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# BOTTOMS UP

MIRANDA BAKER

Love is the hardest limit.

*"I'm an Aries. We don't submit."*

*"I'm a Leo. Wanna bet?"*

Destiny Blake senses that her boredom with blond pretty boys is about to come to a flesh-tingling end. Since her first love left her for a more experienced Domme, she's honed her topping skills to a fine edge. Yet the idea of bottoming for the hard-bodied owner of her favorite BDSM club is an erotic challenge she can't resist.

Destiny isn't Johnny Delcorral's type. Tangling with her, even for one night, is a dangerous proposition for a man with good reason for needing his women submissive. But he suspects she's hiding a submissive streak under her dreadlocks and leather, and he hungers to make her obey—and curb her reckless spirit.

The battle is on, both in the bedroom and out. Under Johnny's knowing hands, she is dismayed to discover she's enjoying submission more than she cares to admit. And Johnny finds himself relishing her defiance instead of curbing it—and fighting a growing unease with his inability to find her boundaries.

Until one night he pushes one step too far—and comes hard up against the one boundary he never expected to find.

Warning: This book contains naked power struggles, sexually charged spankings, kink from chains to canes, an Upstairs sex club, a hot m/f/m ménage, and absolutely everything the title promises.

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# Bottoms Up

*Miranda Baker*

# Dedication

For Ben, my inspiration, my hero and my world.

# Chapter One

Destiny was waiting for a sign. She propped her booted feet on the bench and settled sideways in her booth at Johnny's Downtown. The BDSM club was one of the few places in Norton where she felt comfortable—where her leather, dreadlocks and motorcycle boots kept good company with tattoos, piercings and exposed skin. It was a place where collars were commonplace and black was the color of choice. The room hummed with a D/s vibe that made Destiny feel right at home.

Too bad she was too restless to enjoy it tonight. She'd been inside the club for an hour now, but none of the boys looked tempting. What was the deal? This was not a complicated choice. She usually made swift decisions, occasionally too swift. Waffling over who to top was bizarrely out of character for her.

She scanned the dark corners of the room, where the subs chatted quietly with one another. A girl, maybe?

No, not tonight.

Her gaze wandered to the circular bar in the center of the room where Johnny, the owner of Downtown, captured her attention. It was hard not to take notice of the six-foot-two bartender with colorful tats on every exposed inch of his arms and an eyebrow ring that served to emphasize the wicked gleam in his eyes. Johnny Delcorral was well known in Western New York's BDSM community and somewhat of a legend in Norton. You couldn't throw a rock in his club and not hit a submissive girl willing to let him hurt her in any way he chose.

She wondered if the eyebrow ring and his many earrings were the only hardware he carried, or if, like her, he had metal in places he kept covered. On cue, her clit perked to attention, reminding her of the reason she had come to Downtown tonight.

She scanned the room again. One familiar, particularly sweet-looking boy with long blond hair stirred her, but not enough to get her out of her booth. She knew he was lovely bound with rope, all smooth, tanned skin and pleading excitement. Caught in the memory, her eyes lingered on him too long, bringing him to hopeful attention. She sighed and glanced away, doubting she had the energy for that kind of play tonight—not unless she could pull it from the air surrounding the powerful bartender. Was everyone as aware of Johnny as she, or was boredom fucking with her head tonight?

It seemed to her as if Johnny commanded the room. His charisma fueled the sensual atmosphere but kept everyone on their toes and coloring between the lines. She only remembered seeing one fight break out in the bar, a brawl that had ended abruptly with an angry growl from Johnny. He had stalked from

behind the bar, taken one man in each hand and stuffed them back into their booth. Menace had poured from him like a dark cloud, his body so tightly coiled that the sleek muscles in his arms had bunched and rippled like rocks under the surface of his skin, distorting the Celtic designs on his arms. He had spoken to the men in a voice so low that she hadn't been able to hear a word. The curiosity had nearly killed her. Especially when their eyes had widened and they laughed.

She wondered what it would be like to have all that confident, male power under her fingertips, responsive to her touch. It was satisfying to top a man who craved discipline, but a guy like Johnny? What would it be like to put him on his knees, willingly, and make him beg? Abruptly, she realized she was staring at him, and that he was watching her, too, while he polished beer glasses.

His eyebrow, the one with the ring in it, lifted. Her own ring, lower, answered.

Destiny pushed out of her booth and stood, deliberately making her way across the bar. She stopped in front of him and tossed her dreads over her shoulder. "You called?"

"And you answered very nicely." He was all but laughing at her, shaved head gleaming, black eyes flickering in the bar's candlelight.

Awareness hummed through her. His physical magnetism was palpable. He must be hell on wheels with his subs, as irresistible as the devil himself. After all, the man had drawn her, a Domme, across the bar with a simple flick of his eyebrow.

"Got a problem tonight, Mistress?"

She lifted her chin. "Not exactly a problem—more like a lack of inspiration."

He nodded. "Uninspired, huh? Ever think about switching?"

"Not a chance," she denied. "I'm an Aries. We don't submit."

His black eyes glinted. "I'm a Leo. Wanna bet?"

Destiny fought a rogue impulse to lay herself at his feet and instead focused on what it would be like to feel him at hers. She planted her feet firmly and took control, forcing her gaze over him minutely, gathering her strength around her, letting it buoy her until his hard-core leathers and tattoos, his metal and muscles and self-control ceased to make her feel subordinate.

Her boredom, she noticed, was gone.

Hmmm.

She had spent three years honing her skills as a Dominant, and yet his challenge made her curious. Could she willingly subdue her temper, delay her gratification and let someone else lead for once? What would it be like to bottom for Johnny? An adventure, certainly, possibly even an education, given his reputation. She knew the best tops spent time on the bottom so they could better understand their subs' needs, but theory was always easier than practice. Talking to this enigmatic man made her feel more alive than she had in months, but that didn't mean she wanted to switch. Or did it?

She met his eyes. “I might be willing to negotiate.” It was more an impulse than a decision—one she might regret, but also impossible to resist.

Johnny gestured with the glass. “Have a seat.” His black eyes flashed again. There was humor there, but steel underneath, and he watched her as if he knew what following an order cost her and he was enjoying her struggle.

Destiny slid onto the barstool because she wanted to, not because he had demanded it. She was determined to take the upper hand. “So, do you know anything about astrology?” she asked.

“Not a thing, but I know people—women, especially. You don’t want to be on top tonight.”

“No?” Her eyes slid back to the blond.

“Lookin’ for love ...” Johnny hummed the rest of the line under his breath, but she heard it in her head anyway—and she didn’t care for what he was implying.

“I’m not looking for love,” she scoffed.

“Of course not. But he’ll disappoint you anyway.” Johnny slid another glass into the rack.

“How do you know?”

“If you’re here talking to me, then you’d be wasting your time with that pretty boy. I’m done at one. Let me take you Upstairs.”

“There’s an upstairs?”

“This is the main part of the club, but yes, there’s another level.”

“Can I go check it out?”

He shook his head. “You need an escort on your first night. It’s my world up there. I say who gets in, who stays. I make the rules and everyone who enjoys playing by them has a good time.”

Destiny pictured a rabbit warren of dark rooms with slave girls chained to every wall and Johnny making his way from room to room, whip in one hand, dick in the other. “So what does that make you, the über-Dom?”

He chuckled, the sly sound ruffling her nerves. “I don’t often play.” His dark gaze flitted over her again, licking her skin, lighting fires. “I draw a crowd when I do, though. You like crowds, Destiny? Do you like to be watched?”

She sat up straighter on her stool, wondering what kind of a crowd was gathered Upstairs tonight. Who else had Johnny invited into his inner sanctum? Curiosity added its weight to her inner struggle. Johnny poured a shot of Patrón and set it in front of her. “You know my drink?” she asked, surprised.

He shrugged. “I pay attention. Not just to drinks, though. I notice all kinds of things about people—like your mood tonight.” He cocked his head and raised his eyebrow again. “Do you want to play with me? Because I think you do.”

His arrogance should have been irritating, but she couldn’t take offense at the truth. She did want him—just not the way he thought.



Maybe.

Thinking about that, Destiny knocked back the shot and licked her lips. “I don’t know anything about you.”

“Don’t let that stop you.” He set the glass and the towel on the bar and faced her squarely. “You didn’t answer my question. Do you like to be watched?”

Curiosity overtook caution and she found herself answering him. “Yes, I’m an exhibitionist. But I’ve never bottomed, and I don’t think I’d want an audience the first time.”

“Agreed. Hard limits?” He moved swiftly to negotiation. Her limits, his desires, their needs—a verbal contract between two interested parties that would bind their play in the rules of the BDSM world.

Destiny sipped the beer chaser Johnny provided. He didn’t rush her, which was good, because frankly, she’d never seriously considered putting herself on the other side of the power dynamic. Bottoms held the power, truly, but it wasn’t supposed to feel like it. Part of the play was feeling powerless, and her Dominant nature utterly rejected that concept. She wasn’t sure how much submission she could handle. Where should she draw the lines? What boundaries would permit her to let him take control?

She watched him run the bar towel over each glass as he waited for her to answer. The thought of putting herself under those rough hands made her tingle. Her nipples peaked. Sexual energy thrilled through her tight muscles. For one night, she could handle just about anything, she decided.

Destiny looked up from his strong hands to see that he was watching her, not the glass, as he worked.

“No blood,” she finally answered. “No blindfolds. Always wear a condom. No other women. And not tonight.”

“That’s it?”

Destiny nodded.

“Do you have any questions for me? Anything you need?”

She nodded again swiftly. There was one thing she wanted to know, but it didn’t have anything to do with her needs. She watched him closely. “Why do you like to Dominate?”

Johnny frowned. He dropped the towel again and placed his hands flat on the bar. His shoulders formed a tight bridge as he loomed over her. “You’ll agree to submit to me with ridiculously few limitations so long as I tell you why I’m going to enjoy the experience?” His voice was incredulous.

Uncertainty crept up on her. It wouldn’t be the first time her impulsiveness had gotten her into trouble. Johnny was a big man in more ways than height and breadth, she was sure. She thought of those hands, blunt-fingered and ringed, positioning her, his tattooed arms encircling her body as he pushed into her from behind. Blood rushed south, north, engorging her vulva and breasts, sending a flush up her chest. She ignored her arousal and focused on him. “I’m not afraid of you. Do you want me to be?”

“A very proper question from my new submissive.”

Destiny rolled her eyes, making Johnny grin. Humor flashed merrily in his dark gaze. She hoped he wasn't the kind of Dom who wanted her to look down all the time. She enjoyed seeing his eyes glow like that.

His smile faded. "As for an answer, no, I'm not into fear. Pain, yes; fear, no. I won't expect you to cringe, but you will show me respect." His voice was quiet, calm and diamond-hard.

"Earn it." Destiny clenched every muscle she could control to keep her shiver from showing.

"Ah, Destiny, there is absolutely no doubt of that."

He reached across the bar to stroke his index finger over her lower lip. His touch made her breath stop in her throat. Her mouth fell open and her tongue darted to taste the pad of his finger. Lime from the gin and tonic he had just mixed made her mouth water. The urge to lower herself was shocking.

"Good girl. Good, good girl," he whispered. "You are going to please me very much."

Sweet Jesus, she wanted to. Fear spiked in her center.

Where was the woman who loved power, the leader, the one creating the scene? Panic made her pull her head back from him and close her lips, but he caught her by the jaw, fingers gently clamped around her chin, his little finger feathering the pulse in her throat. "Uh-uh, no way, little lamb. There is no strength in denial. Choose this. Don't let your brain talk you out of what you need."

Her thoughts pinwheeled. She cleared her throat and swallowed, a difficult feat with his hand on her throat. "Not lamb—ram. The symbol for Aries is the ram."

"Since you asked so nicely, I'd be happy to." His slight, mocking smile returned and his hand dropped away from her face, chilling her.

Destiny was torn. Half of her still wanted to flip this situation, make him bow and scrape, put him on his knees in any way she could. The other half, the rising half, actually wanted what he could give her—a strong hand, a will to match her own. She sure as hell hadn't come across another man who brought out a submissive side of her.

Again, the wicked gleam. "Choose it. It's only fun if you want to. Mostly."

"Fun? You do this for fun?"

"Absolutely. Does that answer your question?"

She nodded slowly and Johnny's shoulders relaxed. He took her hand. "Isn't that why you do it too?" he asked.

She had to think about that. Her eyes rested on the blond boy in the corner. He was waiting for her. She knew he was waiting for her. So like Damian, her first love and the man who had introduced her to the BDSM lifestyle, with his long, blond curls and sweet disposition. Also like him in his need to serve. She shook her head. "No, that's not why I do it."

"Then welcome to my world, Destiny. Good times, guaranteed. Give me a night, one night, to show you how much pure pleasure can be found in submission." The merry devil was back, daring her.

His fingers stroked across her palm, tickling, arousing, centering her awareness on the tiny connection between their bodies. The heat of his hand warmed her cold corners. His touch mesmerized, held her captive, motionless. Her clit throbbed, trapped between its ring and the hard barstool. She knew she must look like a sub already, sinking into her space.

“Destiny?”

She gasped, one word, “Yes.”

“Tomorrow night works for me. Midnight. Wear leather because it suits you, but I’d like to see you in a skirt. Short. No panties. Be ready for anything. You know the drill.” She felt his hand on her arm, everywhere. “I like to play because it’s fun, but I have no tolerance for disobedience. Does that tell you what you need to know?”

She blinked, nodded, and he released her.

“Don’t be late.”

Johnny chuckled and poured a celebratory round for everyone sitting at the bar. Game on. He had been watching the brunette Domme for months. She dressed like a Hell’s Angel, but her perfect face made her look like another kind of angel, one with a heavenly body, indeed. Destiny Blake was a tiny little thing with a reputation for rough play that rivaled his own. All of her boys were at least half in love with her, which proved her skill as a Dominant, but Johnny sensed another side of her, a submissive side. She was a puzzle, that one, and not too many people held that distinction for him.

He watched her leather-clad, heart-shaped ass head back to her booth, where she grabbed her motorcycle helmet from the bench. He expected her to leave, but she didn’t. Instead, she turned toward the bar, staring purposefully into the back corner, meeting the eyes of the blond boy who had been watching her and whimpering all night. She rested her helmet under one arm. The other, she raised above her head.

She snapped her fingers, just once, and turned to the front door.

The boy detached from the shadows and hurried after her. Johnny wasn’t surprised. He would have been amazed if she had been that easy to switch. Still, his eyes narrowed as the door slammed behind them, and he eased up on the wineglass in his hand just before it shattered.

Working behind the bar had taught him a lot about people, especially his kind of people, the deviants. Everyone had their own personal kink, but after watching enough folks come in and out, he could usually guess what they wanted before they asked. Sometimes, like now, with her, he helped them discover their true desires.

Destiny Blake wanted to submit. He could feel it. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have bothered with her. Not only that, she wouldn’t have responded to him like she had. Well, she might have come over to talk to him,

but only out of courtesy. He did own the bar, after all. But she wouldn't have trembled. She wouldn't have gasped, and she damn sure wouldn't have agreed to meet him tomorrow night.

His instincts about people were rarely wrong, and he'd been watching her for a long time—too long—trying to figure out why she excited him. She wasn't his kind of girl, after all. He liked his girls obedient and always had, ever since high school when his girlfriend's reckless defiance had gotten her killed.

He had told Lisa not to climb Glen Falls that night. It was dark, and they had been drinking, but she had blown him off, too caught up in the dare, intent on impressing the older crowd that had begun to join them at their favorite forbidden hangout. He had stood at the bottom, water up to his knees, cursing and begging as she scaled the brittle shale waterfall, too sober and too heavy to follow her—and too slow to catch her when she fell. The shallow water had done that for him, swirling and foaming around her. Fifteen years later, the lesson was still fresh. Don't give your heart to a woman you can't trust not to do something stupid.

For years, he'd stayed away from girls completely. Then, in college, he'd stumbled into the right bar on the right night and discovered a whole alternate world of sexuality existing on the fringes of Norton, Buffalo, Rochester, and across the country. Dominance felt as natural to him as his own skin, and submissive women *liked* to be told what to do.

It had been simple to change his college major to business and even easier to get a loan to open his first bar, Uptown, since his banker had mentored him in the Lifestyle. The Downtown bar had come later, after his best friend had finished law school and been able to hammer out the legal ins and outs of running a sex club. It was an elegant solution to his problem. Now he had his pick of safe, submissive women, and he could avoid the girls who looked like trouble.

In other words, he could avoid the girls who looked like Destiny Blake.

It had been a long time since he'd matched wills with a woman, and it was a definite risk. If he was wrong, if she was unable to submit to him, he would have to ignore the fact that his dick got hard when he caught sight of her dreadlocks. He would have to stop making excuses to walk by her booth several times a night just to catch a whiff of her spicy scent. He would have to erase the mental image of her motorcycle boots parked under his bed.

Destiny had shot him a fiery, flickering glance of defiance before she sailed out the door with that blond boy tonight. Were his instincts wrong? Was he wasting his time with her?

He didn't think so, but it was worth the risk to satisfy his curiosity. One night couldn't hurt, but it might be enlightening—for her, he hoped. He'd give her a taste of submission and they'd find out pretty damn quick whether her defiance was skin-deep or bone-deep. He devoutly hoped she wouldn't disappoint him.

## Chapter Two

Destiny tipped the cab driver and nodded her thanks, cursing Johnny under her breath. Wearing a short leather skirt with no underwear had made it impossible to ride her bike to the club tonight. One more way for him to take charge of her. Now she had no way to get home unless he gave her a ride, or she called a friend, or another cab.

Her bare thighs rubbed together and a breeze cooled the moisture where they joined. She was wet. Ironic, considering the sub she had taken home last night had been unable to coax the barest response from her pussy.

In spite of that, she had taken her time with him. She had rewarded him for the eagerness he had shown leaving the bar, but their play had been all technique. He hadn't known, since she didn't always allow her subs to make her come. She liked the focus to be on them, on satisfying their needs. Her own needs came second, and last night, not at all.

Nope, her needs hadn't made themselves known until right now. She feared that the first step she took toward the door of the bar was going to make her crave the second step, and the next, until walking became public masturbation.

Of course, it was only eleven, and Johnny wasn't expecting her until midnight. She could slip around the side of the building and take the edge off if she wanted to. It wouldn't take much. A quick tug on her ring would probably give her an instant orgasm.

Strangely, that idea didn't have as much appeal as walking into the bar to find Johnny. She refused to think about the implications of that fact.

Destiny paused inside the first set of doors while the bouncer checked her ID and entered the number into his laptop. Newcomers were taken through the next set of doors and seated at a small table where the rules were laid out for them. If they wanted to stay, they signed a consent form. No exceptions.

Old news to her.

"Destiny." The bouncer's eyes slid over her.

Instead of her motorcycle boots, she wore tall, black leather boots that hugged her calves and added four inches to her height. Johnny would still tower over her, even in the boots, but they were comforting nonetheless.

The black leather bustier she was wearing had been inspired by the one her co-worker, Crystal, had worn to work today. It was more metal than leather, with rows of fine mesh chain sewn snugly around the

bodice and wider chains roping and separating her breasts. The front and back dipped in sharp points while the sides flared over her lean hips. Although the exaggerated style flattered her spare frame, giving her the curves she admired on other women, the points in front had another purpose. They concealed strong metal clips that served as attachments for the crotch chain that she had slung around her waist as a belt.

The chain was her private rebellion. She'd wear the sub gear, but not as it was meant to be worn, not completely.

The bouncer held the door open for her.

"Thanks, Mac."

"My pleasure, Destiny." She heard a curious note in his voice and glanced at the man whose mature, red dreads made her fashionable plaits look childish in comparison. The speculative look he cast over the top of his dark shades made her catch her breath. He hadn't called her *Mistress*. She imagined she heard a chuckle as the door swung shut behind her.

How had he known? Anger flared until she saw Johnny twirling sleek bottles behind the bar, playing to the crowd. Her body swelled in anticipation, recognition. No need to freak out—she had chosen this.

Johnny had been forcing the edges of her awareness for months, getting closer, making her pay attention, and now that she knew his sun sign, she knew why he affected her so strongly.

Aries and Leos were perfectly compatible, strength feeding strength, both positive, true sun signs. In the abstract, a Leo was just about the only sign she could imagine topping her, but that didn't mean it was going to be easy for either of them.

Destiny crossed the bar and sat down in front of Johnny.

He was wearing leather tonight too. Tight rock-star pants with studs instead of grommets to hold them together. The well-broken-in leather fit him like it had been poured over his flesh, cupping his firm ass, caressing his broad thighs and pooling into the black motorcycle boots on his feet.

Instead of a shirt, his tattoos adorned his rippling arms. The colorful Celtic designs, done in red, green, black and orange, arrowed down his back and made his upper body loom large and powerful above his tight waist. His hips were slung with a chain, like hers, and his nipples were pierced with small rings identical to the one she had nestled between her legs.

Her heart beat fast. She gazed up at him, trying to keep her breathing smooth and steady.

"A shot of Patrón, please," she ordered.

"You know better than that." He placed a glass of ice water in front of her.

Her jaw dropped. How had she forgotten such a basic rule? Destiny shut her mouth and took a sip of the cold water.

"Good girl." His words made her squirm with something that felt like pleasure. She gasped, clit throbbing.

He stabbed a glance at the clock behind the bar. "Fuck it," he said. "Dane, I'm out."

The other bartender nodded. "Gotcha, Boss."

Johnny lifted the counter and stepped out from behind the bar. "Let's go."

She followed him down the narrow hallway that led to the restrooms. She had never noticed there was another door just before the emergency exit at the end of the dim hall. Johnny unlocked the door with a key hanging from the chain at his waist. He gestured for her to precede him and she did, conscious of her short skirt, lack of panties and the steepness of the stairs.

"Pervert," she hissed over her shoulder.

His chuckle made the air vibrate between them.

She could hear Moby throbbing at the top of the stairs. The sensual techno, a favorite of hers, filled her with dread and anticipation. Her nipples chafed beneath the bustier, and her pussy felt wetter with every step. She kept her eyes on the door at the top of the stairs, imagining her pupils must be as wide as dinner plates by now, as wide as the eyes of one of her own eager subs.

Yes, she had chosen this, but it was difficult to quell the panic that threatened to rise above her arousal. Her shoulders were tight, and it felt like she had a steel rod in place of her neck. *You want this adventure*, she reminded herself.

A good Dom would know how to handle her tension. In his place, she knew just what she would do. She would get her down into subspace, fast, and let the endorphins do their work. What would he do?

She took the last step and Johnny reached around her to open the door.

The large, dim playroom she entered was no rabbit warren like she had imagined last night. Instead, it was a posh living room with an enormous leather sectional couch facing a huge, wall-mounted television. The naked, writhing crowd on the couch gave the phrase "Mongolian clusterfuck" a whole new meaning for her. Every inch was covered in bare flesh, making it look like a snake pit of sucking and fucking.

"It's orgy night." Johnny shrugged.

No one seemed to be watching the muted television, which, oddly enough, was showing the latest James Bond film. Screen-in-screen technology displayed private rooms. She counted six, including this one. Four smaller rooms held in-progress BDSM scenes. The last room displayed a huge, empty bed with a scrolled iron headboard.

In a small kitchen off to one side, a man in a business suit stood staring into his wineglass. Destiny recognized him from the downstairs bar. A guy in an expensive suit stood out in that crowd, even if he wore it as comfortably as the rest of them wore their leather.

The man glanced up, cool, gray eyes unsurprised. He nodded. "Hey, John."

"Matt." Johnny raised an eyebrow. "You pick the movie?"

"Uh-huh."

"Having a good time?" Johnny asked.

It was an odd question, considering the circumstances. Matt lifted one shoulder. "Give me a minute." He downed his wine and set the glass on the counter. His brooding demeanor disappeared so quickly she might have imagined it, replaced with expectant sensuality. He walked toward the living room, loosening his tie.

Two naked women immediately detached themselves from the tangle of bodies on the couch, as if they had been waiting for him. They met him in the center of the room. One hit her knees, reaching for his belt, and the other moved to embrace him from behind to finish unbuttoning his shirt.

Johnny picked up a universal remote from the kitchen counter and aimed it at the television. The empty room on the screen went dark. The crowd on the couch didn't notice, but Matt cast a curious glance at them over the head of the woman who was sucking his cock.

"Come on." Johnny moved down the hall, pulling her after him. They passed the rooms she had seen on the television. Two of the doors were open, and she saw flashes of bare flesh. The steady, rhythmic beat of leather on skin joined the music flooding the hall. It was a sound she loved.

Johnny used another key from his belt to unlock a door at the end of the hall. He opened it and gestured for her to precede him into the dark room. As she stepped forward, he flipped a light switch. She blinked. It was the bed from the television. His bed?

He shut the door and stepped close behind her, his body, warm and large, pressing into her. She felt his chin brush the top of her head. His hard arm clasped her waist. "Since this is your first time on the bottom, I left the heavy equipment in the other rooms. However, I do expect you to wear your clothes as they were meant to be worn." He tugged at the chain around her waist and chuckled at her frozen shock. "Did you think I wouldn't know? Silly girl."

"How could you? This bustier is custom-made. The rings are hidden," she stuttered.

"All my girls shop at Come Again. They fucking love that place. Quit stalling."

It was more difficult to obey than she had ever imagined.

"Don't be coy," he said pleasantly. "You wouldn't have wrapped that chain around your waist if you didn't want to feel it between your legs. I could smell your pussy all the way up the stairs."

She squeezed her legs together. Her pussy throbbed with the fast beat of her heart. Her breasts swelled, hot and tight beneath the metal and leather. Was he right? Was that why she had worn it?

Johnny turned her around in his arms until she faced his chest. Slowly, she raised her eyes to his face. His shadowed jaw was hard and his lips were pressed tightly together, but his eyes gleamed. He was enjoying her discomfiture, and he knew she was too. Apparently, he could smell it.

"Since you can't obey a simple directive, I'll have to help you." Johnny unhooked the chain from her waist and wrapped it around his palm. Swiftly, he yanked her tight leather skirt to her knees.



Johnny's nose was level with her bare pussy as he knelt between her boots. He threaded the heavy chain through the rings on her bustier and jerked it a few times, teasing her. Before he clipped the cool metal into place, he carefully flipped her clit ring out of the way of the chains.

"Ah, you have a pretty pussy, Destiny. Delicate, pink little lips." He slipped his fingers under the chain and probed. She clenched her teeth to capture a groan in her throat, but she couldn't do anything to stop the rush of wetness that coated his fingers. His fingers teased the chain until it separated her labia. He rose to his feet.

"Let's see how you walk." He pushed her toward the bed.

Her first step was agony, but not pain. The smooth, wet links massaged her vulva like kinky tire chains, and by the time she reached the bed, the stimulation had her standing on tiptoe with her teeth embedded in her lower lip. She was afraid to turn around.

He did it for her, making her gasp.

"Aw, poor thing. Do you need to come already?"

There was no way in hell she would admit that her own belt and six steps across the room had her on the brink of orgasm. She found her voice. "No, I'm fine."

"I'm glad to hear it. By the way, I respond to red, yellow and green." Safe words, right. She wouldn't need them.

He fiddled at her waist again. His lips curved wickedly. "I think I'll use a few props after all."

An old-fashioned lingerie chest sat next to the bed, but she doubted it held underwear. The wood made a smooth sound as Johnny opened a drawer. He withdrew a black silicone plug and a tube of gel. From another small drawer, he grabbed a few extra metal links. He set the items on top of the chest and grasped her hips, turning her to face the bed.

"Brace yourself." He pressed her chest toward the mattress and nudged her legs apart with his knee. The only way for her to bend over without cutting herself in half required her to tilt her pelvis toward her chin.

He tugged the chain to the side and smoothed cool gel against her rectum. The head of the plug breached her ass. She tried to relax, but it was impossible. Her back arched, forcing the chains against her clit. She cried out.

"Safe word?" Johnny asked.

"Green." She took a breath so far from even it sounded like she was teaching a Lamaze class. She pressed her forehead and elbows into the bed and tried to take slow, steady breaths.

*Push out when he pushes in*, she coached herself. How many times had she given a sub that simple direction? Easier said than done. She was well aware of the theory. She'd just never been on this end of the practical application. Ha, she'd learned something from this experience already.

"Something amusing?" He pressed forward.

She pressed back, and the plug slid firmly into her ass.

Now there wasn't room for thought, just sensation. She let it fill her, flow through her. His fingers stroked down her back and she arched again, this time welcoming the tension of the tight chains against her clit. His hand cupped her mound and she pressed into his fingers.

Something shifted inside her. She no longer resisted his touch—she craved it. Just like that, she was on the other side, not wanting to lead, only wanting to follow. She hadn't expected it to happen so fast. Why had it been so easy? Destiny felt herself slipping away and whimpered softly.

"I've got you." His voice was a rough whisper and not reassuring in the way he probably intended it to be. It felt too good to let him do this to her. It contradicted everything she knew about herself. Panic flashed bright behind her closed lids. Anxiety made her heart pound. She opened her eyes.

He eased one, then two fingers inside her, filling her in another way. Pleasure continued to bloom under his sure touch, and insistent desire soothed her. What was she afraid of? At worst, he would make her come.

She bit back another moan when he withdrew his fingers and turned her around. He pressed down on her arms.

"On your knees, now."

She was afraid to move, afraid of how good it would make her feel.

He raised a mocking eyebrow. "Obey, Destiny. This is pretty standard sub stuff, as you well know. Exposure, degradation, butt plugs, cock sucking. Except for a spanking, which you deserve and will certainly receive, I'd say I'm on target for providing you with a well-rounded submissive experience." His eyes flashed, and he seemed to take up half the room with his colorful shoulders. "Down, Destiny. I'm about to ruin my pants." He unbuckled the chain at his waist and let it drop to the rug with a heavy thud.

She began to sink. Getting to her knees took a long time. The plug threatened to pop out of her ass, and she had to clench her asscheeks to keep it in place. Clenching made everything feel tighter, and now the clit restraint was creating a hairtrigger situation. By the time she made it to the floor in front of him, she had her mind on so many other challenges—namely, not coming—that it was brainlessly easy to unfasten his leather pants.

He wore no underwear. His cock was so engorged that its fat head poked above his waistline. It sprang forward, toward her mouth, and she automatically caught him with her lips.

"I knew you'd give great head," he groaned as she swirled the salty precome from the tip of his cock and sucked hard. She embraced his length with both hands and fed him into her throat, taking it all greedily. His cock was thick and broad, like him, and she stretched her lips around him, bobbing her head up and down over his wide shaft.

She danced over his cock, her hips swaying as she unconsciously thrust her swollen clit against the snug chains. He fucked her mouth in slow strokes, and within minutes, they found a rhythm together.

Wanting him closer, she cupped his balls, rolling her fingers over his tight sac. With her other hand, she gripped him firmly and explored the peaked ridge just under the head of his cock with her tongue. He tangled his fingers in her hair and held her head still for his deep thrusts.

“Swallow it all,” he said a second before he filled her throat. She gulped, continuing her dance, loving the pressure in her ass, embracing the chains between her legs, mindless with need. The sound of his harsh breath filled the room. It drove her on, even as he softened in her mouth and pulled away from her.

Johnny’s hands gripped her shoulders. “Be still,” he commanded. “Naughty girl. I didn’t say you could come. Do you need to come, Destiny?”

She froze. Slowly, painfully, she shook her head.

“That’s a shame.” He tucked himself back into his pants and pulled her to her feet. He unhooked the chain and tossed it away. Blood rushed back into her labia, nearly making her yelp with increased arousal. He correctly interpreted her longing glance at the silver puddle of chain on the floor. “Don’t worry, I’ve got good things in store for you.”

Again, he crossed to the wooden chest. “Since you like metal so much, let’s see how you look in these.” He held up a pair of pretty silver nipple clips. “I think I’ll clip your nipples to that other little ring you’re wearing and lead you around the room like my pet.”

There wasn’t a doubt in her mind that he would. Or that she wanted him to. In fact, she was terrified that she was going to love that too.

Destiny struggled for balance as he unlaced her bodice. What was happening to her? She’d heard about him, knew his skill as a Dominant. She shouldn’t be shocked that he played her so easily, that he made her enjoy the plug in her ass, made her love the chains against her clit, made her want those clips on her nipples. His cock had felt like silky, steely heaven in her mouth, and she wanted him to put it in her pussy, to jam her full in every way.

*So this is what it feels like to be a sub.*

The thought hit her like a bucket of ice water. Her brain rebelled. She was no sub. She wouldn’t let this happen. For three years, ever since Damian had left her for that crazy bitch with the snake whip, she had immersed herself in Dominance. She wasn’t going to let Johnny Delcorral destroy all of her hard work in one night, damn it, just because she had, once again, done something rash.

Her bustier hit the floor. Johnny pinched her right nipple, hard. She gasped. It felt like he had pinched her clit. The clip gripped her tight flesh with piercing pain. Tears stung her eyes, but she didn’t cry out.

“Good girl. Ready for the other one?”

She nodded.

Again she felt the hard pinch of his fingers, the pleasure, the pain, then just the pleasure. She felt her body temperature rising. He gave the chain between the clips a slight tug, and she thrust her breasts forward.

“Tell me how that feels. Do you like it?”

She pressed her lips together.

Johnny smiled. “Stubborn, much?” He ran his finger down her stomach. She watched, hypnotized by the chain swaying between her breasts.

Johnny attached a second chain, then dropped it through the loop between her legs. His fingers were deft as he fastened the end of the delicate chain to her clit ring.

He exerted the tiniest bit of pressure.

She stepped forward.

He grinned. “I think I like you leashed.”

Destiny dropped her eyes, noticing on the way down that his cock was hard again. This passive role felt foreign to her. Yet at the same time, her pussy was so wet, so full, it was impossible to deny that she was enjoying his commands. Her body clamored to meet his demands. Subbing had been a lark, a dare, a new challenge, but now she feared it might become something more. The body was hardwired to the brain, the subconscious, the very essence of her being. And if her being was enjoying this, submitting to Johnny could change her life.

*Not going to happen.*

He could do his worst, his best, and she would not give up control of her Dominant *self*, not completely. She had agreed to follow his commands, and she would. She would do everything he asked. But she was going to try like hell not to enjoy it. If she failed, then fine, he’d make her orgasm. Whatever. She wasn’t going to let him in her head, though.

Johnny raised his hand in an imperious yet courtly gesture. “Get on the bed. On your back.”

She obeyed, but slowly. The chain tugged her clit and her nipples as she walked, driving her toward the bed even as her conflicted thoughts screamed caution.

Before she could reconcile the two, she found herself stretched out on her back with Johnny standing between her legs. He reached up and caught the end of a retractable rope hanging from a track on the ceiling. He pulled it down to her center. She swallowed hard as he lifted the chain from her belly and carefully attached it to the rope. When he was finished, her small breasts hung by their peaks and her clit stood at attention.

“Don’t move,” he said, diabolical eyes dancing as he stepped off the bed.

As if she could. She was immobilized by the thin chains and ropes attached to her most delicate parts. She had no way to escape, especially when he drew soft, black cords from each corner of the bed and loosely captured her wrists and ankles. The wrist and ankle restraints were purely symbolic, but, boy, did they do their job well. The Domme part of her appreciated the fact that he left some play in the cords to protect her clit and her nipples, but she was dismayed to discover she liked feeling confined.

Destiny closed her eyes to try to block out some of the disturbing sensory stimulation, but being sightless heightened the sensations coursing through her body. Her mouth felt swollen from his cock, and she could still taste his salt on her tongue. Her nipples swelled under the clips in a constant state of steadily increasing arousal. The thin chains connecting her nipples and clitoris conducted sharp, hot pleasure through her body in a continuous loop.

She arched her back, gasping as the change in position intensified the effect, then almost screaming as she settled back on the bed and discovered that the retractable rope had just enough tension in it to give her clit and nipples a delicious tug. Her thighs fell wide. Her pelvis thrust toward the ceiling. She felt as if he had driven a wedge into a tiny crack in her façade and split her wide open.

The bed slowly dipped. The chains dragged against her. It felt so good. So delicious. *Oh, my God*, she thought. *What have I done?*

Her eyes shot wide with knowledge. She'd been fighting the urge to lay herself at his feet since the very first time they spoke. She'd agreed to bottom for him damn near as soon as he'd asked. He'd barely even touched her body tonight, and she'd almost come twice. Who did she think she was fooling? She wouldn't even be here if she didn't want to submit to him, truly give up control, and there was no way she was going to be able to hold herself apart from the experience.

Johnny shed his boots and his leather pants. He prowled across the bed to settle between her thighs, and licked his lips. "Mmmm," he purred as he dipped his head. "That's a pretty picture. Everything ready and waiting for me."

His breath puffed against her, making her quake and clench. She felt his tongue swipe once, twice, through her center. The chain braced her clit between her own silver ring and his warm tongue as he swirled and suckled her. He found the hot spot just under her clit that felt like pure flame, and he licked it, over and over again, his taste buds rasping against her.

Destiny's hips arched and fell. Pleasure, as insistent and undeniable as fate, carried her onward. A girl could only handle so much sensation, and she'd passed her limit about ten minutes ago. He was going to make her come. It was only a question of when.

Johnny twisted the plug in her ass.

Now.

Her thighs tensed. Her hands fisted. She saw a wave of red as it came for her.

Destiny screamed.

Johnny pulled his mouth away from her the second before her climax hit. He sat up and crossed his arms over his chest. A devilish smile twisted his lips and pure, gleeful evil shone from his dark eyes. He looked like a demon, crouched on the bed with ropes and chains between them.

"Problem?" he asked.

The red wave receded. "No," she panted defiantly.

Johnny frowned.

“No,” she said again, more quietly.

He reached for the ceiling, making her flinch as he unhooked her clit ring first, then removed the clips from her nipples. Blood rushed back into them, wringing a groan from her throat. He reached for her.

“Submit to me, Destiny. Admit that you need this. You can hide your submissive side from yourself and everyone else, but you can’t hide it from me.”

His fingers stroked deep inside her, and just like that, the waves of red began to rise again. Her reprieve was over.

Johnny licked his fingers and tweaked her sore nipples. Her own moisture eased the path of his other hand inside her. “Your body can’t lie. Making you come would be easy enough. We both know I had you a second ago. But I am truly a sadist. I want you to beg for it. Out loud. I want to hear you say it. I want your utter submission.” He withdrew his hand from her pussy and pulled her over his lap to remove the plug. He tossed it across the room into the pile of chains on the floor.

His warm hands played lightly across her upturned ass and thighs, raising goose bumps and an exquisite awareness of every inch of her skin. She relaxed over his lap. With her face hidden and her body exposed, she surrendered.

She knew what was coming, and she wanted it. Not just the orgasm, either. Something deep inside her recognized his Dominance and accepted it. She was accustomed to getting off on her own mastery. Now, she was getting off on his. She spread her legs and thrust her pussy into his hand, begging with her body again. Would it be so hard to beg out loud, just this once? What would it feel like to give up *all* control?

His first hard slap hit her sharply on her right buttock, bringing tears to her eyes. She didn’t for a minute think they were tears of pain. She knew better.

Destiny balanced on his thighs, held in place with his strong arm across her back. Steady blows rained down on her, and she rocked back into his hand for each slap. She had seen her subs behave just like this and had thought it beautiful, so obedient, but she had never really understood until now. Yes, this was what she needed, this was what made her feel complete. Being under his hand, trusting him to give her what she craved, was the purest pleasure of her life.

She no longer trapped her whimpers in her throat or stilled the restless movement of her thighs. She gave it all to him.

If it changed her life, so be it. She was ready.

He spoke above the sharp crack of his hand on her ass. “Destiny, do you need to come?”

“Yes!” The word poured from her throat, and the relief made her dizzy. “Please make me come.” She gripped his leg, spread her thighs.

“Yes.” Johnny growled and flipped her onto the bed.

He opened a condom packet with his teeth and flipped the wrapper toward the garbage can under the nightstand. She watched him roll latex down his thick length before he followed her down to the bed. His weight pressed her into the mattress and she held her breath as his commanding body hovered at her entrance. Then, with no mercy, no quarter whatsoever, he pushed into her with a thrust that brought new tears to her eyes. She took him inside, let him remake her body around his, and in doing so, Destiny reached her limit in one beautiful, grinding spasm that shattered them both.

Johnny was thinking about Destiny's ass and getting inside its tight curve when she hurried out of the bathroom and made a beeline for her clothes. He sat up in bed. "Going somewhere?"

She nodded, eyes darting all over the bedroom, everywhere but at him. "I'll call a taxi."

"Not yet." He wasn't done with her. "You promised me a night, and it's just getting started. I've got plans for you, Mistress, and don't pretend you won't enjoy them. You want this as much as I do. I'll take you home in the morning."

"I'd really like to shower—"

"And I've got a huge bathtub." Johnny stood and crossed the room to her. He gathered her small hands in his fist and held them behind her back, forcing her body into contact with his. She caught her breath sharply and her body stiffened, but her hips shifted minutely to embrace him. The movement was so small and automatic that he doubted she was even aware of it, but it told him what he needed to know. She didn't want to leave. Now he just had to make her admit it.

Johnny leaned down to kiss her. Her lids dipped, but stayed open. He caught the back of her head, hand tangling in her dreads to angle her mouth perfectly for his. "Stay the night," he whispered against her lips. "There is so much more fun we can have together. But you know that, don't you? You know all the ways I can make you respond. What is your favorite flogger? Want to know what it feels like when it isn't in your hand?" Her mouth opened under his and he surged into her. He wasn't usually into kissing, having much more persuasive means to ensure obedience at his disposal, but he wanted to kiss Destiny. He wanted to explore every part of her.

Destiny broke their kiss. "If I stay, can I be on top?"

"No."

"Chicken."

"I don't bottom, Destiny. Not going to happen. But I would like to make you come again. I want to be inside you again. And I definitely want to make you beg again, all night, if you'll let me. Don't deny yourself the pleasure. And don't deny me, either."

She trembled in his arms. "Are you warm enough?" he asked. He checked her eyes. His eagerness to continue playing with her had made him forget what he had just put her through.

“I’m fine, über-Dom,” she said, smiling up at him, not subduing his protective instincts in the least.

“Are you hungry? Thirsty?”

She shook her head.

“Horny?” he pressed.

She laughed.

“Let me take care of you.” At her nod, he picked her up and carried her into the bathroom. He placed a towel on the edge of the tub and set her there while he drew a bath. He hoped she had the energy for the things he wanted to do to her tonight.

He eased her into the hot water, then settled himself behind her. Her petite frame fit perfectly against his large one. She was so tiny and fierce. He loved that she wore leather and had crazy hair and rode a motorcycle, yet she had submitted to him. His instincts had been right.

He cupped her small, full breasts. Her pink nipples were still flushed from the clamps. He squeezed them gently. “Sore?”

“Just a little. I like it,” she admitted.

His cock rose against her back. Destiny’s legs twitched as if, by reflex, they wanted to open for him.

He reached out of the tub and into the basket under the towel stand. When he had the vibrator he wanted, he set it on the edge of the tub and reached forward to hook her legs over his knees, nice and wide.

She moaned. Oh, yes, he definitely had things he wanted to do to her.

Johnny grabbed a handful of her hair and twisted her head to the side. Roughly, he took her mouth, thrusting his tongue between her lips. She sagged against him, opening for him, giving him what he asked for, meeting his mouth with her tongue.

He wanted to drive into her body, force her submission and make her beg again. Then he wanted to wash her, dry her, and care for her all night.

Destiny’s contradictions were contagious.

His lips gentled on her open mouth. His cock throbbed. His heart swelled.

Warning bells rang in his head.

Only one other woman had made him feel this particular combination of lust and affection. And he hadn’t quite recovered from her.

Johnny wrapped his arms more securely around the woman floating in front of him and buried his face in her neck. He wasn’t a vulnerable kid anymore; he was careful about picking his playmates. Destiny would submit to him again, and he would keep her defiance under control. He stocked everything from feathers to canes in the chest next to his bed. The other rooms Upstairs held crosses, spanking benches, shackles and cages. One way or another, he would persuade her to choose submission—because one night with Destiny was never going to be enough.



## Chapter Three

Destiny raised her head from her pillow and put it back down again. Thank God it was Sunday and Come Again was closed today. She felt like she could sleep straight through the rest of the weekend.

She peered at the clock. She almost had.

Her stomach growled. Johnny had brought her home at six this morning and tucked her into her bed. She'd missed breakfast, and she had turned down his invitation for a stop at the Original Pancake House on the way home. Now she was two hours late for lunch.

The phone rang and her heart jumped into her throat. *Idiot girl*. It probably wasn't him. Johnny had asked for one night, last night. No more.

She answered the phone. "Hello?"

"Good morning, Destiny. Are you awake?"

Her body trembled at the sound of his voice. "Barely."

"How are you feeling?" he asked.

"What's the right answer?"

He laughed, and she could picture his dark eyes snapping with humor. "Good question. Well-fucked?"

"That's about right."

"Are you ready to come back down to the club now that you've asserted your independence?"

"Am I so transparent?"

"I can concede the small things." His voice was droll. "Did you get enough sleep?"

"Depends on why you're asking."

"Why do you think?"

Destiny stretched. The truth was, she felt fabulous. "I'm starving, but other than that, I'm good to go. What did you have in mind?"

"I'd like to feed you, unclothe you and do a variety of deviant things to you until Monday morning."

Her heart skipped a beat. Man, she was so easy—too easy. Just the thought of being with him again made her body, naked beneath the sheet, begin to heat. Her mind began to let go, reaching for the zone she had inhabited last night, where thought was unnecessary and response was everything. Scary territory for someone like her. Last night, she had let him have everything, but now, back in her own bed, it seemed surreal. Last night's experiment had surprised her beyond her wildest dreams, but the fact that she was sore in unusual places didn't *really* change her life. She was a Dominant, not a submissive.

"I haven't been awake long enough to process last night, Johnny. My brain isn't stringing coherent thoughts together yet. I don't think it's a good idea to compound the problem."

"Thinking is overrated. I've been awake for two hours, and all I can think about is the way your body felt wrapped around my cock. I'm tired of thinking. I want to do something. With you."

His commanding tone affected her like a sweet vibration, waking her body, making her doubly hungry. "Johnny, what happened last night was—"

"Let me feed you."

It was a statement, not a question. If there had been any element of entreaty in his voice, she might have been able to say no, but his voice demanded obedience and Destiny found she wanted to please him.

That anomaly was going to require some serious thought come Monday morning. Her marked lack of dominance where Johnny was concerned was disturbing, to say the least. Where the hell was Destiny Blake?

On vacation, she decided, for one more day. "What's for dinner?"

"What's your pleasure?" His voice suggested things other than food.

"Pizza." It was the quickest thing she could think of.

"I'll see what I can do."

Destiny pressed the button to end the call.

Certain moments from last night stuck in her memory like sensory snapshots. The thought of his hand hitting her ass that first time plunged her instantly into the moment. She felt it again, wanted it again. When he had kissed her in the tub, and then pulled out the vibrator, her brain had shut down completely. Her body had performed for him like a Stradivarius in the hands of a virtuoso, climaxing again and again until she could barely keep her head above the water.

Finally, he had lifted her out of the tub, dried her and carried her back to his bedroom, where he fastened her facedown to the bed. She had felt so boneless lying there that she had been afraid she'd fall asleep.

Impossible.

He had begun with feathers, tickling the soles of her feet, the backs of her knees, the underside of her buttocks, the sides of her breasts. She had gasped and giggled and writhed on the bed, begging him to stop, unable to do anything but react to the tickling strokes, until the feather brushed her clit. Then her world narrowed to the tip of the feather against her flesh—a soft, airy touch that felt like an electric current pulsing through her widespread limbs. She held very still, hoping for more, arching her back, wordlessly begging.

A soft leather flogger had taken over for the feathers. Head to toe, he woke her exhausted body until every nerve clamored for release. Soon, the flogger wasn't enough, even when he slapped it in a steady beat between her thighs. She wanted more.

He gave it to her with a riding crop.

At the time, it hadn't felt like pain, but now, as she rubbed her tender, bruised buttocks, she knew he must have hurt her. Destiny pinched the sore spots on her ass. Remembering his masterful touch aroused her, and her fingertips dipped to spread her moisture over the swelling bud of her tender clit.

Her own fingers felt good, but not as good as his touch had felt last night, and she wanted to wait for him. Nothing she could do to herself would equal the pleasure she knew she would feel going to him, especially like this—dripping, needy, willing to beg.

She was looking forward to presenting herself to him again, to be fed and fucked and anything else he desired tonight so long as it made her feel good, but come Monday morning her adventure was over. She wasn't going to change her life for a man.

Not again.

Johnny met her at the outside door and led her Upstairs into the kitchen. The small table was lit with candles and set with china. A delicious-looking loaf of crusty Italian bread on the counter made her mouth water. Johnny covered a pot on the stove and placed a glass of white wine in her hand before leading her back into the main room. More bread, along with cheese and pepperoni, sat on a small tray next to the couch.

"What's all this?" Destiny asked.

"You said you were hungry for pizza, so I hoped Italian might be close enough. Nothing fancy. Just pasta and a salad. Does that sound all right?"

"Fantastic."

The playroom had been transformed overnight. Now that the lights were on and the orgy crowd was gone, she could appreciate the other focal points of the room. She wandered over to get a closer look at the framed posters on the wall behind the couch. She focused on the largest image. It was comic book art—a masked woman in skintight black leather, caught in the center of a spider web of chains. Every line of her well-sculpted body screamed with tension. She looked ready and able to fly out of that web and kick some serious ass, but the exultant look on her face made Destiny believe she was enjoying her predicament.

"Is that Catwoman?" she asked.

Johnny sank down onto the leather couch. "Black Cat."

"There's a difference?"

"As big as the difference between Batman and Spiderman."

She looked at the next poster. "Ah—there he is." It was a teasing embrace with Spiderman half unmasked and Black Cat's creamy breasts spilling out of the deep vee of her black leather catsuit. The last—a breathtaking unmasked kiss. Destiny bit her lip to hide a grin. "Hard to tell which one of them is

controlling that kiss.” Johnny hit a button on the remote and the sound system began to play something with a heavy beat that matched the pulse in her sex.

“Sit down.” He pulled her down next to him on the couch, settling her so that her side was pressed against the length of his body. They faced the huge wall screen, now dark. It felt right to be sitting next to him while he fed her bites of cheese and bread with butter. Bizarrely date-like.

“Comic books, huh?” she teased.

“We all have our thing.” His smile was brief. “I need a minute to get dinner on the table.”

He stood and she watched him go into the kitchen, admiring the stretch of his tight black T-shirt across the breadth of his shoulders and the way his slightly frayed black jeans fit his ass. His feet were bare. He seemed comfortable cooking, comfortable having her there.

Perversely, she was uncomfortable. The food smelled great, garlicky and cheesy, but she’d been a walking orgasm waiting to happen since she woke up this afternoon and the ride downtown on her motorcycle had been...interesting, to say the least. Now he was making her wait, and that was making her cranky.

She followed him into the kitchen. “Johnny?”

“Yes?” He stirred the boiling pot of pasta.

“I want to come.”

“How bad?” He didn’t turn around.

“What, like on a scale of one to ten?”

“Sure.”

“About a seven.” She put her hands on her hips.

“You can wait.” He drained the pasta into a colander in the sink and put a large frying pan onto the stove. Fresh tomatoes, basil and a pile of grated Parmesan waited on a cutting board next to the sink.

“I could have taken care of myself at home, you know,” Destiny said.

“Now that would have been a shame.” Heady garlic filled the kitchen as he sautéed it in oil. He added wine to the pan and let it simmer, then added a big chunk of butter. Her mouth began to water again. Next came the pasta, then the basil, tomatoes and cheese.

“I didn’t know you were planning on playing hard to get.” Maybe she would masturbate right here, standing in the middle of his kitchen. That would show him. She fingered the button of her jeans.

His sly glance intercepted her gesture. “Don’t even think about it. I like thinking about you soaking your panties while we’re eating dinner. Are you wet for me, Destiny?”

“Maybe.”

“Show me.”

“Hell no. Why should I?”

“Because I want to look at your pussy. Show it to me.” He twirled portions of angel hair pasta studded with tomatoes and thin ribbons of basil into two bowls. “Hurry up before our food gets cold.”

“You want me to pull my jeans down?” she asked.

“And bend over so I can see everything. Do it now, Destiny. Put your pants around your ankles and touch your toes.”

He was making her do tricks, submissive tricks, and she should tell him to go to hell. Instead, she found herself turning around, unbuttoning her jeans and shoving them, with her black panties, down over her hips. And loving it. She imagined the moisture he would see on her pussy lips when she bent over, knew he’d see her puckered asshole, knew it would turn her on that much more.

She pushed her pants down to her ankles as she reached for the floor. Bracing her hands on the tile, she bent her knees slightly and arched her back, showing him everything. “Seen enough yet?”

“Nope.” He bent down until his face was so close to her pussy, she could feel the heat of his cheeks and his breath against her core. “I haven’t seen nearly enough tonight, but I can wait.” He helped her rise and watched her pull her pants up. He fastened them for her, then he seated her at the little kitchen table with a steaming bowl of pasta and another glass of wine.

Their play hadn’t killed her appetite, thank God. “This is delicious.”

“I’m glad you like it.”

Destiny ate every bite in her bowl, every piece of bread he buttered for her, and she finished all her wine. She pushed her plate away and sat back expectantly.

Johnny stood and stretched his arms above his head, smiling innocently. “Want to watch a movie?” he asked.

She tossed her napkin at him.

“Me neither.” Quickly, he rinsed the dishes and stacked them in the dishwasher, waving away her offer of help.

Johnny held out his hand and drew her down the hall. Starting with her boots, he undressed her and laid her on the bed. She moaned as his hands grazed her nipples. He stopped to pinch them, roll them between his fingers until they hardened. He bent to lave the hard points beneath his tongue until they stood up like red raspberries, pebbled and moist. She wanted to scream at him to get on with it, to finish her.

Johnny traced a line down her stomach to her pussy, and she almost cheered. Gratefully, she spread her legs, offering herself to him, but he only chuckled and flipped her over on the bed. He pinched her bottom, sharp little teases that made her thighs come apart again.

“I played you hard last night.”

She squirmed as his hand stroked her tender buttocks. At last, he slipped a finger into her wet folds, teasing her clit once, twice, before he took his hand away from her. Destiny mewled a protest which she cut off abruptly as he pressed the tip of his wet finger into her rectum.

“I want to put my cock right here,” he said, punctuating the words with his wide finger. “Have you ever been fucked in the ass?”

“Yes.” One-word answers were easier, and they would get her there faster.

“Do you like it?”

“Yes.”

“I didn’t hear you.”

“Yes, please.” Bastard.

“Please what?”

“Please fuck me anywhere you want, but do it now.” Desire sharpened her tone.

“Oh, Destiny, that wouldn’t be fair. I have to get you ready first.”

“No!” She screamed into the pillow and thrashed her legs.

He laughed.

She heard a drawer open, shut. Then his weight on the bed. He tossed a pile of toys onto the mattress next to her. “Hands and knees, Destiny.” She scrambled up onto all fours and waited. Cool gel squished against her ass.

The first plug felt small. When it was inside her, he pulled her to her knees. Holding her hands to her sides, he bent to suck her clit. His tongue was hot, clever. And gone.

She gazed at him helplessly, furiously.

His smile was knowing as he pushed her back down to the bed and replaced the plug with a larger one. Again, he situated her up on her knees and nursed her clit with his lips and tongue. Smooth fire coursed along the surface of her skin. Her entire consciousness was centered on the tip of his tongue as it flicked back and forth over her clit. He varied the pressure and the tempo so that she could never quite latch onto a rhythm that would bring her release.

He gave a hard suckle and drew her whole clit into his mouth, grazing it with his teeth. Then he let her go.

She eagerly accepted a larger plug—anything to get his mouth back where she needed it. He spread her labia apart with his fingers, forcing her swollen clit out of hiding.

She was so close now, she couldn’t even breathe. His tongue pressed against her clit, following its root into her channel, undulating, pulsing, keeping her on the edge while his lips massaged her pussy.

She sobbed as he took his mouth away again and rose to stand beside the bed. “I’ll take your ass now, Destiny.”

She collapsed on the bed and scooted to its edge. He thrust pillows under her chest to support her body. She heard foil rip. He slid the plug from her depths, and she felt empty and desolate until the fat head of his cock pressed against her.

For a split second, she wondered how the hell he was going to cram that monster inside her, even with the help of the plugs. Then Johnny reached around to stroke her clit with firm fingers and she knew. He would get his cock inside her because she wanted it there. She pressed into him as he forced past her tight ring of muscle and entered her.

Ass-fucking was an art, as Johnny seemed to know, because he held perfectly, inhumanly still as her body stretched to accommodate him. As usual, it burned at first and made her feel claustrophobic as hell. Every other time her ass had been breached, it had been on her demand and with her explicit directions on how she wanted it done. This time, she had given control to Johnny, and thinking of that fact made her moan.

After three deep, shuddering breaths, she was ready for more.

His fingers stroked her clit, steadily bringing arousal past the burning fullness in her ass. Soon, his insistent fingers were not enough. She needed him to move. Now. She wiggled her ass in invitation.

"I'm all the way in," he drawled.

"Newsflash," she said hoarsely.

His chuckle was rough. He scraped his fingers down the long length of her back, forcing her to arch as his hands gripped her waist. He surged forward. "Let's get this party started."

His fingers flashed around her body, lighting fires. She let him do the work, bucking her hips just a tiny necessary inch or so. The slight pain made her swell and put a more desperate edge on her pleasure.

Johnny thrust a hand underneath her to pinch her nipples, one after the other, hard, reminding her of what he had done to them last night. She gasped at the memory. Then his hand was between her legs, pinching her clit, squeezing it between his fingers. She felt more cool gel trickle over her anus. Destiny knew what that meant, and she welcomed it.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

In response, she pushed herself back on his cock.

"You like my cock in your ass?"

She groaned and scrubbed her face against the pillow.

"Say it," he commanded. "Tell me how much you like it. Make it sound good."

He rubbed her clit, harder than before, wringing the words from her throat. "I love it," she ground out between clenched teeth. "I love your cock, Johnny. Fuck my ass. Fuck it and make me come, please!"

"God, you have the sweetest mouth. Such a good girl. Come, Destiny. Come with my cock in your ass."

With that, he leaned toward the pile of toys next to them on the bed, taking her body with him. When he centered them again, she heard a buzz that made her heart pound in her throat. He tucked a vibrating bullet into her right hand, and she snatched it, thrusting the powerful vibe against her sweet spot. Relief made her wail.

Johnny began to fuck her ass in long, even strokes. She couldn't hold the pleasure in her body any longer and began to scream long, keening wails of frustration. Her clit was a fireball between her legs. She was frantic to take the edge off, desperate to come.

Destiny howled into the pillow beneath her face and climaxed. She jammed the slippery vibe harder against her clit, trapped it against bone, and came a second time. She felt electrocuted, like the vibrator and his cock surging in and out of her ass were the only things connecting her to sanity, and she didn't ever want to stop or she'd lose her mind.

"Jesus Christ," Johnny groaned behind her. His cock was so far inside her that she could feel his balls rub her pussy. His hands bruised her waist. Destiny dropped the buzzing vibrator and braced herself with both hands to accept every inch he could give her.

She reveled in Johnny's harsh shout as he came.

It was minutes before either of them moved. Finally, his hands softened on her hips and she braced herself for the dismount. Again, he showed his expertise as he slipped his cock out of her ass by gently pressing his fingers against her stinging opening. He stimulated the burning flesh, forcing synapses to fire until the worst of the stretching pain went away. Then he rolled her off her pillow tower and covered her up, dropping a kiss on her sweaty forehead. "Hold tight."

She heard water running in the bathroom. Her pussy throbbed and burned, amped up so high that it was going to take a nuclear bomb to bring her back down.

Johnny returned to the bedroom. "It'll just take a minute to fill the tub." He raised an eyebrow. "You need a little more?"

How did he know?

He grinned. "Lots of girls get overstimulated during ass play and need a little attention afterward. Do you want the vibe?"

She bit her lip.

"Go ahead. I'll watch."

He put the still-buzzing bullet into her hand and pulled the covers from her body. Destiny cranked the vibe to full power and discovered the high-quality device might just be in nuclear range.

She pressed the soles of her feet together, knees spread apart like a butterfly's wings, and touched the tip of the vibrator to the spot that ached between her legs. Immediately, she began to tremble and spasm. Sweet Jesus, she was going to die if she didn't come one more time, right now. Just a little more would send her off the edge again, more fully, less frantically. She just needed a second to get there. "Ahhhhhh," she cried, riding a rocket without any brakes. The vibrator blasted against her, and if she couldn't keep up, she'd get numb, and then she'd never come. Tears of frustration slipped down the sides of her face.



Johnny reached over her chest to give her nipple a sharp twist, a twist that she felt in her clit like a firebolt. His fingers danced around the edges of her labia, teasing, rubbing, slipping, just nudging the tiniest bit into her pussy. Her full lips were sensitive and his touch took her higher.

What else might he do to help her come? Ram her pussy with a fat dildo? Torture her nipples? Use her ass again? Her spiraling thoughts carried her to the edge of orgasm, and Johnny's knowing fingers pushed her over the cliff.

"Thank you," she breathed, when she could speak.

"My pleasure," he answered. "Bath now?"

She opened one eye. "That would be lovely."

He grinned. "Will you have another orgasm if I tell you I have a chocolate cheesecake in the fridge?"

"Not impossible."

"I'll bring the bullet just in case." Johnny pulled the vibe from her nerveless hand and silenced it.

She tried to mimic his aplomb. "Wined, dined, ass-fucked and now chocolate? I know why all the little girls talk about you now. Is there a chance you're going to hand-feed me the cake while I sit in the bathtub?"

"Only if you let me fuck you while you eat it."

She cocked her head and frowned. "There are certain pleasures I don't like to combine."

Johnny guffawed. "Finally, something you won't do."

"I like my chocolate straight is all. Not a crime." For some reason she felt like she needed to defend herself. She reached for the sheet and tucked it around her body for the trip to the bathroom.

Johnny shook his head. "Not a crime at all." He grabbed the edge of the sheet and tugged. It hit the floor. "But covering up that body is."

She swept by him. "Whatever."

Johnny's soft chuckle made her grin, even as his sharp smack on her sore ass sent her scurrying toward the bathroom.

"You get comfortable. I'll get the cake."

The tub was almost full, and the water temperature was perfect. Thick bubbles swirled in a fragrant froth as she eased into the tub. She'd better watch her step. A girl could get used to submission if it always felt like this.

## Chapter Four

“You are never going to believe what I did over the weekend.” Destiny deftly straightened a crooked vibrator on the rainbow display that lined the back wall of Come Again and shot a smug glance at her boss.

Bonita swept her long, blond hair out of her green eyes and put her hands on her hips. “Usually when you say something like that, you’re right.”

“I bottomed for Johnny Delcorral.”

Her boss stopped smiling. “You did what?”

Destiny continued to restock the vibrator display. “Yup. I don’t know what got into me. One minute I was staring into the sub corner Downtown trying to decide who to bring home with me, and the next minute I was discussing hard limits with Norton’s most infamous Dom.” Destiny didn’t need to explain further. She had introduced Bonita to the club a few months ago. Duck, hello water. Bonita was a natural submissive.

Bonita cocked her head to the side. “Who was your safe call?”

“Uh—” The cautious question caught Destiny flat-footed. Her hand faltered, and she had to stoop to pick up several plastic-covered purple, sparkly jelly dongs.

Bonita’s trademark calm, cool and collected expression was replaced with a frown. “Oh, Destiny.”

Her boss’s disapproval punched a hole in the happy bubble she had been carrying around since she left Johnny this morning. “It’s not like he was some stranger I picked up on the street. I’ve known him for years—”

“You’ve known *of* him for years. You don’t know anybody until you put a whip in his hand.”

“Easy, girl, your cynicism is showing. Anyway, I felt safe. We scened at the bar. Did you know there’s an upstairs?”

Bonita was still frowning. “I’ve heard rumors.”

“C’mon, Bonita, give it a break. He’s an upstanding businessman. He owns the bar, for God’s sake—”

“Two actually. He’s got another one in Snyder. A yuppie watering hole.” Bonita’s words underscored Destiny’s ignorance.

Destiny put her hands on her hips, a sex toy clutched in each fist. “You’ve made your point. Now you’re just torturing me.”

Bonita laughed and relented. “All right, all right, we’ll get back to safety measures later. You bottomed? What brought that on? Did you like it?”

“It was fucking fantastic.”

Bonita nodded her understanding. “Are you going to try it with another Dom?”

Destiny tilted her head. “Huh? I haven’t thought about it. I just assumed I’d see him again.” The words were out of her mouth before she had a chance to think about them, to realize her mistake. “Oh, shit.” She dropped a King Kong Dong with a fat thud. “Oh, shit. Shit. Fuck!”

Bonita bit her lip. “Maybe we should discuss this over coffee before you destroy all my stock and scare the customers away. Hey, Crystal?” Bonita called toward the counter where the other salesgirl was ringing out a customer. “Can you hold down the fort for a while? I’ll bring you a cappie.”

“Yeah, sure,” Crystal called back.

They tossed the toys back into their box, and Destiny carried it into the back hallway while Bonita grabbed their purses from the office. Destiny slung her bag over her shoulder as they headed for the front door. The bell tinkled above their heads as they left the shop. Destiny pulled a revitalizing breath of hot city blacktop air into her lungs and thought about how she was going to justify her actions to her friend.

They ducked into the coffee shop on the corner and placed their order. When they were seated with their drinks, Destiny lifted her chin. “It felt different.”

“For you, sweetie. It was your first time on the bottom. Everything felt different to you. I hate to be a party pooper, but I don’t want you to get hurt, either. Subs talk. Johnny Delcorral is notorious for two things—his big cock and the fact that he has zero tolerance for insubordination. You don’t exactly fit the submissive profile, sweetie. Are you sure he’s a good starter Dom for you? Have you set up another date?”

Destiny shook her head, trying not to let her worry show.

“Do you want to talk about it?”

She did. She really did, but she didn’t want to hear anything else that might make her feel like an idiot, or a failure, or both.

“I won’t judge. I promise. I won’t tell, either.” Mischief lit Bonita’s green eyes. “I have to say, I can’t fault your taste. If I liked men, I’d want to call him *Sir* too.”

Destiny’s grin returned. “He didn’t ask me to call him *Sir*. He just cooked me dinner, made me come about five hundred times, and then fed me amazing chocolate cheesecake while I floated in his bathtub.”

Bonita’s eyes reflected disbelief. “We’re talking about the same guy, right? Tattoos, shaved head, wicked hand with a flogger—or so I’ve heard? None of the girls have ever mentioned cheesecake or spending the night.”

Destiny shrugged. “Two nights.”

“Oh, sweetie, you really better be careful now.”

After that, Bonita kept her promise. She didn’t say anything else that made Destiny feel bad, but it was too late. Her happy bubble was gone.

In all likelihood, Bonita was right. Johnny wouldn't call her again. The next time she saw him, it would be at the club. She would be back in her usual Dominant role again and he wouldn't single her out. How would she handle that? Poorly, she thought. No matter how much she wanted to deny it, something had changed inside her last weekend.

Johnny's wicked voice made her nerves sing. A flick of his eyebrow and she soaked her panties. It had been ridiculously easy to sink to her knees in front of him. He affected her on a physical and emotional level that was unlike anything she had ever experienced. His arrogance, his dominance, the angle at which he held his shoulders, the way he planted his feet on the floor and the mischievous gleam in his eyes drew her to him.

Would they draw her to another Dominant man too? Now that she had opened herself up to submission, would she respond to another Dom in the same way she had responded to Johnny? The thought chilled her. On the flip side, did she still want to Dominate her blond subs from the club? That prospect left her even colder.

Bonita interrupted her freight train of thought. "Hey, why don't you take the rest of the day off? Crystal and I can handle the store."

"Really?" Destiny jumped at the reprieve. Considering she'd logged about eight hours sleep all weekend, a nap sounded pretty good. Coffee notwithstanding, she was about to fall over. "Thanks, Bonita."

"Anytime, sweetie. I mean that. Our world is complicated. If you ever want to talk, I'm here. Talking helps a lot."

Destiny leaned down to give her boss a hug. "Who do you talk to, Bonita?"

"I have several well-qualified voices in my head with whom I debate on a regular basis. I hate to sound clichéd, but it's a little different for me."

"Because you're gay?"

"Among other things." Her smile was wry.

"I hope you know that I can listen too. Almost as well as I can talk."

Bonita cleared her throat. "I'll keep that in mind. Back to you, though. What are you going to do about Johnny?"

"Nothing, yet. I'm going to go home and hit the reset button. He knows where to find me if he wants me."

"Good girl." Her lips curved in an encouraging grin.

She left Bonita in the coffee shop and headed for the back lot of Come Again where her bike was parked, calling for Chinese food as she walked. As she secured her purse in her motorcycle bag, her thoughts moved slowly. Was she a Domme, a sub or a switch? Her submissive vacation with Johnny was over, but she didn't feel like her old self anymore.

Something had begun to change inside her the moment she had accepted his challenge, and she wasn't able to deny it anymore. As Johnny had said, there was no strength in denial. Now she had to figure out what exactly had shifted and how she was going to move forward.

Monday afternoon, Johnny woke up with a hard-on and an empty bed. Neither was unusual for him, but feeling impatient and lonely, damn it, was downright bizarre.

Most Mondays, he woke up thinking about the bars and thought of little else until the tills were counted on Saturday night. His businesses were closed on Sunday, a day he generally used to recover from Saturday and get ready for Monday. He had never cut out early on a Saturday, nor left the counting for the next day. Other than making the bank deposit before calling Destiny yesterday afternoon, he hadn't given the bars a thought all weekend. It was way past time to get back to work.

He rolled out of bed and headed for the shower, making a mental list. It was fetish night Upstairs tonight, so he needed to get the plastic tarps out of storage. Fetish night was usually a quieter night, but it did tend to get messy. He'd also need to set up an extra storage rack for all the special gear the members would bring with them. He stepped into the shower and turned it on full blast. The icy water cleared his head. Before he did anything else today, he needed to check in with his managers Uptown and Downtown to see what they needed from him. The bars pretty much ran themselves now, but he stayed in the loop as much as possible without being an asshole about it. As the water began to warm up, he grabbed the soap, glad the cleaning service had worked their magic yesterday morning. One less thing to worry about today.

His Uptown clientele required little other than booze from him. The Downtown crowd was a bit more intense, but Johnny had found that people into true kink had a healthy respect for rules. They didn't give him too much trouble. Anyone who didn't follow the house rules got one warning before they were escorted to the door, often by him but occasionally by his sharp-eyed bouncers.

It was the Upstairs club that demanded the bulk of his time. That world required serious management skills, but not because of the members' behavior. The rule Upstairs was simple—respect your partners. He never gave anyone a key to the door unless he was absolutely certain they would follow that one simple command. After that, the members policed each other. He allowed safe sex and minimal drinking, since there was a bar downstairs, after all. Those he allowed Upstairs enjoyed the privilege and caused even less trouble than the bar crowd, but he had discovered the devil was in the details.

Over the five years Upstairs had been open, Johnny had put together a loyal and dedicated staff to help him keep things running smoothly, but he controlled the action. All of the smaller, private rooms were booked through him and constantly monitored by video. They had to be restocked and disinfected daily because his members paid a hefty yearly maintenance fee to have their dungeons kept in tip-top shape. The main playroom cycled through the nights of the week, one theme each night, culminating with the weekly

Saturday night orgy. Keeping the kink running smoothly kept him busy. For that reason, he rarely joined in the fun, except to put on an occasional show. Buzz was everything, and he didn't want his reputation to go soft. Sex had become his business.

Thank God he'd turned off the monitor in his bedroom Saturday night. If anyone had witnessed his performance with Destiny, he'd be the laughingstock of the Norton BDSM community. His play had been soft and sloppy, and his self-control had been missing in action. For God's sake, he hadn't even instructed her to call him *Sir*, something so basic to BDSM play that it was almost a necessity, a way for both of them to internalize their roles.

That first night, when she had been slow to obey, he should have punished her, not fastened the chain around her pussy himself. He had wanted to make her submit, and he had, but he hadn't expected to enjoy her defiance. He hadn't known he'd love her sense of humor and the way she gave as good as she got. He'd thrown away a prime opportunity to curb her wild streak and spent the weekend enjoying it, instead. What the fuck? He had never behaved that way with a sub in his life.

Some Dom he was.

Every taste of her had dissolved another layer of his control until it had felt like she, not he, was the one in command of their play. He was shocked she hadn't noticed his poor form and called him on it. She was an experienced Dominant, after all. All that kissing? Making love in the bathtub? Calling her back Sunday night for what—a date? Dinner and dessert and a whole lot of straight-up vanilla fucking? There had been no discussion, no negotiations, and nothing to set boundaries on a relationship that needed structure and rules to exist. With behavior like that, he'd kick himself out of his own BDSM club.

Her effect on him was as unique as she was. His hand on her bare ass had felt like a key in a lock. Now he couldn't shake their perfect fit. After last weekend, he knew he should stay away from her. Girls like Destiny were unpredictable. Thrill-seekers. They took every dare that came their way and did dangerous things when they got bored. He'd learned that lesson a lifetime ago with Lisa. Her quest for adventure had killed her, and from what he had observed of Destiny, she was made from a similar mold. Still, she fascinated him.

Johnny stood under the scalding spray, rinsing off the soap and struggling to pull something positive out of the weekend. She had clearly enjoyed herself, in spite of his poor performance. Maybe she would consider last weekend a warm-up in her submissive training and give him a chance to redeem himself. He could invite her to play with him again Friday night, at Master and slave night Upstairs.

If she said no, he'd know that submission was a one-time deal for her, that she was already looking for a new adventure, and he'd forget about her.

But if she said yes, he could prove himself to be a real Master, and, as an added bonus, their public play would give his reputation a boost...just in case she spilled the beans to anyone about that whole crazy bathtub and cheesecake episode.

He turned off the water and grabbed a towel, drying himself as he padded into his bedroom to find his cell phone.

First he would call his bar managers. Then he would put the Upstairs staff to work protecting the furniture. After that, he would have plenty of time to call Destiny to set up their date. This time, he'd make sure she understood everything he expected from her. Respect. Consideration. Obedience. And he'd make damn sure he stayed in control.

## Chapter Five

Destiny swore as the loud ring of her cell phone nearly made her nick her ankle with the razor. She dried her hands and answered the phone, glad she had brought it into the bathroom with her. “Hello?”

“Hello, Destiny. How are you?”

Ever the solicitous Dom. She grinned. “Wet. I’m in the tub.”

As usual, the rumble in his voice woke her body. She gripped her phone carefully and settled back in the water to enjoy the effect he had on her.

“How wet are you?” he asked. She could hear the grin in his voice.

“Do you want me to check?” Destiny’s hand was already sliding under the water.

“I do.”

The hot water didn’t prevent her own moisture from coating her finger. She sighed.

“Do you miss me?”

“Maybe. Less now.” She circled the tip of her clit with her middle finger.

“I’d like to scene with you at the club this weekend, Destiny.” A thrill shot through her. “It’s Master and slave night Upstairs on Friday. Are you ready for that?”

“I don’t know,” she said slowly. “Let me think about it.” She hadn’t figured out where she belonged in the power dynamic yet, but the idea of sitting naked at his feet in a submissive pose in a room full of people made her want to stroke her clit hard and come fast against her fingers. How much more thought was required?

“We could practice first,” he suggested.

“What do you mean?”

“Right now, we could practice. Will you follow my commands?”

The thought of him telling her to do things—and her doing them—made her tremble. Her knees fell open against the sides of the tub. “Yes.” She would follow his commands.

“Good. Are you finished in the bath? Have you prepared yourself for me?”

“Not quite.”

“Finish up, then. Dry yourself. Before you call me back, I want you to find a butt plug and put it in your ass. Do you have a toy like that?”

“Yes.” Her voice was husky, and because he hadn’t told her not to, she slid one long finger into her pussy. She ground her palm against her clit.



“Don’t touch your clit or your nipples yet.” His voice was hard, and she snatched her hand away, hoping the splash didn’t betray her. “When you are properly prepared for me, sit on the edge of your bed and pinch your nipples until they are very hard. Make sure your pussy is wet. And Destiny?”

His stern command was a promise and a warning. “Don’t forget to call me *Sir*.”

## Chapter Six

On Master and slave night, Destiny called for a taxi, enjoying her pantyless state this time. Johnny had been quite specific about what he wanted her to wear—a little black dress and the same boots she had worn the other night. No bra, no panties.

Mac waved her in.

Tonight, Johnny was sitting at the bar, not standing behind it. His gaze slid over her body with approval. Her breath stopped in her throat as he casually slipped his hand beneath her dress and caressed her bare bottom. One finger slid between her cheeks and she shuddered.

“Let’s get you upstairs.”

She followed him down the hall and up the short flight of steep stairs. He pushed open the door at the top and stepped through. She followed.

The large playroom had been torn apart. The couch had been broken down and scattered throughout the room to form more intimate seating arrangements. Small tables with shelves held drinks, water bottles and toys. The space held both dark corners and spotlight play areas. It throbbed with sensual music pitched just low enough to allow the sounds of leather on flesh and the moans of the slaves to rise above the steady beat.

Johnny snapped his fingers. Two naked women came forward. They didn’t wear traditional collars but instead had matching bands of colorful Celtic tattoos around their necks, very similar to the ones that covered Johnny’s arms and shoulders.

“Eyes down, Destiny.”

She obeyed, but tried to catch as much as she could with her peripheral vision. One woman reached for the hem of Destiny’s dress and pulled it over her head. The other bent to remove her boots.

“Leave them.”

“Yes, Sir.”

This was a world she had read about, dreamed about, but never thought she would experience, especially as a slave. She had always fantasized on the other side of the fence. Or had she? How else would she have known how to please a sub except by dreaming of being one herself?

Johnny led her across the room and pressed her down to her knees next to a low leather chair. With his booted foot, he nudged her thighs apart. Her breasts, with their hard, flushed tips, filled her vision. Lower, the plump lips of her sex were also visible. She felt so secure here, with him. Naked, exposed,

aroused, trusting him to keep her safe and make her happy. She hoped she had done that with her subs, hoped she had made them feel honored and peaceful.

Johnny's low voice broke through her reverie. "You may look around now, Destiny."

She raised her head. The focal point of the room was a small raised dais which held a St. Andrew's cross. The height from the floor was perfect for a whip. For closer work, there was enough room on the stage for a Master to use a flogger or a crop—even a cane. A scene was just ending. One of the nude servant girls stepped onto the stage with a towel and a spray bottle of disinfectant.

Across the room, throaty moans sounded from the lips of a slave who had been bound with black silk. Her arms were crossed behind her head and her calves were bound to her thighs. Her position forced her breasts high and exposed her bare, pink pussy to the room. Destiny watched, enthralled, as each person who stopped to talk to her Master was invited to finger the slave's pussy or pluck her rouged nipples.

"See anything that interests you?" Johnny's black eyes were intent on her face. His body was tense. His erection bulged against the front of his leather pants.

Before she could answer, a familiar whisper sounded above her.

"Destiny?"

She scrambled to her feet as she recognized the shocked face of Damian Boudreaux. With a jolt, she realized she hadn't thought of him all week. Damian was being led by a silver chain attached to a ring in his hard cock. She stifled a hysterical giggle as she realized his jewelry still matched her own—the last link between them.

"Damian? What are you doing here?" This wasn't the way it was supposed to happen. When she saw Damian again, she had planned to be surrounded by adoring male subs. Then he'd know that leaving her had been a mistake.

"Johnny, it's been too long!" Damian's Mistress had silky raven hair, sharp brown eyes, and wore slick, red leather the devil would envy.

"Karina, good to have you back." Johnny pressed his lips to the cheek of the black-haired witch.

"New girl?"

"In a manner of speaking." Destiny cursed the flush that crept across her chest. She was grateful to Johnny for not explaining further. At his sharp gesture, she sank to the floor and kept her head bowed to conceal her face.

"Are you planning to share her?" Karina's voice held polite curiosity.

*When hell fucking freezes over,* Destiny thought.

Johnny's laugh was easy. "We're still getting used to each other."

"Too bad. Love her hair."

"Thanks. Enjoy yourself tonight. Let me know if there is anything you need," Johnny said.

Destiny lifted her head to watch Damian's smooth, tan back as he obediently followed his Mistress. Of course, he'd have to follow her with that leash on his cock. God, he was still beautiful. Golden. His blond hair was long and artfully tousled, with thick waves that begged fingers to stroke it, tangle in it, use it to control his willing body.

Destiny's heart lurched. The peaceful glow that had suffused her body—hell, her whole being—had been replaced by shame. She wanted her clothes, her leather, her dignity back. It was ironic that after topping every blond sub in Norton, she would see Damian again while she was crouched at the feet of a man who was so fucking Dom he made her own painfully acquired skills seem childish in comparison.

"Up, Destiny."

Thank God, Johnny was going to get her out of here. She stood and followed him eagerly.

She swallowed against the knot in her throat when he stopped at a flat, padded table near the center of the room. Dread made the saliva in her mouth feel thick. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Damian's Mistress sit on a couch to watch. Damian sank to the floor beside her.

"Facedown, slave. I'm going to paddle you for speaking out of turn." Johnny's voice was light, teasing, but there was hard steel underneath, and it made her angry. She fought the unexpected urge to run from the room and hide in a closet, preferably under a dozen blankets. It wasn't too late to say no. She climbed onto the table slowly, trying to give herself time to think.

She had agreed to this, but her body was a tense, vibrating board. Unless she figured out what was going on in her head, she was afraid when Johnny struck her she might rise from the table and wallop him a good one right back. Damian's presence changed everything.

She sensed his arm draw back and desperately tried to channel any one of the times Johnny had made her come last weekend, to remember the pleasure his spankings had brought her. She was going to embarrass them both if she couldn't get a grip on her temper.

The paddle hit her ass with a sharp *thwack*. Destiny cried out. It was just a light blow, a warm-up, really, but helpless tears wet the cold leather beneath her cheek.

Johnny leaned over her, casting a shadow across her face and concealing her tears. "Who's making you cry? Him or me?" he whispered tightly.

The hot tears fell faster. "Him," she croaked.

"At least you're honest."

"I can explain," she said in a broken whisper.

"I sure as hell hope so. I don't know what that pretty boy means to you, but it's something, and from the look in your eyes, something big."

Destiny tried to rise from the table, but Johnny held her down with one hand between her shoulder blades.

"Yellow," she said. It was more a breath than a word.

He released his hold on her. “You are going to absolutely ruin my reputation,” he said softly.

Destiny flinched. She couldn’t disappoint Johnny. Not this way, in his club, in front of a crowd. She pressed her chest to the table and forced the words out of her mouth. “I’m sorry, Sir. You may do whatever you like with me, as we agreed.” The words were dull and wooden, but she felt better saying them.

“Damn it, Destiny, I told you, it’s only fun if you want it.” His quiet voice shifted, lost its angry edge, and when she looked at him, humor lit his dark eyes, thawing the icy glare that had chilled her to the core. “Let’s split the difference. I’ve known Mistress Karina a long time. She’s a genius with a cane in her hand. Your little boyfriend must like it rough, huh?”

Destiny’s miserable nod made her cheek slide on the wet leather.

His lips twitched. “You want me to make him jealous for you?” She felt his fingers slide over her back, following the knobs of her spine from the nape of her neck to the top of her ass.

She shivered. “You know how to cane?”

Johnny’s hand dipped to caress her buttocks. He nodded. “From the cradle to the cane. Do you trust me?”

Destiny bit her lip. She wanted him to Dominate her—for reasons she didn’t understand and with a strength that was impossible to explain. Her beautiful, submissive boys had never inspired the rush she had felt playing with Johnny. But did she trust him? With a cane in his hand?

She flicked a glance at the couch where Damian crouched. Anger dried her tears. Fickle, fucking pretty boy. Her first reaction to seeing him had been an instant, knee-jerk surge of pent-up longing. Desire for Damian was a habit, a dull reflex of memory. She had shaped her sexuality around his desire to submit, and her innate talent for Dominance had made exploring BDSM with Damian feel natural, logical, almost inevitable. Even after he was gone, she had continued to move deeper into the BDSM world.

Now she had discovered a whole new submissive side of herself, a side she didn’t want to deny. It had been a long time since she had taken pleasure in being on top. The night Johnny had summoned her in the bar, she’d been bored out of her skull. How long had it been since she’d felt real desire? How long had it been since she’d felt real, period?

Destiny brought her gaze back to Johnny. Perhaps her Dominant identity should have disappeared with Damian. The more she had struggled to maintain it, the more hollow she had become. Johnny was offering her a chance to recover her identity in a way she would never have considered. Her awareness of Damian, kneeling obediently at his Mistress’s feet, disappeared.

Her path was simple now, and effortless. She whispered the word, only loud enough for Johnny to hear, “Green.”

Excitement spiked his heartbeat. Destiny wanted him to cane her. He couldn't ask for a better opportunity to show her his Dominant side.

Johnny took a slow, controlled breath. If she trusted him enough to let him do this, he sure as hell had to get his head in the right space to do it properly. Which meant he had to lose the anger that had dogged him ever since Karina had arrived with her slave.

Destiny had shriveled at his feet the minute they walked in the room. He wasn't stupid. He'd watched her Downtown, and every sub she took out of the club looked exactly like that guy. Who was he? What did he mean to her? And why the hell was she crying?

"I'll be right back." He crossed the room to choose a clear Lexan cane from a stand in the corner. He would have preferred rattan, but he didn't want to leave Destiny long enough to run back to his bedroom.

She looked luminous on the table, her petite, naked form outlined in black leather. She jumped when he brushed the hair off her shoulders, but settled under his steady caresses. He eased her black boots from her feet and began to massage them, taking as much information from her body as he could. Her calves were tense, her thighs solid bands of tight muscle, but slowly she began to unwind beneath his fingers.

His hands moved up her body. Ah, that ass, that perfect round ass. His fingers curved around her sweet spot, just above either side of her inner thigh. Glorious. He stroked one finger down the length of her tailbone, then forced himself higher, gliding over her lower back. Her ribs and shoulder blades were clearly outlined beneath her pale flesh, and he worshiped each hill and valley of her ribcage with his fingertips. He would place his strokes very carefully between her ribs and not have to worry about hurting her—well, causing damage, anyway.

His palms soothed her shoulders until her trapezius no longer felt like handfuls of tight rubber bands and her deep, even breaths told him she was as relaxed as she was going to get.

Should he bind her? Would she hold still for him? He liked the idea of her choosing his touch, but it might be simpler for her to process being hit with a cane if he tied her to the table. The ropes would symbolically restrict her free will, just as they physically restrained her body, taking the choice away from her, making it easier for her to bear.

It was the sadist in him that refused to reach for the cuffs. Instead, he began to tap her body with his fingers. He concentrated on the area between her spine and her shoulder blade, between each rib, over her ass and her thighs—dull thuds intended to ready her for the stroke of his cane. He kept one hand on her, always, to keep her accustomed to his touch. Destiny was a stubborn one—she might not tell him what she needed, but her body couldn't lie. He would sense any disturbances in her muscles.

He began to rub her back with the cane, visiting all the places he had readied with his hands. He bounced a light blow across her shoulder. She didn't move. Perfect. He continued lightly, testing each stroke, more flutter than sting. A soft sigh broke from her lips.

Last weekend, he had learned her body with a flogger and a crop, but a cane had a lot less give to it. He would take the time to learn her limits again. Destiny liked pain with her pleasure, but he had two things working against him—she'd never been caned before, and she had some sort of major headfuck going on tonight. He had to work her slowly, gradually increasing the intensity of each blow. Best-case scenario, she'd fall in love with his cane. Worst-case scenario, she'd get stiff as a board and he'd have to end the scene or risk hurting her.

He stroked her lightly, working his way down her body, waiting for her muscles to turn to taffy under his hands. He planned to drive her so firmly into subspace that her body became an extension of his will. By the time he was finished with her, she would have so many endorphins flooding her system, she'd take any stroke he dished out and beg for more.

Destiny giggled as he landed a flurry of soft taps right in the middle of her butt, making the softly muscled globes jiggle. He focused his attention on her responses, completely blocking out everything but the slight weight of the cane in his hand, the distance between their bodies and the force and speed with which his arm swept through the air. He aimed lower, near her sweet spot, making her gasp. It wasn't a high-pitched sound of discomfort—more a squeal of surprise.

He continued to land blows on the lower curve of her buttock, watching carefully. When he saw her hips arch into his movement, then flex toward the table, satisfaction made his cock throb painfully against the leather confines of his pants. He ignored it. He'd been ignoring his erection for so long that the sting at the base of his spine was his new normal. He switched to the other side of her body and started at her shoulders again.

She was so calm and accepting of his touch that he felt Godlike. He had to force himself not to rush down her body to reach her soft ass again. He wanted to stroke it with his cane, over and over, sending vibrations straight into her pussy. He wanted to see what would happen to her when he did, but first, he was going to draw it out and make them both wait for it. She trusted him to give her what she needed, and he was going to make it unforgettable for her.

Johnny was careful not to hit her hard enough to leave lasting marks. The bright red stripes on her skin would not be there tomorrow. For now, though, she was a pretty piece of work. He labored to keep the lines symmetrical, pacing himself, waiting for her ass.

He was almost there and already her hips were moving again. He caught her rhythm and matched it with the cane. Destiny's eyes were shut and her mouth hung softly open. Breathy, guttural moans drifted from her lips in time with the beat of his cane. She was totally under, tuned in to the sensations he was giving her, and as unaware of her surroundings as he was. He didn't give a crap about Karina and her boy toy anymore. He was going to make Destiny come with his cane.

Her breath hitched, became a pant. Was she falling or coming? Her muscle tension increased across her thighs and buttocks. Johnny made a snap decision and vibrated the cane on the lower curve of her buttock as quickly and lightly as he could, catching the bounce and sending the energy back into her body.

She was definitely coming.

He switched sides and gave her other buttock the same treatment, finishing with a series of gradually lessening strokes on the fleshiest part of her ass. She was breathing deeply, almost as if she had fallen asleep, and her hips still rocked slightly, tempting him to climb onto the table and crawl inside her.

He leaned down to brush a kiss on her temple.

“Good?”

She rolled over and stretched her arms above her head in a gesture of pure female enticement. Her thighs fell open, and just like that, it was no longer possible to ignore the demands of his body. He needed to get inside her. Now.

He levered one knee up on the table. “Say green,” he demanded.

Destiny blinked, unseeing, pupils black and wide.

The noise of the room hit him like a body blow and brought him to his senses. Johnny cursed, using the harsh invective to restore his self-control. He pulled Destiny to a sitting position, and then quickly to her feet, mindful of the fact that her ass was most definitely sore. She slid off the table, eyes downcast, hands clasped behind her back, waiting for his command.

His heart swelled, only slightly less than his cock. She was so perfect, so responsive. So his. He’d made her come with a goddamn cane. She was fearless.

The thought incited a burst of anxiety that torched his nerves.

Fearless wasn’t good. It was reckless. Careless. Destructive. Johnny shook his head, trying to clear the haze of panic. Ten seconds ago, he’d been half in love with her for her incredible submission, and now he was angry because it was so easy for her? The whole point of coming here tonight was to prove himself a worthy Master, to make her submit to him again, properly. And he had. So what the fuck was his problem?

Destiny’s eyes flicked to the side as she sneaked a peek at the couch in the corner, where Karina and her boy were still watching them. Johnny’s confusion morphed into anger. He’d completely forgotten about the crowd, but apparently, she hadn’t. She had let him cane her to make that blond slave jealous, not because she trusted him or because she wanted to be his. Her submission hadn’t been for him, after all.

God, he’d never learn. Last weekend, he’d behaved like a besotted boyfriend, not a Dominant training a new submissive. Tonight, his caning technique had been flawless, but he’d gotten caught up in the scene and forgotten they were putting on a show. What would it take to make her respond to him, the real him, the Dominant?



Johnny stalked away from the table. He motioned for Destiny to follow him down the hall toward his bedroom. Alone, in his room, without the distraction of the crowd, he would push her to her limit. He would find her boundaries. Somehow.

## Chapter Seven

Destiny kept her eyes on the hall rug and her jaws clamped shut to stifle her grin. Holy shit! Exquisite sensations, one on top of the other, had scrambled her brain. She was high as a kite, ready to rock, stark-naked and chasing a man who had just beaten her senseless down a dark hallway where she hoped like hell to receive more of the same treatment.

Johnny was a Master, no doubt.

The old Destiny Blake, the one who had wasted all that time with a flogger in her hand, who had racked her brain for untold hours dreaming up punishment for boys who loved to take it, had been kidding herself. That girl had made herself into something she wasn't to please a boy who had left her anyway. That Destiny was *so* gone.

Johnny had brought her life into focus with a flick of his wrist. Well, several, really, and it had actually felt more like he was using his whole arm, but there was no going back from the knowledge that he had changed her forever. She couldn't imagine being anywhere but on the bottom anymore. She was no longer on vacation—she was living the dream, baby. With him.

She giggled quietly. Shouldn't she be shaking and weeping by now? Done in by an endorphin rush? Instead of crashing, she was spiraling higher, going crazy with the need for more. She danced down the hall and into Johnny's bedroom, ready to beg him to touch her again.

As soon as she cleared the door, he slammed it and flipped her around, forcing her palms high with one hand. His other hand skated roughly down her back, setting off pleasurable aftershocks.

She thrust her ass against him, moaning as his leather pants chafed her tender butt. He pressed harder.

Suddenly, the bedside lamp clicked on.

She shrieked and tried to cover her nakedness, but Johnny held her wrists above her head.

"Nice work, Master." Destiny heard a low whistle from the bed.

"You remember Matt, right?" Johnny asked sourly. He dropped her hands. Destiny hid behind him as he turned to glare at his friend. "What the hell are you doing here? Wait. Let me guess—your little brother is having another wild party and you wanted to crash somewhere quiet. Naturally, you came Downtown. Nothing going on here tonight."

"It's cheaper than a hotel, and your soundproofing is excellent." Matt sat up. His chest was bare, and she wasn't sure what he had on under the sheet as it slipped toward his waist. He yawned. "You usually

make nice with the customers all night, John. Sorry for crashing *your* wild party.” Matt aimed an apologetic grin in her very naked direction.

She nodded, frozen.

“I’ll— Uh— Just—” Matt thrust the sheet aside.

A knock on the door broke the awkward silence.

“Jesus Christ, is this Grand Central Station?” Johnny pulled her away from the door and opened it. “What?”

“Hey, Boss, I just wanted to tell you—” The gorgeous black man stopped speaking to take in the scene.

“Yeah, I got the message.” Johnny’s voice expressed more irritation.

“Sorry, I tried to catch you. You jetted pretty fast, Boss.”

“Thanks, Lex. I’ll slow down next time so you can catch up.”

Destiny knew she was staring, but holy shit, Lex’s cheekbones were spectacular. The Upstairs bouncer uniform seemed to be shirtless with jeans, and, face it, that never got old, especially on a guy built like him. She had been halfway to orgasm before Matt turned on the light, and the fact that three men were looking at her naked was turning her on even more.

Johnny shut the door and shot a sharp glance at her. “I saw that.”

“Saw what?”

“You drooling over my bouncer.”

Destiny put her hands on her hips. Both men looked at her breasts.

“Sorry.” Matt looked away.

“I was hardly drooling,” Destiny grated, responding to the anger in his tone. What on earth was up with him?

Johnny’s voice was silky, dangerous as he caught her elbow and pulled her in front of the door again. He held her there. “If you weren’t black and blue already, I’d beat you for lying. You can’t have Lex. Don’t fuck my staff.” He tilted his head to the side for a moment, as if he were thinking about something, then he shrugged, glancing over his shoulder at his friend. “Now, Matt here is another story. He’s my best friend. We might be able to work something out if you want to be double-teamed tonight.”

Shock energized her. Destiny tried to break his hold, but struggling was counterproductive. The cold, hard wood against her sore back aroused her. “Don’t push your luck, Johnny. I don’t even know him.”

“I don’t know how not to push, babe.” He reached behind her and squeezed. She gasped as his rough hand stroked her ass.

Matt watched from the bed, gray eyes wide and avidly focused on them, on her. She heated further under his gaze.

Johnny thrust his leg between her thighs. His hands ran the length of her limbs. "I know Matt would be happy to oblige. We'll make this good for you, I promise. Think about it." Johnny's voice coaxed her, encouraged her, dared her.

Oh, she was thinking about it, all right. She pictured herself between them, her body surrounded by hard, muscular flesh, their hands all over her, in her, commanding her. She bit her lip. Her knees buckled.

Johnny caught her and pulled her against his chest, facing away from him. He turned them both around and held her there, displayed in his arms, one hand on her breasts, the other cupping her pussy. She could see the rise and fall of Matt's chest as he sat on the bed, waiting for her to make a decision.

Her head fell back against his chest. "I can't do this, Johnny. I don't know how."

"Yes, you do. You can do it because I want you to." Johnny's voice was so certain, she almost believed him. "I thought you Aries girls liked a challenge."

"And I thought you didn't know anything about astrology."

"I looked it up." She felt him shrug. "Channel your adventurous spirit into something I need from you. Submission."

Something a man needed from her. Hadn't that been how all this started for her? Her journey into BDSM had started with Damian and his need to be dominated. Now she was faced with another man who wanted something from her that she didn't know how to give.

Or did she? She couldn't deny that the thought of being sandwiched between their hard bodies had her dripping. What did she want? She had no idea. Maybe there was more to learn by doing.

"Why not?" she heard herself say.

"Good girl," Johnny breathed into her ear. Pleasure flashed, sharp and hot, between them.

He picked her up and carried her to the bed. They must have done this before, she realized, as he tossed her on the bed next to Matt.

"Did you lock the door?" Matt spoke for the first time since Johnny had proposed this crazy idea. He slid off the bed and crossed the room to check the bolt, shedding his briefs as he returned. Naked and erect, without his diffident pose, she could see that he and Johnny had a lot in common. Matt didn't have the tattoos, the shaved head or the piercings, but he had the same bone-deep confidence and steely glint in his eyes.

They advanced in tandem.

"Holy shit," she whispered under her breath.

Their laugh was the same too.

Matt pulled her to her feet to face Johnny. She could feel his hands ghosting over her body from behind her, exploring her hips, her breasts, her buttocks. They were softer than Johnny's hands, and he whispered small words of praise against the curve of her neck as she submitted to his touch. She waited, watching Johnny as he watched Matt touch her.

A satisfied smile curved his lips.

Destiny relaxed. She entered the moment, secure in his dark gaze.

Matt's hand drifted down her belly. "Watch out for the hardware," Johnny said.

She felt Matt nod.

"Red, yellow and green?" he asked quietly over her shoulder.

Johnny nodded. "No blood. No blindfold. Use a condom." The box sat prominently on the bedside table.

"Not a problem."

"She wears a plug very well," Johnny suggested.

"An excellent warm-up."

She found herself upended on the bed. Smooth fingers probed her ass. The plug slid in easily and she surged back against their hands. "Get the bigger one." Johnny's voice.

*Yes.*

She opened one eye and saw him slowly fisting his cock. He crawled onto the bed in front of her and grabbed a handful of her hair and pulled. She gasped. He drilled his cock into her open mouth.

Matt pinched her clit, and the big plug in her ass had her so close to the edge that even his tiny pinches threatened to make her come. She couldn't move or speak around Johnny's cock.

"Come for us, Destiny." It was Matt's voice, not Johnny's, but that was close enough to permission for her. She bucked against his fingers and sucked hard on Johnny's cock as pleasure took her.

His fingers tightened painfully in her hair. "Enough."

Johnny pulled her up to meet his mouth. His kisses were like a drug. With each stroke of his tongue, she fell deeper under his sway. She would do anything for him, anything he wanted, anything to keep him in front of her like this, making her feel treasured and beloved with his lips while Matt's fingers danced inside her. Johnny's skin was hot, his shoulders hard beneath her hands. She was going to come again, and she broke away, eyes pleading.

"Yes," he said and pulled her back to his lips. She quivered and poured all of the gratitude she felt into their kiss.

"I want that ass," Matt whispered behind her.

She whimpered when Johnny let her go. "Only fair," he said. He slid off the bed and gestured for Matt to take his place. "Suck Matt's cock so he'll be ready for your ass, Destiny. Show him how good you can suck it while I fuck your tight little pussy." Johnny put his hand on the middle of her back to force her head into Matt's lap. No encouragement was necessary. Destiny bent to take him. His cock was long, making it a challenge to fit the whole thing in her mouth, but she made it a game to see how far she could get it in, enjoying the way he hissed and groaned as his rod disappeared down her throat.

She felt Johnny's cock nudge her pussy. God, he felt huge. She swallowed a gag as his first thrust forced Matt's cock deep into her throat.

"Goddamn. She's too tight with the plug in," Johnny said.

"Keep going. You're doing her a favor."

Destiny knew what that meant. It would be even tighter with two cocks inside her. Just the thought caused a ripple of pleasure to shoot through her. Wetness eased Johnny's entry and he sighed, caressing her sore back. He leaned forward to stroke her clit, making her thrust her ass against him.

"Hey, hey, wait for me," Matt said thickly.

Johnny slid out of her pussy and pulled her upright. They spun her between them again. Now her back was to Matt and she faced Johnny. Fingers popped the plug from her ass and eased cool gel into place.

"Condom," Johnny said firmly.

They lifted her onto Matt's lap as he sat on the high bed. Johnny supported her weight while Matt guided his cock into place.

His cock felt larger at the entrance to her ass than it had felt in her mouth. Wider, somehow more, maybe too much, at least until she opened her eyes and saw the way Johnny was looking at her. Discomfort turned to pleasure under his fiery gaze. She wanted to please him.

He spread her legs and stepped between them.

Johnny trailed a lazy finger through her labia until she was crazy with wanting him. She pumped her hips, trying to catch his fingertip in the right spot. Behind her, Matt groaned. "Get moving, John."

Destiny was splayed out on Matt's lap, legs wide, hooked over his knees, dying for Johnny's cock. He took his time, leisurely running the head of his cock through her moisture. He bumped her clit teasingly and popped in and out a few times, giving her a bare hint of what was coming to her.

Then he came all the way in.

Destiny screamed. She couldn't help it. There wasn't enough room in her body to hold a breath. It was too much. She pushed against Johnny's chest. He didn't move an inch.

"Be still, Destiny. You can take it. Let your body do this."

Johnny kissed her. Pleasure shot through her, everywhere. She surrendered, surfing the wave of bliss created by him. It was all brilliant and sharp, the wicked, pinching fingers on her nipples, the fullness of a cock in her ass, the pressure of a thumb on the top of her clit as Johnny's cock slid in and out of her body.

Now there were hands on her hips, moving her up and down as Johnny moved in and out. He stared into her eyes. She stared back, hypnotized by the painful desire she saw there.

He increased the tempo of his hips, the pressure of his thumb, the power of his stare. Desperation clawed at her as she fought the raging power they had set in motion inside her body. She saw red, then white, as her body tensed.

"Now!" Johnny's voice cracked like a whip.

She took his punishing thrusts to the heart of her, let him plunder her core and force her over the edge—trapped between them, no way to escape, nothing to call her own. She let him take her, again and again, to the edge and over, riding his powerful body to the top of a wave of pleasure that threatened to destroy her.

Johnny slammed his cock into her and roared.

Matt came too, with a low grunt, his hands gripping her hips in a double vise. He caught her when Johnny reeled back. Destiny couldn't breathe. She gasped, every exhale a low moan of need.

"She's not done," Matt said breathlessly over her shoulder.

Through blurry tears, she saw Johnny toss his condom into the garbage can. He grabbed his pants from the floor and stepped into them. He stumbled. "You can finish her off."

"Johnny?" Destiny cursed the quaver in her voice.

He pulled his boots on without looking at her, and zipped his pants. Then he walked swiftly out of the room, pulling the door shut tight behind him.

Destiny had always imagined the sound of her heart breaking would be louder than the click of a lock. A sob broke from her throat. The tears fell harder when Matt slipped out from underneath her, and her ass throbbed in protest.

"Don't go anywhere," he said roughly, yanking the comforter over her curled body. "I'll be right back. Don't fucking move." He disappeared into the bathroom and she heard water running.

Then Matt left her, too, grabbing his shorts and shirt on the way out the door.

"John!" Matt's voice caught him at his truck.

Johnny turned around. He kept his mouth shut because Matt didn't deserve whatever he might say. He wasn't angry with Matt.

"What the fuck just happened back there?" His friend's usually calm gray eyes were furious.

"Nothing." Johnny shrugged. "It was over."

"Like hell. You don't end a scene like that unless you're an amateur or a fucking prick."

"She was into it. Lighten up."

Matt crossed his arms. "Lighten up?"

"Yeah—no big deal. It was just a scene."

Matt shook his head disgustedly. "No way, John. We've known each other too long for that bullshit. You didn't need me in there. I was just a human dildo while you mind-fucked her. I don't appreciate that, buddy. You set me up."

"Sorry. I just...couldn't deal. I had to get out of there. Sorry if I was an asshole."

"To say the least."

Johnny leaned against his truck, flinching as the cold metal hit his bare back. He didn't appreciate Matt's holier-than-thou attitude, especially since Matt had no room to talk. "You aren't exactly warm and fuzzy in the bedroom, either."

"We're not talking about me." Matt glared at him. "You should have kept her to yourself if you're attached to her."

Johnny cursed. "I'm not attached to her."

"Oh, really?" Matt's angry expression dissolved into the wide-eyed innocence Johnny remembered from their boyhood, before Lisa died, before Matt left for law school and Johnny opened the bars, before real life. Only now, the innocence was an act because Matt said, "Then, if you're sure it's no big deal, she's waiting upstairs for somebody. I wouldn't mind playing with her again."

Johnny threw a right hook.

Matt caught his fist in one hand and drew Johnny's arm around his neck for a tight hug.

"Yeah, I can tell you don't care at all. Not a bit. I don't know what's going on between you and Destiny, but you set *her* up too, John, and that's not cool. She doesn't know why you're angry."

"I said I was sorry."

"Don't tell me. Tell her."

"I can't." Johnny's voice was thick and tight in his throat.

"Yeah, I know." Matt gave him a shove. "Get it together, John. Don't let Lisa fuck this up too."

Johnny considered throwing another punch, a close jab that Matt wouldn't see coming—like the shot Matt had just taken at him. He clenched his fists. "When did you get so fucking smart?"

"She was my sister, jackass. You're not the only one with baggage." Matt put on his shirt. "I'm out of here. Go clean up your mess."

He should have known Matt would understand. "Destiny's got no boundaries, Matt. She doesn't say no to anything. I can't trust her. You're right—she reminds me of Lisa."

"Sure wish you'd mentioned that before I fucked her." Matt pulled his car keys out of his pocket and unlocked his silver Lexus. "Get back up there, John. Make it right."

Johnny watched as Matt pulled away from the curb. His face tightened with grief.

Lisa's death had exploded their lives like a hammer blow, and, like a hammer, she had left her mark. Matt had lost his big sister and his carefree childhood in the same moment. He had been forced to take care of Colin, his younger brother, for a solid year until their parents could function again. Taking on responsibility so young had changed his friend and given him a black-and-white approach to life that was hard to live up to sometimes.

He sighed. Matt hadn't been the only one affected. Johnny knew he had changed too. Lisa had been his first love. His only love, really. Unforgettable. Her energy had been boundless, her zest for fun and life never-ending. Every moment with her had been an adventure.



Her death had been a betrayal.

The same betrayal he had felt seeing Destiny come apart between him and Matt. She was Lisa all over again. Impulsive. Reckless. Destiny would never refuse a dare. She'd do anything, no matter what the cost.

He wouldn't put himself through that hell again.

Johnny steeled himself to go back into the club. Matt was right. He had to get his ass back up to the bedroom and apologize. He might not be able to scene with her anymore, but he was responsible for her welfare tonight. He walked slowly through the crowded bar and back up the stairs.

No one Upstairs seemed to have noticed the uproar. They were all engaged in the usual activities. He opened the door to his bedroom.

The room was empty.

Damn. She must have hit the back door while he was out front with Matt. Johnny cut through the throng of naked bodies and rushed down the stairs again. He pushed open the emergency door.

He saw Destiny, wearing his clothes, slide into a taxi and shut the door. Relief, then shame, washed over him as her taxi sped away from the bar.

## Chapter Eight

Destiny met Bonita's eyes. "I fell for him."

Rather than call in sick to work, Destiny had chosen to spend her Saturday mooning around Come Again until her boss had demanded an explanation. "Totally humiliating, and not in a good way."

"Are you sure? Falling in love in a week is impulsive, even for you." Bonita's eyes were skeptical over the take-out iced latte Destiny had brought her.

"Well, it's not the bondage, and it's not the pain. If any other man picked up a cane and said, 'Lie down,' I'd say, 'Go fuck yourself,' but there's just something about Johnny that totally does it for me. I like him, Bonita—or at least, I did before last night."

"How do you know if you like him? You two haven't done anything together but have sex."

"We had dinner together."

"And then had sex."

"We've talked on the phone a lot."

"Phone sex?"

Destiny collapsed on the stool behind the counter. "You're right. I'm an idiot."

"You are not an idiot, sweetie. BDSM is heavy stuff, and you've really pushed your boundaries this week. What happened last night, anyway?"

Destiny filled her in on all the sordid details, beginning with Damian walking in with Mistress Karina, then the caning, and the ménage. By the time she was finished, Bonita's eyes were blazing green fire.

"Are you telling me the man caned you for an hour, and then, when you were still flying, he talked you into having a threesome with his best buddy? Are you fucking kidding me?" Bonita rarely cursed. "What an asshole! Then he waltzed out the door like you were a brunch buffet and he was full?"

Destiny laughed in spite of the hollow ache in her stomach. "Johnny made it clear from the very beginning that he was just looking for kicks. He didn't make me any promises. He didn't lie to me."

"Don't you dare defend him!"

Destiny sighed. "It's not his fault. He's a Leo."

Bonita gave her a hug. "Huh? You lost me at Leo."

"It's that whole king of the jungle thing. Leos are impossible to resist. When he touches me, I turn into a freaking lemming. I would follow him anywhere, do anything, jump off a bridge, ass-fuck another man—"

"I get the picture." Bonita's eyes crinkled delicately.

The shop bell tinkled.

"Heads up, sweetie. Incoming customer."

Destiny wiped her eyes. Damn the reckless impulse that had gotten her into this mess in the first place. Ignorance had been much more comfortable. She glanced at the door. "Oh, fuck, that's Matt."

"Curiouser and curiouser."

"I never noticed your resemblance to Alice until now." Destiny attempted a smile.

"We're not done talking about this." Bonita squeezed her hand and faded toward the back.

Matt stopped at the counter. "Good morning, Destiny." His cool gaze probed her face. "How are you today?"

"Fine." In spite of the tears, she lifted her chin defiantly. "Why wouldn't I be?"

"Johnny told me you disappeared last night. I was worried about you."

Destiny put her hands on her hips. "I had another engagement."

Matt's eyes lit with a brief flash of silvery humor that made Destiny think of mercury. He nodded. "I'm sure you did. Listen, our friend Johnny can be an asshole, but he has never, ever, to my knowledge behaved that way with a woman." He gave her a look that made her believe his knowledge was extensive, indeed. After last night, she wouldn't be surprised. "I don't suppose you'll take it as a compliment?"

"Not likely."

Matt took a breath and blew it out slowly, then he nodded once, tightly, as if he had come to a decision. "He won't apologize, and I can't do it for him, but if you ever talk to him again, ask him about Lisa."

"Who the fuck is Lisa?" Jesus, if Johnny had a steady girlfriend, or a wife, she was going to kill him.

"You'll have to ask him—not that he really deserves it." Matt tugged a roll of bondage tape from the counter display and laid a ten on the counter. He caught her hand as she reached for the bill and placed a business card in her palm. "Give him another chance, Destiny. He's different with you."

She ignored the card. "I didn't know pimps wore such classy suits."

Her jab only made him shrug.

She handed him his change. "I'll think about what you've said. Thanks for stopping by."

His silvery eyes caught hers, held them as he inclined his head. "Thank you for last night. I'm sorry it ended the way it did, Destiny."

Her breath caught in her throat. "I'm sorry too—"

Matt held up his hand. His polite mask dropped back into place. "You have nothing to apologize for, Destiny. Nothing at all."

The bell sounded forlorn as the shop door swung shut behind him.

“He’s right, you know,” Bonita declared as she returned to Destiny’s side. “This is not your fault. You don’t have to hold your head high and carry on like nothing happened. Johnny Delcorral owes you an apology and an explanation, and you know it as well as I do. I’m giving him the benefit of the doubt for two reasons—the man owns a BDSM club with an excellent reputation, and his best buddy just came in here to tell you he’s acting like an asshole. Something is up with him, and I’d bet my new shipment of SoloPlay vibrators that *you* are what’s up with Master Johnny Delcorral. So what are you going to do about it?”

“Bonita, if I knew what to do, we both know I’d be doing it. I’m totally stumped.”

“Can I make a suggestion?” Bonita smoothed her blond hair away from her face, waiting for Destiny’s nod. “Honey, if you are going to foul out, take the other guy out of the game too. Go tear a couple strips out of him just to make yourself feel better.” Bonita’s bloodthirsty grin changed her whole face.

“I never knew you had a vicious streak,” Destiny said admiringly.

“Right is right. And wrong is wrong. Set him straight, sister.”

“Right now?”

“Why not? Crystal will be in to take over for you any minute.”

*It wasn’t her fault.* What a freeing concept.

Not only that, it was true. She’d been in no condition to behave logically last night, considering she’d just had her brains fucked halfway out of her skull. Johnny had left her high and dry. With a stranger. After working her over with a cane. In front of a crowd. And then double-fucking her. That was a big no-no in their world.

If Johnny had any hair, she should have grabbed it last night, dragged him back into the bedroom, then forced him to finish the job properly. Maybe she should have chased after him through the club. At the very least, she should have waited for him to return to his room so that she could kill him. It now seemed impossible that she had run away last night.

But Johnny had run first, hadn’t he? Why? Because of Lisa?

Destiny looked down at the card Matt had placed in her hand. *Johnny’s Uptown, Main Street, Snyder.*

The door of Johnny’s Uptown bar flew open.

He should have followed her home last night—or called, at least—but he hadn’t been able to pull his attention away from the club. Or so he had told himself. It was a lame-assed excuse, and he knew it. In fact, that’s why he’d headed Uptown today. Destiny wasn’t the wound-licking type, and he knew she’d come after him pretty quick. He had hoped to buy some time to figure out what he was going to say to her when she found him.

Too late.

The ominous sound of her bootheels on the polished hardwood floor sounded like a warning. Clad in skintight leather from the tips of her toes to the tips of her breasts, her dreadlocks flying around her face like dramatic snakes, she looked like a deadly Medusa with an angel's face. The only thing that could have made her more enthralling would have been a whip in her hand.

*Hell hath no fury* was right. She looked like she would cheerfully murder him with a roomful of eyewitnesses and not feel a moment's regret.

Her voice was mild. "Run away much, motherfucker?"

"Mind your mouth, babe, you're Uptown, now."

She cast a disparaging glance around the bar. "Fuck you."

"Again? So soon? It would be my pleasure." Conflicted or not, he couldn't resist baiting her, just for the pleasure of watching her struggle for control. If they had been standing on the street, she might have spit in his face. As it was, he would lay money on her throwing a punch soon.

Destiny put her hands on her hips. "I don't allow myself to be treated like a whore in the name of fun, Johnny. What you did to me last night was wrong. No self-respecting Dom would walk out on a scene like that. You dumped me in Matt's lap like garbage. I deserve an explanation."

"Destiny, we can't have this discussion in front of customers."

"Well, I'm not going anywhere else with you."

Johnny leaned close, risking her fists to make his point. "We both know if I touch you, you'll do anything I want."

"Try it." Her dare made him hard as a rock. She'd mastered her temper for the moment, but she was throwing off energy like a sparkler. The look in her eyes was calm, cold and livid. "You think I can't resist you? Thank your lion pride for that misapprehension. Fucking Leo."

Johnny tossed a glance over his shoulder. His second-in-command waved him away from the bar. "Got it, Johnny."

He lifted the bridge and stepped to her side of the bar. He put his hand on her arm. She didn't pull away, or in any way respond to his touch. Oh, what he'd give to put her on her knees in front of him right now. She was so strong, so defiant, so absolutely dangerous to the careful life he had built. His cock pulsed and his grip tightened. He forced himself to drop her arm.

He gestured toward the back hall and his office. "After you."

She shoved him away and swept toward the back of the bar, barely giving him a chance to shut his office door before she attacked.

"I allowed you to Dominate me, so drop the whole über-Dom act. There aren't that many men who could do it, and even fewer whom I would allow the privilege. It's not like I don't understand the dynamics

of Dominance and submission. You had a responsibility to me last night, and we both know it. Why did you leave?"

What could he tell her? The truth was just too pathetic, and all the lies he had been telling himself were insulting and untrue.

Destiny narrowed her eyes. "Okay, let's start with this. Who's Lisa?"

"Who told you about Lisa?" Dread sparked in his chest.

"Matt came to see me at work today." Johnny juggled the emotions her words caused. Anger and surprise, mostly, but jealousy too. "Are you married, Johnny?"

He snorted. "Not even close." Bitterness welled in his chest.

Fuck it. He owed her an explanation, a real one. If he had been honest with her the night she had challenged him to explain his need for Dominance, he would have saved them both time and trouble. He sighed and sank into one of the chairs in front of his desk. She sat in the other one. "Lisa was Matt's older sister and my girlfriend. She was brave, fearless, constantly looking for the next adventure. Right up until the moment she drank a six-pack and decided to climb Glen Falls."

"The waterfall in that park on Mill Street?"

He nodded. "There's a guardrail there now, but when we were teenagers we used to sneak into the park after dark. Someone dared Lisa to climb to the top of the falls. I tried to talk her out of it, but she wouldn't listen to anything I said. She never refused a dare. The shale gave out beneath her and she fell, hitting every rock and ledge on her way to the bottom. I pulled her out of the water, but it was too late. She died on the way to the hospital. Broken neck." He forced himself to meet her eyes before he continued. "An accident. A stupid, reckless mistake that fucked us for good. I'm sure Matt told you I never got over her, that I turned to the BDSM lifestyle to make sure none of my girls ever tried anything like that again."

Destiny shook her head and tilted it to one side, eyebrows drawn together. "He didn't tell me anything. You liked this girl, right?"

"I loved her."

"Then, if I remind you of her, that's a good thing, right?"

God, it would be so much easier to walk out the door right now, to just ditch the whole subject, but that hadn't worked last night, and he found that he wanted Destiny to know why he was angry. "You were fucking Matt. I didn't like it."

"It was your idea!"

"I guess I was hoping that there might be a dare you wouldn't take. I can't be with a girl who won't say no. I won't put myself through that hell again."

Destiny dropped her chin and gave him a level look from under the slim arch of her brows. "I'm going to assume you know how utterly unfair that is. I wanted to please you last night, Johnny, and no matter what bullshit line you're trying to sell me now, you were into it. You might think you don't want a

woman who is up for a dare, but you do. You totally do.” She arched an eyebrow and slowly shook her head back and forth. “Have you looked at the art on your walls lately? That Black Cat doesn’t look tame to me.”

She stood up. “I apologize for trash-talking your friend Lisa, but I’m not thrilled with the fact that I remind you of a drunk, selfish teenager. There’s a huge difference between a girl who can’t say no and a woman who isn’t afraid to say yes. I know I’m reckless and impulsive. I have a wicked temper, and I don’t like to be told what to do. Submitting to you was a big deal for me. I feel different now. Everything that happened last night happened because I trusted you, and you broke my trust.”

He took her hand and pressed his lips to her palm. “I’m sorry, Destiny.”

“Thanks. I appreciate that.” Her sad smile didn’t reach her eyes. “Doesn’t really help as much as I thought it would, though.” She pulled her hand from his grasp.

He followed her to the door. “Where are you going?”

“Why? Worried you’ll find me hanging in the corners of your club looking for another Dom?”

Shit, now he was.

She snorted. “Don’t worry. I enjoyed submitting to you, but I don’t think it applies to other Doms.”

Satisfaction twisted in his chest.

She looked at his hand on her arm. He hadn’t realized he was touching her. Reluctantly, he let her go.

She left his office without looking back.

He eased out of the doorway and dropped into a chair. Destiny was right about the Black Cat—her daredevil persona enthralled him. He had put her on his wall, a safe way to capture a dangerous woman, but he had never made the connection to his life.

It was possible, fast approaching probable, that he was an idiot. *A bona fide*, hardheaded tool. He had painted every woman willing to stand up to him with the same brush, assuming they were all like Lisa and would self-destruct eventually. He had wanted to curb Destiny’s defiant streak and make her his submissive, but, in fact, the opposite had occurred. She had broken him, instead.

Destiny had turned his world upside down, first by reminding him that he liked spirited women and then by aptly pointing out that obedience was not a substitute for good judgment. She had neatly put the responsibility for his actions back on him, where it belonged. He had asked her to submit to him, to let him cane her, to have sex with him and Matt, and it wasn’t fair to blame her for saying yes. He had thought he was looking for her limits. Actually, he had discovered his own.

Yup, he was an idiot. Pride and the fear of getting hurt again had kept him from love for fifteen years. Hadn’t Destiny said something about lion pride? Smart girl. Well, he wouldn’t allow pride or fear to hold him back any longer. As for pain—well, if he could dish it out, it only seemed fair that he should take it. He had wronged her, and he needed to make it right.

But not here. It wouldn’t mean anything here.

*Miranda Baker*

It would have to be Downtown.

Upstairs.

And he was going to need a little help.



## Chapter Nine

The wind dashed tears from Destiny's cheeks as she sped down the highway. Well, she'd certainly got what she came for—and then some. Of all the reasons she had invented for Johnny's behavior last night, a ghostly ex-girlfriend hadn't even made the list. If he was still hung up on Lisa all these years later, she didn't expect a week with her would make a difference. At least, not to him.

It made a huge difference to her.

BDSM explored desires, needs, respect and trust. Negotiation. Obedience. An environment in which Dominants and submissives could safely exchange power without being judged. For most, it had nothing to do with love.

Unfortunately, Destiny wasn't one of those lucky people. For her, BDSM had begun with love—and Damian.

Dominance had been a torch she had been carrying for him for years. Her love for Damian had made her want to carry the extra weight. In his absence, she had continued to explore the world of BDSM, waiting for him to come back, but the torch had gotten heavier and heavier.

Submitting to Johnny had been a huge relief.

But that didn't make her a submissive. Her feelings for him were exclusive. She had known that since their first scene.

Not a Domme anymore, and not a true submissive. Destiny turned toward the open highway, planning to drive every spoke on the wagon wheel Norton highway system until she figured out who to be. She sighed, the sound lost in the wind whistling through her helmet. Maybe she was just a woman looking for a man to make her feel something extraordinary. *Well, extraordinary humiliation, coming right up*, she thought wryly. Her tendency to act first and think later was getting painful. Johnny was sorry. She wasn't. End of story.

She turned toward home.

Now she had to begin the long process of recovery. Was recovery even possible? All those beautiful blond boys and three years later, she had still felt gut-shot when Damian walked Upstairs. How long would it take her to recover from Johnny? A decade?

Destiny found her apartment door unlocked and cautiously entered. It was quite possible she'd been in such a tizzy this afternoon that she'd neglected to lock it, but she left the door wide open and reached for her pepper spray, just in case.

She found Damian sprawled on her couch, eyes half shut and sleepy as he took in her leather gear. "Now there is the Mistress I thought I'd find here."

"Damian! What the fuck? Do you still have a key?"

"You said I could always come back. I thought you meant it."

Yes, she had.

His lips plumped in a pout. He held out his arms. Destiny felt a frown begin between her eyes.

"Mistress, you've got some 'splaining to do." Damian's familiar, easy grin dispelled her annoyance, and she dipped to hug him. The scent of sweet sunshine wafted from his shirt. She closed her eyes and breathed him in, unable to resist the impulse to press her lips to the strong, tan column of his throat.

"Destiny?"

"Hush," she said in a voice that brooked no argument. He subsided, let her arrange his body around hers in a more comfortable embrace, and waited.

Eventually, Damian's warm body absorbed the road chill from her skin. "Johnny challenged me. To switch," she finally offered. "I was bored, so I thought, why not? It's not my thing, though. I won't do it again."

"Oh, Destiny." His voice conveyed sympathy and a hint of amusement. "You can't fake submission like that. My Mistress was jealous as hell. I think she likes you."

"The feeling is not mutual." She sat up on the couch. She stroked his hair away from his face. He smiled into her palm when her hand lingered on his cheek.

"It must have scared the crap out of you to bottom, especially for a guy like Delcorral."

"Not as much as you might think." She couldn't meet his eyes.

"Did you set that threesome up beforehand? The sound was off."

"Huh?"

"Last night. You and Delcorral went into a private room with some blond guy. It was all on the big screen."

She groaned. "The whole room saw that? I didn't know the monitor was on."

Damian reared up on the couch. "I'm going to kick his ass."

"No need. I just did."

"But you don't like to leave marks."

"Yes, that was always the problem with us, wasn't it?"

He shot her a dirty look, then his sculpted features turned grave. "I did miss you, you know. I still do."

"I'm glad," she whispered.

Damian leaned forward to touch his lips to hers in a sweet kiss.

"Our rings still match," she murmured against his lips.

"I noticed."

His mouth opened under the questing pressure of her tongue, and she explored his lips and teeth, testing the boundaries of their old connection. He responded as he always had, compliant and passionate. It wasn't enough. She sighed and pulled away.

"Shhhhhh." He rested his forehead against hers.

"All that time spent becoming a Domme, and by the time you come back to Norton, I don't even want to top you anymore. It isn't fair," she complained.

Damian held her hands in his warm ones. "I'd love to see you in action, Des, but I think I missed my chance."

"What do you mean?"

"You're not a switch. Think about it."

Her heart sank. "I'm not a bottom, Damian."

"I think the bruises on your ass say otherwise."

She flushed.

"Thought so."

"I can't imagine bottoming for anyone other than Johnny, and he's not interested. You saw what happened last night." Her cheeks felt fiery, although it didn't really matter what had been on the display. The entire room had watched her take a caning and come like a banshee. A little ménage humiliation almost seemed vanilla after that scene.

Damian raised his eyebrows. "Yup, I saw an experienced Dom flee a scene like the hounds of hell were chasing him. Makes a sub wonder, doesn't it? What would make a guy like Johnny Delcorral forget his training?"

"You aren't the first person to say that to me today."

"So listen."

"Why are you doing this, Damian?"

"Because I owe you one."

"Why?"

"I would have been miserable if I had stayed in Norton. You were trying so hard to give me what I needed, but I knew it was difficult for you. I knew you didn't understand. You let me go, even though you didn't want to. Now I want to help you get what you need."

"I thought I needed you."

"And now?"

Destiny shook her head. "Now I have no idea."

"Sure you do."

"Enough with the riddles, Damian." She pulled her hand out of his grasp. "I don't want to play these head games anymore. Not with you, not with Johnny. I just want—"

“To cut your dreads off and wear clothes from Target?”

“Fuck you.”

“You’ll have to discuss that with my Mistress, but I bet we can work something out.” His cheerful self-confidence grated on her raw nerves. “You are not a mainstream kind of girl, Des, whichever way you jump. Domme, sub, Top, bottom, Master, slave, who cares? It’s all a head game. It is what you want it to be. That’s a plural you, by the way. Give it some time. You’ll figure it out.” Damian jumped off the couch and pulled her into a tight squeeze. “Want to have dinner with us this week?”

Her jaw dropped. She nodded.

“Good girl.”

Destiny burst out laughing.

“I’ll call you this week.”

Destiny nodded again, bemused. She still had a somewhat proprietary feeling toward Damian and wouldn’t mind meeting his new Mistress under different, more clothed, circumstances.

“If you change your mind, I’m sure Mistress Karina would love to scene with you.”

Destiny shuddered. “No, thanks. Your Mistress has Capricorn written all over her.”

Damian chuckled and kissed her cheek before he headed out the door. She watched his back—his broad, tan, willing back—and sighed, finally ready to let him go.

## Chapter Ten

They met at a downtown restaurant where their leather and metal caught many admiring glances. Destiny had no idea what to expect from Damian's raven-haired Mistress, but warmth was surprising.

He clearly adored her, and she returned his affection. Destiny was surprised that she felt a twinge of jealousy. Not because she wanted him, but because she wanted that kind of easy, loving exchange for herself.

Karina insisted on paying for dinner, and Destiny let her.

"What are you two up to tonight?" Destiny asked.

"We're going to stay Downtown."

"Ahhh." She understood. It was Friday, Master and slave night Upstairs at Johnny's club. Naturally those two would want to go have some fun.

"Why don't you come with us?" Karina suggested.

Destiny recognized the challenge in her voice. Karina's dare was easy to resist since she'd had a whole week to get her head on straight. The Downtown scene was not for her anymore. "I don't think so."

"One drink." Karina took her hand and drew her along the sidewalk.

Destiny dug her boot heels into the pavement. "No."

"Downstairs." Karina's voice was firm and commanding.

"Uh-uh. No can do."

"Don't let Johnny Delcorral make you hide from him." Karina unerringly hit her hot button.

"I'm not hiding! I just don't want to see him." Destiny shook free.

"Liar." Damian's voice was warm and kind. It compelled Destiny in a way that Karina's needling could not. "Just one drink. We're already here. Show him your strength."

"Not fair." Her voice sounded weak and hollow, even to her.

"We'll be with you the whole time." They each took an arm. Mac waved them through, and, suddenly, Destiny stood inside the door of Johnny's bar.

Johnny slung a beer down the bar and into the waiting hand of a Downtown regular. The door opened and he saw Mac bow. It was unusual for him to accord a patron that measure of respect, but, when Destiny swept through the door, it was clear why the tough Scotsman had been so moved.

Energy crackled around her. Her jeans fit like a second skin, low on her hips, unbelted. Her short, black tank looked like silk and was cut about four inches too low and high for modesty. She was glorious. He almost didn't notice Karina leading her blond boy in Destiny's wake, but the fat, black leash dangling from her hand caught his attention.

The threesome claimed a booth near the sub corner in the back. Destiny assumed her usual posture, feet up on the bench, arms crossed, gaze absently searching the corners. Johnny forced himself to concentrate on the B-52 he was layering. Gratitude made his hand shake over the glass. He had to pour the drink in the well and start over.

He forced his hand to steady on the bottle when Karina appeared in front of him, refusing to let his nerves ruin another drink. "Karina," he greeted her quietly.

"Good evening, Johnny."

"Thanks for bringing her."

Karina nodded. "You've got your work cut out for you. I only said I'd get her here. What's her drink? I'll have one too."

He poured two shots of Patrón. He considered pouring a shot of tequila for himself, but didn't, knowing he was going to need all his self-control before this night was over.

Karina laid cash on the bar.

"On the house."

She nodded.

"You think you can get her Upstairs?" Johnny kept his voice low.

"I'll give it my best shot." Karina nailed him with a piercing look. "I like her, Johnny. Don't fuck this up."

It was his turn to nod sharply.

A complicated drink order pulled his attention away from their corner table. By the time he pulled beers, shook martinis and layered another goddamn B-52, they had finished their tequilas and were standing in front of the table.

Destiny broke off from the pair as if she meant to head for the door, but Karina caught her arm. She said something that made Destiny raise her eyebrows and giggle.

Karina held out the leash.

Johnny held his breath.

Destiny shrugged and took the leash. She swiftly clipped the lead onto the thick ring attached to the blond slave's collar. Together, they led him toward the back hall.

Destiny's slim waist fit snugly in the curve of the taller woman's hip. They walked in step, and the attitude Destiny had been throwing off when she arrived was nothing to what those two women projected together.

Johnny stood stock-still, rock-hard, staring after them.

He motioned to Dane, who was watching the trio almost as hungrily as he. "I'm out tonight." He ducked out from behind the bar.

"Lucky bastard."

"Not exactly." He ignored Dane's quizzical stare as headed for the back hallway.

It had to be the tequila, Destiny thought.

Or the wine at dinner. She must be drunk.

For just a second, when Karina dared her to join them Upstairs, she had felt like her old self and had eagerly agreed. Now the leash felt heavy in her hand, and Damian and Karina looked like strangers. The heavy techno beat made her head throb. Her mouth was dry. The scent of sweat, incense and sex was suffocating.

"I can't do this. Sorry." She pressed Damian's lead into Karina's hand and turned to flee.

Johnny's huge frame blocked her path. She gasped.

"Stay with me. Please." His hard hands on her arms told her he wasn't going to take no for an answer, but Destiny had reached her limit tonight.

"Get your hands off me. I shouldn't be here."

The nude servants swept toward her, but Johnny stopped them with a word. "No. Not her. Me."

The girls flushed above their tattooed collars as they reached for the buttons of his shirt and the leather at his waist. Their eyes were shining like it was Christmas morning and they were pretty sure the enormous box in their hands held the Barbie Dream House.

Destiny watched, confounded.

"Get up!" she whispered urgently when Johnny knelt at her feet dressed only in his broad cape of tattoos. The sight of him on his knees was ridiculous, almost offensive.

He tipped his head to look at her. The column of his throat was corded with tight muscle. He swallowed. "I'm sorry for breaking your trust, Destiny. In apology, I would like to offer myself to discipline as you see fit. Will you punish me, please?"

"You don't bottom." She threw his own words back at him.

"I will bottom for you."

Shock filmed her skin with cold sweat. "I don't know what to—"

"Shhhh," Mistress Karina leaned down to whisper in her ear. "Don't shame him. You know how much strength it takes to submit."

It was true—she did.

Submitting to Johnny had been a challenge that had turned into a life-changing event. Her week with him had freed her from the past, from Damian and her obsession with Dominance. However, her week without him had been even more empowering. She'd had plenty of time to think about what she wanted from her sexual identity. Not what Damian had wanted. Not what Johnny wanted. Destiny had been exploring her own needs and desires. She had discovered her *self*.

Karina's supple arm slid around her waist. "If you don't want him, can I have him? I've wondered once or twice what it would be like to have Master Johnny Delcorral begging on his knees before me. Let's not waste it."

Karina's laughing admonition restored her equilibrium. She remembered fantasizing about seeing him like this, the night they had begun this whole fiasco. Back then, putting Johnny on his knees had seemed impossible. His Dominance had filled the room. It still did, in spite of the fact that he was on his knees before her, naked, erect and vulnerable.

What had changed for him? Why was he willing to taste submission?

More importantly, did she want to punish him? There was power in this moment of decision. It surged between them, a tangible force. How would she wield it?

She knew, quite suddenly, exactly what to do.

She stepped away from Karina with a nod of decision, grateful to the Domme for buying her time to think. "Thank you, Mistress."

Destiny trailed one hand over Johnny's broad shoulders, circling behind him. His muscles were lithe and coiled. The shaved skin of his scalp prickled under her palm. She felt a hint of a shiver shake him.

"Hard limits?" she probed.

His reply was steady. "None."

She motioned him to his feet and led him to the chair he had occupied the night he caned her. She perched on the arm of the chair and gestured to the floor. Johnny sank to his knees. "So, you'd stay at my feet for hours and never complain?"

"Yes, Ma'am." Misery tightened his face.

She gestured across the room where a female slave was bound, hand and foot, to the St. Andrew's cross, waiting for punishment. Her Master stood beside her, whip lax in his hand as he—and everyone else in the room—watched them. "If I strapped you to that cross and worked your ass with a crop all night, you'd be a happy man?"

Johnny nodded rigidly.

"And if I left you here and played with Damian and Karina instead, you'd be fine with that?"

He jerked a curt nod.

Destiny slid to the floor beside him. "That's not what I want from you, Johnny."

The relief on his face was comical. "It's not?"



Destiny shook her head slowly. "I don't need or want your submission. I want your trust."

Johnny frowned. "I'm offering to bottom for you. How much more trust do you need?"

"That's not the kind of trust I'm talking about. I need more from you than sensation play and head games. I want you to trust my strength. My judgment. I won't betray you, Johnny. My impulses, though hard to resist, aren't going to carry me up a cliff and leave you standing at the bottom to pick up the pieces. You have to be strong enough to give me more than your body. I don't want you to submit to me. In fact, I don't want you on your knees at all. I like your lion pride intact. I don't doubt you can take any physical punishment I can dish out, but I need you to trust me with your heart. I want to be with you, Johnny, but I need an equal." She gestured around the room. "This is a game for equals."

The applause from the crowd made her eyes sting with tears.

Johnny took her hands. "I'm still a Dominant, Destiny. This is my life, my world. Will you submit to me? Here?"

"I will." Hope filled the cracks in her composure. She bit her lip. "But I have a Dominant streak too. I spent a long time developing it, and I might want to indulge it under certain conditions." She glanced at Damian and his Mistress. Head games could be fun if you knew what was in your head. And your heart. "I'm done trying to become something I'm not. I'm sick of wearing a label—I just want to be myself."

"I wouldn't have you any other way." He pulled her to her feet and wrapped his strong arms around her. Her feet left the floor. For the first time all week, Destiny felt warm and secure. "You were right," he whispered in her ear. "You were so right. I totally want a woman who is up for a dare." He dropped her to her feet, and familiar mischief began to dance in his eyes. "Hard limits?"

"No other women." Her voice was adamant. They both knew who she was talking about.

"Agreed." He snapped his fingers and one of the girls scurried over with his pants. He fished around in one of the pockets, but didn't put them on. Instead, he held up a sturdy, gold ring, dangling with a sparkly bit of bling.

"What on earth is that?"

"The world's most expensive clit ring."

She gasped. "Is that a diamond?"

"One hundred percent. Will you wear my jewelry, Destiny? Will you truly be mine?"

She gaped. "You want to collar my clit?"

"You bet I do. It's a little more personal than putting one around your neck, and if you like the way it feels, maybe you could pick out a ring for your finger too. Is that exclusive enough for you?"

Was he serious? "I don't think I'm the marrying kind."

"Neither am I."

Their eyes locked.

“So, just a short civil ceremony, then?” Johnny finally asked, one side of his mouth twisting in the sardonic smile she had come to love.

“Only after some serious time and consideration.” No impulse on earth would rush that decision.

Johnny scooped her up in his arms, pausing to snag the remote control from the kitchen counter and black out his bedroom. The crowd booed, making them both laugh. Destiny waved at Damian and Karina over Johnny’s warm shoulder as he carried her down the hall. Damian gave her a thumbs up.

Johnny’s arms tightened around her as he entered his bedroom and kicked the door shut. “I love you, Destiny. God, I love you so much.”

She caught his head for a kiss. “I love you too.”

Their lips met, and strength fed strength, in equal measure. His erection slid against the full length of her body as he eased her feet to the floor.

As signs went, she liked that one a lot.

## About the Author

It makes me chuckle to think about all the romantic short stories I wrote in my rather too literary creative writing classes in college. If only one of my professors had steered me toward popular fiction! On the other hand, if I had discovered my calling back then, I wouldn't have gone to culinary school, I wouldn't have met my husband, we wouldn't have had three children and I wouldn't have turned to erotic romance to get my mojo back during all this hair-raising kid raising.

To learn more about me, please visit [www.mirandabaker.com](http://www.mirandabaker.com). Send an email to [miranda@mirandabaker.com](mailto:miranda@mirandabaker.com) if you want to chat about romance, writing, or recipes!

*One sub to please the Master...in any way he wishes.*

## Hurt Me So Good

© 2010 Joely Sue Burkhart

Victor Connagher is no stranger to the Dallas BDSM scene. As CEO of a risqué cable channel that caters to adventurous adults, he ensures the lifestyle is portrayed in a positive light. He even supports a local bondage club. Yet behind the cool, confident mask, Victor lives in fear.

Once, and only once, he lost control of his inner Dom—and it cost him his fiancée. Now, no one knows how hard he works to keep his darker appetite for pain buried. No matter how much his saucy, confident associate producer makes his fingers itch to once again take up his riding crop.

Shiloh Holmes is a sub, but she's no doormat. She's always suspected Victor has the skills to feed her insatiable need for pain, and now she's found the perfect way to crack his formidable control. Develop a new reality show, America's Next Top sub...and dare him to compete.

Week after week, as Shiloh fearlessly challenges the real Victor to come out of hiding, he realizes his past mistake was only a blow to his pride. If he loses Shiloh, he could lose his heart.

*Warning: Explicit sex, BDSM, reality television, a very reluctant Dom, an audacious sub willing to do anything to win for him, and one very wicked riding crop.*

*Enjoy the following excerpt for Hurt Me So Good:*

"It's a BDSM show." Shiloh let a sultry smile curve her lips, but she didn't look directly at him. She didn't trust herself not to plop down into his lap. "If we set up the correct challenges, everyone will go home extremely happy regardless of who wins."

He checked his watch, warning that his patience was almost gone. "Either this is a reality show or it's not. There has to be a winner, and I won't stand for cheating among my own employees."

"It's a dual competition." Shiloh fought not to blurt out her response in a desperation plea. "We'll have submissives competing to win the Dominants' favor, but also a single Dominant could win the title of Master, if he selects the correct submissive to win it all."

Ms. Kannes laughed. "By God, Victor, it's brilliant. I could compete as one of the Dominants, with my submissive as one of the contestants. Patrick could compete too, and that would give us another two or three submissives, depending on who's in his stable right now. If we can get another couple from Silken, then we'd have an interesting mix of newbies and experienced players. The experienced ones would be teaching the rest, as well as having a little friendly competition among us all."

Frowning, Mr. Connagher shook his head. "There's not going to be much drama between you and Patrick. You're too evenly matched and know each other too well."

Shiloh let out her breath and took a step closer to him, waiting until his gaze swung to her. “That’s why you should compete, sir.”

His eyes narrowed to slits, his mouth flattened into a hard slant, and his shoulders squared, chest broad and muscular in a universal signal of male dominance that his suit couldn’t conceal.

Her heart froze a moment and then exploded into a rapid, thunderous pace that made her ears roar. He didn’t refuse outright, though, which gave her the courage to continue. “The show needs a Master with a capital M. Someone who’ll really bring the competition to a peak. Based on our demographics, it should be a male, and preferably, his submissive should be female. It will be even more exciting if he’s unattached, so the unowned submissives all feel like they have a chance of winning his attention. The ultimate prize, then, will be the Master’s collar, not money like the typical reality show.”

Evidently he didn’t like that idea at all. Silence stretched out, painful and heavy, his midnight eyes locked on her. Her mouth went dry and her heart hammered, but she stood her ground without blinking or flinching in the wake of his intensity. She didn’t even dare breathe.

“You presume, then, that I’m not only a Dominant, but also a man who’d be interested in a giggling, immature submissive who’s incapable of any sort of serious play.” He blew out his breath in a low snort and turned to the other woman. “As though I’d give my collar to someone just because they thought they’d won a show that we set up from the very beginning.”

Sucking in a deep breath, Shiloh squeezed her hands together so hard she felt her nails digging into her skin. She fought to hide the fierce elation burning through her. He might be dismissive, but she’d been right all along. He did have a collar, he was Dominant, and if she played this right, it’d be impossible for him to back out. The competitor in him demanded excellence in all things, even a reality show.

Feigning indifference, she shrugged and turned away from the table. “Then perhaps you can recommend another Master.”

Shuffling through her carefully researched boards, she moved the most important one to the front. Her best friend and roommate—who just happened to be a graphic design artist—had helped with the artwork. A masked man stood on a dais, dressed like an English riding master with a wicked-looking whip in his right hand. Despite the costume, the man bore a marked resemblance to VCONN’s CEO.

Contestants knelt in an arc before him, all in submissive positions, head down, some stretched out prostrate before him. Two others stood on the steps to the dais but lower than him, a man and woman, also in Victorian riding wear. Despite their higher position than the contestants, they inclined their heads to the man above.

In bold letters across the top, the board read: *One Master to rule them all.*

“V,” Ms. Kannes breathed out, her eyes bright. “You’re perfect!”

“I don’t want to do it.” Yet he stared at the board, his right hand opening and closing into a fist, as though he ached to reach out and grab that whip. “There’s no way in hell I’m unleashing that side of me on a bunch of—”

Shiloh pulled out the next storyboard and his voice fell off. In this sketch, a woman knelt at the Master’s feet and leaned against his legs. One hand was wrapped around his thigh; her other fisted in his shirt as though she was trying to climb his body. Her face was pressed against him with her hair pulled aside to bare her back. Long red stripes marked her skin and the Master’s whip curled around her vulnerable body with the heading: *One sub to please the Master—in any way he wishes.*

He ground out, “It’s all wrong.”

Shiloh’s heart plummeted and her shoulders slumped with defeat. She’d gambled everything on this show. If he didn’t like it, then she’d totally misunderstood every single signal she’d picked up from him. She’d even had her friend stylize the winner after her, a deliberate message to him, if only he were paying attention.

She’d planned this show down to the smallest detail, dreaming about winning it all. Wrapping herself around him. Learning to please him in every single possible way he’d ever dreamed. Winning *him*.

Her eyes felt hot and dry, and her bottom lip trembled. It was ridiculous to be heartbroken over a man who’d never touched her. Never looked into her eyes and burned with need. Never taken her on a long, hard ride to a sweetly painful submission they’d never forget.

“You came very close, Ms. Holmes.”

She whipped her head up.

Victor Connagher gave her a hard smile of teeth and dominance that wound her heart into knots and sent icy chills dripping down her spine. “I can live with the English riding style.” He kicked back in his chair and propped his limited-edition Lucchese boots on the edge of the conference table. “But this Master only uses a riding crop.”

*When the screen fades to black, all that remains is love.*

## Rough Cut

© 2010 Mari Carr

### *A Black & White Collection Story*

Ty Ransome. Reigning king of Hollywood, producer, actor, Look Magazine's Hottest Man Alive. He has it all—until he reads a book of short stories that touches him in places kept carefully hidden from the tabloid gossip mill. There's only one way to meet the introverted writer—invite her to Tinseltown to work on a script. The moment he sees her, he realizes why her work haunts him. There's something missing in his life, and it's her.

Gwen steps off the plane with reservations. For one thing, her darkly sexual stories are hardly movie material. Then there's Ty's reputation as a ladies' man. Yet she's won over by his charm and agrees to stay on for a week to get to know him before making her decision. And as the days go by, she discovers there's far more to Ty than a handsome face.

They eat, drink and breathe the characters in their screenplay, re-enacting scenes that delve into the BDSM realm, setting Ty free to unleash his powerful cravings and exposing Gwen's deepest needs. Needs she set free on paper...but is not sure she's ready to make a reality.

*Warning: This title contains all the following Tinseltown essentials: explicit sex on a movie set, anal play in a mansion, BDSM with a hot movie star, capture fantasies while writing a screenplay, bondage in a limo, and, oh yeah, some graphic language—sorry about that.*

### *Enjoy the following excerpt for Rough Cut*

"Now this is the way I like to wake up," a deep voice said beside her.

Gwen opened her eyes, briefly surprised to find her face only inches away from Ty's. She blinked a few times to make sure she wasn't dreaming, then their nighttime conversation drifted back through her consciousness.

"You were supposed to stay on your own side." Her voice was gruff with sleep. As she came fully awake, she became aware of his hand lightly rubbing a bare bit of skin at her waist, beneath her T-shirt.

"So sue me." He leaned so close to her the only air she could feel was that of his soft breath on her cheek. His hand stopped caressing her waist and instead gripped it, pulling her even closer to him.

"I don't think this is a good idea," she whispered, despite the fact her hands were resting, unresisting, on his chest. She'd placed them there to push him away, but instead the traitorous things were exploring the rock-hard definitions of his pecs.

"I think a kiss in the morning is always a good idea."

"Just a kiss?" She cursed her sudden breathlessness.

“Just a kiss, Gwen.” She was shocked by her disappointment until he added, “for now.”

His lips brushed hers and her body shuddered at the impact. His mouth wasn't gentle, it wasn't easy. He took her lips with a roughness that proclaimed his possession. He took everything she offered with her lips and tongue and demanded more. His hands drifted up to her face, engulfing her cheeks in his firm grip, turning her head exactly the way he wanted it. His teeth nipped at her lower lip and she thought for a moment she heard him growl before his tongue plunged into her mouth, tangling with hers. She'd never been kissed like this in her life and the feeling was heady. It made her dizzy, giddy, reckless and she suddenly realized she wanted more. Hell, she wanted all.

She reached up and held his face to hers, twisting her fingers in his hair. He mimicked the action with her own long tresses and she was amazed by her reaction to his rough touch. Each time he pulled her hair, the sensation of pain flowed pleasurably down her body, causing her hips to flex, searching for relief. Her body felt as if he'd set it aflame and she found her reactions shockingly animalistic.

“Harder. Pull harder,” she begged and he responded in turn. His lips trailed along her face, his rough beard scratching her sensitive skin until he reached her ear. He bit her earlobe, pulling her hair at the same time and she cried out, her hips gyrating wildly.

His hard body came over hers as he took control of her wrists, dragging them above her head and holding them firmly in place with one of his hands. She sensed he knew what his actions were doing to her as he pressed his covered cock firmly between her legs, letting her feel the proof of the desire they shared. She wanted to scream at him to take off his pants and give her what she needed, but instinctively she knew he would refuse her.

“Shhh.” He tightened his grip on her wrists while planting soft, sweet kisses on her face. “Calm down, gorgeous.”

She was panting, frustrated, and she foolishly felt as if she were on the verge of tears.

He leaned back at the sound of her soft cry, the look on his face a perfect mixture of shock, awe and naked, red-hot desire.

He smiled as she struggled to regain composure, her body screaming for relief.

“I can see there will be no such thing as innocent kisses with you,” he said.

She blinked rapidly, determined he shouldn't see the tears threatening to fall. Christ, she was a fool.

“I-I, shit.” She struggled to free her hands. He released her and she pushed him away. He moved over easily and she realized she wouldn't have been able to budge him if he hadn't permitted it. She walked away from the bed, pressing her back against the wall for support.

“This is not, I mean, I don't—” She was gasping for air and her voice and her body betrayed her, shaking uncontrollably.

He sat up slowly and she knew he was deliberately keeping his movements unhurried lest he frighten her. “Gwen, you didn't do anything wrong.”



She wanted to laugh at the understatement of his words. He'd pulled her hair, held her down and she'd responded like a bitch in heat. He didn't think that was wrong, weird?

"I told you before, Ty. I want us to keep our relationship professional. Sex muddies the water. You know that."

"No, I don't think I do. Gwen, there's nothing wrong with admitting that we're attracted to each other sexually. Shit, I can't think of anything I want more than to tie your lovely body to that bed and bury myself between those hot thighs of yours."

"Stop it! Stop saying stuff like that. It isn't going to happen. Ever."

He scowled at her words and rose from the bed, crossing to where she stood, trembling. "Well, I think you and I are about to have our first disagreement."

He leaned toward her as she pressed her body flat against the wall. He caged her in, grasping her hands by the wrists once again and pressing them against the flat surface, just above her head. "You and I are most certainly going to have sex, Gwen. Hard, hot, incredibly intense sex and you're going to love every minute of it."

"You smug, conceited—"

"Pull your pants down," he said as he loosened his grip.

She wanted to deny him, wanted to drive her fists against his chest and tell him to get the hell away from her, but his deep voice, his demanding words spoke to the loneliest part of her soul and she felt as if she'd been sunk neck-deep in quicksand.

"Pull them down now," he repeated, his voice commanding. Clearly he expected her to comply. This was so wrong. God dammit, it was wrong. And yet her body felt alive for the first time ever.

She reached for the waistband of her pajama bottoms and she slowly shimmied the soft cotton over her hips. The material fell to her ankles and she stepped out of it, never taking her gaze off his determined face.

"Good girl," he murmured and she raised her hand to slap him for his condescending comment. He caught her wrist and pressed it against the wall. "You don't want to do that."

She closed her eyes in surrender and he released her hand.

His dominant actions, his powerful words, were truly soothing her weary soul, despite the fact her head was demanding she run away from him. Ty Ransome was the one man who could be her complete and utter downfall, yet rather than escape, she found herself relishing every touch, every word he offered.



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