



Perfect Timing

THE STROKE OF
Twelve
KIM DARE

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The Stroke of Twelve

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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*.

Perfect Timing

THE STROKE OF TWELVE

Kim Dare

Dedication

To new years, to new beginnings and to finding new solutions to age old problems.

Chapter One

Wednesday 6th October 2010

“At the stroke of twelve on this day, and on every Wednesday from now on, you will belong to me for one hour. Understand?”

Devon Ashford blinked at the man sitting on the other side of the desk. “What?”

“The appropriate answer is either ‘yes, sir’ or ‘no, sir’,” the older man informed him. “Answer the question. Do you understand?”

Devon gave a mental shrug. Okay, so the guy was kinky. He was also as hot as hell. For a man who looked like that, Devon was willing to learn to live with kinky. “Okay.”

The guy just stared across the desk at him.

Devon shuffled his trainers on the richly patterned rug. Kinky was fair enough, but standing in front of the big mahogany desk made him feel like he was back in school, in the headmaster’s office and waiting to be told how many hours he’d be sent to detention for. He pushed his hand through his hair, shoving the thick blond strands out of his eyes.

Finally, he realised what the other man was waiting for. Devon only just resisted the temptation to roll his eyes. “Yes, sir.”

The guy nodded, just once, as if to show he’d heard. That was it.

Devon pushed his hands into his jeans pockets and rocked back on his heels. At any other time, he wouldn’t have thought twice about striding quickly around the desk to make his intentions perfectly clear. With any other man, he wouldn’t have hesitated to straddle him in his fancy office chair and get the show going. But for some reason he couldn’t quite put his finger on, right then and with that man, the idea of assuming the initiative was ludicrous.

Glued to the spot where he’d been ordered to stand, Devon cleared his throat. “So...um...”

The man held up a hand.

Devon watched it for a little while, to see if it was going to do anything interesting, but it just stayed there, indicating he should remain silent.

The big grandfather clock in the hallway outside the office began to chime.

As it slowly tolled the noon hour, Devon studied the older man across the desk. He'd searched the corners of his mind over and over again during the last few days, but all he really remembered was a lot of vodka slammers and, somewhere between late on Saturday night and the early hours of Sunday morning, someone pushing a piece of paper into his hand.

There'd been no name, no number, just a time and an address. This time. This address.

Devon waited out the clock, since it seemed important to the other guy. While it chimed, he happily took the opportunity to study the other man in a way he'd been too drunk to do before.

He was obviously far older than Devon. His hair was dark, but it was already gaining just a touch of grey around his temples. Still, even while he was sitting behind the desk, it was clear that the other man was also much taller and broader across the shoulders than he was.

Devon wasn't going to complain about that. Stern lips, brooding brown eyes, square jaw...Devon quietly nodded to himself. The guy was definitely worth putting up with a bit of leather for.

As the last note from the clock's chimes faded from the air, he opened his mouth to ask exactly what the other guy was into.

The older man cut him off before he could utter a single syllable.

"Strip."

Devon forced out a slightly nervous laugh. "You don't waste any time once you get going, do you?"

The guy didn't so much as crack a smile.

"Don't I even get some music to strip to?" Devon joked, but even he couldn't manage to chuckle this time. Suddenly uncertain for no logical reason, he pushed his hands deeper into his pockets.

"Don't dance," the man told him. "Don't perform. If I want you to put on a show, I'll tell you. Just take your clothes off." His voice matched everything else about him perfectly, deep and rich and apparently created especially for giving orders.

Devon took his hands out of his pockets. He pushed one hand through his hair again, shoving the scruffy blond strands out of his eyes as he considered his options. It wasn't as if

either of them thought they were hooking up for anything but a midday quickie. They'd obviously be getting naked at some point, but still...

Thrusting his nerves aside, Devon grabbed the neck of his T-shirt and pulled it over his head. Dropping it to the floor at his feet, he glanced across the desk again. The man said nothing. Realising that going slowly from that point on would only make him more anxious, Devon kicked off his trainers. Quickly tugging off his socks, he tossed them on the pile. That only left his jeans and his boxers. Unbuttoning his fly, he pushed them down together and quickly stepped out of the tangled mess of denim and cotton.

Suddenly, all the confidence Devon had acquired since he'd turned eighteen, come out, and discovered that most guys really liked the way he looked—dressed or undressed—drained away. He didn't get the feeling the guy watching him was easily impressed by anything, not even a naked and willing twenty-three year old.

"Pick up your clothes, fold them neatly and place them on the table."

Devon glanced at the side table the other man nodded towards. He looked back to the guy. He was serious...he was bloody well serious!

Devon frowned. Hell, even if he wasn't delighted with what had rolled up onto his doorstep, it was just basic good manners for him to say something complimentary to the guy standing stark bollock naked in front of him.

Not knowing what else to do, something inside Devon latched on to the older man's order. Bending down, he picked up his clothes and carried them over to the side table. Quickly folding them up, he set them in a lopsided little pile before glancing over his shoulder.

"Back where you were," the older man ordered.

Devon returned to the spot where he'd originally been told to stand—right in the middle of the rug, facing the desk.

The man studied him vigilantly for several minutes. There was nothing particularly sinister or even licentious about his gaze. He looked remarkably detached, completely composed, like a scientist examining some damn bug under a microscope.

Devon's hands clenched into fists at his sides as he fought against a new-found instinct to blush and cover up his rapidly hardening cock. "You know, if you just wanted to look at a naked man, there are websites you could have gone to and saved me the taxi fare out here."

"Turn around."

Devon sighed. His clothes were already on the other side of the room. Since he was already pretty damn committed to whatever game the guy was choreographing, he figured he might as well play along and do as he was told for a little while longer—if only out of a morbid curiosity as to what would happen next.

He turned his back on the other man, but looked over his shoulder just a second later. “You never did tell me your name.”

“You may address me as sir.”

Turning back to him, Devon frowned, pale blond eyebrows coming together behind the long blond fringe. “You’re serious,” he realised.

“Perfectly.” At long last, the other man stood up and walked around the table to greet him. “For the next hour, you belong to me. You’ll do exactly as you’re told, without exception.”

Devon stayed rooted to the spot, watching him come closer, step by step.

“If I give you an order you understand, you’ll say, ‘yes, sir’. If I give you an order you don’t understand you’ll say ‘I don’t understand, sir’.”

The older man stopped and waited.

Devon tilted his head back and looked up at him. Damn, but he was a hell of a lot taller than he remembered him being through the haze of vodka. “Yes, sir,” he said, for lack of any other words in his head right then.

“Your name?” the older man prompted as he stepped between Devon and the high window on the other side of the desk. He was a good few inches broader than Devon remembered, too. His shadow seemed to reach for miles.

He blinked up at the other guy. Name. Yes. He had one of those. “Everyone calls me Sparks.”

Not even a flicker of a smile. “Is that what’s written on your birth certificate?”

Devon cleared his throat. “Devon Ashford. Ash, fire, sparks...um...yeah...”

If he got the play on words, the larger man didn’t seem particularly impressed by it.

“You’re not into anything really hardcore, are you?” Devon blurted out.

Without bothering to answer, the guy reached for his face and caught his chin between his thumb and forefinger. Firmly tilting his head back, he studied Devon for a long time, turning his face this way and that as if to catch the different angles of the light that flooded in through another window on the adjacent side of the room.

He ran his fingers over Devon's cheeks, where he hadn't bothered to shave the previous day's stubble away. His fingertips caressed the dark shadows under his eyes.

"You don't talk much, do you?" Devon said, desperately trying not to sound too nervous and failing miserably.

The guy turned his attention to Devon's hair. He ran his fingers through it as if studying the texture and debating if it was an acceptable standard.

"You're not part of that white slave thing they're on about on the news, are you?" Devon quipped.

Completely ignoring every sodding word, the older man ran his hands down Devon's throat, examining the skin there too. He had huge hands. They could easily span his neck.

Devon closed his eyes. Strangulation had to be a pretty painful way to go. It probably wasn't the most painful way though.

"What do you think is the most painful way to die?" Devon asked at random, unable to bear the silence in the room a moment longer.

The other man looked down at him, straight into his eyes. "I have no interest in killing you. You'd be no use to me dead."

"So, you do want to screw me then?" Devon asked, hopefully. Whatever he was into, something which actually involved sex had to make a damn sight more sense than anything that had happened since he'd walked into the office.

The man offered no response as his inspection moved on to Devon's shoulders.

"Raise your arms, extend them in a straight line to either side of your body, palms up."

Devon hesitated, but he'd put up with this much weirdness, he didn't really seem to have anything to lose by putting his arms out too.

Each limb was inspected individually. Long, strong fingers kneaded into the muscles all the way down his arms, not missing one single inch of skin along the way.

The inspection focussed around the veins inside his elbows for a long time. "I'm not using, if that's what you want to know," Devon said. "I don't do drugs – never have."

His words didn't make one jot of difference to anything.

Devon closed his eyes. In spite of all sense or reason, each strong, impersonal touch was going straight to his cock, making him harden a little more quickly with each moment that passed.

When Devon opened his eyes, he looked up, trying to read the other man's emotions. He didn't have much expression at all. He just seemed completely focussed on his task.

Devon tried to remember a time when anyone had ever looked at him that way, but he was sure no one ever had. Guys looked. But that was just a 'you're pretty, want to screw?' sort of looking. It was never like this.

Since the man seemed to be finished with whatever he'd wanted to do with his arms, Devon lowered them back to his sides, surprised how quickly his shoulders had started to feel sore just from holding that one position.

"I didn't tell you to move. Put your arms back where they were."

Their eyes met. Devon thought about telling the man to sod off and stop playing silly buggers, but, for some reason, the words just didn't come. He put his arms out to the sides once more, palms up, exposing his torso and practically inviting the man to continue his examination.

Devon nibbled on his bottom lip as the other man's hands made their way down his chest until they paused for several minutes to tease his nipples. Devon had never thought them particularly sensitive before. After thirty seconds with this guy tweaking and examining the little nubs of nerve ending, he was reasonably sure he could come just from that. He breathed a deep sigh of relief when the guy's inspection dropped lower without actually lingering long enough to tip him over the edge.

His abs were studied one by one. Devon instinctively tensed the muscles, trying to make his build appear to its best advantage. Even through the black suit he wore, Devon could tell the older man was far more heavily muscled than him.

The younger man shifted a little uncomfortably under the comparison. "I keep meaning to spend more time in the gym." He failed to be at all surprised when the older man ignored his latest attempt at conversation.

It wasn't as if the guy could miss the fact that Devon's cock was as hard as a rock. But he didn't make any comment on that as he trailed his fingers over his skin and reached the last of his stomach muscles. He skipped over his crotch altogether and dropped his assessment to Devon's legs.

As he watched the older man go over every inch of him, right down to the gaps between his toes and to lifting up each foot so he could examine the sole, Devon tried to think of something appropriate to say. Right then, he'd have settled for any words that broke

the silence, but his mouth was dry and his mind blank. All he could think about was those hands inspecting him and that at the end of all this, that the guy would inevitably pass some sort of verdict on everything he'd seen.

Finished with his legs, the man stepped behind him. "Feet shoulder width apart, bend over and put your hands on your knees."

Devon looked over his shoulder. Something in the back of his mind kept whispering to him, telling him that he really didn't have to do what this guy told him to. The other man didn't have any right to order him around or expect his obedience.

The sensible little voice was impatiently overruled by the part of him which screamed its desire to know what happened next—the same part that yelled out a reminder that his cock was hard and curving up towards his stomach. He might still get laid if he stuck around and played the game for just a little while longer.

Devon shuffled his feet apart and bent over, arching his back slightly to present his arse in the best possible manner.

Hands massaged his buttocks, kneading the firm muscles in a strong, confident grip. One hand moved to the small of his back and steadied him. The other disappeared for a moment, to come back, slicked, to press against his hole.

Devon tensed as the fingers teased against him, testing the ring of muscle to gauge how tight he was. It was stupid to be self conscious at the intimacy of it. It wasn't as if no guy had ever touched him before—as if dozens of men hadn't done the same at one time or another. Although, as the inspection slowly progressed, Devon couldn't deny just how different this was to anything he'd ever done with anyone else.

The guy's fingers finally slid inside him. Biting his lip, Devon tried to stay silent as they worked their way deeper into his arse, but the moment they found his prostate, he whimpered and instinctively tried to push back.

"Stay still, Devon. If I want you to move, I'll tell you to." The guy really did possess a magnificent voice, so low and stern. He sounded so serious about everything he said and so damn sure Devon would want to do as he commanded.

And he did try to do as the other man said, he tried like hell. But if the guy truly wanted him to stay still, he really needed to stop rubbing against his prostate that way. Devon murmured his approval, low in his throat as the fingers worked him to fever pitch. Just when it was starting to be enough, just as Devon thought he might actually be able to come from

that alone, and just as he decided that would be a really great thing to be able to do right then, the fingers disappeared from his world.

“Stand up straight. Hands behind your back,” the guy snapped.

Devon, his breath coming in rapid, frustrated gasps, straightened up and looked over his shoulder. “Okay,” he managed to say, reasonably calmly. “Kinky is fair enough but...” He trailed off as their eyes met.

The man held his gaze until Devon, of all the stupid things to do, blushed. Dropping his gaze, and desperate to do something to ease his confusion, he latched on to the other man’s order once more, put his hands behind his back and wrapped one hand around the other wrist to keep them in place.

A warm, strong hand reached out and palmed his testicles, rolling the tight sac within its grasp and examining it for several minutes. Devon bit his lip. He tried as hard as he knew how to stay still and quiet and allow the man do whatever he wanted with him.

In a way he didn’t understand, he really wanted the man to approve of him—to realise he was doing his very best to follow his orders. A few whimpers of frustration and moans of appreciation made it past his lips despite his best attempts, but the older man made no comment on them.

When his hand finally wrapped around Devon’s erection, the younger man almost dropped to his knees, half in grateful thanks and half because his legs suddenly decided they didn’t want to support him anymore.

Keeping him in hand, the larger man stepped behind Devon and allowed him to lean back against his body. He did so, grateful for anything that might keep him on his feet and his cock at the right height to keep receiving that touch.

The older man’s other hand steadied him at the waist as the fingers wrapped around his cock stroked him and toyed with him, pushing him close to the edge before pulling him back from the brink to try something else. Whenever he had Devon mere milliseconds away from coming, the guy stopped again. More and more pleasure rushed through the younger man’s body, until his head spun with it and the only thing keeping him upright was the guy giving all the orders.

Devon’s hands twitched between them, trapped between their bodies, unable to reach out and explore in return, unable to offer the other man anything but their obedience as they remained where the older man had ordered them to be.

Devon wasn't sure at what exact point he started to hold back, unsure if he was allowed to come regardless of how much he wanted to. Still, clinging to his self control only did him so much good once the older man finally settled on a rhythm he seemed willing to like for more than a few consecutive seconds.

Unable to do anything else, Devon thrust into the tight grip and came into the relative stranger's hand. The older man stroked him all the way through his orgasm as Devon pressed back against him, half collapsing against the more muscular frame.

Finally the other man's hand stilled.

As Devon's breathing evened out a little and he started to be able to think of something other than his own cock, he realised he could feel the other guy's erection digging into him, just to one side of where his hands crossed behind his back. He tried to bring his mind back together and focus on what that meant.

The moment he straightened up and took all his own weight back onto his feet, the guy stepped away from him. Devon tried not to regret the loss as cold air replaced the warmth of another man's body.

"That was..." Devon trailed off. Bizarre was what it was. The fact it was strangely erotic didn't change the fact it was still very, *very* strange. Not sure he'd like the answer, he found himself asking anyway. "What do you want me to do for you?"

The older man walked calmly back to the other side of the desk. Devon took a step forwards, guessing he was going to be on his knees in front of the guy's chair at any moment.

"Next Wednesday, your hour will start at twelve o'clock exactly. The door will be unlocked at five minutes to the hour. I don't tolerate tardiness. Close the door behind you on the way out."

"What?" Devon blinked at him. In the background he could hear the faint sound of the grandfather clock starting to strike the hour once more. "That's it? You just..."

The man stared across at him, not one hint of frustration visible in his expression.

Devon frowned as he dropped his gaze, wondering if he'd done something to suddenly put the man off. By the time he looked up, the man had turned his attention to the paperwork spread out across his desk.

Devon stood naked in the middle of the man's office for several minutes, watching him go through the files.

He had to say something, the only question was what. "You're sure you don't want to do anything else?"

The other man looked up. "When I want something, I'll tell you."

A few more minutes passed. Devon slowly walked across to his clothes and scrambled into them. His fingers shook slightly as he shoved his feet into his trainers. He glanced back to the man behind the desk as he made his way out of the room, but right then he didn't know what else to do except follow the last order the man had given him.

He closed the door behind him on the way out.

* * * *

Wednesday 13th January 2010

Devon pushed back his sleeve and glanced at his watch. Pushing his hands deeper into his coat pockets he walked a little faster. Turning the corner into a quiet side street in the oldest part of town, he walked swiftly up the drive leading to the offices of Templeton, Crawford and Associates.

"You're an idiot, Devon," he whispered under his breath. There was no doubt about that fact in his mind. Only a complete pillock would put up with all the bull he'd gone through the previous Wednesday, then go back for more a week later.

Reaching the front door, he attempted to turn the old-fashioned brass handle. It wouldn't budge. Devon gave the door a gentle shove with his shoulder. Nothing.

Frowning at the black painted woodwork, he looked at his wristwatch again. It was already a few minutes past twelve. If the man was going to insist on stopping at one o'clock again, then their time together was rapidly running out.

Devon reached for the doorbell. The guy had probably just forgotten to unlock it. The faint sound of the bell ringing inside made it through the door. Rocking on his heels, he waited for someone to answer it. After a few minutes he glared at the bell and rang it again.

Maybe the older man had forgotten about their appointment. Devon's teeth nipped worriedly into his bottom lip. He may have only known the guy for an hour, but he was already sure he wasn't the type to forget things. Taking a few steps back, Devon peeked around the side of the building. A path led towards the back of the offices. He followed it

around until he reached a window that looked into the same room he'd spent an hour in a week earlier.

Gazing through the glass, Devon's gaze fell on the same guy sitting at the same desk he'd been fantasising about being screwed across all week. He watched the...the dominant he supposed he was, through the window for a few seconds before tapping on the glass.

There was no way the guy didn't hear the light rap on the pane, but all he did was glance once at his wristwatch and turn his attention back to his paperwork.

Just because he was a few minutes late?

Devon stared silently through the window. He was a few minutes late and the guy wasn't even going to let him into the building? That was...

Gritting his teeth, Devon spun around and stormed away from the window. He kept going, around the office, down the drive and along the street. At the far end of the road, he stopped and looked back for a moment.

Shaking his head, he turned away once more. This time, he kept going.

He wasn't going to be treated like that. If the guy was that petty he could find some other idiot to play stupid games with.

Mr. Andrew Templeton kept his eyes fixed firmly on his paperwork, until he could be sure the boy was completely out of sight of the window. When he finally looked up, he gazed through the glass without really seeing anything that was on the other side of it.

If Devon was anything like the man Templeton thought he might be, if the potential he saw in the younger man really did exist, he'd be back. And if he didn't come back...

Holding back a sigh, Templeton turned his attention back to his work. If Devon didn't come back, there was little he could do about it. It was impossible for anyone to fulfil a need that didn't actually exist in a man.

Chapter Two

Wednesday 20th January 2010

Devon glanced at his watch yet again. His arm was starting to get tired from him lifting it to look at the damn thing so often.

Ten minutes seemed to be a good compromise. If he turned up more than ten minutes early, he'd look pathetic. He shuffled his feet on the slightly uneven pavement while he waited at the end of the road until the longest hand moved just a little further around the dial.

Arriving more than ten minutes early would imply he didn't have anything else to do with his time. It might be true, but he didn't need to bloody well advertise the fact. Nor did he need to make it completely obvious that he'd been thinking about the guy almost non-stop for the last fortnight. There was no need for him to shout out just how much he hoped that he hadn't screwed up whatever the hell it was that might happen between them on Wednesdays at noon.

Fifteen minutes would be desperate. Five would imply he was unrepentant. Ten minutes said, sorry I was late last time – let's put that behind us and have sex.

Exactly ten minutes before noon, Devon stood outside the front door to Templeton, Crawford and Associates. The guy had said he'd open it at five minutes to the hour. He hadn't said knock, or ring, or walk around the back. Devon had run everything the other man had said to him over and over in his head for fourteen days. He was pretty sure the guy was the type to be very specific in his orders.

At exactly five minutes to the hour, the sound of a key being turned in the lock floated through from the other side of the door. When the glossy black surface didn't move and the door failed to swing open on its own, Devon risked a tiny bit of initiative.

He turned the handle and peeked into the hallway.

No one was there, but the door leading into the office was open. Devon walked in and stood in front of the desk, just as he'd been ordered to once before.

The older man looked up.

Devon cleared his throat. "I'm sorry I was late last time." He was sure he hadn't intended any other words to attach themselves onto the end of the sentence, but one did. "Sir."

The dominant nodded, just once, and went back to his paperwork.

Devon waited and tried not to fidget.

Eventually, the clock began to strike the hour. The other man stood up and walked around the desk to face Devon.

"At the stroke of twelve on this day and on every Wednesday from now on, you belong to me for one hour. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"There are to be no repeats of last week's mistake," he went on.

"No, sir," Devon agreed quickly.

"Very well then. Strip."

Devon took off his clothes without wasting any time. Eager to show how much he'd learnt from his last visit, he folded his clothes as neatly as he knew how, and placed them on the side table. Then he returned to the spot where he'd stood before.

He looked to the other man in the hope of approval and received another nod. The guy walked slowly around him, studying him with no less intensity than on his previous visit.

"Am I allowed to ask you a question, sir?"

"If you want to ask me something, the correct form is, 'may I know', followed by whatever it is you wish to query. Asking if you can ask something is contradictory."

"May I know if you are Templeton, Crawford or Associates, sir?"

"For what purpose?" The older man idly trailed a line down the centre of Devon's back with his fingertips as he spoke.

"I..." Devon stalled as one finger traced further down the crease between his buttocks. He took a deep breath and tried again. "I'd like to know your name, sir."

"That's important to you?"

Devon closed his eyes and tried to stay still as the fingertip's touch reached the top of his spine before beginning to descend again.

"Yes, sir."

"Would I be the first man you've had sex with without knowing his name?"

Unable to work out what the right answer would be, Devon had little choice but to opt for the truth. "No, sir, you wouldn't be the first."

"Then why does it matter?"

Words rushed to the tip of Devon's tongue, but he bit them back. It mattered because *he* mattered, because the hour he'd spent in that office two weeks earlier was different to any other hour he'd ever spent with anyone else. "You're different, sir," he finally whispered.

"Mr. Templeton," the other man said from behind him, as his finger trailed down Devon's spine once more.

"Thank you, sir." It was astonishing how easily the honorific slipped from between his lips now, how instinctive it seemed to be. Still, as natural as everything felt between them, Devon had given himself a stern talking to since last time. "May I also know if you intend to give me a safe word, sir?"

"If you want to say no, say no. If you want to leave, say so and I won't try to stop you. You don't need a safe word."

Devon nodded, suddenly embarrassed he'd ever asked for such a thing. "Yes, sir."

Mr. Templeton's fingertips left him as he walked around to face Devon and made him look up. "If the question was inappropriate, I'd have told you so."

Devon nodded again.

"Bend over that desk, legs apart, hands behind your back. Make yourself as comfortable as you can. You'll be there until the end of the hour."

Devon looked to the desk the other man indicated. There were so many different things he felt like he should ask, but the words wouldn't come to his lips right then. Mr. Templeton had told him what to do. In some way it felt as if that was all he really needed to know.

Stepping up to the edge of a smaller mahogany desk on the opposite side of the room, Devon bent over it, settling himself quickly against the green leather inlaid into the surface. He was already more than half hard. With his cock trapped between the desk and his body, every movement he made as he spread his legs and placed his hands behind his back sent a peak of pleasure rushing to his shaft and made him stiffen further.

Devon closed his eyes and took a deep breath as he rested his cheek on the desk top. They were just going to have sex. There was nothing scary about that. There was no reason to be worried.

None of those facts stopped his nerves from doubling over and over again while Mr. Templeton left him there, waiting, with no control over what would happen next.

With his head lowered to rest on the leather, it was impossible for Devon to see what was happening behind him. He could hear Mr. Templeton moving about, but the sounds meant nothing to him in the unfamiliar room. A scrape of wood against wood could have been a drawer being pulled out. Or it could have been a chair being dragged against the floor. Hell, for all Devon knew the guy had set up a damn woodworking shop on the other side of the office.

Lost in his own thoughts, Devon yelped as a large, strong hand came to rest on his shoulder.

"Sorry, sir." Heat rushed to his cheeks at the silly mistake.

Mr. Templeton didn't say a single word in response. He just stroked his hand down Devon's body, the flat of his palm hot and solid against his bare skin. The touch soothed something inside Devon as he lay over the desk, telling him that everything was under the older man's control, that he didn't have to worry about anything but doing as he was told – and that it was a good thing.

The dominant's other hand slipped between Devon's buttocks and started to play with his hole as his fingers deftly prepared him. Slick digits slid into Devon again and again until the tight ring of muscle relaxed and welcomed the intrusion, eager for every caress.

Behind his back, Devon's own hands grasped at thin air, desperate to reach out for the other man but sure that no such touch would be welcomed. Without even being told, he knew that would be a privilege he'd have to earn. He squirmed against the table, rubbing his cheek against the leather beneath him as pleasure built up inside him and he realised he had no way to release it.

The older man's fingers slid out of him, leaving him empty and impatient. Devon was half sure it was all a bloody tease again. Then he heard a condom wrapper tear. A moment later, the blunt pressure of an erection pressed against his hole.

Placing his hand on Devon's shoulder once more, Mr. Templeton steadied him as he pushed into him very slowly, obviously making damn sure he felt every inch of his long, hard shaft sliding into him, stretching him wide open and filling him perfectly.

As he felt Mr. Templeton's hips settle against his buttocks, Devon let out a contented little sigh against the leather-topped desk. Somehow the older man kept his rhythm incredibly slow, impossibly steady as he pulled back and thrust into him again and again.

Devon bit down hard on his lip, desperately trying not to ask for more, no matter how much he wanted it.

Eventually, the build up of pure pleasure was more than he could take. It became a choice between speaking or moving without permission. "Please, sir," he whispered, hoping like hell he was picking the lesser of two evils.

The dominant made no response. He changed nothing about his deep, determined thrusts.

Devon whimpered his frustration as his hands fisted behind his back and his fingernails bit into his palms.

Very gradually, someone, somewhere answered Devon's prayers. The older man's rhythm started to speed up. Stroke by stroke he started to push into him harder and faster, rubbing the length of his shaft against his prostate on every movement, making him whimper and squirm as far as the other man's grip would allow.

The faster thrusts rocked him against the desk, rubbing his cock against the wood and leather. Devon's breaths sped up, his pulse raced, his cock screamed for release. As frantically as he tried to hold back, Devon's will cracked under the onslaught of sensations. He jerked under Mr. Templeton's hands and came, semen spreading beneath him, coating his stomach and the leather beneath him as his hips pumped against the hard edge of the desk.

Mr. Templeton thrust into him all the way through his orgasm, not even faltering as Devon's hole clenched and relaxed helplessly around the other man's shaft. Some minutes later, as Devon lay across the table, trying desperately to catch his breath and order his scattered thoughts, he felt Mr. Templeton come inside him.

A steadying grip on his shoulder, and the other on his hip, tightened for a moment as Mr. Templeton buried himself as far as he could inside Devon with one final harsh thrust, then fell still, with barely a sound.

A minute passed and he pulled away. Devon stayed where he was, grateful for a few extra moments of rest before he had to get up and try to make his brain work. He listened to

the sound of Mr. Templeton dispensing with the used condom and straightening his clothes with an almost otherworldly sense of calm, and waited patiently for the order to move.

The command didn't come.

The sound of the older man moving around the room behind him floated across to Devon, but there were no words. Then complete silence fell. He started to wonder if he was alone in the room, if Mr. Templeton had just walked away and left him to be discovered by the first secretary to return from her lunch break. His heartbeat began to speed up as he wished like hell that he'd rested his other cheek on the desk and given himself a better view of the room.

The first indication that someone was still there was a sudden firm pressure against his hole. Devon tensed. It hadn't been that long. He was still soft. There was no way in hell Mr. Templeton should be ready for another round.

A hand settled in the small of his back, as if in silent reassurance. Devon glanced behind him as well as he could from his position, but he knew who he'd see there. Even after such a short acquaintance, he'd know his touch anywhere.

The pressure against his hole increased until something slid slickly inside him. A butt plug. Devon relaxed a little. Barely a moment later, he tensed all over again, as it started to vibrate, sending a shiver through his spine and coursing out into every bit of his body. Mr. Templeton pressed against the base of the plug, jostling it inside him as he adjusted the setting. It whirled away faster. Devon bit his lip as he heard the dominant walk away.

A few seconds later, paper rustled. Devon closed his eyes as the vibrations continued to purr away inside him and coaxed him to slowly harden against the sticky table while the other man calmly went back to work.

He desperately wanted to move, to ease the soreness in his joints and work out the tension building in his muscles, but he found himself waiting for permission, waiting for an order from Mr. Templeton before he could do anything at all.

The room remained silent except for paper moving against paper or the occasional flurry of clicking keys on a keyboard, and Devon stayed where he was, listening to Mr. Templeton work. He'd almost forgotten there was a world outside the room when he suddenly heard the clock in the hallway begin to chime in the next hour.

"You may rise and get dressed," Mr. Templeton said when the clock had finished its proclamation.

Devon obediently began to lift himself away from the table. Every muscle in his body ached from maintaining that position, but, for some stupid reason, he found himself trying to hide the fact as best he could. A few stiff muscles weren't as important as the older man's approval. The last thing he wanted was for Mr. Templeton to think he couldn't hack whatever game it was they were playing together.

Devon straightened up and brought his arms back in front of him. Pain flared along his shoulders. Already hard again, he wasn't entirely sure if he should try to hide that fact too, or if Mr. Templeton would be pleased that the vibrations of the plug made him bounce back so quickly.

He hesitated for a moment, wondering if Mr. Templeton expected him to remove the plug before he left. But, since no mention was made of it, he could only assume he was supposed to keep it in place, still purring away inside him, when he left—a little reminder of the hour they'd spent together.

Devon slowly put his clothes back on. Every movement made the plug shift inside him and tease him. Devon closed his eyes as he wondered how long it would keep purring away for before the batteries finally ran out. Something told him that no matter how long it took, he wouldn't take it out until they did.

A glance back to the little desk he'd bent over showed where he'd left his mark on the surface.

Cleaning it up as well as he could with tissues from his jeans pockets, for the first time in his life Devon did his best to leave a room as neat and tidy as he'd found it. When he was done, he finally found the courage to turn around and meet Mr. Templeton's gaze across the room.

The older man was leaning back in his chair with his fingers steeped in front of him, watching every move he made.

Devon cleared his throat. He was supposed to go now, he knew that. He'd been given an order, he was expected to obey it. He walked across to the door and turned the handle. At the last minute he stopped.

"Thank you, sir," he offered.

Mr. Templeton nodded, just once. Devon liked to think he saw a tiny spark of approval in the gesture.

* * * *

Wednesday 27th January 2010

"At the stroke of twelve on this day and on every weekday from now on, you will belong to me for one hour. Do you understand?"

"Every weekday?" Devon echoed.

Mr. Templeton held his gaze for several seconds. "Is that a problem?"

Devon shook his head. "No, sir." His life already revolved around Wednesdays at noon.

Every other moment, he either found himself remembering the last hour he'd been permitted to spend in the older man's office, or looking forward to his next visit there, or just thinking about Mr. Templeton in general.

The idea of actually being allowed to visit him five days a week wasn't just not a problem, it was bloody amazing.

Devon frowned as he analysed what he'd actually said in response to the announcement. "I mean, 'yes, sir', to every day. And 'no, sir', to it being a problem." He mentally rolled his eyes at himself. It was obviously a very good thing Mr. Templeton rarely initiated conversations with him if this was the amount of sense he made when he tried to answer a simple sodding question.

The dominant said nothing. He walked back to his desk and sat down behind the huge expanse of mahogany. "Take off your clothes, then come here, Devon."

Quickly slipping out of his jeans and shirt, Devon put them neatly on the side table and walked back to what he was quickly starting to think of as 'his spot' in front of the desk.

"Here," Mr. Templeton corrected. Swivelling his chair to one side and tapping the rug to one side of his chair with the toe of his shoe.

Devon hurried around and stood where he was directed.

"Kneel."

He knelt and was immediately reassured to know he wasn't the only one sporting a hard-on. Even if Mr. Templeton was still fully clothed, his erection was tenting his trousers and Devon had the perfect point of view.

The chair spun back to face the desk and Mr. Templeton turned his attention to his paperwork, seeming to forget there was a naked submissive at his side for several long minutes.

Devon knelt there, silently watching him work, waiting as patiently as he could for any command the dominant cared to offer him.

"In the cabinet on the left hand side of that window there's a file marked 'Southwark project'. Find it and bring it back to me."

It wasn't quite the order Devon had been looking forward to. He was there to screw, not to play the errand boy.

When he didn't immediately jump to obey, Mr. Templeton glanced towards him. "Did you understand the order, Devon?"

Devon looked down in confusion. "Yes, sir..." A glance up, and he saw how carefully the older man was watching him.

The order was a test. And he was failing it. Perhaps it was too late to make a really good impression, but Devon quickly got to his feet. He found the file and brought it back. Mr. Templeton took it from him as Devon knelt next to his chair once more. The older man stuck a little sticky arrow on the edge of one of the pages, then he handed both the little pad of sticky arrows and the file back to Devon.

"Mark each point where it requires a signature."

Devon frowned, but he took what was offered to him and did as he was told. His task completed, he waited for Mr. Templeton to glance in his direction, and offered him the completed file.

The dominant took it back and absentmindedly stroked his fingers through Devon's hair in quiet praise.

Heat raced to the younger man's cheeks, not so much because Mr. Templeton had just patted him on the head for being a good boy, but because Devon was sure a grown man really shouldn't like that gesture as much as he did. Even so, hot on the heels of embarrassment was the desire to know how he could keep the other man happy with him.

To his surprise, it wasn't hard. Mr. Templeton seemed more than willing to provide him with several other little jobs. And each completed task earned the same reward—a gentle touch and a moment in which to bask in the dominant's approval. Both rewards were

addictive. Devon quickly found himself watching the older man for any sign that there was something, anything, he could do to serve him.

When Mr. Templeton set aside another file and turned his chair towards Devon again, he expected another little order to be issued, but the older man just gazed down at him, studying him in silence for several minutes.

Devon looked to the floor. Mr. Templeton's shoes were really shiny. There were even little reflections visible in the highly polished surfaces.

"Look up."

Devon glanced up and met Mr. Templeton's gaze.

The dominant reached out and traced a line around Devon's lips with the tip of his finger. The skin he caressed tingled under his touch. Devon's eyes immediately dropped to the older man's fly, before he recalled his last command and dragged his gaze back up.

Mr. Templeton actually half-smiled at him. "That's right, Devon," he said, in the same perfectly calm and incredibly serious tone of voice he always used. "I'm going to tell you to suck my cock."

Devon nodded enthusiastically. "Yes, sir."

Mr. Templeton leant back in his chair. He nodded once.

Rising on his knees, Devon stopped sitting comfortably back on his heels and reached for the dominant's belt. Deftly freeing him from his clothes, Devon risked another glance up at Mr. Templeton's face.

"May I know what you like, sir?" The words came out far more softly than he intended.

The older man touched his cheek and made him look up when he'd have dropped his gaze. "Are you telling me that you've so little experience you need to ask?"

Devon shook his head. "No, sir. I know what I'm doing. I just thought, if there's something you particularly..." He trailed off. The only words inside his head were the truth, and he couldn't bring himself to utter them.

He really didn't want to screw this up.

"It's not a test. If I want you to do something specific I'll tell you."

"Yes, sir."

Leaning in, Devon carefully wrapped his lips around the tip of the dominant's cock. Steadying the length with his fist, he lapped at the head. This had to be good for his...with

any other man he'd have said his lover. But, even as he knelt there, Devon knew that it would have been the wrong word for what they had together.

He wasn't an idiot. He had the internet. He'd seen the porn and surfed the kinky toy shops often enough.

Mr. Templeton was his master.

Dipping his head to take the other man's cock deeper into his mouth, it was the word and not what he was doing that made him suddenly blush bright red. Sucking gently around the dominant's shaft, pulling back to tease the tip with his tongue, Devon realised for the first time that he was kneeling at his master's feet.

A shot of panic raced through him at the unfamiliar thought. He sucked harder. Extending his mouth with his fist so the whole shaft was covered, Devon started to speed up his movements, working on autopilot.

"More slowly, Devon. Concentrate on the head."

A glance up, and the younger man tried to signal he'd heard and understood with his eyes, unwilling to let his master's cock slip from between his lips to answer right then.

As he altered his technique, Mr. Templeton reached out stroked his cheek. It felt like praise—like Mr. Templeton was pleased with his efforts, even though he wasn't getting the perfect blow job Devon had hoped to provide.

Slowly, pre-cum began to leak onto his tongue. The older man's taste filled his mouth. Second-hand pleasure rushed through Devon's veins. He brought his other hand up to rest against the base of his master's cock. It was the only way he could be sure his fingers wouldn't stray towards his own aching shaft as he felt a drop of his own pre-cum trail down the underside of his erection.

He whimpered around the dominant's cock, but he kept his hands up, kept his focus on the other man's pleasure rather than his own.

Guided onward by occasional instructions and corrections from above, Devon slowly brought the other man to the edge of his orgasm. The older man's hand tightened around the padded arm of his chair. His muscles tensed. His feet pressed down against the floor to either side of Devon's knees. One tiny little gasp of pleasure escaped from between the dominant's lips.

Mr. Templeton's hips rocked forward as he came in Devon's mouth. Quickly swallowing it down, the younger man savoured the salt as it slid over his tongue and relished the success of knowing he'd given the dominant satisfaction.

As the older man's cock slowly softened in his mouth, Devon remained exactly where he was. Until he was ordered to move, he was going to stay precisely where he wanted to be and cherish every damn moment of it.

Eventually, he was forced to give up his prize as Mr. Templeton calmly retrieved his cock from his mouth and tucked himself away. But the dominant didn't immediately send him away.

"Tell me, what made you blush?"

Devon gave him his best blankly innocent look.

Mr. Templeton raised his eyebrow, obviously not in the least impressed.

"I..." Devon searched for the right words. "Sir, are you my master?" he blurted out.

The dominant didn't seem the least shocked by the question. He stroked Devon's cheek in a mildly approving gesture. "Between twelve and one on weekdays, yes, I'm your master."

Devon nodded. "Thank you, sir."

Barely a moment passed before the clock began to strike one. They stayed where they were, with Mr. Templeton's finger still gently caressing Devon's cheek, until the last chime sounded.

His master took his touch away then, and nodded for Devon to get dressed. Devon did so, carefully covering up his own, untended erection as he buttoned his fly.

At the door leading back into the hall, he paused on the threshold.

"Tomorrow, sir?" he checked.

"Yes, tomorrow is a week day," Mr. Templeton agreed.

Devon nodded. "Yes, sir."

* * * *

Thursday 11th February 2010

By ten minutes to twelve, Devon was shivering. He wrapped his arms more tightly around his body as he stamped his feet in a last ditch effort to keep the blood pushing

through his veins. The cold spell they'd been predicting really had to pick *today* to kick in with a bang.

Every movement made his head pound all the worse. He swallowed down his queasiness and wrapped his arms even tighter around his T-shirt covered torso.

At five minutes to twelve, right on time, Mr. Templeton unlocked the outer door and let him into the building. Devon shuffled into the office. Just like any other weekday, he went to his spot on the rug in front of the desk, but Mr. Templeton didn't retrace his steps back to sit behind his desk the way he usually did. The dominant stood immediately in front of him.

Keeping his gaze fixed on a point somewhere around the older man's knees, Devon tried not to look as fragile as he felt. He didn't glance up until Mr. Templeton tucked a knuckle under his chin and tilted his head back.

The older man rarely appeared impressed, but Devon realised in that moment that he'd never seen him so coldly furious before.

The clock began to strike. Mr. Templeton stared down at him in silence.

For several, long, terrifying seconds, Devon thought he wasn't going to say the words — that he didn't want to be his master any more, not even for one sodding hour.

"At the stroke of twelve on this day and on every weekday from now on, you will belong to me for one hour. Understand?"

Devon closed his eyes, relief flooding through him. "Thank you, sir."

"I asked you if you understand." His tone wasn't just cold, it was frigid.

Opening his eyes, Devon looked anxiously up at his master. "Yes, sir."

Mr. Templeton took a step back, putting enough distance between them that he could look him over properly. Devon had thought he was getting used to that, but this wasn't the cool, clinical look, or even the pleased, admiring one he was starting to see a little more often from his master. The dominant's anger hadn't disappeared when the hour started.

Mr. Templeton turned away from him and strode to the office door. "Follow me."

Devon trailed after him, his nerves increasing with every step. Mr. Templeton strode along the corridor leading towards the back of the building at such a pace, Devon had to scurry along to keep up with him.

At the end of the corridor was what looked like some kind of staff room where the people who worked in the building could take their breaks. Another door on the opposite side of the room led to a bathroom.

“Strip.”

Devon breathed a sigh of relief. Everything was fine. Only the location had changed.

As Mr. Templeton turned on the taps above the bath and hot steam filled the room, Devon took his clothes off as quickly as his shivering would allow. With shaking hands, he folded them as tidily as he could and placed them on the vanity next to the sink.

“Get in.”

Devon looked at the bath. An order was an order. Just because it was a new one, that didn’t mean he shouldn’t obey it. Some tiny part of his brain that the vodka hadn’t killed off the night before remembered that Mr. Templeton was always pleased with him when he did as he was told. He lifted a foot and stepped over the high side of the tub.

The younger man almost toppled over as he snatched his foot away from the water. His hands caught hold of the edge of the bath just in time to keep him on his feet.

Looking over his shoulder, he found his master right behind him. “It’s too hot, sir.”

“Get in.”

Devon looked back to the bath full of water. “Sir — ”

“The water’s fine. It only feels too hot because you’re half frozen. Get in.”

Devon looked from him to the water and back again. He put his foot back into the tub. Every inch of his skin that touched the liquid screamed out that it was scalding him. Somehow he still managed to lower his foot to the bottom of the tub. Gripping the sides so tightly his fingertips turned as white as the enamel on the tub, he forced himself to bring his other foot into the water too.

Closing his eyes for a moment, he desperately tried to push the throbbing heat away. His master might be angry as hell, but he wouldn’t order him to scald himself from tip to toe. Even knowing that, Devon had to bite his lip to stop himself crying out as he slowly lowered himself into the steaming water.

It felt like someone had poured liquid fire into the bath. With each inch he descended, the water ignited yet more of his skin. Forcing his eyes open, he looked up at Mr. Templeton through the steam that swirled around the room. His master didn’t look in the least sympathetic.

Devon dropped his gaze. Against all his expectations, his skin wasn’t blistering under the onslaught of the water. As he sat in the bath, the pain slowly ebbed away and turned to

pleasure. Heat seeped into his body, warming his chilled frame. He sighed his relief as he leant back in the blissful comfort of it.

“Did you actually make it to your bed at any point last night?” Mr. Templeton asked.

“It was Mike—one of my friend’s—birthday, we went out and—” Devon caught his master’s eye. The dominant didn’t want details, just an answer to the question he had asked. “No, sir, I didn’t.”

“Anyone else’s bed?”

Devon shook his head very rapidly. His brain spun. He covered his mouth, fighting against his queasiness. “I wouldn’t do that, sir.” He hadn’t so much as looked at another man since he’d started visiting his master. He made an effort to pry his eyes open and met Mr. Templeton’s gaze. It was important that his master believe that, but Devon couldn’t tell if he did or not.

He dropped his gaze as Mr. Templeton continued to study him.

“I’m sorry, sir,” he offered.

The dominant made no response.

After a while, Mr. Templeton ordered him to get washed. Through the whole process, he stayed by the side of the bath, watching him until he was finished.

“Get out.”

He handed Devon a big white towel to dry himself off. While he rubbed the soft towelling against his skin and the water drained out of the bath, he saw his master leave the room. He came back as Devon began to cautiously rub the towel against his sore head.

He’d thought he was used to hangovers, but this one really was something special. Glancing at Mr. Templeton from beneath the edge of the towel, he tried to gauge his mood. He was just in time to see the older man place a small pile of clothes on the vanity next to the clothes Devon had removed before his bath. A carrier bag was placed by the worn clothes.

“Come here.”

Devon walked across the room to him. In spite of the soothing warmth of the bath he still ached all over. Every movement was an effort.

Lifting a hand, Mr. Templeton took hold of his chin and roughly turned Devon’s head to one side then the other. Taking the towel from Devon, the older man rubbed at the especially sore point the younger man had been avoiding drying on his right temple.

A spike of discomfort flashed through him before the dominant finally took the towel away from his head. There was blood on it. Devon stared wide-eyed at the stained fabric. "Sir?"

Mr. Templeton glared down at him. "Do you remember what happened?"

Devon shook his head. "I must have fallen..." he hazarded.

He tried to reach up and touch his temple as if that might help him remember, but his master caught hold of his chin once more and turned his head to the side.

Devon took the hint. He didn't have permission to do that. He dropped his hand back down to his side. After a few moments, Mr. Templeton seemed to lose interest in the cut. He caught hold of Devon's hand and lifted it to study his wrist. Following the dominant's gaze, Devon saw a red mark that promised to turn into a vivid bruise by the next day.

"And this?" Mr. Templeton asked.

"That was Jimmy," Devon said, pleased he could at least answer that question, if not any of the others the dominant might put to him. "I think he's one of my..." One night stands sounded wrong. "Exes?"

"You think?" the older man demanded.

Devon looked down. "I tend to get a bit fuzzy after a certain number of drinks, sir."

Mr. Templeton made him look back up. "If someone hurt you last night, you need to tell me." For the first time that day, there was a touch of something other than cold fury in his voice. There was something in his tone which said Devon could speak up, without fear, if there was something he *needed* to tell his master rather than if there was just something he wanted to babble about.

One brain cell nudged its neighbour. Devon realised what his master was asking him. "No, sir! He was just being an idiot. He wasn't trying to force me to do anything."

The older man studied Devon's eyes very seriously for several seconds, obviously judging his sincerity.

He nodded, just once, to indicate that he was willing to accept the answer. "Return to the office when you're dressed."

"Yes, sir." The words sounded lost and sad in the empty room. Mr. Templeton hadn't waited around to hear his answer.

For several long seconds, Devon stared at the door, but even hungover as hell, he was able to realise he wouldn't get back into the older man's good graces by being slow to obey his orders.

He turned to the clothes on the vanity. Examination of them proved that they were all exactly the right size for him. There was no way in hell they'd ever fitted his master.

Devon put the clothes on, smoothing them all neatly into place before he packed the rest of his clothes into the carrier bag and retraced the path to the office.

Mr. Templeton sat behind his desk, his expression more serious than ever. Devon stepped forward until he stood before it, the same way he had so many times before.

"Sit by the table," Mr. Templeton ordered. "Drink the coffee. Eat the soup."

Glancing behind him, Devon traced the fantastic scent of hot, rich food to a bowl of thick, creamy soup and a cup of coffee set on the small table on the other side of the room. His stomach rumbled, reminding him he hadn't eaten since early the previous afternoon. The food called to him, promising to ease his hangover and make him feel just a little bit better about the world.

"Thank you, sir."

Mr. Templeton didn't look up from his paperwork.

There was nothing else for Devon to do then but follow his master's orders. The soup and the coffee calmed his anxieties as they eased his hunger. His master couldn't be that pissed off with him if he was still willing to feed him. As soon as he'd finished both the coffee and the soup, the younger man looked across to Mr. Templeton for the next command.

His master didn't so much as glance in his direction.

Devon sat in silence.

A few seconds passed. He adjusted the hem on the thick woollen sweater his master had given him. Perhaps his master hadn't bought the clothes for him, perhaps they'd belonged to someone else once. But the fact Mr. Templeton had given them to him still meant something—it meant the dominant must still care about him, if only a little.

Minutes ticked past, and Devon found it harder and harder to sit in silence. "Is there anything I can do to help, sir?" he asked, when the quiet finally became too much for him.

Mr. Templeton didn't look up, or in any way acknowledge that Devon had spoken.

Suddenly it was obvious that neither the food nor the clothes meant a damn thing. Devon closed his eyes. His hands clenched around the edge of his sweater as he tried to push away just how much it hurt to have his master mad at him.

He failed completely. His efforts only made him hate himself more. It was stupid to have gone out and got so drunk like that. He knew he needed to be there for Mr. Templeton. Telling himself that everything would be fine so long as he made it there on time had been senseless too. His master deserved more than someone who was merely punctual.

More of their hour ticked past. Devon looked at the empty bowl and mug. If there was somewhere to heat the soup and make the coffee, there had to be somewhere he could wash up—maybe in the bathroom he'd just visited.

He glanced across at his master, but he couldn't even bring himself to speak up and ask for permission to do that. He wrapped his arms around his torso as the frigid atmosphere seemed to seep into his bones and steal all the warmth he'd found in his master's provisions for him that day.

By the time the clock began to strike one, his view of the desk top was blurring. Devon brushed at his eyes with the back of his hand, determined not to make things worse by making his master think he was going for the sympathy vote.

The clock fell silent.

"You may leave."

Devon stood up, very slowly. He looked at the door, but his feet carried him to his spot on the rug.

"Sir?" The word sounded weak and lost, but that didn't matter right then. He had to ask. He had to know.

Mr. Templeton looked up.

Devon had to clear his throat before he could make more words happen. "Am I still allowed to come back tomorrow, sir?"

"Twelve until one," Mr. Templeton said.

Devon closed his eyes. For the first time since he'd begun to doubt he'd be welcomed the next day, he felt like he could breathe without something stabbing him in the chest. "Thank you, sir."

Mr. Templeton turned back to his work without a word.

Several minutes passed in silence as Templeton stared blindly down at the paperwork before him. He closed his eyes for a moment.

The boy was fine. No real harm had been done. Knowing that didn't make it any easier for him to push aside the pure terror that had raced through him when he saw the blood on his temple and the bruise on his wrist.

Yes, he had potential. There couldn't be any doubt about that. Devon was as instinctive a submissive as any man could be—and far more in need of a master's guidance than any boy Templeton had ever laid eyes on.

Rising from his chair, the dominant crossed the room and picked up the mug and bowl from the table.

Natural submission only counted for so much. An hour a day could only make a certain amount of impact on a man's path through life. Templeton nodded slowly to himself as he reached his decision.

It was time to take another step forwards.

Chapter Three

Friday 12th February 2010

Devon was waiting patiently for his master to unlock the door for him at five minutes to the hour. As soon as he heard the lock turn over, he carefully pushed the door open. Mr. Templeton was just stepping back into his office. He didn't turn and look over his shoulder as Devon trailed after him.

The clothes the dominant had given him the day before were in a carrier bag. They bounced against Devon's leg as he quickly made his way to his place in front of the desk.

Falling still, Devon silently waited for Mr. Templeton to speak with the chimes of the clock.

"At the stroke of twelve on this day and on every weekday from now on, you will belong to me for one hour. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir."

Mr. Templeton's attention dropped to the carrier bag in Devon's hand.

"I wasn't sure if..." he held out the bag of neatly folded and laundered clothes towards the older man.

Mr. Templeton shook his head. "Keep them."

"Thank you, sir." Devon lowered his arm back to his side, hoping that was a positive sign.

"Put them, and the clothes you're wearing, on the desk."

"Yes, sir."

Devon quickly and efficiently removed his clothes, folded them with practiced ease and placed them on the table, next to the carrier bag. The familiarity of the actions soothed him. His master allowed him to do as he had always done. It was a very good sign.

Rising from the chair behind his desk, Mr. Templeton crossed the room to sit on the sofa set in the far corner. As Devon watched, the older man picked up a cushion and placed it on the floor at his feet. "Come here, Devon."

He hurried across and lowered himself to his knees before his master, unable to work out if he should be excited or nervous about this new development.

The only thing he could be sure of was that it was *very something*. He just didn't know if it was going to be very good or very bad.

"You're aware that we need to discuss your behaviour yesterday."

"Yes, sir." Devon looked up and met the dominant's eyes. In a strange way, it was a relief to have the topic out in the open. Even as he squirmed slightly on the cushion, he listened eagerly to hear what the other man had to say.

"Arriving here in that condition is entirely unacceptable," Mr. Templeton told him.

Devon nodded. "Yes, sir."

"Do you have anything you wish to say about it?"

"I really didn't mean things to turn out that way, sir," Devon blurted out, before he could think better of it. "I was only going to have one or two drinks, then..."

"Then?" the dominant prompted.

Devon looked down. "I did switch to soft drinks for a while, but everyone else was still knocking back vodka and..."

"And your friends thought your behaviour was amusing," Mr. Templeton filled in for him.

Devon nodded, still staring down at his master's feet.

Mr. Templeton made him look up. "And what do *you* think of the way you behaved?"

"I screwed up, sir," Devon said.

"Yes."

He blinked up at his master.

For a moment, Mr. Templeton looked almost amused. "Did you think I'd lie and tell you that I don't care if you go out and get so drunk you can't find your way home, keep yourself safe or conduct yourself with any sort of dignity?"

"I—" Devon cut himself off before he could make things even worse than they already were.

"You?" Mr. Templeton prompted.

Devon shook his head and looked away. "I'm sorry, sir."

"Finish the sentence," he ordered, making Devon meet his eyes once more.

"I turned up on time, sir," Devon whispered.

"Yes. And I can tell that you went to a great deal of effort to make sure you did — which is good. But, I expect more than that from you now. The way you behave during the other

twenty-three hours in a day alters the way you're able to conduct yourself during the hour you belong to me."

"Yes, sir."

"And this is the worst part of it all." Reaching out, Mr. Templeton gently caressed Devon's injured temple. He studied the damaged skin for several moments before holding out his hand.

Devon offered up his injured wrist to be inspected, too. When he seemed satisfied that his injuries weren't serious, his master released Devon's hand.

"If you are to belong to me, even for an hour a day, you'll have to learn to take better care of yourself."

If...Devon swallowed rapidly. "It won't happen again, sir," he promised.

Mr. Templeton stared down at him for several minutes, as if debating with himself what he should say next.

Devon held his breath until the older man finally made his decision. "Your behaviour yesterday was a symptom, not the whole problem, Devon. What do you do during the hours you don't spend with me?"

Devon shrugged. "Not much, sir."

"And do you think that's adequate?"

"I don't really need to do anything, sir. My grandfather left me quite a bit of money when he passed away and..." He trailed off when he caught sight of his master's expression.

"That merely means you don't need the money you could earn from a job," the older man corrected. "Not that you don't need employment."

"You want me to get a job?" Devon guessed.

"I want you to think of a better use of your time than going out and getting drunk, or idling your days away doing *not much* with your life."

"I could come here —"

Mr. Templeton's fingertips silenced him. "No, something else." He took his fingers away.

Devon frowned down at his own hands. "I'm not sure there's anything I'm much use for," he admitted softly. "I didn't really get on well with school, and even when I did get a job I..." He trailed off, wondering, not for the first time, why Mr. Templeton would want him of all people hanging around him, even for an hour.

"Don't you think those are things you should start to correct?" his master asked.

Devon nodded. "Yes, sir."

Mr. Templeton stroked his fingers through Devon's hair, just once. "It's something I want you to start thinking about very seriously."

"Yes, sir," he said again.

Mr. Templeton nodded. It looked almost like approval, except it couldn't possibly be that. Devon knelt quietly at his feet for a few minutes, wondering if that was it and half hoping it wasn't.

"What are you thinking?" Mr. Templeton asked him after a few moments.

"You didn't punish me yesterday, sir," Devon pointed out tentatively.

"No, I didn't."

"I thought you would," Devon whispered.

"You were in no condition to be punished yesterday. And a punishment should never be delivered in anger."

"What about today, sir?" Devon blurted out.

"Are you telling me you want to be punished?"

"Yes, sir." He hadn't even realised just how much he wanted it until the words passed his lips.

No, wanted was the wrong word, it felt far more like something he needed – an aching desperation for it settled in the base of his soul as he came face to face with the possibility for the first time.

Mr. Templeton made him look up and meet his gaze once more. "Think very carefully before you ask me for any sort of punishment, Devon. If you want me to provide you with closure after your mistakes I will. You'll be punished and the matter we're dealing with won't be spoken of or thought of again afterwards. But the punishment will always be a real punishment, not a game, and it'll hurt."

Devon forced himself to hold the other man's gaze through every word. "I understand, sir. I am asking to be punished."

Mr. Templeton nodded, just once. "Stand up."

Swallowing down his nerves, Devon did as he was commanded.

"Over my lap."

After all the things Devon had imagined the punishment might include, a spanking didn't seem that bad. He was reasonably sure could get through a spanking without letting his master down. That thought alone sent a wave of relief rushing through him.

Taking half a step forward, he looked at his master's lap and found he didn't have the least idea how the hell he was supposed to turn himself over it. The older man offered him no encouragement, no advice. Devon was left to clumsily scramble into place as best he could.

He almost toppled onto the floor, before his master's arm finally settled over the small of his back and held him exactly where Mr. Templeton wanted him to be.

Taking a deep breath, Devon braced himself for the first stroke, but several seconds passed, and it didn't come.

"This is about learning self control as much as it's about punishment," the dominant informed him. "If you ask me to stop, I'll end the punishment immediately, and you won't be allowed to change your mind. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," Devon whispered. He squirmed, unable to hold himself still as his nerves built up.

The first strike landed heavily and without warning on his upturned arse. Devon flinched, gasping at the force of it. He thought he'd been spanked in the past. A few guys had wanted to mess about before, but with the first connection of Mr. Templeton's hand on his backside Devon realised this was in a different league.

This wasn't a tap to make his buttocks blush before someone screwed him. It was a punishment, and Mr. Templeton had warned him from the start that punishments were supposed to hurt.

The older man's hand came down on the other cheek. Devon closed his eyes, biting down on his bottom lip to keep from making any sound. He mentally counted out the first dozen spanks. Then, numbers failed him. All he could do after that was repeat over and over inside his head that he couldn't let a single word pass his lips.

He couldn't let Mr. Templeton down by asking him to stop before his master was ready to declare the punishment over.

Tears flooded his eyes. Devon squeezed his lids shut very tight, begging the tears not to fall. They fell anyway, and there was nothing he could do about it. The heat and pain flaring across his arse paled in comparison to how much it hurt to let his master down that way.

He bit his lip until he tasted blood, desperately trying not to cry out as the sound of hand against skin filled the air again and again, and each time a wave of heat and pain flared under Devon's skin in response. The spanks came in quick succession, allowing him no time to recover from the last, and each one was delivered with the same harsh force.

His master held nothing back. Devon's arse burned, his skin screamed in protest as a blaze seared through the nerve endings. Every muscle in Devon's body tensed. His hands curled into fists. His legs twitched as he fought against the urge to kick out.

Then, silence.

Devon lay across his master's lap, his breaths coming in pants and his eyes shut so tightly fireworks exploded behind the lids, waiting for whatever would come next.

"Turn over, Devon."

More clumsy than ever, trembling as he tried to coordinate his movements, Devon scrambled to do as his master commanded. On his third attempt, he managed to turn himself the right way up.

Mr. Templeton guided him to sit on his lap. A new wave of agony flooded him as his weight came to rest on his buttocks. Devon bit back a yelp. He turned his face away, as if there was any chance his master wouldn't see his tears.

It didn't do him any good. The older man made him turn back and look him in the eye.

Devon swiped at the tear tracks with the back of his hand.

"I'm so sorry, sir." The words were barely a whisper.

Deftly brushing his hand aside, Mr. Templeton wiped the tears away himself. One of his hands was pleasantly warm as he held Devon's head still to swipe the moisture away with his thumb. The other palm was burning hot.

Its touch shocked Devon into realising that he wasn't the only one his punishment had hurt. He quickly caught his master's hand and kissed the palm, trying to soothe the other man's pain.

Mr. Templeton allowed it for a few seconds, before calmly taking his hand out of Devon's hold. Guiding Devon to lean into his body, Mr. Templeton encouraged him to rest his head on his shoulder. He stroked his fingers through Devon's hair and just let him rest in his embrace for a little while.

"Hush. You're fine now."

Devon swallowed rapidly. He nodded into his master's shoulder as his breaths slowly steadied. As hard as he tried not to squirm, it was impossible for him to sit still right then. He'd never imagined a spanking could hurt so much.

As he wriggled, trying and failing to find a less painful way to sit, he slowly became aware that his squirming was getting his master hard. He glanced up at the older man, doubtful he'd be granted the privilege of servicing him after the way he had behaved.

"I really am sorry, sir," he whispered again.

Mr. Templeton stroked his fingers down Devon's cheek. "You took the punishment very well. The matter is forgotten."

Devon hesitated. "Really, sir?"

"I wouldn't say so otherwise, would I?" The dominant's voice was surprisingly gentle.

"No, sir," Devon said.

His master wouldn't humour him with lies. He knew that. Devon met his gaze, still not sure how to offer himself to the other man. Mr. Templeton smiled a fraction and tapped the cushion that rested on the floor with his foot.

No further order was required. Devon quickly slid off his lap to kneel at his feet. A nod was all the permission he needed. His hands still shaking, his mind swirling with the pain flaring outwards from his buttocks, Devon freed Mr. Templeton's erection from his clothes as quickly as he could and took him eagerly into his mouth.

He'd paid attention to every instruction his master had given him over his previous attempts to please him. He sucked gently and steadily around the tip of his shaft, lavishing his tongue's attention on the head. Lapping and swirling around the glans, he worked the older man exactly the way he'd learnt Mr. Templeton liked best.

A few moments passed, and his master stroked his hair back, the way he only ever did when Devon had pleased him in some way. No orders, no corrections, Mr. Templeton didn't find one single fault with him as he knelt at his feet and savoured every taste he could glean from his master.

Even when he eventually allowed the dominant's softening cock to slip from his lips at the older man's command, Devon found that he wasn't pushed away. He was still allowed to rest his head against the dominant's thigh and have his hair stroked and petted.

Mr. Templeton permitted him to remain exactly where he was until the clock struck one. Hiding his face in the older man's lap, Devon only looked up at his master when Mr. Templeton touched his cheek to get his attention.

"Put your clothes back on, Devon."

Devon reluctantly did as he was ordered. His backside was still an inferno. Every movement only increased the ache in the muscles. It took every scrap of self control Devon could muster not to reach behind him and rub at the flaming skin, to try and ease the sting.

Putting his trousers on was a lesson in just how rough denim could be. Devon tried not to let the discomfort show on his face. He'd asked for the punishment. It was worth a little soreness to be rid of the guilt he'd felt for letting his master down.

As soon as he was dressed, he walked across to the door, but he couldn't help but look back at his master one last time.

"Tomorrow," Mr. Templeton said with a nod, as he returned to his desk.

Devon nodded. "Thank you, sir."

The door closed softly behind Devon. Templeton leant back in his chair and took a deep breath as he continued to stare at the woodwork long after the boy had left the building. When he finally looked away, his gaze fell on his right hand. His left thumb was massaging the palm, absentmindedly trying to ease the ache in it.

Letting out a sigh, Templeton tried to turn back to his work. It had been the right thing to do. It had been exactly what Devon had needed in order to draw a line under the whole mess.

Still, part of him couldn't quite help but regret that the boy's first introduction to being spanked had been about pain rather than pleasure.

Soon, he promised himself. As soon as Devon was ready for it...

Chapter Four

Thursday 18th March 2010

“At the stroke of twelve on this day and every day from now on, you will belong to me for one hour. Do you understand?”

“Every day?” Devon snatched at the word. “Really?”

Mr. Templeton raised an eyebrow, although there was amusement in his eyes as well as a note of correction.

Devon cleared his throat. “Yes, sir,” he said, as seriously as he could manage, even though he couldn’t quite wipe the smile off his face.

Mr. Templeton ruffled his hair with casual affection as he walked past him to stand on the other side of the room. “Undress, then come here, Devon.”

He immediately stripped off and went to his master’s side. The dominant stood by the small desk with the green leather inlay. Devon was pretty sure he was well on the way to developing one hell of a fetish for that table – especially since visiting it usually meant he had a chance to come.

As much as he loved dropping to his knees and sucking his master’s cock, he’d left the office hard and frustrated for eleven visits in a row. Including the weekends, when he hadn’t been permitted to visit until now, he hadn’t been allowed to come for sixteen, very, *very* long days.

“Sit on the desk.”

Devon did as he was told without even thinking to question the order. He lifted his backside up on the desk and eagerly cooperated as Mr. Templeton began to arrange him just as he wanted him, lying back across the leather, his knees spread and pulled back to his chest, and his arse resting right on the edge of the table.

The dominant looked him over for a few minutes, as if debating whether or not he should be rearranged. Finally he nodded. He didn’t hesitate for a single moment once his decision had been made. Slicked fingers soon slid into Devon’s exposed hole and began to stretch him gradually open.

Already way past the point where he thought anything he did would change his master's chosen pace, all Devon could do was close his eyes and enjoy every moment. Holding his legs back the way his master wanted, he just relished every touch of his master's fingers and gloried in the other man's attention.

When the dominant's hands eventually disappeared and clothes rustled, Devon blinked his eyes open. He was just in time to watch his master sheath himself in a condom and spread a little extra lube over the latex.

The first thrust, as his master buried himself deep inside him, made Devon gasp. Still holding back his legs, he dug his fingers into his calves.

He wanted to come. He needed to come. Desperation raced through him. But it would still be incredibly embarrassing if he didn't manage to last for the first thirty seconds. Anyone who was worthy of belonging to Mr. Templeton should be able to last longer than that.

Devon closed his eyes and frantically tried to hold on to his control for just a little longer.

"Open your eyes, Devon. Look at me."

He tried to obey, to focus on his master through clouds of arousal. Their eyes met.

"You don't have permission to come. Understand?"

Devon opened his lips to protest. The chances of his control actually holding out were so unlikely, Devon didn't even know how to begin to explain the situation to his master.

"Yes, sir." The words left his mouth, but they were only really an acknowledgement that he'd heard what his master had said and understood the words. He didn't think for a moment that he'd actually be able to follow the order.

Mr. Templeton's hips rocked forward, burying his cock to the hilt in the younger man's arse once more, every inch of his length making Devon more convinced than ever that he'd never outlast his master.

Devon whimpered as thrust after thrust pounded into his prostate. Pre-cum leaked from the tip of his cock and dripped onto his stomach. He held back with every ounce of his strength. Then, just when he knew it was a lost cause and there was no way he could continue to follow the other man's order, he felt Mr. Templeton's rhythm falter.

The older man's grip around his hips tightened for a moment. Pleasure flashed across his face as he came deep inside Devon with a last few hard thrusts, before stilling inside him, looking straight down into his eyes.

Devon stared helplessly back at him, unable to break the gaze. When his master pulled away to tidy himself up, Devon closed his eyes and repeated over and over inside his head that his coming wasn't that important, even if it did feel as important as hell in that moment.

He was with his master, and his master was pleased with him. Nothing else was as vital as that. Nothing else was significant at all.

"Your self control is coming along very well, Devon," Mr. Templeton said, as he moved back to stand at the edge of the desk between his legs.

"Thank you, sir," Devon whispered, his voice rough with arousal and emotion.

The older man stood there looking down at him for quite some time before he, quite casually, bent down and took his submissive's cock between his lips. Devon helplessly bucked into the lush, warm wetness.

"Sir?" he managed, through gritted teeth.

Mr. Templeton pulled back. Devon's cock slipped from his mouth. He looked down at him. "Yes?"

"My self control isn't *that* good, sir," he blurted out.

His master's lips twitched into another of those rare half-smiles. "Then it's a good thing you now have my permission to come." He lowered his head again then, as if that explained everything, as if him going down on Devon was the most natural thing in the world.

Devon looked down his body and watched as Mr. Templeton slowly parted his lips and took his whole shaft into his mouth. Cradling Devon's balls in his hand, he rolled the tight sac between his fingers as he suckled rhythmically around the glans.

Staring down at the older man Devon desperately tried to wrap his head around the fact that his master wasn't only willing to give his submissive head, but that he was bloody fantastic at it. It wasn't easy, especially not when his entire brain seemed to melt further by the moment. His head swirled with pleasure. His fingertips bit into the backs of his legs as he scrambled for control.

But still, no matter how much he tried to make it last, it wasn't possible to remain in the perfect cocoon of his master's mouth for more than a few minutes. Devon's hips rocked up off the table. He came before he could think to issue a warning. Staring down his body, he

could only watch fascinated as Mr. Templeton calmly swallowed it all down without missing a single damn drop.

Slack jawed, he gawped incredulously at his master as the older man straightened up. Mr. Templeton chuckled and stroked Devon's cheek with his knuckle before he walked back to his desk and calmly sat down. "When you're ready, come across and sit with me."

Devon took that to mean he had a few minutes to get his breath back and be sure his legs would support him before he walked across the room. He needed those minutes. His body didn't seem to be his to control anymore. Even when his breaths evened out and his heart ceased to race so fast, it was hard for him to pull himself together and rise from the desk.

It wasn't so much readiness as the need to kneel by his master's chair and rest his head on his knee that finally brought him across the room.

They sat in silence for several minutes. Finally Devon built up the courage to speak.

"Sir?"

"Yes, Devon?" His tone invited further speech.

"What you said before," Devon began. "About how you think it would be a good idea if I got a job..."

"Yes?"

"I was jogging in the park opposite my flat a few days ago and I got talking to an old friend," he thought about that sentence for a second and decided it sounded wrong, as if he was meeting up with men who weren't his master in the park. "He's straight and married and everything."

Mr. Templeton calmly nodded for him to continue.

"He works with this charity—a wildlife trust—and he said they were looking for volunteers. And he asked if I'd be interested in working with them some mornings."

Devon stared down at where his hand rested on his own knee. "I wouldn't be doing anything special, just helping out. I spoke to him again yesterday. I told him I wouldn't be able to work after eleven. He said that would be okay. So, I'd still be able to come here every day and..." He glanced up at his master, wondering if the babbled explanation made any sense let alone found favour with him.

"You don't need my permission to do whatever you want during the hours you don't spend with me, Devon," Mr. Templeton told him. "But, if you want my opinion, I think that sounds like a very good idea." He stroked his hair and smiled down at him.

Devon nodded his understanding. Whatever the older man said, he saw the truth in the dominant's eyes. He had his master's approval. That was all he needed to know.

* * * *

Tuesday 13th April 2010

The door was already unlocked when Devon arrived at seven minutes to twelve. He frowned and cautiously stepped inside, wondering if one of the secretaries Mr. Templeton liked to send on long lunch breaks had yet to leave.

Someone was speaking French in Mr. Templeton's office—someone with a very familiar voice that called to Devon, even while it was speaking a different language. Devon peeped around the half open door. His master sat alone in the room, speaking into the phone. Walking across to the spot on the rug where he always waited, the submissive looked to his master for further instruction.

Mr. Templeton rattled off a few quick words of French before putting the phone to one side and pressing a button on the hand set, which Devon took to mean the person he'd been speaking to was now on hold.

"I'm going to be on the phone for most of the hour."

Panic rushed through Devon the moment the words hit the air. Mr. Templeton couldn't send him away, just like that. He had to have his hour with his master.

"Please, may I stay anyway, sir? I swear, you won't hear a word from me. I'll just sit quietly and stay out of your way."

He whispered the words very softly, as if that might somehow prove to his master just how quiet he could be. But Mr. Templeton just raised a hand for him to be completely silent. The older man pressed the button on the phone and spoke into the receiver once more.

A few minutes passed. The clock in the hall began to chime the hour, but Mr. Templeton was still deeply absorbed in his phone call. For several terrifying seconds Devon thought the dominant wasn't even going to have time to say the words to him. At the very last moment, he said a few quick words of French and pressed the hold button again.

He looked across at Devon and met his gaze. "At the stroke of twelve on this day and on every day from now on, you will belong to me for one hour. Understand?"

"Yes, sir." Relief made him sigh the words.

"Take your clothes off, then come here." Mr. Templeton tapped the floor by his feet with the toe of his shoe.

As the older man turned his attention back to his phone call, Devon did as he said and moved to sit, naked, by his master's feet.

It wasn't until that moment, when he sat practically ignored, that he realised how much just being owned by the other man for that one hour every day meant to him.

The sex was good. The sex was hot. Hell, it was bloody fantastic. But it was the pleasure of being owned that made him arrange his day around the hour he spent with his master. It was the other man's dominance that made him wonder what his master would think of whatever he was doing as he went through the other twenty-three hours of each day, not his cock.

It was pure mastery that was pushing him to work hard at the wildlife trust, and to drag himself to evening classes several times a week in the hopes of getting a few of those qualifications he hadn't been willing to work for in school.

Devon looked up and pushed his daydreams aside when Mr. Templeton touched his cheek. A crook of the older man's finger brought Devon to his feet. His master pressed another button on the phone, switching it to speaker phone.

Rapid French filled the air from the other end of the line.

Mr. Templeton put his finger against Devon's lips.

Devon nodded his understanding. Any noise he made would go straight to the man on the other side of the phone.

Taking Devon's hand in his, the dominant guided his submissive to wrap his hand around his half hard cock and begin to stroke himself with long, slow movements. A tap of his shoe on the floor boards and Devon lowered himself back to his knees, his hand still working his cock.

Every time he glanced up, Devon found his master watching him. While he rattled off French to the man on the other end of the line, while he listened to the swift response issued to whatever it was he'd said, no matter what he was doing, his eyes never left his submissive.

Devon's hand moved up and down his shaft again and again, first coaxing himself fully hard, then teasing himself to the edge.

With no sign that permission to come would be granted, Devon had no choice but to slow his touch and to stop himself just short of coming each time he approached the point of no return. It was obvious he couldn't climax until he received an order to do so, but at the same time, he knew couldn't stop jacking his cock either.

The minutes ticked by. His cock screamed in protest. The muscles in his hand and arm began to tire too. Devon started to listen out for the next set of chimes from the hallway. There was no way in hell he'd be able to last the whole hour of teasing himself like that.

Except he knew that if it was what his master wanted, he'd just have to bloody well find a way to do it, just as he'd had to find a way to ignore his friends' teasing when he stopped after two drinks, just as he'd found a way to build up the courage to book those courses at the local college.

His master always somehow made him capable of doing things he knew he was incapable of when the order was first issued.

Two piece of plastic clicked together as Mr. Templeton hung up the phone.

Devon didn't look up. He didn't stop jacking himself off, either. That wasn't his choice to make right then.

"That's enough."

Devon dropped his aching hand from his cock and dragged a deep, relieved breath into his body.

"Tell me about your class last night."

Devon cleared his throat and tried to remember that there was ever a time when he hadn't been sitting on the floor by his master's desk, stroking his cock and desperately trying not to come.

"We're studying *Great Expectations* this week. I got seventy-six percent on my last essay," he offered. He couldn't help but glance up at his master then, both eager and wary to see what his reaction might be.

Mr. Templeton nodded his approval. He half-smiled down at him. "Very good. That's the highest mark yet, isn't it?"

Devon nodded and smiled back. His master always asked. Every Tuesday since the course started, he'd asked how it was going, and listened to his little successes and failures, all with that same approving look in his eye.

His concerns obviously weren't as important as his master's. Devon knew that without either of them needing to acknowledge it aloud, but still...he always asked.

"Did your call go well?" Devon cautiously enquired in return, unsure if he was allowed to ask such questions of his master.

Mr. Templeton merely nodded. "Yes, it did."

Devon mentally added French to the end of the whole list of things he should try to learn at some point.

The moment was so companionable, so perfect, the clock chimes took him off guard.

A quick look at Mr. Templeton's crotch told Devon that he wasn't the only one left frustrated by the hour they'd spent together. "If you wanted me to stay a little longer," he offered, carefully.

Mr. Templeton didn't look angry with the suggestion. He even stroked Devon's cheek in approval for him making it, but he still shook his head.

"Twelve o'clock tomorrow," the older man said.

Devon pushed aside his disappointment. "Yes, sir."

* * * *

Saturday May 29th 2010

"At the stroke of twelve on this day and on every Saturday from now on, you will belong to me for twenty-four hours. Do you understand?"

Devon was so used to saying 'yes, sir', he almost didn't notice the slight but important change in what he was agreeing to. He opened his mouth.

Twenty-four hours.

His lips came back together without any actual words leaving them as the words registered.

"Is that a problem?" Mr. Templeton asked.

Devon shook his head. "No problem, sir. I understand. Thank you."

Even as his mind reeled, Devon struggled to pull the tattered edges of his composure together. He straightened his back and arranged himself a little more neatly in his place before the dominant's desk.

As he watched, the older man picked up his briefcase and walked towards the office door. Devon looked from him to the desk where he always left his clothes and back again. His hands had already gone automatically to the hem of his shirt. The change from their normal routine left him momentarily lost, without any point of reference to rely on. For several long seconds, all he could do was stand in the middle of the room and fidget with the edge of the fabric that had never lingered long on his skin while in that room.

"With me, Devon."

"Yes, sir." The order snapped him out of the deepest part of his daze. He dropped his hand to his side and trailed behind the other man as Mr. Templeton left the building and conscientiously locked the door behind them. When his master walked across to the only car parked in the driveway, Devon couldn't bring himself to step forward and approach the vehicle without a very clear invitation.

The moment seemed far too fragile, far too liable to end with him being dismissed in disgrace.

"You're to ride in the front passenger seat unless you're specifically told otherwise," Mr. Templeton informed him, as he unlocked the car.

"Yes, sir." The gravel crunched under Devon's own well polished shoes as he stepped forward and took his stated place in the other man's car.

Briefcase deposited in the boot, Mr. Templeton folded his larger frame into the car, next to Devon. His presence seemed to fill the entire space the moment he closed the driver's side door.

When Mr. Templeton fastened his seat belt, Devon quickly did the same. He rode in silence next to his master as Mr. Templeton drove them away from the office and into a different part of town.

Dividing his attention between the dominant and their surroundings, Devon frantically tried to work out what kind of mood the other man was in, and where they might be going. By the time the car pulled up outside a large Victorian house, he still had no idea of the other man's emotions, but a glance at the building hinted that they might have arrived at the most unexpected of locations.

"Is this your home, sir?"

"Yes."

Nothing else was said as Mr. Templeton led him inside.

Devon swallowed rapidly as he looked around the hallway. The house had the feel of a building that had been occupied by just one man for a long time, a man who was used to having things exactly as he liked them and who had expertly moulded the house to fit his personality and his preferences.

Everything was spotless. Without any sense of ostentation, every single object in the building seemed to exude quality. Devon looked at the well polished floor, then at his shoes, unsure if he should take them off. His fingers went to the edge of his shirt again, not sure if that should come off too or if being here was different to being in his master's office.

Mr. Templeton strode through a doorway leading off the hallway to the right. Devon crept forwards to peek inside. The older man stood by a table on the other side of a large living room. Mail had been placed on the table, along with a note, presumably from some sort of housekeeper.

"You may come in," Mr. Templeton said, without even looking over his shoulder.

Devon stepped forward until he stood in the centre of a rug in front of the fireplace, as he instinctively sought out the equivalent of his place in his master's office.

Someone had laid out logs in the hearth. It looked as if they only needed to have a match set to them to create a welcoming blaze. Devon wished like hell he had any confidence in his ability to tend a real fire without risking burning down his master's house. It might have made him feel just a little less useless.

A few seconds passed in silence. Mr. Templeton turned towards him. "Do you have a question, Devon?"

He cleared his throat. "May I know what the rules are here, sir?"

"Is there any reason you're so keen to know?" There was no bite to the question, just curiosity.

"I don't want to screw this up, sir." They might not have been the right words to say but Devon blurted them out anyway. They were the truth, and that was all he had to offer his master right then.

Mr. Templeton held his gaze in silence for several long seconds before crossing to sit on the sofa facing him. A nod to the floor by his feet had Devon kneeling on the rug directly before him.

"The rules are very simple. You still have the right to say no, and to leave whenever you wish. There's a phone in the hallway which you may use to call a taxi and enough money in the drawer below the phone to pay the fare."

Devon shook his head.

"I'm not accusing you of asking to leave," Mr. Templeton cut in before Devon had a chance to say a single word. "I'm giving you information. You may ask any questions when I'm finished."

"Yes, sir," Devon whispered.

"While you're here, I expect you to obey whatever orders I give you, and complete any tasks you're assigned, just as you would at my office. If you have any immediate questions or concerns you may raise them. And if there are any more general issues that you wish to discuss with me, there will be time for you to broach those topics too."

He stopped, as if waiting for an answer. "Yes, sir." It was the obvious thing to say.

"When you don't have a task to occupy you, then you may relax. On the other side of the entrance hall, there's a library and you have free use of the books in there."

"Thank you, sir."

"You may pick out something to read this evening while I get changed."

Mr. Templeton stood up. Devon strode after him as he left the room. It took all the self control he could scrape together to change course in the hall and make his way to the opposite doorway rather than stalk the other man up the stairs.

A library. It was a perfectly accurate description of the room, but the reality of it still made him stop in his tracks. Devon had never seen so many books owned by one man before. As he silently ran his gaze along row upon row of leather bound spines, he felt himself falling further and further out of his depth by the moment.

Finally his attention settled on a shelf containing obviously newer books. He stepped forwards until he stood directly in front of it, hoping like hell he'd at least find a title he recognised, or a subject he had some chance of understanding.

A frown grew across Devon's forehead as he found not one familiar title, but an entire shelf full of them.

It was like scanning through his entire reading list for every course he was taking or was due to start within the next three months. Reaching out, he ran his fingers down the spines. There wasn't a single crease where any of them had been opened. None of them had been read. They obviously weren't books Mr. Templeton had simply had laying around.

"Devon?"

He jumped as he spun around to face the older man. He blinked at his master as if he'd never seen him before. In a way, he never had seen him as he appeared right then, in jeans and a comfortable sweater rather than one of his expensive suits.

Mr. Templeton raised an eyebrow at him. "Is there a problem?"

"No, sir." You're gorgeous! He kept the last words back somehow.

The older man took a step back, towards the door. "Leave your choice in the living room on the way past."

"Yes, sir." Devon quickly found the next book he needed to read for his English Literature course and followed the dominant from the room. A few minutes later, when he found himself standing in Mr. Templeton's kitchen, he wished he'd chosen to take a cookery course instead.

Suddenly, his ability to heat up a microwave meal didn't count for much.

"Sir?"

"Yes, Devon?"

"I can't cook," he blurted out, eager to get the admission over with as soon as possible. "I mean—"

"Then it's time you started to learn," Mr. Templeton cut in briskly, as he pushed his sleeves halfway up his forearms. "You can start by fetching four eggs for me." He pointed to a container on the counter top.

"You can cook," Devon realised.

Mr. Templeton's lips twitched, almost as if he was about to smile. "Yes," he agreed, his tone still perfectly solemn. "I can."

The words sunk into Devon's mind as easily as every other pronouncement the older man had ever made, but there was still some little part of him that just stared at the sight of his master in his kitchen as if he'd been beamed down from another planet.

Apparently, the planet his master came from bred dominants who didn't think cooking was strictly submissives' work. Mr. Templeton moved around the large, light space as if he

didn't just own it, but as if he commanded it too. Complete confidence, complete control of the whole world.

It was almost like helping him out in the office—the older man soon found lots of little jobs for him to do. Almost like helping him in his office, except as Devon watched him work, his gaze strayed to the muscles in his forearms. He'd never even seen that much of him bare before.

It was all he could do to keep his hands by his sides and not reach out to stroke the older man's skin.

"Are you listening, Devon?"

He snapped his attention up to his master's eyes. A lie rushed to his lips, but he bit it back. "No, sir. I was daydreaming," he confessed.

Mr. Templeton held his gaze for a moment. He didn't look half so furious as Devon would have imagined he'd be. That tiny touch of a smile came back. If nothing else, he seemed to appreciate his submissive's honesty. His tone of voice was warm when he spoke. "There'll be time for daydreaming later. Right now, I want you to concentrate."

"Yes, sir." Devon did his best, but simply being with the Mr. Templeton in his house was distracting. As they sat down to eat the meal the dominant had prepared for them, Devon couldn't help but want to spend all his time staring at him and simply soaking up his presence, but somehow the food still made it to his lips as a companionable silence settled over them.

"Tell me about your family," Mr. Templeton suddenly ordered, as they finished off the last of the meal.

Devon blinked at him. "Sir?"

"Your family," Mr. Templeton repeated. "Tell me about them."

Their plates were empty. Devon shrugged as he picked up his fork and traced the sparse pattern on the chinaware. "There's not much to tell, sir."

"Your parents are still alive?"

"Last I heard they were," Devon said, more softly than he'd intended. He cleared his throat and pushed on. His master appreciated him telling the truth, and it was his master who was important now, not them. "We haven't spoken much since I came out. That was kind of the final straw for them."

He glanced up to check the other man's reaction.

"The other straws being?" Mr. Templeton asked, his expression entirely neutral.

Devon set down his fork and pushed his plate away. "Lack of intelligence. Lack of talent. Lack of finesse. Lack of ambition. Lack of charm. Lack of whatever it was they were looking for in a son." He stared at the table directly in front of him as the pain from every word they'd ever thrown at him flooded back into his body.

Part of him was suddenly so sure that the older man was going to realise that they were right – and that he'd been right to waste his time doing nothing much at all, because that was all he was really capable of.

Mr. Templeton stood up. Devon closed his eyes for a moment, but he couldn't bring himself to beg – that wouldn't be fair on his master. "I'll just get my coat, sir."

"Devon?"

Pushing his own chair back, Devon turned towards the door. "I won't bother you again, sir."

Suddenly a hand was wrapped around his wrist, tight and perfect. Devon automatically tried to pull away, but the fingers tightened against his skin. He wasn't going anywhere.

He looked up and met the older man's eyes for a moment.

"Do you really think I'd bring you here if I agreed with anything you just said to me – anything that they said to you?" Mr. Templeton demanded.

Devon swallowed.

"Do you?" the dominant pushed.

"No, sir."

The older man nodded, very slowly. "Good." He seemed to think for a few seconds, before he nodded once more, in the way that Devon was so familiar with. Mr. Templeton had made a decision. "The conversation is over, you needn't think about it again."

"Yes, sir," Devon whispered. It shouldn't have been as simple as that. A few words shouldn't have eased the pain, but the other man's acceptance of him wrapped around him, holding him just as tightly as Mr. Templeton gripped his wrist, and in a strange way, that did make it hurt less than it had before.

Their eyes met once more. Devon had seen that particular light in the older man's eyes a few times before, back at the office. It almost always meant that whatever happened next was going to instantly become one of his favourite memories ever.

"Please?" The word was out before he could stop it. The second it hit the air, he wanted to snatch it back.

He didn't ask. Whatever they did, it was the other man's decision. It was his job to obey orders, not to make requests. He didn't ask. Devon's eyes opened very wide. He scrambled to find the suitable words for an apology.

"Yes."

Devon blinked up at the older man, trying to fit the word into context.

"Yes," Mr. Templeton repeated, very calmly.

Not sure what else to do, Devon nodded his general agreement with the affirmative. A second later, with his hand still wrapped around Devon's wrist, the older man led him out of the kitchen.

Chapter Five

Two minutes later

Devon wasn't sure what he'd expected to be behind the door at the top of the stairs when Mr. Templeton unlocked it. Maybe a bedroom—an old fashioned and entirely masculine space that was filled to the brim with the dominant's personality as much as with his possessions. Dark wood. A neatly made bed. Everything arranged nicely and in its right place.

Reaching into the darkness of the room, Mr. Templeton clicked a switch. A light came on, illuminating the reality.

Old fashioned — maybe. Masculine — certainly. Kinky as hell — bingo!

Devon's gaze rushed from one item to another. First it fell on the neat rows of hooks on the far wall of the room, where an array of whips and floggers hung in perfectly organised lines. Next it went to the huge diagonal cross set up in the corner of the room, dark polished wood gleaming under the overhead light.

The sling in another corner caught Devon's attention for a moment, before the cage occupying another segment of the space called to him. Mr. Templeton stepped forward until he stood right in the middle of it all. And suddenly it was so easy to see him locking the door on that cage as Devon sat naked and vulnerable behind the bars.

The dominant folded his arms across his chest. It took no effort at all to imagine one of those big strong hands holding a whip. The breath caught in Devon's throat. His brain spun and screamed out for more oxygen, but it was too late — Devon's entire blood supply seemed to have been diverted directly to his cock.

"Do you remember the rules?" Mr. Templeton asked.

Devon pulled his attention to the other man's face as he took a step into the room. "I'm not saying no, sir. I don't want to leave." Another step forward. "We can do whatever you want."

Mr. Templeton stared down at him for several long moments. Devon forced himself to remain perfectly still as the dominant seemed to inspect his very soul.

Stepping closer, Mr. Templeton reached past him and pushed the door closed. It banged as it met the frame. Devon managed not to jump.

"You have free reign over the rest of the house, but you won't enter this room without my specific permission. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Templeton took a step back. "You have permission to look around."

Devon cautiously walked around the room, taking in every detail. Black leather, stainless steel, dark wood. He had to tighten his hands into fists at his sides to stop himself reaching out and caressing it all. He didn't have permission to touch, just to look. He didn't have permission to come, either, although he was pretty sure he could get off on nothing more than the sight and smell of his surroundings.

"Do you have any questions?" the dominant asked, eventually.

"Just one, sir," Devon said. His voice sounded strange to his own ears, slow and sleepy as if it were coming from a long way away.

As he turned to face the older man, Mr. Templeton nodded permission for him to ask it.

"What do you want to do first, sir?"

The older man's lips definitely twitched into a smile then. "Over time, you'll get to know every item in this room very well," he promised.

"Yes, sir." Devon wasn't sure what pushed more pleasure into his voice right then, the idea of playing with all the other man's toys, or the possibility that he might actually be kept around for long enough to do that.

"But there's no rush."

"Yes, sir," Devon repeated.

"Put your clothes on the bench."

The sheer familiarity of the order was a welcome beacon in the middle of a room that was far out of his range of experience. A command that he knew he was capable of completing to a standard that was likely to please his master soothed his soul.

Within a minute he stood in the middle of the room, his clothes folded neatly on the bench, and turned back to his master.

"Hold out your hands."

A few deft movements from his master, and Devon found both his wrists encircled by thick black leather cuffs. His ankles soon received the same treatment. The restraints were

well padded, but they still fitted tightly around him, making sure he felt their presence with every second that passed.

His movements were his master's to permit or deny. He'd known that in the office, but he had never been so aware of the fact, nor quite so in love with it, as he was right then as he felt the leather embrace him for the first time.

"Come here."

Devon stepped forward, very conscious of the added weight around each limb. Mr. Templeton stood next to the heavy wooden beams that formed the diagonal cross. As he approached them, Devon spotted the ring hooks on the top and at the base of each length of polished mahogany.

Almost without needing to think about it, he offered up his wrists and ankles to be locked in place. His master stepped closer. Four metallic clicks echoed around the room. Devon's eyes fell closed. He sensed the larger man move away and he tensed against the cross, biting back a plea not to be left behind.

"No dominant who is worthy of the term walks away from a man on a whim, or just because someone else was stupid enough to doubt his worth." The words were spoken directly in front of him.

Devon's eyes snapped open. Mr. Templeton had moved to stand in the space between the cross and the wall. Devon looked up at him, staring helplessly into the older man's eyes.

"I told you that I own you whenever you're with me, didn't I?" his master asked.

"Yes, sir." The words were barely a whisper. The room seemed to absorb every ounce of false bravado out of them.

"But, sometimes a submissive needs more than words to remind him he is owned," Mr. Templeton went on. "Sometimes a man needs to feel the leather against his skin holding him where he belongs, binding him to his master." Reaching up, he ran his fingers over the cuff around Devon's right wrist.

"Yes, sir."

The dominant could have said the sky was green and Devon would have made the same reply. Every word the older man said slid straight past that part of his brain that was worried about mere facts. They rushed to the instinctive bit of him that only cared about what the man in front of him was really talking about, really telling him.

"You're bound to me, Devon. And if you don't achieve the standard I expect of you, I'll see to it that you're trained and your behaviour improves until you do. But I won't walk away, and I won't send you away either."

Devon swallowed rapidly. "Yes, sir," he repeated.

As he stepped to the side of the cross, Mr. Templeton ran his fingers from the leather wrapped around Devon's wrist, down the outside of his arm and across his back. Even that chaste contact sent shockwaves racing through Devon's body. His cock curved up between the crossing lengths of wood towards his stomach.

"And sometimes a man needs to feel his master's touch *underneath* his skin in order to feel entirely safe in his master's possession of him."

"Yes, sir."

"That's very different to him deserving a punishment."

Devon had never heard the older man so serious about anything. "Yes, sir," he rushed out.

He sensed Mr. Templeton walking away from him then, but the sound of his footsteps on the hard, wooden floorboards soon heralded his return.

That was right, something inside Devon remembered. A dominant didn't walk away from his submissive – not in any way that really mattered.

Leather brushed across Devon's back. He looked over his shoulder. A flogger trailed over his skin, dozens of long black leather thongs caressing him with every tiny movement of his master's wrist.

Mr. Templeton stepped back once more. The leather left Devon's skin. It returned in a sweeping motion that struck his left shoulder and made its way down towards the right side of his waist, leaving a trail of heat in its wake.

He gasped, instinctively pulling at the cuffs.

No reprimand was issued for his lack of control, but Devon couldn't bring himself to look over his shoulder and see the other man's expression.

The flogger came down again, leaving another line of warmth from his right shoulder and to the other side of his waist. He stayed still. Pressing his lips together, he ensured no sound escaped.

A second passed and the leather kissed his skin again, no more harshly than it had the first time. Slowly it registered in Devon's mind that the pain he expected to flood into his

veins wasn't there. He wasn't showing off his newly acquired self control skills by keeping back an agonised scream.

There was nothing to scream about. The warmth of the flogger's touch didn't really hurt as it seeped into his skin. It brought far more pleasure than pain.

The flogger kissed his back once more. Devon frowned slightly, as his brain tried to process the sensation and failed. His body had no choice but to deal with the flogger without his mind's help.

Trapped in the moment, with no idea when the leather would fall against him again, Devon found himself acutely conscious of every detail within his grasp, within his body.

His breaths began to speed up. His heart beat faster. As his muscles tensed, adrenaline pumped around his body more rapidly by the moment. Every time the flogger landed Devon rocked slightly in his restraints, but he had no idea if he was moving away from it or towards it.

It wasn't a punishment. Mr. Templeton had been very clear about that. It wasn't a punishment and his master wasn't angry with him. His master wanted to keep him around. Mr. Templeton wanted him to feel his master's touch beneath his skin and know he was owned.

Devon whimpered as he let his head fall forward. The heat was nothing like the fire that had burned in his buttocks when Mr. Templeton had spanked him. It was more a caress than a blow, more a kiss than a spank.

Biting down on his bottom lip, Devon tugged at his cuffs, searching for a sensation he could understand. The padding inside the leather made it impossible for him to hurt himself no matter how hard he pulled at them.

It was as if his master's hands were wrapped around his every limb, holding him safe and secure, keeping him exactly where he wanted him, protecting him from himself as much as from everything else in the world.

Nothing bad could happen. He couldn't let his master down right then. All he could do was stand there and take it as more and more unexpected pleasure seemed to race around his body.

His skin tingled and sung out under the lash. Heat spread through him. His cock gloried in every sensation. The tip rubbed against the crossing pieces of wood in front of him,

teasing him, making him desperate to rise onto his toes and rub himself properly against the wood.

The flogger came down again. The sound of it against his skin filled the room. Devon released his bottom lip from his teeth. Unable to stay silent a moment longer, he tossed his head back and moaned his pleasure up to the ceiling.

Too much. Not enough. Unable to cope with what he'd already been granted, he still needed more—more of his master, and more of whatever else the dominant was willing to offer him too. He pulled more frantically at the cuffs as desperation swirled and writhed inside him.

As suddenly as the flogger had greeted him, its presence seemed to disappear from the world. Empty air was the only thing that brushed against his back. Every inch of skin from his shoulders to his buttocks purred its pleasure.

Devon arched and squirmed as if he might somehow be able to discover the flogger's location with his wriggling. A cool palm came to rest in the middle of his back. Devon gasped. He tried to look over his shoulder.

His master's other hand came to rest on the back of his head. Fingers stroked through his hair, gentling him down, holding him in place.

"Hush."

The hand resting on Devon's back stroked over his heated skin, tenderly caressing him and making his whole body ache with more pleasure than it knew how to process.

"That's right," Mr. Templeton said. More words followed. They flowed over Devon, not imparting any real information, merely telling him the other man was there and everything was fine.

Mr. Templeton stepped forward. His clothes brushed against Devon's back. His sensitised skin screamed out its joy.

The older man's arms slid around his torso, stroking across Devon's chest as they pulled him back tighter against his body. Mr. Templeton's clothes rubbed against his back, making him gasp and arch against him. His wrists pulled at the leather as he tried to get closer to his master.

"Good boy."

The larger man's hand slid down Devon's body, past the crossing lengths of wood, and wrapped around his erection. Devon whimpered. He pressed back against him all the more, glorying in an entire world full of sensations both above and beneath his skin.

Mr. Templeton's grip moved up and down around his cock, tightening and relaxing as pre-cum smeared against the dominant's palm and slicked Devon's shaft.

Balanced right on the edge, Devon clung to the tiny scrap of control he still possessed as he desperately tried to wait for permission.

"Come."

Devon had never been more grateful to hear a word hit the air. He stopped trying to hold back. A wave of pleasure so intense it felt far more like pain than the kiss of any flogger ever could coursed through him. He tossed back his head. A scream filled the air as he came into the other man's hand.

Mr. Templeton's grip around him never eased, never hesitated. He kept on stroking him again and again, as Devon's hips thrust forward as far as they were able and finally fell still.

Silence descended on the room. The only proof that a scream had ever filled the air was the rawness in Devon's throat. He whimpered as Mr. Templeton's hand kept moving long after he'd have asked for it to stop if that had been an option. But it wasn't even a possibility that night. He couldn't have brought himself to refuse anything the other man was willing to offer him if his life had depended on it.

Finally, Mr. Templeton's hands fell away from him of their own volition. The cuffs disappeared a few seconds later, leaving Devon lost and all alone in the world, until Mr. Templeton's arm wrapped around him, steadying him as he stood naked in the centre of the playroom. His master turned Devon towards him, letting him lean against his body. A hand settled on the back of his head, encouraging him to rest his temple against the other man's shoulder, too.

"Hush."

The word seemed to seep under Devon's skin just as easily as the heat from the flogger had. It went straight to his heart and slowed the frantic beating.

Picking up his clothes as they passed the bench, Mr. Templeton carried them down the stairs as he led him from the room. Setting the garments neatly on the hallway table next to the phone, he walked Devon on into the living room.

With his head still spinning from adrenaline and afterglow, Devon's focus slowly began to return to him as he looked up at the older man.

Mr. Templeton smiled at him—a real, full smile. His knuckles brushed against Devon's cheek before he stepped back and put some distance between them.

Lacking an order to do anything else, Devon remained motionless where he'd been left as he watched the older man pick up a thick cushion and move it to rest on the floor at the base of an arm chair.

There was a table next to Devon. He rested his fingertips on the well polished surface as he sought for something to centre himself on. They brushed against something. He looked down. The book he'd brought in from the library.

"Come here, Devon. Bring your book with you."

His legs still more than a little unsteady, Devon followed the order. He crossed the room and settled himself on the cushion. Leaning back against the base of his master's chair, he found it was possible to lean his shoulder comfortably against the other man's leg and keep contact with him.

Devon looked down. His book rested on his lap. Desperate to please, he opened it and tried to read.

Mr. Templeton reached past him and gently closed it.

Devon glanced up at him, wondering if the other man was disappointed in him for being so fuzzy.

"There's no rush for that. Put it down. It'll still be there when you're ready for it."

"Yes, sir." The words were little more than a hoarse whisper.

Mr. Templeton turned away from him for a moment. He picked up something from beside his chair. A bottle of lemonade appeared in his hand as it came back into Devon's field of view.

The older man opened it and offered it to his submissive's lips.

It was only then that Devon realised how dry his throat was, how thirsty he was. He squirmed around and eagerly offered his lips up to the rim of the bottle. Just as Mr. Templeton was about to tip it up, Devon managed to see the world around him a little more clearly.

His gaze fell on the other man's crotch, where the fabric was disturbed by the line of his master's straining erection. Suddenly the lemonade wasn't important. He looked up to the other man's face. "May I—?"

Mr. Templeton shook his head. "This will do you more good at the moment."

Devon dropped his gaze.

"Later," the dominant promised. His fingers stroked through Devon's hair, pushing the messy blond strands back from his face.

"Yes, sir."

Devon offered his lips to the bottle again. The cool liquid slid down his throat, soothing the soreness his own cries had put there. A few moments passed. Mr. Templeton took the bottle away and set it aside.

Dropping his gaze, Devon wondered if later had arrived yet, if he'd be allowed to offer his master something in exchange for all the pleasure he'd given him, now.

Minutes ticked by slowly. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Mr. Templeton picking up his own volume. Leaning his head to one side, Devon let his temple fall against Mr. Templeton's knee. A moment later, a hand settled in his hair and slowly stroked through the strands again.

The older man's words from earlier that day came back to the forefront of Devon's mind then. *When you don't have any orders or tasks you may rest.*

Devon's eyes fell closed and he did as he'd been told.

* * * *

Four hours later

Propping himself on one elbow, Andrew Templeton stared down at the younger man for several long seconds, wondering how the hell he'd managed to resist bringing the boy to his bed months before.

As he silently watched the submissive sleep, his hand tightened into a fist beneath the bedclothes. Even then, in the stillness and peace that had settled over the house as night fell, Devon's parents' opinions of their son repeated around and around inside his head. Forcing his fingers to relax, he reached out and stroked his knuckles down the sleeping boy's cheek.

If there was only one thing he did in the world, he knew in that moment, that it would be to do everything in his power to keep that kind of pain out of Devon's life.

It was a strange sensation. Protectiveness and possession, lust and something that might actually be a bit like love. After so long spent thinking of nothing but his own needs and desires, it was also faintly terrifying.

The submissive stirred. He leaned into his master's touch, half awake and half asleep. Gathering the smaller man closer to him and encouraging him to rest his head against his chest, Templeton dipped his head and pressed a chaste kiss to the top of the slumbering submissive's head.

After so long with no one to think of but himself, the realisation that he now had someone in his life who needed him just as much he might need them was going to take more than a little getting used to.

* * * *

Saturday 5th June 2010

As the twelfth chime rang out, Mr. Templeton rose from his chair and picked up his briefcase.

Devon knew what that meant. He tried not to grin like too much of an idiot at the idea of visiting the older man's house again. But, even if he couldn't quite keep the smile from his face, he still managed to walk out into the drive and slide into the passenger seat of his master's car with perfect composure. He was quite proud of that.

It was only when they'd been in the car for several minutes and driven some distance that Devon realised they weren't taking the same route as they had last time they'd driven away from the office.

Glancing at the other man out of the corner of his eye, Devon shifted slightly in his seat. He tried not to look nervous, tried not to show any doubts about whatever his master's decision turned out to be.

They would go wherever his master wanted them to go. They would do whatever Mr. Templeton wanted them to do when they got there. A good submissive knew that. A good submissive didn't doubt his master. Faith wasn't much for the older man to ask of him in return for everything he'd done for him since they met, and it wasn't even as if it would be

blind faith. Mr. Templeton had never given him any reason to think he wasn't completely trustworthy.

Devon stared out through the windscreen for several seconds as he considered his options. Very slowly, his eyes fell closed. The world turned dark. Cautiously leaning his head back, Devon found the head rest and took a deep breath.

He didn't need to know where they were going. He didn't need to see where they were going either. That was his master's decision, his master's responsibility. All he had to do was trust, and follow his master's orders as he tagged along.

Within moments the submissive had lost track of the corners they'd turned. It didn't take much longer for him to lose all perspective of time. They could have been driving for minutes or hours. Devon still kept his eyes closed.

He didn't open them until the car stopped and the engine fell silent.

Devon blinked in the bright sunlight as he looked around. Tilting his head to one side, he looked up at the building Mr. Templeton had stopped alongside. He straightened his head, blinked, then looked again.

"I live there." He turned to his master.

The older man was half smiling again. "I'm aware of that. Go up to your flat and put some things in a bag to take to my house."

"Yes, sir." Devon opened the car door and stepped out onto the pavement. Being driven around with his eyes closed had to have addled his brain. There was no other reason why he'd want to turn back, peek into the car and say something like, "Would you like to come in, sir?"

Mr. Templeton regarded him in silence.

"I have coffee," Devon added. It was another bloody stupid thing to say. His master had to know that he had the right to go wherever the hell he wanted, and to drink anything he liked when he got there.

Devon stepped back, closed the door and turned towards the building, eager to follow the order, before he managed to keep the older man waiting for so long he'd decide to give up on him and drive away without him.

A sudden bleep behind him informed him a car had just been locked. Devon looked over his shoulder. Mr. Templeton walked around the car and joined him on his way into the building.

Unsure what to say as they rode up in the elevator, Devon studied their reflections in the mirrored doors.

It was as impossible as ever to try to work out what the other man was thinking from his expression. He didn't seem to be too annoyed. That was something to be grateful for at least. Devon pushed his hands deeper into his jeans pockets.

He was so lost in his thoughts and so busy cursing himself for his stupidity in inviting the other man in, he jumped as the lift jolted to a stop on the fifth floor.

The doors slid open. Devon stepped out into the hallway.

"It's this way, sir." He waved an arm to the right.

Mr. Templeton said nothing as he followed him down the corridor.

Devon walked more quickly, keen to reduce the time he had in which to make a fool of himself.

Unlocking the door to his flat, he stepped inside and quickly moved out of the small hallway to make room for his master.

Mr. Templeton followed him in and closed the door behind him. A few more paces were all it took for him to join Devon in what the marketing brochure had called the 'contemporary open plan layout'.

Devon let out a breath he hadn't realised he'd been holding, as he realised he'd remembered to put everything back in its rightful place before he left that morning. There were no dirty dishes left out. No clothes on the floor. No flaws for his master to pick him up on.

"I'll get that coffee, sir."

The kitchen wasn't much more than a corner of the other room. It was impossible for Devon to find any real privacy there in which to pull himself back together. All he could do was face the counter and take a deep breath.

Coffee.

He repeated the word to himself several times. Maybe if he just concentrated on that, he had a chance.

Taking his master's favourite blend from the cupboard above the counter, he carefully brewed up a mug, just as the other man liked it, and took it back into what passed for his living room.

"Thank you." Mr. Templeton smiled at him after he sipped it. "Very good."

A rush of relief mixed with pleasure at the compliment had a blush rushing to Devon's cheeks. He dipped his head in an effort to hide it.

"I should go pack that bag, sir," he muttered, turning away from him and quickly beating a retreat into the flat's only bedroom.

He was standing next to his bed, staring into an overnight bag without the damndest idea what his master expected him to put in it, when he heard a footfall behind him.

He remained exactly where he was as he sensed his master move closer.

"Devon?"

He froze as his master's hand came to rest on the small of his back. "Yes, sir?"

"If, for whatever reason, I took some insane dislike to your living arrangements, what do you think would happen?"

Devon continued to study his bag. "You'd tell me what I was doing wrong and how I could do better, sir?" he hazarded.

"Correct. And is that something you need to be afraid of?" His hand remained on Devon's back, the heat from his palm quickly soaking into his skin.

"No, sir."

"Good boy." Mr. Templeton's hand left him.

Devon sensed the older man walk back towards the bedroom door.

"Sir?" He spun around to face the other man. Mr. Templeton turned back towards him too.

"Is there anything in particular I should be packing?" Devon blurted out.

The dominant considered the question for a few seconds. "A few changes of clothes. A wash bag. Music. Books. Photographs. Whatever will make you feel at home."

"Yes, sir."

The other man nodded once, before he made his way back towards the living room.

Mr. Templeton wanted him to feel at home in his house. Devon felt that same pleased blush rush back to his cheeks. He smiled as he went back to his packing.

Minutes passed and he continued to put things in his bag, but as time went on, more and more of his attention strayed to wondering what his master might be doing in the adjoining room.

The moment the bag was full, Devon carried it into the living room. He found Mr. Templeton studying the beech shelves against the far wall.

"Did you choose these?" the older man asked. He sounded mildly impressed.

Devon shook his head as he ran his gaze over the artistically arranged pieces of abstract red glass and pottery. As much as he wished he could take credit for them, he couldn't bring himself to lie to his master. "I'm not good with things like that. There was a show home package thing. Pretty much everything came with the flat, sir."

He looked around the room then, as if seeing it for the first time. It was as blank and impersonal as Mr. Templeton's house was a complete representation of the older man's personality and taste.

Devon looked down, wondering what the older man must think of it, what he must think of a man who lived in such a soulless place.

It was neat and tidy, yes. But it could have belonged to any man on the planet who knew how to pick up after himself—any man who belonged to someone able to inspire him not to want live in the kind of mess the place had been before he'd first met Mr. Templeton.

"Is there something you wish to say?" Mr. Templeton asked him.

"No, sir," Devon whispered.

Even after he said that, the older man seemed to wait for him to say something else.

"I don't want to make excuses, sir."

"For what?"

Devon looked around the room. Right then he wished he had the balls to apologise for *everything*.

Mr. Templeton stepped forward and closed the gap between them. His fingers tucked under Devon's chin and encouraged him to look up.

The pain and the confusion in Devon's eyes tore at something in Templeton as their eyes met. Staring down at the smaller man, he wanted nothing more than to wrap his arms around him, pull him in close and tell him that everything would be well with the world for the rest of his life.

He stopped himself short before his new found inclination to sopiness took over completely.

"You have nothing to be ashamed of." He let the younger man see him turn his attention back to the room. His fingers stayed under Devon's chin, holding him in place, making sure the younger man's eyes remained on his master's face. "Nothing at all."

A little bit of assurance to give him the confidence to put more of a mark on his surroundings would obviously do him the world of good. But that would come with time. And it could hardly be considered the boy's fault anyway.

"I wish it was more like yours, sir."

Templeton stared down at the younger man in surprise. "In what way?"

"Your house is — it's exactly like you, sir."

Templeton let his fingers stroke up and down the younger man's throat as he thought about that.

"Yes, it is." He'd moulded it into something that was all about him over the last few years. Everything arranged just as he wanted it, with no allowances made for anything or anyone else.

"Did you pack your bag?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

Templeton nodded his approval.

Having someone in his life whom he cared about enough to stop insisting on having *everything* his own way would no doubt do him the world of good too.

Chapter Six

Saturday 7th August 2010

Devon let out a breath he hadn't even realised he'd been holding as his master pushed open the door to the playroom and finally stepped inside it for the first time in what felt like forever.

Quickly approaching the doorway, Devon waited politely on the threshold for permission to enter too. It wasn't immediately granted. He stood there and watched as the older man made a slow circuit around the room, calmly running his gaze over all his toys and his options, as if only then deciding what he'd like to play with that day. Devon's heart raced even faster, as it occurred to him that he could be deciding *if* he wanted to play that day.

He had to want to play. He had to.

Devon did his best not to let his desperation show as he stared into the room and tracked his master's progress.

It had been weeks. It felt like years, but even according to the calendar, it had been weeks since the older man had invited him in there to play. He couldn't have come that far today, only to change his mind at the very last moment.

"Come here, Devon. Close the door behind you."

Already naked since they'd risen from his master's bed that morning, Devon shivered as the cooler air that always seemed to linger in the playroom caressed his skin. The blocked up window stopped the sun entering the space. It made sense that it should be chilly, but that wasn't the only reason why a shiver ran down Devon's spine.

He made no attempt to move his hands in front of him and hide how much he loved the idea of being in there again. His master was hardly likely to miss the fact he was ram-rod hard whatever he did.

Standing neatly in the middle of the room, he studied his master's body language very intently, trying to work out what he was thinking. Mr. Templeton had his back to him as he took something out of a cabinet. But still, Devon thought, he seemed...relaxed...almost peaceful in there?

When the older man turned back to him, he had a pair of very wide cuffs in his hands and a slight smile on his lips. He fitted the cuffs around Devon's wrists without a word. They extended up over his palms and the backs of his hands as far as his fingers. The thickness of the padding made it almost impossible for him to bend his wrists.

Unsure what was going to happen next, Devon couldn't even try to help as his master moved away to fetch whatever else he intended to involve in their latest scene.

When a low stool was placed in the middle of the room, a nod from his master finally let Devon know there was something he could do to please the older man. He rushed forward and stepped up onto it.

"Raise your hands."

The ceiling was high. His fingertips didn't come close to it. But the cuffs brushed against the chain hanging down from a fitting bolted to the plasterwork above his head as if it had been measured especially for someone of his exact frame and build.

With his extra height, Mr. Templeton didn't need to stand on anything to lock his submissive's cuffs to the chain.

Devon stared up at the padlock as it clicked into place and his master checked its hold on him by tugging firmly at the chain. Apparently satisfied, he took half a step back.

Something touched one of Devon's toes. He looked down. Mr. Templeton's shoe rested between his bare feet, right on the edge of the low wooden stool. The highly polished surface distorted slightly, as if the older man's foot was moving inside it.

The stool shifted beneath Devon. His eyes snapped up and focussed on his master's face. His throat instantly dry with nerves, he parted his lips, but no words emerged.

"Is there something you wish to say?" Mr. Templeton prompted.

Devon closed his mouth and shook his head.

"Something you want to ask?"

He shook his head again. He even managed to scrape up a verbal answer to go with the gesture. "No, sir."

As he held the dominant's gaze, Devon felt something slowly begin to settle inside him. There was no need to ask him anything. He trusted his master. Mr. Templeton had never let him down, and he wasn't going to start now.

The stool moved beneath his feet once more. Devon tensed, but he kept his eyes up and locked with his master's.

Another tiny movement of the stool, and suddenly it was gone. It disappeared from beneath his feet as Mr. Templeton kicked it away. Devon's body dropped, just a fraction of an inch, as all his weight suddenly came to bear on his wrists.

Devon's legs automatically kicked out, desperately searching for any point of safety.

Mr. Templeton remained immediately in front of him. Pain shot through the submissive's toes as they kicked against something. Devon's eyes opened very wide as he realised he'd just struck his master, but his gaze never dropped.

His shoulders protested at the unfamiliar pressure on the joints, his heart raced so fast he was sure it couldn't manage to keep up with itself a moment longer, but somehow it did. And, very slowly, Devon began to scrape together some sort of self-control. He managed to still his legs. It was impossible to make his body instantly motionless. He swung gently as the momentum of his struggles slowly dissipated.

Silence fell over the room, to be disturbed by nothing other than Devon's gasping breaths.

"I'm sorry I kicked you, sir," he whispered.

Mr. Templeton shook his head, brushing the apology and the kick aside. "Hush."

Devon obediently hushed as the dominant's hand came to rest against his skin, just below his rib cage.

Every breath Devon dragged into his body pressed his diaphragm down against his master's hand. As Mr. Templeton stepped closer and stood to one side of him, he settled his other hand on Devon's back, steadying him, providing him with all the strength and security he could ever need.

Devon had no idea how long they remained there, neither of them moving, as his breaths slowly calmed and his heart ceased to race so frantically.

Although their bodies weren't touching, in the silent stillness, he became aware of his master's breaths and felt his body automatically try to follow them.

"That's right."

Devon closed his eyes as he relished the mild praise.

Just a second later, his master's hands left him.

He opened his eyes just in time to see Mr. Templeton leave his field of vision. Turning his head, Devon tried to look over his shoulder. His own arm was in the way. All he succeeding in doing was to set himself swinging all over again.

The dominant reappeared on the other side of him. His eyes ran over Devon's body, as it had so many times over the months, seeming to examine him for any flaws that might have appeared overnight. It was impossible not to squirm subtly under his assessment, and even the tiniest movement sent his whole body swaying and the chain above his head rattling, loudly relaying his weakness to his master.

Finally Mr. Templeton stepped forward. His fingertips trailed along Devon's cock, pulling a gasp from him. His hips instinctively tried to thrust forward and push his shaft into the older man's hand. The chains clanged. His cock still received nothing more than his master wished to bestow upon it.

A few more fingertip teases and he walked away again, out of the submissive's line of sight. Devon could almost have believed he was alone in the room, until slicked fingers slid against his buttocks.

He tried to part his legs and push out his arse in invitation. His movement couldn't have been symmetrical enough. He started to rotate slowly from his restraints making the room swirl around him. Trying to correct the movement only made it worse. Devon whimpered his frustration as he frantically tried to still himself, to turn himself back and regain his master's fingers.

Mr. Templeton didn't say anything. He just made him wait until he gently spun back into his original position and hung perfectly motionless before he gave his fingers back to the submissive. Devon held his breath, afraid that too much oxygen might start him spinning again.

He couldn't risk parting his legs as the dominant's fingers slid between his buttocks and worked their way inside his hole. Very slowly, they began to prepare him and work him open, sliding into his arse over and over again, deeper with each minute that passed.

Devon's breath escaped as a pleasure-filled moan as Mr. Templeton found his prostate. It was impossible for him to stay still then. He squirmed, trying to push back. The chains sang out as he began to sway. He lost his master's touch again.

He whimpered, closing his eyes to hide from his own weakness, mentally cursing himself for screwing up yet again.

Gradually, he realised something had changed within the room. Devon blinked his eyes open.

Mr. Templeton stood directly in front of him. His fly was undone, his hand wrapped around his condom covered shaft as he slicked it with extra lube. Devon's gaze dropped to watch, mesmerised by the other man's slow, rhythmical movements. His tongue flicked out to moisten his lips. A low moan escaped from the back of his throat as he realised there was no way in hell he'd be able to reach out to touch, to taste, to please his master in any way.

Eventually, he dragged his gaze back up to his master's face. He could keep the words back, but there was no way he could keep the pleading expression out of his eyes.

Mr. Templeton stepped forward. Reaching around him, he ran his hands down Devon's back. The submissive couldn't help but arch into the older man's touch then, but his master steadied him and stopped him swinging out of control.

There was still a trace of lube on one of his hands, slicking his fingers as his hand slid over Devon's arse. His master's hold on him slid down the backs of Devon's legs and pulled them up to wrap around the larger man's waist. The tip of Mr. Templeton's erection brushed against his hole as Devon squirmed and tried to get even closer to the other man with clumsy movements of his legs.

Devon bit his lip to keep his begging back, sure that his babbling would only annoy the older man. His master's face was right in front of him, his eyes as serious as ever as he guided Devon down onto his cock.

There was no way he could rush the dominant. All he'd ever succeed in doing if he tried was to lose what grip he had on him with his legs.

In tiny increments, Devon's master fed his cock into him. He gasped as the thick shaft stretched him open even further than the man's fingers had.

His teeth nipped at his bottom lip as he fought to adapt to the burning stretch more quickly. He met his master's eyes then. Even if he could hurry his own body along, he knew there was no way his master would be coaxed into quickening his pace.

Gradually, he relaxed and his body welcomed the other man inside him. As his head dropped back and pleasure filled him, Devon wriggled and managed to wrap his legs even more tightly around the other man's waist.

His master's hand palmed his arse, squeezing the tight, round muscles in his hands as he rocked his hips for the first time and buried his cock even further into Devon's arse.

Suddenly the burning ache in the submissive's shoulders didn't matter. The only things that he needed to think about were the pleasure rushing through him and his desperate attempts to try to offer some fraction of his joy back to the older man.

He tensed his muscles around the dominant's shaft again and again. Mr. Templeton moaned his appreciation as he rocked back and thrust into Devon once more. As he pulled his submissive closer, Devon's cock rubbed against the fabric of the older man's shirt, smearing pre-cum against the neatly ironed cotton.

Whimpering his pleasure, Devon tried his best to complement the rhythm his master set, but it was almost impossible for him to control his movements as he hung there. All the control rested with his master.

Suspended in mid air with the other man's cock deep inside him and his hands taking a tight grip on his body, Mr. Templeton became the only solid point of reference in Devon's world.

The cuffs around his wrists ceased to matter—the only thing that kept him safe and content and full of pleasure was the way his master held on to him.

"Sir..." That was the only word in his head.

He met his master's gaze just in time to see the pleasure rush through the older man's eyes as he jerked and ploughed his shaft in him to the hilt as he came, hard and fast. The dominant's hold on him tightened, his fingertips digging into Devon's flesh hard enough to leave marks that might even linger into the next day if the submissive was very lucky.

Gradually the older man's movements ceased, but Mr. Templeton still didn't break eye contact with Devon. Even as he stepped back and left him hanging there, the younger man's own erection still flourishing, curving back towards his stomach without any way of him to gain any friction against his aching shaft, Mr. Templeton held his gaze.

Turning his attention away for a moment, the dominant tidied up his clothes, disposing of the used condom and tucking his cock neatly away. That was all he needed to do to once more appear like the calm, collected businessman whom Devon had first met in the office so long ago.

Mr. Templeton hadn't changed at all. He'd just changed the man he owned beyond all recognition.

Devon closed his eyes and tried to gather together some kind of composure. He failed spectacularly, but a touch to his cheek informed him that his master wasn't angry with him.

Blinking his eyes open, Devon turned his face into his master's hand and kissed his palm. Mr. Templeton smiled at him then—one of those very rare real smiles that Devon had been lucky enough to receive from him over the last few weeks. Suddenly his own frustration didn't matter.

"Good boy."

Two words, one smile and everything was right with his world.

Templeton slowly took his hand away. As amazing as he looked strung up that way, it wouldn't do to leave him there too long—not on his first time, not when his joints weren't used to being put under that kind of tension.

Nudging the stool back under the submissive's feet, Templeton carefully undid the cuffs and guided the younger man to lower his arms.

A whimper escaped from the back of Devon's throat. His joints obviously didn't like that at all. His muscles appeared weak with submission as much as anything else. And Templeton had no doubt that the younger man's head was going to be spinning from it all for some time yet.

Sliding one hand behind Devon's knees and the other around his body beneath his arms, he easily lifted him off the stool. The boy's eyes opened very wide as he turned to him, but his arms quickly settled themselves around his master's neck.

In spite of his surprise, the younger man made no complaint as Templeton carried him down the stairs and into the living room. Lowering himself into an armchair while Devon was still in his arms neatly placed the submissive on his lap.

The boy hesitated then, apparently not sure what to do with himself.

"That show you like is going to start soon." Templeton nodded to the remote laying well within the other man's reach.

Devon hesitated.

"Put it on."

He reached out and followed his master's order.

As the rather appalling show began to play, Devon slowly relaxed into his master's embrace. Templeton smiled over the top of his head as he blocked out the racket from the television and gave all his attention to the man in his arms.

There was a curious pleasure, not in having to do things for another person, but in choosing to do things for them anyway. In having all the control in the world, and using it to make someone whom he cared for happy.

Templeton brushed his knuckles against the submissive's erection, gently teasing him as the younger man curled into his master's embrace, more content than ever.

Saturday 1st January 2011

"Tell your master what's wrong."

Devon looked up from his desk as he heard the order.

Mr. Templeton stood in the doorway and stared back at him in silence for a full sixty seconds.

Devon still didn't know what to say at the end of the minute. He dropped his attention back to the book he had been staring at and not reading for the last half an hour.

"Devon?" the older man prompted.

"If I do something I shouldn't do, sir..." His courage failed him and he trailed off.

Mr. Templeton took a seat on the sofa closest to where Devon was, in theory at least, working on his latest evening class assignment. "Are you asking me if you'll be punished or if you'll be disowned?"

"Disowned, sir," he admitted.

"That won't happen." The older man sounded so sure of himself, so sure of everything.

Devon nodded. That being the case, there wasn't really any reason for him to hold back any longer. If the worst that could happen was a punishment, it was worth the risk.

Reaching into the backpack full of study texts, he took out a carefully wrapped package. Quickly closing the gap between them, he knelt down by his master's feet.

"My first wages came through and...and it's been a year since we first met, sir," he blurted out, offering the present up to him.

Mr. Templeton took the parcel from him and glared down at it as if he'd never seen such a thing before.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have." All at once that was obvious. Devon reached out to take it back and remove it from the other man's sight.

Mr. Templeton took it briskly out of his reach. He stared at it some more.

Devon gazed at it too. In hindsight the carefully tied ribbon had probably been a mistake. His master wasn't a ribbon sort of guy—even if it was a navy blue ribbon the same colour as the older man's favourite suit.

Very slowly the dominant turned the parcel over in his hands, before untying the ribbon and carefully undoing the silver wrapping paper, to reveal a small black box, about three inches square.

Devon held his breath as Mr. Templeton finally opened that box and moved the tissue paper aside.

Gold sparkled as he lifted the pocket watch from its hiding place and held it up to the light to be inspected.

It had been a stupid idea. Devon could see that now. It wasn't his place to give his master presents. And a silly timepiece was the worst possible thing he could have chosen to buy for the other man. As Devon stared up at the shining surface of the watch's case, all that was obvious.

His gaze moved to the wristwatch that Mr. Templeton always wore.

"You don't have to use it or anything, sir. I just thought—" A fingertip came to rest on Devon's lips, silencing him.

"It's a beautiful present, Devon. Thank you."

Relief rushed through the submissive. He hadn't screwed up.

When Mr. Templeton smiled at him, Devon smiled back. Dropping his gaze, he shuffled his knees slightly on the carpet, not quite sure what to do now that he'd put himself in that position.

"I should get started on dinner, sir."

Mr. Templeton didn't call him back when Devon rose to his feet and left the room.

Quickly making his way to the kitchen, the submissive carefully consulted the notes he'd made after the older man had taught him the spaghetti recipe the week before.

Having something to do with his hands helped put his mind at ease a little—it helped to reassure him that he had made progress in the last year. Twelve months ago he wouldn't have had a clue where to start. A year ago he'd probably have been drunk out of his mind at...

He looked at his wrist watch. Six o'clock on a Saturday evening. He shook his head. He still might not be worthy of the older man's attention, but at least he could take comfort in

the fact that the man the dominant had turned him into was a damn sight better man than he'd been a year before.

* * * *

An hour later

Devon frowned as a light, musical ringing sound filled the air. He looked around the kitchen for the source of it. It didn't sound anything like the smoke alarm he'd set off a few weeks before, but his attention still went to the cooker first. It was only when he glanced across the kitchen table and his gaze fell on his master that he realised that the older man was the font of the sound.

Mr. Templeton didn't seem the least surprised. Reaching into his jeans, he took out his new pocket watch. Without the denim to muffle the sound, it sung out clearly as it chimed in the hour.

Devon blushed and turned his attention back to his spaghetti.

Mr. Templeton didn't say anything until they'd both finished their meal and all the dishes had been washed and put away.

Hesitating in the hallway, Devon silently prayed that he was going to be invited to the playroom, but the older man walked past that doorway without even glancing at it.

"Tomorrow."

Devon turned his head. His master was standing in the doorway leading into the living room, staring back at him.

"Sir?"

"We'll play tomorrow," the older man promised.

"Yes, sir."

* * * *

Sunday 2nd January 2010

"At the stroke of twelve on this day and on every day from now on, you will belong to me for twenty-four hours. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir." Devon blinked at him. He ran through what his master had actually said. His mind went blank. "Pardon, sir?"

"At the stroke of twelve on this day and on every day from now on, you will belong to me for twenty-four hours." Mr. Templeton repeated, perfectly calmly.

Devon ran the numbers over in his head. He'd been getting good marks in his maths assignments, but he still double checked them. "That means all the time, sir," he hazarded.

"Yes, Devon. It does."

Looking up at his master, Devon nibbled on his bottom lip. His feet shuffled on the rug in front of the fireplace in Mr. Templeton's living room as he tried to wrap his mind around the idea.

"All the time," he repeated, not so much asking a question as just needing to hear the words out loud again. "I'd belong to you all the time."

"Yes," Mr. Templeton said. "All the time."

Devon looked around the room as if he'd never seen it before, imagining how that would be. Mr. Templeton was half smiling at him when he looked back to his face, although there was also a touch of tension around his eyes that Devon had often seen when he first arrived at his master's side, but which rarely lingered there when they were together now.

"Leave your clothes on the table, and come sit with me." His master turned away from him then, and settled himself on the sofa opposite the fire.

The familiarity of the order gave Devon a concrete point of reference in a world that had suddenly shifted under his feet.

Quickly taking off the clothes he'd worn in Mr. Templeton's garden as he started to learn how to help him look after it, Devon crossed the room and knelt at his master's feet.

"Tell me what you're worried about."

"What if I screw up?" Devon blurted out. He was working his arse off and managing one hour of doing well each day, along with one full day on the weekends. The chances of that extending into twenty-four hours every day had to be so slim they'd be nonexistent.

"It's very possible you will," Mr. Templeton said. "And when that happens, we'll deal with it. I'll set out the rules I expect you to follow. If you break those rules, I'll expect you to accept the consequences—just as I do now."

"Yes, sir."

“How I’ll treat you and what you can expect from me will remain exactly the same as it has always been, Devon. I’ll look after you, and teach you, and do what I can to make sure you fulfil all your potential. But, it’s important you understand that even if we’re together for the rest of our lives, I’ll still be your master, not your...your boyfriend, or anything else you might imagine.”

Devon blinked at the other man. For just a moment, he tried to imagine Mr. Templeton as something other than exactly what the man he was. He shook his head at the possibility.

The atmosphere changed slightly. He sensed the strain in the older man double and redouble again.

“I wouldn’t want you to be anyone other than you, sir,” Devon rushed out.

Mr. Templeton offered him one brisk nod.

Devon dropped his gaze to the tiny patch of floor between them and tried to make his brain work.

Eventually Mr. Templeton tucked a knuckle under his chin and made him look up. “Is this what you want, Devon?” he asked, carefully studying his expression as if he wanted to search out any hint of doubt.

He wouldn’t find any doubts. Devon met his master’s gaze and held it. As quietly terrifying as the whole idea was, he didn’t have any doubts about what his answer should be. If there was any chance of him getting exactly what he wanted from life, he had to take it.

“Yes, sir, I do want this – so much.”

His master gave him just one simple nod in return. As easily as that, Devon had the distinct impression he’d given complete control of his body and possession of his soul to another man, to his master. It was done.

Adrenaline and endorphins rushed through him, making him light-headed. His mind span with pleasure.

He belonged to his master. No time limit, no cut off point. He belonged to his master. Full stop!

Devon had no idea what to do next. Instinct kicked in. He looked up at the older man in the hope that Mr. Templeton would tell him.

The dominant smiled and held out his hand. “Up here.”

Devon cautiously rose from his knees and moved to the seat next to the older man.

"That's right," his master praised gently, guiding him to move closer and sit right next to him.

Devon glanced up. Their eyes met and suddenly Devon couldn't look away. He'd never quite grown used to being the centre of that sort of attention, and Mr. Templeton's focus upon him had never lessened over the months they'd spent together.

A knuckle came to rest under his chin to keep his head up. He remained perfectly still as his master leant forward and brought their lips together. Devon gasped as their mouths met for their very first kiss.

The older man's lips were strong against his. There was no hesitation as Mr. Templeton's tongue slid into his mouth and took instant possession of him. As they turned on the sofa, Devon reached up and settled his hands on the older man's shoulders to keep himself steady.

He whimpered as his master's tongue brushed against his. His fingers fisted against his master's shirt. The hand that had rested beneath his chin moved around behind his skull and threaded into his hair, holding his head back at the perfect angle as the dominant deepened the kiss.

Devon moaned his pleasure and tightened his grip on the other man's shoulders, savouring each moment. He bucked into his master's hand as fingers suddenly encircled his cock.

It had been so long since he'd been allowed to come, and he belonged to his master, and the dominant's tongue was laying claim to his mouth. He squirmed on the sofa, trying to stay still and simply accept his lover's touch, but finding himself entirely unable to do that. Within seconds he was close to coming. His hands clenched and unclenched against his master's shoulders as he tried to find some extra bit of self control that he hadn't been aware of possessing before.

Suddenly Mr. Templeton pulled away. Before Devon could scream out a protest, another word hit the air, one spoken by the other man.

"Come."

The word bypassed Devon's brain and went straight to his cock. By the time the dominant's lips returned to his, Devon was already spilling into the older man's hand. Some tiny part of his brain registered the sensation of cum falling on his bare skin and knew it had

to be staining his master's clothes too. But far more of his brain was spiralling up through heights of pure bliss he hadn't even guessed at the existence of until that minute.

He gasped for breath as Mr. Templeton pulled back and looked down at him. It wasn't in him to resist or feign a kind of strength he didn't feel right then. When his master's hand guided him to lean forward and rest his head on the older man's shoulder, he was more than willing to do so.

He was vaguely aware of Mr. Templeton reaching past him for a wipe and cleaning his sticky hand, but the dominant didn't immediately order him back onto the floor and Devon had absolutely no intention of putting any extra distance between them until he was commanded to do so.

His master touched his cheek. Blinking open his eyes, Devon looked up at the other man. Then, of all the embarrassing things to do, he blushed.

Mr. Templeton chuckled and stroked his flushed cheek, guiding him to rest his face against his shoulder and lean into the solid strength of his body once more.

Minutes passed in silence. The submissive's brain started to work again. As much as he loved resting in his master's arms, Devon had to know, he had to speak up.

"Sir...?" As soon as he began, he trailed off, suddenly not sure if he really wanted to ask the question or not. It wouldn't do to let one kiss go to his head and make him think he could ask his master silly things whenever he felt like it.

"I've never been angry with you for asking a question, Devon. I'm not going to start now," his master promised, idly stroking his fingers up and down his back.

"Why me?" Devon blurted out. "That night in the club, sir. Why did you give the note to me and not someone else?"

"Because no one else in the bar was you," his master said very simply. "You have no idea how rare such a perfect submissive is, do you?"

Devon glanced at him. He might be a lot of things, but he knew damn well he wasn't perfect.

"As soon as I saw you, I knew you had the potential to be incredible if someone would only take the time and give you a little bit of direction. Without any sort of guidance, some submissives tend to drift rather aimlessly."

"That's what I was doing," Devon said, resting his head on his master's shoulder again, wrapping himself in the certainty his master provided for him.

"Yes," Mr. Templeton agreed. "A submissive without a master is almost as bad as a master without a submissive. Neither tends to do well without the other."

"You were doing well, sir," Devon corrected quickly.

His master pressed an unexpectedly tender kiss to the top of his head. "In some ways, perhaps. Dominants don't tend to become drifters as much as they become complete bastards. I don't think you know how much I've looked forward to noon over the last few months. Dominants need someone to look after, someone to love, just as much as everyone else."

A glance up at Mr. Templeton told Devon that he was perfectly serious. His master loved him. He parted his lips, the pent up declaration desperate to finally be allowed out. At the last moment he hesitated, not sure if he was allowed to say it.

Mr. Templeton just nodded his permission.

Devon swallowed. "I love you too, sir." They were barely a whisper, but they still made his master smile and brush their lips together once more.

At that moment, something broke the calm quiet. Devon's gaze dropped to his master's pocket as the kiss ended. The chimes finished their approach to one o'clock as the older man pulled out the watch and flicked open the case.

He hated the one o'clock chimes so much—almost as much as he'd grown to love the sound of the twelve o'clock chimes. Every muscle in his body tensed as he stared down at the gold and Mr. Templeton's fingers continued to stroke through his hair.

The short toll of one finished. The watch, and the whole world, fell silent.

"If you intend to try and hold your breath until noon tomorrow, you're going to make yourself very uncomfortable very quickly," Mr. Templeton whispered in his ear.

Devon looked up at his master. He let out a breath he hadn't realised he'd been holding. "I'm really allowed to stay, sir?"

Andrew Templeton smiled down at his submissive. "Yes, you are."

Devon blinked at him. He nibbled at his bottom lip.

"If you want something, ask," Templeton prompted, when it became obvious no words would be spoken if he didn't.

"A few more minutes here, sir?" Devon asked, very softly, as he looked at where they sat together on the sofa.

Templeton nodded. "Just a few then."

He quickly settled his head on his master's shoulder as if that was all he could ever want to do for the rest of his life. Templeton gathered him closer into his arms and only half pretended he was doing that entirely for his submissive's benefit.

Devon's cheek moved against Templeton's shoulder as the younger man smiled to himself. Templeton smiled over the top of his head too.

A year to the day. Whatever the submissive's less than sober recollections might be, it was a year ago in the very early hours of that morning that he'd finally given in to the temptation to approach the boy. And now the submissive finally belonged to his master—for twenty-four hours, from the stroke of twelve on that day and on every day to come.

About the Author

Kim Dare is a twenty-seven year old full time writer from Wales (UK). First published in December 2008, Kim has since released over thirty BDSM erotic romances.

While the stories range over male/male, male/female and all kinds of ménage relationships and have included vampires, time travellers, shape-shifters and fairytale re-tellings, they all have three things in common – kink, love and a happy ending.

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G-A-Y: Gay Since Today
G-A-Y: Gay Pride
G-A-Y: Gay Man Seeks Same
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G-A-Y: Gay Best Friend
G-A-Y: Gay Day! Gay Day!
G-A-Y: Gay-ish
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Perfect Timing: Silent Night
Perfect Timing: Time to Do
Perfect Timing: Three Minute Man
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