



Signed, Sealed
AND
DELIVERED
SIERRA CARTWRIGHT

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Signed, Sealed and Delivered

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

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED

Sierra Cartwright

Dedication

BAB! I could never do this without you! I'm bad, but you're 'badder.'

Chapter One

Now what?

Alana reminded herself she wanted this, needed this. This insanity, the trip, the vacation... The entire thing had been all her idea, a grand adventure to sate the hunger burning deep inside her. Hunger? No, that wasn't the right word. This wasn't as simple as hunger; it was more like an obsession. Since she'd discovered Sir Ethan Kendall, she'd been unable to stop thinking about him; she'd been unable to stop wanting him. Learning about BDSM from any other man simply wouldn't do. She had to have Ethan.

So, now, here she stood, an American on English soil, waiting, uncertain, frightened, and if she were honest, consumed by an unholy excitement that made her heart thump and her palms slick with cold sweat.

Her fellow passengers had claimed their bags from the carousel and exited the area nearly half an hour ago. She was the only one standing here, orphaned.

At this time of night, Heathrow was cold and lonely. A nasty wind battered the windows and a miserable drizzle spat on the panes. Yesterday in Florida, the sun had blazed across the afternoon sky, palm trees had swayed gently, the humidity had been blessedly low, and she had been running around in cut-off shorts and a tank top.

Now, she shivered. Instinctively she knew the sudden chill wasn't from the dreary weather. It was from the mixture of anticipation and low-level fear.

Surely it wouldn't be much longer until Ethan came to collect her.

Or perhaps it would be.

He could, would keep her waiting as long as he wanted. She was, by her own choice, totally, completely one hundred percent at his mercy for the next fortnight.

A man, tall, broad, and wearing a blue cap and yellow rain slicker pushed through the revolving door.

"Ms. Simmons?"

Her mouth suddenly dry, she nodded, instead of responding. Ethan? It could be, she supposed, since she had no idea what he looked like. Not that anyone did, really. He didn't frequent her side of the pond and he had never been a player on the scene. Despite that, his

reputation for working with submissives was legendary. It had taken her months to find him and make contact, which in its own way was remarkable. Among her numerous naughty sins, she was an excellent computer hacker. It would have taken slightly less time to contact the President of the United States on his private cell phone.

The man stopped near her. Water dripped from his slicker onto floor. Good God, let this be Ethan. Up close, this man was a hunk and a half. His eyes were blue, but not just an ordinary blue. They were an electrifying, stunning blue. She could imagine him capturing her gaze while he commanded her onto her knees.

His hands were large and just the thought of him touching her naked skin made her want to obey.

"I'll be having the personal effects that Master requested you bring."

Master?

Which meant this man wasn't Ethan.

She exhaled. So who was he?

"Ms. Simmons?"

This was it.

Ethan's e-mailed instructions had been very specific. She was to travel lightly. She should wear a skirt with stockings and a garter belt – no knickers, he'd said, and she'd had to learn that that translated into American panties – and the highest heels she could tolerate. Her blouse should button up the front. Surprising her, he'd added an instruction that she should wear a bra. As for suitcases, she'd need none. He would be supplying everything she needed.

She was allowed to travel with her prized handbag containing identification, credit cards, cash, passport, and, of course, the letter.

The unnamed man stood there, his hand extended. "Your personal effects, if you please," he repeated.

There was something about being in a submissive state of mind that made Alana's brain turn to mush. She was competent – more than competent – at her marketing job. She led her team in strategic ideas. But put her with a man who held sexual power over her, and she struggled to think straight.

"Ms Simmons? Do you need me to repeat the request?"

"No." Her hands were shaky as she shrugged her purse from her shoulder and unzipped the bag's main compartment.

She made a neat little pile on his extended palm.

"Keep the book," he said. "Master didn't request anything else."

Oh-kay.

Master? It was the second time he'd used the word. Was this man a slave, much like she wanted to be? Surely not. As big, strong, and yummy as he was, he was probably just being respectful of Ethan's British title.

Tucking her papers safely inside his slicker, he said, "Now dispose of the rest."

"I beg your pardon? Throw away...?"

With infinite patience, and without a scowl forming between his brows, the man repeated the order.

"Are you mad? Do you have any idea how much I paid for this bag?" Ever since she'd been old enough to lust over fashion magazines, she'd wanted a purse that department stores kept safely locked in a glass case. Or, even better, one from a fashionable little store that discretely tucked price tags inside the bag. Alana had spent days bidding on this particular purse on an internet auction site. She'd wondered if her credit card would melt from the frenzy. "You're kidding me, right? Tell me this is a bad joke."

He said nothing.

Men.

Another drop of water dripped from his slicker onto the floor.

Then she realised this was the first test. Being bound and flogged was one thing. Throwing away a purse that cost a month's salary was another, entirely.

With a sigh, she walked over to the nearest rubbish bin and tossed in her handbag. As if that wasn't bad enough, it still contained her journal, the book she was quite enjoying, and worse, her toiletries, including her favourite tube of mascara.

Good God. Was she really ready for this? Ready to be stripped to her barest, basest level? For that's what Ethan would demand from her.

The man, who still had not introduced himself, headed for the exit. She shrugged and then followed him.

In seconds, the inhospitable English weather had taken its toll. The rain drenched her, the wind whipped wet strands of hair onto her cheeks. Now she was cold, wet, tired, jet lagged, and minus one fine handbag. She could have booked a flight anywhere in the world. Bali, Tahiti, Puerto Vallarta, Maui. She could be baking in the sun, smiling her thanks to the subservient boys who brought her frozen, tropical drinks with colourful umbrellas stuck in them. But, no. She'd searched out a recluse and gleefully handed over her credit card number for an aeroplane ticket to England in January.

Mad. She was the one who was totally, completely, one hundred percent certifiably insane.

The man held open the back of a limo for her.

Well, this was a treat.

The inside was enormous. Maybe things weren't so bad after all. She could warm up, relax, take a snooze, and maybe, just maybe, have a drink to steady her nerves before meeting Ethan.

She slid her drenched self onto the back seat of the dark limo, and the driver closed the door. She tipped back her head and sighed.

"On your knees."

Her insides became a puddle of desire.

In the dark, she couldn't make out much more than the silhouette of a broad man facing her. But his voice was rich, like brandy poured over velvet. It had the added, seductive elements of being precise and authoritative.

Ethan?

He'd personally come to collect her?

Exhaustion clobbered by a burst of adrenaline, Alana slid from the seat.

Being on her knees sounded like an easy order to follow, until she was on the uncomfortable floorboard, the short carpet chafing her knees.

She waited. And waited.

Was she expected to speak or just remain silent? Nerves made her babble. "Ethan? Thank you for accepting me. I mean, I know you don't work with many slaves anymore and..." She trailed off.

The vehicle began to move, and yet her companion hadn't said another word, hadn't responded to anything she said.

If his intention was to keep her on tenterhooks, he'd succeeded.

Alana had to shift slightly as the car accelerated and merged onto the roadways.

She was hyperaware of the man in front of her, of the scent of raw, untamed North Sea.

As her heartbeat slowed and blood stopped pounding in her ears, she tuned into the secondary sounds, those of the rain splattering on the windows, the vehicle's tyres splashing through the water on the motorway, the other cars zooming past, and most importantly, the breathing pattern of the man barely an arm's reach away.

As they passed beneath the occasional streetlight, she caught shadowed glimpses of him. Dark hair. Intense eyes. Chiselled features.

He was resting on something. A cane?

She was consumed with curiosity, wanting to talk to him, ask him questions, anchor herself in some way to the man she'd given herself to.

"Remove your coat."

Alana's hands shook. She'd never felt more disoriented. She couldn't see much, and she knew little of the man she was kneeling before. She'd played bondage games in the past; even some where she was blindfolded, not exactly tops of her list of favourite things.

But, even in those, she entered the club willingly with a partner of her choice. She'd seen the room, recognised all the torture devices hanging from the walls.

She folded her coat and placed it on the floorboard next to her. Unable to resist the vanity, she ran her hands through her rain-dampened hair before tucking strands behind her ears.

Anticipation making a knot of her stomach as she waited for his next instruction.

It was strange how she craved the sound of his voice, as if the rich, aristocratic cadence were a lifeline.

But the order didn't come.

For all she knew, he'd totally forgotten about her.

She breathed deep, smelling the sharp scent of leather. The car's interior, she wondered, or something else, like a whip or flogger? Or, better yet, the belt he wore?

And she once again inhaled *his* scent as well. She would come to know it well, she realised. It was the scent of her trainer, her master.

As time passed and city lights disappeared behind them, her knees became even more fatigued, and she had to fight the urge to rest on her haunches. So much for a comfy ride and a glass of wine. This, the silence, the uncertainty, was much more intense than she'd anticipated. He was wearing down her resistance, taking her completely out of her comfort zone, she knew. But that didn't make it any easier.

If he'd have made her get naked and inspected her, she would have known how to act. Every article she'd read covered that. Everyone she talked to told her to expect that. But this? Uncertainty provided a much greater mind fuck than a detailed set of instructions would have.

"I trust you're comfortable?"

"Err..." She hesitated. Was he expecting a "*Yes, Sir?*" Or the truth?

"Answer the question." His tone was a whiplash and it jerked her fully upright again.

"No. No, Sir. I'm not comfortable."

"I always want honesty from you, Alana. Lying will get you sent back to America immediately."

She nodded, not that he would notice in the dark.

"If I have done my job correctly," he said, his voice rich, measured, and paced, "the next time we take a ride in my car and you're on your knees, tired and wet and hungry, you'll be able to say you are comfortable."

She cocked her head to one side. "Sir?"

"Submission," he said. "The reason you're here is to learn about submission."

He was nobility, comfortable with giving commands and fully expecting to be obeyed. "Yes."

"Submission," he told her, "is about more than whips and chains, although you'll certainly feel the bite of my leather."

Alana had gotten an elicit thrill from their e-mail exchanges, but it was nothing compared to the reality of being here, close enough to smell him, to have his voice send shivers up her spine. Her arousal made her moist between the legs.

“Submission is more mental than physical. It’s about pleasure. It’s about —” He broke off. Using the cane for balance, he leaned towards her. “You tell me, Alana. Tell me about submission.”

“I told you in my first e-mail.”

“That was scripted.”

She swallowed. He was right. It had taken her several days to write that first e-mail. She’d had her friends in the scene read it; she’d used a dictionary and a thesaurus. Even though she wasn’t an English major, the letter had been good.

“Insulting, even. You’re lucky I didn’t delete it.”

Oh.

“Tell me about your journey to submission.”

“You’re right, it is mental. I think about it, fantasise about it. I have dreams about it.”

“Keep going.”

She would have to dig deep to give him what he demanded. “I used to have these fantasies of being spanked.” Good grief. She couldn’t believe she was actually telling him this. Her tongue suddenly felt too big for her mouth.

“Go on.”

Her knees were definitely hurting now. About five minutes ago, she’d passed fatigue and crossed into a dull ache. Her muscles strained as she struggled to keep her balance. Did he notice? Or care? “One night, I think I was about nineteen, I went to a birthday party at my friend’s house. There were a bunch of us, and after we sang Happy Birthday to her, her boyfriend told her she was going to get birthday spanks, one for every year.” She licked her lower lip.

The silence in the car became a palpable thing. Alana was hyperaware of the chauffeur also listening to every word.

“Instead of just spanking her while she stood there, he waited until all the adults were gone, and then he turned her over his knee. She fussed and had all these little cries, but with the way she was squirming and then moaning, you knew she was enjoying it. At home that night, I hardly slept at all.” She finally took a breath.

“You wanted to be her.”

“Yes. I would be the one to get a spanking. It would be an over-the-knee thing, like hers.”

“Bare-bottomed?”

“Back then, I didn’t think that far. Maybe over my clothes. But I never got the images out of my head. The fantasy changed, though. I added details. I wanted a bare-bottomed spanking.” She wished she could see him. She wanted to read his expression, wanted to know if her answers, her honesty pleased him. “But maybe I’d be wearing stockings and a garter belt. I’d be chastised for misbehaving.”

“And your punisher... Would he finger your clit or fuck you when he was done?”

Ethan’s blunt talk cut straight to the matter. With this man, there were no pleasantries. He hadn’t asked about her flight, or if she was hungry, or if she needed a drink. Instead, he went straight to the point...went about the business of establishing who was master. “No,” she responded. She took a deep breath. “He wouldn’t touch me at all. He’d leave me to think of my naughty ways.”

“He?”

She hungered for his man’s reaction. “In my fantasies, my punisher has always been a man, yes.”

“Perhaps it would be interesting to watch a woman give you a spanking.”

She shuddered. That wasn’t something she’d ever thought about.

“Alana?”

Honesty. He demanded honesty. “I’m strictly heterosexual, Sir.”

“I said perhaps it would be interesting to watch a woman give you a spanking. I did not ask if you wanted to be spanked by a woman. And...” He trailed off and leaned even closer towards her. “The correct answer is ‘if it pleases you, Sir’.”

She gulped.

She was completely out of her element.

Ethan wasn’t a player at the scene, someone who put on leather and assumed a role at night and then went back to his regularly scheduled life. This man was a master. In the past ten minutes, even though he hadn’t so much as touched her, she’d seen that. He’d been demanding and exacting, subtly outlining the rules, probing at her memories, testing her

commitment. Dominance was woven into the fabric of his soul. He couldn't be any other way.

And he was still waiting. "If it pleases you, Sir."

"If I ask your opinion directly, I expect a straight answer."

"Yes, Sir."

"You understand the difference?"

"Yes." If asked a direct question, he required honesty. If he suggested something he'd like to do to her, the decision as to whether or not to do it was up to him.

"Did you ever get your spanking?"

"I did." And the memory was there, fresh and real. "When I was about twenty-three. I met a man at a club. I'd had a drink or two and told him what I wanted. Since he was a Dom, he took me home and gave me a sound thrashing."

Ethan didn't ask questions, but his silence was both instruction and invitation. She continued, "It was hot. I, uhm, loved it. But then..." She trailed off, mucking around to find the right words. "I had this hunger to...I don't know. Serve? I wanted to be on my knees, I wanted to kiss his hand. He wanted to fuck and then hold me in his arms." She broke position to run her hand through her hair.

"Punishment is a part of submission," he said. "And so is reward."

"But—"

"But you weren't craving just a spanking, little one. You were craving submission. Your Dom didn't understand the mental angles. You wanted punishment and reward. You got punishment, but there was no crime to be punished for. Not even a made-up one. The psychological angles weren't explored or exploited." He captured her chin with his thumb and forefinger.

She felt his power, his strength.

She was glad she came. There was no place on the planet she'd rather be than on her knees in front of a man who did understand the psychology of what she craved.

"Therefore it was shallow. Meaningless. And it didn't satisfy."

"Yes." That was it, what she herself had never comprehended.

"Your instincts were right, by the way. You should have had a deeper hunger to serve. You should have wanted to kiss his hand. That's submission. Spanking and being tied up, that's kink."

"There's nothing wrong with kink."

"Quite right," he agreed. "A little 'tie me up, tie me down' can be good for some. But for others, for submissives, it's not enough."

"For me, it's not enough. Not that I don't enjoy just being tied up and..."

"Say it."

She ran her tongue across the front of her teeth. "Fucked."

"Go on."

"But I lay awake thinking that there has to be more."

"A submissive finds pleasure from pleasing her master."

And she wanted to please this man. She wanted to turn her head into his palm, wanted to kiss his hand. She had no idea if she pleased him at all. Did the way she stayed there, fighting for balance against the car's sway, despite the fact her body ached, make him happy? Damn it! She had no idea if she was doing anything right.

"That said, that doesn't mean you cannot or will not be punished, spanked, or flogged simply because I want to beat you. Seeing you writhe beneath my whip will give me pleasure." Tightening his grip a bit, he added, "But it will never be meaningless."

She wanted to lean into him, to surrender. The pad of his thumb felt rough, callused. This man was so much more than just a gentleman.

In the quiet, in the dark, he asked, "What do you want to do right now? What do you want to say?"

"Thank you," she whispered. "I want to thank you, and not just because that's what a properly trained sub would do." Her thanks came from the heart. This man, more than anyone she'd ever met, understood her. "Thank you for understanding, for helping me to understand."

"I want to kiss your hand because I know it will give me pleasure, as well as pain. And I want to press myself against you, begging for your touch." Never had Alana been so boldly honest. This man she'd never met before tonight aroused her, tantalised her. She wanted him to possess her.

Yet she was still fully clothed.

He held her face prisoner still, and he tenderly stroked her cheekbone with his forefinger.

She tried to kiss him, but he forbade it. She closed her eyes. "I—"

"Is your pussy wet?"

"Yes." And it was. Very wet.

"Show me."

Alana frowned. Show him, how?

He released her and sat back in his seat.

Spreading her thighs even farther apart, she grabbed the hem of her skirt and pulled it up. She tucked it into her waistband to keep the material out of the way, and then reached between her legs to run her fingertips across her damp crotch.

She bit back an involuntary moan. Her entire body was sensitised, and even the lightest touch from her own fingers was enough to push her over the edge.

"Show me," he repeated.

She held out her hand towards him. Resting on the cane, he once again leaned forward. He took her hand and raised it to his nose. There was no way to miss the sharp scent of her arousal. It filled the car. She thought she should be embarrassed, but, releasing her, he gave her no opportunity.

"Lick your fingers."

What?

"Lick your fingers," he repeated.

With a shudder, she forced herself to tamp down her instinctive rebellion and do as he instructed. She raised her hand, and then sucked her fingers into her mouth. Her juices were salty, but, she had to admit, not all that unpleasant.

"Do you want to orgasm?"

"Yes," she whispered. The shame of the admission made her drop her head forward.

"You want to fuck yourself in front of me, where even Thomas can hear your every moan?"

So that was the driver's name. Thomas.

"Alana?"

She wanted the orgasm.

She didn't want an audience.

Being uninhibited in front of Ethan was one thing. He'd tolerate nothing less. But behaving that way in front of both men was another, especially since she was attracted to the driver. "I've never masturbated in front of anyone," she confessed.

"Because?"

"I've never been an exhibitionist." Something seemed particularly naughty about that.

"So you'd prefer to be denied an orgasm?"

"No," she said quickly. She knew enough about the lifestyle to realise it wasn't smart to turn down an offered orgasm. You never knew when you'd get another chance.

He turned on an interior light. But because of the way it was positioned, she didn't get a better glimpse of him. "You have two minutes to bring yourself off."

"Two minutes?" She couldn't do anything in less than five.

"One minute and fifty-five seconds," he amended.

"But—"

"Allow me to help." He leaned forward and slapped her cunt, hard.

She jerked and cried out. Her breaths came in shocked, panting bursts. But once the burning sting receded, she was even wetter than before. Damn it. Damn him. He knew her so completely already.

"Fuck yourself," he ordered.

Her fingers shook and her senses swam.

This couldn't possibly be happening.

"I—" Feeling miserable, she parted her labia. From his smack, her clit was hardened and swollen. She pulled back the hood, exposing the nub so she could gently rub it.

This was more difficult than she could have imagined, letting go of her inhibitions long enough to masturbate herself to orgasm in front of two strangers, despite the fact she'd begged for the opportunity to come to England.

She worked her fingers against her clit, pushing them deep into her pussy, but the damned orgasm remained elusive.

So close... Painfully close... She jerked her hips, humping her hand. But she couldn't quite...

Suddenly, Ethan dug his hand in her hair, simultaneously pulling and imprisoning her head as he said, "You'd do well to follow my orders, girl." His breath was hot on her face. "If you don't climax when given the opportunity, it will be a long time before you are given another chance."

She nodded, but the motion pulled her hair tight and made her wince.

"I have a fairly good idea what kind of Doms you've been with in the past," he added. "Weak. Players. Men who don't understand submission. Do not confuse me with them."

"No," she said, "I won't."

"I told you to fuck yourself."

Furiously, she kept working her pussy. Her senses were overloaded, her nerves were stretched to their limit, and her brain was unable to complete a rational thought.

"Time's up," he said.

Chapter Two

An obviously dejected Alana dropped her hand and as he released his hold on her, sank onto her haunches.

“Another thing you’ll learn,” Ethan told her, intentionally keeping his voice moderated and patient, “is that I do not tolerate my subs feeling sorry for themselves. It gets in the way of learning. You’re here of your own free will. You’re welcome to leave at any time. I trust you’re clear on that?”

Alana nodded.

“Then why are you not kneeling correctly?”

She cursed softly and scrambled back into position.

Part of Ethan wondered what in the hell *he* was doing here. Several years ago, he had completely sworn off training. Men, as well as women. There was little reward in it. He taught natural subs what they needed to know, then sent them off, rarely to be seen again.

Since his return from the war, he hadn’t accepted anyone. He’d been comfortable, even happy, alone. He was satisfied to have Thomas in his life, and the estate would pass to his brother’s children. Everything was satisfactorily handled.

The blasted cold and damp bothered his knee. He could have stayed at home, in front of the fire, nursing a fine brandy that Thomas poured for him.

Instead, he was out in the nasty weather, trying to teach a headstrong woman to get out of her own way.

Normally he wouldn’t have bothered, but she was persistent.

She’d managed to work past the layers of security he’d built around himself, and she’d accessed his private e-mail.

He’d discarded her first request. And the next dozen.

She was brash, though, and pushy. He’d been intrigued.

And, if he were as honest with himself as he demanded she be with herself, he wasn’t sorry he’d dragged himself out of the house to meet her at the airport.

The excitement of training again, and especially, of training her, had brightened an otherwise dreary winter. "Spread your legs farther," he told his lovely want-to-be sub.

Despite what she said about her impulse to kiss her Dom's hand after she'd been spanked, despite the fact she'd thanked him and kissed him, despite what she herself thought, she wasn't a complete natural. She had to fight her instinctive urges. Serving him would be an afterthought, forcing her to subjugate her own impulses. And he doubted she could do that. It took extreme desire to be a sub if it didn't come naturally.

She probably wanted to explore the naughtier side of life and then scamper away. Ethan wouldn't be surprised if she turned her American arse back west and fled across the pond in less than two days.

He just hoped he was wrong.

Her thigh muscles trembled at the unnatural position. Still, she didn't move. "Hands on your thighs. And no matter what, you may not touch yourself."

He looked at her. Her brows were drawn together, and she struggled not to disobey him. Clearly, she wanted the climax that was just a few more seconds out of reach. There was nothing calm about her.

Which, perhaps, was why he'd accepted the challenge, even though he'd sworn he'd never accept another novice. Training a natural? That was old hat; he'd done it dozens of times. But someone who was merely interested, more curious than anything, almost a total novice? Now that was different. "What's the longest amount of time you've gone without an orgasm?"

"A day?" she said, still with that adorable frown on her brow. "Maybe two? Unless I have sex, I usually masturbate twice a day."

"And when you're being dominated?"

"I have multiple orgasms," she admitted.

Ethan heard no shame in her admission, and he delighted in it. Absently he wondered how many orgasms she could take before passing out in his arms. "Tell me about the shortest amount of time it took you to come."

"Tony...he was a Dom who took me to his condo. He started to spank me, and after about half a dozen slaps, I started to wriggle about. I thought I'd get chastised, but he instructed me to part my legs. He ground his thumb against my clit and I came instantly."

“Interesting that in your fantasises, your Dom doesn’t fuck you. Yet you’re telling me you come quickly while being spanked.”

“I do.”

“Were you punished for orgasming instantly?”

“No.” She shook her head.

He noticed her tip her head, as if straining to see him. He sensed her frustration, stemming, he imagined, from the inability to look at her Dominator, the stranger she’d entrusted her mind, body, and soul to. Purposefully, he used the dark and shadows to delve into the deepest parts of her psyche.

“Tony got off on pleasing me.”

“While I expect you to get off on pleasing me.”

A huge difference, they both knew. But ultimately, that’s where her pleasure would come from.

“It pleases me to have you lie on the floor, on your back, with your legs spread. Now.”

She licked her bottom lip in a nervous gesture. But she complied without having to be told a second time.

“Lift your arse.”

Digging her heels into the floorboards, she lifted her hips.

“I want to know, beyond what you’ve already said, why you’re here. We have exchanged enough e-mails that you know I’m not inclined to give you a good hiding, then fuck you until you curl up and go to sleep.”

“That’s not what I want.”

“Are you certain?”

To her credit, she hesitated before answering. Then she gave the honesty he demanded. “I want to explore that part of me where I want to kiss my Dom’s hand after he’s administered pain with it.”

Not a natural, but curious enough to be malleable in his hands. “Masturbate yourself.” He repositioned the interior light. Since she was on her back, looking up at the car’s ceiling and he was lounging back in his seat with a small beam directed between her legs, he could see all her secrets, but she still couldn’t see him.

“That’s a girl,” he said, “rock your hips as if you were being fucked.”

Since she had only slim high-heeled shoes to balance on, following his orders proved difficult, as he'd intended. The muscles in her thighs and calves strained, and the motion of the limousine made it even more challenging.

"You've got a good view then, Thomas, in the rear-view mirror?" Ethan asked.

A horrified blush burned into her cheeks. Ethan was charmed.

"Yes, Master. Indeed."

A small shudder passed through her. Ethan knew it was one thing for a new sub to expose her pussy to the man mastering her, but it was another entirely to have another servant ogle her.

"Ethan," she breathed.

"Having him see your pussy cream pleases me."

She opened her mouth as if to argue, but he interrupted her thoughts by saying, "Spread your labia."

It took only a couple of seconds for her to overcome her hesitation. That was a couple of seconds longer than he'd allow her in the future.

"Your cunt is wet, slut."

She whimpered, but part of Ethan's training was the constant assault on emotions and mental as well as physical defences. His use of language was intentional. Everything he did was intentional.

He grabbed a very large dildo from a storage compartment next to the leather seat. He pressed it against her gaping vaginal opening.

"Ethan?" she asked.

"Sir," he corrected. One thing at a time. "I'm holding a large dildo," he told her. "It will probably feel too big." He began to ease it in.

"It is..." She gasped. "Too big."

"No, it's not," he said. "Relax and take it."

"I..." She thrashed from side to side.

"Can. You can. You will. It pleases me to see you stretched and vulnerable, and I assume it pleases Thomas as well."

"Yes, Master, it does," Thomas said. "It's been a while since we've had someone to play with."

“Keep your hips up,” Ethan said, seeing her struggle. “Keep your hole wide open for this cock.” He worked it, pushing it in, pulling it back out, twisting it around. “It’s glass,” he said. “Only the best for my little sub.”

Stretched, probed, fucked, she gasped. No doubt it hurt. But her gasps had pleasure in them, as well.

“Arse up,” he said when she started to drop her hips.

“It’s...”

“The perfect size,” he finished for her. “Even if it feels like it’s too big. You’ve got a greedy, needy cunt.”

His words, as naughty and raw as they were, made her wetter.

He chuckled. “See?”

“Is this...? Uh... I mean...”

What was she trying to say? “Punishment for not bringing yourself off?” he supplied helpfully.

She yelped. “Oh!”

“Yes.”

Twisting and pushing, he forced the enormous cock in deeper.

“I can’t...”

“You can.”

She tried to squirm away, fighting off the intrusion. He pinched the inside of her thigh.

She cried out. But the distraction worked. The toy slid in all the way, filling her. Her eyes closed.

“It’s like...” She seemed to cast about for words.

“It’s what?”

His lovely sub was unable to answer. He wanted to ram his cock up her arse as he reached beneath her and twisted her nipples painfully. *That* would be sensory overload.

His blood rushed to fill his penis, making it hard and demanding.

But one thing subs rarely realised, the Dom needed every bit as much control, if not more, than a sub. If he gave into his impulses, she wouldn’t learn a thing, but he’d be satisfied.

He fucked her with the dildo, bringing it out, forcing it in, pulling it out, slamming it in with a twist of his wrist.

Her head tossed back and forth.

She was wanton and sexy.

“Makes a man want to ride her, Master,” Thomas said.

Ethan saw her try to form a response, but she couldn't. He smiled. Training her would be an absolute pleasure.

Ethan touched her clit.

She dug her heels into the carpeted floor even deeper and forced her pelvis up higher, silently begging for him to touch her clit again.

“Naughty little cunt,” he said as she all but ground herself against him.

As suddenly as he'd started, he stopped. He pulled the dildo from her, leaving her wide-open and unsatisfied.

Chapter Three

Alana cried out.

Bastard. Ethan was a bastard.

Thomas laughed from the front seat.

"The next time you're given the opportunity to climax," her Master said quietly, "I advise you to take it."

Her thighs trembled. She turned her head to the side and bit her lower lip.

"Concentrate on your breathing," he told her. "It's the most effective way to control your emotions."

She shuddered.

What the hell was she doing, thousands of miles from home, turning her wants, needs, desires, *her entire body* and its responses over to a total stranger? Why was she lying on the floor of a limo, her legs spread and her wet pussy open to view?

Her cunt juices cooled on her thighs, and she became aware of the chill in the car. But no one seemed to notice or care.

"Breathe," Ethan told her a few moments later.

She let out a shaky sigh and then drew in a shallow breath.

In and out.

Then again, a bit deeper.

As she did, the fatigue in her muscles seemed to subside. As he'd promised, she did manage to control her emotions and she no longer felt as though she'd start to cry.

"Silently count backward from one hundred," Ethan instructed. "And when you get to one, you may rest your arse on the floor."

No one counted faster than her.

"No cheating."

She slowed down, schooled her breathing, and did as he said.

She didn't exactly lower herself gracefully. It was more like a plop of exhaustion.

"That needs work," he observed.

"Yes, Sir."

“Again,” he told her. “Lift your hips, and then silently count backwards. This time from two hundred.”

Even her ankles were screaming in protest of the weight she balanced on them. Tears burned in her eyes. Her entire being felt raw and ragged, and it wasn't just from the jet lag, it was just a complete sense of being overwhelmed.

“I enjoy seeing you spread open like this. I believe I'll have you do it every day. Perhaps even while Thomas serves breakfast.”

She gritted her teeth. Protesting would likely earn her the opportunity to be spread like a Christmas turkey at suppertime, as well.

This time, when she lowered her body, she did so very slowly.

“Elegant,” he said. “Much better.”

She had no idea how long she lay there, ignored while Thomas completed the drive.

By the time they arrived at Ethan's country estate, her nerves were stretched tight. He'd already taken her farther than she imagined possible, past the point she had ever been before. From her years of reading and adventurous forays into the world of BDSM, she thought she understood what it meant to be a submissive. The experiences she'd had so far left her woefully unprepared for the reality, the intensity of Ethan Kendall.

Thomas opened the door. In the absence of other instructions, she remained where she was. Which, evidently, was the correct thing to do. Relying on the cane, Ethan climbed from the car, and then said, “You may exit the vehicle.”

Elegant, she reminded herself. Every motion must be elegant. That was easier said than done, with her skirt tucked into her waistband, her crotch exposed, her shirt awry, the slim, spiky heels, trembling muscles, and no mascara to freshen her makeup.

The rain had stopped, but the air hung heavy with cold humidity.

She followed the men into the house, if that was the right word. In America, she'd never seen anything quite like Ethan's ancestral home. Rich woods, tapestries, portraits, and warm fires in the hearth.

She didn't have much opportunity to enjoy her surroundings before Ethan said, “I'll see you in the drawing room.”

She followed Thomas, vividly aware of Ethan's gaze on her backside as she walked away.

“Wait in the centre of the room and remain fully clothed. Master will join you when he’s ready.”

“Thank you.”

He placed her personal items on a tray near a decanter of whiskey.

“Thomas?”

He paused near the door.

“Are you a slave?”

He shook his head. “But there’s no man I’d rather serve.”

He left the room, closing the door quietly behind him.

She paced nervously, and when Ethan entered, she was wearing a hole in the marble in front of the fireplace.

She stopped and turned to look at him, getting her first real view of the reclusive Sir Ethan Kendall. He was tall, well over six feet, and the cane he leaned on lent him an air of mystery.

Like his manservant, he had dark hair. It was much, much longer than she anticipated, however. She knew he’d been in the military, so she expected his hair to be regulation length. Instead, it was so long he held it cinched back with a thin strip of leather.

His eyes were dark and stormy, grey, matching the weather.

His shoulders were broad, stretching wide the blazer he wore. Like a true gentleman, he dressed, even at home.

My God, he was good looking. Really, really good looking. His nose may have been broken in the past, but that did nothing to detract from his looks. His features were strong and masculine, as if chiselled by a master craftsman.

She wanted to run her hand down his face, tracing the strong curve of his jaw. She wanted to slide a finger into his mouth and have him suck on it. She wanted sex.

“You’ve much to learn,” he said.

She offered a half smile.

“That nervous energy,” he clarified. “It’s not going to be tolerated here.”

Her smile froze.

“Elegance and grace define a submissive.”

“I thought—”

“Despite what you said in the car, you think it’s mostly about spanking and being pushed to your limits.”

“Yes. That’s what I read about. That’s what I saw in the clubs. Read about in chat rooms.”

“It’s that, and more. In the clubs, do you not notice that some subs have an air of something almost intangible about them? An acceptance, perhaps?”

She frowned. There were women, men, as well, who seemed more suited to their roles. Some seemed to be playing a game. Some seemed to be loving it.

Leaning on the cane, he crossed to the sideboard and poured himself a drink. “And one for the sub?”

She raised her eyebrows and licked at her lower lip. He’d allow her to drink? “Yes, please.”

“Submission, being a slave, is a state of mind, more than anything else,” he said, pouring a second, neat brandy, “which is why the titillation is so exploited. You can’t see state of mind.”

She crossed the room to stand near him. She accepted the crystal snifter, whispered, “Thanks,” and kept her eyes lowered.

“Much better,” he approved.

She sipped the smooth, classy alcohol.

“When I came in, I expected to see you in the middle of the room, emotions under control, waiting on my pleasure.”

She said nothing. What could she say?

“Perhaps Thomas didn’t give you instructions? Perhaps he was remiss?”

She shook her head. “No. No, Sir. Thomas told me to wait in the centre of the room.”

“Then?”

“I...” She trailed off. “I don’t have an explanation. I wanted to see the room; I had been cooped up in a plane and a car... My muscles needed to be stretched.”

“And you didn’t give Thomas’ words the same weight you would have given mine.”

She hadn’t.

“For future reference, Thomas is to be obeyed, just as I am, unless an order of his countermands mine. In this case, sub, he was the bearer of my specific instructions.”

She felt as if she were swimming through murky, shark-infested waters. "I apologise."

"An apology is a start, but not good enough."

"I'll be punished?"

"You will."

He left the words hanging between them.

Her hand trembled as she finished the brandy. It warmed all the way down, and yet it did nothing to soothe her nerves.

"You'll not get brandy again," he told her. "You'll learn to control yourself without artificial help." He moved across the floor and picked up the personal items Thomas had left on the sideboard. Ethan set aside the letter and said, "Your passport, identification, and money will all remain right here on this table. You are free to leave at any time. In fact, you're encouraged to leave. Thomas will always be at your disposal." He looked up and nodded towards the corner of the room. "Rather old-fashioned of me, but there's a rotary dial phone on the stand. There's a telephone book there, as well. If Thomas is not available, feel free to ring for a ride. No one will stop you from leaving.

"Your submission to me must always be freely given."

She nodded.

He took a seat, leaning the cane against the chair's arm, and then opened her letter.

She knew the contents by heart. She asked him to please accept her and train her. She vowed she was here of her own free will. The period of her training was to be fourteen days. Under no circumstances would she be allowed to stay longer than that.

She'd also listed that she was using birth control and included her latest blood work results; he'd sent her his as well.

He'd asked her to list her preferred method of punishment. He'd clarified in his e-mail, "In other words, if I were going to punish you, and you were to become sexually aroused, what implement would I use?"

"Your hand," she'd said. "Followed by your leather belt."

"Why do you like to be punished with a belt?" he asked now.

"I like the way it smells," she said. "And its bite." She hesitated.

He sensed it. "Go on."

"It's personal."

"Meaning?"

"If you wear it, if it's yours." She struggled for the right words. "Being punished with your belt is intimate. More so than anything except your hand."

"And what, if anything, would you prefer never to be punished with?"

"Isolation."

He raised his brows. "Being caged?"

She shuddered. "I'm not particularly claustrophobic. But I would prefer not to be left alone."

"So being sent to your room?"

"A fate worse than death."

He laughed.

"Seriously, I want to be the centre of your attention."

"Now that's honest." He scanned the letter again. "There is nothing crossed through."

"Making things off-limits during my training seemed counterproductive."

"Lying is counterproductive to your training."

Her blood chilled.

"There's nothing here to indicate those things you want to try but are embarrassed to tell me you want to try."

There'd been two things that made her shudder, but she'd decided not to draw attention to them. Standing here, in front of him, she definitely didn't want to talk about them.

"You've insulted me, woman."

Her mouth opened, then she snapped it shut. "Insulted you?"

"As my sub, you're allowed no secrets. You've kept them with your refusal to answer. There are things on here that terrify you." Pointedly, he looked at her. "Piercing?" he asked.

"Branding?"

She shivered.

"You're game for them all?"

Her eyes were wide.

"Perhaps, then, you should go put a poker in the fire." His gaze flicked to the assortment of metal implements next to the hearth.

Her stomach turned over.

"Ten minutes ought to do it."

He wouldn't. "Ethan..."

"You signed the bottom."

"I..." Her entire body shook.

"You made nothing off limits."

"You made your point."

"This is a contract, Alana, and I expected you to give it due consideration."

Chastened, and, for the first time, scared to death, she said, "I'm sorry."

"Indeed." He rang a bell.

Moments later, Thomas appeared. "Show Alana to her room."

"Aye, sir."

"But—"

He held up his hand. "Take your miserable letter upstairs with you. And when I summon you in the morning, it will have things crossed through. It will have a question mark next to those items you think you might like to try but are nervous about."

"Mas-ter!"

"Your disobedience began before you left the States. I will not tolerate anything less than your total honesty. And unless you can give me that, Thomas will deliver you to Heathrow first thing tomorrow morning." He re-folded the letter and scored the lines with his thumbnail, placed it back in its envelope, and handed it back to her. "You'll have the rest of the night, in isolation, to think about your transgressions."

A flush of humiliation drowned her.

She dropped her head forward.

This man was harsh and unyielding. And she would do anything not to be sent away from him.

She was horribly aware of his gaze on her as she followed Thomas from the room.

Chapter Four

"Another brandy, Sir?" Thomas asked, joining Ethan in the drawing room. It had been a number of months since Thomas had seen Ethan like this, legs stretched in front of him, crossed at the ankle, rolling an empty glass between his palms. His brows were slightly furrowed as he stared at the fire. He seemed contemplative, but not morose.

"She's going to be a challenge."

"Aye, Sir. That she is."

"She didn't like being left alone."

It was more statement than comment, but Thomas answered anyway, "She hated it."

"Good."

"She asked if she could please just have a beating."

"She'll get both."

Thomas fought back a satisfied smile. It'd been too damn many years since Ethan showed this much interest in life. Not for one minute had Thomas regretted his slight *assistance* in helping Alana's email get through to his master. The fact that the woman was sexy enough to give Thomas an electrifying hard-on was an added benefit.

"She needs to be mastered."

"And you're the man to do it. And damn is it fun to watch you do." Thomas took the glass from Ethan and added another splash of brandy.

"What the hell am I doing, Thomas?"

"Your civic duty, Sir."

Ethan laughed. 'Bout damn time, as well, if anyone asked Thomas.

Ethan accepted the snifter. He took a sip, and then put the glass on the sideboard.

"Drop your trousers."

He raised a brow in shock. His friend, his lover, had fucked him often enough, but it was usually Thomas who initiated their sexual relations. His cock hardened, and blood warmed in his veins.

He grabbed a condom and a tube of lube from a drawer in the sideboard.

Thomas wanted Ethan naked, but the man was too much of a master, even when he wasn't with a slave, to have his will bent to another's.

Thomas stripped, and his penis became even more turgid when Ethan looked at him, his storm-grey eyes darkening.

Ethan toed off his shoes and removed his socks, and then he used his cane to stand.

Wordlessly, Thomas lowered the zipper on Ethan's pants.

As usual, he wore nothing beneath his trousers. The man's cock was hard, throbbing. His balls were large and full. He'd removed all of the pubic hair from his testicles, leaving them smooth, lickable. Thomas' mouth dried.

He fumbled with the condom wrapper, his fingers shaking. No matter how many times he and Ethan were together, he trembled with anticipation.

Thomas sheathed Ethan's cock with the latex condom. He reached to uncap the lube, but stopped when Ethan said, "Leave it."

He dropped the tube on the sideboard.

"Over the arm of the chair then, Thomas."

"Oh, aye, Sir." He took his position, his arse exposed as he bent and reached across the chair to grasp the arm on the far side. His breaths were ragged, and he empathised with how Alana must have felt earlier when she'd been on her back on the car's floorboards, her legs spread, rear end lifted, pelvis tilted. She'd been completely exposed and vulnerable, just as Thomas was now. It was an exhilarating, frightening feeling.

The cane clattered to the floor.

Ethan caressed the cheeks of Thomas' arse, kneading, and spreading at the same time.

Thomas' cock was erect, but there was nothing to rub it against. "Take me, Ethan."

"In due time."

"Now!" he begged.

Ethan's hand closed around Thomas' cock. "Argh!" Urgently, he thrust. The friction of skin on skin drove an orgasm closer and closer. He humped his lover's hand shamelessly, shamefully.

Suddenly, Ethan uncurled his hand.

"Damn you." Rather than a curse, the words emerged as a plea.

In a total lack of sympathy, Ethan smacked Thomas' right thigh.

Ethan wasn't a selfish lover, but Thomas was surprised when he heard Ethan squirt lube onto his hand.

"Spread your legs for me, lad."

He did, exposing his hole to Ethan's gaze.

For balance, Ethan kept one hand on Thomas' back. Ethan inserted a well-lubed finger up Thomas' arse, pushing past that first band of resistance, then the second. He wiggled backwards, urging his lover in deeper.

"Greedy lad."

"I am. Now for fuck's sake, fucking fuck me."

Ethan laughed. "I want you to enjoy this, first."

"I am enjoying."

"Enjoy more."

"You are a sadist."

"I'm giving you pleasure. Shut up and enjoy it." A second finger joined the first, and Ethan pushed deeper, finding that sweet spot that made him moan. Deep in his balls, an orgasm built to a fevered pitch.

His insides were slick and moist from the lube, and he was hungry for his lover's possession.

Ethan inserted a thumb, then began widening Thomas' hole. He was making love with his hand, lubing, teasing, preparing, taking his time and making Thomas hunger. "I want you ready for me."

"I couldn't be more ready," Thomas insisted. He wanted to grab his own cock and beat off, but Ethan was so deep that Thomas needed both of his hands for balance.

"Almost there," he said soothingly.

"Already there," Thomas corrected. "Already there." Then he groaned as Ethan widened his anal opening even more. "I want your cock."

Ethan removed his fingers and thumb.

Thomas sighed, feeling the tip of his friend's cock at his sphincter's entrance. "Yes!" No matter how Ethan prepared him, the first thrust took his breath away. That power. That energy. That possession. He burned. Hurt. Needed.

Ethan shoved deeply into him, filling him, stretching him.

Then he stopped.

Thomas tossed his head back and forth. "No."

"Patience." Ethan's voice was hypnotically soothing.

The man's hand closed around Thomas' cock. He stroked, and, greedily, Thomas began to move.

The sensation of having his arse stuffed full by his lover's cock and thrusting back and forth in his hand was almost too much. Pre-ejaculate leaked from the tip of his penis.

"Come for me, lover," Ethan whispered, jacking him off.

With a yelp of surrender, he did.

His hot seed spurted everywhere. And Ethan was relentless, milking him until he was dry. "Ethan!"

"That's it," he said.

Overwhelmed, Thomas moaned when Ethan pulled out entirely, only to slam back into his arse in a single, masterful stroke.

"I..." He sounded like Alana had earlier, weak and submissive.

"Yes, lover, you can take it. You can take me." He buried his cock all the way to his balls.

"Argh," he moaned again.

Ethan fucked him hard, all the way out, all the way in, until he was spiralling out of control.

He felt the subtle change in the man's cock. And he knew Ethan was going to come. Ethan's fingers dug into him as a deep, guttural moan escaped from low in his throat.

"I'm yours!" Thomas cried out, happy, grateful for the lovemaking.

Finally, orgasm spent, Ethan withdrew.

Thomas, his own legs trembling, helped Ethan back into the chair. "The woman's given you a new burst of enthusiasm."

"Are you complaining?"

After that bout of sex? "Not at all, Sir."

"Me, either." He reached for his all-but-forgotten brandy. "I may have need of your body more than usual."

He smiled. "I live to serve."

* * * *

Upstairs, alone and forgotten, Alana fumed. Despite Ethan's earlier admonishment that she should be graceful and calm, she paced back and forth. What the hell did she care if she wore a hole in the elegant tapestry rug? It would serve him right. Jackass.

She'd travelled thousands of miles to be in his lordship's presence, and he'd sent her to her room like an errant child. Or a woman to be taken off the shelf when he wanted to play with her. Or, damn it, like a sub to be ordered about...

Her breath left her lungs with a whoosh.

She sank onto the edge of the bed.

She was all that.

When he'd told her to bring the letter, he'd been very specific. He'd e-mailed her a detailed list of acts, of punishments, of humiliations, and she hadn't crossed through anything, including the branding or the piercing. To tell the truth, she hadn't taken them seriously. People really didn't do those kinds of things, did they?

She unfolded the letter and scanned the list for at least the tenth time. And then it hit her. Some of the stuff, she *was* embarrassed by. But if she didn't say it embarrassed her, they wouldn't have to talk about it.

In not marking anything, she hadn't meant that she was game to try it. She just hadn't wanted to look too deeply at it, hadn't wanted to confront her own thoughts and feelings.

Now, he was making her do exactly that.

He'd made her come to him, instead of coming to her.

He'd instructed her to bring no clothes, no toiletries, nothing but herself, and that damnable bag of inhibitions, fears, and desires. And was going to open the bag and expose every one of them.

She wondered what she'd really gotten herself into. It was one thing to sit on the patio of her Florida home and daydream about being a sub. It was a kick to dress up as a man instructed and go into a club in the heart of Miami. But it was another entirely to be in the middle of nowhere, stripped of not just clothes, but also of a polite veneer to hide behind.

With this man, she wouldn't go home by herself to her private sanctuary, and then go on with her regularly scheduled life. Here, for the next fortnight, she'd be exposed, mentally, as well as physically.

How would she ever go back to her regularly scheduled life after this?

She slid off the edge of the mattress and crossed the room to pick up the letter.

When Thomas had delivered her to the room, he'd told her there was no lock on the door. "But Master has made it clear you're to stay here until the morning. It's part of your punishment. If you don't stay in the room, he'll assume you want to go home."

With a grin that lit his gorgeous eyes... Wait. Had she actually thought the driver had gorgeous eyes? He didn't. He had eyes that disguised a diabolical mind, just like Ethan's... Thomas had closed the door with a decisive click.

Pissed off, she'd wadded the paper and envelope and thrown them at the closed door.

She carried the letter to the small desk and smoothed it out, a bit ashamed of her childish display.

She sat at the desk, aware of her naked lower body on the wooden seat.

She took out a pen, and, this time, she was honest with herself.

Spanking. *Yes, definitely.*

Paddle. *Maybe.*

Crop. *Scares me.*

Cane. *Absolutely not.*

Leather belt. *Yes, definitely!* She added a second exclamation point. She gnawed on the pen's cap. Would it be a bit over the top to add, please?

Gag. *Pushes my limits.*

Blindfold. *Scares me.* Even though she'd used one before, it wasn't an experience she really wanted to repeat.

Dental dam. *Absolutely not.*

Handcuffs. *Yes, definitely.*

Other restraints. *Yes, definitely.*

Nipple clamps. *Nervous. But might like to try.*

Nipple clamps with weights. *Absolutely not.*

Collar. *Yes, definitely.*

Lead. *Lead?* Had she missed that one the first time? Lead, like as in a leash? But the idea held an illicit thrill. *Nervous*, she admitted. *But might like to try.*

Labial clamps. *Embarrassed to admit I want to try this.*

Public spanking. She'd done this at the club more than once. It wasn't so bad. But, she wondered, did he mean the same thing? At the club, there were rules. Nudity wasn't allowed. With Ethan, she suspected it meant that she would be exposed, which was an entirely different thing. With trepidation, she marked, *yes, if it pleases Master.*

Homosexual play. Her gut tightened. *No.* She didn't add *absolutely not.* But she didn't stray into the *convince me* option.

Threesome. A threesome? With him and Thomas? *Yum.* How was that for honest?

Under all the bondage options, including breast bondage, she selected, pushes *my limits.* Then she wrote, *convince me.*

Piercing. *Embarrassed to admit I want to try this.*

Branding. *Not. Ever.*

Finally done, she tossed the pen on the table and stood up.

Thousands of thoughts crowded in her mind. His demand that she be honest with herself as well as him had opened her eyes. There were things she never wanted to try. There were things she might like to try, still others she wanted him to nudge her towards trying.

Now that she was done with her pique, she really noticed how lovely her room was. Antique furnishings. Down comforter inside a gorgeous jacquard duvet cover. Half a dozen pillows on the bed. Crystal glasses with a hand-etched water pitcher.

Still, she thought, as she looked at the closed door, it was a cage, gilded or not.

She wondered what he was doing, wondered what Thomas was doing.

And she hated being isolated.

Lesson well learned.

She took off the ridiculously high heeled shoes. That improved her mood all by itself. Then she removed her garter belt and stockings. She wiggled her toes into the rug. Feeling happier, she took off her bra and blouse.

Now, naked and aroused by the thought of all the things Ethan might do to her over the next two weeks, she wanted that orgasm she'd been denied.

He hadn't expressly forbidden her from masturbating. But he hadn't said it was okay, either. So that left her...where?

For now, frustrated.

She crossed into the attached bathroom. Might as well get ready for bed. After all, she had to face her lord and master first thing.

The bathroom too, was lovely.

Marble and luxurious hardwoods, along with soaps and lotions. A dozen white, fluffy towels hung from heated racks.

And, hanging from another rack was an enema bag.

Oh-oh.

A subtle reminder of her subservience.

Her heart thudded.

Freaking wonderful.

She'd never had an enema before, and she couldn't say she ever wanted one. Alana scowled. Enema hadn't been listed on the letter. So what did that mean? Surely he wouldn't force her to have an enema without even discussing it?

Try as she might, even while she filled the oversized, jetted tub, she couldn't take her gaze off the hated thing.

Finally, before getting into the steaming hot water, she unhooked the bag and shoved it into a drawer...where she found extra tubes of lubricant and something in a black velvet bag. She pulled it out. A glass butt plug. Bigger than a man's penis.

She dropped it and slammed the drawer shut.

She didn't want a plug up her ass any more than she wanted a gush of water *in* it.

Alana found a hair clip and some pins, and she scooped up her hair and secured it atop her head before climbing into the bath. Determinedly, she enjoyed the bliss of the soaps, and she turned on the jets. She tried to forget about the need for an orgasm and concentrate on something else. Anything else.

The warm jets of water pulsed, massaging her lower back and shoulders, easing the fatigue of the trans-Atlantic flight and the discomfort of being on her knees in the back of his car, and, oh yes, as well as being on her back, legs spread and her butt lifted so she could show both men her pussy.

Something like that should scandalise her. And at one time, it might have. But not now. Now the memory of it just made her hot. Had Thomas, looking in the rear-view mirror, liked what he saw? Had Ethan, her master, wanted her?

Almost unconsciously, she turned over and moved towards one of the powerful jets. She spread her legs and tried to get her body angled correctly so the stream would pulse against her clit.

She closed her eyes. Sightlessly, she parted her labia and moved her hips, thrusting in a simulation of sex.

Thoughts of Ethan consumed her.

She imagined him implacably pulling her across his lap and spanking her bottom for being so naughty.

Maybe Thomas would be there, watching, as well...

Maybe Ethan would hold her prisoner while Thomas had a turn. After all, she had behaved badly...

Maybe...

“What in the hell do you think you’re doing?”

Chapter Five

Guilty, caught, Alana shoved herself away from the jet, slipping as she did.

She flailed, seeking purchase, unsure how she was going to act.

Unladylike, ungraceful, she slipped, knocking her chin on the side of the tub.

Ethan hauled her up and out of the bath.

She stood in front of him, head lowered, shaking from the onset of nerves as steam swirled through the room. Water cooled on her skin and her nipples were hard little nubs.

The roar from the jets couldn't begin to drown the sound of her pulse pounding in her ears.

Ethan pressed a palm against a wall as he studied her. "I asked you a question."

She knew well enough to know he wouldn't accept "nothing" as an answer. So she opted for the truth. "I was using the water's jet to masturbate."

"Ah."

Water dripped from her body onto the ceramic tiles. "I was horny."

"Always a good reason to fuck yourself without permission."

She lifted her head. His words sounded conversational enough, but were they just a cover? She had no idea how much trouble she was in, and she had no idea whether to continue speaking or leave well enough alone and shut up while she still could. He didn't appear angry, but what did she know? With him just staring at her, saying nothing, she more or less babbled. "I was having my bath, and I had my head tipped back, and my eyes closed, and I was thinking about you spanking me."

"Go on."

"And Thomas was there, watching. I wasn't consciously masturbating." Well, mostly not.

"I unconsciously masturbate all the time," he told her.

Crap. How serious was he? Totally off balance, and now, nervous, she ran her tongue over her upper teeth. "Uhm..."

He raised a brow.

“Am I in trouble? I mean, we never specifically discussed whether or not I could pleasure myself.”

He spread his fingers apart on the wall. “When we were in the car...”

“Yes?”

“I can swear I said something to the effect of, if you don’t climax when given the opportunity, it could be a long time before you get the chance again.”

“I...”

“The rules, my rules, are not flexible. Was there anything in that statement that you found questionable?”

“No,” she admitted.

“Join me,” he said, the statement as inflexible as his rules, “in the drawing room in five minutes. Fully dressed.”

Fully dressed?

“Questions?”

“Are you sending me away?”

His eyes were storm-tossed as he leaned in closer. “No.”

So why, then, did he want her dressed?

“Five minutes.”

The moment he left, she grabbed a towel and dried herself off. Five minutes was an eternity if you were on your knees, the blink of an eye if you were trying to get ready to go somewhere, especially if you had to fuss with stockings and a garter belt.

It was less than five minutes when she made her way down the stairs, holding on to the banister for dear life in those shoes. Going up was one thing, she’d learned, going down was an art.

When she entered the drawing room, both men were there, seated in the wing-backed chairs. Ethan was sipping another brandy; Thomas was drinking bottled water.

Ethan, she noticed, was absently rubbing his leg. Maybe from the exertion of dragging her from the tub?

“Come in,” Ethan invited. “Stand before us.”

Not knowing what to expect, she did.

“Tell Thomas what I caught you doing upstairs.”

Somehow it was worse confessing her transgressions to someone else. She felt her face flush crimson as she said, "Masturbating."

"Specifically?" Ethan asked.

"I was..." She cleared her throat. "I was trying to get myself off on the hot tub's jets."

"A little louder, please."

She cleared her throat again. "I was thinking about...fantasising about Ethan spanking me, and I was masturbating in the tub."

"Would you simulate that act for us, please?"

Her eyes widened as she jerked her head towards Ethan.

"You told me upstairs that you were fantasising about Thomas watching while I spanked you. Go ahead and get undressed, pretend you are climbing into the tub, and talk us through your fantasy. We have all night. Take as much time as you need to bring yourself off."

He was dead serious.

Being asked to strip and masturbate herself in bright lights was a worse punishment than isolation. It had been different in the car. There was an air of urgency then, and Thomas' glances in the mirror had been furtive. Now, they were both sitting back, enjoying a beverage and she was the entertainment. "I'm really not an exhibitionist."

"You wanted to be the centre of my attention," Ethan said. "And you're the centre of Thomas', as well. And you're always free to leave," he reminded her.

"Keys are in my pocket, whenever you give the word, love," Thomas added. "We wouldn't want you to do anything you'd rather not."

"Indeed," Ethan agreed.

No way would she leave, especially not within the first twenty-four hours. She was made of sterner stuff.

Resolved, she pulled her blouse from the waistband of her skirt.

Alana suddenly understood why she had been instructed to get dressed. There was an extra layer of humiliation involved in taking off her clothes for their pleasure.

She couldn't say she hadn't been warned.

In every email communication over the last few months, he'd warned her that she'd be asked to do things that were outside her comfort zone. Until now, she hadn't realised where her boundaries were.

She reminded herself only an hour ago, she'd marked her letter yes, where it asked if she wanted a threesome with Thomas. This wasn't much different.

"We're waiting," Ethan said.

With nerveless fingers, she undid her buttons, from the bottom, up.

Then she shrugged off the shirt and allowed it to flutter to the floor.

"You told her to wear a bra?"

"I didn't mean a twenty-four hour, nineteenth century one," Ethan said. "You'll take her shopping?"

"If you promise we can burn this one."

"Alana, give your bra to Thomas."

They weren't serious. The bra had been seventy-five dollars! Never in her life had she spent that much on lingerie. And neither of them seemed to care.

Thomas held out his hand.

Dutifully, she gave it to him.

Thomas whistled. "Master, I changed my mind about taking her shopping. I don't believe she should be allowed to wear a bra ever again."

"Lovely breasts," Ethan said. "They'll look good in bondage."

Her stomach knotted, but her pussy moistened. His words had that effect on her. She wanted to try what he suggested, and at the same time, it scared the daylights out of her.

She bent to unfasten the straps on her heels. Then she slid them off.

Next came the skirt.

It hadn't hidden much, but it had given her a small amount of modesty.

"I like the stockings and garter belt," Thomas said.

"Leave them on," Ethan instructed. "Now pretend to get in the tub and talk us through your naughtiness."

Feeling a fool, she began by sitting on the floor. Thanks to the fire, it wasn't as cold as she thought it might be. She extended her legs in front of her and put her hands palm down

on the floor next to her. Then she tipped back her head. Her hair flowed behind her. It had been pinned up in the tub, but she figured she might be able to hide behind it now.

"The bubbles are foaming," she said. She closed her eyes. This had to be easier if she wasn't looking at the men, and if she wasn't aware of them staring at her. Behind her, the wood in the fireplace popped and hissed. "And I notice how tired my muscles are from the flight and from being on my knees."

She waited for them to say something, but they didn't.

Knowing her words were rushed and stumbled over, she continued, "So I sink down lower in the tub so the jetted water can work out some of the kinks." She shrugged and wiggled, so that she simulated getting closer to the jets.

"I have these random thoughts about everything that's happened since I got off the plane, and I go back to the fantasy I've had for years, the one..." She stopped for a breath. "The one where I've been naughty..."

"That one's easy for her, Master."

"Unless you're wanting a spanking, Thomas..."

Her eyes opened, and she tipped her head to look at the men. They weren't serious?

"If that's your pleasure."

Thomas had said he wasn't a slave, but obviously he wouldn't protest if Ethan told him to drop his trousers and reach for the floor.

She wanted to see that. Desperately wanted to see that.

And more... Would she ever get to the point where she just calmly accepted everything Ethan demanded of her, from her?

"You were being naughty," Ethan prompted.

"As usual," Thomas added.

"I'm wearing a skirt," she said, tipping back her head again. "And Master Ethan tells me to pull it up. I'm wearing panties...I mean knickers...and Ethan makes me take them off. He's sitting on a chair that looks like the one in my bedroom. And he tells me to lie across his knee." The going got more difficult. "So I do. He rubs my butt cheeks a few times, and I'm enjoying his attention. It feels so good. When he actually hits me for the first time, I'm shocked. The breath rushes straight from me. I yelp and I wiggle and I try to get away, but he holds me firm. By then, I knew I was getting wet, and I desperately wanted to touch myself."

Worrying her lower lip, she moved to her knees. She told herself this shouldn't be difficult, she'd done it in the back of the car. But it was. She spread her legs and tilted her pelvis forward. "Then, I look to the side, and I see Thomas standing there. I notice the bulge in his pants. He's got a hard-on from watching Ethan punish me."

Resuming her confession, she said, "I parted my labia..."

"Show us."

That was Ethan's voice.

She used the fingers of her right hand to expose herself. "And in my fantasy, Master spans me again and again. My hair is wild about my face, and I'm crying, and I'm begging for him to stop. I'm promising that I'll behave. But Master is having none of it. I see Thomas stroke himself through his pants."

"Masturbate," Ethan instructed.

She did, playing with her clit, finger-fucking her pussy.

"How many times are you spanked, naughty girl?"

"Dozens." By now she was deep in the fantasy. "Master is disappointed in me, and I'm horribly upset to have let him down. But I know I'll do it again if it means he'll keep punishing me with his hand." She was gyrating, imagining his hand on her skin, making it hot, making her burn. "And Thomas is beating off, and he's thinking how he wants a turn next, and I'm thinking I can't take it... My ass already hurts. I'm begging. 'Please. Please. I'll behave. I promise. I...'"

"Come," Ethan snapped.

"I... Master!" She shoved her fingers deep into her pussy.

"Come now."

She did.

With a great shudder, a sigh, and a soft scream, she came. She'd forgotten about her embarrassment, forgotten she was being punished, forgotten she was being stared at.

It took long minutes for her to shake off the after effects of the orgasm. She didn't remember the last time she'd climaxed so hard.

"You may thank me," Ethan said.

She shook her head and brushed back her hair. "I'm sorry?"

"For the orgasm," he prompted. "Thank me."

He wasn't smiling. Which meant he was serious. He wanted her to thank him for letting her come. Puzzled by the command, she nevertheless complied, "Thank you for the privilege of climaxing."

"You're welcome," he said. "And just for the record, you may not, as long as you are under my roof, ever orgasm without permission. Now go to your room."

Her legs still wobbly, she stood. There was nothing graceful about the action.

"You do like challenges," Thomas said to Ethan.

Nothing could have humiliated her more than having her flaws pointed out to the one man she wanted to please.

Horrified, she dashed from the room.

Upstairs, she slammed the door behind her. This time, it wasn't punishment, it was a sanctuary.

Alana doubted she'd sleep well, but the flight, the excitement, the confusion, the mind-boggling events, and the orgasm all worked together to pull her under. It didn't matter that she didn't have anything to sleep in, or that the clothes she did have were lying in a heap on the drawing room floor, she was exhausted. The crisp sheets with the sumptuously high thread count finished her off.

And when she woke, Thomas was in her room, sliding a silver carafe onto the dresser.

"Master is feeling generous," he told her. "Subs usually have to earn coffee."

"It's coffee? Real, honest to goodness coffee, and not tea?" She sat up, dragging the duvet with her. Not that he hadn't already seen all she had to offer.

"You're American," he said, as if that explained everything, which, she supposed, it did. "Milk and sugar?"

"Have I died and gone to heaven? The man with the most gorgeous eyes on the face of the planet is bringing me coffee in bed?"

"I'll take that as a yes, to both." He prepared her coffee. "That fantasy from last night?" He carried the cup and saucer to her.

Gratefully, she accepted.

"When it happens, both of us will spank you."

The coffee sloshed over the rim and splashed on the saucer.

"I can hardly wait for the opportunity. Bring your letter. Master's expecting you in the drawing room."

The moment he shut the door behind him, she put the cup and saucer on the nightstand.

He'd shocked her.

And sent an illicit thrill through her.

The assault on her senses never let up.

She took a few sips from the delicious coffee, then carried it with her into the bathroom. She drank as fast as she could so she could brush her teeth and get ready to meet Ethan.

Since she'd been given no clothes or make up, getting ready was a breeze, if unsettling. She was stripped bare in all ways.

She gathered her letter, then hurried down the stairs. "Signed, sealed, and delivered," she told him, extending the letter towards him.

"Cheeky," he said. He took out the paper and looked at her, letting her know, without saying a word, that he'd noticed it had been wadded. He scanned the contents. "Better. Much better." Then he looked at her a second time. "You listed your safe word."

"See? I can follow directions."

"Hacker?" he asked, raising a brow. "Your safe word is *hacker*?"

"It's how I found you," she explained. "Seemed appropriate."

He grinned.

"I couldn't think of anything else," she admitted.

"Raise your index finger."

Oh-kay. She did as instructed.

"That's your safe signal," he said. "For when you're gagged."

"Er... Gagged?" That was one of the things that had made her nervous. She'd listed that, hadn't she? "I think I said that one pushes my limits."

"You did."

"And...?"

"I will push your limits. Even the things that are listed as non-negotiable are open to future discussion."

Somehow her heart landed in her toes.

“The way you talk, princess, you’ll be wearing a gag often. Might as well get used to the idea.”

Her mind spiralled as she tried to remember the things she’d listed as no. He wouldn’t actually do them to her. Would he?

“Let’s make one thing perfectly clear, Alana. If you use your word or your signal,” he said, his facial features hardening as he again became a total Dom, “Thomas will be summoned. You’ll be delivered to Heathrow.”

Her mouth felt dry, like Death Valley in July. “No second chances?”

“As your trainer, I will recognise your limits. I will explore them and test them. I will recognise when to give you time to digest what will happen, and I will know when to push you past your own inhibitions. Communication is key. But if ever you do not trust me, you should leave. Are we clear?”

“Very.”

“Then, we’ll begin with your first lesson.”

“A spanking?”

“Move towards that kneeling bench. Rather than kneel on it, face me.”

This was what she was waiting for, had been hoping for.

There was no tension in his voice; there was no more emotion than if he inquired as to the weather.

After refilling his cup with, she assumed, tea...he was British after all and she could have assumptions, just like Thomas did...Ethan sat in a wingback chair. This morning, it was positioned differently. It faced away from the fireplace, towards the window, towards the kneeling bench. He laid his cane on the floor next to him. “Grace,” he reminded her.

“Breathe.”

She drew a deep, fortifying gulp of air.

The coffee had warmed through her body, and she shook only slightly as she crossed the room on bare feet, striving for the elegance he wanted. She noticed that her clothes from the previous night had been removed. They were no where in sight. And she wondered if that scoundrel Thomas had really burned her prized bra.

“I believe I’ll remove that patch of your pubic hair.”

Alana nodded. She'd trimmed the thatch and shaved the outer edges, but she had figured it was easier to shave if Master preferred her bare than to grow it out if he'd rather she have a thick patch.

"Or rather, I'll watch as Thomas does it."

She opened her mouth to protest, then quickly closed it again. "If Master wishes it." See? She'd learned something from listening to the exchange last night between Thomas and Ethan.

"Good girl."

Her heart soared. Even the tiniest approval was enough to make her try harder.

"Thomas was right last night. You do have great tits, Alana," he said. "They're natural?"

"Yes, Sir." She grinned impishly. "They would have been considerably larger if I had ordered them."

"They're brilliant the way they are. Fondle them."

Aware of the window behind her, but also knowing he had a large private estate, she followed his instructions with only a slight hesitation. She cupped her breasts, holding them in her palms, and then she squeezed each nipple with her thumb and forefinger.

"Does that make your cunt wet?"

"Yes," she admitted, her voice barely audible.

"Because you like to play with them or because you like me watching while you play with them?"

"Both. Mainly because you're watching me."

He took a drink while she continued to play with herself.

"Squeeze," he told her. "Make it hurt."

"My nipples are sensitive," she told him.

"So much the better. You'll feel the pain much more exquisitely when they're clamped."

She'd marked that she might like to try that. Obviously he took that as a green light.

"Now, the kneeling bench."

The piece of wooden furniture had likely been fashioned for prayer, she realised. It was shaped sort of like an L. You could kneel on one pad and rest your chest on the upper one.

Completely naked, reminding herself she was supposed to breathe and practice grace, she knelt on the pad, uncertain what he expected. Knees together or apart? And her arms, where did they go? She could use the bench for support, she supposed, resting her hands on the top.

"In the absence of other instruction," he said, quietly, "I require that you always have your legs apart, open for inspection, or if I, your Master chooses, for me to insert something in your cunt."

She parted her knees.

"Hands behind your neck at all times, unless I've given you a different order. I want your entire body available, nothing hidden or protected."

Once she was properly positioned, he said, "Good. But for the beating, I want you standing. Raise the kneeling pad, then bend over the top. If it helps, you can grip the sides."

"Am I to be whipped?" *Finally.*

"You are."

Elegance... Grace. She repeated the words as a mantra as she moved into position. Yeah. Right. Tell that to someone else. The collision of excitement and fear made grace and elegance both close to impossible.

She was hanging upside down, hair streaming down to the floor. She grabbed hold of the sides of the structure, and since it was solid wood, couldn't see anything through it.

He was diabolical, she was convinced of it.

"There are a number of different reasons to beat a sub. One is for my pleasure. One is for punishment. Another is to establish boundaries. Or even to teach you the way a different implement feels...instructive, if you will. There's always your favourite, as well, isn't there? So that you can get off."

"I like it when I get off."

She heard Ethan chuckle. Then, moments later, the clatter of his cup and saucer on the sideboard. Then another sound. His cane on the floor?

"My belt it is," he said.

She heard it slide free of its loops.

"I'm going to warm you up first. But not with my hand. I don't want you getting confused with your fantasies. By warming you up, we'll minimise bruising."

The belt fell. Not hard at all. Nice.

He found an easy rhythm that she enjoyed. She got wet between the legs. Oh, yes, coming here was worth every penny.

"Now, before we begin, the beating you're going to take isn't about punishment," he said by way of clarity. "You've been punished for all your infractions, swiftly and correctly. This one is instructive, so you'll know the feel of my correction. You'll know what you want to avoid. But if it were punishment, you'd feel it bite even more."

Sensing he was waiting for acknowledgment, she nodded.

"How many strokes shall we begin with?"

"Seven." Her favourite number. And she could take seven of anyone's best. Seven was easy, easy.

"Ten."

"Yes, Sir."

"Again, this is for no other reason than that I want to make sure you know who's in charge."

As if there was a doubt about that. She was the one who was all but naked, spread wide, and waiting for the first blow from his belt. She knew who was in charge.

When it landed, she yelped. It hurt much, much more than she believed possible. That wasn't a thing like Tony had done to her at the club, wasn't a damn thing like the ones Ethan had already laid across her arse.

The second, third, and fourth fell quickly, and just as hard.

"Position," he warned when she started to stand.

"Master!" She wanted to stamp her foot. She couldn't do it, couldn't take it.

"We'll begin again, then, shall we?"

"No!"

The belt fell on her bare ass again. "Stop!" She broke position.

She stood and reached back, both to soothe the searing pain and to protect herself from his beating.

She heard the clatter of his belt buckle on the floor.

Then his hand was in her hair and he brutally dragged up her head. She was aware of him leaning on his cane, but it didn't impact his ability to master her completely, to make her tremble.

Her breaths were ragged.

He crouched so he could look her in the eye. "I knew you were not a natural sub, Alana, but I had no idea that you were a spoiled and petulant woman who was only concerned with her own pleasure. You haven't even tried to take this beating."

His eyes chilled her. Right now they weren't just grey. They were more like a storm-enraged sea, and equally as uninviting. For the first time, she desperately wondered if she would have been better off staying at home and finding someone to play with at one of the clubs.

But that's not what she wanted.

She'd tried that and found it totally unfulfilling.

"A beating is not meant to feel good, unless that's its intent."

"But..." Tears fell, even though she tried desperately to blink them back. His hand in her hair pulled viciously, and she was desperate to escape.

"You expected me to continue those gentle strokes?"

"No." *Yes.* She'd expected him to warm her up with a few more lashes, and then lay into her for the last one or two. But not all ten.

"You, sub, will not top from the bottom."

Unexpectedly, he ground his mouth against hers. He kept her head painfully imprisoned as he forced his tongue into her mouth. He thrust, and she met him with a parry. He tasted of power, of brandy. He dominated her thoroughly, even in the kiss.

He released her abruptly and she struggled to maintain her balance.

"You will take ten of my best. Or use your safe word."

He waited.

She shook her head. She wouldn't fail. Wouldn't.

"Show me your safe signal."

Gulping convulsively, she did as he instructed.

"Ten more."

"Yes, Master," she whispered.

"In that case, resume your position. Spread your legs. Compose yourself."

Her sobs quieted into hiccups. She forced herself to breathe.

Before she was completely ready, he caught the outside of her right thigh with the tip of his belt.

She quietly cried out.

She released her grip on the bench. "Master," she whispered.

The second stung just as bad. She wiggled and tried to escape. And the third felt even more intense.

"Take it," he told her.

She cried as he delivered the fourth stroke.

"Grip the bench."

She did, and she gasped as the belt caught her between the legs.

"Relax into it," he told her.

She nodded, her hair blocking her vision. Honestly, she had no idea what he was talking about. Relax into pain?

The next landed across the fleshiest part of her butt cheeks.

Then she stopped fighting, not just him, but herself and her responses. She surrendered to the inevitability and thought of Ethan standing behind her in shirtsleeves and the crisp starch in the material. She thought of the sharp creases in his trousers. To this man, precision mattered. She thought of his belt, the leather warmed from his body. And the fact she was having a dream come true. She wanted to be here.

She was his sub. He was the centre of her universe, and right now, she was the centre of his.

Suddenly the pain no longer seemed so searing.

"That's a girl. Two more."

Only two more? Surely it was more.

She gripped the sides of the bench. She breathed. And she took her stripes.

"You may kneel."

As horrible as it had been, as painful and intense, it was over. She'd survived it.

And as her pulse returned to normal, she realised it hadn't been as bad as she feared. It hadn't been as bad as she'd convinced herself it was. Her bottom had been well and truly heated, yet she doubted there would be bruising or even welts.

Considering it was a beating, it hadn't been terribly intense.

Ethan didn't say anything for long moments, and she composed herself, parting her thighs and putting her hands behind her neck.

"The next time you're taking a beating, Alana, that type of behaviour will not be tolerated."

"Yes, Master."

"Breathe. Concentrate on pleasing me, rather than on what you're feeling."

How could she do anything else? Her thoughts were consumed with him. There was no one else right now. His refusal to go easy on her because she lost her composure did something funny to her insides, knotted them up. "Thank you," she whispered.

"I wondered if you'd remember your manners."

"I..." Her mouth was dry. "I'm glad you didn't relent."

"You're here to be trained, not coddled."

He left her alone for long minutes. Silence, except for the distant ticking of a grandfather clock and slight pop from the dying fire, roared in her ears.

Because of the silence, her thoughts stayed on the punishment. That was likely his intent, she knew. The man understood the psychological implication of what he was doing, making the experience even richer.

She thought of him, standing behind her, focused on her submission and his determination to tame her. "I've never experienced anything like that." Despite herself, her pussy was getting wet. "May I ask a question?"

When he didn't answer, she went on, "Did it please you? Did beating me please you?" Desperately, she wanted the answer to be yes.

"It did."

"Do it again," she begged.

Chapter Six

He'd never come across a woman like her, a sub like her. Not that sub was quite the right word. He'd had women, and men, kiss his feet, pleading for his lash, but never immediately after a beating.

"I want to apply what you've taught me."

She was relentless. Of course, he knew this from her persistence in tracking him down. And it was that persistence that had worn him down and he was afraid, would continue to do so.

She was something, this American.

For minutes, he didn't respond.

To her credit, she hadn't broken position to turn around and look at him. And he was rather enjoying the view of her reddened arse and thighs. Well, then.

Ethan crossed to the far side of the room and rang a bell. But she continued to tamp down her curiosity.

"Sir?" Thomas enquired, appearing in the room mere moments later.

"I'd like you to lash the sub."

He heard her gasp. She started to turn towards him, perhaps to protest, but she stopped herself.

"My pleasure, Master," Thomas said.

"Alana?" Ethan enquired.

"If it pleases you, Master."

It didn't matter if she'd uttered the words through gritted teeth after all. "The idea of having Thomas beat you definitely pleases me. I want to see your arse get even redder, and I want to see if you'll take the beating I've ordered because it makes me happy to see you suffer."

She nodded.

"Thomas?"

The servant nodded to him. Then, looking at Alana, he said, "Position yourself over the bench, sub."

Even though Ethan was a few metres away from her, he could see the rapid rise and fall of her chest. He even heard her whispered self-coaching, "Grace and elegance" as she draped herself across the kneeling bench.

But she didn't complain as she spread her legs, and bent over as far as she could. Maybe there was hope.

His cock was hard. He needed to fuck the little hussy, and soon. "Point your toes a bit towards each other," he said. "That'll expose more of your pussy to our view."

Slowly, she complied.

"Twelve," he instructed, so both Thomas and Alana knew his expectations.

Alana's breath hitched.

With the first five, then the additional ten, she'd already taken fifteen. Admittedly, they hadn't all been powerful, but still, he knew she was feeling the sting.

"What implement would you like me to use, Master?"

"My belt."

Thomas shrugged out of his suit jacket and tossed it on the back of a chair. He turned up his shirtsleeves, and the passage of time just gave Alana longer to squirm a little and think about what was coming. "Perfect."

Her hands gripped the sides of the bench, and her beautiful hair, highlighted with blonde streaks from the Florida sun, all but brushed the tile floor as she waited.

Thomas had a different style than Ethan, and he always enjoyed watching the other man wield a whip or flogger.

He snapped the belt in the air behind her, and she jumped.

Ethan grinned.

Since she was distracted, the first blow from the belt caught her completely unaware. It landed in that tender, gorgeous sweet spot where her upper thigh became the swell of her buttocks, just on the underside. A perfect cut. She yelped.

Ethan's cock became even harder.

He didn't coach Thomas, didn't need to.

The chauffeur landed the next three in the exact same spot, prolonging her agony and making her whimper.

Make that four.

Thomas was nothing, if not precise.

But she'd taken half the beating already without breaking position. Ethan was unaccountably pleased. He'd never turned a sub over to another person until much farther along in their training. But with this one, he broke all the rules.

Now that he'd reached the halfway mark, Thomas offered a silent few seconds respite from her beating. She took the opportunity to turn her toes back inward. Maybe her desire to please her master was stronger than her desire to sit back and enjoy while he gave her multiple orgasms.

Thomas drew back his arm to continue her thrashing, but Ethan raised a hand. He moved over to Alana and put a hand between her legs.

She wriggled her hips backwards, wordlessly seeking his touch. But he found what he was looking for. Dampness. "Seems our little sub is enjoying her beating, Thomas." Despite what her letter said, despite what her mouth said, she definitely had an exhibitionist tendency. Why else would she be shamelessly trying to fuck his hand? Why else would she fantasise about Thomas watching while Ethan spanked her? Exploiting her exhibitionist tendency would be a pleasure.

He moved away and waited for Thomas to continue.

He did, and Alana surrendered completely.

By the time Thomas had delivered the final stripe, she was all but grinding her hips into the wooden structure. Her arse was bright red. Welts were raised, and he suspected one or two might bruise. "You can stop humping the furniture," he told her.

"Oh!"

He nodded, and Thomas placed the belt on the chair before rolling down his sleeves and collecting his jacket.

Alana went to kneel.

"Stay where you are," he told her.

He moved behind her and fingered her pussy.

With a needy moan, she adjusted her stance to give him better access. He dropped his cane and placed a palm on the small of her back for balance.

"What do you want?"

"I need to thank...need to thank Thomas for the beating."

"You're welcome," he said on his way out of the room.

"Now what do you need?" Ethan asked.

"I..." She panted. "Oh. Oh. My God. Please!"

"Please what?"

"I beg you. Stop fingering me."

"Because?"

She thrust her hips backwards. "I need to come."

"You don't have permission."

"I know! So please... Stop touching me."

"If I don't?"

"I'll come! And then I'll be...be naughty. And then I'll be punished."

"You say that as if it's a bad thing."

"Mas-ter!"

She was right there. Another scrape across her clitoris and she'd explode. So he stopped. "Kneel. Legs as far apart as you can get them."

She sobbed, great gulping sounds that might have swayed a lesser trainer. And to tell the truth, nearly swayed him. "Cup your breasts."

She moaned. And even though she was on her knees, she swayed slightly.

"Breathe," he reminded her once again. "Compose yourself."

Minutes later, when he saw that she'd gotten her breathing under control, he asked, "Can you see how hard my cock is?"

She nodded.

"Ask permission to suck it."

"Please, Master. May I suck your cock?"

"You may." He moved in front of her, and he enjoyed watching her motions. She was very deliberate as she unfastened the top button of his trousers, and then lowered the zipper.

"Master has a drop of cum on his cockhead."

"Lick it off."

She did.

Hardly anything was as sweet. One hand propped on the cane, he dug the second into her hair to cradle her skull so she didn't pull away.

She began to suck, taking first the head, then more and more of his shaft. His head fell backwards, and he felt her other hand cradle his testicles. "Good," he approved. "Take more." He rocked his hips forward, forcing more of his cock into her mouth.

When he felt an ejaculation building, he stopped her.

"But Master!"

Thankfully he'd gotten his rocks off in Thomas' arse, otherwise, he'd have spilled inside her. And he wasn't ready to give her that honour yet.

He released her hair and pulled his pants back up. "Zip me up, sub."

With an adorable scowl, she did.

"Am I right in thinking you didn't have time for your morning enema yet?"

"Morning...?"

"Was the bag not in your bathroom?"

He saw a furious blush creep up her face. "Alana?"

She wiped the back of her hand across her mouth. "Yes. There is a bag in my bathroom."

"And?"

"Enemas weren't on the list," she said.

"Go on."

"If they were, I would have marked no."

"You'd have...?" He shook his head. "Little one, that's not open to discussion."

"You said we need excellent communication."

"We're going to trip up over an enema?"

She looked up at him mutinously. Her jaw was set, and her back teeth were obviously ground together.

"Have you never done anal play?"

"No."

"And yet you've had relationships you'd describe as BDSM?"

She nodded.

"How many holes do you have?"

Taking her time, obviously being very deliberate, she said, "Three."

"And how many available to your master?"

She dragged her lower lip between her teeth.

He went carefully. He'd had no idea they'd entered a minefield. She'd try a threesome, she wanted to be beat, she had exhibitionist tendencies, and she balked at a required enema? "Are you willing to use your safe word over this?"

She didn't answer.

"Alana?"

"You're not willing to negotiate?"

He couldn't. He'd lose control immediately if he allowed her to keep any part of herself private from him. "Do you have a legitimate reason for your hesitation?"

"I think it's..."

"A legitimate reason," he reminded her. "Something other than what you think?"

She shook her head.

"You can have no secrets from me, Alana," he said, keeping his voice even. He gave her some space, crossing the room to sit in his wing chair. "I am, however, willing to let you administer your own enema for the first few days."

"You mean... You'd actually want to give me one?" She shuddered.

If it wasn't so serious, he might laugh. "How many holes do you have?" he asked again.

"Three." It was hardly a whisper.

"And how many must be available for your Master's pleasure?"

She hesitated.

He tried again. "You've done more than your fair share of reading, Alana. You're not a BDSM innocent. How many of those three holes must be made available for your Master's pleasure if you're to be a fully trained sub?"

She dropped her head.

"So you see, I cannot negotiate this."

Miserably, she nodded.

"Your choice. You can administer it. Or Thomas will. Or I will. But within four days, either Thomas or I will be giving you a daily enema. More often if it suits me. But it's always your choice, Alana. We can move forward. Or we can end here, now."

* * * *

Her choice wasn't really a choice.

She either wanted to be a sub, or she didn't.

She didn't have a legitimate reason. She just hated the idea of shoving a gallon of water up her arse. And what went in had to come out.

"Upstairs with you, then. For your first time, you only have to fill it half full."

And wasn't it her lucky day?

She stood, rather ungracefully after being on her knees for so long. He said nothing, though, about her awkward motions.

She followed the familiar route back to her room.

Using the same technique that she did at work, she decided not to stall. Get the most disagreeable task out of the way first.

She wasn't quite sure how it worked.

"It's actually easier if someone else does it for you."

She jumped. She hadn't even seen him walking down the hallway. "Are you a fucking ghost?" she said to Thomas. "You're always around and I never hear you." She scowled at him.

"Are you always disagreeable when Master is out of earshot?"

"Piss off."

"No worries." He raised his hand. "Just trying to help."

"Why does every man on the face of the planet want to stick something up my ass?"

"Actually, I couldn't care less. Go stick the nozzle up your own arse."

He walked off. She sighed. "Thomas!"

He kept walking.

"I'm sorry."

He ignored her.

"Please!"

Finally, he stopped.

"I'd appreciate your help."

He came back. "You're here of your own choice," he told her.

"I know."

"Ethan's being more than generous with you. I'm surprised he didn't march you up the stairs and give you a full dose and stand there while you eliminated it."

She was horrified.

Chastened, once again, she nodded.

She led the way into the en suite bathroom.

"I left the bag hanging from the shower curtain rod," he said.

She pointed. "It's in that drawer."

"You can run," he said.

"Shut up, Thomas."

He grinned. "Master gave you permission to start with half a bag?"

"Yes. Aren't I lucky?"

"Actually, yes. And you'll consider yourself lucky later. Otherwise he might make you take two litres, then stuff a butt plug in behind it."

Her jaw actually fell.

"Serious," he assured her. "Dead serious." He pulled out the bag. "After filling it, hang it from someplace high."

"Like the shower rack. Where it was."

"You are a bright one."

She stuck her tongue out at him.

At home, she'd be hot for him, way hot for him. But here, she was off balance. Naked to his natty dressing. Short to his powerful physique. Sub to...servant? Regardless, he ranked higher on the totem pole than she did.

He turned on the faucet. "Since you're administering your own, you can choose your own water temperature. Master could always choose to send two litres of piping hot water into your bowels. Or he could make it drip with ice."

Nice.

"Always make sure you've turned off the spigot." He showed her. "If I were giving it to you—"

"That doesn't gross you out?"

"Do you mean, would I find it repulsive?"

"Yeah, in English speak."

"No. It's part of being prepared for Master's penetration."

"But... The... Err..."

"Elimination?"

"Yes. That."

"You can have no secrets, Alana."

"If I hear that one more time, I'll, I'll..."

"Go on."

"Shove it up your tight ass."

"Want to?"

"What?"

"I don't have the same issues with enemas as you do. If it makes you happy to give me one, I'll bend over and take one right now."

She felt as if she'd been dropped into an alternate universe. She shook her head. She so didn't want to play around up any man's rear end. "You're serious."

"I am."

"No way."

"He's right, though. You can't be a full sub and keep secrets. No parts of you are private from your Master, not your thoughts or your bowels."

"Shut up. Just shut up."

"Alana, as they say in the States, get over yourself."

She really was going to hurt someone.

"As I was saying, if I were giving it to you, I'd have you on your knees, with your head on the floor. When you're doing your own, that's the fastest way, as well, but you can have trouble reaching the spigot to turn it on and off."

She nodded.

"So you may want to sit on the toilet and lean forward. Or lie on the floor, on your side. That's actually the most comfortable."

"As if that's possible."

He laughed. "I didn't say it was comfortable, just the most comfortable." He grabbed a tube of lube from the same drawer where she'd earlier stashed the bag. "A final hint. Put a

dab on the end of the nozzle. And if you can stand it, you should first insert a finger up your own arse to make the insertion a bit easier.”

He smiled. “I’ll leave you to it, then.”

“Good-bye,” she told him.

“Unless...”

“Out!” She’d drown in her mortification alone.

She shut the bathroom door behind him. Not that it would keep him or Ethan out if either of them wanted in.

Chapter Seven

Master Ethan always, always, kept her off-balance.

She'd returned downstairs to find Thomas waiting for her. "Master would like to see you in the breakfast room."

"Which is...?"

He indicated another room she hadn't yet been in.

Ethan was at the table, eating eggs and a rasher of bacon. No carbs for him.

He looked particularly handsome this morning. He wore a crisp black T-shirt, exposing the sinew in his arms. His hair was still damp from his shower, and a hint of spice clung to his skin. He was appealing and powerful in one hunk of a package. She wanted him. She'd had a taste of his cock last night, and she wanted more. She wanted him inside her, filling her, stretching her, making her cry out, making her weak, making her come.

But, other than fingering her pussy after he beat her, he hadn't gone near her. That, she hoped, would change soon.

"Something to eat?" he invited.

"Toast. With strawberry jam." *And a side of chocolate.* Unlike him, she could happily live off a diet of carbs. If they came from sugar, so much the better. "And more coffee." He served her some toast from a rack. She could have easily reached it herself. Naughty, she supposed, but if he was going to offer...

He then rang a bell, and a woman appeared.

Alana couldn't have been more stunned. She'd thought she was alone in the house with just the two men. But now, with a woman there, especially one so young and gorgeous, Alana felt a little uncertain, as if she were standing on shifting sand. The woman had short, dark, spiky hair. On anyone else, the style might have looked butch. But on her, it looked hot.

She looked as if she'd be more at home in a London club or on South Beach. Her jeans had a fashionable slice cut across one thigh, and her T-shirt fit tightly, stretching across her breasts. Her right ear had half a dozen studs running up the side, and she had a tat of a half

moon on her forearm. Alana was doubly aware of being naked. And she was uncomfortable with it.

"Celia, the princess would like some coffee," he told the woman.

The woman gave a quick nod, and she didn't give Alana more than a cursory glance as she headed out the door.

"No trouble sitting after your beating?"

"My right buttock is a little tender."

"Let me see." He folded the morning newspaper that he'd been reading and laid it alongside his plate. He didn't repeat himself, he simply waited for her obedience.

She hesitated only a few seconds. Pushing back from the table, she stood. Dutifully, she bent.

"Are you able to reach your ankles?"

"Yes." Without prompting, she grabbed her ankles and held them.

He ran his fingers over both of her bottom cheeks. "You're not bruised."

"Coffee, sir."

At the sound of the other woman's voice, Alana started to stand. "Stay where you are, sub."

This was, by far, the most difficult thing he'd compelled her to do.

It was one thing to be naked in front of the men, but to be bent over, exposing her slit to another woman? She'd never even been to a female doctor. She felt the blood rush to her cheeks, and her humiliation was complete.

It took the woman five minutes longer than forever to cross to the buffet and put the pot in place.

"Shall I pour, sir?"

"Please," he said.

Bastard.

He was intentionally prolonging her torture.

"Cream and sugar, princess?"

Were they really having a conversation with her bottom up, in the breakfast room? The entire situation was becoming too much to bear. Still, he waited, and she finally

answered. After all, being indignant was one thing. Being indignant without coffee was another. "Both, Master."

"Will that be all, sir?" the servant asked.

"What do you think of our lovely sub?"

Alana gnawed on her lower lip and forced herself to breathe deeply. She couldn't believe he was discussing her as if she wasn't there, as if she were... As if she were a slave.

"She seems well behaved, sir."

"Anything you'd like to do to her?"

"Oh, yes, sir. I'd like to lick her cunt."

Alana prayed the floor would open and swallow her whole.

"Perhaps we can arrange that. Alana?"

Her hips jerked at his words. *Never*. Never, ever, ever. "If it pleases you, Master."

From her upside down position, she could see Celia leave the room. Ethan slapped Alana gently on her sore buttock. She yelped.

"Very well done. You may be seated."

She shook her head to clear it as she rejoined him at the table. "You wouldn't..."

He sipped from his tea. "I wouldn't?"

"I mean..."

"Why wouldn't I allow someone to give you a fantastic orgasm?"

"But another *woman*?"

"So it would be okay if I let Thomas eat you out?"

She blushed at his crassness.

"Drink your coffee, Alana."

He was clearly moving on from the conversation, but she couldn't let it go. Over and over, as she ate the toast and drank coffee, she couldn't think of anything but Celia between her legs. The idea upset her. It intrigued her. And she couldn't help but remember yesterday, when he said perhaps he'd have another woman beat her.

He hadn't mentioned anything a second time, but he dropped hints and then allowed the conversation to be changed.

And she didn't know him well enough yet to know which things he was serious about, and what he might require of her.

Oh yes, he was a master of the psychological pieces of BDSM.

He knew when to push, when to back off.

He moved aside his plate and took out her letter again. "You keep a lot of secrets, Alana."

"Not intentionally," she said quietly.

"You give me your body, but only the parts you want to give. And you refuse to share your thoughts, your emotions."

"I'm here," she said, "for the experience."

"And you're denying yourself exactly that."

She sat back in her chair, but she continued to meet his gaze, rather than look away.

"You travelled across an ocean to be here. You badgered me for months to accept you into my training. I've never seen anyone try as hard as you to get accepted. And now that you are... No one has fought me harder than you." He picked up his tea. The cup looked ridiculously small in large, powerful hands. "Even subs who were sent to me by their masters didn't fight me as much as you do."

"There's a method to my training," he continued. "It's deliberate. It's carefully calculated to break down a sub's resistance."

"Maybe I'm untrainable?"

"That's up to you. If you want to fight, you'll fight. If you want to keep secrets, you'll keep secrets. But every time you fight, with every secret you keep, you prevent yourself from the full experience that you say you want." He leaned towards her. "But soon, Alana, you'll need to make a decision. I won't continue to fight you. And you fight yourself more than you fight me. The letter, for example. You took nothing off the table when there are clearly things that terrify you, that upset you, that you'd rather not try. You were dishonest with me. And more disturbing, you were dishonest with yourself."

She lowered her gaze, looking at her toast and jam.

"Part of your training, as we talked about, is the practice of breathing, of grace and elegance. If you focus on those things, rather than focusing on how you hate an experience, you'll get the benefit of its full effect."

“That doesn’t mean you just gamely jump into every situation. It means you’re honest with yourself and with me. When you react negatively to something, you think about what it is that made you react that way. And you tell me why. No prevarication.”

“You want...”

“All of you. I want your submission, mental, physical, *and* emotional.”

She swallowed.

“But as always, Alana, it’s your choice. I cannot take what you won’t give.”

Her shoulders slumped.

“Think about why you’re here,” he encouraged. “You either want it all, or you don’t. If you don’t, take the rest of your vacation in London or go back home. Find a Dom to play with who is in your comfort zone. Someone who won’t push your boundaries, someone who doesn’t want to explore the psychological implications, someone who will let you hide. But make no mistakes...that man is not me.”

With that, he reached for the cane that was resting on the floor beside him. He left the room without another word to her.

She sat there, coffee ignored, toast untouched.

She felt miserable, alone with her thoughts. He wasn’t a stupid man, he’d left her intentionally.

She had come here by choice. Hell, she’d spent months trying to wheedle her way into his life. But what she got out of the experience was up to her.

Eventually, Thomas joined her. “You’re good for him. You’re a challenge he doesn’t quiet know what to do with.”

“I think I’ll get sent home.”

“You might. But in the meantime... You have exercises.”

“Exercises?”

“That whole way you got up from the kneeling bench yesterday? Won’t do.”

“And?”

“We’ll practice about two hundred times today.”

“Two *hundred*?”

“Maybe more.”

He led the way to the drawing room.

"I need to use the restroom first." Teach her not to drink so much coffee.

He led her to a bathroom down the hall. When she went to close the door, he put his foot between it and the jamb.

"You're kidding me."

"No."

Remembering what Ethan had said, she merely sighed.

She supposed she should be grateful he hadn't followed her inside the small powder room.

Minutes later, she emerged. Thomas was standing there, shoulders propped against the wall. Another experience she hadn't wanted, but had survived.

Did it get easier?

She entered the drawing room.

"Start with the kneeling pad down," Thomas told her. "And practice getting up from there. Fifty to start."

The first ten were dismal.

The next ten were worse.

"Slow down," he instructed. "You're not a horse getting out the gate. You're a sub who wants to please her Dom. Think about what you're doing. Think about showing off your body to its best advantage."

After the next twenty, her knees hurt and her legs were becoming wobbly. But Thomas didn't relent. "Ten more."

Because she was fatigued, she did slow down. She really concentrated, making every motion count.

"Much better."

Ethan.

She resisted the impulse to turn around.

"Remain kneeling," he told her.

She hated having her back to him, unable to see his face.

"Tell me about nipple clamps," he said. "You marked that you were nervous, but might like to try."

Her mouth dried. Being with him, and with Thomas, was a constant assault. Ethan had meant it when he said he would push her boundaries. And she knew she didn't have the option of trying to dodge his question. "My nipples are very sensitive," she said. As if he didn't know that. "I'm afraid the sensation will be too much. I'm afraid it will hurt."

"It will."

At his blunt, raw words, she moistened.

"There are many different types of clamps, from mild to extreme. I'm not very much interested in the mild type, unless we're out in public, and I just want you mildly aware you've been clamped. For the most part, they're part of training. They can be used for punishment. They can be used to heighten sexual arousal.

"The sideboard has a pair in the drawer. Fetch them."

Gracefully, or as gracefully as she could now that her legs were tired, she rose. She crossed to the sideboard and slid open the drawer. A pair of vicious-looking metal clamps, joined together by a stout, linked chain lay there on the velvet covered bottom.

If it was possible, her nipples seemed to shrink and retract.

She turned towards him, and she saw she was alone with him. He was focused completely on her.

Slowly, she crossed the room, the floor cold on her bare feet.

Remembering what he told her yesterday, she knelt and offered the clamps to him.

"Legs even farther apart," he instructed. "I may want to play with your pussy, and I always want it available."

"I want you to."

He raised a brow.

"I want you to play with my pussy," she said. "I want to be fucked by you."

"In due time."

"Why?"

"Why am I making you wait? Because I want you to focus on me as a master, your trainer, not as a fuck buddy. BDSM is about a whole lot more than sex."

"And I still want you to fuck me."

"And that, Alana, may be the most honest you've ever been. Cup your tits with your palms."

She made herself concentrate on her breathing. She tried to tear her gaze away from the clamps, but she couldn't. She was fixated on them.

"Are you familiar with the different types of clamps?"

She shook her head.

"These are Japanese clovers," he told her. "Some are more intense than others. This particular pair is deceptively wicked. Unlike other clamps, these don't have screws or biting metal teeth." He squeezed one open and showed it to her. "This part will close around your nipple."

She nodded. It didn't look too bad. And if they didn't screw or have metal teeth... That was a plus, right?

Ethan went on, "In fact, they're lined with cork. You won't feel an immediate bite like you might with others. The pressure intensifies over time."

Ah. Uhm.

"And they won't become dislodged or fall off when you move. Pinch your nipples."

Even as she did, Alana kept staring straight at the clamps. Now that she was distracted by them, she barely noticed the cold, unyielding floor beneath her knees. It was all perspective, she realised.

"Now pull your nipples out, away from your body. Good," he approved. "Now twist them. Hold them."

She started to wince. Surely the clamps couldn't be worse than that? Surely they couldn't.

"Squeeze harder."

"But..." She gasped. "It hurts."

"Yes. It does. Is your cunt wet?"

She shook her head. "No. I'm too nervous for my cunt to be wet."

"You've survived everything so far," he told her.

She was hyperaware when he dropped the clamps onto a chair. Had he changed his mind?

"Stand up."

Her motions a little less elegant than she would have preferred, she stood, still cupping her breasts and squeezing her nipples.

“Legs shoulder-width apart,” he instructed. “Tip your head back so the column of your throat is exposed. It’s a very vulnerable position,” he told her. “Your body is open that way, and you’re not poised for flight. Says a lot about trust.”

She positioned herself as he instructed. She couldn’t look at him, she realised, and she hated that.

Alana felt one of his hands on her right breast. “Master?”

“Drop your hands to your sides.”

Her nipples were already super sensitised.

“Keep them there,” he said, “despite any temptation to try to stop me. You will be restrained if necessary.”

“No... It’s just...”

“Go on.”

“The anticipation of the pain.”

He gently cupped her breasts. His touch was more of a caress. She felt her body relax, and she all but swayed against him.

“Stand still.”

It was hard when she wanted him to kiss her like he had done last night, hard, rough, demanding, commanding.

She wanted him to make love to her, to fuck her, to possess her. But she’d probably have to earn that, too.

He flicked the pads of his thumbs across her nipples. They pebbled. His touch was... wonderful.

Ethan leaned in. Holding one breast captive, he sucked a nipple into his mouth. Using his tongue, he pressed it to the roof of his mouth.

“Oh. God. Ethan!” She shuddered.

“Now is your cunt wet?” he asked.

“Yes!”

He moved on to her other nipple, but he continued to tease the other with his fingers. Never had she enjoyed nipple play more. Her breasts felt full, and she wanted more.

Unbelievably, she felt the first tendrils of an orgasm licking at her. Just from breast stimulation.

But he stopped before she could get there.

She moaned a protest. "Please."

"Thank you," he corrected.

"I..."

"Thank me for my attention rather than pleading for more."

She worried her lower lip. "Yes. Thank you. Thank you, thank you. I want —"

He took hold of her nipples.

"Thank you." She gave a little mew of gratitude. That orgasm was so close. So close.

She moved a bit closer to him, silently begging him to touch her between the legs.

He rolled her nipples.

"Ahhhhh..." Her eyes closed. "Mas..."

Then he exerted more pressure. And more. The sensation at the tips of her breasts fell from delicious to tolerable, then to discomfort. "It hurts," she protested. But unbelievably, she did feel her crotch getting more and more moist. He pulled on her nipples, nearly dragging her off balance. Tears stung her eyes.

Slowly, he backed off the pain, his touch becoming soothing.

Her head spun at the constant change of pressure and intensity.

Suddenly, he released her.

"Offer me your tits. Ask me to clamp them."

She couldn't.

He waited.

He wanted her to ask for pain.

The grandfather clock continued to tick in the background.

He licked her nipples, laving them with moisture. Whatever he wanted to do to her, she wanted him to do it. "Yes," she said, finally. "Clamp me."

"More specifically."

Her eyes were squeezed tightly closed. "Please, clamp my nipples."

"More graphically."

He'd ratcheted the tension again. "Clamp my tits. Clamp your sub's tits. She wants to please her master."

"Cup your left breast. Offer it to me."

He needed to lean on his cane, she knew. And he'd asked for the added symbolism of her making the offering.

He squeezed her nipple into a tight bud, then he released the clamp onto it.

She sucked in her breath in anticipation of pain that didn't come.

In fact, it felt...good.

The way he'd tormented her nipple felt worse than this. This was easy. Piece of cake. Chocolate at that.

"Good girl. Now offer me your right breast."

As he squeezed and kneaded and prepared her nipple, she became aware of the constant pressure on the other.

He'd been right. It was deceptive. Deceptive and mean.

He clamped her nipple.

"Lovely," he said.

The darkening of approval in his eyes made everything worthwhile.

For the first time she began to understand the meaning of getting pleasure from her Master's pleasure.

"Hands back to your sides."

She dropped both of her hands. He released the chain, and its added weight tugged on her nipples. She curled her hands into little fists, her nails biting into her palms.

"You're starting to feel the pressure."

"Yes."

"But it's not unbearable."

"No."

He picked up the chain. "As effective as a lead," he told her.

She silently willed him not to drop the chain.

"The key is to think about something else. Think about how your tortured nipples please me. Concentrate on the feeling it gives your cunt. You can get aroused from them, if your state of mind is right. You may even, eventually, ask me to clamp you."

And she might one day ask if he'd like a one way ticket to hell.

"The joy of clamping your nipples is only second to the joy of removing them. Those first few seconds when the blood flow returns and your involuntary cry."

"You've a mean streak, Master."

"Oh. Aye." He yanked on the chain that ran between the clamps.

"Jesus!"

"Now," he told her, twisting the chain in his hand, pulling her breasts together and making her gasp for air, "tell me thank you."

She whimpered. She moaned.

"You'll do well to remember your manners, slut."

"Thank you!"

"For?"

"Thank you for clamping my tits. Thank you for reminding me of my manners."

He slowly released the chain from his fist.

"Thank you." This time it was sincere.

"And now for your next lesson..." He rang the bell.

She blinked back tears. She was overwhelmed. He'd been so gentle. He'd had her on the verge of an orgasm, he'd had her asking him to fuck her.

And now...

"Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Concentrate on me. On how I like seeing your nipples tormented. Think about your arousal."

"I'm not..."

"You are." Proving his point, he put a hand between her legs and effortlessly slid two fingers into her vagina. "Fuck my fingers."

Unbelievably, he was right; she was aroused. And the pain in her breasts shot little darts of need to her pussy. She was more turned on than she ever remembered being.

She was shamelessly moving herself on his fingers when Thomas came into the room.

"You called, Ethan?"

"It's time for Alana's next lesson."

He grinned.

Alana wasn't just damp any longer, she was wet.

She gave an unladylike moan when Ethan removed his fingers from her pussy. "Lick them clean," he told her.

Aware of the other man watching her humiliation, she licked and sucked her Master's hand. Until last night, she'd never tasted her own juices.

"How're your nipples?"

"They hurt."

He nodded.

Without the distraction of him playing between her legs, she was ridiculously aware of the pain lancing her breasts.

Then he fisted his hand in the chain again. He exerted pressure, forcing her down onto her knees.

Her eyes were watering, but she'd be damned if she'd cry out in front of both of them.

"Thomas."

She couldn't figure out what they were about until he was lying on his back, his head positioned between her legs.

"Lower your crotch until your cunt is above Thomas' mouth," Ethan instructed. "He is, I'm told, very skilled at this."

She'd never done anything like this. She'd had a man between her legs before, licking her, but never like this.

She lowered herself, until she was all but sitting on her haunches, facing towards Thomas.

The chain between her clamps was still captured in Ethan's fist, but he wasn't pulling on it. "Listen to me carefully."

She looked up at the implacable face of her trainer.

"No matter how tempted you are, you may not come."

Chapter Nine

"She still needs to be shaved, Master."

Ethan carefully watched his trainee. He did know where her limits were. And, as he'd told her, he'd push her past them. But he was never careless. When he had a sub under his care, his every thought was on that person, even if they never had any idea of that.

He saw Thomas curl his hands around her thighs, spreading her legs and drawing her closer and closer to his mouth.

Thomas licked her from back to front, in a long, sensual motion.

She let out a little moan. She wiggled, soundlessly trying to encourage him to reach different places.

He repeated the same motion, letting her guide him to different spots.

Ethan enjoyed watching this dance, knowing on some level he orchestrated it.

When Thomas sucked her clit into his mouth, she froze.

When he did it a second time, Ethan simultaneously tugged on her metal chain.

"Hell!"

"See what I mean, about the added intensity?"

"Damn," she said.

Relying on his cane, he lowered himself to the floor next to them. He could read her expression better this way, see when she was in danger of climaxing.

He enjoyed watching her body move as Thomas teased and thrilled her. And when Thomas was particularly intense, Ethan would twist her nipples, adding to it.

"Mas...Master...I think...I'm going to..."

"You don't have permission," he told her.

Thomas kept up his onslaught on her cunt, adding little bites, then soothing them with a kiss.

"Driving me..."

"Think about me," he told her. "And what I want. And I want your orgasm."

Her eyes opened wide. "You..."

“Want your orgasm,” he repeated. “I want all of them.”

She didn't take her gaze from him. He saw her concentrating, fighting off the orgasm he'd denied her.

Thomas was relentless, pulling her down, using his fingers to probe her vagina and part her pussy lips.

And that was exactly what Ethan wanted, her out of her mind with desire and a conflicting order.

“Come for me,” Thomas told her.

“Better not,” Ethan countermanded.

Thomas sucked her clit into his mouth.

Her body convulsed, and he knew she was close to an orgasm.

“I want you draped over the kneeling bench *now*,” he told her, pulling on her chain.

He saw her shake her head. It wasn't to deny him, it was to throw off the sensual daze.

“Yes,” she whispered.

Thomas reluctantly released her.

“Thank you,” she said softly.

“She's learning, Ethan.”

“Indeed.”

“Summon me if I can be of service.”

Thomas left the room, and Ethan was consumed with his sub. It took all of his self-discipline not to just flip her on her back and fuck her.

He released her chain and she padded, a little unevenly, towards the bench. He used his cane to stand upright and move in behind her.

Then he used his free hand to unfasten his trousers.

She was perfectly, beautifully draped over the bench. Her hands were gripping the sides, her hair with its natural blonde highlights spilled on to the floor. She'd remembered to keep her legs parted, but turn her feet slightly inward.

He stroked his cock and then rammed into her gaping pussy hard and fast.

“Yes! Yes! Master me! Use me!”

She was as wet and ready for this as he was.

Ethan kept her bent over the bench and drove into her. He pulled back and out and slapped her upper thighs and arse, searing her skin, giving her the spanking she so hungrily craved.

She screamed, but got wetter and wetter.

Even though his erection strained, he inserted a finger into her vagina, seeking her G-spot.

"Damn it!"

"Do not come," he told her.

"But—"

He stopped and smacked her cunt, hard. Deliberately.

She screamed.

"You're wet," he said.

"I'm going to come!"

"No, you're not."

She tried to tease with her body, wiggling about, exposing herself. She might not be a natural sub, but she was shameless about pleasing and being pleased. He welcomed that.

He found her G-spot again and put pressure against it. When she was about to shatter, despite his orders, he stopped.

"You're diabolical."

Ethan laughed. "One of the nicer things I've been called." His hands on her waist, he sank his throbbing hard-on into her cunt again. Wordlessly, her body welcomed him. Her vaginal walls gripped him, milking him.

His orgasm built in his balls, and he pulled out. He stroked himself hard, then ejaculated his thick load on her back.

She moaned, finding satisfaction in pleasing him.

Thomas was right. Answering her e-mails had been one of his better decisions in the last few months, if not years.

"Thank you."

He barely heard her, as she was upside down and her breaths were loud and ragged. This woman, this sub, pleased him. As long as she was open and honest with him.

"Hey?"

He continued zipping his pants.

“When do I get to come?”

“When I’m ready to let you.”

She pouted.

He smacked her right buttock.

* * * *

His semen, *Master’s semen*, was warm and sticky on her skin.

Alana was overwhelmed. Her nipples throbbed with pain. She hadn’t come, yet she was as dizzy and disoriented as if she had.

Since the moment she’d stepped off the aeroplane and Thomas instructed her to throw her handbag in the rubbish bin, nothing had been predictable. From the rear-view mirror, the chauffeur had watched her masturbate herself as she rode in the limousine. Ethan had fucked her with a too-large dildo while she was on her back on the floor of the car. She’d been beaten, made to reveal some of her deepest, darkest secrets, forced to take an enema, clamped, eaten out by Thomas, and now, Master had finally fucked her, filling her full of his cock. He’d groaned deeply and climaxed.

Could she be any luckier?

Reaching back, she rubbed his cum into her back, aware that Ethan still gripped her.

“You’ve earned an orgasm,” he told her.

“Master?”

He crouched behind her, something, she imagined, that wasn’t easy for him.

“Legs farther apart.”

Like Thomas had, he started to eat her pussy, his tongue devouring her in long sweeps.

Here, hanging upside down, her ass and thighs stinging from the nasty slaps, her nipples aching, her whole body was on fire from Ethan’s touch and mastery.

He’d aroused her and kept her there. That she hadn’t climaxed already was testament to how tuned-in he was to her every response, rather than her restraint or training.

He inserted a finger into her pussy, then a second and third.

Then he found a rhythm that would drive her over the edge.

“You have permission to orgasm.”

He continued to lick her clit and insert a finger in her pussy.

She'd never been so overwhelmed. Boyfriends had brought her off, but not like this.

Ethan dragged her to the edge and kept her on the precipice.

The sensations in her arse were almost too much for her to reach orgasm, but if he'd touch her clitoris just one more time, with his finger, his thumb, his tongue... His tongue. Just for a few seconds...

All she needed was one simple lick. Even a nip. Or, heaven help her, if he'd just gently suck...

Then, unbelievably, he stood, once again grasping her waist. She felt his cock at her entrance. Men couldn't be ready to fuck again so quickly. “Master?”

He held her tightly and entered her.

She felt his cock get harder as he worked in and out of her.

“Come,” he told her, riding her hard.

He fumbled and found the chain attached to her clamps and pulled on it.

Seconds later, filled, stretched, hurting, wanting, needing, she screamed and shattered.

She'd been used. Well used.

After removing the clamps, the pain momentarily stunning her, Master left her, and she shook, shivering.

She wanted to curl into a ball and hug herself, soothe herself and absorb everything that had happened to her.

But that was a luxury he wouldn't afford her. She was a sub, and she needed to be reminded of that role. “Lick my cock clean,” he said.

She shook her head to clear the cobwebs. She was somewhat aware of Ethan reaching for his cane and moving to the chair near the hearth. It took a few seconds for her to stand up straight once she was no longer hanging upside down.

Tucking strands of hair behind her ears, she walked towards him on wobbly legs.

His cock was still turgid, and she knew she'd never get the entire length in her mouth. But she knew that didn't mean he wouldn't compel her to try, and to keep at it until she succeeded.

She knelt in front of him, and, like she had yesterday, she noticed the raw, ugly wound on his thigh. Unthinkingly, she kissed him there. He dug his hand into her hair and held her firmly.

"Iraq," he explained. "I was the lucky one."

A hero.

More than any man she'd ever been with, more than any person she'd ever been with, Ethan knew pain, understood the emotion of it, she realised. No matter what he subjected her to, it was nothing close to what he'd endured.

More than ever, she wanted to please him, and pleasing him would give her tremendous pleasure. "Let me clean your cock." Softly, she added, "Please."

He released his powerful grip on her.

He was shaven, and the image was erotic. With more enthusiasm than she'd ever had for giving head, she licked and teased the head of his penis, lapping at the drops of pre-ejaculate. More than mastering her, he'd humbled her.

She cleaned all of her pussy juices from him, and then started to suck him deeper into her mouth, asking for the gift of his orgasm.

"Alana," he said. "You're the submissive."

"Right. I mean, yes, Master." But she cupped and squeezed his testicles. Then she placed a fingertip in that sensitive area between his scrotum and anus.

"Slave."

Her mouth was too full of Master's cock to answer.

He arched his back slightly, giving her greater access. After long minutes, he gripped her hair again, and it was the first time he had come close to losing any sort of control.

She smiled, proud of herself.

The cold tile beneath her knees didn't matter, nor did the throbbing pain from her two meetings with a leather belt and Mater's hand. She forgot about jet lag and being tired and being pushed to the emotional edge, so far out of her element. The only thing that mattered was this moment and pleasuring Ethan.

When he came, she sucked every drop from him and then swallowed it.

She looked up at him and saw him grinning at her. "That's definitely an area you don't need a lot of instruction."

Her heart thudded and skipped. She hung on every bit of approval from this man as she never had from another.

She was learning what it was like to be a sub. And she wanted more.

He did push her, as he promised, as he threatened. But there'd been nothing she couldn't take. He combined the right amount of force with tempered reserve to push past her barriers. And she hadn't been sorry yet.

She was learning to trust him.

"I believe you were in the middle of something when I interrupted?"

"Not really. Thomas was just making me practice standing from a kneeling position."

Ethan captured her chin. His eyes that had been so warm were now chilled. "And you think there's anything more important?"

"I don't understand."

"I want you to be perfectly trained in every way. We're already a couple of days into the amount of time you committed. Can you imagine there's anything more important than you doing those things I require of you?"

Shamed, she dropped her head, and apologised. "I had done fifty of the two hundred Thomas instructed me to do."

"Good. Now you can begin again."

When would she learn?

Dismissed, she returned to the bench. She lowered the knee pad and practiced kneeling and standing, no easy task with how exhausted her mind and body were, and how conscious she was of the dried cum on her back.

She heard no sounds behind her, so she didn't know if Ethan was watching while she went through her paces. Probably not, she decided. He knew she hated isolation, so he had probably added that to her lesson.

"No feeling sorry for yourself."

So he was still there!

Strangely giddy, she went back to her exercises, concentrating on each motion.

She wanted to practice, wanted to get better, wanted him to be pleased with her.

Her senses were overwhelmed.

If she were honest with herself, she would admit that she wanted to be pushed. That was why she'd sought him out. All the other Doms she'd played with let her off the hook. She used a namby-pamby safe word, *flowers*, and got out of anything that pushed her outside her comfort zone.

Anal sex?

Flowers.

Enema?

Flowers.

Homoerotic sex?

Flowers.

Gag?

Flowers, flowers, flowers!

And the truth was, most of them, she wanted to try.

Spanking?

Oh, yes. Yes, master, yes.

But Ethan would have nothing of that.

He saw through her tactics, saw what even she had cowardly refused to identify. If she used her safe word with him, she'd be on an aeroplane.

Instead of scaring her, the thought liberated her.

She couldn't run. She couldn't hide.

And in the time remaining, she could choose to experience all those things she'd dare fantasise about.

"Good. Now one hundred more, where you rise from being bent over the bench."

She'd reached five hundred?

She'd been so carried away, so lost in her thoughts of him, of the understanding that she could be honest with herself, that she hadn't noticed any pain in her muscles.

Alana stood in front of the bench. She gracefully bent over, adjusting her feet inward, grasping the sides. She allowed her hair to reach the floor before bringing herself erect again.

"Spread your legs a little farther apart next time."

"Yes, Master."

She did.

And she thought about being draped over it while he fucked her. Her skin was still damp where he'd ejaculated on her back, and the reminder made the memory even more stark and real.

She wanted this, all of it, every succulent, delicious, frightening, pulse-pounding moment of it.

"You have an hour to freshen up," he told her. "Then join me back down here."

She finished her final exercise, and then turned. He was almost out of the room. It was unseemly, but she called out to him. "Master!"

He stopped and turned back, dark brows raised over dark grey eyes. Damn, he was hot. How was she supposed to go and find someone else after him?

"Thank you. Thank you for the instruction. Thank you for fucking me."

"There's hope for you."

"A lot?"

"Some." But he smiled. His weight on the cane again, he left the room.

* * * *

"Before you leave, Alana, all your training will culminate into a single scene where each one of your limits will be tested in a brief amount of time. We'll see how much you've learned, and we'll see how good you are at mastering yourself."

She cocked her head to one side. "I'm not sure I understand."

Ethan was seated in one of the wing chairs, his fingers pressed together, steepled.

Before him, on her knees, hands behind her neck, head tipped slightly back, legs parted, naked and submissive, she was very much aware of his power. It didn't come from his physical prowess, it was deeper than that. He wore an air of command. It didn't matter where he was or what he did, this man would always lead.

The floor beneath her was cold and hard, but she chose to focus on Ethan, his words, his expectations. It made everything more tolerable. Damn if he wasn't right about that, too.

"By mastering yourself," he said, "I mean that you put my needs, wants, and desires above your own. If we're successful in our two weeks together, you'll know that I am watching your every reaction. I will know when you're at your limit, I will know when

you're past them, and I will know just how far past them I can go. If you master yourself, you will know, at a deep level, even if you're feeling scared or uncertain, that I'm always thinking of you, that your safety and well-being is the most important thing to me."

"You mean you've got my back."

He laughed. "I suppose you could say that."

"And that means it's safe for me to let go of my own inhibitions," she said quietly, recognising the truth of her own words.

"If we're going to be successful, inhibitions are an option you can't afford."

She nodded.

"Everything you fear, everything you like, it will all be brought to a head in a single afternoon."

Everything?

All the things from her *this scares me* list? All of the confessions of, *I don't want to admit it, but...* Every *yes*?

He tapped his index fingers together rhythmically, just in front of his mouth. "When I train subs, I generally like a month with them. The training can progress at a slower pace, and there's more time for attention to the finer details, like serving others. Of course, you'll have the opportunity with Thomas and Celia, but it's not the same as being thrown into a situation where you know no one and don't know what to expect. But we only have a fortnight, and it will have to do."

She shuddered. She wasn't sure, though, if it was from fear or anticipation. "You're preparing me for it."

"You wanted the complete experience."

"I did. I do."

He continued, "The experience will only be as good as you allow it to be. As I was saying, the most important thing you can learn while you're here is to master yourself. Mastering yourself also means that you're able to serve as your own coach, you'll tell yourself to breathe when you're in an uncomfortable situation. You'll develop your own techniques to conquer fear and panic, maybe practise a mantra of sorts that you can focus on when you're starting to freak out."

"Freak out? Is that a technical BDSM term?"

“Cheeky wench. Tell me about gags?”

She blanched. She wasn't sure why she kept trying to be a smart ass with him, she always ended up on the losing end. “I listed that gags are one of those things that actually do freak me out, didn't I?”

“Pushes your limits, I believe was the way you put it.”

“I haven't actually ever been gagged,” she admitted.

“Not because they weren't tempted, I'm sure.”

She stuck her tongue out.

“But because none of your other Doms would push you.”

“Well... Yes. And because my mouth isn't available for other things then.” She smiled. But she doubted she'd convinced him.

“Do you realise, Alana, that when I'm fucking you, and when you want to be fucked, your language is more coarse?”

She frowned. “Really?”

“And when you're having a discussion with me, you're more coy? And coyness is not acceptable in my subs. Repeat your sentence more directly.”

She flushed. Good girls didn't use bad language. Her mother had taught her that. Her father had reinforced it when she'd said “hell” when she'd been twelve. He dragged her by the arm into the bathroom and used the bath soap to wash her mouth out. She'd gotten over it in bed, but, evidently, not out of it.

She tried again because he demanded it and because she wanted to say it. “If there's a gag in my mouth, master can't receive a blow job.”

“Skull fuck,” he corrected.

Her stomach was a mass of knotted tension as she repeated his words. “If there's a gag in my mouth, master can't skull fuck me.”

“He can if the gag's a dental dam.”

The blood drained from her face. She felt it.

He wouldn't.

That was on her *absolutely not* list.

“Am I right?”

If he was watching her closely, if he'd read her list, he knew the impact of his statement. "Yes, Master. You're right. If I was wearing a dental dam, I could be skull fucked."

"Stand and go to the sideboard. Open the drawer."

She was hesitant, but she didn't let Master see that. Hoping that he would think she was just practicing her grace skills, she took an extra few seconds crossing the room. Last time she'd opened the drawer, evil little metal clamps had glinted at her. She wasn't anxious to repeat the experience.

Slowly, she drew the drawer open.

She gasped.

So much for mastering her reactions.

Two ball gags were in the drawer, laid out next to one another. One was significantly larger than the other. But, diabolical man that he was, he'd placed a dental dam there, too.

"Fetch the smallest gag."

Thank God.

She grabbed it and slammed the drawer shut. His laugh proved he knew what she was about.

"Kneel in front of me."

She did and offered him the gag.

"What's your hesitation with the gag?"

No prevarication. The words echoed in her ears, as if he'd uttered them aloud. Once again, he demanded access to her innermost thoughts.

"It's more than just being unable to talk," she admitted, "although that frightens me. I can't tell you to stop."

"You have a signal."

"I know, but..."

"And a gag muffles sound, it won't eliminate it entirely. It'll keep your screams down."

"That's reassuring," she said dryly.

He smiled. "Some subs find them liberating."

"How so?"

"You can let go. You can scream."

“But they look stupid,” she continued. “I saw a woman at the club wearing one. She looked ridiculous, this big red ball stuck in her mouth.”

“So you’ll look foolish. What else?”

She swallowed. “They make you drool.”

“They do.”

“Sometimes I wish you’d argue with me.” She drummed her fingers against her thighs. “You told me the clamps would hurt. You told me I’ll drool in that thing.”

“Both true.”

“But... It’s unseemly.”

“Says who?”

“Drool is not attractive.” If she wouldn’t have been in trouble for it, she would have folded her arms across her chest.

“Being gagged is a symbol of your submission, drool or no drool.”

She glared at it.

“Open your mouth.”

“I...”

“Open your mouth, sub.”

Chapter Ten

Panic flashed through her.

“Show me your safe signal.”

Her gaze fixated on the red ball nestled in his palm. Against the size of his hand, it didn't look so bad. And it wasn't nearly as horrendous as the other instruments of torture she'd just seen in the drawer.

She raised her index finger.

“Lie across my lap.”

“What?” And what about the gag?

He said nothing, instead, he just arched a brow in that terrifying way.

Slowly, she stood.

“Between my legs.”

This was new.

“Turn sideways.”

He guided her into position. Rather than lying across his entire lap, she was to rest her weight on his uninjured leg. She was overwhelmingly conscious of the slight scratch of his wool trousers beneath her stomach.

Her fingers skimmed the floor for balance and her hair fell forward across her face.

“I notice you didn't have to be told twice to do something you want to do.”

Her heart was thudding.

“Now if we can get you to behave that way when you're told to do something you don't want to do.”

He moved his other leg closer.

She was, in effect, trapped.

She'd thought he was protecting his leg. He was imprisoning her.

Uncomfortably, she shifted.

He stroked her buttocks tenderly.

Instead of calming her, the motion unsettled her. She knew he liked to warm her up for a spanking so she didn't bruise. Anticipation unfurled. Alana's breaths came in short bursts, like a butterfly's wings beating. She wanted this. Hungered for it.

Her pussy moistened, and when he wordlessly urged her legs apart with one of his hands, she surrendered completely, totally. She arched her back. "Please," she whispered.

"Please?"

"Finger me."

When he didn't respond, she tried again, "Finger my cunt, Master."

He did, sliding one finger into her moist heat, then pulling it out again.

She moaned.

When he re-entered her, it was with two fingers. She shifted a bit to accommodate him more, urging him deeper.

He finger fucked her until her breaths were more like desperate gasps.

In and out.

Again.

And again.

Faster and faster.

Then he stopped completely.

The first painful slap to the back of her legs was so hard, so unexpected that it stole her breath. She tossed her head back and forth.

"Now open your mouth."

She couldn't think, couldn't concentrate.

She was upside down across his lap, and she felt him move her hair aside and then try to force the gag into her mouth. She started to protest... "Mas—" The rest of the word was cut off as he shoved the gag in her mouth. She shook her head, trying to spit the awful thing out, hating the texture, hating the way it tasted, hating the horrible scent of the rubber. "No." Her protest was muffled behind the rubber ball.

He slapped her right thigh, hard.

She thrashed about, desperate to escape.

He slapped her again. "Control yourself." Ethan firmly held the ball deep in her mouth. He impaled three fingers of his other hand in her vagina.

He'd switched from lover to Dominator with dizzying speed, leaving her confused. Confused and intimidated.

"Breathe," he told her. "Unless you'd rather I stuff the bigger gag in your mouth?"

Somewhere in the back of her mind, she was aware of him sliding his fingers in and out of her pussy.

The sensation of arousal overrode everything, even the momentary fear.

Between his fingers, the pressure of his leg trapping her, the force of the ball in her mouth, she was completely subdued.

"Much better," he told her. He withdrew his fingers from her and said, "I'm going to fasten the gag into place."

She nodded.

Slowly, he did, taking care not to catch her hair in the buckle.

"Show me your safe signal."

She very nearly showed him a different finger.

Afraid of further punishment, though, she followed his instruction.

"Now stand up."

All this and no real spanking? Was he out of his mind?

He helped her to stand, and he held her hands behind her back, his firm grip keeping her as secure as if she were in real bondage.

He walked her over to a mirror.

She was shocked at her reflection.

Her eyes were wide, terrified. Her hair was a mess, except for the parts secured by the strip of leather securing the gag. But the gag itself...? The ball was bright red. The leather band was black. She looked like a woman who'd been completely mastered.

"Not ridiculous."

She nodded. "Is." But the word was an incoherent mumble.

"Submissive," he said. "Sexy."

She blinked at his reflection.

"Sexy," he affirmed. "For men who like submissives, for women, too, there's nothing as alluring as seeing their chattel properly adorned. Within a few minutes, if we're lucky, you'll be drooling."

She shook her head wildly.

“Now for your spanking. Prepare yourself. It won’t be a pleasant one. This spanking will be strictly for correction purposes, punishment for how badly you behaved while you were being gagged. Do you understand that?”

In the mirror, her gaze fixed on his, and she nodded.

“Do you submit to your punishment?”

She continued to regard him.

“Your hands are imprisoned,” he said. “Your lovely, but cheeky mouth is gagged, so you’ll have to nod to let me know you’re ready for your correction.”

There was an awful, sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach. But, bravely, she nodded.

“I should spank you?”

Again, she nodded.

“Hard? Like you deserve for being a naughty, disobedient slut?”

Her head fell forward. Her pussy was wet, and she was sure he knew it.

With his hand in her hair, he pulled her head backwards, forcing her to meet his gaze in the mirror.

“Alana?” he asked. Slowly, he continued, enunciating each word as he repeated his question, “Should you be punished for being a naughty, disobedient slut?”

Shamed, she nodded a final time.

He released his grip on her hair, then took her by the hand and led her back to the wing chair. Wordlessly, he urged her into the position she’d been in previously. He released her hand, she presumed, so she could balance herself.

When he rubbed her buttocks vigorously, she knew it didn’t mean he was behaving like a lover. She knew it meant he intended to give her a beating worse than the others he’d given her.

She tried to swallow and couldn’t. Breathe, she told herself. Which would have been easier if she weren’t upside down with her lungs squished.

He stopped touching her entirely.

Seconds dragged into minutes.

He was a master at sadism.

He knew how to prolong the agony of waiting.

She was tuned into all the different things she was thinking and feeling, all the different physical sensations, of not being able to drag in a full breath, of the discomfort in her muscles from being unable to move. And her jaw ached. Worse than not being able to talk or swallow was the pressure on her jaw. Even the nasty leather strap exerted small amounts of pain.

When the first blow finally came, his hand on her bare, sensitive skin, she yelped.

The second was mind-numbing.

The third caught the most fleshy part of her rear, and it didn't hurt quite as bad.

But once she'd forced air into her lungs, he continued. The next few rained down without a break. She couldn't absorb the pain. Instead, he added insult to insult, up and down her thighs, between her legs.

Despite her efforts to take the beating calmly, by coaching herself, she couldn't. She tried to struggle away from the constant hits.

She was crying in earnest, his hand searing her skin.

This wasn't like what she imagined. It wasn't a thing like she'd hoped. In her fantasies, she'd had time to take each smack and enjoy it, even if it stung.

But this... This burned and, damn it, hurt.

"Please," she said. But the word was muffled, lost.

"Show me your safe signal, sub."

He'd stopped hitting her. Her body was on fire.

"Show me."

Barely coherent, she showed him.

"Do you want to use it?"

She lowered her hand.

"Very well. Spread your legs."

It took her mind long seconds to process his order and even longer to obey.

Brutally, he slapped her cunt.

Her head jerked up and she screamed.

"Are you wet?"

She nodded.

He slapped her cunt again.

She moaned.

“Again?”

“Yes.”

“Didn’t quite catch that.”

“Yes.” Even she couldn’t decipher the word. Spit was building behind the gag, and she couldn’t swallow it away.

She was humiliated.

“Tip yourself forward a bit more. I want this next one to really hurt.”

Scared nearly out of her mind, but desperately wanting it, she dug her toes against the floor and moved her body scant centimetres. She was even more exposed. Totally vulnerable.

Smack!

She screamed. Arching her back she heaved, debilitated by its intensity.

She drooled, and she didn’t care. She was so overwhelmed, so shattered. So undone by his mastery.

“Stand up.”

She felt his hands on her. He was moving her body, not gently, but with great skill. In moments, he had her standing.

“Grab your ankles.”

“I…” She shook her head. “Can’t.”

He forced her into the position he demanded. “Hold your ankles.”

Through the haze of pain, she managed what he said.

“Three more.”

She couldn’t take three more smacks to her pussy, she couldn’t. Already, she’d never been in his much pain.

But master was clever.

He slapped her right buttock.

Then the left.

Then, the final was between her legs, scorching her cunt.

She screamed, the sound reverberating in her head. Blinding pain tore through her.

Devastating pain.

But she'd done it. She'd taken it.

Then... Then the reward. Master's reward.

The tip of Ethan's cock was at her heated entrance. He didn't need lube. She was slick and ready.

She couldn't believe her body's reaction to the beating.

She was so hot, she could smell her own arousal, even above the scent of leather and rubber. "Fuck me." The words were a mantra, swirling, repeating in her mind, even if he couldn't hear them. "Fuck me, please. Fuck me, fuck me!"

He grabbed hold of her hips, dominating her, forcing her to stay still for his possession. She wanted it. Needed it.

Now.

He fucked her hard, his large cock splitting her as she held her ankles.

She wanted him to come, wanted his hot ejaculate pounding into her.

Again and again, he drove into her.

Then, whimpering, moaning, consumed, she came, the orgasm swallowing her whole.

With a groan, he slapped her thigh one last time and then came deep inside her, his cock pulsing and throbbing.

But Master wasn't finished with her; her punishment wasn't over.

"Stand up."

She wondered how that was going to be possible.

Gripping her shoulders, his tension just shy of bruising her, he forced her towards the wall where the mirror hung.

Standing behind her, he grabbed her chin and held her steady. "Look," he told her again. "See what I see."

Her eyes were wide, with fear, with satisfaction, with unshed tears. Her cheeks bore stripes of scarlet, and drool escaped from behind the gag. Her hair was a wild wreck, and her body trembled.

"You've been punished, sub."

She couldn't respond, staring at her own dishevelled, submissive reflection.

"Beautiful," he said.

Then, quickly, he pulled her into the centre of the room. "Hands behind your back, Alana."

Barely able to string her thoughts together, she did as he told her.

She was aware of him picking up his cane. And even though he used it for balance, he was still able to totally overwhelm her. With soft cuffs, he secured her hands behind her back.

He forced her onto her knees. "Legs shoulder-width apart," he instructed.

Subdued, she mumbled her gratitude for his lesson. "Thank you. Thank you." There was no way he'd hear her, but she needed to say it.

"Glad you remembered your manners. Thought you might need another lesson."

Without another word, he left the room, leaving her there, alone and bound, their co-mingled juices drying on the inside of her thighs, her buttocks stinging and bright red, overwhelmed, subdued.

* * * *

To make her humiliation complete, a quarter of an hour later, he sent Celia into the room.

Alana closed her eyes.

She'd had time to think, and she realised Master was intentionally increasing the stakes with each passing hour. He'd started small, by having her kneel in the car, and then by fucking her with the glass dildo.

Then, once they'd arrived at his ancestral home, he'd beat her, spanked her, and clamped her. And he'd done things to her in front of Thomas. And now, he'd left her vulnerable in front of Celia.

Alana shuddered, remembering his earlier promise, or, more like it, threat, that would lead to the culmination of all her training. She wondered if she'd survive it.

"Lucky girl," Celia said, "for Master to have used you so."

Lucky?

She might have protested, if she weren't gagged. Instead, she shook her head.

"Oh, yes," Celia said. "Lots of women would like to be in your place. Some men, too. They'd be as badly behaved as you are to get treated like that."

Alana realised Celia was right. With her attitude, with her behaviour, she had asked for every bit of the experience.

She could have accepted the gag without fuss. She could have asked him to talk her through it.

Instead, she'd protested, been disobedient, she'd deliberately goaded him.

"I'm to help you upstairs," Celia said.

Since Alana's legs wouldn't work right, she accepted the other woman's help in standing.

On many levels it bothered her that the younger woman was dressed, and dressed comfortably in jeans and a T-shirt. Alana had no doubt Master had intentionally planned that, as well. He did nothing without great thought. Every action was carefully calculated to take her to a deeper level of submission.

Celia guided Alana towards the stairs.

Ethan stood there, at the bottom, one strong hand gripping the banister.

He looked so compelling, so strong, his black T-shirt hugging his honed body. Jeans conformed to his muscular thighs. A lock of hair fell across his forehead. Everything about him shouted power.

She dropped her gaze, then her head. She was gagged, drooling, humbled. He walked off as if he hadn't even noticed her.

She'd take a beating any day over being ignored.

With a hand on Alana's upper arm, Celia guided Alana upstairs, then continued holding her all the way across the bedroom. Because she was still bound, Alana was somewhat helpless as Celia tipped her forward onto the bed. Wildly, desperately, she wondered if there'd be no end to her humiliation?

"Spread your legs," Celia told her.

What?

"You'll want to be obedient," the woman warned.

Celia was probably right.

She was clearly acting under Master's orders, meaning the woman was her dominator in Master's absence.

Of all the things he'd demanded from her so far, this was likely the hardest.

Even in the locker room of her health club, she was modest.

But, honestly, what choice did she really have? And to tell the truth, there was a tiny frisson of excitement wrapped up in a bundle of nerves. She had been curious... And this woman, with her long legs, shapely body, and stylish dark hair was more than attractive.

"Spread your legs," Celia said again. This time, the words brooked no refusal.

Wiggling as she tried to follow orders, hyper-aware of exposing herself, Alana spread her legs apart.

Without an explanation, Celia left her there.

The woman returned moments later and pressed a wet, warm cloth against Alana's pussy, cleaning her up. She sighed behind the gag. She was so sore from Ethan's spanks, open handed on her most tender area, and the warm flannel was deliciously soothing.

Celia patted Alana's cunt dry.

"I've got some arnica to help prevent bruising," Celia said. "I'll just rub some on your bum and thighs for you, shall I?"

Alana nodded, shyness receding as she surrendered. Ethan had been right about that, as well. When she stopped fighting, when she mastered herself, it was possible to enjoy the experiences and get more out of them.

Celia warmed the cream in her palm, then worked it into her tender flesh.

She'd never imagined that anything could feel as good. It wasn't just the warm flannel or the gentle pats with a dry towel, and it wasn't just the cream being rubbed into sore muscles to prevent bruising...it was the tender touch of another woman that she was enjoying. Celia was gentle as she stroked and soothed, and it felt so much different from a man touching her.

And when Celia's long, soft caresses took her fingertips higher, towards Alana's clitoris, she moaned, and she arched her back, gently asking.

Celia caressed Alana's clit. Alana pressed her face deeper into the duvet cover. She shouldn't want this. She shouldn't be silently begging the other woman to finger her and bring her to orgasm, but she was.

She rose onto tiptoe, trying to give Celia greater access.

"Naughty little cunt," Celia said.

Desperately, Alana shook her head.

"Oh, yes," Celia said. "Admit it."

She shook her head again.

Celia pulled her hands away.

Alana thrust her hips backwards.

Celia laughed. "Admit it or I won't touch you again."

Tears welled in Alana's eyes. She couldn't admit to something so scandalous. She couldn't admit to the other woman, or to herself, that she was so hungry for a female's touch.

"Right then, let's get you ready for Master Thomas."

Master Thomas?

Celia knelt on the floor between Alana's legs and tongued her cunt.

Alana, relieved, thrilled, sighed. Hungrily, she widened her legs, giving Celia all the access to her private parts that she could possibly need.

After the woman's touch, after Master's beatings, she was completely on the knife-edge of an orgasm. The feel of her tongue on her clit... She was going to come...

Then...

Then...

Celia stopped. With a soft laugh, she said, "You'll have to admit you want me to fuck you," Celia said, "With my hands, with my tongue. You'll have to be honest with yourself and with me before I'll let you come."

She cried out behind the gag. "Please!"

"What have we here?"

At the sound of Thomas' voice, Alana froze.

"Did you have Master's permission to eat her out, Celia? And, Alana, did you have Master's permission to come for anyone other than him?"

She was horrified.

"Stand up," he commanded Celia. "And leave us. Master will deal with you directly."

"I hope so," Celia said. But instead of complying completely, she tongued Alana one last time.

“Celia.”

“I’m going,” she said.

“As for you, Alana,” Thomas said, “I’ll see to you now.”

Chapter Eleven

She was braced, he could see that, ready for his beating.

And he did enjoy being a torment.

But what they had in store for her later, was much more diabolical than a simple spanking now.

As for now... Keeping her uncertain was as effective as a beating.

He unbuckled the gag. "Open your mouth," he said, reaching beneath her to remove the gag.

Easier said than done, he knew, after you'd had it in your mouth for so long.

She coughed as she tried to swallow, and he knew spit would be everywhere. Without giving her too much time to think, he dropped the ball gag on the nightstand and pulled her up by her shoulders and forced her onto her knees facing away from the bed, towards him.

He grabbed a fresh towel from the pile Celia had thoughtfully provided and wiped Alana's mouth.

"Thank you," she said hurriedly, after he'd let silence drag for a few moments.

"You do like to skate on thin ice," he told her.

Ethan had done well with this one. She was a constant challenge. And that made it much more fun than a woman who happily acquiesced to everything. Julianna, Ethan's last submissive, had been a little frightening that way. He wasn't sure they would have ever found her limits. He'd been more than happy when Ethan sent her packing. He just wished it hadn't been so long between subs to train. Ethan really was meant to do that, even if he no longer wanted to admit it to himself.

"Ethan is waiting for you," he said.

"Thomas?"

He raised his brows.

"I, er, need to use the toilet."

"I'll wait."

Colour seared her cheeks.

"I'm still handcuffed," she pointed out.

"I'll uncuff you when you've finished."

She opened her mouth and then closed it again without uttering a protest.

"I suppose you want me to leave the door open."

"That question," he said, "doesn't deserve an answer."

He helped her up and watched her as she walked into the en suite bathroom. To her credit, she'd pulled back her shoulders. Didn't she look proud? And didn't he want to fuck her, hard?

She was lovely, as he'd told Ethan.

That riotous mass of golden hair made him long to dig in his fingers and imprison her head. He wanted to devour her pouty lips with a deep kiss. He wanted her cunt on his face until she screamed her pleasure from the devilment his tongue exacted. He wanted to hold her breasts and suckle their tips, and he wanted to hear her call out his name from a submissive headspace.

"Thomas!"

He went in to join her. "Lean forward," he instructed. He released the clip holding the cuffs together and said, "Move slowly. It's possible your muscles will be difficult to move after being bound for so long."

She whimpered a bit as she shrugged and circulation returned to her arms.

"Finish up there," he said. "Then you've five minutes to freshen up."

He heard water in the sink and plenty of splashing, and, if he didn't miss his bet, she was brushing her teeth, as well.

When she emerged, he was captivated. He was leaned back against the chest of drawers, his arms folded across his chest. He took his time looking at her.

She'd tamed her hair, but her lips were swollen, her face was flushed with colour, and her eyes were bright, startling and honest. She met his gaze, and he read trepidation there. Her eyes, he'd noticed before were green, but green didn't begin to describe it. They were flecked with specks of gold, making them compelling. And if he weren't careful, he could get lost there.

This woman, Ethan's trainee, was beautiful in her submission.

They should keep her there.

"Thank you."

"Keep that up and I won't have many reasons to punish you."

"Then I take back my gratitude," she said.

"Ethan's right about how cheeky you are. We should keep a gag in your mouth."

She scowled. He laughed. "Ethan's waiting," he said.

Alana followed him down the stairs. Rather than leading her to the drawing room as she expected, he continued towards the back of the manor.

"This is Ethan's training room," he told her without looking over his shoulder for her reaction.

The room was large, well appointed. A leather settee was situated at an angle. A marble fireplace dominated the west wall, and there was a stunning black lacquered screen imported from the Orient that hid a number of toys.

Front and centre, though, was a table with genealogical stirrups.

"Climb up," he told her. He turned then, to see her hesitation. She'd stopped in the doorway, and her gaze seemed riveted on the examination table, just as Ethan had intended.

She swallowed deeply. Then, with slow steps, she moved towards the table and climbed up onto the step, then finally seated herself on the table.

He and Ethan definitely needed more subs. Seeing the fear in her eyes and reluctant trust in the way she forced herself to come into the room made his cock hard.

"Feet up."

She took her time, but not enough to get herself into trouble.

"Now, scoot your derriere to the edge of the table." He moved in and slid back the movable part of the table, leaving her with nothing beneath her arse. She was there, feet up, exposed. Beautiful. "Make yourself comfortable," he said. "Ethan will be along directly."

On Ethan's earlier order, Thomas exited the room.

She hated that, he knew, being left alone, wondering if she'd been forgotten.

And being on the table, with the metal rolling tray beside it wouldn't make the wait any easier.

He joined Ethan in the drawing room and poured the other man a brandy.

"She's lovely," Thomas said, offering a snifter to Ethan.

Ethan was in his favourite wing chair, his legs stretched before the fireplace. His cane laid on the floor, and, for the first time in months, damn if he didn't look pleased with himself, content.

He was staring into the flames, but not morosely.

"Did she come for Celia?"

"Nearly. It'll be a bit before she asks for it, but I've confidence she will. Oh, by the way, when I caught her dining from our sub's cunt, I promised Celia you'd see to her. She's expecting an arse warming."

"I'd be happy to give her one, if it's alright with David."

David was Ethan's friend from the Army. They'd served together, and, when David and Celia had gone through a bit of trouble after his return, David had called on Ethan for some assistance. She'd been learning about submission while he was gone, and David was worried about hitting his wife. Instead of petitioning for a divorce, David had gone to Ethan. Ethan had talked to him about the differences between abuse and Domination. And he'd taught his mate how to keep his wife happy while at the same time teaching her to toe the line. Once he'd gotten a feel for the flogger on his wife's flanks, he'd never looked back.

"Perhaps we should invite David over, and Alana can watch you flog Celia."

"Ring him for me, will you?"

"My pleasure." While he made the arrangements, Ethan finished his brandy, then stood. "Would you like me to massage your leg for you?"

"Later," Ethan said. "For now, I'm anxious to see our sub."

Despite his cane, Ethan moved stealthily, and Thomas knew there was no way Alana would hear him.

The rest of the day was certainly going to be entertaining.

* * * *

Breathe in.

Breathe out.

This mastering herself stuff was a lot of work.

Alone in this room, naked, legs uncomfortably spread, bottom suspended in air, she was aware of a hundred different things. The annoying drone of a housefly, the sound of wind whipping through the trees outside, and the chill that hung in the air and pebbled her nipples, despite the fact that a fire crackled only a few feet away.

And she was fully cognisant of the fact that she sucked at mastering herself. Her hands were curled into little fists and her fingernails dug into her palms. She hated being alone, hated not knowing what would happen next. Hated knowing she was in trouble for playing with Celia. Hated knowing she wanted to finish what they'd started.

"Is this the disobedient sub?"

She jumped.

Ethan.

She hadn't heard his approach, and she'd been listening for him. She turned to face him, seeing him there in the open doorway, leaning on his cane. His dark eyes were made darker by his black shirt, and there was an afternoon shadow on his chin. This man was sexy as sin.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Yes. I mean no. No, Master." She licked her lower lip. "I haven't been disobedient."

"Oh?"

"Thomas... Celia... I mean... I didn't climax."

"But she was eating you out, I'm told."

She shuddered. It sounded so naughty when he said it like that. "She was. But I didn't come."

"You didn't protest."

Was a half-truth a lie? "I was gagged, Master." She didn't add that she'd been grinding her face backwards, trying to get Celia to please her.

"Ah, the gag. Tell me about that experience."

She'd gotten away with it. "My jaw aches," she said. "But other than that..."

"Liberating?"

"I wouldn't say that. I think I was more into the scene because I couldn't talk."

He nodded. "You won't fight it next time?"

She looked away from him. "No, Master."

He entered the room and rang a bell. A few minutes later, Thomas appeared.

"Fetch a bowl of warm water, along with my razor and shaving cream."

He was going to personally shave her?

While he waited for the man to return, he pulled up a chair. "You're comfortable?"

"Not at all."

"Good."

"Sadist."

"I've noticed you've not moved. Masochist."

She grinned. If she wasn't careful, there was no way she'd be able to leave here in a week and a half.

She heard a rattle on the tray, and then felt a tug on her pubic hair. She grunted a little at the slight pain.

"I'll cut off some of the length, it'll make the shaving go faster."

Probably the most important thing about submission, she was coming to realise, was how intimate it was. He'd promised her she'd have no secrets from him. Between leaving the bathroom door open, him shaving her, him shoving his cock in her while she was bent over, there weren't many more intimacies left.

Within minutes, Thomas returned. He laid all the items on the metal tray, and he'd thoughtfully provided a couple of hand towels, as well.

"Thomas, give Alana a hand."

"Master?"

"I'd like her knees to her chest so we can shave the inside of her labia even better."

"Hold your knees," Thomas instructed her, as he pulled first one, then the other foot from the stirrups, "otherwise you'll lose your balance."

"Now isn't that a pretty picture?" Ethan asked.

She'd thought more than once that she might die of embarrassment, but this was, by far, the most vulgar position they'd gotten her into.

"Shave her," he told Thomas.

While Thomas filled his palm with a dollop of thick, rich cream, Ethan massaged his injured thigh. Since he'd managed to trim her pubic hair, he probably could have managed to shave her himself, but he obviously enjoyed sharing her with his servant.

At first, she'd hated being naked in front of both of them, but as time was going on, she was getting used to it.

"Look up at Thomas."

She did.

"You're to be proud of your cunt. And show it to anyone I command."

With a couple of swipes of the triple-edged razor, Thomas had removed the last of her pubic hair.

Then he took hold of her right pussy lip, and, stretching it taut, lathered, and then shaved.

In all her years of trimming and shaving, she'd never swiped a razor on the inside of her labia.

He repeated the motions on the inside of her left pussy lip.

"Much better," Ethan said, leaning in for a closer look.

Thomas used a towel to wipe away the last of the creamy foam.

"Be sure it's completely bare."

She felt Thomas spread her cunt wide and run a finger across her, inspecting for stray hair.

"Satisfactory," Thomas said.

"And her anus."

"We'll use a strip of wax for that," Thomas said.

"Wax?"

"Gag?" Ethan offered conversationally.

She shook her head.

She heard Thomas pick up something from the tray, and then heard scissors cutting something.

"This will hurt," Thomas said.

"Could you pretend to enjoy it a little less?"

"Hell, no."

"You'll want to make sure you hold onto your legs even tighter," Ethan said. "When that wax comes off, you'll scream like a Banshee."

She couldn't wait.

She knew her body shook as he pressed the sticky strip against her skin. But she didn't protest. She had no doubt Ethan would follow through on his threat of gagging her if she opened her mouth.

"Ready?"

She closed her eyes.

And screamed when he ripped the strip off, yanking the tiny hairs from her most delicate area. She would have sat up or scooted desperately away, but she knew she'd land on the floor if she moved an inch.

"I think I got it all," Thomas said.

She'd kill him if he hadn't. Her breaths were shaky. "How many layers of skin did you take off?"

She breathed deep for a few seconds, willing the pain to go away.

About a minute later, the sting receded.

Then she felt his fingertips, callused from hard work, all over her mons.

"She's acceptable, Ethan."

"I believe I'll see for myself."

She kept her arms wrapped around her legs, holding them against her chest.

Was it possible to drown in embarrassment?

He skimmed a finger on the inside of each labial lip. And he spent a few seconds exploring her clit, pulling back the little hood and stroking the distended nub. She moaned. She was still on edge from Celia playing with her, and she knew she'd come in only a few seconds if he continued to play with her.

Obviously reading her reactions, he stopped before bringing her off.

He checked her anus for hair, as well. "Well done," he told Thomas. Then, he continued, "While I have you here, all shaven and waxed and sweetly submissive, I'm going to insert a finger in your anus."

"Thomas, put some lube on my fingers."

Er. Wait. *Fingers?* Plural?

She heard a lid being flipped open, then the unmistakable glop sound of lube being dispensed.

She braced herself.

"Bear down," he coached her, "it'll make the penetration easier."

She felt him there, and she gasped, only to have Thomas cover her mouth in a kiss.

It was a deep, rocking French kiss that stole her breath. It shocked her, thrilled her.

Ethan worked a finger deep inside and Thomas swallowed her second gasp.

She closed her eyes, but she thrashed as she felt more pressure against her anus.

"A second finger," he told her.

She couldn't.

Then he slapped her cunt.

The stunning pain and the kiss collided, and she accepted Ethan's second finger.

"That's a good slut," Ethan said. "Just concentrate on what Thomas is doing to you while I widen your hole."

Tears glossed her eyes as he spread his fingers apart. "Just a little wider."

She'd never experienced anything like this.

"Lots of nerve endings there," he said, his rich voice like cognac splashed on ice.

"You'll enjoy it if you let yourself."

How could she?

This, more than anything, was horrible. Good girls, nice girls, didn't willingly do this.

This was nasty.

He started bringing his fingers in and out.

And Thomas stroked her nipples.

She'd never in her life felt more consumed with confusion.

Each sensation, her mouth, her nipples, Thomas' palms cupping her breasts, her stinging pussy, her aching clit, her tormented ass combined to drive her out of her mind.

"Let yourself enjoy it," Ethan said again.

Unbelievably, she started not to hate it.

He kept up the rhythm, in and out. Thomas kept up the pressure on her nipples, already sensitised from the earlier clamps.

Ethan then applied some pressure against her clit.

She couldn't.

Oh.

Couldn't...

"It..." But Thomas' mouth devoured what she was going to say.

Deep inside, an orgasm built, a powerful feeling that she'd never experienced before.

This wasn't the type of ordinary climax, it felt as if it came from somewhere else entirely, deeper inside, more powerful.

He never deviated from his smooth in and out stroke.

Then, as she started to rock, he said, "That's a girl."

Thomas rolled both of her nipples between his thumb and forefinger.

Heaven help her!

She groaned as she came, unbelievably, for having her anus fingered.

"Not so bad," Ethan said.

She shook her head.

Slowly Thomas ended their kiss. And he released his grip on her nipples.

"Thank you," Ethan prompted.

"That was spectacular," she said. "Thank you."

He smiled. "Now, Thomas, please put a butt plug in our sub's bum."

"A plug?"

"Indeed."

She noticed that he'd stopped asking if she wanted to use her safe word. Instead, he trusted her to speak for herself if she objected.

"You're already stretched and wide open. Your arse is begging for a plug."

Thomas came around to the foot of the table. He slid the bottom part of the table back into place and helped her put her feet back in the stirrups.

"Lube her well," Ethan instructed.

She turned her head to watch Thomas squeeze lube onto his fingers. But while she was looking, she saw two butt plugs standing on the metal tray. One was gigantic, and the other was enormous. Her blood chilled. "Scared," she said. Her voice was hardly a squeak.

"You're new to this," Ethan said. "Thomas will take that into consideration."

"Surely one of them isn't going up there."

"It is," he said. "And, Alana, you can take it."

But she didn't want to.

"It will please me to see you wearing one."

Really, that comment was all she needed.

Ethan slid the table extension back away, leaving her butt suspended in mid-air.

Like Ethan had done, Thomas started slow and easy, sliding one well-lubed finger into her anal whorl.

She looked at Ethan, and he held her gaze.

"Doing alright?" her Master asked.

She nodded, feeling Thomas slide his finger all the way inside.

"Another then," Ethan instructed.

She felt Thomas there, stretching her to accommodate a second finger. "It's uncomfortable," she confessed.

"I'm sure it is," Ethan said. But he didn't allow Thomas to relent.

He slid both fingers in and out, slowly sinking them all the way to his knuckle. Then he paused, stretching her. She kept her gaze on Ethan, drawing strength from him.

She watched as he personally lubed the smaller of the two plugs. That would be the enormous one. She supposed they expected her to be grateful for that small mercy.

"Are you sure?" she asked.

"You're stretched wider than this now," Thomas told her.

"Not convinced."

"He's right," Ethan said.

Thomas withdrew his fingers.

She drew a deep breath.

"Now," Ethan he said.

He began slowly, working the plug in and out, letting her get used to it. It got wider in three places, and its shape reminded her of a tree.

"You're past the first notch," Ethan said.

Was it possible to be completely seduced and undone by rich timbre of a man's voice? If so, she could come just from his encouraging words.

The second notch was much more difficult. "Damn it," she protested. "It hurts."

"You're doing well."

He never let her off the hook. She supposed she'd eventually be grateful. Now she was just frustrated.

Thomas fucked her with the plug, in and out, deeper.

She felt a slight difference, a painful one, and she took a shaky breath.

"Second ridge," Ethan said.

This was going to tear her apart, she was convinced of it. She was miserable.

Thomas continued to work the plug, in out, adding a little force on the inward thrust.

She wasn't well behaved, thrashing about.

"Stop it," Ethan said. "Practice your breathing and stop acting petulant. Relax your asshole."

Still, her Master read her well and knew what she needed. He came in closer and started to rub her clit. Distracted by the pleasure, she relaxed.

Thomas sank the plug home.

She gasped.

"You're there," Thomas said.

"Now," Ethan said, "don't you feel proud of yourself for taking that plug?"

When she got her breath back, she might.

"I'm proud of you," he said.

Her heart soared. Any discomfort, any pain, any torment, it was all worthwhile to hear that warm approval in his voice.

This whole submissive thing wasn't what she expected when she'd emailed him and relentlessly tracked him down.

She expected it to be like the clubs, kind of like playing with Tony, only a little more intense, a bit more a thrill ride, sort of like a roller coaster at an amusement park.

She hadn't been prepared, even though she said she was, for him to take all of her inhibitions and blast right through them. She'd thought she knew what he meant. She truly hadn't had a clue.

Now, here she was, lying on a table exposed, a gigantic plug in her butt. And, if she were honest, she did feel proud of herself. She'd gotten past another hang up; she'd pleased Master.

"She looks lovely, Ethan."

"Indeed she does. Nothing like having a sub's holes well used. Maybe we'll always keep her stuffed full like this."

Thomas laughed, and she was sure the sound was purely diabolical.

From somewhere in the distance, she heard a bell, it sounded like a doorbell.

"Our company is here," Ethan said.

"Company?" she asked.

"I'll meet you in the drawing room?" Thomas asked.

"We'll be along directly," Ethan said.

"Company?" she asked again when Thomas left, closing the door behind him.

"David Malchovy," he said. "Celia's husband. He's here to witness his wife's punishment."

"What?" She pushed herself up on her elbows, not minding that she was being disobedient. "You're actually going to punish her?"

"I understand you two were not following orders upstairs. She was to clean you up and rub cream into your skin so you didn't bruise. You two were not to be naughty sluts."

"But..."

"Thomas told her I'd see to her."

"Yes." She searched his face. His jaw was set in an implacable line. There was no trace of teasing. This was a man determined to do what he says.

"A Master always follows through on what he says. There can be no equivocation."

Alana's stomach was a mass of butterflies.

"Think on it, Alana. If I were to punish you sometimes for certain infractions but not others, where would the consistency be? How would you ever learn to trust what I said?"

Trust.

The key component in what they did. "I suppose you're right."

"You don't need to be so grudging," he said.

His eyes had lightened a shade or two. Was he actually teasing her?

"You have a choice, though. Would you like to take a punishment with her?"

Get a public spanking in front of Celia's husband? Not a chance.

But how could she let Celia take all the punishment for something Alana herself had wanted?

Ethan put the table extension back in place. "Scoot back," he told her.

She did, aware of the unyielding plug between her arse cheeks.

He took her feet from the stirrups and said, "Sit up."

The plug seemed to drive even deeper into her. She wiggled about, trying to get comfortable.

"You'll be there to witness her beating. You'll be on your knees. And you're to keep quiet. If you don't think you can do that, say so now and I'll gag you before going in."

"I'll be quiet."

He drew his brows together.

"Honestly."

He nodded. "We'll see."

He didn't help her down from the table, and her legs were a little unsteady for a few seconds. Seeming to know this would happen, he waited a few moments, his right shoulder propped against the door jamb.

She followed him down the hallway towards the drawing room. The plug seemed to shift constantly, although it probably actually didn't. Still, she was very much aware of its unyielding, unpleasant existence.

Ethan used his cane only slightly. She'd noticed that sometimes he leaned on it heavily. Other times, he hardly used it at all.

And having a cane had never once prevented Master from thoroughly using or beating her.

Outside the door, he stopped and turned back to look at her.

She heard the soft sounds of voices coming from inside the room.

"You'll follow me in and kneel near the fireplace," Ethan instructed. "You may keep your knees as close together as comfortable. You'll be aware of the plug, and I want you aware of it."

"Yes, Master."

"Again, you're to be silent, no matter what."

"Good subs are seen and not heard."

"Indeed." He lifted her chin with his forefinger. "Unless you're whimpering from my whip."

Which she'd done at least once and suspected she'd do again.

"Observe, Alana. Later we'll talk about what you learned. Any questions?"

His tenderness nearly made her want to kneel right then and there. "What should I do with my hands?"

"Surely you don't need to ask that question?"

"In the absence of further instruction," she said, repeating his words from the first day, "they're to be behind my neck."

"Excellent," he said. "And did I give further instruction?"

When she only shook her head, he released his hold on her.

"Right then. Don't disappoint me Alana by misbehaving."

She realised her actions would be a reflection on Ethan and his training.

"If you're ready?"

He didn't wait for her assent, instead, he went into the drawing room. Alana followed as instructed, and she was stunned to see Celia in the middle of the room, naked, her slender body on display as she knelt, her knees spread as far apart as possible, looking adoringly up at a man Alana didn't recognise.

For a woman about to get beaten, she looked surprisingly serene.

Chapter Twelve

All the attention was on Celia, and no one seemed to even notice Alana as she knelt near the fireplace and put her hands behind her neck.

"You know why Ethan will be punishing you, Celia?" her husband asked.

"Because I was licking Alana's cunt."

Alana squeezed her hands together. She couldn't truly be watching this.

"Thomas rang me to explain the situation."

Alana expected to see the other woman bow her head in shame. She didn't. In fact, she didn't seem at all repentant for putting her face between Alana's thighs.

"And since you're under Ethan's house, subject to his rules, he'll be the one to punish you."

"Thank you," she told David.

There was Alana's first lesson. The other woman had much better manners than Alana did. In fact, she hadn't thanked Thomas or Ethan for plugging her, and for their patience while doing so. They hadn't needed to take so much time, she knew, and she was fortunate they had.

"Do you submit to his punishment?"

"I do, Master."

Celia's words weren't little squeaks like Alana's often were. She sounded confident and sure of herself, and sure of what she wanted. It didn't sound to Alana as if Celia were being coerced into anything, she was actually enjoying this.

David moved to a wing chair and accepted a drink from Thomas.

It was interesting, being an observer.

She saw subtleties she often missed, like Thomas' subservient nature. She'd been terribly aware of him dominating her, but now she saw him anticipating others' needs and acting on them. He was more than just a servant. And, although he'd told her Ethan wasn't his Master, the man treated him with that much respect. Of course, who couldn't? The man naturally dominated any situation he was in.

"Fetch me a gag," Ethan said.

Moments later, Thomas gave him one.

Unlike Alana, Celia didn't protest. Instead, she said, "Thank you," and opened her mouth wide.

Show off.

Celia closed her eyes while Ethan shoved the gag a bit deeper. Then Thomas moved behind her and secured it in place with the buckle.

Instead of a protest, she opened her eyes again and looked up at Ethan, awaiting his next direction.

Alana had a long way to go.

"Drape yourself over the kneeling bench."

She rose with practiced ease, with a beauty Alana could only aspire to. Even in her free time, she vowed, she'd be voluntarily doing her exercises. Where Alana was gangly and uncertain, the taller, more slender woman was elegance in motion.

She took hold of the sides and draped herself over the bench. There wasn't another word for it. Each motion was effortless. As she spread her legs, Alana noticed that Celia was also wearing a plug.

Instead of a latex one like hers, Celia's was glass. If she were closer, she'd be able to see inside the woman. And it was far bigger at the base.

Despite all she'd learned in the past few days, she realised how much farther she had to go.

This atmosphere wasn't like the clubs. David, Thomas, Celia, Ethan...they weren't people who dressed up in leather and dabbled in BDSM on Saturday nights, instead, it was an integral part of who they were.

She wondered which one she was.

Did she just want to dabble on weekends? Did she just want an occasional spanking? Or did she want BDSM to be a constant part of her lifestyle?

Celia didn't look unhappy.

And half the people Alana worked with did. They were always counting the days until Friday. Wednesday was hump day, half way through the week. Then they came back on Monday morning, tired, depressed, dragging through until Wednesday to start the hump day celebration again.

In fact, she had been there, herself.

Was it enough?

And if it wasn't, how would she adapt to a different kind of life?

Without being told, Celia turned her feet slightly inward, and, from this vantage, Alana appreciated why Ethan instructed to do it. Not only were Celia's thighs more accessible to a whip, but her body looked lovely.

Alana was anxious to tell Ethan what she'd learned.

"Show me your safe signal, Celia," Ethan said.

She raised her hand.

Ethan kept his left hand balanced on his cane, and he accepted a tawse from Thomas. "I'll warm you up," he told the sub, "and then the beating will commence."

She wiggled her ass, but Alana could see it wasn't in protest like her wiggling would have been. It was more like Celia was preparing herself to welcome the lash.

Alana watched, fascinated, as her Master gently used the tawse on Celia's thighs and rear end. She barely moved, and Alana could swear she heard Celia sigh in satisfaction.

Her body became heated, but she never released her light grip on the sides of the bench.

"Are you ready?"

In response, she turned her toes a little more inward and she rose up just a bit, exposing more of her pussy to view.

Alana noticed that David stared transfixed at his wife. He sipped his brandy, and, even from here, she noticed that his dick was hard. Celia was in for a fun evening, and Alana was a little jealous.

Thomas came over and stood next to Alana. He fisted his hand in her hair, making sure she watched the entire event. As if she could do otherwise.

"Ten of his best," Thomas said quietly.

Then the tawse cut through the air.

Celia jerked. Alana gasped.

"Quiet," Thomas whispered.

The second stroke landed on Celia's right thigh. She jerked again before settling. She hadn't made a single sound, though.

Ethan was being intentional with every stroke he delivered, Alana realised after the fourth fell. He'd started low on her thigh, and he alternated sides as he moved higher.

The fifth caught that tender space where her thigh met her buttocks.

Then, startling everyone, he landed one right on her cunt.

She dropped her position for a fraction of a second while she absorbed the blow.

David stroked his cock while he watched. And Ethan traced a fingertip from the plug to her pubic bone.

"Your wife's pussy is wet, David."

"She's a pain slut," he said.

Ethan went back to work, and he concentrated the next few hits in the same general area, on the fleshiest part of her butt cheeks.

He landed the ninth again below her cheeks, searing both thighs at the same time.

He finished up the way he'd done the middle stroke, by placing a lightning hot, lightning fast stroke to her exposed pussy.

She pressed backwards a bit, silently inviting him to continue if he wished.

Alana definitely had a few things to learn.

His hand gripping her hair more firmly, Thomas said, "I suggest that our naughty Alana put some arnica on Celia's hindquarters so she doesn't bruise."

"Excellent idea," Ethan said. "Since that's what started the whole thing."

All eyes were now on Alana.

She thought she'd rather prefer being ignored.

She was very much aware of her naked body, the plug, and the fact she was going to have to touch another woman.

Thomas' hand was on her head, and he forced her to nod.

"Cream is in the sideboard," Thomas said. "See to her."

Ethan dropped the tawse and joined David in the wing chairs.

"Nicely done," David said.

"Always a pleasure."

Always a pleasure? Did that mean they did this often?

Her pulse thundering, she stood. She wasn't as graceful as Celia, not even close. But at least she didn't make a fool of herself.

Thomas released his grip, and she took a breath before finding the cream and squirting a dollop into her palm.

The men watched silently as she massaged the cream into the reddened, tender areas of Celia's thighs and ass cheeks. This close, she could smell the other woman's arousal, and she could see how wet she was. Celia had enjoyed every minute of the beating, no doubt.

"You may kneel," Ethan told Alana when she was finished. "Celia, you may stand and thank Alana for her attentions. First, though, will you gag her? Her gag is in the sideboard drawer."

Alana sought out Ethan's gaze. Was he serious? Instead of looking at her, though, he was looking at Celia.

This was Alana's ultimate test so far.

She was determined not to fail in front of all of these people.

Thomas unbuckled Celia's gag, and she didn't seem embarrassed at all by the drool. Instantly, she said, "Thank you, Master Ethan. I enjoyed that beating immensely."

"Behave yourself or you'll be getting another."

The woman actually grinned. Then she crossed to her own Master who wiped her face with a flannel Thomas had provided. Then she kissed his hand and told him, "Thank you for allowing Master Ethan to beat me."

"Oh, you'll pay later, wench."

"Thank you!"

Is that what the men meant by Celia being a pain slut?

Then, horrified, Alana watched while Celia went to the sideboard and grabbed a gag. All the men were watching as Celia stood behind Alana.

"Open your mouth."

Alana found no reassurance in Ethan's face, but she lowered her gaze and submitted to being gagged without causing a fuss.

"Good girl," Thomas said.

Celia buckled the strap one notch tighter than the Ethan had. It was uncomfortable, but she forced herself to concentrate on her breathing.

"Now thank her," David told Celia.

This time, this time, Alana was sure the floor would open up and swallow her. Celia laid on the floor and scooted between Alana's legs.

"Lower yourself," Ethan said.

Face flushing to match the detested gag, she did.

She felt the other woman's tongue on her clit and delving into her pussy. The men enjoyed the show, and she heard Ethan and David make a ten pound bet on how long it would take her to climax.

Celia dug her fingers into Alana's ass, spreading her cheeks,

Behind the gag, she cried out.

She looked at Ethan again, silently asking his permission to come.

He nodded.

In less than five minutes, her own libido in sensual overdrive from being plugged and from watching the beauty of Ethan's beating, Alana came, shamelessly, joyfully, grinding her cunt against Celia's face. Ethan won the bet. At this point, it wouldn't have mattered at all to Alana whose tongue was caressing her pussy. All she knew was that she was desperate to come.

"Kneel up," Ethan commanded.

Her thighs trembling, Alana struggled to follow his order. She felt as if she'd been drugged.

At David's command, Celia got up, too. She slapped Alana on the rear before following her Master from the room.

"That was entertaining," Thomas said.

"Indeed," Ethan agreed. "Now, Alana, I want you upstairs."

She was to be banished?

"My bedroom," he clarified. "I've not finished with you yet."

Her head spun. Ethan wanted her alone in his bedroom? Had she died and gone to heaven?

"Crawl up the stairs," he told her.

She blinked.

"Hands and knees," he clarified, "like a good little sub."

She stood and walked to the stairs, still plugged and gagged. And she was very much aware of him and Thomas as she went to the stairs and started to crawl up them.

"I like that plug in your arse," Thomas said.

"Sexy," Ethan agreed.

She heard him on the stairs behind her. "Last door on the left. And keep crawling. I like the way your bum wiggles."

She did as instructed, and she figured there was no use getting embarrassed by his gazes or words. He would only push her past it, anyway. Just when she thought she couldn't be any more humiliated than she'd already been, he dreamed up something new.

In his room, she crawled to the foot of the bed and then knelt.

"You're learning fast," he said.

She basked in his approval.

"Now crawl up on the bed. Arch your back, get your hips as high as possible, forehead on the mattress."

She cried out when he pulled out the plug. There was nothing gentle about his action.

Before she could brace herself, he pushed it back in.

All the way in, all the way out.

She couldn't take the pain, the sensation, the assault on her senses.

She tossed her head back and forth, but he was relentless.

Until, finally, he stopped. Alana froze. She remained perfectly still, hardly daring to breathe.

Then she heard the rip of a condom wrapper. Surely...

"Turn around and lube my cock," he said.

Her muscles feeling as though they were made of treacle, she turned around and took the tube of lubricant from him. She squirted a more-than liberal dose into her palm, and then she slid her hand up and down his thick cock, coating it.

Because of the gag, she couldn't ask what he intended to do, she could only guess. The problem was, she suspected she knew the answer, and she didn't like it.

"Back into position," he said. "But this time, reach back and spread your arse cheeks."

Her guess was right. And she hated it. But she had to trust him, no matter how terrifying that was.

Motions deliberate, she spread her anus wide for his penetration. He dragged her farther apart, obviously not satisfied with what she'd done.

She felt the tip of penis at her anal opening. After having the plug there, she was a little raw. "Push back," he told her.

No worries. And she'd pull a couple of stars from the sky while she was at it.

Breath strangling her, she moved back a bit, trying to accommodate the girth of his cock.

"Push," he told her again.

He sunk into her anus in a single, powerful thrust. He stopped once he was buried as deep as he could get, and she felt his balls against her. A cold sweat broke out on her back. She'd never felt like this before.

He moved his hands so that he grasped her hipbones.

"Relax," he told her.

Forcing herself, she did, dragging in a few gulps of oxygen, then slowly releasing them.

"Good."

He rode her hard. Anal penetration was a much more intense feeling than being taken vaginally. It licked at her insides like a fire.

She expected him to ejaculate inside her, but he didn't.

Instead, he stopped and pulled out. "I want you on your back," he said.

Limbs shaky, mind whirling a dozen different directions, she moved onto her back.

He pulled off his T-shirt and dropped it on the floor. For the first time, she really got a good, luxurious look at her trainer.

He was a specimen and a half. She could hardly wait to tell her girlfriends. From his dark hair to intense grey eyes, to the hardened set of his jaw, chiselled pecs, well-defined biceps, and broad chest with a smattering of hair that arched downward to his crotch, which was devoid of any hair. His balls were full and drawn-in, and his cock jutted towards her.

His thighs were powerfully muscular, and the puckered skin from his wound didn't do anything except make him look slightly dangerous. "I'm going to fuck you," he said. "I've wanted to do it all day."

She nodded, spreading her legs. She wanted this man.

He entered her like he'd taken her from behind, with a single stroke that drove him home.

Her vaginal muscles clenched around him as she tried to hold him tight.

Bracing on his elbows, he cradled her head. He kissed her forehead, and she desperately wished her mouth was available so she could kiss him.

"You've got the hottest pussy," he told her. "I could fuck you all night."

She wanted that, desperately.

He'd become more than a trainer to her. More than a Master to be obeyed. He'd become important to her. She wanted to please him, wanted to be with him.

"Wrap your legs around my waist," he said.

She did, willingly surrendering.

He thrust into her, and her pussy clutched as an orgasm built.

"Go ahead," he told her.

She was lucky. Most Masters that she'd read about were into orgasm denial, but not him, not tonight. She came twice while he rode her.

Then, finally, his large palms cradling her head, he came.

Behind her gag, she mumbled her thanks, her gratitude, her desire for this to go on and on.

He unbuckled the gag and tossed it aside, then he moved next to her, holding her tight while she thanked him.

She nuzzled against his neck, inhaling his masculine scent. Boldly, she placed a hand on his chest, feeling the fall and rise as he breathed.

She felt safe, protected.

This was post-coital bliss. She'd never experienced anything like the contentment that wrapped around her.

He wasn't like any other man she'd ever been with. He was an enigma, a wounded warrior, a force to be reckoned with. She was breaking a cardinal rule. She was falling for him.

She wondered if she'd survive it, wondered if she'd survive him.

"I think we should keep her," Thomas said.

"We don't keep trainees," Ethan responded, pouring a healthy dose of brandy into a snifter.

He'd joined Thomas in the drawing room about an hour after his very satisfying sub had drifted off to sleep. She'd snuggled against him, as if totally trusting him. Her blonde hair had spread across his chest, and he'd tangled his hand in it while she slept.

He'd been unaccountably restless. He'd wrapped her in a blanket, tucking its edges around her shoulders. Thoughts of her made him toss and turn. That was highly unusual for him. He slept like the dead, a trick he'd learned in the Army. You slept when you could as hard as you could.

He was thinking things about her that he had no reason thinking about.

Ethan had known shortly after Thomas had joined his staff that he needed the man in his life. Not just as an employee, but an integral part of his day-to-day living. He compensated him handsomely, but the cursed man just deposited his cheques into a joint account. Recently, he'd stop cashing them entirely, causing more than one argument.

And damn it, Ethan was starting to think of Alana in a more long-term way. He wanted her in his bed when he woke. Hell, apart from the bed being so god-damn small, he would enjoy waking up with both Alana and Thomas, all of them tangled.

In a move very unusual for him, Ethan had thrown back the covers on his side of the bed and he'd gotten back up.

Alana had turned over, and he'd smoothed back her hair and kissed her temple before slipping on a robe and coming back downstairs. He found Thomas reading the newspaper, sipping some of Ethan's fine cognac. Good taste when the Master was abed.

The scene struck him as very bucolic. Very normal. Very much the way he wanted his life.

Thomas shook out the newspaper, folded it precisely along its creases, and put it down.

"Maybe we should make an exception to the rule and keep this one." Thomas stood and dragged over the ottoman. When Ethan sat, Thomas gently picked up Ethan's leg and placed it on the ottoman.

He parted Ethan's robe and began to massage the place where the IED had taken its nasty toll. The rehab sessions were working. Three years ago, Ethan had been told he'd never walk again. And now, from time to time, he even managed without the cane. Part of that was due to Thomas' diligence in making him adhere to the physical therapy and to his constant ministrations.

All in all, Ethan was a very lucky man.

He felt Thomas' sure, deft touch, and he felt his cock, surprisingly, stir to life.

"She's getting to you, Ethan."

"You're getting to me," he corrected.

"She's a breath of fresh air."

"She's a sub to be trained and disciplined. I'll hear no more talk of her. We have a contract."

Thomas was nothing, if not persistent. "It will be quiet when she's gone."

He grabbed his manservant, his friend, his lover by the hair. "It will be quiet when my cock is down your throat."

Thomas smiled. "Aye, it will."

He placed his brandy on a cocktail table. Then, with inexorable pressure, he forced Thomas' head onto his cock. Something had to drive thoughts of alluring Alana with her tangled riot of hair and startling green eyes from his mind. God knew, nothing else had worked.

Chapter Thirteen

“Are you ready?”

Alana couldn't believe it. The fortnight had flown past. She hated for the time to end. Last night, repeating the pattern of the last ten days or so, she'd gone to bed with Ethan, but she'd woken up with Ethan and Thomas.

Now, Thomas had come to collect her from the room she'd been assigned on her first day.

She was shaven and waxed. She'd had an enema, and she'd done it without being too much of a baby about it. “As ready as I'll ever be,” she said.

“Lie on the floor.”

She did and as she'd been trained, spread her legs.

With his fingertips, he skimmed the inside of her labia, inspecting for any stray hairs.

He wouldn't find any.

About a week ago, he'd used a pair of tweezers to remove one she'd missed. That was a lesson she wouldn't soon forget.

“Turn over and present your arse.”

She followed his orders with the same respect she gave to Ethan's. This hunk of a man who'd collected her from the airport didn't command her often, but when he did, there was no room for prevarication. He was as formidable as Ethan himself.

She moved around, getting onto all fours, then she crossed her arms and rested her forehead on them. He spread her cheeks apart and checked for stray hair there, as well.

“Very well done,” he said. “You've had an enema?”

“Yes, Thomas.”

“Ethan has instructed you to wait for him in the play room. You may stand.”

Her mouth dried. This was the day he'd talked about, that he'd promised her, that had kept her awake at night.

It was the culmination of all her training. A full-on assault of her senses would occur, testing her limits, and more importantly, Ethan's training of her.

She nodded.

He stepped aside.

"You're not coming?"

"Later," he said. "For now, you're on your own."

Test one.

They knew how much she hated to be ignored. Thomas wasn't accompanying her, and Ethan wouldn't be there when she got downstairs. "He's diabolical," she said.

"You can't even begin to imagine."

Giving into impulse, she rose onto her tiptoes. She kissed Thomas' cheek. "You've made this more than bearable. Thank you."

"You have learned your manners," he said.

"Cheeky bastard."

He swatted her butt.

She wrapped her arms around his neck and pressed her naked self against his fully clothed, very masculine body. "Fuck me," she said.

"No chance in hell while Ethan is waiting. I like having my skin attached to my body."

"He'd flay you alive?" she teased.

"Well, one could hope, I suppose."

She grinned. "I'm nervous."

"You should be."

Alana stuck out her tongue. "That wasn't reassuring."

"Wasn't meant to be."

She took a breath.

"You've survived everything," he reminded her. "Go on."

She kissed him on the lips. She felt his erection push against her stomach.

"Alana," he warned. Reaching behind him, he disentangled her hands.

"I can't entice you to be naughty?"

"Oh, yes." His eyes had darkened, his cock had hardened. He wanted her as badly as she wanted him. "But not when I'm following Ethan's orders. Furthermore, you should stop stalling, as well. It is your lovely arse that's on the line, after all."

Full of nerves, she went down the stairs.

There was no trace of Ethan or Celia.

Apart from Thomas, she could be all alone in the rambling manor.

Her insides were a knotted mess when she reached the play room. The hated table had been pushed to one side, but in the middle of the room stood a large Saint Andrew's Cross. Generally, they didn't frighten her.

She'd been strapped to one at the bondage club she'd visited in the past year. To tell the truth, she loved being spread wide for her Dominator's pleasure. And since she was tied with leather or rope and she didn't have to force herself to stay in position, it allowed her to really let go and enjoy her punishment.

But that was different.

At the club, there were very specific rules, and she'd been wearing some clothes. Not many, but her rear had been covered by a leather miniskirt. It had absorbed most of the blow from the belt Tony had used. And, because Tony was a little protective, she'd been wearing a thong beneath her skirt.

Here, with Thomas and Ethan, she'd be allowed no clothes to lessen the impact of the punishment, and her cunt would be exposed and vulnerable, too.

She knelt gracefully. She was still not as practiced as Celia, but her motions were a lot easier than the day she'd arrived almost two weeks ago.

She kept glancing at the clock on the wall.

Funny, she hadn't noticed a clock the few other times they'd played in here. They'd probably had it installed so she was aware of the passing of time.

They kept her waiting more than half an hour.

She shifted positions.

She considered going to find them, but she knew this was part of the test.

After three quarters of an hour, she heard voices down the hallway.

Her pulse picked up.

Surely now...

Another five minutes, and... Nothing.

She wasn't sure how much more of this she could take without going mad.

Every muscle screamed in protest, and her mind had started working on itself. They'd forgotten her. They never intended to come for her. They'd decided not to play with her.

There was other, more important stuff to attend to, and she was at the bottom of the priority list.

She'd give it another ten minutes, she decided, before breaking her position.

"Every single thing in this room is a test," Ethan said.

She looked up. She could read nothing in his eyes. He was as implacable as a stranger. This wasn't the man who'd held her last night, this was her Master, and this was her greatest test.

Alana was determined not to fail herself, and she was doubly determined not to fail him.

"Please stand with your legs shoulder width apart and grab your ankles."

Meeting his gaze, she swallowed deeply and did as he said. Since her muscles were so tired from kneeling so long, standing was easier said than done.

"Is your pussy wet?"

Hanging upside down, she answered, "A little, Master." She heard the click of his cane on the floor. Then, once he was behind her, he dipped a finger into her vagina.

"You remember your safe word?"

"Hacker."

"And your signal?"

She showed him.

He stroked her, making her more and more moist. Then he drew some of the dampness backwards, towards her anal whorl.

Though she didn't protest, this, too, was a test. She never liked the initial insertion of anything into her ass. It always felt uncomfortable.

This was in her letter, she remembered.

"Ask me to insert a finger in your anus."

He probed at her tightest hole, an entrance no one had ever penetrated until she'd come to England. "Please," she breathed, offering trust as well as doing what she was told. "Fuck my ass with your finger."

"Good girl."

As always, his words of approval sent her soaring. They felt liberating, as if she were free to be who she wanted to be.

Ethan understood her so completely.

He drew moisture from her front and pulled it back, using it as lubricant to enter her anally.

"If I were putting my cock in your rear," he said, "we'd use lube. But since it's just a finger..."

She moaned when he tried to enter. "Fuck me," she demanded. She expelled a breath, and he seized the opportunity, reading her perfectly.

In rhythm, he finger fucked her in both places.

"You like it?"

"Yes." Yes, she liked it. Yes, she wanted more.

"Do you want to orgasm?"

He kept up that searing double penetration.

"Yes, please. Please let me come, Master. Please. Let. Me. Come."

"No." He stopped the motion entirely and pulled his hands away from her.

"Thank you," she said.

He smacked her right cheek. "You are a well-mannered slut."

"Thank you," she said again, hoping he didn't notice the words emerged somewhat disingenuously and through gritted teeth.

"You're welcome. Now, play with your tits. Your nipples need to be nice and hard for the clamps."

Everything, he'd told her. Today would be a culmination of everything she'd experienced. Those things she liked, and especially those things she didn't.

He went behind the beautifully lacquered screen and emerged pushing the silver metal tray that generally accompanied the gynaecological table. He kept the tray mostly hidden from her view, just to add to the torment, she was sure.

She cradled her breasts in her palms, then pushed them together and squeezed her nipples against her forefinger, exerting pressure with her thumb.

"Like this," he said, moving her hands aside.

He pulled on her right nipple, distending it, then painfully pinching it. Her eyes teared up. Then he released one of the clover-style clamps onto it.

"Thank you," she managed.

He repeated the process with her left nipple.

The clamps were a relief after the pressure he exerted with his grip.

He tugged on the chain linking the clamps, making her blink to force back the tears.

When he gave a particularly nasty yank, she said, "Thank you, Master!"

Once she'd remembered her manners, he backed off the intensity.

Now that was a lesson worth remembering. Too bad she wasn't a quicker study. She could have saved herself a lot of pain over the last fourteen days.

He brought over a collar. And it wasn't a pretty little thing. It was a stout piece of black leather. Serviceable, but not attractive.

"Lift your hair."

She did.

It was all she could do not to be overcome by him. He smelled so good, looked so good with tight jeans, and, today, a dove grey shirt that made his eyes even more compelling.

When he tugged on the collar, making it tight, but not uncomfortably so, Alana gave in to her deepest, darkest urges and turned her head to kiss his hand. "Thank you for collaring me."

"You'll make some Master a fine sub," he said.

The reminder that he was going to send her away stopped her heart momentarily.

He attached a lead to her collar. Again, it wasn't pretty, it was something like you'd use for a medium sized dog.

The emotional realisation that she didn't want to go back to Florida was more overwhelming to her than any physical or mental punishment he'd ever mete out.

"That rolling stool in the corner," he told her, "bring it to me."

Forcing herself to concentrate on the here and now, not the empty future, she rolled the stool towards him.

"Over my knee, sub."

She placed herself appropriately, balancing with her fingertips. Her nipple clamps pulled downward, exerting even more pressure. She needed something to distract her from the pain, quick.

"Thomas?"

Thomas? When had he arrived in the room? And how had he done it without her noticing?

“Do you mind giving the sub a few spanks?”

“My pleasure.”

Her mind reeled.

This had been one of her fantasies, Ethan holding her prisoner while Thomas spanked her.

The first spank took her breath away. He was much more harsh than she anticipated. But she thanked him regardless.

His bare hand worked her over, and as her rear got heated, she noticed that she became more and more wet. Surely the men could smell her the way she'd smelled Celia after her beating.

She was shameless.

She wriggled her ass, silently asking for more.

“Enough,” Ethan said after a dozen open-handed slaps. “Alana? What do you say?”

“Thank you, Thomas.” Then, hardly believing her own ears, she said, “How about another dozen.”

“Hussy,” Thomas said with a laugh.

“Tip yourself a little farther forward. Spread your thighs a bit more.”

Afraid she would fall, but, on a deeper level, trusting Ethan completely, she manoeuvred into the position he'd chosen.

“Your cunt is going to be clamped.”

She literally bit into her tongue. She hadn't excluded it from her list, she remembered, but nor had she thought he'd actually do it.

“Be brave,” Thomas said.

As if he'd be brave if she attached a pair of metal teeth to his scrotum.

While Ethan kept a palm firmly pressed between her shoulder blades, Thomas crouched between her legs and plumped her labia with small pinches.

“The tension on these isn't quite as tight as the ones on your nipples. They'll burn a bit, but they'll pull down on your lips, making them look gorgeous.”

She didn't even want to take his word for that.

“Ready?” Thomas asked.

“Do it.”

“I’ll take that as an unequivocal yes.”

It was closer to a *hell no*.

It hurt, but it was more of a dull ache than actual pain. And that made it quite a nice surprise.

Then she felt a plug at her anal whorl. Ethan had told her not to wear one for the past three days to give her a rest. Thankfully, though, with the way it slipped in Thomas’ grip, she knew he’d put lots of lube on it.

As he rocked it forward, then pulled it out, her nipple and labial clamps tugged, distending those delicate parts.

There wasn’t a part of her body that didn’t feel inflamed.

And then, she tasted rubber. While Thomas was inserting the plug, Ethan was forcing a gag into her mouth.

“Breathe,” Thomas coached.

But her torment wasn’t finished. Ethan put a blindfold over her eyes. It wasn’t one like Tony had used that she could see beneath if she tipped her head just right. This engulfed her in darkness.

A moment of panic engulfed her and she struggled.

“You can do it,” Ethan told her.

She grabbed onto the sound of his voice as if it were a lifeline.

She repeated his words again and again until she could breathe normally.

They’d calculatingly increased the amount of things she was simultaneously subject to. She could no longer form a coherent thought.

“Thomas will take you to the cross,” Ethan told her.

Then, finally, clamped, plugged, blindfolded, collared, leashed, gagged, the men helped her to her feet.

She felt fingertips against her spine. Thomas, she knew. It had to be. His fingertips were callused, Ethan’s were not. The clamps on her cunt made it impossible for her to take anything more than small, shuffling steps.

"You're doing well," he said against her ear. Louder, he said, "Stop. Now, one more step forward."

She'd never been more disoriented in her life. Her breaths came quicker and quicker.

"You'll hyperventilate if you keep that up," Thomas said. "Take deep breaths."

When she'd regained her composure, Thomas said, "Give me your right arm."

She had to consciously think which was her right arm. Thomas helped her. He gripped her wrist and pulled it up, securing it to the cross.

"Now the left," he said, fastening her in place.

In moments, he had both of her legs affixed to the cross as well.

"You'll receive four strokes with my belt," Ethan said. "Then four more with a paddle."

Him telling her what to expect was a mercy some subs didn't receive.

"Then I'll finish you off with another four from my belt. Spread the fingers on your right hand if you understand."

She did.

"Thomas will count them for you."

Instead of the expected blow from the belt, she felt Thomas' hands on her upper and inner thighs, then on her rear as he vigorously rubbed her skin.

"Now then," Ethan said.

He caught her first with an upper cut, just beneath her butt cheeks.

This whipping, she suddenly realised, wouldn't be purely for instruction. It was meant to push her.

Behind the blindfold, she blinked.

"Show me your safe sign."

She did.

He landed the second one in exactly the same spot. She jerked, making the clamps all pull on her painfully.

Only two more of them, though, she knew.

The sadistic bastard placed the next two in exactly the same spot.

Tears spilled from her eyes.

He switched to the paddle.

She heard its whoosh moments before she felt its stinging impact on the right side of her ass.

The next balanced it out on the left.

She jerked.

"You're not becoming aroused, are you?" Ethan asked.

She felt fingers probing between her legs.

Unbelievably, despite the pain, or maybe from it, she was wet.

Thomas, she didn't know if it was mercifully or unmercifully, played with her pussy, making her horny. The clamps swayed together even when he moved away, making her delirious.

She lost count of the next strokes or the fact Ethan had switched back to the belt.

All she knew was she was lost, flying, thinking of nothing but the moment.

She was snapped from her reverie when she felt Ethan's cockhead at her vaginal opening. She knew it was Ethan from his scent, from the way his thighs pressed into the back of hers, denim to hot, naked skin.

"Take me."

She couldn't, not with a plug filling her.

But he pressed into her. She moaned behind the rubber ball.

She was stuffed full completely, her mouth, her anus, her pussy.

She pressed back into him, trying to get him deeper.

She ached for his possession, yearned for her Master's touch.

He ejaculated before she did, shooting deep inside her.

She knew, in that instant, that she loved him. This man who pushed her beyond where she'd ever been before. He understood her, cared for her, gave her no quarter.

Vaguely, she was aware of the buckles being released. And Thomas caught her, holding her upright.

"Concentrate," he said quietly. "Stand up."

She forced herself to focus on his short, simple sentences.

"I'll release your gag last," he said, "simply because I can't stand to hear you moan when I take off the clamps."

Chicken. He was a complete chicken.

"Alright now, love?"

She nodded.

He released her, but her knees sagged anew when he took off the labial clamps.

"Plug," he said. "It'll be easier if you're squatting."

Not coherent enough to be indignant at the suggestion, she squatted. She sighed from the feeling of relief when he pulled out the monstrosity.

Using his forearm for balance, she stood again.

Next came the nipple clamps.

But Thomas was merciful, as he released each, he suckled on the smashed nub, and that somehow lessened the pain.

He released the blindfold next and she blinked furiously against the light.

She sought Ethan and quickly realised he wasn't in the room.

Thomas removed the gag, and she swallowed deeply. She still couldn't talk because her jaw ached, but Thomas surmised her first question, and he said, "Ethan will meet you upstairs."

Ethan. She wanted him, needed him.

Thomas offered her a towel, and she wiped her mouth. Then she put a hand on Thomas' face. "Thank you."

"You *are* learning." He grinned.

It took almost a minute before she felt she could walk under her own power. And she started up the stairs, gripping the banister for support.

She knocked on his door, and she entered to find him sitting in a chair, facing the door.

"Thank you," she said, sinking to her knees.

"You pleased me," he said. "You did well. Better than I could have hoped for."

She smiled.

"And you're proud of yourself? You should be."

"I..."

He pressed his palms together.

There was a lump in her throat all of a sudden. "I can't help but think I'll never find this again."

"Come here."

She stood and went to him. He imprisoned her head with his hands and kissed her deeply.

She felt adored and cherished.

Then, she was aware of other hands on her back, rubbing her. Thomas.

There was a heaven, and it was in Ethan's bedroom.

Wordlessly, Thomas carried her to the bed.

Ethan removed his clothes and joined them. "Mount me."

Joyfully, she did. She sank onto his cock, grinning. Then Thomas was behind her, cupping her breasts, delicately playing with her oh-so sensitive nipples.

"I'm going to fuck your arse," Thomas said against her ear, "while you ride the Master."

"If you could see her expression," Ethan said dryly.

Then both men were filling her, stretching her, making her cry out.

She'd never felt anything like it, two cocks relentlessly splitting her. There was nothing more overwhelming, more thrilling.

Ethan reached between them to play with her clit. With a shudder and a scream, she came.

Cradled between the two powerful men, she slept.

"You're still going to let her go?" Thomas asked.

"A deal is a deal," Ethan said. "We have a contract. Everything between a sub and Dom is sacred. I have to let her go."

"I'll be having a word with you, Ethan."

Ethan turned from his place at the window and raised his brows. He'd instructed Thomas to bring the car around for Alana's return trip to England.

But here she was.

Never before had Alana breeched the sanctity of his bedroom without an invitation.

"This is my letter," she said.

There was nothing respectful about the woman standing in front of him wearing her high heeled shoes and short skirt with a buttoned-up shirt and tightly fastened bra. This woman, with her flashing green eyes and hair about her shoulders was a force to be reckoned with, she wasn't a sub, she was the woman who'd fought through layers of his security and refused to take no for an answer.

This was the woman he'd fallen in love with.

She tore up the page and brazenly threw the pieces on the floor. She ground one of them beneath a stiletto heel.

Sexy.

"If that didn't make my point, maybe this will." She crossed the room and stabbed a finger into his chest.

Lord help him. He sat on the windowsill, no longer certain he could stand without the aid of his cane.

"I told Thomas not to bring around the car."

"You countermanded my order?"

"Damn straight."

And damn if that wasn't an American term that gave him a sudden hard-on.

She captured his head between her hands. "Now you listen here, Mister."

"I have a title," he reminded her, a smile teasing his lips. "A proper one."

"Not right now you don't. Your name is mud."

"That sounds serious."

She kissed him. Hard. Deep. Aggressively.

She tasted of determination and femininity in one alluring package.

He was done for.

"I've already told Thomas we're a threesome," she said when she ended their kiss.

"You have, have you?"

"And now I'm telling you. I. Am. Not. Leaving. I'm quitting my job, packing it in, as you might say. And you're stuck with me."

"We had an agreement."

She glanced at the tattered pieces of paper on the floor. "Now we don't."

"I'm your trainer."

"You're the man I love," she contradicted. "Well, you and Thomas. Thomas and you. Whatever."

"Whatever," he muttered.

She bit his lower lip.

"Cheeky sub."

She unbuttoned a button on his shirt. Not her own, but his. "Master me."

"That's a fulltime job."

"I take it the slut isn't leaving?" Thomas said from behind her.

"Turns out our sub still has a lot to learn," Ethan said.

"Indeed, Master."

She looked over her shoulder towards Thomas, then she looked back at Ethan. Despite her bravado, he noticed she trembled a little. This moment meant everything to all of them.

"Are you up for the challenge, Master, or shall I send her packing?"

Ethan saw her holding her breath, waiting.

"Why are you dressed?" He took hold of the front of her shirt and ripped downward, spitting buttons across the floor.

She gasped and then she smiled.

"We want you naked, sub, and your arse presented for punishment. Impertinent wench." There was so much more for them to teach her. And he intended to enjoy every moment. "We're not finished with you yet."

"I guess this means we're keeping her," Thomas said. The two men exchanged glances, and they grinned.

About the Author

Born in Northern England and raised in the Wild West, Sierra Cartwright pens books that are as untamed as the Rockies she calls home.

She's an award-winning, multi-published writer who wrote her first book at age nine and hasn't stopped since.

Sierra invites you to share the complex journey of love and desire, of surrender and commitment. Her own journey has taught her that trusting takes guts and courage, and her work is a celebration for everyone who is willing to take that risk.

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