, you'd have someone available far more often than if you just had one. As long as the three of us are always honest and always open, this can work."

She rested her face against his shoulder and inhaled his scent. "This is a lot to think about, Lex." She wasn't afraid of making a rash decision. Samantha already knew what she wanted. Now she had to accept it, and get herself ready to deal with the emotional consequences.

He tugged at her ponytail until she looked up at him. “You’re right. Take your time. Neither of us is going anywhere.” He pressed a kiss to her temple. “Now I get to confess why I really came.”

Sam looked up at him through her lashes, affecting the sexiest coy look she could. She wasn’t pressed against his cock, but she was sure the wetness in her panties was echoed in something weeping and ready in his pants. “Why is that?”

“Your website sucks.

She pushed away from him and rubbed her palms on her jeans, bristling at his criticism. “That’s not a nice thing to say.”

He chuckled. “I know you’re used to me being a little more diplomatic, but we don’t have time to ease into this. We only have tonight and tomorrow night to work on this. I have meetings all day tomorrow and Friday. After that, Stef and I are going to do our best to convince you to pack your things and move in with us this weekend.”

Sam drew back. Moving in together was a little fast. She needed to know how it would change her life. “I have plans this weekend.”

Though he didn’t say anything, his look communicated a firm belief that he could alter her plans with very little effort.

That wasn’t so. Saturday was her birthday. Though they usually took care of birthday stuff during their annual family vacation at the end of August, they always got together for dinner on the actual date of her birth. Samantha bit her lip. She’d already hurt Lex’s feelings by not revealing her art to him. She couldn’t compound that mistake by not informing him of her birthday.

“My parents are having a cookout on Saturday for my birthday.”

“Great.” He clapped his hands and rubbed them together. “Stef and I will clear the afternoon. That’ll be more fun than golfing with the Galens in another vain attempt to talk some sense into Steve. I swear, he wasn’t this much of a tool growing up.”

Without further discussion, he pulled out his laptop and set it on the warped wooden coffee table that sat in front of her couch. Sam pushed aside her paints and brushes.

Alexei eyed the mess. “If you were to move in with us, we could convert the boat house into a studio. There’s plenty of light and room for your canvases. I think you’re going to need a computer, a printer...”

When he trailed off, still mumbling to himself, Samantha pounced. She didn’t require her lover to supply the tools of her trade. “I have my own equipment. The computer is in the bedroom.”

Lex delivered a swat to her ass. “We’ll get to the bedroom later, Sam. Right now, you need to make some serious decisions about what kind of artist you want to be, because your webpage is seriously lacking in focus. You can’t throw all your work on here and see what sticks. People who visit your site want something easy to navigate and they want it set up in a way that makes sense.”

Despite the pleasant tingle in her bottom, Samantha sat still and listened to Alexei. As he spoke, he deleted most of the pictures in her website’s gallery. As she listened, she realized why his company was so successful. His focus amazed her, and his knowledge about marketing was incredible.

By the time Samantha yawned, her website looked completely different. She had pages and subpages, each organized according to Alexei’s logic. His method made complete sense to Samantha. It just wasn’t something that would have ever occurred to her.

Alexei stood and stretched. Sam admired the way his pants draped over his tight ass and the way his shirt stretched across his shoulders. “You’re very good at this.”

He grinned down at her. “You’re very good at what you do, Samantha, but you suffer from your gift. Artists aren’t known for being good at the business side of things. That’s okay. You concentrate on making your art. Stef and I will help you with everything else.”

Sam studied a spot of paint on the carpet. There was no way she was going to ever get her security deposit back. She took a deep

breath and said what was on her mind. “Lex, I don’t want you to think I’m with you because you can help with my career.”

“Good,” he said. “I don’t want you to think that helping with your career is the reason I’m with you.”

Her head snapped up. He must have read her confusion.

“You’re very talented, Sam. I’m not saying this because I love you or because I want to fuck you. I’m saying this because it’s true. If you didn’t have talent, I wouldn’t have wasted time redesigning your website. I would have spanked your ass for keeping secrets and you’d probably be passed out right now from all the physical activity. Stef and I would have supported you in this as a hobby. However, you do have talent. That changes things a bit.”

She blinked at him, banishing the image of him dressed as her white knight. Her mother had a habit of shaking her head, sighing, and telling Sam to get her head out of the clouds. So she was a dreamer. Alexei and Stefano seemed to like that about her. “A bit?”

“Yeah. As I said before, you’ll need a real studio and you’ll need to meet some of our contacts in the art community.” He held his hand out to her. “We’ll finish working on your site tomorrow. By the time I pick you up after work, I want you to have selected your flagship pieces to take to Treva’s gallery. Right now, it’s time for that spanking.”

Her pussy clenched and her ass tingled in anticipation. “You said you weren’t mad at me for not telling you.”

He drew her to standing. The steel in his cobalt eyes triggered a gush of fluids that drenched her panties. “I’m not angry with you, Samantha, and I never need a reason to turn that luscious ass of yours pink. Don’t pretend you don’t want it.”

She shook her head. “No, Master. I want it.”

“Good girl.” A knock sounded at the door. Sam’s eyes darted past Alexei, wondering who the hell was at her door this late at night.

Alexei seemed to not have heard it. “I want you naked and kneeling in offering in your bedroom in five minutes.”

She protested, gesturing to the door. “Lex...”

He gave her a shove toward the bedroom door. “I’ll let Stefano in, slave. You’d better find those nipple clamps he gave you. He’s missed your breasts, and he’s going to need some relief after spending the evening with Dad.”

* * * *

Stefano wasn’t surprised to see Alexei when the door opened. If Lex had any kind of sense, Sammy was naked and tied to the bed.

“How is Dad?”

Stef snorted and rolled his eyes. While he had issues with their father, he’d never harbored as much hate and resentment against their father as Alexei. Unlike Lex, Stef listened to their father’s explanation of why he was so dictatorial where their mother was concerned. It didn’t exonerate everything, but it explained quite a bit. Lex wasn’t in the mood to listen to reason right then. “Dad is doing great. His lady friend is really nice, and they seem happy together. How is Sammy?”

He moved past Lex to look around. One glance was sufficient to cover the entirety of her apartment. The door opened to a narrow hall. A tiny kitchenette could be accessed with a sharp right. If he continued on, he would be inside her living room. It might have been adequate space for a couch and television set, but Sammy had packed it full with the supplies of her trade.

Stacks of canvases and enlarged photographs occupied every open bit of space against the walls. Drop cloths covered the majority of the carpet. In the far corner, two windows came together, and that’s where she had set up her easel. They’d already solicited bids to have their unused boat house converted to a studio for Sammy.

Lex gestured to a door off the living room. “She’s waiting for her spanking.”

“What did she do?” Stefano wasn’t too interested in whether or not she smarted off to Lex. Alexei could be domineering as well as

dominating and that sometimes rubbed Sammy the wrong way. For the most part, their golden-haired beauty submitted to their wishes. Not once during the weekend had she chafed under their rule.

Instead, she went out of her way to be accommodating. She wanted to please them both. When they had taken her down to the playroom Saturday night, her only request was that she not wake up alone. And Alexei had lived up to his promise to make her see that having a Master wasn't a bad thing.

She didn't always use the title. "Sir" rolled from her tongue much more easily. She was still getting used to it. Stef noticed she used it whenever she felt truly submissive. As far as he was concerned, it was another way to gauge her mental state.

"She didn't do anything," Lex said. "I think she came close to orgasm just from me mentioning it."

Stefano had left his jacket and tie in his car. He took one last look around her place. It was clean and full of her things, but the walls were bare and the place was not homey. This was a warehouse where Sammy parked her things between trips. This wasn't her home.

When his eyes met Alexei's, he knew they were thinking the same thing. Their slave deserved so much more than this hovel on the wrong side of the tracks.

He grinned at his brother. "Let's push her tonight."

Alexei nodded. Stef knew his brother knew exactly what he meant. The brow that was a mirror to his own furrowed. "No bindings?"

Stef shook his head, and the right side of his mouth quirked upward. "We'll see how good she can be."

"I didn't bring a gag. She had neighbors and thin walls."

Reaching out, he tugged on his brother's tie. "One piece of silk, so many uses."

"If it comes to that." Alexei's agreement was steeped in reluctance. "I like the sounds she makes, and she's moving this weekend anyway."

“She said yes?” Stefano thought Lex would have waited until they were both there to ask her something that important.

“Not yet, but she wants to.” Lex’s grin was the epitome of cocky.

Stefano entered the bedroom. A queen-sized bed was shoved against one wall. A dresser, flanked by more crates of canvases, took up space on the opposite side of the room. The focal point, a naked Sammy offering herself to them, absorbed his complete attention.

For a minute, he just looked at her, drinking in the sweetest sight in the world. Her back curved in a perfect arc, thrusting her breasts upward. Her golden hair cascaded down, reaching almost to where her hands grasped her ankles. The nipple clamps he had shoved into her suitcase at the airport were already in place. Her perfect, rosy nipples were suffused with evidence of her arousal, though the sweet musky scent permeating the room also gave her away.

His cock twitched, aching for the feel of her breasts around it. He wanted to squeeze and knead those perfect pale globes. He wanted to slap them until they were pink all over. Then he wanted to ejaculate all over those round mounds of joy.

She whimpered, and that jerked him from his reverie.

It had the same effect on Alexei. Stefano couldn’t remember a woman ever affecting either of them as profoundly as this beautiful slave. It made him doubt exactly who was in charge.

Without a thought for his brother, Stef twisted his hand in the hair at the base of her skull and held her still while he kissed her breathless. The muscles in her shoulders jerked as she struggled to maintain her position, fighting the urge to wrap her arms around him and hold him close.

Reluctantly, he broke the kiss and stared into her cornflower blue eyes. “Where are we, slave?”

“I missed you.”

He ran his fingertips along her hairline. “I missed you, too. Let’s not do this again, okay? We’ll pack your things this weekend and you’ll move in with us.”

She nodded and finally answered his question. “Green, Master. I’m so fucking green I could scream.”

“We’ll take care of that for you.”

She sighed, a contented smile lifting the corners of her mouth. “I know you will.”

Chapter 15

When Stefano undressed and straddled her chest, Sam wasn't sure what to expect. This was not a good position for a blowjob. His hard cock rested between her breasts. Unless he let her move or he taught his cock to do party tricks, it wasn't going to reach her mouth.

First, he tugged on the chain between the nipple clamps. She had secured them so tight they brought tears to her eyes. Shards of pleasure shot electric heat through every part of her breasts. It radiated outward, pulsing through her pussy and her ass.

"Lex, you put these on really tight."

An amused chuckle came from a few feet to her right. "I didn't put them on her."

He tugged again, and Samantha moaned at the exquisiteness of the sensation. "My masochist. I can't believe you told us you weren't into pain." Fire exploded against the side of her left breast.

She was so close to orgasm and he hadn't even touched her pussy. When she could control her breathing enough to speak, she didn't keep the words inside even though she knew he wasn't looking for a response. "I was mistaken."

Something that vibrated touched a sensitive place on the inside of her knee. It moved, tracing a slow path up her thigh. Samantha shivered at the delicate touch and she quivered as Stefano delivered another blow to her breast.

A dim remembrance came back to her. Alexei had mentioned that Stefano would want to come all over her chest. The comment had faded to the background because he hadn't shown the single-minded interest in her boobs that Alexei had described. She relaxed into the

next slap, knowing this excited him just as much as it excited her. Sam was beginning to think it was possible to orgasm just from having her breasts spanked.

Of course, Lex was between her legs. The toy—it wasn't large enough to be a vibrator—didn't touch her pussy. It stimulated her thighs, her hips, her stomach. He even pressed it close to her back entrance, never coming close enough to touch where it counted the most.

A stinging slap to her ass was probably meant to stop her hips from thrusting closer to Alexei, but it had the opposite effect. Sam gasped. "I'm going to come."

The vibrating torture toy lifted from her skin. Stefano's slaps stopped.

"No, you're not. You don't have permission."

She didn't bother to figure out who said that. "Please, Masters. I need to come."

The clamps on her nipples eased and slid away. She whimpered at the loss and seriously considered having her nipples pierced. Stefano rubbed a cool gel in the valley between her breasts.

"A slave needs to learn control and restraint, Sammy. You're a good little slave, but you have much to learn. You'll come when we say you can come and not a moment sooner."

That cocky edict came from between her legs. As much as Samantha loved Alexei, his high-handed ways did get on her nerves, especially when they were stretched this taut. Other than the occasional affectionate caress, he had been all business that evening. Yes, her website looked much better, but the ache between her legs was proportionally worse.

"Then you'd better not touch me."

"I brought the paddle, Samantha."

That killed her impending orgasm. She loved the feel of the whip. She loved the feel of their hands on her skin, no matter what they were doing. She hated that paddle.

“You’re going to have to earn the right to come, Samantha.”

Sam loved the way he said her name except when he used it to reprimand her. “You’re going to get yours on Boxing Day, Alexei.”

Stefano pressed her breasts around his cock and thrust back and forth slowly, openly savoring the feel of her against him and the fact that she couldn’t come.

Alexei chuckled. “Americans don’t celebrate Boxing Day.”

“But we will,” she said. Her fingernails dug into her ankles as the sounds of Stef’s pleasure grew louder and more frantic. She wanted to taste him. She wanted to feel him inside her. She wanted to take an active role in making him come. “And when the roles are reversed, I’m going to torture you just like this. I’m not going to let you touch me, and I’m not going to let you come.”

Stefano pinched and twisted her nipple hard. Air sucked from her lungs and tears pricked her eyes. He cut off anything else she might have said, but cream gushed between her legs as that elusive orgasm pulsed through her empty pussy. “Sammy, shut up. Good slaves don’t complain, and they don’t threaten their Masters or disturb their Master’s pleasure.”

“Sorry, Master. Thank you, Master.”

He resumed fucking her breasts, thrusting between them until, with a loud cry, he came. Semen spurted up her chest, splattering over her neck and onto her face. She licked at the salty drops that landed on her lips, moaning in delight and wanting more.

Stefano moved, abandoning his position over her. Samantha made no move to wipe away the way he marked her. “Good girl, Sammy.”

Alexei’s shadow loomed over her. “Nope, not a good girl. She came before you did.” He wrapped his hands around her upper arms and hauled her to her feet. “Bend over the foot of the bed, slave. You’ll take twenty-five.”

Samantha gasped. She couldn’t handle twenty last time. What made him think she could take even more now? Fear tasted metallic in her mouth even as warmth rushed between her legs, but she didn’t

protest. She had heard Stefano when he told Alexei they wanted to challenge her. Besides, she could always use the safe word if it became too much. “Yes, Master.”

She positioned herself over the foot of the bed with her legs spread shoulder-width apart and her hands behind her neck.

“They’ll come five at a time, Samantha. You’ll learn to control yourself.”

Stefano climbed onto the bed next to her. He smoothed the wrinkled covers out of the way and pushed the hair from her eyes. She appreciated the thing he did with the covers because it cleared the way so she could breathe. However, she liked the hair in her face because it hid her trepidation and the tears she knew would come.

To make matters worse, he positioned himself so that he was face-to-face with her. He would be watching her reactions closely.

“Count them out.”

She tensed at the first harsh sting of the paddle. Where had he been hiding that thing? “One.”

“Relax, honey. Accept it. Submit to it. That’s your problem, you know. You don’t automatically submit to us.” To make matters worse, Stefano caressed her cheek.

The paddle swung again. “Two.” It must have been in the bag with his laptop. Alexei certainly thought ahead, and he didn’t waste time while doling out the punishment.

“Three.” Tears came at that one. Alexei didn’t have a soft swing where that damn paddle was concerned. Would she be able to survive twenty-five, even if he spaced them out?

“Four.”

Stefano used his thumb to wipe away a big, fat tear.

“Five.”

He brushed his lips over her cheek, following the curve of her jaw to nip at her chin. “It’s so much better to submit, Sammy, to accept that you belong to us.”

She had no problem accepting that she belonged to them, but she did have a problem with automatic submission. If they wanted submission from her, they were going to have to force the issue. She could only give them so much on her own.

Stefano's words whispered against her neck. "Do you accept that you belong to us, Sammy?"

"Would I be here, letting you do this to me if I didn't?" Sometimes, she thought, he asked the stupidest questions.

Slickened fingers rubbed against her back entrance. She closed her eyes and moaned with delight. Samantha didn't know if it was like this for everyone, but she absolutely loved when they fucked her ass.

Alexei's latex-covered cock nudged her opening.

"Ask for it, Sammy." Stefano's hand caressed her back, playing across her shoulders and down her spine. "Ask Master Lex to fuck your ass. Tell him how you want it."

Samantha licked her lips. Juices coated her thighs. The skin of her ass burned from the spanking, but that pain was quickly fading as she focused on the feelings to come. "Fast and hard, Master. Fuck my ass fast and hard."

Though she'd asked for it, Sam cried out when he entered her exactly as she asked. He reamed her, his balls slapping against her nether lips. When he entered her slowly, the edge of pain she so loved was missing.

He didn't move.

She panted as she adjusted to the feel of him inside her.

Next to her, Stefano peered at her. "Where are we, Sammy-slave?"

"Green, Master." Her response was strangled and husky. "Please don't stop."

"Okay," Stefano said. "But remember, you don't get to come until you've taken all of your punishment."

Alexei withdrew almost all the way. He slammed back into her. Samantha cried out, but she was careful to keep her body still. If she gave in to the urge to buck and thrash, she would come again, and she knew she couldn't handle fifty blows of the paddle.

"Breathe through it."

Behind her, Alexei pumped his cock into her ass exactly as she had asked for it. Next to her, Stefano coached her on how to stave off the orgasm. Inside her, the pressure built. She didn't know what it was about having her ass filled that drove her to orgasm faster than just having a dick in her pussy, and she didn't stop to analyze it. It hadn't always been like this. All she could do was feel.

"I'm going to come."

The hard thrusts halted. Lex pulled out completely. Samantha whimpered at the loss.

Next to her, Stefano smiled. "Time for the next five, honey. You can do this."

Samantha didn't know if the physical part of the punishment was worse than Stefano's optimism. She fought the urge to push his handsome face away while she told him to go fuck himself.

Alexei didn't waste time, though his hand wasn't as heavy as it had been with the first five.

"Six."

Stefano said something, but she closed her eyes and ignored him.

At ten, everything halted again. She opened her eyes, to find Stefano regarding her with his dark brows drawn sharply together.

"What?" Due to the burning pain coating her backside, Sam's query came out a lot harsher than she intended. "You can't expect me to deal with this while carrying on a conversation. Multitasking isn't my strong suit."

He exchanged a glance with Alexei. Without warning, Alexei resumed what he had been doing before he continued her punishment. Samantha cried out at the sudden invasion, and she couldn't stop her

hands from coming to the bed to provide the leverage she needed to thrust back against him.

“Yes, Lex, yes. God, that feels so good.”

Stefano rose to his knees and positioned himself in front of her. “Honey, since you can’t seem to hold your position or your tongue, I’m going to help you as much as I can.”

Sammy eyed the hard length in front of her hungrily. She loved the taste of Stef’s cock. She wanted to feel his semen shoot to the back of her throat. He wound one hand in her hair and she opened for him. She sucked hungrily as he pumped into her greedy mouth.

Behind her, Alexei dug his fingers into her hips and gave one final thrust. Samantha concentrated on the dick in her mouth so she wouldn’t come again without permission.

A finger parted her pussy lips and caressed her folds. Samantha whimpered, wanting more and afraid of having it. Stefano shuddered as the vibrations from her needy noises added to the sensations of her teeth and tongue.

He withdrew. Now she was empty at both ends. Only a single finger remained, touching her too lightly to do more than tease.

“Please,” she said. “Master, I need more.”

“All right,” Alexei said. His voice was gentle and reassuring. “Count them out.”

Sam had hoped he had forgotten the rest of the punishment. That wasn’t what she had been begging for.

Eleven came without warning, knocking her off her hands and onto her stomach. Air whooshed from her lungs at the unexpected contact. She counted out loud, but he didn’t stop until he reached twenty. Her ass was on fire and tears streamed down her cheeks. Samantha sobbed silently into her bedding. Stefano had abandoned her to this punishment. She wasn’t sure if it was worse to have him talking to her or to have him completely gone.

The cock stretching her anus was the one that had just been in her mouth. Stefano pressed into her slowly, not bothering to ask how she wanted it. He moaned as he seated himself fully inside of her.

“I’m never going to let you go, Sammy.”

He grabbed a handful of her hair near the nape of her neck and pulled her back, bowing her torso so that it arched off the bed. Alexei lay across the bed in front of her, the sated expression on his face vanishing as he watched his brother prepare to fuck her.

Whether Stefano meant his statement literally or figuratively was lost as he pumped his cock into her ass and used his hold on her hair to keep her from squirming.

Alexei moved closer. His lips brushed against hers, a soft, soothing caress in direct contrast to the controlled violence of the way Stefano fucked her. Samantha concentrated on Alexei’s kiss because if she paid too much attention to what Stefano was doing, she was going to surrender to the orgasm screaming for release inside of her.

Lex’s tongue slid along the seam of her mouth and she opened for him. He mastered her with a kiss that began as gentle and ended by taking everything he wanted.

Stefano slammed home with a shout, coming so hard she felt every vein in his cock pulsing inside of her.

“Lex,” she said as Stefano left her empty and wanting. “Please, you have to let me come.”

He grinned. “Last five, slave. Then we’ll torture you properly.”

She wanted to wipe that smugness from his eyes, but more than that, she was seized with a driving desire to please him, to prove she could take her punishment like a good slave. Lowering her head, she threaded her fingers together behind her neck and resumed the punishment position. Her voice was strong and steady as she counted out the last five, which Stefano delivered. She had no idea if he hit harder than Alexei or not because her ass was already on fire and her pussy ached with need.

Alexei drew her into her arms, draping her across his body as he stroked a soothing caress down her arms and back. He kissed her temple. “You did well, Samantha. What lesson did you learn?”

Stefano leaned over her and used a tissue to wipe away her tears. His expression was stern, but Samantha knew that was because he was uncomfortable with her tears. He didn’t mind the tears that leaked from her eyes from the result of intense pleasure, but he didn’t care to make her cry. Now she understood why he didn’t stick around to watch her take more of her punishment.

Soothing coolness spread over her abused skin as Stefano tended to her.

“I think I’m learning how to control when I have an orgasm.”

Alexei’s hand trailed through her hair. “You think?”

“Yeah,” she said. “If I’m doing something else, it’s easier to not come.”

“You’ll need to practice breathing through it. You seem to have forgotten how.” Stefano settled on the bed next to where she lay draped across Lex’s body. “You won’t always be doing something else.”

“I don’t understand why you want me to hold it off.” Need pulsed between the lips of her pussy, but it competed with the peaceful languor stealing over her body. Whether it was an aftereffect of the punishment, which left her feeling strangely loved and pampered, or it was due to the soothing heat of Alexei’s long body beneath her, she didn’t know.

Stefano caressed a path down her arm. When he reached her hand, he turned it over and traced patterns on her palm. “Then we’ll have to show you.”

Lex’s chest rumbled beneath her. “Yeah, honey, trust us to show you that some things are worth working for.” He planted a kiss on her forehead. “Did you learn anything else?”

“Besides the fact that I love when you fuck my ass, which I kinda already knew, I learned that you are more of a sadist than Stefano.”

She hissed as Lex followed up her statement by running a fingertip over her ass. “See? He put something on me that made it feel better, and you’re delighting in causing me more discomfort.”

Alexei didn’t bother denying anything, and the cock against her thigh would have announced him a liar anyway. He chuckled, his low, rumbling laugh tickling against her breasts.

Stefano snatched her away from Lex, sliding her to lie across his chest. He bent his head to press his lips to hers, and she opened her mouth, surrendering to him immediately. The pulsing in her pussy grew as the languor receded.

When he released her lips and panted for air without moving his face from hers, Sammy reached up and grasped his face between her hands. “I love you, Stef.”

His face changed, raw emotion taking the reins. “I love you, too, Sammy. Have you decided to come live with us yet? These past few days without you have been empty and hellish.”

“Lex asked me. I said I’d think about it.”

He lifted one dark brow. “And?”

She knew her smile reflected the conflict within. “And I’m still thinking about it.”

The second brow joined the first. “What’s there to think about? You can stop working for Elizabeth and concentrate on your art full time. The rest of the time, you can concentrate on Lex and me. You can travel to places you pick and you can go when you want to go, not when your boss tells you to go. And, Sammy, you’re wrong about Lex. We’re both sadists, just in different ways. He likes to take it out on your ass, and I prefer to spend time with your luscious tits. But, honey, we’re not more sadistic than you’re masochistic. You’ve experienced the farthest we’ll take things already.”

A hand pulled at her shoulder. Alexei repositioned her between them. He and Stefano moved so that they flanked her and pinned her arms at her sides. They both leaned up on one elbow and talked to each other across her body.

“She’s afraid her family will be so upset about her being with us that they’ll disown her.”

Stef didn’t flinch, and his eyes didn’t leave Alexei’s, even when his head bobbed in understanding. “We take turns being with her, and we’ll pretend to be one person around her family.”

A sharp pain stabbed Samantha deep in her heart. They were willing to sacrifice their individuality to set her mind at ease. They were willing to act as if only one of them mattered to her. It wasn’t fair, and it wasn’t right.

“No,” she said, interrupting a conversation to which she hadn’t been invited. “Don’t do that. I don’t want you to do that. I love you both. I can’t be dishonest about that, not to anyone for any reason.”

They stared at her, watching as she struggled to free her arms and sit up. On each side, a strong male hand came up to stroke and soothe. They petted her until she settled down.

Lex spoke first. “We love you, Samantha. We don’t want you to lose the people closest to you. We don’t want you to have to choose between being happy with us and being happy with them.”

“Yeah,” Stef added. “We’re used to acting like we’re one person. Very few people can tell us apart. So far, just you, our dad, and our housekeeper. If it will make things easier for you, we’re okay with doing it.”

She took a deep breath and shook her head. “I’m not. Come with me on Saturday. We’ll see how it goes then. Ellen will be there. I’ll call her beforehand and she’ll be on our side. She liked you guys.”

Hands stroked down her body as they silently considered her proposal.

“Okay,” Stefano said at last. “We’ll wait. Did you want a gag, Sammy?”

“No,” Alexei answered before she could draw a breath. “If we gag her, we won’t be able to hear her beg.”

Samantha groaned. “I’m ready to beg right now, Lex. I want to feel you buried in my pussy so badly I’m close to screaming.”

A cocky smile settled on his lips as his hand slipped between her legs and parted her folds. The insistent throbbing in her pussy grew as he circled her clit with his thumb and plunged three fingers inside.

Sam's hips shot off the bed, lifting to thrust against his hand.

Stefano pulled her thigh toward him and trapped it between his, stealing her balance and her leverage. His fingers replaced Alexei's, who used his newly freed hand to trap her other thigh between his.

Then too many fingers thrust and circled. Sam lost track of who was where as the pressure increased and climax hovered just out of reach. She thrashed and tried to thrust, but they held her firmly between their hot, hard bodies.

"Oh, God," she said, the words whispering from her on thready breaths. "Please let me come. Oh, please, my Masters. Please let me come."

The hands stopped their magic and Samantha groaned in protest. They shifted her. Alexei arranged her pillows behind his back and sat against the headboard. He pulled her against him, arranging her so that she reclined against his chest. He lifted her legs to fall to the outside of his, and he spread his legs wider, revealing all of her to Stefano's lustful gaze.

Stef lay on his stomach between her legs and scooted closer. Without preamble, his mouth devoured her pussy, licking the juices on her thighs before working his way to her center. She squirmed, trying to match his rhythm as he fucked her with his teeth and tongue. She moaned and begged. He kept her on the edge, sucking harder when the need to climax lessened and slowing his motions when she screamed and begged for release.

Samantha didn't know how long he lasted between her legs. Alexei held her in place with his strapping arms. He plucked at her nipples and lent a hand to Stefano when his brother took a breather.

At long last, she relaxed, submitting to the exquisite torture and to her two Masters. She accepted the pleasure they gave, reveling in it without a thought of asking for more.

It was only then that Stefano renewed his efforts.

“Come for us,” Alexei whispered.

The sensations that hovered just out of reach crashed over her, and she screamed, her body jerking uncontrollably as the waves washed through her body. Sam’s eyes drifted shut and she melted into Alexei’s chest. Before she could think to move, Alexei shifted her forward, forcing her to balance on her knees.

Samantha opened her eyes. Stef’s hands slid up the inside of her thighs, keeping her legs parted.

“Go slow, Stef. She’s been through a lot.”

“She’s going to go through a lot more.” Stefano positioned his cock at her entrance and pulled her hips down. Samantha gasped and Stef groaned. He pressed his thumb to her clit and rotated it in small circles. “Ride me, Sammy. You have permission to come as many times as you can.”

Sam enjoyed the fullness inside her until Stefano bucked, urging her to move.

“Samantha, you may climax, but you can’t stop until we say you’ve had enough.”

She snapped her hips back and forth, basking in the temporary power she had over Stefano. “You’re going to fuck me until I pass out, aren’t you?”

Alexei chuckled as he stretched out next to them and propped himself on one elbow to watch. “Hell, yes.”

Sam threw her head back. She cupped her breasts in her hands, kneading them and tweaking the nipples.

Stefano moaned. “Damn, honey, that’s so hot.” His thumb left her clit and his hands displaced hers. “Touch your clit, Sammy. I want to watch you masturbate while you fuck me.”

Her hand obeyed without a directive from her brain. Pressure built inside. Climaxing had always been easy for Samantha. Climaxing with Alexei and Stefano took a little longer because they didn’t let her

get there so quickly, but they sure made up for it in intensity and endurance.

“I’m going to come.”

Alexei ran his hand down her thigh. “Go ahead, Samantha, just don’t stop fucking Stef.”

She came again. It interrupted her rhythm. Stefano gripped her hips and helped her keep it going. When her stiff muscles relaxed, she fought the languor threatening to steal her energy. This was her dream, a man who could keep going as long as she could.

She opened her eyes to find both of her lovers watching intently. Sam smiled and arched her back, feeling very feline. Lex stroked his cock while he watched her fuck Stef. Samantha wanted to be the one who gave him pleasure, so she reached over and fondled his sac. Lex groaned, electricity sparking from his deep blue eyes as his hand fell away and he ceded control to her.

This time, the climax blindsided Samantha. She lost her rhythm with both men. The pulsing inside her pussy exploded, radiating pleasure through every capillary in her body. Samantha screamed as the world tilted.

The hand on the back of her neck forced her to lie down on top of Stefano. Sam waited in the patient tranquility of afterglow while Lex spread the cool gel to prepare her back entrance. She sighed, contented in their love and in the way they loved her. Nothing compared to the way having both of them inside made her feel.

The tip of Lex’s cock once again pushed through the tender, tight muscles ringing her sphincter. He was gentle this time, understanding without being told that she couldn’t take anything else right then. They made love to her, both of them at the same time. Samantha once again surrendered to the pleasure they offered, basking in the love flowing through the three of them. Words weren’t needed, yet they spoke them anyway.

They made her come twice more before they surrendered to the mountain of feelings and shouted their releases. Boneless and liquid, Samantha collapsed and fell asleep sandwiched between her men.

Chapter 16

Stefano glanced over at his brother, not bothering to hide his worry. “I hope you’re not planning to confront Dad with Sammy there.”

They had dressed similarly, both choosing to wear casual suits to this formal dinner occasion. Out of respect to the woman they were scheduled to meet, they fell back into their habit of wearing different colored ties. Stef wore blue, and Lex wore red.

Alexei downshifted into second to turn a corner. “If we’re going to marry her, there’s no sense in having secrets. She’s going to find out sooner or later that I wasn’t lying when I told her Dad was an asshole.”

Air hissed from between Stef’s teeth. “Lex, Mom was severely OCD. Dad did what he did to protect her.”

Lex’s face darkened, the ruddy features looking downright devilish next to his dark hair. “So she washed her hands a lot and she needed to have the furniture arranged a certain way. She wasn’t a nutcase. Even if she was, that doesn’t give him the right to limit her time with friends, to tell her who she could and couldn’t hang out with, or to make her wear only what he wanted to see her in.”

A white box sat on the back seat of the Lexus Alexei had borrowed from their father. In it was a cocktail dress he had purchased for Samantha to wear tonight. Stef refrained from pointing out the similarities between Lex’s behavior and their father’s. That would only set him off and cause him to be more aggressive toward their father. Normally, he wouldn’t care, but he found himself reticent

to expose Samantha to a stressful situation she couldn't hope to soothe. She was so sensitive to other people's feelings.

"So, we're going to let Sammy travel wherever she wants whenever she wants?"

That question had a fifty-fifty chance of sending Lex's temper off the deep end. Thankfully, he took it seriously. "Yes, but I can't see her wanting to be away from us all that much, and we don't have the time to travel constantly. Maybe we should set her up with a discretionary account."

Stefano's brow rose. "Give her an allowance?"

Alexei shrugged. "Why not? She can use the money on clothes, travel, art supplies, whatever. Then she won't have to ask us for money when she needs something."

Stef was well aware of Lex's reasoning process. Their mother had been required to account for every penny she spent. Alexei didn't want Samantha to be under their complete control. He wanted everything to be her choice. Stefano agreed with his brother on that account. However, Lex labored under the impression their mother had been trapped in her marriage. Stefano no longer did. The previous night with his father had opened his eyes to several truths that had always been out in the open where the boys had long chosen to ignore them.

But then, it had always been easier for Stefano to let go of his anger than it was for Alexei. A volatile personality was only one thing Lex inherited from their father.

"Lex, you need to face facts. Dad told Mom what to wear because she would have tried on every piece of clothing in her closet twice. She had a compulsive need to make sure she wore everything twice. If Dad just told her what to wear, she could live with not doing that."

Alexei's mouth compressed. "Fine. He did that to help her. What about restricting her friends?"

Stefano's patience with Lex wasn't infinite. He drew on his vast reserves and withstood the impulse to punch his brother. If Alexei

ever bothered to get over his anger and have a conversation with their father, he would be able to understand so much more about their parents. “People made fun of her. Dad forbade her to see people who were mean to her. He also refused to deal with the companies of those families who were cruel to her. Alexei, it’s time to get your head out of your ass. He got a vasectomy because she had to be sedated when she found out she was pregnant with Ana and it wasn’t twins.”

Figurative steam issued from Alexei’s ears. “And I suppose he limited her spending because she had a compulsive need to buy two of everything?”

“Finally,” Stefano said, his voice laced with dryness. “You understand.”

Alexei was quiet for most of the long ride to Samantha’s apartment. As the car turned into her parking lot, he sighed. “I owe Dad an apology, don’t I?”

Stefano shook his head. “You owe Dad a chance. Think about it, Lex. What wouldn’t you do to make sure Sammy is happy?”

“I won’t buy off a gallery owner.”

“No,” Stef agreed. “She’d never forgive us. She wants to earn her success.”

Alexei nodded. “Fine, but we’re going to have to push her. She lacks confidence.”

“Agreed.”

They pulled into the parking lot next to the brick building that housed Sammy’s apartment. Stefano wanted to see her moved out of there within the next few days because the place was small and it wasn’t the safest area.

She had yet to consent to move in with them.

Stefano hopped out of the car and was inside the building first. Though he knew Sammy wouldn’t skimp on the second kiss, he still wanted the first one. Sound of an argument coming through the door stopped him short. He held up a hand to silence any question Alexei might ask.

Pressing his ear to the door, he made out three voices. Two were feminine and one was masculine. He couldn't make out the words, but the tone the man used pricked his ire, and his temper was difficult to provoke. Nobody talked to his Sammy like that. Twisting the handle, he found it unlocked.

Samantha wanted to die. She knew her face and neck flamed pink. The sudden opening of the door only surprised her for a millisecond. Her heart beat faster because the men of her dreams were in her apartment, not from fear.

They wore identical, tailored Italian suits. The only discernable difference was that Stefano wore a blue tie and Alexei's was red. That, and Stefano looked ready to kill someone. Alexei held a white box under his arm. He nodded a greeting at Sabrina and Jonas as he slid the box onto her kitchen counter.

The room wasn't built to fit five full-grown adults, especially not three who were extremely pissed off. Samantha waved her hand at Stefano and Alexei. "Can you wait in the living room?"

Stefano crossed his arms and he glowered at Jonas. Sam had to admit he looked intimidating. However, her brother wasn't impressed by bravado.

"No, Sammy, we can't."

Behind Stef, Lex was doing his best to try to figure out the situation. He looked from Sam to Jonas to Sabrina and back again. "What is going on here?"

Samantha exhaled in a loud growl. "Nothing except my brother sticking his nose where it doesn't belong."

Sabrina reached out and wrapped her hand around Sam's wrist. "Sam, this is our business. We're your family."

Stefano's mouth tightened. He stared at the place where Sabrina touched Sam's arm, and Samantha had no doubt he was weighing the idea of removing it. She hoped to hell he didn't. Jonas would go ballistic if anyone touched Sabrina. He had always been protective of her. Now that she was pregnant, he was even worse.

“If Sammy says it’s none of your business, then it’s none of your business. You don’t get to have a say in her love life.”

If Sam’s face was pink before, it was scarlet now. The last thing she wanted to do was to talk about this with her big brother present. She’d spent her childhood following him around and idolizing him. His disapproval would kill her.

Jonas’s head cocked to the side. He opened his mouth to say something, but Sabrina elbowed him in the gut. He grunted and sucked air.

“Well,” Sabrina said, nodding slowly. “At least the two of you are being honest this time.”

Alexei stuck his hands in his pockets, an uncharacteristically nervous movement. “And serious.”

Sabrina fastened her gaze on Stefano. “What about you, Stef? I know better than to assume Alexei speaks for you.”

Samantha had never seen either of her lovers look nervous or try to present themselves as a united front before. “It’s serious, Sabrina. We’re taking her to meet Dad tonight.”

Sabrina nodded to the white box. “Did you bring battle armor for her?”

Stefano grinned, but Alexei scowled and spoke. “She won’t need it. I’ll kill him if he so much as looks at her wrong. I’ve already warned him.”

Stef cleared his throat. “She can handle him.”

Sam didn’t understand the undertones in what wasn’t being said, but she knew they were there. She exchanged a glance with Jonas. He had caught them, too. “Honest this time? What exactly does that mean?”

Sabrina answered without removing her eyes from Lex. “Alexei asked a friend of mine to his junior prom. He and Stefano spent the night switching on their dates and those poor girls never knew it.”

The news didn't shock Samantha. It wasn't a nice thing to do, but she couldn't find it in her to be all that upset. If their dates couldn't tell them apart, they got what they deserved. She squelched a giggle.

Jonas peered down at his diminutive wife. "How did you find out?"

Pink stained Sabrina's cheeks. "They bragged to Stephen."

Stephen Galen, Sabrina's high school boyfriend, was still a friend to Alexei and Stefano, but that wasn't what caused Sabrina to blush. Sabrina didn't care to talk about the time she spent dating anyone who wasn't Jonas.

Sabrina straightened up and shoved a lock of hair behind her ear. She was the shortest person in the room by half a foot, but her confident demeanor easily made up for that disparity. She pinned Alexei and Stefano with one pointed look. "However, we weren't talking about Sam's relationship with the two of you. As long as you're good to her, treat her well, we're happy for you. Now, if you would be so good as to wait in the living room, Jonas and I aren't finished speaking with Samantha."

Stefano and Alexei looked to Samantha, and she understood that they would give her privacy if she wanted it. Hell, yes, she wanted it. The last thing she needed them to know was...

"Actually, I think they should stay."

Leave it to Jonas to spoil everything. Lex and Stef perked up, and Sam knew nothing she said would induce them to leave now.

Jonas nodded. "If you're as serious as you say, then you should be part of this discussion. Tell your submissive that it's okay for her to accept money to pay her phone bill, turn her electricity back on, and pay her rent."

Sabrina gasped. "Don't call her that!"

Samantha wanted to take a step back, to put distance between her and her well-meaning family, but she was stuck between them and the kitchen table that was already pressed against the wall. There was nowhere to go.

Jonas glanced from Sam to Alexei and Stefano. “Fine. Slave, then? Has it progressed that far?” Sam didn’t hear approval in his tone, but disapproval was absent as well. It seemed that Jonas had decided to withhold judgment.

Alexei nodded. “She’s acknowledged a Master/slave relationship. She already has her own room at our place near Miami. We’ve asked her to move in this weekend, and we’ll be marrying her once she gives consent.”

Jonas pulled Sabrina away from Sam, clearing the way for Alexei and Stefano to move closer.

Lex reached her first, pulling her into a searing kiss. Stef followed suit. After he released her, neither of them moved away. Lex placed a proprietary hand on her lower back. Stefano threaded his fingers through hers.

Alexei cleared his throat. “It is not okay for her to accept the money.”

“No, it’s not,” Stefano said.

Samantha breathed a sigh of relief. They agreed with her. They took her side. She had already borrowed more than she could repay. Things were going to be tight this next month, but she would survive.

Jonas nodded, his ire completely replaced with an unexpected tranquility. Sam was shocked he gave up so easily. She had spent the past hour arguing with him and with Sabrina. “So, you’ll take care of it?”

Stef nodded. “She’s ours now. We’ll take care of everything.”

Sam tried to jerk her hand from Stefano’s, but he tightened his grip. “I won’t take money from you, either.” It was the primary reason she hadn’t answered them about moving in together. She had no hope of being able to contribute to paying the living expenses.

She tried to argue further, but one look from Stefano silenced her. It was a silent warning. Arguing would earn a punishment. She hadn’t been able to sit comfortably all day. There was no way she was in any shape to endure another spanking just then.

This wasn't fair. She was going to have her say.

Sabrina stepped forward. Lex and Stef moved away a little to let Sabrina hug Samantha, but they didn't stop touching her.

"It'll be okay," Sabrina said. "It sounds like the three of you need to sit down and talk." Sabrina pressed a kiss to Sam's cheek and whispered, "I'm sorry."

Before Samantha could tell her there was no need to apologize and that she understood Jonas and Sabrina offered her money out of love, Sabrina turned her most dazzling smile on Stefano.

"Lex, you always were good at micromanaging."

Stefano smiled and wagged his finger in Alexei's direction. Samantha thought Sabrina had done remarkably well until then.

"Right. The ties. It's been awhile since you've done that." Astonishingly, no blush stained Sabrina's cheeks. She turned to Alexei. "Lex, you were always good at micromanaging."

Alexei's brow rose as he held Sabrina's gaze, but he didn't comment.

"A friend of mine, Treva Andreas, owns an art gallery. She's been trying to get in touch with Sam, which is what prompted Jonas and I to come by today. She's seen Sammy's website and she wants you to stop by tonight with her eight best pieces. She'll choose three of them for a show."

Now Sam understood the reason for the apology. She wanted to strangle Sabrina for interfering.

Alexei grinned. "I'm already on it. That's our first stop tonight."

Sabrina retreated to the safety of Jonas's proximity and slipped her hand into his. "Are you ready, honey? I have surprise for you when we get home."

The speed with which her brother and his wife abandoned her amazed Samantha. Soon, she was alone with two very angry men.

Stefano's mouth set in a firm line, but Alexei did the talking. "Samantha..."

She held up a hand. "I don't feel comfortable accepting money from you, Lex. I might never be able to pay you back. I already feel bad enough about the money I've taken from Jonas."

Stef's fingers traveled up the back of her arm, his light caress sending signals down her spine. "How much do you owe him?"

Samantha shrugged. "I don't know. More than I'll ever be able to repay. Given how pissed Sabrina got when I mentioned paying him back, I think she might kill me if I tried. It doesn't make me feel better."

She sighed and sank down at her table. She parked her head in her hands to hide from those knowing blue eyes. "I always thought I'd be able to pay my own way by the time I was twenty-nine. I honestly don't know what you guys see in me."

Nobody said anything for so long that Samantha looked up to see what they were doing. Arms crossed, two sets of electric eyes glared at her.

Stefano raised one eyebrow. "Are we done with the pity party?" He tilted his head in Alexei's direction. "It's his turn next. I'll reserve mine for an actual crisis."

Lex's face darkened to that ruddy color that brought out the highlights in his black hair. "Don't start, Stef. This is about Samantha. This is about the fact that she doesn't trust us."

"That's not true," Samantha said. Tears pricked behind her eyes. Between Sabrina's news about her gallery owner friend and Jonas's financial lecture and the life-changing decisions her lovers wanted her to make, she was feeling a lot overwhelmed. "I let you tie me up, blindfold me, and do anything you want to me. I trust you implicitly."

"No," Lex said. He knelt on the floor next to her, smoothing her hair away from her face with one hand. "If you trusted us, you would accept that taking care of you is something we're driven to do. We love you, Sam. Why would you deny us our right to make sure you have the kind of life we want you to have?"

The dam broke. Samantha had always been an emotional person. Realizing she was a submissive and a masochist, falling in love with two men, and all of her other worries were too much to handle. She had been raised to be an independent person, to make her own way in the world, not to put her life in the hands of anyone else.

Alexei's arms came around her, and she sobbed. Yes, she did want them to take care of her. She liked that Alexei flew all the way to Michigan and made her redesign her website. She was an artist, a visionary. She sucked at the details, and she lacked the motivation to do the small things that made such a huge difference, like marketing.

"I want to live with you," she said, her words muffled by Lex's shoulder. "I want to be with the both of you always."

Stefano scooted the table out of the way and held her from the other side. "But?"

Lifting her head from Alexei, Samantha looked from him to Stefano. More than anything else, she wanted to have a life with them. "I've never been weak before. I'm not looking for a white knight to rescue me and make my life better."

Stefano stared at her, that hard line returning to his mouth. "So you would deprive us of the only woman we've ever loved, the only woman who has ever touched our souls, all because you don't want to appear weak? It takes a tremendous amount of strength to admit what you want, especially when it's not what you've always thought you should want, and then take it. Sammy, you're being selfish."

Alexei cleared his throat. "I agree. Selfish."

Oh, they knew how to push her buttons. Appealing to her selfless nature was a ruthless manipulation. Samantha was well aware of what they were doing, but she did take a minute to shift her thinking.

Since she had let Alexei and Stefano into her life, into her heart, she had never been happier. It was only the prospect of disappointing her parents that kept her from taking the dive and committing to them fully. However, hadn't her parents always said they wanted the best

for her? Hadn't they always said they wanted her to be happy? Being with Stef and Lex made her happy.

She nodded and sniffed. "Okay, fine. Which one of you is going to marry me?"

Alexei, still kneeling next to her, looked up and across her at his brother. "Rock, paper, scissors?"

Stef shook his head. "Who can make her come the most in fifteen minutes."

Lex nodded in agreement. "But we warm her up together." Samantha opened her mouth to give her opinion, but Alexei turned to her next. "Where are your pieces, Samantha? We'll load the car while you change."

Sam realized she wasn't going to have a say in the matter. Her eyes went to the white box on her counter. "What's that?"

Stefano pressed his lips together before blowing out a loud exhale. "It's a dress."

"You brought me a dress?"

Color stained Alexei's cheeks. "You don't have to wear it if you don't want to. I saw it in a store today and I thought you'd like it."

Her eyes dropped to regard the man at her feet. She knew he was thinking of his father at that moment. Though they had both expressed anger and disappointment at their father, Alexei's anger seemed raw, while Stefano's seemed like it was a demon from the past that no longer bit.

She ran a hand through his hair, silently lamenting its shortness. "That's so thoughtful, Lex. Thank you." Leaning down, she let loose all the tenderness permeating her heart in a long, slow kiss. When she opened her eyes at the end of the kiss, the vulnerability oozing from him almost knocked her from the chair.

"You'd better get dressed, Sammy."

Stefano's reminder was softly spoken and reluctant. Sammy rose at Alexei's nod. She didn't want to leave him high and dry when he needed her.

As she skipped off to her bedroom to dress, the prospect of introducing Alexei and Stefano to her parents made her heart soar. How could they not love these two wonderful men as much as she did?

She dressed carefully in the forest green cocktail dress Alexei had chosen. The sweetheart neckline molded to her breasts in a way that was tasteful and elegant, and the hem fell past her knees. Alexei had also managed to find matching shoes and a handbag. Samantha supplied the bra and decided against underwear.

The gallery wasn't on the way to the Morozov estate. Stefano drove, speeding along the highway during rush hour traffic with an ease that did nothing to alleviate the tension and nausea in Sammy's stomach. As soon as they stopped at a light, Samantha freed herself from her seat belt and crawled in the back seat with Alexei.

He chuckled at her. "He drives like a maniac all the time. You'll get used to it."

Samantha hadn't remembered it being this bad on the way back from the airport, but then again she hadn't exactly been paying attention and her career hadn't been on the line.

They survived the first leg of their journey. Samantha white-knuckled it and Alexei's hand had the nail marks to prove it.

Treva Andreas was a very tiny, very old woman. Her head was a mass of wrinkles topped with wiry grey hair twisted into a neat bun. She grinned upon seeing Alexei and Stefano enter the gallery, and she held out her arms for a hug.

"My boys, all grown up. Which of you is who?"

"I've got red, Lex has blue," Stefano said. "Just like always, Treva." He leaned down, but he didn't hug the elderly woman.

She grabbed his face and smacked a loud kiss on his cheek. Then she reached for Alexei. "You boys don't come around nearly enough. I thought maybe you'd gone and died like the rest of my family and friends."

Alexei laughed. "You can't get rid of us that easy."

She made a thoughtful sound and turned toward Samantha. “And who do we have here?”

“This is Samantha Spencer, Treva. She’s Sabrina Breszewski’s sister-in-law.”

“Ah, yes.” Treva studied Sam, raking knowing eyes up and down her figure before perusing Alexei and Stefano, who stood on either side of her, with the same intensity. “Not a Spencer for long, I’d wager.”

Samantha didn’t even think to blush. She was too nervous. “I brought the paintings and photos you wanted.”

Once Lex and Stef scattered the art in the places Treva directed them to put them, Sam watched the woman move from piece to piece. She wrung her hands and picked at her cuticles until Alexei captured one and Stefano captured the other. Their warm hands enveloped her with a reassuring possessiveness.

At last, Stefano spoke. “Treva, we’re meeting our dad for dinner. Are you going to take much longer?”

She shot him a nasty look. Sam sucked air. At last, Treva harrumphed. “Leave them with me overnight. This will be a difficult decision.”

Alexei squeezed her hand. “All right, but we’ll be back by ten, Treva. That’s your deadline.”

Sam wanted to speak up, to assure Treva she could think about it for as long as she wanted, but Stef shook his head at her.

As they sped off, Samantha thanked her lucky stars that Alexei was driving. She sat in the front seat. “How could you rush her like that? I don’t have plans for those pieces. What if she decides against showing anything because of that deadline?”

“Don’t worry, Sammy.” Stefano’s reassurance did little to placate her. “That’s how Treva operates. She needs a deadline or she’ll take forever to make up her mind.”

Stopping at the gallery made them exceptionally late for dinner with the elder Morozov. Now that the initial meeting was over, the

worst of Sammy's nerves were calm. She was starving. They arrived to find that dinner hadn't been held for them.

Dmitri Morozov was as tall as his sons. His steel grey hair was liberally sprinkled with black threads, attesting that he had once had hair just as dark as his sons. After the things Alexei and Stefano had said about their father, meeting him was a deflating experience. He didn't seem one ounce the ogre they described.

As a matter of fact, Samantha could see much of Alexei and Stefano in the way the man greeted her, clasping her hands between his with warmth and respect. His brown eyes sparkled with mischief.

"Samantha Spencer. At last we meet."

At last? Sam was under the impression that neither of her lovers had disclosed their relationship to their father.

"It's nice to meet you, Mr. Morozov. I'm sorry we're late. It was my fault."

His smile widened. "In that case, all is forgiven. A beautiful woman need never apologize for being late. It's expected."

A throat cleared behind Samantha. She turned to find Sabrina's mother lingering just inside the doorway. Melinda Breszewski was a short woman. She had a delicately oval face and deep chocolate eyes. Shoulder-length, rich brown hair was twisted in a classic upsweep. She wore a simple sheath dress that perfectly accented her figure and a tentative smile that betrayed her nervousness.

* * * *

Nausea churned Alexei's stomach as he watched the woman he'd known his entire life hovering in the protective safety of his father's proximity. "Melinda?"

He knew the color had drained from his face only to be replaced with the ruddy tones of fury. Images of Melinda on their yacht dressed in the skimpiest string bikini or of her dressed to the nines for a dinner party combined with the current situation. When he was a

teenager, she had stopped coming around so much. Had his mother known that Melinda had designs on his father? Samantha stepped in front of him, blocking his path when he would have crossed the room to confront the interloper.

Stefano muttered a warning. "Lex, don't."

The tight lines of Alexei's body didn't relax, but he did redirect his rage to Stefano. "You knew. You knew and you didn't say a word!"

Stefano shrugged. "It wouldn't have done anything except put you in a shitty mood before now."

Dmitri held out his hand, and Melinda slipped hers into it. "We ran into each other a few weeks ago. Neither of us expected anything to happen."

Alexei trembled with the effort it cost to contain his emotions. He wanted to punch his father and he wanted to storm out of the room. A glance down at Samantha's concerned face didn't sway his emotions. He felt no need to alter them for her. She understood that he wasn't angry with her and she wasn't the least bit afraid of his temper. She had no reason to be. However, looking into her silky blue eyes let him see that his own eyes glittered like diamonds, hard and unforgiving. "Dad, can we speak to you alone?"

Samantha's hands tightened around his biceps. She had one hell of a firm grip.

"No. Anything you have to say, you can say in front of Melinda. You've known her your entire life, and now she's going to be my wife." Dmitri was stone, strong and unmovable.

Melinda stepped forward, her open palm facing upward in a placating gesture. Dmitri retained hold of her other hand. "Lex, I know how close you were to your mother. I know this is difficult for you."

Alexei's eyes dropped to Melinda's hand. He stared at it with a mixture of alarm and disgust. He had to know the whole story, even if

it killed him. There was a good chance that this night would lead him to break all ties with his father. “How long has this been going on?”

Dmitri nodded, accepting the question he knew was coming. “Two weeks.”

Alexei growled through his teeth. He ignored Samantha’s fingers biting into his arms. “Tell me this wasn’t going on while Mom was alive. Tell me this wasn’t what killed her.”

Melinda flinched, and the blood drained from her face. It was small comfort to Alexei. He wondered whether she was stung by his accusation or if her reaction indicated guilt.

Dmitri’s ruddy face matched Alexei’s. “How dare you? How dare you come into my home and say such things? I loved your mother. Part of me died with her. For almost twelve years, I’ve carried her memory with me, and I rejected every woman who showed an interest in me because I couldn’t bear to besmirch her memory.”

His father’s words rang hollow. “But you’ll do it now?”

Alexei tried to push Samantha out of the way, but she tightened her hold, refusing to be moved.

“Alexei...” Her plea registered, calming him a bit. Part of him wanted to lock himself in a room with Samantha and let her comfort him, let her make him forget this night ever happened. He had known it would be unpleasant, but he hadn’t expected such a betrayal.

Dmitri took several deep breaths. “I’ve known Melinda and her family for more than forty years. We have a lot in common. Your mother and I were there for Melinda through her two marriages. She was there for me when I lost your mother. We’re friends. It wasn’t until we ran into one another at that party that either one of us entertained the idea of dating.”

The wind of his rage was dying down. Alexei’s shoulders relaxed and the force he used to push against Samantha lessened. What his father said made sense. His mother had been gone for more than a decade. If there had been anything between Dmitri and Melinda back

then, it would have surfaced much sooner. Still, the marriage part was a bit sudden. “So you decided to get married?”

Dmitri shrugged, his anger allayed as well. “At our age, there’s no point in beating around the bush. We’re already friends and lovers. The wedding is a formality, a celebration. I’m a forever kind of man, and Melinda needs that in her life. And I need someone who understands me like she does.”

“And you know she’s not after your money.” Stefano laughed as he said it.

Seeing as how he and Stef managed Melinda’s business interests, he was in a position to know that Melinda was quite well off. She released his father’s hand and came forward to lay a hand on Alexei’s arm. Samantha released him now that he no longer needed to be restrained.

“Alexei, I know this is difficult for you, but please understand that I loved your mother. Maggie was one of my dearest friends. I don’t seek to replace her. Dmitri and I are happy together. We deserve this.”

Alexei stared into Melinda’s deep brown eyes that brimmed with sincerity and nervousness. He let his face relax into a tight smile. It was going to take some time to get used to this. “Do Sabrina and Ginny know?”

A blush stained Melinda’s cheeks. “No, not yet. We thought we would break the news to the two of you first. Anastasia is flying in Sunday morning. We planned to have brunch with all the girls and tell them then.”

The unspoken agreement seemed to be that Alexei would take the news hardest. A glance at Stefano showed that his brother had a bland expression. Wasn’t he concerned at all that Melinda couldn’t know the extent to which Dmitri liked to control the people around him?

While those thoughts churned in Alexei’s head, Melinda turned to Samantha.

“Sammy, darling, it’s good to see you.” Melinda linked her arm through Sam’s. Though Samantha dwarfed her, Melinda didn’t seem

to notice. “Dmitri and I had dinner, but we had the cook keep things warm for the three of you. Sabrina told me that you met with Treva this afternoon. How did it go?”

He let them go, catching his father’s arm when his dad would follow the women. “Dad, I’m sorry about...” His voice trailed off and his father nodded. Words weren’t necessary.

Dmitri clapped Alexei on the back and squeezed his shoulder. “I know you always blamed me, Lex, and I let you because I felt it was a just punishment for not seeing the signs that your mother was having health problems. But it’s time to put that behind us. Your mother was a remarkable woman. I don’t look to replace her with Melinda. I’m looking to move on with my life. I miss having a woman to tell me what to do.”

As if on cue, Melinda’s voice drifted from the corridor. “Dmitri, are you boys coming? We’re going to start without you.”

Lex’s concerns about Melinda being cowed by his father fled as he recalled just how stubborn and opinionated she’s always been. He grinned at his father. “She’s going to be a handful, Dad.”

Dmitri grinned back, but Stefano answered. “She already is. Watch her at dinner. She keeps Dad in his place quite nicely.”

Chapter 17

Alyssa Spencer's gardens were green and lush, fighting the coming fall with every bit of shelter and fertilizer she provided. For as long as she could remember, Samantha had admired her mother's ability to keep a meticulous flower bed. Sam had never entertained the desire to follow in her mother's footsteps in that regard. Though she liked seeing rows of flowers blooming and she didn't mind planting or weeding, Samantha didn't have the attention span to keep it going. Her eye never failed to stray to the sky, and her thoughts often took flight, following that path as well.

Her father labeled her a dreamer. He hadn't crushed her dreams, but he did his level best to instill in her the understanding that dreams didn't pay the bills. Given her current financial situation, she had to wholeheartedly agree.

They had arrived at her parents' house almost ten minutes ago. Samantha had driven Stefano's Lexus and she parked it in the street for a quick getaway. Dinner with Melinda had taught her a few things about living with dominant men. As long as she acquiesced in the areas that mattered most to them, they would bend to her will in all other situations. The drive to her parents' house was a good example. First, she had put her foot down with regard to Stefano's driving. She had no problem with him as a passenger, but she didn't care to chance their lives on his vehicular craziness.

With a sheepish smile, Stefano had handed over his keys and called shotgun. Alexei had rolled his eyes and slid into the back seat.

He was back there now, staring at her as she stared at the house where she had grown up. Turmoil churned her stomach, leaving no room for the promised cake and ice cream.

“Samantha, staying in the car isn’t going to make it any easier.”

“Yeah, Sammy.” Stefano lifted her hand and pressed a kiss to her palm. “Sabrina and Jonas already know and they don’t seem to have a problem with it. Ellen will be there for you, too.”

At long last, Samantha nodded. Her things were packed. Alexei and Stefano had already hired movers to transport her things to their home in Florida. They would arrive sometime Monday. The flight home had been booked as well. The only thing left to do was to inform her parents and Amanda.

Alexei opened her door and helped her from the car. He provided support and strength when she most needed it.

They rounded the car and joined Stefano in the driveway. Out of respect for her parents, they had dressed differently. Lex wore jeans and a white polo shirt. Stefano chose tan cargo shorts and a sky blue T-shirt. Samantha missed having them dressed similarly. She was beginning to like that nobody else could tell them apart.

The front door opened and Alyssa stepped out onto the porch. She shaded her eyes with one hand. “If you’re expecting us to bring the party out to you, Samantha Jean, then you’re going to be sorely disappointed.”

As she mounted the steps, Sam hazarded a glance to where her mother was standing. She wore her favorite jean skirt and a white tank top that tied behind her neck. Her blonde hair streamed over her shoulders, hanging loose and free. The smile on her mother’s face was the same joyous expression that had greeted her every time she came home.

Sam froze in shock as she realized something. “You knew?”

Alyssa’s smile softened even further. “Of course I knew, Sammy. I’m not blind.” She enfolded Samantha in a tight hug and pressed a kiss to her cheek. “Of course, your father is upset because you’ll be

moving out of the state. I told him not to give you grief about that. We always knew you'd be the one to fly the farthest."

The screen door opened and her father came outside. Brandon Spencer had the same dark blond curls as Jonas and Amanda. His sweeping glance took in his wife hugging his daughter and the two men waiting patiently on the steps behind them. Stepping around the women, he extended a hand to Alexei.

"Hi. I'm Brandon Spencer, Sammy's father."

Alexei shook her father's hand. "Alexei Morozov, sir. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Brandon extended the same greeting to Stefano. Samantha breathed a sigh of relief before turning to face her mother.

"How did you know?"

Alyssa shrugged, lifting one shoulder in a careless, dismissive gesture. "A mother always knows."

Alyssa winked, and Sam knew her mother wasn't going to explain further.

Later, she sat in the backyard, finishing off the last of the soda with her father. Stefano and her six-year-old nephew, Ricky, teamed up against Jonas, playing touch football. Four-year-old Faith ran interference for both teams, though she was technically supposed to be helping Jonas.

Alexei was deep in conversation with Sabrina, taking delight in calling her "sister" and not telling her that her mother was engaged to his father.

Samantha summoned the courage to look her father square in the eyes. "Dad, are you really okay with this?"

Brandon scratched at his chin as he thought. "I can't pretend to understand it, Sammy, but you're happy and that's all I've ever wanted for you."

He threw his arm around her and she leaned into his embrace. "I love them both, Daddy. I can't imagine my life without them."

Her father nodded and sipped his soda. “It’ll take me some time to get used to it, honey. As long as they treat you well, I have no complaints. The minute that changes, I’ll kill them both.”

* * * *

Samantha expected to fly to her new home in first class. She did not expect to fly home via private jet. It was spacious and open, featuring a kitchen and a huge television. The seats were huge and the couches were even bigger. Stefano had mentioned owning his own jet, but she hadn’t really considered what that meant.

The moment the pilot announced that they didn’t have to be belted in, Stefano and Alexei turned to her, each sporting huge grins.

“Take your clothes off,” Stefano said, tugging at the short sleeve of her top.

“It’s time to join the Mile High Club,” Alexei added. He pointed to a spot right in front of their seats. “Strip for us, slave.”

Shivers shot straight to her pussy as she took her appointed position and threw a cheeky grin to each of them. “Yes, Masters.”

THE END

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michele wears many hats in the course of a year. She's a wife, a mother, a teacher, and a writer. When she's not busy with one of those roles, she's most likely sleeping or thinking of more ways to stretch her obligations.

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