

A CAPITOL AFFAIR

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romance

A Capitol Affair

A Ravenous Romance™ Modern Love™ Original Publication

By Jamaica Layne

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Ravenous Romance™

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This book is a work of fiction, and any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

Chapter One

“Shit, shit, *shit*.”

I stared at the rolling news ticker on my computer screen in disbelief. Sen. Howard Grayle, the conservative Republican senior senator from North Dakota—and my boss—had just been caught with his pants down.

Literally.

Apparently, Sen. Grayle—one of the most right-wing members of the Senate and an avid critic of gay rights—spent the evening prior sampling the pleasures of cheap male hustlers who worked the hiking trails at Rock Creek Park. Conservative, stuffed-shirt (and married) gay-rights-hater or not, it seemed Sen. Grayle liked his blowjobs to come from greasy, desperate heroin addicts at 3 a.m.

Only problem was, the greasy, desperate heroin addict the senator hired the night before was an undercover cop with a film crew. Grainy footage of the senator in a decidedly non-“family values” position was all over the news media.

Take a super-right-wing senator, add in some illicit gay sex, and sprinkle liberally with a slow newsday and America’s appetite for sex-soaked tabloid journalism----it all added up to a public relations disaster.

Shit.

After 10 years in the business, there was hardly a public-relations disaster in Washington I couldn’t clean up with a well-written press release and a few hot sound bites. That was why Sen. Grayle hired me away from Rep. Dwight Harrison’s office in the first place. I had saved Rep. Harrison’s political career when he got caught cheating on his second wife with his 20-year-old stepdaughter. Just a few vague terrorist-threat stories in the media, and voila! The networks spent enough time trying to chase down the questionable leads I’d dug up on the Internet that the public forgot all about Rep. Harrison’s little indiscretion. He won re-election soon after.

The only ethic a Washington public-relations professional has to worry about sticking to

these days is doing everything possible to make and keep her employer *famous* rather than *infamous*.

...And I do mean *everything*.

In my tenure, I've penned fake press releases, telephoned radio and TV call-in shows pretending to be a "concerned citizen" in order to name-drop my employers on the air; and bribed newspaper and magazine editors with boxes of Beluga caviar and expensive champagne in exchange for favorable headlines. I even gave the media coordinator at PBS' "Washington Week" full use of my car one weekend in the hopes he'd give Sen. Grayle 15 minutes of airtime to discuss his proposed Grayle-Rileman bill legalizing gambling nationwide. The media coordinator wrecked my car, then canceled Sen. Grayle's spot at the last minute. The bill failed.

My efforts to generate press attention for bosses didn't always work; but they worked often enough for me to keep trying. The seriousness of Sen. Grayle's latest public gaffe was calling for some very extreme PR measures indeed—even by my standards.

The one line I hadn't yet crossed in my PR career was using sex as a weapon in the fight for positive media attention. But I knew I just might have to cross that threshold very soon. Sen. Grayle had made such a public ass of himself that going horizontal with at least one powerful Washington news editor might be the only way for me to keep my job.

If that didn't work, there was always Starbucks. They had plenty of openings for eight-dollar-an-hour baristas.

"I should probably just go kill myself now," I muttered.

Rebecca, my cubicle mate in Sen. Grayle's office, looked up from her game of computer solitaire. "Why?"

"You obviously haven't heard."

Rebecca cracked her gum and booted up another solitaire match. "Heard what?"

"Our boss got caught buying blowjobs from boys in Rock Creek Park last night."

Rebecca stopped mid-chew. "What?"

"You heard me. Turn on the TV. They're having a field day with this."

Rebecca flipped on the office plasma screen, which we kept perpetually tuned to CNN. Sen. Grayle's chiseled, aging WASP face and silver crew cut were all over it. The screen flipped back and forth between footage of the senator pulling it out and his mugshot. He was arrested for solicitation.

Things were not looking good for his re-election campaign. *At this rate*, I thought, *I can forget about Starbucks, too.*

I turned up the volume on the TV as the news announcer said Sen. Grayle was still waiting in jail for someone to bail him out, his wife refusing to come to his aid.

"You know that means he'll be calling one of *us* to bail him out," Rebecca quipped. She would know. As Sen. Grayle's personal secretary, she'd suffered such indignities as scraping the senator's vomit off the floor of a limousine when he got drunk on Tequila at President Bush's second inauguration party; and running telephone interference between Mrs. Grayle and the senator's three known mistresses.

Rebecca poured herself a cup of strong coffee and sighed. "Having worked her for almost six years," she said, "I can say with total sincerity that the man is a sex fiend. But this is the first I've heard about him having a thing for boys."

"It's always the ones you least expect," I said.

"I guess so." Rebecca shut down her solitaire game and pulled up Sen. Grayle's online media directory for me. "I guess this means you're going to want to start damage control with the press right away, Jasmine," she said.

I sighed and bit my lip. "Of course. Not that it's going to do any good."

I scanned Sen. Grayle's directory of media contacts, which he and a whole series of PR reps before me spent years cultivating. Grayle had been in Washington more than 30 years, after all; and I'd spent the past two working to refine his image with his existing stable of press contacts, not trying to build up new ones. *A mistake*, I realized then. Grayle was going to need all the friends he could get in the media; and the fact was, he didn't have enough. It would only be a matter of time before almost every editor, journalist and broadcaster in Grayle's tried-and-true

directory would abandon him—or at best, make him their latest punch line.

There was only one name in that press directory I could possibly count on in a crisis like this.

Rodney Doyle, editor-in-chief of the *Beltway Times*.

Rodney Doyle was king barracuda in Washington's veritable sea of razor-toothed press predators. His paper was the lead rag when it came to hyping up right-wing politics and tearing down liberals. A rich wiz kid from an old New England family, Doyle founded the paper right out of college by cashing in his trust fund in the early 1990s. He built the *Beltway Times* into the highest-selling conservative political paper nationwide within five years. No Republican could get elected to anything—not even to his local wastewater-treatment department—without the *Beltway Times*' endorsement.

Doyle was also a fiery political commentator who appeared frequently on television and had his own high-rated syndicated radio program and two dozen national bestsellers to his credit. Doyle's huge media presence, magnetic personality, and red-hot political rhetoric could turn the tide of public opinion any way he wanted.

And Rodney Doyle wasn't afraid of weaving his own personal brand of fantasy into a very stretched-out version of the truth if that's what got him the results he was looking for. The Democrats could thank Rodney Doyle and the *Beltway Times* for being shut out of the White House for eight years, among other things.

There was no level too low for the paper to stoop. The *Beltway Times* was America's closest counterpart to an old-school British tabloid; it seemed no scandal was too sordid for the paper's pages as long as it had at least *something* to do with Washington's elected officials. The paper used scandal (preferably sexual) whenever and wherever it could to manipulate the nation's political winds in whatever direction Rodney Doyle wanted them to go.

His *spinmeister* skills were so sharp, in fact, he even managed to make over Monica Lewinsky from sleazy tramp into glorious political savior during the Clinton impeachment scandal.

It went without saying Rodney Doyle was a brilliant, slimy bastard.

Or so I'd heard, anyway. I'd never actually *met* the man in person before. Senator Grayle had never needed more than a routine endorsement from the *Beltway Times* until now. Sen. Grayle was suddenly up to his wrinkled, old-man balls in the biggest sex scandal to hit Washington in years. His career was in deep shit. And if I couldn't help him, so was mine.

The very thought of meeting Rodney Doyle face-to-face made little beads of sweat start creeping out on my forehead. It wasn't just because the guy was a slick, sleazy, power-broking bastard. There was another side of Rodney Doyle that intimidated the hell out of me: I'd seen Rodney Doyle on television enough times to know the man was drop-dead gorgeous. He had quite the reputation as a ladies' man; with a special affinity for young, attractive Congressional aides.

I was a female Congressional aide, but that was where the similarities between me and Rodney Doyle's infamous string of Washington conquests ended. At 34, I was not exactly young; and as a plump Size 14 with mousy brown hair and freckled skin, certainly not what he'd consider attractive. The chance of Rodney Doyle finding me good-looking enough to exchange sexual favors so I could save my boss' career was roughly equivalent to the Canadian Army's chance of conquering the world by force of arms.

Still, the very notion of seeing Rodney Doyle in the flesh already had my panties in a pretzel. The fact I hadn't had sex in the two years I worked 80-hour weeks for Senator Grayle certainly wasn't helping matters.

Oh, God.

Rebecca tapped me on the shoulder. "Jasmine, are you okay?"

"What?"

"You look a little red in the face. Do you need an Aspirin or something?" Rebecca rooted around in her bottom desk drawer, where I knew she stored samples of every over-the-counter drug from Advil to Zyban.

"I'm fine," I panted. "Just, you know, a little stressed out."

And a little turned on.

Rebecca didn't look convinced. She went to the water cooler and drew me an icy-cold cup. "Take this," she said, handing me two Advil. "I know you'll probably be pulling an all-nighter on this one."

"And then some." I scanned my packed Outlook calendar for the day and canceled all my appointments. There was only one place I needed to go in a crisis like this. "Rebecca," I said, "do me a favor?"

"Sure thing."

I printed out Rodney Doyle's contact information and handed the sheet to her.

"Rebecca, I want you to use all your sweet-talking telephone skills to get me a private appointment with Rodney Doyle over at the *Beltway Times*. Preferably for this afternoon. Think you can do that?"

Rebecca's eyebrows rose. "Rodney Doyle? The meanest, toughest editor in town? The king barracuda himself? Are you *really* gonna go to him for help with this mess? Are you sure that's a good idea, Jasmine?" Rebecca looked worried. "His newspaper is *so* sleazy—"

"Look, we're basically out of options as far as the press is concerned. Doyle's the only guy left in town who can even possibly help us at this point. And since I'm sure you enjoy having a job as much as I do, I think we should at least give him a try. Will you make the call or not?"

Rebecca's expression softened. "Sure, I can make the call. But I thought you preferred to set up all your press meetings yourself."

More sweat beads broke out on my forehead. "True. But this is sort of a special situation. I need someone with a softer touch on the phone than I can manage." A lie, of course. I couldn't exactly tell Rebecca I might have an orgasm on the phone if I tried calling Rodney Doyle myself.

I stood up. "Rebecca, um, excuse me for a moment. Let me know if you can make that appointment with Mr. Doyle."

I headed for the ladies' room in serious need of release.

I went into the handicapped stall—plenty of room to maneuver—and locked the door behind me. My right hand went straight to ground zero, already slick and sweet. My left hand pulled

down my stockings and skirt and then went straight for my boobs, which I expertly popped out of their underwire 38D cups and began to stroke. My nipples were already rock-hard. I ran my middle finger back and forth over my clit, sending that little bundle of nerves over the edge in no time at all.

“Oh, God, yeah,” I cried, not at all worried about who might hear me. I came almost immediately, shaking and vibrating and kicking the stall door. But I didn’t stop there. I rubbed all my creases and crevices, spreading my juices as far and wide as they would go. I came again almost without effort. It still wasn’t enough.

I needed something big and hard to ram itself right up inside me. Unfortunately, the closest thing available was my right middle finger. My vibrator was at home in my bedside drawer, loaded with dead batteries and collecting dust. I just hadn’t had the time or desire to use it in more than a year. Dejected, I rearranged my clothing and traipsed out of the stall to wash my hands. I ran directly into Rebecca. She looked a bit afraid.

“Jasmine,” she said in a hushed voice, “pardon me for asking, but what on *Earth* were you doing in there?”

“Um, nothing,” I lied. “Just, um, freshening up.”

“Riiiiight,” Jasmine chuckled. “I just came in here to tell you I was able to set something up with Rodney Doyle. He’s very busy, and would only agree to see you if you go to his office right now. You need to get there no later than two o’clock or you’ll miss him.”

I glanced at my watch: 1:45 p.m. Doyle’s office was on K Street—almost three miles away, and a good 20-minute drive in slow afternoon traffic. Getting there by 2 p.m. would be an impossible task. I was sure Rodney Doyle knew this full well when he made the appointment. “Call Rodney Doyle back and tell him I’m on my way,” I said, running out of the bathroom and to my cubicle to grab my coat and purse.

Chapter Two

I got lucky for once. The first cab I hailed was driven by a man who knew how to beat the worst D.C. traffic. He swooped around other cars, jumped curbs, ran stop signs, and less than five minutes later dropped me off in front of the looming *Beltway Times* building on K Street.

I checked my watch: 1:52 p.m. I had exactly eight minutes to get inside, take the elevator to the penthouse office suite, and convince Rodney Doyle to save my boss' career.

I tipped the cabbie a fiver for his efforts and swept into the building's swank marble lobby. A grouchy-looking security guard blocked the door. "Do you have an appointment?" he growled at me, looking official and rude at more than 200 pounds of muscle.

"I'm here to see Rodney Doyle. My appointment's at two."

The huge security guard looked me up and down, frowned, and rested his left hand on his gun while he used his right to check his register book. "Says here that Rodney Doyle don't have no two o'clock appointment."

"He does now. My secretary just set it up." I checked my watch again and tapped my foot incessantly. I was running out of time.

The guard punched an extension into his security phone with his thick, meaty fingers. He hung up after a quick conversation and grunted.

"You're clear," he said. "Sign the register and take this badge. Go up to the eighteenth floor, show the badge, and they'll let you in."

"Thank you." By now I was sweating buckets, and my panties were swimming in my own juices. I didn't know what had me turned on more: the huge hulk of a man behind the security desk, or the fact I was about to meet Rodney Doyle.

"Ma'am," the guard said, "you better get going. Mr. Doyle don't like to be kept waiting."

I walked to the elevator, passed my electronic security badge over the scanner, and was off.

I did a quick mirror-check on the elevator doors and discovered I looked quite the tramp. My

blouse and skirt were rumpled and creased from my solo romp in the bathroom stall. My mascara had run a bit, giving me little raccoon eyes. And the apples of my cheeks were covered with a textbook sex flush. *Ack*. I was about to beg the most powerful newspaper editor in Washington for a break, and I was going to do it looking like a mousy, pudgy, horny tramp. But it was too late for me to freshen up. I smoothed the creases of my blouse and skirt as best I could with my sweaty palms, rubbed at the mascara smudges with my fingers, and hoped for the best.

The elevator doors slid open to reveal a huge penthouse office suite. The far wall was floor-to-ceiling smoked glass, the middle of which held a door that read “RODNEY DOYLE: PRIVATE”. Across from me behind a large gleaming desk sat a very glamorous receptionist.

“You must be Jasmine Rand,” she cooed, looking me up and down with noticeable distaste. She couldn’t have been older than 20. Her Size 0 frame was poured into a tight-fitting Prada suit; meaning she was either grossly overpaid, or had a major sugar-daddy. “Mr. Doyle is expecting you. Right this way.”

I followed the tiny woman to Rodney Doyle’s imposing glass door. “Good luck,” she chirped, opening the door slowly while looking me up and down again. She turned on her kitten heel and went back to her perch.

A booming voice called tome from the seemingly empty office. “What are you waiting for, Kingdom Fucking Come?”

Kingdom Fucking Come? Interesting choice of words.

I stepped gingerly into the office, looked around, and saw no one.

“Funny,” the voice boomed again. “I would have expected you to come groveling on your hands and knees, Ms. Rand. But I suppose that’s not your style. I bet you prefer to do things standing up. Come. Come, please.”

The number of double entendres in that statement was ridiculous.

Who talks like this in real life? I wondered.

“Excuse me,” I said to the empty air, “but where are you?”

“Over here.” One of the mirrors turned. Out of nowhere popped Rodney Doyle—or rather, a

dozen Rodney Doyles. He was reflected 12 times over in a wall of mirrors. I couldn't tell which one was real.

"What the hell is this, a joke?" I asked.

I felt a light tap on my shoulder and spun around. The flesh-and-blood Rodney Doyle stood just behind me, even more gorgeous in the flesh than he was on television or reflected in a dozen creepy mirrors. He was a veritable Greek god. Six-foot-four, hazel eyes, sandy blonde hair, chiseled features; a barrel-like chest, and biceps so thick they nearly burst out the sleeves of his custom-tailored shirt. Rodney smelled of musk and expensive aftershave. His face was spread wide in a glistening, perfect smile.

"Sorry if my little mirror trick upset you," he said. "I've been into mirror tricks since I was a kid. My mom rented me a copy of *The Lady From Shanghai* when I was fourteen and I loved the hall of mirrors scene so much that when I grew up and got rich, I had one built into my office."

"*The Lady From Shanghai*?" I asked. "Sorry, I'm not following."

"It's an old Orson Welles movie. Orson Welles used a hall of mirrors to subdue Rita Hayworth during a shootout. I find it works well at subduing everyone who comes into my office."

"Well, it didn't *subdue* me. It just freaked me out."

"One and the same," Rodney said, motioning for me to sit in one of the massive chairs across from his desk. "So, Ms. Rand, I assume you're here to beg me to save your ass?"

"I'm not here on my own behalf. I'm here to ask you to help Senator Grayle."

He laughed. "Senator Grayle is beyond help at this point. His career ended the minute he propositioned those hustlers. I don't know why you think I can do anything to change that."

I knew I had to appeal to Rodney's enormous ego somehow, or I'd be sunk before I even started. "Surely you wouldn't give up that easily," I cooed. "After all, you and your paper have the power to turn public opinion any way you want. You even turned Monica Lewinsky into a saint for a while. You're a media genius, or so everyone says. This ought to be a piece of cake for you."

More booming laughter. Rodney's electric blue eyes twinkled. "Flattery will get you nowhere, my dear," he said. "I think far too highly of myself already."

I scoffed. "That's obvious. It's a miracle that there's any air left for me to breathe in here, given the size of your head."

Rodney blinked. "Let me level with you, Ms. Rand. I know that I *can* help Senator Grayle. But at this point, I don't see any reason why I *should*." He walked over to a massive walnut cabinet and opened its doors, revealing a miniature bar. "Scotch on the rocks?" he asked, pouring himself one.

"I don't like hard liquor."

Rodney ignored this and poured me a brimming highball from an expensive-looking bottle. "Ms. Rand, if you want to play with the big boys, the first thing you need to do is to drink with them."

"Call me Jasmine, please." I took a tiny sip from the glass. To my surprise, I found the strong liquor to my liking. "This is very good."

"It should be, for eight hundred bucks a bottle. So tell me, *Jasmine*, what do you think about Senator Grayle's latest indiscretion? I know, as I'm sure you do, Senator Grayle is no stranger to indiscretions. But this is the first I'm aware of his open breach of the law."

I took another sip. The booze made my throat tingle as it went down. Little waves of warmth swam through my blood. I crossed my legs. "It doesn't matter what *I* think of it," I said. "I'm a PR staffer, not a judge. My job is to make the whole thing go away so Senator Grayle can be re-elected."

Rodney's eyebrows rose. "Surely you don't believe that's possible."

"I have to believe it. Otherwise, I'm out of a job."

"Quite a conundrum." Rodney sat down at his massive desk. "Ms. Rand—"

"Jasmine, please," I interrupted.

He ignored me. "*Ms. Rand*, to be perfectly honest, what happened today is hardly a surprise to me. I often wondered if my paper would have the opportunity to dish on one of Senator

Grayle's, shall we say, *unique* tastes. But he was far too good at keeping that part of his life under wraps from the press. I knew about it, of course; but nobody at my paper was ever able to catch him in the act. Not that we haven't tried, believe me."

My eyes widened; that news surprised even me. From what I understood, *the Beltway Times* was only interested in making *Democrats* look bad. "I never knew the *Times* was interested in trashing die-hard Republicans like Senator Grayle," I said.

"These days, the *Beltway Times* is interested in anything that will help sell papers," Rodney replied. "It's a very tough business now—much tougher than it used to be. Senator Grayle's private life was ripe for the picking. It was only a matter of time before he made a mistake like this." Rodney leaned back in his chair and examined his fingernails. "At some point, I suppose even a connoisseur like Grayle can get bored with the kinkiest, most expensive sex-for-hire Washington has to offer. The only reason I can think of for him taking such a risk is for the thrill of it."

"What do you mean?"

Rodney rolled his eyes, as if I should have known what he meant already. "Maybe this is news to you, Ms. Rand, but your boss is a total sex fiend; though cheap male hustlers in Rock Creek Park is slumming for him. He's always preferred exclusive private sex clubs and the high-class bondage scene in the past."

My eyes flew wide. "How do you know all of this?"

Rodney swallowed his drink in one gulp and smirked. "I make it my business to know everything that happens in this town. Plus, Grayle and I run in some of the same, shall we say, circles."

I felt more blood flowing to my nether parts. "I see."

"I suppose you're wondering what it would take for me to help you," Rodney said. "I don't generally do anything for anyone unless there's something in it for me."

I chuckled. "Right. That makes you just like everyone else in Washington."

"Not quite. The favors I expect in return for my help are a bit different from the usual

wheeling and dealing you see over on Capitol Hill.” Rodney raised his thick eyebrows and lowered his eyelids seductively. “Do you get my meaning?”

My crotch was hot, but I wasn’t about to let him know that. Not yet. “I’m afraid I don’t.”

Rodney checked his watch. “I really must be going. I’m due to make an appearance on MSNBC in twenty minutes.” He got up to leave.

“But—” I stammered. “You haven’t even given me a chance!”

“On the contrary,” he replied. “I gave you five minutes of my time. That’s more than ninety-nine percent of the PR staffers in town get.”

My back was up against the wall. I needed to act fast and hard, or my career was done for. “I’d be willing to discuss favors with you. Privately. Any kind of favors you want.”

Rodney stopped short. “Is that so?”

“That’s so.”

“All right. Meet me tonight at CityZen at the Mandarin Oriental. I’ll make reservations for eight, my treat.” He paused and looked at my outfit with displeasure. “And dress appropriately.”

“I always dress appropriately, I’ll have you know.”

“Not today, you don’t. That suit went out of style three years ago, and it was cheap to begin with. It looks like you slept in it.”

“I beg your pardon—”

He raised his hand. “I could go on and on, but I won’t because I’m a gentleman.”

“Hardly.” I’d had more than enough of this. I stood to leave.

“Don’t go just yet.” Rodney crossed to me, his expression softening a bit. “Please don’t take what I just said the wrong way. I’m afraid I’m not known for my tact.”

“That’s obvious, too.”

Rodney placed a strong hand on my shoulder and squeezed. Heat from his fingers tingled through my body. “You’re a very attractive woman, Jasmine,” he said. “You’re just a little rough around the edges. Truth be told, I *like* my women a little rough.”

My cheeks flushed. “I really should be getting back to Senator Grayle’s office. Thanks for the

dinner invitation, but I think I'll pass."

"Wait." Rodney took my hand, white-hot electricity on my skin. "I don't mean to offend you, Jasmine. I really don't. I just find you incredibly attractive, is all. Sometimes I get a bit rude and crude around women who turn me on. It's a personal vice of mine."

Oh. My. God, I thought, panicking. Me? A mousy, frizzy-haired, slightly overweight, 34-year-old celibate who hasn't been laid in two years?

"Pardon me," I said, "but is that a joke?"

"No joke. I'd really like to take you up on your offer and spend some time with you, Jasmine. *Private* time. And then, maybe we can see what I can do to help out Senator Grayle. Believe it or not, even *I* can be convinced to change my mind about certain things from time to time." He gave me a wink. "Not that it would be a tit-for-tat exchange or anything."

I chuckled again. "Of course not."

"I'll see you at eight then. Wear something nice. I'm partial to red, and strapless." He gestured to the door. "My assistant Marie will see you out."

Red. I didn't *own* anything red, let alone strapless. A shopping trip was in order. I turned on my heel and left, crotch buzzing.

Chapter Three

I walked out of the office building and into the brisk afternoon air. I pulled out my cell phone and dialed Rebecca at the office.

She picked up on the first ring. “Hello?”

“Rebecca, it’s Jasmine. I won’t be back in the office today.”

“What? Why?” Rebecca sounded alarmed.

“I just finished meeting with Rodney Doyle, and he wants to have dinner tonight to discuss the Senator Grayle situation. I need to spend the rest of the afternoon getting ready.”

“No!” Rebecca cried. “You can’t do that! All hell has broken loose over here since you left!”

I stopped short. “What do you mean?”

“There’s a media circus camped outside the office. I can’t even go outside the front door without getting attacked. And Senator Grayle needs me to go over to the jail to bail him out!”

“Can’t you send one of the interns over to do that? That’s what they’re for.”

“Jasmine, that’s not going to work—”

I started over. “I mean, the interns are there to do all the crummy errands we don’t want to do, not necessarily bail the senator out of jail, per se—”

“Jasmine, all the interns *quit* right after you left the office. They didn’t want to risk putting Senator Grayle’s name on their resumes after what’s happened.”

“Oh dear,” I said, feeling my crotch go cold.

“Jasmine, what should I do?”

“Just sit tight for now. Don’t worry about bailing Senator Grayle out just yet. I might be able to pull some strings to get him out of there *incognito*. And I’ll see what I can do to get the media circus out of the way.”

“How long will that take?” Rebecca sounded desperate. In fact, she was hyperventilating into the phone. “I can’t spend the night here, you know.”

“You won’t, don’t worry,” I said, trying my best to sound soothing. “I’ll do everything within my power to take the media heat off this, believe me. My meeting with Rodney Doyle went very well.”

“Really? Is he going to help us?”

“He might. But only if I go to dinner with him tonight dressed to kill.”

Rebecca laughed at this. “Dressed to kill, huh? How are you going to pull that off when all you own are a bunch of drab gray power suits?”

“I have to go shopping. That’s why I can’t get back to the office just now.” As I spoke, I walked toward the Metro Center Mall. “Say, Rebecca, you’re a snappy dresser. Where can I go to find a drop-dead sexy, strapless red cocktail dress in my size?”

“Try Nordstrom’s. Go to the eveningwear department, ask for Rhonda, and tell her I sent you. She does—or *did*, rather—all Mrs. Grayle’s fittings. Mrs. Grayle’s a size sixteen, but you’d never know it to look at her because Rhonda does such a good job with custom fittings. She’ll get you looking great.”

“All right, thanks.”

“I gotta go, Jasmine. The reporters are practically breaking down the door.”

“Give them my cell number and tell them they can call me for an official statement,” I suggested. “That might get them to leave you alone for a little while.”

“Are you sure you want me to do that? There’s an awful lot of them.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll just let all the calls roll to voicemail. I’ll get Rodney Doyle’s help on how to deal with them tonight.” I made it to the Metro Center mall entrance and stopped. “This is all going to work out, Rebecca, okay? It will all blow over soon, Senator Grayle will be re-elected, and we’ll get to keep our jobs. Trust me.”

“Whatever you say,” Rebecca said. “Bye, Jasmine. Good luck with your dinner. Call me if you need any help.” She hung up.

Chapter Four

I arrived at Mandarin Oriental Hotel at 8 p.m. sharp. After finishing things up at Nordstrom, I treated myself to a facial and new hairstyle at my favorite salon before making it home with just enough time to freshen up and pour myself into my brand-new fuck-me red dress and matching stilettos. Rebecca was right: Rhonda had me looking great in an Old-Hollywood-style red cocktail gown that hugged my curves in all the right places. I never knew mousy, plump old me could look like a sultry screen siren.

I turned heads left and right as I stepped past the hotel doorman. I didn't know if it was the fuck-me dress and heels, or the fact that a veritable cloud of musky sex-scent hung over me like a thick London fog from my now-constant arousal.

CityZen Restaurant was just a few steps away, but I took my time getting there. I didn't want to risk being the first to arrive. Keeping Rodney Doyle waiting would make my plan for seduction that much easier, giving me the opportunity to make a grand entrance.

The extra moments would also give me some time to figure out what the hell I was supposed to be doing. It had been so long since I'd had sex, I could hardly remember what a penis felt like. Hell, I barely remembered what a penis *looked* like. The very notion of me using sex to pull off a reversal of fortune in the midst of the worst Congressional scandal of the past 20 years was ridiculous.

I strutted over to the CityZen entrance, doing my best to ooze sensuality from every pore. The imposing, impeccably uniformed *maitre'd* blocked the entrance.

"Do you have a reservation?" he barked.

"Hello. I'm Jasmine Rand. I'm here to meet Rodney Doyle at eight."

The snooty *maitre'd* scanned his register. "Hm. I don't see either name here."

I tried not to panic. "What about the *Beltway Times*? Is there a reservation under that?"

"I'm afraid not."

I bit my lip, smearing my cherry-flavor lip gloss. “Um, okay. What about Senator Grayle? Any listing under that?”

The *maître’d* clucked. “I certainly hope not. CityZen is a respectable restaurant.”

I made one last attempt to save face. “Would it be all right if I just took a quick peek inside the dining room to see if my dinner partner is here?”

The *maître’d* looked down his aquiline nose at me. “I’m afraid that’s against our policy. But I can let you sit at the bar if you like. This way, please.”

He escorted me to the bar, keeping his distance. “Wait here,” he sneered, pointing to an empty barstool. “I’ll see if anyone in the dining room is waiting for a guest.”

I had just enough time to order a Cosmopolitan (the sexiest-looking drink I knew of) before the *maître’d* reappeared. “Apparently there *is* someone waiting for you,” he said, obviously disappointed. “Right this way.”

I followed the uniformed snob into the dining room, where Rodney Doyle was seated at a secluded table for two in the farthest corner. He was dressed in a different custom-tailored suit than he had on that afternoon, and had loosened his collar and removed his tie. He was nursing a highball of what I figured was probably the most expensive scotch the restaurant had to offer.

“Your dinner partner, Sir,” the *maître’d* chirped. He gave me yet another look of disapproval and disappeared.

“Ah,” Rodney said, checking his watch. “I see you finally made it.” I was 15 minutes late for our appointment, no thanks to him. “I’m sorry if the *maître’d* gave you any trouble.”

My cheeks flushed with embarrassment. “He didn’t seem to like me very much.”

“He doesn’t seem to like anybody. Don’t take it personally.” Rodney finished his drink and motioned to the chair across from him. “Please sit, Ms. Rand.”

I did. And try as I might to remain civil, it was getting hard for me to ignore the fact I’d been deliberately set up. “You kept our names off the register on purpose to embarrass me, didn’t you?”

Rodney chuckled. “I *did* keep our names off the register, but not to embarrass you. I did it to

keep from embarrassing myself. I can hardly make it known publicly that I'm having a romantic dinner alone with Senator Grayle's PR staffer. If word got out, it would be all over the tabloids tomorrow. The tabloids that I *don't* edit, that is. There are still a few of them left."

"So you find *me* embarrassing," I seethed. "Well, that's even better."

Rodney held up his hand. "Don't take things the wrong way. Truth be told, I prefer to remain *incognito* whenever and wherever possible, so I always use an alias when I'm dining in restaurants or staying in hotels. I tend to use the names of my favorite literary characters when I'm out and about."

"I see," I said, gingerly sipping my Cosmo. "And who, pray tell, are you today?"

"Today I'm David Copperfield," Rodney replied. "Tomorrow, I plan to be Nicholas Nickleby."

"So you're a Dickens fan."

"I'm a fan of all good books," Rodney said. "I know it might be hard for you to believe since I'm a sleazy tabloid proprietor, but I am an ardent admirer of excellent literature."

My eyebrows rose slightly. "I suppose everyone needs a hobby."

"You're not a fan of books yourself, I take it?" Rodney seemed disappointed.

"It's not that," I said, trying to recover. "I like to read. That is, I used to. I just don't have time for it anymore, with my career and whatnot."

Rodney flagged the waiter for another round of drinks and our dinner menus. "It seems to me that if things don't change for you career-wise very soon, you'll have plenty of time to read all the books you want."

I answered by draining my Cosmo.

"You know, Ms. Rand—pardon me, *Jasmine*—sometimes what we think of in the short term as a horrible crisis turns out to be a welcome opportunity," Rodney said, his tone softening. "You could always look at what's happened with Grayle that way. It would probably be healthiest for all involved if you did."

I leaned back in my chair and crossed my arms over my chest. "I thought the purpose of this

dinner meeting was for us to discuss how you and your paper could help repair the damage to Grayle's public image; not give me personal career advice."

"I'm just looking out for you, Jasmine."

I scoffed. "Somehow I find that hard to believe. You don't do anything unless there's something in it for you. You said so yourself. This is Washington—not the Peace Corps."

Rodney fiddled with his napkin. "Normally, that would be true. But I like you, Jasmine. I like you a lot. I don't usually take to people right off the cuff the way I've taken to you. I can't explain why, but it seems I'm smitten with you."

"If this is your idea of a cheap pickup line, I'm not biting."

"Funny, I thought you and I had already agreed to engage in a little amorous favor-exchange this afternoon. This dinner was merely a formality."

Bile rose in the back of my throat. "Now you're just toying with me." I was furious. Here I was, dressed to kill and trying to seduce the sexiest man in Washington—making my best effort to bend him to *my* own whim and will—and instead, Rodney was playing me like an eight-track tape.

Still, I couldn't help but be intrigued. Rodney's gaze alone was enough to get my crotch buzzing. "All right," I said, delicately licking the tip of my finger and running it along the top of my empty martini glass. "Let's just say, theoretically, that you and I decide to become—ahem—intimately involved this evening. What would you do for me in return?"

Rodney smiled. "Nothing."

I choked. "What do you mean, *nothing*?"

Rodney reached across the table and took my hand in his. "Jasmine, I already tried to tell you. My feelings for you aren't driven by mere lust. I'm quite taken with you. More so than I've been toward any woman in a long time. And as such, it's my plan to behave like a gentleman, not as a sleazy cad. Only a sleazy, slippery cad would use sex as a tool in exchange for political favors."

I was speechless. The waiter arrived with our drinks; I guzzled my second Cosmo in five

seconds flat, then stared dumbly into space when the waiter asked to take our dinner order. I was too flustered to read the menu. Guzzling two Cosmos was a bad idea. The liquor had gone straight to my head.

And my head went straight for the floor.

I only came to after Rodney shook me, slapped me twice, and dashed a glass of cold water in my face.

“Jasmine?” I heard his booming voice through a fog. “Jasmine, are you all right?”

“Mrrrrrgh?” I said. “Mmmph?? Whhhhhaaa—whhhaat haaappppennd?”

“You fainted. Here, let me help you up.” Rodney picked me up bride-style and set me upright on my chair. Everyone in the fancy restaurant had turned to stare at us. Several young women were even headed our way, all of them waving autograph books. “Look!” one of them shouted. “It’s Rodney Doyle! Rodney Doyle is here!”

Before I knew it, a slew of well-dressed women had swarmed our table.

“Rodney! Rodney! Can I have your autograph?” A blue-haired lady in peach chiffon shoved a green autograph book in Rodney’s face.

“Rodney, I *loved* your commentary on MSNBC this afternoon,” gushed an attractive 30-something wearing a black Armani suit and Senate floor badge. “What are your thoughts on the latest nominee to head the CIA?”

A half-dozen more women seemed to emerge from the walls, all of them waving slips of paper for Rodney to sign and peppering him with questions.

Rodney gulped his scotch and stood up. “I’m sorry, ladies, but you have me mistaken for someone else. Excuse me.” Rodney dragged me forcibly from my seat and used his considerable biceps to shove a path through the throng of his delirious female admirers like Moses parting the Red Sea.

Rodney gripped my left wrist and pulled me along through the restaurant so quickly I could barely stay upright. My fuck-me stilettos scraped red tracks along the floor when I nearly wiped out on a dessert cart. We finally made it out to the hotel lobby, but not before a stop at the snooty

maitre'd's podium.

“Tell our waiter to send our meals up to David Copperfield’s room, please,” Rodney barked at him.

And before I knew what happened, I was in an elevator heading up to Rodney Doyle’s private hotel suite.

Chapter Five

Rodney Doyle had his very own private suite at the Mandarin Oriental available for his exclusive use whenever he wanted. So exclusive was it, in fact, that he only used it under fake names drawn from classical literature. It was clear that the hotel respected Rodney's preference for literary character aliases, since there was a hand-lettered parchment placard on the room door reading "Mr. Copperfield: PRIVATE" and the suite's sitting room had rows of bookshelves featuring leather-bound copies of the complete works of Dickens, Austen and Melville, among others. The suite was decorated in rich red satin and brocade in a Chinese style, along with a plethora of Asian antiques and art. There was a huge plasma-screen TV, state-of-the-art Bose stereo system, full bar, massive Jacuzzi, and round king-sized bed.

My head still buzzed from the booze, and soon the room started to spin. The round bed looked like a giant red flying saucer headed straight for me. I ducked and toppled over.

Rodney caught me just in time. "Jasmine, why don't you sit down?" He guided me over to a red velvet settee. "I think you had a bit too much to drink downstairs."

"Really?" I slurred. "Ya think?" The room spun again.

Rodney went to the bar, poured me a glass of ice water, then dropped in two Alka-Seltzers. "Here, drink this," he said. "It'll clear your head a bit. When was the last time you ate something?"

I thought back for a moment and realized I hadn't eaten anything except for a stale raisin bagel in Sen. Grayle's office at 10 a.m. No wonder I was so drunk.

"Is there anything to eat?" I slurred. I needed something in my stomach to soak up some of the booze.

"Our CityZen meals should be up in a few minutes," Rodney said. "All I have in the meantime are the contents of the minibar, which isn't much unless you're into Ritz crackers and M and Ms."

“M&Ms,” I said. “You can have all the green ones, though. I hate the green ones.”

“Whatever you want,” Rodney said, and pulled two bags of plain M&Ms from the minibar. He tossed one in my lap. “To tide you over until our meals get here. I hope you don’t mind, but I ordered you the steak teriyaki while you were out cold. Medium rare. I trust you aren’t a vegetarian?”

I laughed. “*Nobody* from North Dakota is a vegetarian. Trust me.”

“Don’t cattle outnumber people there?” Rodney asked with a chuckle.

“Yes, they do,” I said. “And the cattle would take over everything if we didn’t eat them. I should know. My parents raised some on our wheat farm outside Bismarck.”

Rodney settled back into the settee opposite me and dove into his bag of M&Ms. “So I see Senator Grayle still prefers to hire staffers from his home state.”

“Yes, all the people who work for him are originally from North Dakota,” I said, swallowing a bunch of M&Ms whole. I felt the rush of sugar and chocolate almost immediately, which helped to balance out the booze. “Which believe me, isn’t easy to do in Washington. There aren’t too many Roughriders around here.”

“I don’t imagine there would be.” Rodney kicked off his shoes, stretched, and took off his blazer. “Pardon me for saying so, but you seem very sophisticated for someone who grew up on a wheat farm in North Dakota.”

“I came to Washington to go to college at Georgetown, and I’ve been here ever since,” I said. “I never was much of a farm girl growing up. In fact, I hated it there. I have a brother who stayed on to help my parents run things, and he’ll probably inherit the farm someday. Which is perfectly all right with me, thank you very much.”

Rodney’s eyebrows rose. “I take it you don’t get along with your parents?”

“I get along with them fine as long as I only see them twice a year.” I picked out all the green M&Ms from the bag and handed them to Rodney. As I did, the skin of our palms touched: pure electricity.

Rodney must have felt the spark, too. He sucked in his breath, got up from his seat, and

began to pace. "Jasmine, I think you and I need to have a little discussion about exactly what kind of relationship we are going to have."

"I thought we already had that discussion today in your office."

Rodney stopped mid-pace. "Not quite."

I polished off the rest of the M&Ms and stood up. The booze had started to wear off a little so I managed to do it without staggering, but now a different kind of intoxication was setting in.

"Look, Rodney," I said. "I'll level with you. I'm desperate here. I not only need to do anything and everything possible to keep my job, I am in *serious* need of some *serious* sex. *You* need a new hot story to sell papers. And you've already admitted to being attracted to me. Seems to me we can take care of both our needs and have a great time doing it. So why not?"

Rodney sighed and ran a hand through his hair. "You know Jasmine, there was a time I would have been happy to take you up on an offer like that. Like this afternoon, for example. But I've changed a lot since I met you. I know it sounds corny and hard to believe, but I don't want to use you as a mere sex object, even if it would save your career and Senator Grayle."

"Yeah, it *does* sound corny and hard to believe. Especially since you propositioned me yourself today in your office."

Rodney threw up his hands. "All right, I know you probably think I'm behaving strangely right now. Hell, even *I* think I'm behaving strangely. But I'm being completely honest when I say that my very genuine feelings for you would preclude me from trading your sexual favors for good press. Even *I* have some journalistic ethics left. I guess there are just some lines I'm not willing to cross." He paused, looked at me with sadness. "Not anymore, anyway."

I sighed heavily. "Well, I guess I better go then. This has just been a waste of time." I picked up my purse and started for the door.

Rodney grabbed me by the arm. "I'm not finished."

I stared into his deep-set eyes, incredulous. "Yes, you are. I think you've embarrassed me enough for one day." I struggled to free myself from Rodney's grasp, but he wouldn't let go.

"Jasmine, I might not be willing to trade sex for helping Senator Grayle, but I would be

willing to make love with you just for the sake of it.”

“What do you mean?”

Rodney leaned in closer. “I mean just what I said. Make love with me, with no terms, no political favors, no strings attached.”

“But—”

Rodney placed a finger over my lips. “Hush,” he said. Then he placed each palm on each side of my face, pulled me close, and kissed me.

Chapter Six

Sex with Rodney started out slow and delicious. First, he licked his index finger and used it to trace a warm, damp outline on every feature of my face. Then he used his mouth and tongue to connect the dots between them. Rodney ran his tongue up one side of my neck and down the other until I shuddered with pleasure. He ran his hands up and down my sides, tracing the seams of my red fuck-me red dress with his fingers. Shivers shot down my spine and came to rest deep inside my pussy, where they turned from ice to red-hot flames.

I guess this dress delivered, after all, I thought. But no sooner had this musing crossed my mind when the red-hot fuck-me dress was whisked over the top of my head and tossed across the room. It landed on a pair of crossed antique Chinese swords mounted over the fireplace, where it hung like a battle flag.

“Has anyone ever told you that you have the most luscious body in the world?” Rodney said as he licked my collarbone.

“As a matter of fact, no.”

“What a travesty.” Rodney’s mouth slid across my chest and came to rest on my right nipple. He pulled the entire areola into his mouth, then beat a conga dance on my nipple with the pointed tip of his tongue while he expertly rolled and tugged the left nipple between his fingers. Each tug, pinch, lick and pull sent rockets of desire up and out through my entire body, until even the tips of my fingers and toes buzzed. My pussy was slick and puffy, and I could feel my cleft widening in anticipation as Rodney worked my breasts.

Just as my nether parts cried out for the feel of Rodney’s expert mouth upon them, there was a knock at the door.

Rodney disengaged himself from my left nipple. “I believe that’s our dinner,” he said.

“I don’t think I’m very hungry anymore,” I protested. I tried to guide his mouth back to me, but Rodney pulled away.

“Why don’t you head for the bed and make yourself comfortable? This’ll just be a minute.”

My crotch cried out in pain. *How can Rodney Doyle think of dinner at a time like this?* My distress must have shown on my face, because Rodney caressed it gently and said, “Don’t worry, Jasmine. I have an idea for our dinner I think you’ll enjoy.”

I slid between the round bed’s red satin sheets just in time for Rodney to let in the busboy, who had our dinners on a silver cart. The busboy tried to set up a formal table service on the buffet, but Rodney tipped him a \$20 bill and shooed him out the door. Then Rodney lifted the metal warming lids from our plates, spread a white napkin over his arm French-waiter style, and brought the dishes over to the bed.

“Come out from underneath the sheets, Jasmine. It’s time for dinner.”

Rodney set down the plates at the foot of the bed. He took my plate of steak teriyaki and proceeded to finger-feed me the chopped pieces of meat one at a time. Each time he placed a bit of meat in my mouth, he was careful to ensure his fingers made it inside just as I bit down. I nibbled and licked his fingers sensuously as I savored every bite of the well-prepared and seasoned steak. My meal became an act of foreplay in and of itself.

When I finished, I was as turned on as I would be if Rodney had kissed and licked me all over. He lifted away the covers, revealing my sweating, heaving body—naked except for my black lace panties and stilettos, which I realized were still on my feet.

“That is one beautiful sight,” Rodney said, admiring the full length of my body. “But something’s missing, I think.”

Rodney picked up his plate—a filet mignon with Asian ginger sauce—tested the dish’s temperature with his finger, then lifted the meat off the plate and placed it on my solar plexus. The soft, juicy meat felt warm against my bare skin. As an added bonus, the ginger sauce gave my skin a delightful tingle. Just as I started relishing the feeling of the meat on my skin, however, Rodney leaned over and began to nibble tiny bites of the filet. The meat moved slightly with each bite he took, creating damp feathery sensations that sent warm prickles all over my belly. He ate slowly and deliberately to maximize the pleasure the food gave us. When it was finally gone,

Rodney lapped up the ginger sauce that had adhered to my skin; making sure to spread it around with his tongue so I could get the most of the tingling sensations from the raw gingerroot. A wonderful melty feeling headed straight for my pussy.

“Oh yeah,” I moaned. “That is *so* good.”

Rodney looked up from his perch on my belly. There was a dabble of ginger sauce stuck to one corner of his mouth, which he licked off slowly. “You haven’t seen anything yet,” he said, and dove south.

Rodney parted my thighs and spread my labia with his fingers. He made his tongue into a sharp little point, then started licking up my juices and spreading them in all my cracks and crevices. There were remnants of raw ginger still on his tongue, and its sharp acidic content made my pussy tingle and burn delightfully. I felt my orgasm within arm’s reach. Rodney helped speed it along by turning his focus to my clit; which he started to coax out from underneath its hood with quick flicks of his tongue.

Before I could take another breath, my climax rocked my body. It started deep inside my sheath and radiated out from my pussy and then up my torso and down my legs until my feet, arms, and head convulsed in wrenching explosions. Rodney deepened the intensity by pushing two fingers inside me and expertly hooking them up against my G-spot. A second later I came again, so violently that I shrieked and pounded the mattress with both fists.

I reached for Rodney’s belt buckle and struggled to open its complicated Celtic-knot design for almost a full minute before I figured it out. He leaned back and watched me work at it with relish.

“You sure keep your equipment under lock and key,” I breathed, finally getting the buckle open.

“I like to keep everything safe and sound for occasions like this,” he said. “Which reminds me.” He pulled a condom out of his wallet and set it beside me on the bed. “You can never be too careful.”

“No, you can’t,” I agreed, taking Rodney’s zipper pull between my teeth and yanking

downward. His enormous cock popped right out of the opening—he wasn't wearing any underwear. "I can see why you need to keep your cock under lockdown," I giggled. "You're awfully well-endowed to go commando."

"I like the air circulation," he whispered, pushing my head down so the tip of his cock found my lips. "Keeps things fresh down there, if you know what I mean."

A tiny drop of moisture appeared on Rodney's glans. I touched it with the tip of my tongue, then used it to spread the salty sweetness over the whole glans and foreskin. Rodney gasped and moaned, then thrust his hips forward so his whole cock filled my mouth, sinking in deeper and deeper until the glans hit the back of my throat.

I sucked Rodney's cock slowly at first, savoring the salty, musky flavors of it and marveling at how my mouth and throat had to stretch and strain to take in his huge bulk. Once I was used to the size, I moved my mouth up and down the shaft. I licked the underside with my tongue, pressing down on the top with my lips and teeth. Rodney bucked his hips to meet my rhythm, and soon we were moving back and forth in perfect unison. Each time I felt Rodney's climax build in his shaft, I held it back by biting down on his glans; making him yelp with pleasure and pain, amassing more and more sexual tension up and down his body until he shook all over.

"Please, Jasmine," he groaned. "Please."

I pulled myself off his cock. I wanted to torture him for just a moment more before I let him explode. I took my breasts in each hand, then wrapped them around his member. I rubbed them back and forth and up and down, making them into a kind of bouncy sheath for him to delight in before I pinched the tip of his cock hard with one hand, holding off his climax one last time.

"Unh," he grunted in protest, grabbing at my hair. Rodney pulled me up and away from his cock, then threw me down flat on the bed. He took my legs and placed them up over his shoulders to splay me wide open for his entrance. The condom was over his cock in less than a second. Rodney thrust his hips forward, entering me in one swift motion that stretched my insides to their limit. The resulting feeling was like fire and ice; an incredible mixture of pleasure and pain that sent me reeling into yet another orgasm. My own climax was the trigger

for Rodney's, and I felt his cock throbbing with it inside me. Our orgasms were in perfect synchronization; beating to the same deep rhythm until they slowly, gradually came to a perfect stillness.

We lay in each other's arms for several minutes basking in the afterglow. Then Rodney gently rolled off me and took his place at my side. He caressed the curve of my full hips and heavy breasts and kissed the space where my neck met my chest. "So, what did you think?" he asked. "Do I meet your standards?"

"And then some," I answered. "That was incredible. Thank you."

Rodney kissed my forehead. "You're welcome. And like I said before, there are no strings attached. I hope you enjoyed it. I know I did."

"It was great, believe me." I ran my finger along the bladelike curve of his chin. "What do we do now?"

"Nothing," he said. "Just relax."

I sat bolt upright. "But I *can't* relax. I'm probably going to be out of a job tomorrow. Or if not tomorrow, by the end of the year for sure. If you don't help me, Senator Grayle is going to lose the election."

Rodney put his hands on my shoulders and eased me back down to the bed. "Jasmine, you really need to stop bringing work to bed with you."

"But—"

Rodney held up his hand. "We've already discussed this, Jasmine."

I sighed. "I know, I know. You're smitten with me, and you respect me too much to use me in exchange for political favors and all that. As much as I appreciate how much you respect me and all, it really doesn't help my current situation very much."

Rodney stroked my cheek. "Have you ever considered *changing* your current situation?"

"What do you mean?"

"Who says you have to keep working for Senator Grayle? Who says that maybe instead of working PR for a senator, spending all your time and energy trying to get him a ten-second spot

on CNN or to get him interviewed in the *Post* or *Time*, that you switched sides? What if you quit shilling yourself trying to get the media's attention and started *working* for the media instead? I think you'd make a great investigative reporter."

"I haven't done any reporting since I was in college working at the student newspaper," I said. "And my beat was sports, not politics."

Rodney laughed. "Then you'll bring a very fresh perspective to the job."

"But—but I can't just up and leave Senator Grayle at a time like this!" I protested. "He's desperate! He needs me now more than ever! If I bail on him now, it'll haunt me for the rest of my career."

"You wouldn't have to leave his employment," Rodney said. "At least, not right away. I generally like my investigative reporters to work undercover."

I gasped. "You aren't suggesting—"

"Yes, I am. You'd keep working for Grayle for outside appearances' sake, while you used your position there to gather unsavory information about him---as well as some other Washington folks I've had my eye on—and then once we've got enough to work with, we'll go public with it. It means you'll lose your PR job of course, but believe me; there'd be a helluva future for you in journalism. Maybe not as a Pulitzer-winning *Washington Post* reporter, mind you, but you'd be pretty powerful in town just the same. If you can dig up what I think you can, pretty soon there won't be an elected official left in this town who won't tremble at the sound of your name."

I was shocked, but intrigued. "What exactly would you want me to dig up? And on whom?"

Rodney raised himself up on one arm. "Senator Grayle isn't the only high-level Washington official with—ahem—unusual sexual tastes. He's just the only one stupid enough to get caught. At least, right now he is. I intend to change that. That's where you come in."

"Are you saying that you want me to help expose elected officials' kinky sex lives to the public?"

Rodney smirked. "You catch on fast."

"And how, pray tell, am I supposed to do that?"

Rodney tickled my belly. “You may not realize it yet, but I think you have considerable talent when it comes to seducing people; especially people of sophisticated and unusual tastes. You certainly managed to get under my skin in a hurry. And that’s not an easy task, believe me.”

I giggled. “I have to admit, I wasn’t trying very hard. I didn’t even know what I was doing.”

“That’s because you’re a natural.”

“I think you’re pulling my leg about all this, Rodney.”

Rodney shook his head. “I’m deadly serious, I assure you. I never joke about business. And mind you, what I’m asking you to do is just business. It wouldn’t affect my feelings for you—which by the way, are considerable—at all.”

“What exactly *are* you asking me to do?”

Rodney placed a hand on the curve of my hip. “I’m asking you to use your considerable sex appeal to get under the skin of several very powerful men and women in Washington. I’ll let you know who they are one at a time. You might need to do some things with them that you haven’t experienced before, but that I guarantee you’ll enjoy. You’ll gather information and evidence while you do it, and then you’ll report that information and evidence back to me.”

My eyes narrowed. “Sounds sleazy to me.”

“Well, Jasmine, I’m a slick, sleazy bastard. I’ve built my entire career around being a slick, sleazy bastard, in fact. I thought you already knew that.”

I pouted. “What if I refuse?”

Rodney stroked my hair. “You have the right to refuse, of course. I’d never force you to do anything against your will. And like I’ve already said, my feelings for you come with no strings attached. If you don’t want to do this, that’s perfectly fine. Believe me, I’ll still want to spend as much time ravishing you as possible regardless of what you decide.”

“Because you respect me, I know, I know.” I rubbed my temples. It was an awful lot to take in. “What makes you think I would want to do something like this? I’m sure someone like you knows plenty of women around town who are into way kinkier stuff than I am.”

Rodney scoffed. “Given what you and I just did to each other, I find that very hard to

believe.”

“You caught me on a good day, is all.”

He laughed. “Jasmine, whether you realize it or not, you are a very sexual creature. And that sexual creature inside you is just bursting to be let out of its little cage so she can finally grow up and explore the finer things in life. I’m giving you an opportunity to do just that; and maybe even shake up the entrenched Washington status quo in the process. I promise you’ll have a very good time.”

“What about *us*?”

Rodney grinned. “*We* will have an even better time taking advantage of all the sexy new bedroom activities you’re going to learn working on this assignment.”

I had to admit, it sounded tempting. I hadn’t had a sex life of any kind in more than two years; and the sex life I had prior to consisted only of my on-again, off-again college boyfriend (whose sexual tastes were meat-and-potatoes boring) and a couple drunken one-night stands my first few years working as a low-paid PR intern in Washington. I’d been repressed and mostly celibate for more than 10 years, and I wasn’t getting any younger. However taboo it might have been, I decided Rodney’s business proposition was probably the last chance I had for some bona-fide, no-holds-barred sexual experimentation. The very idea of expanding my sexual and career horizons simultaneously was even more exciting. My cunt got hot and puffy again at the mere thought of it.

“When do I start?”

Rodney’s eyes lit up. “You’re accepting the job offer then, I take it?”

“Yes.”

“You can start tomorrow if you like. I’ve already planned your first assignment, in fact.”

Rodney caressed the inside of my thighs, inching his fingers towards my dampening slit. “And if you don’t mind, I’d like to give you some on-the-job training in preparation for that assignment right now.”

“Sounds good to me,” I cooed. “Let’s get started.”

Without another word, Rodney got up and crossed the room to an ornately carved Chinese cabinet. He opened the lacquered doors to reveal a set of small drawers. He opened one of them and took out two small red balls which were even more ornately carved than the cabinet. They were joined by a red silk cord, and had tiny chimes inside them that tinkled as Rodney passed the balls back and forth from one hand to the other.

He held them out to show me, dangling them by their silk cord. “Do you know what these are?”

I studied the balls closely. They were very pretty, and by the looks of them probably also very expensive. “I have no idea.”

“They’re priceless Chinese antiques dating from the eighteenth century,” he said. “I’m a collector of sorts, and these are among the most prized items in my collection.”

“What is it that you collect?”

Rodney smiled. “Historical erotica: paintings, sculptures, pillow books and the like. But my favorite—and usually, the rarest—items in the collection are antique sex toys.” He swung the balls back and forth on their ribbon in a hypnotic fashion.

I stifled a laugh. “*Those* are sex toys? You’re joking.”

Rodney blinked and shook his head. “Absolutely not. These little lacquer balls are probably the best sex aid ever invented. Most people in this country call them Ben-Wa balls, after a modern Japanese manufacturer that makes cheap aluminum versions of them for sex shops. But Ben-Wa balls are a poor imitation of the original, which is part of an ancient tradition.” He rolled the balls back and forth between his palms a few times. “The Chinese call them Enlightened Pathway Balls, which I think is much better than any cheap Japanese brand name.” Rodney placed the balls in my hand. They felt deliciously warm, rough and knobby.

“What are they for?” I asked, though I had some idea.

Rodney smiled. “How about I show you?” He leaned me back and spread my thighs wide enough to give him full access to me. Rodney slid the balls one at a time up into my vagina as high as they would go. Once they were inside, he tugged on the silk cord—which still hung

outside of me—until there was some resistance. The feeling of the balls inside me was odd, but slightly pleasurable. I could feel the carvings on the balls' surface rubbing against the walls of my sheath.

“What exactly am I supposed to be feeling?” I asked.

“You'll get the full effect if you stand up,” Rodney explained. He motioned for me to get up, so I did. The effect was almost immediate.

“Ooh,” I moaned the moment I was upright. “That's *niice*.”

Rodney watched me intently, his arousal obvious. “Try walking around.”

As soon as I got used to the new sensations erupting inside me, I took a few steps. With each step I took, the Chinese balls moved and rolled inside my vagina, pressing their carved lacquer surfaces against the sides of my sensitive sheath and moving up and down, side to side in a sensual dance I could feel throughout my body. I also had to clench my vaginal muscles very tightly to keep the balls from falling out, which only added to the intensity of sensation.

“What do you think?” Rodney asked. It was already pretty clear what *he* thought, since his cock was pointing due north.

“I think I like these—what did you call them again?”

“Chinese Enlightened Pathway Balls. Though as I said, they're more commonly known as Ben-Wa balls in the States.”

“Whatever they're called, I like them very, very much.” I walked around some more until I felt something building I'd never felt before. Without warning, my insides tightened and undulated in a series of intense, rocky waves. The contractions were so powerful that I lost my balance and landed flat on my butt, my legs and arms bucking as my body writhed in ecstasy for almost a full minute.

When I finally got control of myself again, I looked up at Rodney. “Wha-what the hell just happened?”

Rodney laughed. “Looks to me like you had a very intense vaginal orgasm. Which is *exactly* what those Chinese balls are designed to cause.”

I blinked. I couldn't comprehend it at first. "Wow," I finally said. "That was amazing. I've never come without involving my clit before."

"Most women don't without a little help," Rodney explained. "Which is where toys like these come in." He slunk up beside me and tweaked on the silken cord; almost pulling the balls out of my sheath, but not quite. "Your first assignment, Jasmine, will be to walk around with the Chinese Enlightened Pathway Balls inside you for a full twenty-four hours without once giving away to anyone around you that they're in there. Once you can control your reaction to the sensations, then you'll be ready to go undercover for me. Do you think you can do that?"

"Mmph," I moaned, still savoring the delicious feelings coming from my cunt. "I'll, ah, do my best."

"That's all I need to hear," Rodney purred. He produced another condom out of nowhere and rolled it onto his erect cock. Then he seized me, tossed me on the bed, and took me again; this time from behind and with the Chinese balls still inside me. The feeling of having Rodney's giant cock competing for space in my tight pussy with two rolling, turning lacquer balls was indescribable. Both of us came immediately.

We collapsed onto the bed, panting and covered in sweat and musk. I'd had so many orgasms in such a short span of time that my head pounded. My vision grew distorted and my limbs became heavy lead weights. Within minutes I sank into a deep, dreamless sleep.

When I woke, the first fingers of dawn were already poking through the hotel room's red velvet drapes. I glanced over at the clock—5:45 a.m.—and panicked. I had to be at Sen. Grayle's office no later than 7 a.m., and desperately needed to shower and change.

Rodney was still fast asleep, so I dressed quietly and tiptoed out the door.

Chapter Seven

I made it out onto the abandoned early-morning street just before 6 a.m. and figured I had barely enough time to hop a cab to my apartment for a shower before hightailing it to Sen. Grayle's office by 7 a.m. A lone taxicab approached; I reached up to hail it, and instantly felt a feathery sensation inside my pussy.

I thought something was wrong with me until I remembered a moment later that Rodney's Chinese balls were still inside me. I clenched my muscles just in time to keep them from falling out onto the sidewalk. An intense vaginal orgasm immediately took hold of my body as the taxi pulled up at the curb.

The cabbie rolled down the window. "Where to, Ma'am?" he asked, just as I felt the entire lower half of my body vibrate itself into another dimension. I gritted my teeth and willed myself not to thrash or cry out in response to the intense sensations. "Georgetownnn, plllleeze," I managed. "Seventeen Macarthur Boulevard."

I hopped in and the cabbie sped off. The balls rolled and tossed about inside me with every bump in the road. By the time the cab reached Georgetown, I'd had two more orgasms.

A girl could get used to this.

The ecstasy must have shown on my face, because the cabbie glanced at my reflection in his rearview mirror and frowned. "You all right, Ma'am?"

"Fiiiine," I groaned as I felt yet another climax coming on. "Just a little *tired*."

The cabbie shook his head in bewilderment and drove on.

By the time we made it to my apartment building, it took all the force of will I had to keep from showing the crazy sensations emanating from down south in my face and body. Beads of sweat broke out on my forehead and my toes curled inside my -me stilettos. It was all I could do just to dig around in my purse for money to pay the fare. I impatiently tossed him a \$20 bill and told him to keep the change.

I ran upstairs to my apartment and peeled off my clothes piece by piece. I headed straight for the shower and turned the taps all the way over to COLD. But all the freezing water did was make me shiver; which made the Chinese balls move around that much more inside me. And that just aroused me more.

I finished showering and shampooing at lightning speed, dried off, and threw on the first suit I grabbed from the closet. I pulled my still-damp hair back into a severe schoolmarm bun and decided against makeup. *Whatever I can do to feel less sexy today, the better*, I figured.

I hopped another cab and told the driver to take me to the Hill and step on it. I was already halfway there when I realized I forgot to put on underwear.

So much for feeling less sexy. The feeling of the rough wool fabric of my suit slacks rubbing up against my slit and tugging at the Chinese balls' cord was sinful torture.

How am I supposed to walk around for 24 hours as a straight-laced Capitol Hill staffer when I have the most effective orgasm aid known to womankind shoved up my pussy? I wondered.

The cab pulled up in front of Sen. Grayle's office on the Hill. I paid the cabbie and got out of the car, fighting tears as my latest orgasmic spasm took hold of my body.

My stomach growled. I hadn't eaten breakfast, and I knew I wouldn't be able to sustain myself on my usual stale-bagel diet if I was fighting to stay ahead of the Chinese balls all day long. I stopped in McDonald's to order something quick to go.

I ran into Rebecca in line. Literally.

"Ouch!" she cried as I rammed into her and stepped on her foot.

"Oh! Sorry, Rebecca! I wasn't watching where I was going," I said. "I'm a little preoccupied right now."

An understatement.

"Jasmine! I'm so glad you made it in!" Rebecca gave me a hug. "I've been worried about you."

"Why?"

Rebecca bit her lip. "I wasn't sure if you would come back to work after meeting with

Rodney Doyle.”

“What makes you say such a thing?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” Rebecca said, and shrugged. “Mr. Doyle just has a certain reputation. And if things didn’t work out—you know, with him helping the senator and all—I didn’t know if you’d be up to doing your job anymore.”

I ordered an Egg McMuffin Value Meal and stifled a shudder. *If Rebecca only knew what’s really going on!* I could live with betraying Senator Grayle, but not so with Rebecca. I’d gotten to be good friends with her over the years, and now she was caught up in something big and serious and didn’t even know it. A lump of guilt formed in the pit of my stomach.

“I’m always up to doing this job, Rebecca,” I lied. “Public relations is my life.”

Rebecca gave me a hug. “I knew you’d come through,” she said. The guilt grew. “Things are pretty crazy upstairs.” She lowered her voice. “And Senator Grayle’s back in the office. Someone bailed him out of jail.”

“What?” I yelped. “Who bailed him out?”

“Nobody knows. Even Senator Grayle doesn’t know. Whoever paid the bond asked to remain anonymous.”

A terrible possibility formed in my mind. *Did Rodney bail out my boss just so I could start snooping around on him that much sooner?* It seemed likely.

“Hm,” I said, sipping my coffee. “I’m sure it’ll be all over the news this morning, too.”

Rebecca grabbed her own breakfast order from the counter and headed for the door. “You know, you’d think so. But I’ve been watching the headlines all morning, and so far there’s been no mention of it.” Then I *knew* it had to have been Doyle who bailed Grayle out. Only he could get away with something like that and then manage to keep it out of the media. Things were getting more and more complicated by the second.

I struggled to keep up with Rebecca’s quick pace as we headed upstairs to Sen. Grayle’s office, the Chinese balls knocking together inside me with every step I took.

Just before we made it to the office, Rebecca stopped short in the hallway. “What’s that?”

“What’s what?”

“That ringing. Don’t you hear chimes ringing?” Rebecca looked around, her expression puzzled. “Where is it coming from?”

“I don’t hear anything.”

Rebecca shrugged. “Maybe I’m hearing things.” She headed for the office front door, and I followed. Then she stopped short again. “There it is again. Don’t you hear it?”

This time, I *did* hear it. To my shock, I realized the tiny chimes inside the Chinese balls were ringing *inside* my vag.

“I don’t hear anything at all,” I lied, desperate. “Maybe your ears are ringing. You shouldn’t listen to your iPod so loud.”

“I’m sure you’re right,” she said. “Senator Grayle wanted me to tell you he wants to see you as soon as you come in. He’s in his office.”

“Tell Senator Grayle I’ll be right in,” I said. “I just need to make a pit stop first.”

“No problem. Take your time.”

Rebecca went inside the office and I headed down the hall to the bathroom. I supposed I could eat my McMuffin in there while I figured out what to do next. I’d barely made it into a stall when my cell phone rang.

“Hello?”

“Greetings and salutations, Jasmine Rand.” *Rodney Doyle*. “How are things?”

“Not good,” I growled through a mouthful of McMuffin. “No thanks to you.”

“Funny, I thought we had a good time last night.”

I rolled my eyes. “Well, last night *was* fun, but today is different. These Chinese balls of yours are driving me nuts.”

“That’s odd. I thought most women *enjoyed* having orgasms all day long.”

I sighed. “Ordinarily I would, Rodney. But it’s sort of interfering with my day. Do you know how hard it is to keep a straight face when your entire lower half is on fire? And I have *bells* ringing from inside me! People can *hear* them, and I’m running out of explanations for it.”

“You need to hold your muscles more firmly in that area. That should put a damper on things. Exercise some control.”

“How the hell am I supposed to exercise *control* down there with Senator Grayle back in the office?” I shot back. “I know you’re the one who bailed him out. By the way, your timing sucks. I needed at least one more day on my own to get things settled.”

“Jasmine, I thought you and I agreed you would begin your undercover work *today*,” Rodney said. “The whole reason I bailed Grayle out was so you could do that.”

I ground my teeth. “You could have at least given me a full day to get used to having these *things* shoved up inside me.” I shifted from one foot to the other, searching for a position where I couldn’t feel the Chinese balls rolling. As far as I could tell, there wasn’t one. “You know, I’m just about ready to yank them out.”

“Jasmine, you can do whatever you like. I’m not forcing you to do this work, you know.”

I polished off the McMuffin and started in on the hash browns. “I know you aren’t. But I *want* to do it. I really do. It’s just that—well, I’m sort of nervous.”

Rodney laughed. “Is that all that’s bothering you?”

I almost choked on my hash browns. “I’m a *lot* nervous. Terrified, in fact.”

“Jasmine, it’s perfectly normal to be scared about trying something new,” Rodney said, his tone softening. “But I guarantee I wouldn’t have offered you this job if I didn’t think you were perfect for it. My advice to you is just to jump in with both feet and enjoy the ride.”

I thought it over while licking grease from my fingers. “I guess I can try it for a little while,” I said. “The only problem is, I’m not sure exactly what it is I’m supposed to be doing.”

“Right now, all you need to do is get control of those Chinese Enlightened Pathway Balls,” Rodney explained. “It’s a kind of physical and mental conditioning that will prepare you for what’s ahead. While you’re doing that, just go about business as usual. I’ll give you a call again this afternoon to see how you’re doing.”

“But—”

Before I could get another word in, Rodney hung up.

Chapter Eight

Sen. Grayle sat across from me behind his massive teak desk, his bushy gray brows knitting.

“I don’t suppose you got any bright ideas that might get the goddamn media off my back, Jasmine,” he said. “I swear, I think I’m up shit creek with this one.”

I coughed to keep from laughing. “It is a very—difficult situation, Sir.”

Sen. Grayle took a glass paperweight shaped like a stalk of wheat off his desk and tossed it from hand to hand. “I hope you don’t think I’m some kind of pervert after what’s happened, Jasmine. Because I ain’t. I’m still a decent, stand-up North Dakota fella.”

“Of course you are, Sir.” I crossed my legs, and chimes rang out.

Sen. Grayle looked up, startled. “What the hell was that? Where’s that ringing noise coming from?”

I gave him a blank look. “What ringing noise, Sir?” I uncrossed my legs, and the chimes rang again.

“*That* ringing noise. You didn’t hear that?” Sen. Grayle picked a paperclip out of a tray on his desk and began to unfold it.

“No sir, I didn’t hear anything.” I clamped down on my vaginal muscles with a vengeance. I couldn’t have any Chinese funny business going on in Senator Grayle’s office.

“My ears must be ringing,” the senator drawled. “I swear, the noise going on in that jail was so loud, it near to split my eardrums. People were yelling and carrying on like it was some kind of madhouse.”

“I’m sorry to hear that, Sir,” I said. “But you’re out of jail now, so it’s time to start damage control with the press. I’ve already written up a list of talking points—”

Sen. Grayle cut me off. “I don’t want to hear about any phoney-baloney talking points right now. First things first. Jasmine, *I am not gay*.”

I coughed again. “I never said you were, Sir.”

“Maybe not, but everyone in the goddamn media is saying that I am. My wife even ran out on me because of it. We need to do something about that, pronto.”

“You do realize, Sir, that you were caught in a rather *unsavory* position in Rock Creek Park the other night. Some people were bound to draw certain conclusions.”

Sen. Grayle pursed his lips and looked at the floor. He tugged on his tie, printed with tiny drawings of bison and wheat stalks—two symbols of North Dakota. The lines on his face had deepened since I’d last seen him; he seemed to have aged 10 years in two days.

“My career’s over, Jasmine,” he said. “You know it, I know it. Let’s just try to bow out gracefully, shall we?”

My heart sank. I knew this was the inevitable conclusion of Sen. Grayle’s latest gaffe, but I hadn’t expected this admission.

“If that’s really what you want, Sir,” I said. “Does that mean you’ll be dropping out of the election?”

He picked at his cuticles. “Naw. Election’s only a month away. We’ve got way too much invested in it to drop out now. We’ll just lose, is all. That’ll be it.”

He picked up his coffee cup, swirled around the dregs inside it, and set it back down. He didn’t seem much in the mood for work at all; let alone a futile attempt to revive his political career.

“I don’t suppose you wanted to respond to any of the allegations that are swirling in the press personally?” I asked, timid. “The *Post* says you’ve been charged with solicitation and public indecency.”

“That’s right,” Grayle sighed. “My lawyers told me to plead no contest. They said that would be the fastest way to make everything go away. I’ll get off with a fine and time served.”

“The people of North Dakota have been very loyal to you over the years,” I offered. “And they don’t like Democrats, either. You might still win re-election despite all of this.”

Sen. Grayle laughed dryly. “Now don’t be jetting yourself off to fairyland, Jasmine. We both know that ain’t gonna happen.”

“We can always hope,” I said, though I knew it was hopeless. “You do have several requests for interviews with all the major media. My cell phone has been ringing off the hook with them since yesterday afternoon.”

“I’m not doing any more interviews, Jasmine,” Grayle snapped. “You’ll just have to handle the press yourself. From here on out, I’m a lame duck; and I’m going on vacation.” He stood up and took his coat from a hook on the wall. I noticed he had a suitcase already packed. “I’ll be staying on the ranch back home until the end of the year. And I won’t be taking calls while I’m gone, either.”

My eyes flew wide. “But you can’t just leave in the middle of your term! You’re due on the Senate floor in twenty minutes for a vote!”

“Only place I’m due to be right now is on a plane, getting the hell out of Washington.” He stormed out of the room.

I slumped in my chair, stunned. *What am I supposed to do now?* My career as a PR staffer was over before I’d even had a chance to do any undercover work for Rodney Doyle. *So much for my future as an investigative reporter.*

Rebecca rushed in, her face a pale with shock. “What happened? Senator Grayle just left and he wouldn’t tell me where he was going!”

“He said he was leaving Washington for good and heading back to the ranch,” I said. “He said he needed a vacation.”

Rebecca sucked in her breath. “*What?*”

“It’s over, Rebecca. Senator Grayle won’t do any interviews, and won’t campaign for re-election. He’s pleading ‘no contest’ to the criminal charges. As far as I can tell, he’s giving up.”

Rebecca sank into a chair. “I guess I’ll need to start polishing off my resume.”

“We both will,” I said. “Excuse me for a few minutes, Rebecca. I’ll need to make some calls.” I headed for the door, but she stopped me.

“Go ahead and use Senator Grayle’s private office if you need to,” she said. “It’s pretty clear he’s not going to need it anymore.” Rebecca headed back to her cubicle, dragging her feet with

every step.

I shut the door behind her and made for Sen. Grayle's private land line. He was guaranteed the privilege of a high-integrity fiber-optic line that was practically impossible to wiretap. I needed to make a very important call, and didn't want to risk it on my cell. With the press swarming like vultures around Sen. Grayle's office and law enforcement watching closely, I didn't want to take any chances.

I picked up the receiver and dialed Rodney Doyle's number. His assistant answered.

"Rodney Doyle's office, this is Marie speaking."

I remembered Marie, the tiny trophy-wife type poured into a Prada suit. "This is Jasmine Rand of Senator Grayle's office," I barked at her, trying to sound authoritative. "I need to speak with Rodney Doyle immediately."

A pause. "I'm sorry, Ms. Rand, but Mr. Doyle does not take calls from persons he doesn't know."

I swore under my breath. "Mr. Doyle knows me very well, I assure you."

"Hold just a moment, Ms. Rand," Marie sang snottily. "I'll have to verify that first."

Hold music came on; an annoying instrumental version of "Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head."

Rodney's assistant came back on the line sounding surprised. "Rodney Doyle was expecting your call, Ms. Rand. I'll connect you now."

"Hello, Jasmine," Rodney's smooth baritone boomed on the line. "What can I do for you?"

"How about you put a bullet through my head?"

Rodney cleared his throat. "I'd prefer not to. I'm told they put people in jail for that nowadays."

I rolled my eyes. "I'm serious, Rodney. My career is over. *Really* over. Senator Grayle just flew the coop. He's heading back to North Dakota. Rather than deal with the sex scandal head-on, he's just walking out on the rest of his senate term and giving up. So I'm afraid that not only am I out of a PR job, I don't have anyone I can snoop on for you undercover, either."

"I see," Rodney said. "Well, that's a problem."

"It's more than a problem. It's a disaster."

I could hear the creak of Rodney's leather desk chair as he leaned back in it. "Tell me something, Jasmine. When did Senator Grayle leave?"

I glanced at the clock. "About five minutes ago."

"And where did he say he was going?"

"To the airport, I assume."

"You *assume*?" Rodney asked. "Why?"

I drummed my fingers on the desktop, irritated. "He said he had a plane to catch back to North Dakota. Where else would he be going?"

"Jasmine, I know for a fact there's only one flight out of Washington National to North Dakota per day this time of year, and it doesn't depart until six-thirty this evening. That's ten hours from now."

"What are you, a travel agent?"

Rodney laughed. "No, I'm a rich, sleazy tabloid publisher who pays people to keep track of flight schedules for me. That kind of knowledge can come in handy in my line of work, you see."

"I'm not following."

Rodney lowered his voice slightly. "Jasmine, if his past patterns of behavior are any example, I have a feeling Senator Grayle planned to make a pit stop before heading to the airport. I'm going to give you an address for a place in Columbia Heights. It'll look like an ordinary townhouse, but it's actually a private club. I want you to head over there now. I'm acquainted with the owners of the club and I'll give them a heads-up that you're coming. I'll also make some other arrangements with them that will assist you in your undercover work."

I was bewildered. "Why would Senator Grayle want to go to a private social club at seven-thirty in the morning?"

"This is no ordinary social club, believe me. It's very exclusive. The club is located at 73 Brentwood Way. It's a three-story graystone townhouse with a black door. Very ordinary-looking

from the outside, but that's only to keep what goes on inside a secret."

"What exactly goes on inside?" I asked, though I already had some idea.

"It's a sex club," Rodney said. "Senator Grayle has been going there for years. And you'll need to head over there right now if you're going to catch him in the act."

I bit my lip. "I'm not sure if I want to do this, Rodney. It sounds risky."

"You'll be perfectly safe, don't worry. And if there's ever a time you start to feel uncomfortable, you can just leave. The staff at the club are very understanding and supportive of first-timers."

I jotted the address down on a slip of paper. "How do you know all of this?"

"I'm a regular customer," Rodney said. "When you get there, ask for someone named Daisy. Daisy works undercover for me, too. She'll tell you exactly you what you need to do."

"But—"

"Jasmine, I'm sorry, but I've got to get to an important meeting now. I'll check in with you later in the day." Rodney hung up.

I sighed and rubbed my temples. *I am in way over my head.* I stopped by Rebecca's cubicle before I left

"Rebecca, I have to go out and—well, I'm going to go see if I can find Senator Grayle and convince him not to leave."

Rebecca brightened. "Good. If anyone can do that, Jasmine, it's you. Shall I hold your calls or transfer them to your cell?"

"Hold them, please. I'll try to return some of the press calls myself from my cell while I'm out, too. I know you're getting buried with them."

"Thanks," Rebecca said. "What should I do if the press starts swarming the office again while you're out?"

I sighed. "Pretend you aren't here." I dashed out of the office before Rebecca could protest.

Chapter Nine

I hopped a cab to Columbia Heights, my stomach aflutter. I couldn't help feeling hot between my legs as the cab bumped along the city streets. The fact a clandestine sex club was located in Columbia Heights was no surprise to me. The area was full of seedy shops, low-rent buildings, and shady people. I made sure to keep tight hold of my purse and cell phone as the cab crossed into ever-dankier and dingier territory.

The cabbie stopped the car in front of the nondescript graystone townhouse and turned around.

"Pardon me Ma'am," he said. "I know it's none of my business, but I was just wondering what a nice-looking lady like you would want to be doing in a neighborhood like this."

"Just taking care of some personal business, is all," I said curtly, and paid the fare.

The cabbie handed me his card. "If you need a ride back, give me a call and I'll come get you right away. You usually can't hail a cab in this neighborhood, and I have a feeling you might decide you want out of here in a hurry."

"That's thoughtful of you. Thanks." I took the card and headed for the townhouse.

The plain black wooden door had no knocker or bell, so I pounded on it with my fist. The door whisked opened almost immediately.

A tall, willowy blonde woman appeared in the doorway. She wore a 1960s-style short, sleeveless sheath dress and white go-go boots. She also wore a fresh white daisy tucked behind one ear. "You must be Jasmine," she said, her voice light and whispery. "We've been expecting you." She placed a bone-white hand on the small of my back and lithely guided me inside.

How can I spy on Sen. Grayle here if everyone at the club already knew I was coming? I panicked.

"Don't worry," she said, reading my thoughts. "The only person who knows who you really are is me. I'm Daisy, and I do some work for Rodney Doyle on the side. I've taken the liberty of

creating a persona for you to use at the club. Nobody else here will know your true identity. We keep everything anonymous and discreet here at the House of Flowers.”

“The House of Flowers?” I said, trying not to giggle. “*That’s* what this place is called?”

Daisy smiled softly. “Yes, the name is kind of a throwback to an earlier era. Once upon a time, this building housed a florist shop that was a front for an old-fashioned bordello, with the resident prostitutes using flowers as their stage names. We’ve hung on to some of those old traditions in the way we run things here at the club.”

Daisy led me down a narrow, twisting corridor that opened into a large, sumptuously decorated marble waiting room. Vases of fresh flowers were everywhere. One wall was covered with a large mural depicting beautiful nude women with flowers in their hair. One of the women in the painting closely resembled Daisy. “So is Daisy your real or stage name?” I asked.

“Both,” she said. “My parents named me Daisy, and I call myself Daisy for clients, too. But I’m the odd one out. Most of the men and women who work here keep their real selves a secret from everyone, even the owner.”

“Who’s the owner?” I asked.

She gave me a mysterious wink and held her finger to her lips. “I believe you’ll find the person you’re looking for right now in our Blossom Submission Chamber,” she said. “Would you like to participate in that guest’s activities directly, or as a secret voyeur? We can accommodate both choices.”

“Um, secret voyeur, I guess.”

“Of course. Right this way.” Daisy led me down a dark hallway and into a tiny room. The only furnishings were a small wooden chair and coat rack. She opened a closet door and took out a black silk robe and matching slippers, which she handed me. “Undress and put these on,” Daisy instructed. “You can hang your clothes on the rack there.” She reached into the closet again and took out a silk eye-mask of the style worn to masked balls. It was trimmed with rhinestones and dyed-black marabou feathers. “And put this on, too. It’ll help keep your identity a secret while you’re here.”

Daisy stepped back into the hallway. "I'll just be right outside," she said, and shut the door.

I fingered the silk robe. The fabric was of the highest quality: finely woven and satiny smooth. The diagonal jacquard silk weave reflected the light in delicate waves. As I slid my fingertips over the fabric, the sheer sensuality of the cool, slippery cloth against my skin sent a shiver up my spine.

I slid out of my suit and pulled on the robe, which was like a liquid caress against my naked skin. I let out a deep sigh and my groin muscles relaxed unconsciously. The Chinese balls shifted slightly inside me, sending out their tinny little chimes. My whole lower half warmed up into a pleasant slow burn.

I slipped on the mask and checked my reflection in the tiny dressing-room mirror. With the mask and robe, no makeup, and my hair pulled back into its severe bun, I was unrecognizable. My pussy grew hot and slick between my naked legs as butterflies of anticipation picked up pace inside my belly. I was about to become a deep-undercover sexual spy, and it was hot. *Way* hot. I slipped my cell phone, which had a discreet camera function, into a pocket I found on the inside of my robe.

There was a soft rap on the door. "Are you all right in there?" Daisy asked.

"Yes, I'm fine," I called back. I made one more slight adjustment to my mask and stepped out of the room. Daisy gave me a quick once-over and smiled her approval. She led me further down the hall to a narrow spiral staircase.

"The submission rooms are downstairs," she said. "You'll be in a voyeur room adjacent to the Blossom Submission Chamber. There's a one-way mirror so you'll be able to see everything going on in the submission chamber, but the bondage participants can't see you."

"Participants?" I asked. "As in, more than one?"

Daisy laughed. "Of *course* there's more than one, Jasmine. It's hard to engage in bondage play by yourself."

I felt my cheeks flush. "Sorry. I didn't know."

"It's all right, Jasmine. We all have a first time."

I followed Daisy down the spiral staircase and into the viewing room. There were several empty chairs in front of the darkened one-way mirror, but it appeared I would be the only “secret voyeur” that day.

“The submission rooms and the viewing rooms are separated by a soundproof wall,” Daisy explained. “You’ll hear what’s going on through an intercom once I turn it on. Are you ready to begin?”

I took a deep breath and swallowed hard. “Yes,” I whispered.

Daisy motioned for me to take a seat and handed me something that looked like a remote control. “If at any time you want to stop watching, press the red button. If at any time you want to join the participants in the submission chamber, press the blue button. And if you need my assistance, press the white button. Do you have any questions?”

“Um, no.”

Daisy turned to leave, then stopped short. “I almost forgot to tell you what your persona is whenever you’re in attendance here at the House of Flowers. When you put on that mask and robe, you cease to be Jasmine Rand. Your new name is Hyacinth Slaughter.”

Hyacinth Slaughter?

“Enjoy yourself today, Hyacinth,” Daisy purred. “It’s your first time with us, and first times are always special. You’ll be observing Mistress Violet and her favorite Slave, who I think you might recognize.” Daisy flicked a couple of switches on the wall and slipped away.

Something inside the one-way mirror changed, and suddenly I could see everything in the Blossom Submission Chamber. Sen. Grayle was indeed in there; although like me, he wore a black silk robe and mask. The only thing I recognized about him physically was his silver hair and the tiny bald spot at the very top of his head. He was crouched down on the floor in the prisoner of war position, his arms tied behind and beneath him with studded leather straps. His black silk robe was open at the front, leaving nothing to the imagination. A masked woman with long dark hair and clad in studded purple leather stood over him, brandishing a cat-o-nine-tails with multicolored streamers that were at least five feet long. The whip turned into a waving

rainbow every time Mistress Violet flicked her wrist. Each streamer ended in highly polished, spined brass bells that rang and scratched skin with each blow, giving the recipient sensual stimulation of three separate types: sight, sound and touch.

Mistress Violet whacked Sen. Grayle with her whip three times across the chest. The paunchy old man shivered with ecstasy at each blow. There was no mistaking his voice, which I could now hear through the loudspeaker.

“Give me more, please Mistress Violet,” Sen. Grayle begged in his trademark North Dakota drawl.

Mistress Violet shook her head. “No, Slave, I am afraid you do not deserve any more pain today. You have been a very bad boy.”

Sen. Grayle’s face contorted. “Please, Mistress—”

“Silence!” boomed Mistress Violet. “Slave, you must now perform a task of penance. Get on your hands and knees.”

I watched transfixed as my boss—a powerful senator from the nation’s tight-laced, ultraconservative heartland for more than 30 years—groveled half-naked at Mistress Violet’s feet. “Please, Mistress Violet,” he begged. “Please!”

“Silence, Slave!” Mistress Violet cried, and cracked her whip against the wall.

Sen. Grayle bowed down until his forehead touched the floor and his face was buried in the carpet. His silken robe slipped off his wrinkled body, revealing his flabby thighs and sagging buttocks. At one level, I felt sorry for him. But at another, I was thrilled at the sight of a powerful government official begging and pleading for mercy at the feet of a violent female temptress.

It was probably the most arousing sight I’d ever seen, in fact.

I took my camera phone from my inside pocket and snapped a photo, making sure Sen. Grayle’s face was clearly visible. My temperature rose and my breath quickened when I saw the perfect result light up my phone’s digital viewfinder. I stood up and moved around the viewing room, snapping photo after photo of the pathetic-looking senator from different angles until I had almost a dozen of them saved in my phone’s memory. To my surprise, I was no longer frightened

or nervous. Instead, I was euphoric; drunk on that unique kind of arousal that only comes from one thing: *power*.

Who knew watching somebody else get humiliated could be so much fun?

Ever since my first college boyfriend tried unsuccessfully to get me to watch a porno with him once before sex, I never understood why so many men got sexual thrills from going to strip clubs, watching peep shows, reading girly mags, and renting dirty movies. The whole scene disgusted me. But perhaps that was because the main attraction in all those products were scantily-clad, surgically modified blonde bimbos gyrating their hips and shaking their plastic boobs. There was no style, substance, or subversion of gender roles in old-fashioned, male-oriented porn. This was different. This was one of our nation's most powerful men reduced to sexual slavery by a beautiful woman in a skintight purple leather corset that hugged all her natural, voluptuous curves. There wasn't a dash of silicone anywhere in sight—just skin, leather and expensive silk.

Here at the House of Flowers, true eroticism dwelled in elegance. There were beautiful silken robes, and feathered masks peppered in faux crystal diamonds. Even the whips here were fashion-forward. And the show couldn't be beat.

Sen. Grayle trembled as Mistress Violet held him at bay, flicking her cat-o-nine-tails against the floor just out of his reach. "Are you prepared to do my bidding, Slave?" she boomed.

"Y-yes, Mistress," he warbled, his voice barely above a whisper.

Mistress Violet brought her made-up face just above the shaking senator's. "And you know the penalty if you fail, don't you?"

"Y-yes, Mistress."

Mistress Violet slapped the handle of her whip against the palm of her hand. "What is the penalty, Slave?"

Senator Grayle muttered something unintelligible.

Mistress Violet cracked the cat-o-nine-tails against the wall; the combination of slapping leather and ringing bells deafening. "Slave, speak up or you will be punished further."

Sen. Grayle was shaking so hard now he could barely keep from falling over. He spoke again, his voice a bit louder but still barely audible. “M-Mistress, the penalty for failure is that I will be denied my right to orgasm.”

This did not satisfy Mistress Violet. “Say it again, Slave! Louder!”

“M-Mistress, the penalty for failure is that I will be denied my right to orgasm!” Sen. Grayle shouted this time, his voice breaking as he began to weep. I felt a slight tinge of pity for him, but that melted away when I saw how huge his erection had become. No matter how much he might tremble and cry with fear, Senator Grayle was *enjoying* this.

Mistress Violet seemed pleased. “That is correct, Slave,” she said. “So let the act of penance begin. Since you have redeemed yourself, I will make it an easy one. Today you will lick all the dirt and mud from the soles of my boots. When they are shining like the diamonds on your mask, then and only then will you be given the satisfaction you desire. Do you agree to carry out this penance, Slave?”

“Yes, Mistress.”

Mistress Violet smiled. “Will you savor each second you spend licking my boots, Slave?”

“Yes, Mistress.”

Mistress Violet ran a finger up and down Sen. Grayle’s spine; his whole body vibrating with pent-up desire. “And once your penance is done, will you be a good Slave and withhold your orgasm until I give you the command of release?”

“Yes, Mistress.”

Mistress gave Sen. Grayle’s shoulders a light squeeze. “You are a good and obedient Slave,” she said. “Let us begin.” She unhooked his wrists from the restraints, but the old man still didn’t move; obviously waiting for permission to do so.

Mistress Violet climbed onto a large, high wooden chair that left her booted legs dangling just above the floor. “Assume the position, Slave,” she said.

Sen. Grayle lay flat on his back underneath Mistress Violet’s chair so his face was just underneath the soles of her boots. Mistress Violet offered him her left foot first. He took it into

his hands and held the shoe over his mouth, lapping the sole of the boot with his tongue like a cat cleaning its paws. It was clear from the slow, careful way Sen. Grayle licked his mistress' boots clean (not to mention his giant erection) that he loved every second of it. After a moment or two of watching this strange sight, I felt a low thrum build between my legs. I shifted in my seat and the Chinese balls moved inside me, intensifying the vibrations.

I glanced up at Mistress Violet and was stunned to discover she'd spread her own legs wide, revealing that her purple leather catsuit was crotchless. Her pussy was red, swollen and glistening. Her hand strayed to her sex and she gently began to stroke herself in time to the rhythm of Sen. Grayle's lapping of her boot soles. Her strokes became harder, longer and faster. Her body seized and trembled. Mistress Violet didn't let herself go over the edge, though; she seemed to be saving her orgasm for something bigger later on.

I wasn't about to save *my* orgasm any longer. The juices of my sex were soaking through my bathrobe onto the chair upholstery. I untied my sash and opened my robe. My right hand went straight for ground zero, rubbing and stroking my clit in perfect unison with the lapfest happening on the other side of the glass. My left middle finger jammed itself in my vagina, competing for space with the Chinese balls and their dangling silken ribbon. The result was an incredible symphony of strokes, pokes, and the rough-and-tumble action of the Chinese balls. I closed my eyes and saw my orgasm approach from over a precipice. At just the right moment I went over the edge to meet it, crying out as my vagina clenched like a vise around my fingers and pushed the Chinese balls up high against my G-spot. My clit melted, my uterus vibrated like a thousand exploding suns, and I could feel more explosions radiating from my belly all the way out to the tips of my fingers and toes.

Not to be outdone, my hands and fingers pumped their way through that orgasm until I came out on the other side only a second away from my second. This one was longer and even more intense, with my pussy pulsating so hard that the Chinese balls traveled up and down my sheath until they bumped against my G-spot and almost popped out of me entirely. The spasm took hold of my entire body, rocking me back and forth until I lost my balance on the edge of

my chair and toppled down onto the floor. As I fell, the remote control Daisy handed me at the beginning of the session lost its perch on the arm of the chair and landed squarely underneath my heaving bottom. It all happened so fast that I didn't realize I'd accidentally pressed one of the buttons on the remote in the midst of my ecstasy until I heard Daisy's voice interrupting over the loudspeaker.

"Hyacinth Slaughter, you have pressed the blue button. Does this mean you wish to join the activities in the Blossom Submission Chamber as a direct participant? If so, press the blue button again."

I sat frozen. *How could I have been so clumsy? I'm a mousy Congressional PR staffer, not a whip-flipping S & M mistress!* There was no way I could cross over to the other side of the glass and get in on the action; sure Sen. Grayle would recognize me and blow my cover. Then I remembered I was in disguise.

I pressed the blue button again.

A door panel I didn't notice earlier slid open with a *swish*. I walked through it into the Blossom Submission Chamber. As I did, Daisy's voice rang out over loudspeakers.

"Mistress and Slave, you have a guest. Hyacinth Slaughter wishes to join your sex play. Will you accept her?"

Sen. Grayle did not acknowledge my presence. He just kept lapping at Mistress Violet's boots. Mistress Violet took a break from her sex-stroking to look me up and down, her deep-set violet eyes (the source of her name, I assumed) coming to rest on my bared breasts.

"You are a fine specimen, Hyacinth Slaughter," Mistress Violet purred, her voice husky with arousal. "A fine specimen, indeed. Lovely figure, soft and pillowy in all the right spots. A pouty, swollen mouth, too." Her purple gaze stole lower, focusing on the triangle of dark hair just above my sex. "And your scent is intoxicating and powerful. I can see how you got your name."

Mistress Violet's awesome presence and many-taloned whip intimidated me to no end. I stared up at her quizzically.

"Ah," she said, "I see you are new in your persona. Allow me to explain. Here at the House

of Flowers, everyone's personas are a reflection of some special part of themselves. You are Hyacinth Slaughter. I know who named you, and now I know why. The scent of your sex is dusky and sweet, potent enough to be smelt across a room—just like a hyacinth flower. Your body opens up wide and curvy at the hips, much like the shape of a hyacinth blossom. And your body is hardy and strong, capable of wielding a heavy weapon. You are powerful and sensual, Hyacinth. Powerful enough to *slaughter* any man or woman who approaches you with your incredible sex appeal. You've certainly turned me on." Mistress Violet went back to stroking her sex, though she didn't take her violet eyes off me for an instant.

I blinked. No one had ever spoken to me so boldly. I felt as though I'd been magically transported to a parallel universe where everyone and everything were walking vessels of pure, dripping sexuality.

Mistress Violet smiled softly. "Don't be so alarmed, Hyacinth. Whatever you are like in the real world; within these walls, you are purely a sexual being. A sexual being I'd like to spend some time getting to know." She shifted in her seat and pulled her booted foot out of Sen. Grayle's grasp, much to his dismay. "You are released, Slave," she said. "Go and stand with your face to the wall until you are summoned again."

Sen. Grayle opened his mouth to protest, but Mistress Violet silenced him with a wave of her hand. Slump-shouldered, he obeyed and trudged over to the wall. Mistress Violet rose from her seat and approached me. The scent of her sex hit me like a speeding car: a heady mix of vinegar and roses. "Have you ever dominated someone in sex play, Hyacinth?"

I shook my head.

She smiled slightly. "Would you like to try it today?"

I sucked in my breath. My body tingled all over with erotic tension at the very thought of becoming a whip-cracking temptress like Mistress Violet. But the truth was, I didn't know the first thing about being a dominatrix. I'd never even held a whip in my hands before, let alone used one on somebody. "I—"

Mistress Violet raised her palm. "Hush," she said. "It's natural to be a bit apprehensive the

first time. Contrary to what you might think, dominating someone during sex doesn't necessarily mean whips and chains." She paused, licked her lips. "As lovely as whips and chains can be, sometimes domination can be quite subtle."

"I don't understand."

Mistress Violet took my hand. "You can dominate someone with subtle looks and words just as you can dominate them physically. And doing so can be just as erotic if done properly." She ran her long, lacquered nails up and down the inside of my arm, leaving light scratch marks that felt as if they were being made by razor-sharp feathers. "Perhaps your first lesson would be best learned as the one being dominated. Would you like to try being a 'bottom' first, my dear? Although I think your ultimate destiny is to be a 'top', all of us dominating ladies have to spend some time on the other side to learn a little perspective." She giggled, then glanced in Sen. Grayle's direction. "Isn't that right, Slave?"

"Yes, Mistress," the naked senator mumbled, his face still to the wall.

"Yonder Slave is a very powerful man in the outside world," Mistress Grayle purred, teasing the back of Sen. Grayle's calves with the ends of her cat-o-nine-tails. "Very, very powerful and rich. He's used to being boss in every part of his life." She gestured around the room. "Every part except *this* one. Yonder Slave comes here so he can spend some private time having the tables of power turned on him. And he enjoys it *immensely*. Isn't that right, Slave?"

"Yes, Mistress."

Mistress Violet giggled again. "I think we're all going to have a lovely time."

She crossed to the far side of the room and opened a set of paneled double doors. As they swung open on creaky hinges, they revealed a walk-in closet filled with all manner of exotic sex toys: handcuffs, harnesses, dildos and vibrators of every shape, size, and color; and a few things I'd never seen before. "Hyacinth Slaughter, please take your pick of any of these instruments of pleasure. You may select one, or many, as you choose; and then I will use it on you." She jerked her raven-haired head in Sen. Grayle's direction. "And yonder Slave will watch and pleasure himself on command. With your consent, of course."

I considered that for a moment. I wasn't sure how I felt about having my boss watch me have an orgasm at his mistress' hands. Then again, in this secret, sensual place, Sen. Grayle wasn't really a senator—nor was he my boss. At the House of Flowers he was a Slave, and I was Hyacinth Slaughter. Nothing that happened here would ever be known beyond these walls. (Unless, of course, I showed the photos stored in my camera phone to Rodney Doyle. But that was another matter for another time.) I nodded my agreement.

Mistress Violet grinned. "Splendid, Hyacinth. Now choose your instrument of pleasure."

I carefully inspected every shelf in the closet of sensual delights. I passed over the more exotic items and settled on a Rabbit, the popular dildo-vibrator combination I'd seen advertised in the back of women's magazines and had once featured on an old episode of "Sex and the City." There were a number of Rabbits in Mistress Violet's collection in a variety of sizes and colors. I picked a medium-sized white one and handed it to her.

Mistress Violet tested the dildo's power switch, and the Rabbit emitted a high-pitched buzzing sound. She switched it off, then produced a condom from a hidden pocket in her jumpsuit. She slipped the condom over the Rabbit, then coated it with some cherry-scented Astroglide.

"Perfect," she said. "Hyacinth, I can see you are an elegant woman who appreciates the classics."

"Thank you," I stammered. "I—um, to tell you the truth, I really don't know what any of that other stuff is for."

"All in good time, Dear. Now for your first domination lesson, I'll break with my usual protocol and refrain from calling you Slave." She glanced over at Sen. Grayle. "Slave, you may turn around from the wall now and observe," she said, resuming her booming dominatrix voice. "But you will refrain from stimulating yourself until I give you the command."

Sen. Grayle turned around. "Yes, Mistress." His member was so huge now it practically burst out of its skin. His bulging purple glans dripped with juice, and he was clearly fighting to keep his release in check. The senator stood motionless, staring straight ahead and waiting for his

mistress' next set of instructions.

Mistress Violet turned her attention to me. "Hyacinth Slaughter, you will now remove your robe."

Her tone left no room for argument. My already-open robe slipped off my body and onto the floor. I made a mental note to retrieve it when the festivities were over no matter how exhausted I was, since my camera phone was still tucked inside the breast pocket.

"Now, Hyacinth, you will turn around to face the far wall, spread your legs, and bend over. Use your hands against the wall to support yourself. You will need to, believe me."

I obeyed her command but felt oddly exposed with my butt sticking out and my sex exposed to the point I could feel the light stir of the air conditioning against my wet, wide-open vulva. I'd barely had a chance to brace myself against the wall when the first touch of the Rabbit against my clit made me jump.

"Mmm," I moaned, swaying my hips as Mistress Violet administered the Rabbit's ears to my sex with her seasoned, expert hands. I pushed against the Rabbit's vibrating tip, intensifying the sensation. Mistress Violet countered by sliding the dildo portion deep into my sheath, then switched on the dildo's own vibrator function. She kept it on the low setting at first, allowing my body to adjust to the wild whirring sensation reverberating throughout my insides. Just as I felt my body drop over the edge, she switched the setting to high. My clit instantly went numb and the Chinese balls shook hard enough against the walls of my sheath to produce an intense, teeth-clattering vaginal orgasm. As I came, my hips bucked and my pussy clenched so fast and hard I thought I might break in half.

Mistress Violet switched the Rabbit off, but left it inside me. "You are a very sensual woman, Hyacinth," she said from behind me. "You orgasm wildly even at the slightest stimulation. That's a good sign. Would you like to experience something even more intense than what you just felt?"

As if that is even possible. "Mm hm," I groaned, pushing myself up against the Rabbit. Mistress Violet pressed a button hidden in the wall. A mirror appeared. "Look in the mirror, Hyacinth," she ordered. "It will aid in your pleasure. And once your eyes are focused there, keep

them there. Do *not* turn around.”

I obeyed. In the mirror’s foreground I saw Mistress Violet caressing my backside softly with her soft, well-manicured hands as she prepared to start Round Two with the Rabbit. In the background, I saw Sen. Grayle standing at attention with his hugely swollen member in his hand, awaiting Mistress Violet’s orders. I kept my eyes glued to the mirror, afraid Mistress Violet would use her whip on me if I disobeyed her.

“You may begin your own pleasure now, Slave,” she told him. “But you will hold off on your release until I give the command.”

“Yes, Mistress,” came Sen. Grayle’s robotic reply. He stroked his dick, his eyelids lowering and mouth opening with pleasure.

Mistress Violet flicked the Rabbit’s switch back on. This time, she kept both parts of the toy set to low. I longed for something more intense, but she kept things slow and easy at first.

“Relax, Hyacinth,” she purred. “Give yourself up to the sensations. Let things build slowly and then savor them. The greatest sexual pleasure grows slowly over a long time and lasts all day, rather than exploding in a mere instant.” To illustrate her point, Mistress Violet leaned her groin against the butt end of the Rabbit so she too could share in its slow, steady pleasure.

I followed the dominatrix’s instructions as best I could by putting all my weight into my hands against the wall, letting the rest of my body relax and grow limp as Mistress Violet stroked my sex softly in delicate, widening circles. At first I was frustrated by my body’s slow progress to orgasm, since all Mistress Violet was doing was using the Rabbit’s ears to gently stimulate my clit while keeping the dildo portion still in my pussy. I tried to buck my hips to get a rhythm going inside, but Mistress Violet slapped my buttocks hard as a signal to stop.

“Be still,” Mistress Violet whispered through clenched teeth. “You will grow to appreciate what I’m doing, believe me.”

And after another moment or two, I did.

Mistress Violet’s slow, deliberate stroking on my clit built up a kind of heat I’d never experienced before. Instead of my usual tendency toward rapid, frantic strokes that took me over

the edge as quickly and efficiently as possible; I enjoyed the slow, steady buildup that started on my clit and, after several minutes, radiated out across my vulva and into my perineum. I rocked gently back and forth on my heels, going with the flow and savoring the deepening heat between my legs.

“Ahhh,” I groaned as my body relaxed into the hot vibrations even more. “That’s *sooo* good.”

Mistress Violet smiled at me in the mirror. I could tell she enjoyed seeing my dewy, aroused expression in the glass. “And now it will get even better.” She turned up the setting on the Rabbit a notch and moved it slowly up and down in my sheath with one hand; keeping her own groin leaning against it to maintain her pleasure simultaneously. With the other hand she stroked my perineum, which had grown hot and slick with my juices. I circled my hips in time to her strokes, which made the center of heat that had built up in my groin after such a long time go white-hot. Meanwhile, I could see Sen. Grayle in the mirror as he stroked his member in perfect synchronization with Mistress Violet and me. We were like a classical string trio, playing chamber music in a slow, steady crescendo.

Just as I was getting used to the new intensity of sensation in my perineum, Mistress Violet took things to a new level. While still keeping things going with the Rabbit, she moved her free hand from my perineum to my back passage, running the tip of her finger around the edges of my puckered hole. “You have never been penetrated here, have you?” she asked as she used my freely flowing juices to lube up my tiny, forbidden rosette.

“Nuh-nooo,” I groaned, feeling the heat in my groin and belly get even hotter. I could almost see my orgasm approaching. Mistress Violet kept up her exploration of the entrance to my back passage, circling its outline lightly with one finger. The tight ball of heat in my pussy spread lower; and I felt my forbidden passage open in response. Mistress Violet fit in one finger—then two, then three—until I had two full-force fucks going on at once. The Chinese balls inside my sheath pressed upward and back against my forbidden passage and my perineum, sending forth mind-numbing sensations I didn’t know were possible. The pressure built between my vag and back passage until both orifices exploded. I thrashed and kicked with climax, and would have

fallen over if Mistress Violet hadn't anticipated my reaction and held me steady with her strong, hands.

As I leaned against the wall struggling to catch my breath, Mistress Violet turned her attention to Sen. Grayle. "You may relieve yourself now, Slave," she said.

"Thank you, Mistress." I watched in the wall mirror as Sen. Grayle instantly brought himself to a massive orgasm. His seed spilled all over the floor in front of him. When he was finished, he stood at attention and awaited Mistress Violet's next command.

Mistress Violet helped me to recline on a nearby velvet settee and handed me a warm washcloth to clean myself up. "Take a moment to rest, Dear," she said. "Would you like a glass of ice water?"

"Yes, please," I replied as I stretched out. But before she could bring it to me, I'd already fallen asleep.

* * * *

I woke up in a small bedroom of sorts. I was tucked inside a twin bed lined with silk sheets and a satin comforter. I was wearing my black silk robe again, but someone had removed my face mask. I checked the robe's inside pocket for my cell phone and found it there. But to my dismay, I saw that someone had deleted all the pictures I took of Sen. Grayle.

I got a sinking feeling in my stomach as I realized that I failed my first assignment as an undercover sex spy. I'd put my own pleasure ahead of completing my mission. *What will Rodney Doyle think of me now?*

Even so, I had mixed feelings as I tucked my camera phone back into my purse. Although now nobody would know it but me, I'd just shared a very intimate experience with my boss of the past two years. And even if he was a corrupt, self-serving politician in trouble with the law, he was still my boss.

I found my clothes and purse stashed in a cubby just below the bed. The small bedroom had an adjacent bathroom and stand-up shower, which I used to clean up. The shower was equipped with luxury-grade toiletries, a hair dryer, hairbrush, and even a makeup kit. After a long, hot

shower and a few minutes of fussing in front of the mirror, I was back to my nondescript, PR-staffer self. I gathered up my purse and overcoat and made my way out into the hallway.

Daisy was there to meet me. “Did you enjoy your stay with us today, Hyacinth?”

Hyacinth? I thought, still groggy from my nap. *Who is Hyacinth?* Then I remembered it was me.

“Oh, yes,” I said, “it was just lovely.”

Daisy smiled. “Good. Please do come back and see us again soon, Hyacinth. You’re welcome here anytime. And your account has already been paid in full, so you’re free to go whenever you like.”

I wondered how much money Rodney Doyle coughed up for my private session with a dominatrix. “Thank you for all your help, Daisy,” I said. “I appreciate it very much.”

“I’m so glad,” Daisy said, patting me on the shoulder. “Is there anything else I can do for you?”

I fished the business card the cabbie had given me that morning and handed it to Daisy. “Could you call a cab for me? I need a ride back to my office on the Hill.”

“I can do better than that,” Daisy said. “The House of Flowers has a private limousine at its disposal. I’ll have it pull around out front for you right away.” She handed me back the cabbie’s business card. “Keep this for another time,” she said with a knowing smile. “You never know when you might need it.”

Daisy guided me through the sex club’s twisting hallways and staircases until I was back out on the street. The limousine’s passenger door opened itself on hydraulic hinges. I stepped inside and the car began the journey toward the Hill.

Before we were even halfway there, however, I had the distinct feeling we were being followed. I turned around and glanced out the limo’s tinted rear window, and saw a white stretch Cadillac just behind us. The car’s windshield was tinted, so I couldn’t make out what the driver looked like. The white stretch matched every turn and lane change my driver made, and tailed us all the way back to the Hill; only breaking off its pursuit moments before my driver dropped

me in front of Sen. Grayle's office building. The driver of the other limo seemed to know exactly what my destination was. The only person besides Daisy who knew where I'd been and where I was going was Rodney Doyle.

Rodney Doyle was having me followed. I'd have to give him a piece of my mind. First things first, I told myself. I have work to do.

Chapter Ten

I made it back to the office just in time for lunch. Rebecca was seated at her secretarial desk, rummaging through a stack of pink “While You Were Out” phone message slips when I came in.

“Oh, Jasmine!” she exclaimed when I walked in. “I’m so glad you’re back. We’ve had some interesting calls come in this morning.”

I slumped down in one of the overstuffed leather reception chairs. “I’m sure,” I said.

Rebecca took the top message slip off the stack and handed it to me. “I think you should respond to this one first,” she said. “It sounds urgent.”

I looked at the slip. There was a phone number I didn’t recognize for a return call but no name and no message. “What exactly is urgent? There’s no name.”

Rebecca’s lips pursed. “I tried to get whoever it was to leave a name and message, but he—I think it was a *he*, anyway—refused. The voice on the line sounded odd, sort of distorted.”

“Distorted, eh? Hmm. Could be a tapped line. I’ll return this one on Senator Grayle’s line. What about the other calls?”

Rebecca handed me the rest of the slips in a wrinkled wad. “The usual press calls, a couple constituents calling to say how upset they are about Senator Grayle’s sex behavior and how they hope he loses the election.” Rebecca’s expression saddened as she handed those messages over. “And one last call from Rodney Doyle at the *Beltway Times*. He wanted you to call him back as soon as you got back to the office.” Rebecca paused. “He seemed to know where you were, too. I thought that was odd, since I tried to tell him you were tied up on another line, not out on an errand. Do you know how he could have known where you were?”

I bit my lip. “I dunno—lucky guess, maybe?” I tucked the phone messages in my pocket. “What’s for lunch? I’m starving.”

Rebecca stood and stretched. “I don’t know. I’ve been too busy this morning to even think about food. In addition to all the calls coming in, I’ve had to put all of Senator Grayle’s financial

records in order for the divorce lawyers. Things are pretty nasty with Mrs. Grayle. It looks like she wants to take her husband for everything he's worth and then some."

"Well, you can hardly blame her," I said. "Honestly, I always found it hard to understand why she stuck by him as long as she did."

Rebecca lifted a stack of sorted files from the floor and placed them in a banker's box. "I think she enjoyed being a political wife so much she looked the other way for a long time," she said. "But what happened at Rock Creek Park was way too public. Mrs. Grayle is always worried about how things look to others. After what happened the other day, she probably won't show her face in public for a long time." Rebecca sighed and shook her head. "I feel so sorry for her. She really is a nice lady, even if she's a bit of a snob sometimes. She didn't deserve this."

Thinking back on my experience at the House of Flowers, I couldn't help wondering what the senator and Mrs. Grayle's sex life had been like. Between all his expensive mistresses and membership in a top-secret S & M club, it seemed that Sen. Grayle hadn't been getting his sexual satisfaction from Mrs. Grayle for a very long time. I also knew that the Grayles had no children.

"Rebecca," I said, shaking off the thoughts, "what do you say I order us in some Chinese takeout for lunch? And I'll try to make sense of all these calls."

Rebecca smiled. "Sounds good. But I always thought you hated Chinese food."

I smiled back. "You know, I used to. But today I just have a taste for Chinese for some reason." I headed for my cube to make the takeout call, clenching my vaginal muscles as tightly as possible to keep the Chinese balls from chiming in Rebecca's earshot again. "How about sweet-and-sour pork, chicken with cashews, and an eggroll appetizer? My treat."

"Sounds great."

I ordered the food and left some cash with Rebecca so she could pay for it when it arrived. "I'll be in Senator Grayle's office, returning calls on his private line," I said. "Just come get me when the food arrives." I walked into the office and locked the door behind me.

I returned the mysterious distorted-voice message first, and was met by a recording from the telephone company saying the number had been disconnected. Thinking I might have misdialled,

I tried again and got the same recording. Whoever called probably gave a fake number. I made a mental note to ask Rebecca to be vigilant if a caller with a mysterious, distorted voice rang again.

I tossed all the messages from angry constituents in the garbage. With Sen. Grayle's political career over, there was no point in trying to keep in good graces with the voters back home. That left the message from Rodney Doyle. I had mixed feelings about Rodney now. On the one hand, my experience at the House of Flowers had been incredible. But I wasn't entirely sure I wanted to get caught up in the kind of scandal and intrigue Rodney and his newspaper were famous for stirring up—and I didn't know how to break it to him the pictures I took were gone.

I dialed his office and was surprised when he picked up his own line, bypassing his luscious little secretary. "Rodney Doyle speaking."

"Well, I'm back from running that little errand," I said, my voice husky and deeper than usual. I decided not to let on I'd figured out he'd had me followed.

"So I heard," he replied. "Daisy called to let me know how things went."

I blinked. "Did she now? Boy, the girl is efficient."

Rodney laughed. "Yes, she is. Which is exactly why I keep her on my payroll. It's my understanding from Daisy that you had quite a good time."

I kicked off my heels and put my bare feet on Sen. Grayle's desk, suddenly feeling powerful. "Yes, I *did* have a good time," I said. "The whole experience was very interesting."

Rodney cleared his throat. "I understand from Daisy that you gave Mistress Violet a run for her money. Is that true?"

"I'm not sure," I replied. "What exactly would constitute a run for a dominatrix's money?"

"Oh, this and that," Rodney teased. "Trust me, you did very well. I have it on good authority."

"Is that right?"

"Yes, that's right." Rodney paused. I could hear him drumming his fingers onto his mahogany desk. "Now down to business," he said. "How many pictures did you get of Senator Grayle while you were there?"

I chewed my lip. “Well, there’s kind of a thing about that.”

“Such as?”

I took a deep breath and swallowed hard. “I *did* take several photos with my camera phone,” I said. “But all the photos got deleted somehow.”

Rodney coughed. “And how, pray tell, did that happen?”

“I don’t know. I sort of fell asleep after things wrapped up with Mistress Violet, and when I woke up, my phone’s memory had been cleared out.”

Rodney took a moment to ponder this. I wasn’t sure, but I thought I heard him grinding his teeth. “Well, it’s not unexpected you’d have problems on your first assignment,” he finally said. “And I also suppose it’s my fault. I should have better prepared you for what you’d run into at the House of Flowers. Mistress Violet does have a reputation for wearing out her clients. ”

I breathed a sigh of relief. I was certain that given his reputation as a cutthroat barracuda in the media world, Rodney would have been furious with me for failing. But here he was, shrugging it off as no big deal.

“And even if you hadn’t fallen asleep, Jasmine, I probably shouldn’t have sent you on assignment after Senator Grayle as your first visit to the House of Flowers. I think it was probably a bit too personal for your liking. Am I right?”

“Yes, you’re right,” I sighed. “But don’t misunderstand me—I *did* enjoy myself. Really.”

“I don’t doubt that at all,” he said. “You are a very sensual woman, Jasmine, and I’m sure you were in your element. I wanted you to go to the House of Flowers as a sort of test: not only of your potential skill as an undercover tabloid reporter, but also a test of your sexual prowess. And I’m pleased to report that you passed *that* test with flying colors.”

I passed! I couldn’t help but feel a little smug. If someone suggested to me a week earlier that I’d soon be living the life of a sexpot political spy, I would have laughed them out of town. I stifled a giggle at the notion someone like me could be destined for a life of secret sexual intrigue. Stuff like that just didn’t happen to small-town, virginal girls from North Dakota.

“Jasmine?” Rodney asked. “Are you still there?”

“Yes, I’m still here,” I stammered. “I just sort of lost my train of thought for a minute.”

“More like *three* minutes,” Rodney said. “I was beginning to wonder if maybe you’d passed out from exhaustion.”

My cheeks burned. “So what happens now?”

“Take the rest of the day to catch up on whatever you need to in the office,” Rodney said. “We’ll meet for dinner tonight to discuss our next steps. My condo is at thirty-four Riverside Drive. I employ a private chef who’ll make us a nice meal. I hope you like French cuisine.”

I smiled. “Love it. Just no snails, please.”

“Don’t worry. *Escargot* won’t be on the menu. They’re out of season. See you at eight, Jasmine. And how about you wear that little red number you had on last night again? It suited you. The shoes, too.” Rodney hung up.

The red dress he referred to was badly stained with sweat and pussy juice. I wouldn’t have time to get it dry-cleaned in time for dinner. And there was also the little matter of me confronting Rodney for having me tailed. I was puzzling over what to do about both predicaments when Rebecca stuck her head in the room.

“The takeout’s here,” she said. “I’ll set everything up in the break room.”

“I’ll be right there,” I replied. I could feel a monster headache coming on. I rummaged around in Sen. Grayle’s bottom drawer where I knew he kept his Excedrin. I took three tablets from the bottle and dry-swallowed them before heading to the break room.

Rebecca had already set out the Chinese food, along with paper plates, napkins, and bamboo chopsticks by the time I arrived. She’d also set put out two cans of Diet Coke for me, knowing I liked it better than the healthy herbal tea she preferred.

“I have the kettle on if you decide you want tea later,” she said.

“No, Diet Coke is fine.”

Rebecca frowned. “You know, they say diet soft drinks cause brain cancer. You really should consider cutting down.”

I flopped into a chair and dished myself a hearty helping of cashew chicken. “At the rate I’m

going, I'd be better off with a brain tumor."

Rebecca's brown eyes glistened with concern. "Jasmine, you shouldn't talk like that."

"I dunno, Rebecca. I'm not sure if I have much of a future in Washington anymore. And if I don't have a future in Washington, I'm not sure if I have a future at all. Washington is all I know. I'd rather die than have to go back to North Dakota."

Rebecca took an egg roll from the takeout box for herself and handed me the other one. "I thought things were going well with your Rodney Doyle angle," she said, smothering her egg roll with hot mustard sauce. "Did something go wrong between you and him? I hope not, for our sake. Seems to me his paper is our last hope."

My mouth turned to cotton. Rebecca gave me an odd look. "Are you all right, Jasmine? You seem a little preoccupied."

"No, I'm fine," I lied. "Just tired, is all. The past two days have been a little crazy."

"That's true," Rebecca said. "I'm worn out too. Working fourteen-hour days trying to keep the press from breaking down the front door is no fun. But we have to do our best to stay positive, whatever happens." As if to emphasize her point, Rebecca smiled brightly and polished off the rest of her egg roll.

I envied Rebecca her devil-may-care attitude in the midst of such a crisis. Then again, she was such a skilled and well-connected secretary that I was sure she'd have a cushy job in some congressman's office on the Hill in no time.

"I wish I had your positive attitude, Rebecca," I said. "It would make my life a lot easier."

"Anyone can have a positive attitude who wants one," was her swift and sunny reply.

"They're not hard to come by if you just try."

We ate in silence for a few minutes before Rebecca spoke again. "So, what *is* going on with Rodney Doyle and his paper? You never said. And I *am* curious why he called this morning while you were out sounding like he did."

My chopsticks stopped in midair. "What do you mean, *sounding like he did*? What did he sound like, exactly?"

Rebecca wiped the grease from her fingers with her napkin. “To tell you the truth, he sounded jealous.”

Jealous? My jaw dropped. “Are you fucking kidding me?”

Rebecca scrambled to explain. “I wasn’t planning to say anything about it at first, because I thought maybe I was imagining things. But now I see you acting this way at lunch, and it makes me wonder if my first impression was right.”

“This is just getting worse and worse,” I groaned.

“What? What’s getting worse?” Rebecca laid a gentle hand on my shoulder. “We’ve worked together for a long time, Jasmine. Whatever it is, you can tell me what’s on your mind.”

I looked up. “I’m not sure you’d want to know the truth.”

“Sure I would. Try me. Believe me, Jasmine, after working in Senator Grayle’s office for as long as I have, there’s not a lot I haven’t seen already.” Rebecca raised her eyebrows. “*If* you know what I mean.”

“No, I’m afraid I don’t.”

Rebecca rolled her eyes. “Come *on*, Jasmine. It’s not as if I haven’t heard about Rodney Doyle’s notorious reputation with the ladies. And I read the *Beltway Times* practically every day, so I know what kinds of topics that rag likes to cover. Given the size of the bags under your eyes, I can pretty well imagine what you’ve been up to. So dish.”

I sighed. “All right. It looks like you’re already on to me, so you might as well know the truth. Rodney Doyle and I are having an affair.”

Rebecca clapped her hands. “I *knew* it!”

“At least, I *think* it’s an affair. I don’t have a lot of experience with these things, so maybe I’m wrong.”

Rebecca reached across the table and gave me a hug. “Jasmine, I’m so glad to hear it! You’ve needed something like this for a long time. You’re such a workaholic, I was beginning to wonder if I’d ever see the day you found someone.”

I abruptly broke off the hug. “Now wait a minute. I didn’t say that I’d ‘found’ anybody. As

far as I can tell, this thing with Rodney is just a fling. Not that I mind.”

Rebecca went to take the kettle off the hotplate, and poured herself more tea. “Whether it’s for real or just a fling, Jasmine, at least it’s *something*. Honestly, I don’t think you’ve been on a date the entire time I’ve known you.”

“That’s because I haven’t,” I said, embarrassed. “Up until yesterday, anyway.”

Rebecca raised her teacup in a toast. “Well, then here’s to you and Rodney,” she said. “Cheers.”

“Not so fast,” I said. “I’m not really sure if things are going the way I want them to with Rodney.”

Rebecca’s face fell. “Why not?”

“I don’t know. It’s sort of complicated.” My throat tightened up at the prospect of revealing the truth to Rebecca. I didn’t think she’d take it well.

Rebecca patted my hand. “You don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want to,” she said. “But I’m here to help if you need it. All you have to do is say the word.”

I stared down into the remains of my cashew chicken. “Thanks, Rebecca, I appreciate it,” I said. “I really do. But I think this is a situation I’ll have to deal with on my own.”

Rebecca’s expression softened. “Say no more,” she said. “Like I already said, I’m aware of Mr. Doyle’s reputation with the ladies, believe me. And my original offer still stands. Whatever you might think of me or my personal life, Jasmine, I’m not as innocent as you think.”

“I’ll take that under advisement,” I replied. “But for now, I’d like to keep private things private.” I pushed my plate away, no longer hungry. “You can have the rest of the takeaway,” I said. “I need to get back to work.”

Chapter Eleven

At 6 p.m., my workday was finally beginning to wind down. I'd spent most of the afternoon running interference with the press, which had gone on the offensive when it became clear Sen. Grayle was in trouble with congressional leaders for blowing town in the middle of an important floor vote. The outlandish (and totally false) standard statement I'd been issuing to the world at large in response to the whole mess was that Sen. Grayle contracted appendicitis while in jail, and had to be rushed home to North Dakota so his personal physician could perform the appendectomy surgery.

I doubted that would hold the press vultures at bay for more than a day.

My only hope at this point was that some other politician in Washington would also be caught with his pants down in the next 12 hours, so the media would have some other press secretary to pick on besides me.

Or maybe the President would decide to declare war on somebody tomorrow. That would be an even bigger help. Neither possibility seemed likely.

I peeked over the cubicle divider and saw Rebecca had already gone home. I had just less than two hours to prepare for my next tryst with Rodney Doyle, and I didn't have a thing to wear.

I locked up the office and headed out to the street to flag a taxi. A cab pulled up to the curb almost immediately, and as I climbed in I was stunned to see it was driven by the same cabbie who'd taken me to the House of Flowers that morning.

He smiled at me in the rearview mirror. "Evening, Miss. Did everything turn out all right for you this morning over in Columbia Heights? I was worried about you when you didn't call me for a ride back."

"I got a ride home safely just the same," I said. "But thank you."

"Where to now, Miss?" The cabbie looked to be about my father's age, with deep-set smile lines in his face and around his eyes, as if he'd spent a lifetime being happy. And no wonder: Cab

drivers arguably had the best jobs in Washington. They had a birds'-eye view of all the political wheeling and dealing, power broking and scandals in D.C. without having to get personally involved. I secretly wished I could lead the carefree life of a Washington taxi driver instead of having to face my fast-disintegrating career in PR.

The cab approached the Metro Center Mall. I figured I could do a little shopping, then catch the subway back to my apartment to freshen up in time for my date with Rodney. "Just let me off up here at the corner," I said. "I need to go buy a new dress."

The cabbie nodded his acknowledgement and pulled the cab up to the curb in front of the entrance to Neiman Marcus. "My wife likes to shop here," he said. "I hear they have some nice things in the formalwear department."

"Thank you," I said, and handed the cabbie a \$20 bill for an eight-dollar fare. "Keep the change."

The cabbie tipped his hat in gratitude. "Much obliged, Ma'am. My name's Dexter. Be sure to ask for me by name next time you call Yellow Cab for a ride. I'll pick you up anywhere, anytime. And when I say 'anywhere, anytime,' I mean it. No place is too strange or out of the way for me to go pick up a beautiful young lady in distress."

Distress? Puzzled, I got out and slammed the cab door shut behind me. Dexter gave me a wave as he sped off.

I headed into Neiman Marcus and wandered the aisles of the women's formalwear department, not at all interested in the overpriced, gaudy fashions that hung from the racks. It seemed everything in the store was designed to appeal to women who were in their 50s and older.

Frustrated, I headed out of the mall the way I came in; but got turned around and somehow ended up in the menswear department. As I stood surrounded by bulky wool suits and overcoats, I had an idea.

I grabbed a large black wool overcoat off the rack at random. I checked the price tag and was delighted to find it was marked down. I took it up to the nearest cashier's desk and paid for

it with my Visa card. The middle-aged woman behind the checkout desk smiled sweetly as she wrapped up my purchase.

“A gift for your father, miss?” she asked. “Or for someone special perhaps?”

I grinned. “*Definitely* for someone special.”

The clerk adjusted her reading glasses and handed me my package. “Well, I hope he likes it, Dear.”

“I hope so, too.” I turned on my heel and headed out of the store. I’d missed the 6:30 p.m. train by then, but I still had plenty of time for the 6:45. As I stood on the platform waiting for it to arrive, I mentally went over the contents of my lingerie drawer at home. It didn’t take long; with the exception of the plain white bras and panties I wore almost every day, there was almost nothing in it worth remembering.

Almost nothing.

In my mind’s eye I could see the red teddy and matching G-string I bought myself at Victoria’s Secret for Valentine’s Day the year before. The teddy and tiny scrap of panties were at the bottom of my drawer, in their original paper wrappings with the tags still attached. I remembered how I’d been feeling a little depressed earlier that year at not having a date or a boyfriend for the third straight Valentine’s Day, and had given myself a little retail therapy by buying overpriced lingerie I never thought I’d have occasion to wear.

That occasion had arrived.

The subway train slid onto the platform. I stepped inside the last car and, even though it was nearly empty, made a point to stand grasping one of the overhead hand-loops instead of sitting down. The bumping and shaking of the subway car made the Chinese balls still tucked inside me that much more enjoyable when I was standing up.

I took a deep breath, closed my eyes, and let my body be overtaken by the intense vibrations rising in my pussy as I headed home. My crotch went hot and my forehead went clammy as I felt my orgasm approach. Rodney’s prediction had been right: Carrying the Chinese balls around inside me all day *had* taught me control. I was on the brink of a body-quaking orgasm, and yet

neither my face nor my body registered that fact on the outside. Anyone passing by would think I was just a little tired from a hard day's work at the office.

My climax overtook me just moments before the train arrived into the station closest to my apartment. The delightful spasms stopped just as the train car doors slid open.

Chapter Twelve

I arrived at Rodney Doyle's posh apartment building at 8:10 p.m., just as planned. I thought being fashionably late would only add to the sexual tension—and I needed all the thick, dripping sexual tension I could get for my little plan to work.

The heavy overcoat I bought at Neiman Marcus was at least three sizes too big. The sleeves covered my hands entirely with room to spare, and the hem would have dragged the ground if I hadn't been wearing my three-inch heels. I wore nothing underneath the overcoat except my red teddy and matching G-string. But to make me as nondescript as possible on the outside, I wore wraparound sunglasses and had a black silk scarf wrapped over my hair, Jackie-O style. I didn't want to risk drawing any unnecessary attention from the doorman or anyone else. Given some of the stories I'd seen printed in the *Beltway Times* of late, I wouldn't have been surprised in the least if Rodney had hidden cameras in the lobby and hallways of his building.

I checked my reflection in the lobby's smoked-glass doors before stepping inside. I was unrecognizable. Not a strand of hair—which I'd swept into an alluring updo—showed from underneath my black scarf; and the huge, mirrored wraparounds took care of my face, which I'd powdered bone-white. The only bit of color that stood out against my all-over black attire was the Joan Crawford-style red lips I penciled on.

Looking up, I was surprised to see the same huge black male security guard I'd seen back at the *Beltway Times* building the day prior. I wondered if perhaps he pulled double shifts because he was Rodney Doyle's own private security detail. I gave him my name. The beefy security guard made no indication that he recognized me. He grunted something into the receiver; I couldn't help but find that grunt erotic.

He motioned toward the elevator. "Come with me, Ma'am," he said.

With pleasure, I thought. I couldn't help but pick up on his double entendre, intended or not. I was surprised at how naughty I felt. He punched a code in the elevator panel. I watched him do it

from behind, relishing the cords that stood out on the back of his thick brown neck as he did so. The elevator beeped.

“It’ll take you straight up to Mr. Doyle’s penthouse,” he said. He tipped his hat and winked. “Have a good night, Ma’am.”

The Chinese balls did a somersault inside my sheath as the elevator rocketed north. By the time the doors slid open onto Rodney’s posh penthouse suite, my entire lower half was on fire.

Rodney stood waiting in front of the elevator; a crystal carafe of port in one hand, a brimming highball in the other. He looked tired and frazzled. His shirttail was out and his trousers were wrinkled. A white-cloth table set for two with filet mignon, risotto primavera and iced champagne sat untouched in the foyer. I could tell the food had already gone cold.

Rodney looked me up and down with a steely gaze. I could tell he wasn’t at all pleased with my coverall attire. “You’re late,” he snapped.

“Not by much,” I said, and swished past him. “I need to visit the ladies’ room, please.”

“First door on your right,” he said curtly, and guzzled half the contents of his highball. “And hurry up about it.” He pulled a handkerchief from his breast pocket and mopped his face with it. “You’re driving me to drink, do you realize that?”

I smiled to myself as I ducked into the bathroom to powder my nose and check my lipstick. I lingered in the stunning all-marble bath for longer than I planned, overwhelmed by the rich beauty of the unusually large bath suite. There was a two-person Jacuzzi tub, a large separate shower with a steam feature and all-over body sprays, and an abundance of luxury bath products. There were his-and-hers Egyptian cotton bathrobes hanging from hooks, and there was an oblong loofah scrubber on the counter. I reached out and ran my finger over its rough, pockmarked surface and stifled a desire to rub the thing back and forth between my legs. I could foresee Rodney and I having a very wet-and-wild time in there.

There was a heavy pounding on the door. “Are you about finished in there, Jasmine?” Rodney boomed from the other side. “We have important business to take care of.”

And then some, I thought, and swept out the door, nearly knocking Rodney over in the

process. He finished his highball and refilled it with more port. “What the hell are you doing in that ridiculous getup?” he cried. “I distinctly remember telling you to wear your red dress again.”

I folded my arms across my chest. “Rodney, you and I need to get something straight right off the bat. I might be a lowly PR staffer with a career on the skids, *but I do not take orders from people.*” A bit of a lie, given what I’d consented to do with Mistress Violet.

Rodney’s eyebrows rose. “Is that so?”

“Yes, that’s so.” Heat rose in my body. “I’ll have you know that I might be naïve, but I’m not stupid. I know you’ve got a bunch of different plates spinning in the air when it comes to this undercover work you want me to do for you.”

Rodney raised one eyebrow. “Is that so?”

“Yes, that’s so. For one thing, I know I’m not the only stringer you’ve got out there looking for dirt. And for another, I know you’re going behind my back at the same time you’re pretending to help me. You had me followed when I went to the House of Flowers today. Isn’t that right?”

Rodney didn’t answer, but I noticed his Adam’s apple bobbing up and down while he gulped his drink.

“You sent *me* to spy on Senator Grayle. But I think you sent somebody *else* to spy on *me*, too. Didn’t you?”

Rodney broke his gaze from mine and stared at the floor. He gave a small nod, clearly stunned I was onto him. “If you’ll just let me explain—”

I cut him off. “Now Rodney, you and I both know you’re a ruthless barracuda of a tabloid publisher. And I’m fine with that. Really, I am. I wouldn’t have come to you for help in the first place if I didn’t understand that from the get-go. But I think you’ve gone too far. So from here on out, in order for me to keep working with you, I’m going to rewrite the rules of engagement. Starting now.”

With that, I whisked off the sunglasses and scarf, and let the huge overcoat settle to the floor. My size-14 body was revealed in all its curvaceous, fleshy glory; covered only in wisps of

transparent red lace.

Rodney dropped his highball on the floor. It shattered. Port splashed against my legs and feet.

“Jasmine,” he sputtered. “Oh, my God. You look incredible.” He reached out for me, but I put a firm hand on his chest and pushed him away.

“Do you want a piece of this, Rodney?” I teased.

He nodded, his eyes transfixed on my breasts.

I plucked one nipple through the transparent red lace, then the other. Rodney frothed at the mouth. “Because if you do, you’ll have to agree to my terms. Do you want to hear them?”

Rodney sucked in a deep breath and blew it out slowly. “Go ahead.”

“All right. Term number one. You will never, *ever* spy on me or have me followed in secret. If you do, I won’t ever go undercover for you again. Hell, I won’t even speak to you again. As much as I liked what I did over at the House of Flowers today, the fact you didn’t trust me enough to do it by myself really pisses me off.”

Rodney bit his lip. “Jasmine, I only had you followed on your way *back* from the sex club—something I did for your own personal safety.”

“Why would you feel a need to do that? I can take care of myself.”

Rodney rolled his eyes. “Well, Columbia Heights is a bad neighborhood, for one. And second, I didn’t want to run the risk of one of my competitors catching you in the act and running undignified photos of *you* in tomorrow’s editions.”

“If that’s the real reason you had me followed, why didn’t you just tell me that ahead of time? Or just give me an escort? Why all the secrecy? Is it because you had someone spying on me on the inside of the club, too?”

Rodney flinched. “I didn’t have you followed *inside*. Daisy did give me a full report of your activities while there, but you knew going in that she works for me. Frankly, I don’t see what the problem is.”

I stamped my foot. “You didn’t need to have me followed *at all*. You were obviously trying to catch me at something, or keep me from going somewhere. Where the hell did you think I

would go?”

Rodney mopped his forehead with his handkerchief. “To be perfectly honest, Jasmine, I had you followed because I wasn’t sure if you’d want to leave the House of Flowers once you got there. I wanted to make sure you came back. I wanted to make sure I’d still have a chance to be with you. That’s all.”

“If you weren’t tailing me inside the House of Flowers, then who deleted all those photos off my phone? Those photos were password-protected. Whoever did it had to hack their way into my photo directory.”

Rodney shrugged. “I have no idea. But whoever did had a vested interest in making sure they didn’t get out. I suppose it could have been Senator Grayle.”

“No way,” I said. “He’s so old-fashioned, he doesn’t even know how to *dial* a cell phone, let alone hack into one.” I paused to think. “Could it have been Daisy?”

Rodney sighed. “Possible, but I doubt it. Especially since I promised her a cut of any revenues those photos would bring in. That leaves Mistress Violet, but I think that’s even more unlikely. Mistress Violet loves nothing more than to be photographed while she’s in persona. She considers it good marketing.”

I paced back and forth, making sure to give Rodney a good view of my bare behind. “So that means somebody else is spying on *us*,” I said. “Who could it be? Do you have any enemies, Rodney?”

He laughed. “Several thousand.”

I crossed to him and wrapped one leg around his waist. “We’ll need to make a list. You can start compiling it while we’re fucking.”

Rodney cupped his sweating palms around the heavy flesh of my ass. “That sounds like a fantastic idea,” he said, and kissed me hard. Our tongues danced a slow tango. Rodney ran his hands over the red lace covering my breasts and torso and licked his lips. “This is probably the most fabulous teddy I’ve ever seen. Where did you find it?”

I giggled. “In the clearance bin at Victoria’s Secret last winter, marked way down. Apparently

there isn't much of a market for size-fourteen lingerie."

"That's something I'll never understand," Rodney said, tracing the outline of my erect nipples through the fabric. "Skinny women don't have any curves. You need curves to fill out a teddy properly." He made a move to suck my still-covered nipples, but I stopped him.

"We haven't discussed the rest of my terms yet," I said, pushing him out to arm's length.

Rodney grinned. "Funny, I thought that since I wasn't spying on you, there wouldn't have to be any more 'terms' between us."

"That's where you're wrong," I said. "You sent me to the House of Flowers so I could learn something new. And I'm pleased to report that I *did* learn something new. Something I think you'll grow to appreciate."

Rodney raised an eyebrow. "Such as?"

"I saw a dominatrix at work for the first time today. And while I won't pretend to be as accomplished as Mistress Violet, I think I know a thing or two about how sexy domination can be. So how about it, Doyle? Will you be my slave tonight?"

"I'll try anything once," Rodney replied. "Truthfully, I was kind of hoping you'd want to take things in that direction."

I mentally put away my tired old Jasmine Rand self and put on the invisible robes of Hyacinth Slaughter, dominatrix-in-training extraordinaire. "Then assume the position, Slave."

Rodney paused, his expression puzzled. "And exactly what position would that be?"

I felt my cheeks burn. Less than five seconds into my first turn as a dominatrix, and I was already making mistakes. I had to admit that I really had no idea what I was doing. I decided to improvise.

"Okay, scratch that. First, Slave, you will need to disrobe," I ordered, doing my best to adopt the deep, booming voice of a dominatrix. The result was a cross between Kathleen Turner and Michael Jackson.

Rodney erupted into laughter. "I think you'll need to work on your voice a bit, Mistress."

"Silence, Slave!" I shouted. This time I was able to control my tone a bit better. Now I

sounded more like Amy Winehouse on steroids. Rodney clapped his mouth shut. “Good, Slave,” I barked. “*Now* you will begin to disrobe.” I cocked my head and put my hands on my ample hips. “Slowly, please. Start with your shirt.”

Rodney’s eyes widened. The sheen of sweat on his forehead got a little brighter, his breath a little heavier. Without breaking eye contact, he began to unbutton his shirt. He made a point to take as much time as possible with each buttonhole, turning an otherwise mundane act into a sensual one. By the time he was halfway done, a tent had formed in his pants.

After almost a full minute, Rodney’s shirt hung open to expose his thick pecs and washboard abs. His little brown nipples stood at attention, and his chest shone with a fresh coating of sweat to match his already-glistening face.

“What is your next command, Mistress?” he asked, his voice husky and low.

“Take it off.”

He did, one arm at a time in a kind of performance, relishing every moment just like an old-time Chippendales dancer. “Is that to your satisfaction, Mistress?” he asked timidly. Every shred of Rodney Doyle’s die-hard, tabloid-owner, sleazy-barracuda persona had melted away; replaced with a desperate man who quaked with a mixture of fear and desire.

I’d never seen such an arousing sight in my life.

“You did well, Slave,” I said. “Now you will continue with your shoes and socks, then your trousers. Take your time,” I ordered. “Make every second as sexy as it can possibly be. *Don’t* disappoint me.”

Rodney obeyed. He deftly untied one brown Italian wingtip, then the other; treating the shoelaces like tiny, tactile aphrodisiacs in and of themselves. He stepped out of each shoe with a sultry swing of his pelvis, which only emphasized his obvious erection. Then came the socks, which he peeled off with as much raw bestiality as a python shedding skin. I never knew until that moment just how sensual footwear could be. And through it all, Rodney kept his dusky blue eyes locked on mine, searching for my approval.

I made no outer indication he pleased me. I wanted to push Rodney further and further into

his role as my slave. I didn't plan to stop until I had him literally on his hands and knees, begging for my touch and groveling for the soaked glory of my sex.

Once Rodney figured out that he'd get no outer validation from me for his fetish-inducing foot striptease, he started in on his trousers. He went for the belt buckle first. Unlike last night, he was wearing a simple off-the-rack belt with an ordinary buckle. You'd never know it from the length of time he spent unfastening it. Rodney ran his fingertips back and forth along the belt's edges, making the tiniest, wispy sound of skin on leather. Licking his lips, he pulled on the loose end of the belt and slid it between his fingers until it slowly began to unwind itself from the open end of the brass buckle. He flipped the belt end forward, loosening it from the buckle prong. Once the belt was free of the buckle, Rodney *swished* it out of his trouser loops in one deft, swift motion, and dropped the belt into a coil on the floor.

Unfastening his fly was another matter entirely, since by now the front of Rodney's pants might as well have been the big top for Ringling Brothers. He had to flatten his giant erection with one hand in order to work the fly's buttons with the other. Once those were free, his giant cock popped through the opening—Rodney had gone commando again. The glans was purple and glossy, and veins stood out and pulsated up and down the shaft. In a final flourish, Rodney slowly stepped out of one pants leg, then the other. He tossed me the empty trousers. I caught them with one hand.

He looked up and smiled. "I'm naked now, Mistress."

"I see that, Slave. Very nice. Very nice, indeed."

Rodney took a small bow. "Thank you, Mistress. I hope you don't mind me calling you that."

"Not at all, Slave." The crotch of my teddy was sopping wet. My juices were running so thick they were starting to trickle down my thighs. I'd managed to turn the tables of power in my direction without even knowing how. Maybe Rodney had been right last night when he said I was a "natural." I slid into the role of nascent dominatrix as easily as a set of silk pajamas.

"Now, Slave, you will enter the bath suite."

He obeyed, padding softly on his bare feet down the carpeted hall and onto the cool marble

floor of the bathroom. Rodney hesitated and glanced over his shoulder, looking for further instructions. I gave none. He took a few more ginger steps, then stopped once he was about halfway between the two-person Jacuzzi and the large enclosed shower. I followed him into the lush room, my eyes scanning the polished marble and shiny chrome fixtures. My mind reeled with possibilities.

“Now what, Mistress?” Rodney asked, his voice timid.

I stamped my foot. “Slave, you will *not* speak unless you are spoken to,” I barked. “If you disobey this order again, there will be severe consequences. Do you understand?”

Rodney gave me a small nod and sly smile. He clearly liked being bossed around and terrorized while naked.

“Good,” I said, lowering my voice a bit. “Now, Slave, you will enter the shower.”

He did, leaving the glass door to the enclosed shower chamber open. He seemed to expect me to follow him in, but I didn’t. I slammed the glass shower door shut behind him. Rodney jerked to attention, his eyes wide and glistening.

“Slave, you will now turn on the shower,” I ordered. “Use all the body sprays and the handheld massager. Set the taps all the way over to cold.”

Rodney’s eyes flew even wider, but he complied with a grin on his face. He switched on the rainshower-style overhead shower spigot first; then the wall-mounted body sprays one by one. He jerked and shivered more and more as the ice-cold sprays hit his body; but instead of the famous “shrinkage” so many men experience when their bodies are exposed to cold, Rodney’s equipment seemed to grow longer, thicker and harder the colder his body got. It was obvious Rodney got off on the stinging pleasure-pain sensation of frigid water as it poured over his rippled, muscular body.

I was about to issue my next order when Rodney read my mind and instinctively took the handheld shower massager in one hand. He adjusted the massager’s pressure setting until the water poured out of a single, high-pressure opening in its middle, its stream powerful enough to tear into skin. He tested the powerful spray with the palm of his hand for a moment or two,

then held up that palm to show me. The skin of his palm was bright red from the cold water and stinging water jets. Rodney shot me a wink, and then I watched transfixed as he transferred the spray to his crotch.

I was speechless. I'd planned to just have Rodney spray his *torso* with the ice-cold water on the much gentler massage setting. But like a true masochist, he'd gone way over the top completely on his own. After almost two full minutes of withstanding the frigid spray, Rodney's cock was red, raw—and *huge*. His cock was easily the biggest I'd ever seen—and so rock-hard, it could probably be used as a blunt weapon.

The sight gave new meaning to the term "stone cold." My pussy ran like a river at the thought of having that huge, wet and cold cock deep inside it.

I inched my way toward Rodney, swaying and sashaying my hips. I flung open the dripping shower door, placed my hands on my hips, and cocked my head. "That was quite a maneuver you just pulled, Slave," I purred. "Tell me something. How did you know I like watching a man freeze himself solid?"

Rodney snickered. "Just a hunch, Mistress." His eyes traveled up and down my body, coming to rest on my sex. The dark triangle of my pubis was clearly visible through the red lace. But as much as my pussy screamed for Rodney's dick to fill it, I wasn't going to let him anywhere near there just yet.

"Slave, your next task will be to lick the dried-up drops of port you spilled on my legs and feet. Once you have done this, you will turn the cold water back on until I tell you to stop. Do you understand?"

He grinned a mile wide. "Yes, Mistress." He looked at me expectantly, waiting for my next set of instructions.

I took the cue. "Slave, you must get on your hands and knees and lick my feet and legs from the floor. Start with the left foot and leg; and when it's clean, go to the right. Don't rush."

Rodney's lowered eyelids fluttered. He licked his lips. "Yes, Mistress. Your wish is my command." He knelt in front of me and began to lick the splatters of wine from my shins with

the tip of his tongue. He took his time, savoring every drop of spilled port. Once he'd licked my left shin and knee clean, he unstrapped my left shoe, slipped it off, and started in on my left foot. The sensation of his wet tongue along the arch of my foot sent electric jolts straight up my leg to my cunt. When the sole of the left foot was wiped clean and slick with Rodney's saliva, he moved on to the spaces between my toes, making a point to suck each toe individually as if was a piece of hard candy. By the time Rodney's mouth reached my big toe, my clit was as puffy as a beach ball.

Rodney polished off my left foot by lapping away at the drops of port that dried on my instep. He gently set my bare foot on the floor and went to work unstrapping my right stiletto. He gave my right shin and foot the same treatment as my left. When he finished, he rested back on his haunches and awaited my next command.

"That was very good work, Slave," I purred. "Now, you need to cool things down a bit."

Rodney obediently switched the handheld water massager back onto his equipment, keeping the taps on their coldest setting. But instead of just using the massager, he flicked a series of switches until all the body sprays and overhead rain shower were all spewing ice-cold water onto his entire body. He gritted his teeth and tried hard not to shiver underneath the frigid waterfall. But in spite of—or perhaps because of—this torture, his cock got even harder and thicker. His balls drew themselves up and back, ready to blow their load.

"You have been a good and obedient slave," I said, borrowing a line from the great Mistress Violet. "And now, we shall screw."

I took a condom from a basket on the bathroom counter and removed it from its wrapper. I threaded the condom over his ice-cold cock, then reached out and grabbed Rodney's hands. I pulled his chilled, dripping body to me and pressed my warm body against it. His huge member thrust itself into the space between my thighs, its purple, swollen head knocking against the entrance to my sex. His cock was like a block of dry ice, and I yelped.

Rodney delighted in this. He reached around, grabbed my bare buttocks, and squeezed. "Mistress, may I speak freely?" he whispered in my right ear.

I ran my fingernails up and down his back hard enough to leave marks. “Of course, Slave.”

“What do you say we chuck this whole dominatrix-slave thing now and just have a good old-fashioned fuck?”

I threw my head back and laughed. “Sounds fabulous.”

I guided Rodney’s hands to the tiny crotch of my now very damp G-string, which he slid to one side. I lifted my right leg and wrapped it around his ice-cold, dripping waist, giving him plenty of room to push in his giant cock. He slid inside my sheath easily. The feel of his frigid, chilled-out cock inside my red-hot pussy was the most delectable combo of fire and ice imaginable. The sound of my juices sluicing against his swollen member filled the room, accented by the tinny chimes of the Chinese balls as they waltzed around in my vag in time to each thrust.

We stayed that way for several minutes, until I was so breathless and turned on that I could barely stay upright. Rodney picked me up, wrapped my left leg around his waist to match the right one, and carried me out of the bath suite, down the hall, and to the massive four-poster bed in his bedroom. He never stopped thrusting. Rodney finally set me down on the edge of the bed and looped my ankles around his neck.

“Look down, Jasmine,” he breathed. “Look at what we’re doing to each other.”

I did. My pussy and labia were splayed wide open, red and glistening with my nectar and cream. My sex was swollen to at least three times its normal size, like a giant, night-blossoming magnolia. Rodney’s cock had swollen to even more gargantuan proportions. He moved in and out of me all the way each time, giving me a glimpse of its purple, shiny tip and bursting foreskin with each and every movement. My clit had retreated up underneath its little hood, but was so sensitized it could still register even the tiniest sensations; like the stir of the air caused above it by Rodney’s breathing and thrusting.

My juices made the surface of Rodney’s sheathed penis slick and shiny as a new penny. My nipples stood sharp as arrows, threatening to tear through the flimsy fabric of my teddy.

I watched Rodney move in and out of me for several minutes, amazed at the drastic bodily

changes our desire brought out. I could feel the heat and friction that concentrated around our joined parts begin to build and spread wider. Waves of scorching intensity undulated up and down my body with every thrust, bump and grind. I encouraged Rodney to pick up the pace by raising my hips to meet his at quicker and quicker intervals; making those scorching waves spread even wider.

The sound of our genitals slapping and slushing against one another was deliciously obscene. Our breathing, grunting and moaning became perfectly synchronized. I closed my eyes and could see my orgasm approaching from far away.

Rodney leaned forward and took my left nipple into his mouth, sucking it through the rough lace fabric until it swelled and pointed itself into a little round, pointed cone. Then he switched to sucking the right one, while rolling my newly sensitized left one back and forth between his fingers. He worked my boobs like a professional, but never missed a beat with his thrusts down south. The man was truly a master.

When Rodney had sucked both my nipples raw, he lifted my hips from the bed and spun me around like a top with his cock as its spin-pin. Now I was on all fours, my butt up in the air and my chest resting on some pillows. Rodney adjusted his hips to take advantage of the new angle and penetrated me even deeper than before. Now he was ramming me so hard and deep that the head of his cock thumped against my G-spot with every thrust. The Chinese balls came close to popping out every time. The resulting sensations were like having a throbbing discotheque inside my pussy. Rodney turned his attention from my nipples to my clit, which was hotter and more swollen than it had been in my 34 years on the planet. He tweaked it and toyed with it until I cried for mercy.

My orgasm was coming fast. It started in my clit, throbbing and pulsating, then spread to my vag, where the Chinese balls intensified the sensations to the point of a near-earthquake. I went into full-body convulsions as my orgasm took hold. “Yesss,” I groaned, banging my fists against the mattress. “Yes!”

Rodney exploded a moment later, groaning and swearing as his orgasm rocked his body so

hard he lost control of his limbs, too. I knew I'd have bruises from where his fists hammered my back involuntarily at his moment of orgasm. He landed on me in a heap, biting down on my shoulder so hard at the last spasm of his climax that he drew blood.

"Thank you, Mistress," he breathed, then rolled off my back and spooned me from the side.

"You're welcome, Slave," I replied, and fell asleep.

* * * *

I waked hours later in an empty bed. The lights were dimmed, and the room was quiet. I found my watch on the bedside table and checked the time: 3 a.m.

I padded on bare feet into the marble bathroom and took one of the Egyptian-cotton bathrobes off its wall hook and put it on. After cleaning myself up a bit, I set out to search the huge penthouse suite for Rodney.

I found him in a small den at the end of a long hallway, sitting in an overstuffed leather chair and brooding over a laptop. He wore a tattered old plaid robe with nothing underneath, chewing his thumbnail in deep thought. A cold cup of black coffee sat half-empty next to the laptop.

I snuck up behind him and placed a hand on his shoulder. "Awfully late for you to be working, isn't it?"

Rodney looked up, startled. "I thought you were asleep."

"I was. But I woke up. Sometimes it's hard for me to stay asleep in a strange bed."

Rodney rubbed his temples. "I can relate. Sometimes it's hard for me to sleep at all."

I tried to read Rodney's laptop screen over his shoulder, but he had a privacy guard that made it impossible to see anything unless you were looking from a certain angle. I surmised it was probably something due to appear in the *Beltway Times* morning edition. "Any good dirt there?"

Rodney flinched and snapped the laptop shut. "Nothing I'm prepared to discuss with you," he hissed. He stood and walked to the window. His body was wracked with tension. Something was very wrong. I curled up behind him and wrapped my arms around his waist. He shrank at my touch. "Is there something you want to talk to me about, Rodney?"

He shuddered and began to pace the room. "No," he growled.

His tone stung. “I thought after what’s happened between us that we wouldn’t have secrets from one another anymore.”

“You thought wrong. I never said you and I would be intimate in any way other than sexual. And as I recall, I made it very clear that the sexual relationship was with no strings attached.”

“Oh really?” I crossed to him and shoved my way between him and the windowpane. “You also said in that same conversation that you were *smitten* with me. What did you mean by that?”

Rodney looked at the floor. I reached for him but he stiffened. “Nothing,” he said. His tone was low and terribly sad. “Nothing at all. I must have misspoken.”

“Bullshit.”

He sighed and ran a hand through his tangled hair. “Jasmine, I think it would be best if you went home now.”

I gasped. “What? Why? It’s the middle of the night!”

Rodney turned to face me. “I’m really sorry, Jasmine, but something’s happened. Something serious, and I can’t risk you being here when the shit hits the fan. I expect the shit to hit the fan in a matter of hours. So please, do as I ask and go home. For your sake.”

“But—”

Rodney raised a hand. “Don’t argue with me, Jasmine. Go. *Now.*”

“What the hell am I supposed to do, *walk* home?” I cried. “The subways aren’t running, and I’ll never get a cab this time of night—”

Rodney’s expression softened. “I’ll arrange a private car for you.” He reached for the phone.

I scoffed. “No thanks. I’ll see myself home, thank you very much.”

I turned on my heel and dashed out of the room. At the last second, I glanced back over my shoulder, and saw Rodney slumped back in his chair, his head in his hands.

Chapter Thirteen

Dexter and his cab arrived in front of Rodney's apartment building less than 10 minutes after I dug his business card out of the bottom of my purse and called him.

"I had a feeling you'd be needing me someday soon," he said as I got in. "Though I really would have preferred it if you'd waited to call me until after sunrise."

I slouched against the backseat. "Sorry, Dexter, but that wasn't an option tonight."

He smiled at me in the rearview mirror. "Sorry to hear that, Miss." He paused, his expression grandfatherly. "Man trouble?"

I nodded.

"Want to talk about it?"

I shook my head.

"Fair enough. Where to then, Miss?"

I gave him my address. To my surprise, I found myself choking back tears.

"Pardon me, Miss," Dexter said, "I don't believe I ever learned your name."

"My name is Mud," I said, faking a laugh that came out more as a croak.

Dexter flinched, then pulled the cab out onto the deserted street. "Miss, I know it's none of my business, but in the past two days I've either driven you to or picked you up from some dangerous places. First to a seedy house in Columbia Heights, and now somebody else's apartment building in the middle of the night. Are you in some kind of trouble?"

This time I laughed for real. "You have no idea."

Dexter drove in silence for a while. Then when we were a few blocks from my apartment building, the cab came to a stop at a red light. The grizzled old cabbie turned around to face me.

"Miss, again I know it's none of my business, but if you're in some kind of trouble here in town, I happen to know a lot of important people. People who could probably do a lot for a nice young lady like you. You don't drive a cab in Washington for as many years as I have without

meeting at least a few folks who have their fingers on all the right buttons. If there's anything I can do for you, you just give me a call. All right?"

I stared back at Dexter, stunned. "Thanks. I'll take that under consideration."

The light turned green. Dexter crossed the intersection and turned the cab onto my street. He stopped the car in front of my building and shut off the meter. I dug in my purse for cash to pay the fare, but Dexter refused it.

"This one's on me, Miss," he said. "And remember what I said. If you need anything at all, all you have to do is pick up the phone and call me. All right?"

I nodded as I stepped out of the cab. "Thank you so much, Dexter. By the way, my name's Jasmine. Jasmine Rand."

Dexter smiled. "That's a hell of a lot better than Mud," he said, and drove off.

* * * *

I collapsed on my bed as soon as I got home, but couldn't sleep. I tossed and turned until my alarm went off at 6 a.m.

I headed straight for the shower and made the water scalding. It did little to sooth the icy numbness that crept into my limbs and groin.

I chose my work clothes and makeup for the day carefully. I didn't want to risk running into Rodney Doyle (or anyone else of importance, for that matter) looking like my former frumpy self. I found a stylishly cut red blazer that I'd seldom worn because of its low neckline, and paired it with a tight black pencil skirt. In a bold move, I decided to wear black silk stockings and my red fuck-me stilettos. I kept my makeup mostly muted except for some green eyeshadow, and I topped it off with a triple strand of glittering black onyx beads and matching dangly earrings. When I saw myself in the mirror, I was surprised to find that I was as well-groomed, fashionable, and attractive as any of the female anchors on CNN.

I hadn't been grocery shopping for weeks, so I skipped breakfast and headed outside, figuring I could grab a bagel and coffee on my way in to the office. I'd have to drop by a newsstand to pick up all the morning editions, and the one closest to Sen. Grayle's office had a breakfast bar.

I had a sinking feeling that there was going to be some very bad press for Sen. Grayle since he bailed on the rest of his senate term.

I stood in front of the rack of newspapers, bagel and coffee in hand, and felt the bottom drop out of my stomach.

Every Washington daily—from the *Post* to the *Tribune* and everything in-between—featured blown-up, grainy images of Sen. Grayle and Mistress Violet in the midst of the day prior’s wild sex play at the House of Flowers. There were two blurry photos featured side-by-side on every paper’s front page, underneath seamy headlines ranging from the *Post*’s “SEX-OFFENDING SENATOR IN HOT WATER AGAIN” to the *Tribune*’s “SLEAZY SENATOR GRAYLE SEEN SUCKING UP TO YET ANOTHER SEX WORKER!”

I recognized the first image immediately, because I took it with my cell phone. Whoever deleted the images from my phone’s memory made a point to download them to their own file source first. But it was the second image—and its caption—that really packed a punch.

The second photo—grainy and digital, probably taken with a cell phone as well—was of *me*. My black mask was still in place, but I was completely naked. Whoever snapped the shot caught me in the most undignified position possible, spread-eagle against the wall with Mistress Violet’s Rabbit shoved up my vag. There were little black boxes placed over the most explicit parts; but even with those in place, it was clear to any onlooker what I was up to.

And even though I was still in disguise in the photo, and therefore should have been unidentifiable, it was pretty clear that whoever stole the photos knew exactly who I was. The caption below the second photo in every paper’s morning edition positively identified me as “Jasmine Rand, longtime publicist for Sen. Grayle’s office.” My round, fleshy, size-14 ass was positively identified in every local and national newspaper for people to view and enjoy with their morning coffee.

Every paper.

Even the Beltway Times.

In fact, the *Times* had made a point to make my photo larger and less grainy than Grayle’s.

Rodney Doyle and his sleazy tabloid had betrayed me. He *used* me.

The fucking bastard.

I dropped my mug, splashing scalding coffee all over the piles of newspapers and onto my own shins and feet. Heads turned all over the shop, and I turned and ran.

“Hey! Lady!” the shop owner shouted after me as I ran away. “You’ll pay for those!”

Yes, I will, I thought as I bolted out onto the street. *In more ways than one.*

* * * *

Rebecca found me in my cubicle an hour later, my head face-down on my desktop. I looked up and saw she carried several morning newspapers under her arm. The one on top was my hometown newspaper from North Dakota, the *Bismarck Register*. It apparently had picked up the story from the wires. The headline read “LOCAL WOMAN CAUGHT UP IN GRAYLE SEX SCANDAL.”

“So you’ve heard,” I groaned.

She pulled up a chair and sat down beside me. “Jasmine, it’s not the end of the world.” She patted me softly on the shoulder.

“No, just the end of my life.” I started banging my head hard against the desktop.

“Look on the bright side,” Rebecca said. “It’s pretty obvious from the photograph that you had some great sex.”

I shrugged. “Ha. A lot of difference that makes now.”

Rebecca forced me to sit up. “Jasmine, you aren’t the first person on earth to get caught in the act. Believe me.”

“Maybe not, but I *am* the first person on earth to get caught in the act on the front page of every major newspaper in the country.”

Rebecca giggled. “Actually, no, you’re the second. The first person was our boss.”

I had to chuckle at that. “At least he’s safe and sound in North Dakota, where nobody can bother him.”

“Not exactly,” Rebecca said. “If I know the people of Bismarck the way I think I do, he’s

probably got an angry mob on his front lawn waiting to tar and feather him.”

“You’re probably right,” I sighed. “And that means I can’t exactly go back home myself, even if I wanted to. How can I face my parents now? They’ll be so embarrassed.”

“Maybe, maybe not,” Rebecca offered. “I think mostly they’ll be worried about you.”

I scoffed. “Yeah, right. You don’t know my parents. When it comes to things like this, they make Pat Robertson look liberal. They probably thought I was still a virgin.”

Rebecca smiled. “They weren’t too far off. You said yourself that until Rodney Doyle came along, you hadn’t had a date in more than two years. That qualified you for born-again status as far as I’m concerned.”

“That’s how I got into this mess in the first place,” I said. “I never would have gotten mixed up with that rat bastard Doyle if I hadn’t been so desperate to get laid.”

“Do you think Rodney Doyle is behind this, then?”

“Of *course* he is!” I cried. “*He’s* the one who sent me to that stupid sex club to spy on Senator Grayle in the first place. And the photos are on the cover of *his* paper. He used me. I trusted him, and he *used* me.”

Rebecca’s face fell. “So you were going behind Senator Grayle’s back this whole time. I thought you were trying to *help* him. And us.”

I felt my cheeks go hot with shame. “Yes, I was. I admit it. I went behind Senator Grayle’s back because Rodney Doyle promised me a job to replace this one if I did some undercover work for him. And I figured I’d be out of a job soon, so I had to do *something*. And then of course there was the sex part, which I enjoyed. I know that what I was doing was wrong, but frankly, I didn’t see that I had any choice at the time.”

That didn’t seem to impress Rebecca very much. “You *did* have a choice. You could have chosen not to do it.”

“I know, I know. I’m sorry, Rebecca. I really am.” I stood up and gathered my things. “I should probably go now. I’m sure I don’t have a job here anymore.”

Rebecca hesitated, then gave me a hug. “Jasmine, I’d be lying if I said that what you did

didn't upset me. But we've known each other a long time. I still consider you a friend. And as your friend, I'd like to say that I'm glad you had a good time with Rodney Doyle while it lasted. You were way past due for a good time, if you ask me."

I sighed. "Thanks, for saying so, but it doesn't make me feel any less used."

"Are you absolutely sure Rodney was behind all this?" Rebecca asked.

I threw up my hands. "Of *course* he was! Who else could possibly have done it?"

Rebecca frowned. "So you're just making an assumption, then."

"Well, I'd say it's a pretty valid assumption. He *owns* the Beltway Times, after all. And the *Times* printed those pictures just like all the other papers did. I'm sure the whole reason he met up with me in the first place was with some kind of angle like this in mind. Then he made sure to get hold of those pictures from the sex club, and then *sold* the pictures to all the other papers, too. If he wasn't directly in on the whole deal, he would have put a stop to it."

Rebecca's eyebrows rose. "Are you sure? One of his lower-level staff could have been responsible. I highly doubt Rodney personally edits and approves each and every issue of the *Times* from cover to cover. It could have slipped past him without his knowledge."

I scoffed. "I highly doubt it."

"Well, you'll never know for sure unless you ask him."

I took my coat off the rack and laughed. "I'd rather eat glass."

Rebecca's expression softened. "I know it doesn't sound like fun," she said. "But after all you two have done together in the past two days, I think you should at least give the man a chance to explain himself. If he turns out to be a sleazy, slimy bastard who used you, fine. At least then you'll know. But if you don't confront him and find out the truth first-hand, I think you'll regret it for the rest of your life."

* * * *

I packed my office supplies into a box and carried them home with me on the subway, along with the personal photos and a potted philodendron I'd kept on my desk for two years. I knew I could never show my face in the senator's office again.

I arrived at my building and trudged up to my apartment. It was hardly in the condition necessary to sustain me through the extended hibernation I felt I needed. My cupboards were bare. Piles of dirty laundry occupied the corners of my room. There was a huge stack of suits and blouses I'd never found time to take to the dry cleaners in my closet. The bathroom was grimy and dirty; the carpets covered in dust and lint. My apartment looked how I felt.

I spent three hours on the sofa feeling sorry for myself. I couldn't even relax in front of the television, because no matter what channel I tuned it to, the regularly scheduled programming was interrupted with the latest news on the "North Dakota Nooky" scandal, as it was being called. When I flipped the television to CNN, I was shocked to see a videotaped photo retrospective of my girlhood in North Dakota and my years in Washington. As the retrospective progressed, the news announcer wondered aloud how I'd gone from being a wholesome, virginal, All-American girl to a two-bit whore with her ass exposed on national television.

God only knew how the news network had gotten hold of grainy pictures of me as a cute toddler, gawky sixth-grade Girl Scout, skinny teenager with frizzy hair and braces, and tipsy sorority girl at Georgetown. Most of the photos were ones I had never seen before; which made me wonder which one of my old grammar-school or college classmates had turned on me for cash.

I skulked off to the shower and then wrapped myself in my favorite terrycloth robe. I gazed at myself in the steam-fogged mirror and despaired at what I saw. Huge black bags under my eyes. Mottled, blotchy skin. Lips pulled downward in what looked to be a permanent frown.

The shoe was on the other foot. I'd spent my entire PR career working to elevate the politicians I worked for in the media solely by tearing down and mudslinging their opponents. And now, *I* was the one being torn down. *I* was the one having mud slung at her naked ass on television. *I* was the one being humiliated.

And in some ways, I probably deserved it.

As I brushed out my damp hair I came to a realization. I could either sit home, stewing in my own juices and feeling sorry for myself and my pathetic situation, or I could do something about

it. The only question was, *what?*

For the first time in my entire PR career, I was at a complete loss on what to do about a media disaster. I racked my brain for inspiration. I'd rescued plenty of other Washington insiders whose careers went on the skids when scandal hit. I'd built an entire career around my skills as a damage-control expert, for Christ's sake. *How can I apply those skills to my own situation?*

I had no idea.

I headed for the kitchen to search for something to drink. If memory served, I still had a half-bottle of vodka in my otherwise empty freezer. I poured myself a glass and drank it straight because I had nothing in the house to mix it with. Within five minutes of guzzling the strong liquor, I got an idea. A *crazy* idea, that might not have an iceberg's chance in Hades of working.

It was my only hope.

To get started, I needed to leave town and have a nice, long rest far away from Washington. But not *too* far. I had to be able to get back quickly just in case my crazy plan worked.

I found my purse and dug through it until I found the dog-eared business card Dexter the cab driver gave me the day before.

Chapter Fourteen

Dexter came to pick me up for the airport 15 minutes after receiving my call. “I had a feeling you’d be calling me soon, Jasmine,” he said. “Tough break on the newspaper pictures. That’s some nasty luck, Hon.”

“You don’t have to tell me,” I sneered. “Why do you think I’m hightailing it out of Washington on a moment’s notice?”

“I don’t blame you a bit,” he said, his expression grandfatherly and kind in the cab’s rearview mirror. “Where you headed? I hope it’s somewhere nice.”

“St. Lucia,” I answered, checking my reflection in my mirrored compact. “One of those all-inclusive luxury resorts. I had a bunch of airline miles built up on my credit card that were set to expire if I didn’t use them soon. I cashed them online at Orbitz and it was almost enough to cover the entire trip! I only had to pay two hundred dollars out-of-pocket, and everything is paid for once I arrive. I even got an upgrade to a suite.”

“Sounds pretty ‘sweet’,” Dexter replied, shooting me a wink.

“Yes, I think so too,” I said.

The taxi stopped at a traffic light. I zipped my purse shut and rolled up the car window. I didn’t want to risk anyone important walking by on the crowded sidewalk and overhearing what I planned to say next. “You know Dexter, I’ve been thinking about what you said the other day about knowing a lot of important people. I was kind of wondering if you could tell me exactly what you meant by that.”

Dexter gave me a small nod in the mirror just as the light changed.

“Well,” he said, “I could start out by hooking you up with the editor-in-chief over at the *Post*. “I pick him up almost every morning at his townhouse in Georgetown and take him into the office. Given what’s happened over the past couple days, I bet he’d love an opportunity to get an exclusive interview with you.”

“Are you sure?” I asked. “I always thought the *Post* was above delving too deep into the sordid personal details of Washington sex scandals.”

“True,” Dexter replied. “But I think the *Post* might have an interest in you because your position in this whole scandal is, shall we say, *unique*.”

“All right,” I said. I scribbled the name and number of the resort I’d be staying at in St. Lucia and handed it over the seat to Dexter. “Go ahead and see if you can set up the interview. The *Post* can call me at the hotel and we can do a phone interview.”

“Will do.” Dexter smiled slightly. I wondered how often he brokered these kinds of backseat deals. By his blank expression, probably often—his certainly wasn’t the expression of someone who was nervous about taking illegal bribes in the back of his licensed taxicab. I noticed then for the first time that Dexter wore an expensive watch: a Patek Phillipe just barely visible underneath the cuff of his ordinary work shirt.

That sparked a realization. *If a cab driver could afford a \$40,000 watch, I thought, chances are good he makes his living from something other than cab driving.*

“All right, so you know the editor-in-chief of the *Post*, but what else have you got?” I asked. “Anybody big on the Hill? What about White House staff? Know anybody there?”

Dexter gave me a tight-lipped grin that indicated I wouldn’t get any more information without some palm-greasing. I reluctantly handed over a \$20 bill, but Dexter kept his palm out. Clearly the information I sought came only at a premium. I peeled \$20 bill after \$20 bill off my fat roll of cash. Dexter was finally satisfied enough to pocket the dough and start talking. I’d handed over almost \$600.

“I can hook you up with just about anybody you’d like on the Hill. Congressmen, senior senators, whoever. I have contacts in both parties. White House staff will cost you a little extra”—at this, I tossed another \$50 over the seat, which Dexter immediately pocketed—“and I can arrange that too.” Dexter pulled the cab onto the entrance ramp to the freeway that led to Dulles Airport, which I’d chosen to fly out of over Reagan National specifically because Dulles was more than an hour away from downtown Washington. It gave me plenty of time to grill

Dexter for the information I needed for my crazy plan to work.

Dexter finished merging onto the freeway and gave me a quick glance over his shoulder. “But before I give you this information, I’d appreciate it if you can tell me a little bit about what you plan to do with it.”

I sucked in my breath. “I’m thinking about inviting certain high-profile persons around town to come visit me in St. Lucia for some political conversation and—ahem—entertainment,” I said, trying to be as vague as possible. “I’m hoping to cultivate some new relationships with folks on the Hill, since I’ll be needing a new job and all. I’ll consider working with elected officials, government staffers, and the media. Wherever I think my unique skills might fit in the marketplace.”

“I see,” Dexter chuckled. “And these *relationships* you’re looking to cultivate. Will they be with persons of the male persuasion or the female persuasion?”

I swallowed hard. “Both.”

Dexter chuckled again. “All right. And I assume you’re going to want all of this to be happening exclusively on the Q-T?”

“Yep.”

Dexter cleared his throat and brazenly thrust his open palm behind him across the back seat. I reluctantly placed several more bills in his hand. I couldn’t keep this up for much longer, or I’d be flat broke.

Dexter pocketed the cash. “I’ll be sure the right people get the information you’re looking for,” he said. “I’ll take care of getting them to the airport, too. Though they’ll have to pay their own airfare down to the Caribbean. But it’s so nice down there this time of year, I’m sure none of them will mind. Especially if you give them a receipt for their taxes. You could always make the event into an offshore charitable fundraiser.”

I blinked at this. Dexter was a clever Washington crook indeed. And yet he seemed so kind and gentle on the surface! I wondered what other crooked shenanigans he got away with. “I’ll take that into consideration,” I said.

My stomach lurched a bit. I knew I was crossing into dangerous territory.

We drove the last few miles to Dulles Airport in silence. Dexter turned up the volume on his radio, which blared the obnoxious kind of early-1980s country-and-western music that I couldn't stand.

He pulled the cab into the Kiss-n-Fly driveway in front of the terminal. He helped me with my bags and shook my hand after I gave them to a skycap to check in.

"Pleasure doing business with you, Miss Rand," he said. "Call me again anytime you want to work together." He headed back to the idling taxi, then paused and turned back to me. "Or if you ever just want a ride."

I headed into the terminal, feeling a more than little nauseous.

Chapter Fifteen

My cell phone rang while I stood in a ridiculously long line to get through airport security. I was in the midst of taking off my shoes so I could run them through the X-ray machine along with everything else I owned. I nearly knocked over an elderly woman standing behind me as I fished the phone out of my overflowing purse while balancing on one leg.

“Hello?”

“Jasmine, I need to talk to you.” Rodney Doyle.

Since there were a half-dozen federal security officers standing only five feet away, I suppressed the urge to hurl my cell phone across the terminal along with a string of obscenities.

“Ha,” I seethed, clenching the phone between chin and shoulder as I worked the buckle on my left shoe. “I don’t think so, *Rodney*.” My voice dripped ice cubes. “I’m hanging up now.”

But I didn’t. No matter how much I wanted to deny it, I couldn’t ignore the fact that Rodney’s voice pulled at my groin. My belly went soft and melty. I didn’t want to let go.

Rodney cleared his throat. “Jasmine, I thought you were going to hang up.”

“I am. In a minute.” The TSA inspector who ran the X-ray scanner was giving me a dirty look. I’d been so struck dumb by Rodney’s call that I’d completely forgotten to put my belongings into the scanner.

“You’re holding up the line, miss,” the inspector growled at me. “Let’s move things along.”

I glanced behind me and saw at least three dozen angry travelers, all tapping their feet and checking their watches. Rodney had had me on the phone for less than a minute, and he was already screwing with my world.

“Jasmine, are you still there?” He sounded worried. *The two-faced jerk*.

I tossed my belongings onto the scanner and walked barefoot through the metal detector. “Yes, I am,” I replied. “Unfortunately.”

“You seem to be having a hard time hanging up on me,” he chuckled. “I suppose that’s

because you find me so irresistible.”

Bile rose in my throat. “No, I suppose it’s because I find you so shockingly repulsive that I just can’t turn away. Sort of like watching a car crash on the side of the highway.” My coat, purse and shoes cleared the inspection and the TSA officer handed them back to me. I sat down on the hard plastic chair provided at the end of the security line to put on my shoes. “Now if you’ll excuse me, I’m at the airport and need to go catch my plane.”

“What the hell are you doing at the airport?” Rodney boomed.

I ground my teeth. “None of your goddamn business.”

I made a move to shut off my mobile, but before I got a chance Rodney interjected. “Jasmine, I called to tell you that I’m very, very sorry about what happened in the papers this morning. I had absolutely nothing to do with it.”

“You’re lying,” I seethed. “How can you not know what’s going on at your own newspaper?”

“It’s complicated, Jasmine. That’s why I need to meet with you as soon as possible.”

I glanced at the departures monitor and saw that my flight had already begun boarding. “I’m sorry, Rodney, but there’s nothing you can do to explain away what happened. My Washington career and reputation is ruined, and it’s all because of something *you* asked me to do. That’s all there is to it.” I tried to sound stern, but in actuality I was choking up.

“Jasmine, please—” Rodney’s usually authoritarian voice was plaintive. I clamped down on my longing.

“I’m sorry, Rodney, but my plane is boarding. Good bye.” I pressed the END button on my cell before he could get another word out.

The warm, melty feeling Rodney stirred in my lower half went cold and damp as day-old soup when I boarded the plane.

* * * *

The plane touched down in St. Lucia two hours later. The all-inclusive resort where I planned to stay was near Marigot Bay, on the opposite side of the island from the airport. I hailed a battered taxi driven by a coffee-colored Rastafarian with bleached-blond dreadlocks. He gave

me a blinding white smile as he tossed my luggage in the trunk and held the cab door open for me like an Old World gentleman.

“Where going, Madam,” he lilted in an island patois I couldn’t help but find sexy.

“Silken Sands Resort, at Marigot Bay,” I replied.

“Yes, madam,” he said. “I know where ’tis.” He pulled the rattling cab onto the island’s only highway, homegrown reggae blaring on the taxi’s ancient tape player.

“You have no been here before?” the driver shouted over the bouncy island music.

“No, I haven’t,” I replied. “Is it that obvious?”

“Yes, Madam, ’tis,” he laughed. “If you don’ mind me sayin’ so, Madam, you be very uptight. *Relax*. You be in da islands now.”

“You’re right,” I said, stretching out on the cab’s backseat, which had no seatbelts to hold me down. “I am *very* uptight right now. That’s the whole reason I came here.”

“Same reason *everybody* come here, Madam.” The driver turned down the reggae a bit. “My name is Milton. I take you anywhere on da island you wanna go. There nothing here I don’ know about. You want to take island tour? I charge you only ten U.S. dollar extra.”

“Just the resort is fine, thank you.” I’d already gotten into enough red tape engaging in extracurricular activities with a cab driver back home.

“As you like, Madam,” Milton chirped. “Whatever you do while you here on St. Lucia, just take it *nice and easy*. That is da island way.”

After almost half an hour of driving past vegetation-choked ravines and grubby island shantytowns, the taxi rumbled into a circular driveway that led inside the luxury Silken Sands Resort. Milton brought the taxi to a stop in front of the resort’s elaborately carved glass entranceway and helped me with my bags.

“You are here, Madam,” he said as he deposited my luggage with a wink in front of a very attractive young bellboy. “You need anything to help you *take it easy* during your stay, you give a call to First Elegant Lucia Taxi Service. Concierge here know me by name. He be my cousin.”

The good-looking Rastafarian gave me a bow and was gone with a swing of his dreadlocks.

I faced the bellboy, who was looking me up and down with glistening golden eyes.

I checked in at the front desk, and a pretty young woman with a golden complexion and reddish cornrows handed me my key. The very attractive bellboy loaded my luggage onto a brass-handled cart and gestured down a hallway that led onto a lush private courtyard filled with palm trees and hibiscus. A parrot with golden plumage sat in the low-lying branches of one palm tree and squawked “Welcome to Silken Sands” as I strolled past.

The bellboy glanced over his shoulder as he led me through the courtyard. “That is Beulah, the resort parrot,” he said. “She is quite intelligent. I have taught her to say many things.” I was surprised to hear the young man’s voice come out as a smooth, educated British accent instead of a bouncy island patois. It was a deep and masculine—the kind of voice one would expect to hear from a middle-aged, corpulent English country gentleman; not a slender, sleek young Caribbean thing barely out of his teens. He sounded like a British cross between Barry White and James Earl Jones.

The combination of the bellboy’s voice and his tanned, muscular physique made him irresistible. The sight of his back and shoulder muscles flexing through the tight fabric of his uniform as he walked in front of me was enough to make me forget all about my troubles back home in Washington. *Almost.*

“Do you do anything besides work here at the resort?” I asked as innocuously as possible.

The bellboy glanced over his shoulder again and smiled. “I spent two years at the University of London, reading law,” he said. “But I ran out of tuition money when my mother passed away, so I’m here working until I have enough saved to go back.”

“It must be hard to earn enough to pay for college abroad working as a bellboy,” I offered. “Do they pay you well here?”

He laughed. “I’m paid only in tips,” he explained. “Which isn’t much at all. But I’ve learned how to pick up some extra on the side.” He shot me a wink as he stopped the luggage cart in front of the entrance to my suite.

“Here we are, Madam,” he said in a voice that turned my crotch to cream. “Your suite. May I

have your permission to follow you inside? I can help you get settled in if you like.”

I'm sure that's not all you can help me with, I thought as I keyed into the suite and motioned for him to follow me in. He did.

The hot young bellboy showed me the features of my luxury suite in a stiff, rehearsed manner: “Here you’ll find an assortment of luxury bath linens,” he said, pointing to a wicker cabinet that leaned against the marble bathroom wall; “Here is a direct telephone connection to our room services department,” he explained of an old-fashioned white enamel telephone mounted above a three-person Jacuzzi. “And here—”

I placed a gentle hand on his forearm to stop him. “That’s enough,” I said. “I’m sure I can figure out everything I need to know about the suite on my own. Why don’t you tell me a little bit about yourself instead? Like your name, for instance.”

His forced expression relaxed instantly. “Thanks for stopping me,” he said. “I really hate doing the features tour. I’m Reginald. Reginald Toussaint.” We shook hands. The feel of his cappuccino skin on mine was electric.

“Very pleased to meet you, Reginald.” I kicked off my shoes and lounged on a white plush chaise lounge I found in the suite’s sitting room. “How long have you been working at the resort?”

Reginald took my cue and seated himself in the chair across from me. “Four years, on and off. I started here during my last year of A-levels, then came back summers when I was at university until my mother passed away.” A dark wave of pain passed over his face.

“I’m so sorry you lost your mother. How long has she been gone?”

He swallowed hard and struggled to regain his composure before answering. “Mum died two years ago, and I’ve been working here full-time ever since. I even live here on the resort, in the staff dormitory. I had to sell Mum’s little house in town to pay her funeral expenses.”

“I’m so sorry to hear that,” I said. “You must have had a very hard time.”

Reginald sighed and looked at the floor. “Yes, it has been hard. I was very poor growing up. When my mum got sick, we didn’t have enough money for her to get good treatment. But my

mum always told me I could improve my lot if I just worked hard. So that's what I'm doing."

"I admire you, Reginald. I really do. What area of law are you hoping to pursue?"

Reginald brightened. "I want to be a public-interest barrister, who brings civil rights cases on behalf of the poor here in St. Lucia," he said.

I patted him gently on the back. "Good for you, Reginald. I'm sure you'll make a fantastic barrister who will help a lot of people in need. I'm glad to hear you're getting into law to help people, instead of making buckets of money lobbying for evil corporations. I work in Washington, D.C., myself, around loads and loads of slimy lawyers who sold their souls to oil and tobacco companies."

He blushed. "Thank you, ever so much. You don't know how much that means to me."

"You're welcome. You deserve it. How old are you, if you don't mind my asking?"

He gave me a shy smile. "Twenty. I'll be twenty-one in June."

Good, I thought. *Young and fresh as virgin snow, but still old enough to be legal*. "You mentioned something about earning a little cash on the side," I chirped, eager to change the subject. "Would you mind giving me a few details about what exactly it is you *do* on the side?"

Reginald leaned in closer to me and fluttered his eyelashes. "It would be a lot easier if I just showed you."

He kissed me. With tongue. Lots and *lots* of tongue. I was caught totally off-guard, but couldn't help kissing him back.

After a long moment, Reginald broke the kiss and let me up for air. "Did you like that?" he asked.

"Very much," I replied. "You're a sensational kisser. I can see how you could drum up some serious on-the-side business with talent like that."

"You haven't seen anything yet," he whispered, then reached for the buttons on my blouse. He unfastened them one at a time, making each motion into a sensual dance with his lithe fingers. I watched awestruck as he slipped the blouse off my shoulders with one hand, as swiftly and dexterously as a master chef cracking an egg between two fingers. He made a move to start in on

my bra when I stopped him.

“Pardon me, Reginald,” I stammered, nervous as a hen in heat. I’d never had to negotiate a transaction before sex before, so I figured it was best to just be direct. “Shouldn’t we discuss *payment* before we start?”

Reginald ignored me, busily working on the front clasp of my bra with his teeth.

I burbled on. “We should probably talk about what you charge for your services at some point, because you see, I recently lost my job, and you can therefore appreciate my limited budget for certain *recreational* activities.”

Reginald continued to ignore me. With one final *swish* of his canines, he bit my bra open and nudged it free of my already-heaving globes with his pointed little chin. He immediately transferred his attention to my left nipple.

“Reginald, Darling, I don’t know what your rates are, but if what you’re doing to my left boob right now is any example—*ooohhh*, that’s *nice*—you are probably quite expensive. And as I said before, my money is pretty tight right now.”

Reginald put an index finger to my lips. “Hush,” he breathed, then transferred his mouth from my left nipple to my right. His tongue left a long wet trail across my chest.

“But—”

“This session is free,” he said with a sly grin. “And any future sessions you might desire, too. My usual rate is three hundred U.S. dollars per hour, but I’ll never charge *you* a penny.”

“So you *do* work as a gigolo, then?”

“Of course,” Reginald replied, tracing an elaborate design in wet saliva with his tongue in the valley between my breasts. “I can hardly earn enough for University of London tuition, accommodations, and plane tickets abroad by lugging bags and pocketing tourist pennies. I discovered back at university that I have a talent for satisfying women; and decided to use my position here as a marketing tool for my talents. I should have enough earned to pay for my remaining years at university and law school by the end of the summer.”

I stroked Reginald’s close-cropped, wooly hair and sighed. “I’m glad to hear you’ve found

a way to support yourself,” I said, relishing the feeling of his tongue on my breast. “But if your hourly rates are so high, why are you giving me a freebie?”

Reginald looked up and caressed the side of my face. “Because in the two years I’ve been doing this, you are the only woman who ever showed any interest in me as a person. Most women just toss some cash in my face and expect me to take my pants off in a hurry once they find out what I do on the side. You actually took the time to get to know me.” He nuzzled my ear and sucked on my earlobe. “And besides all that, you *are* very beautiful.”

It was my turn to blush. “No, I’m not.”

Reginald’s mouth strayed lower, tracing the fine line of dewy chestnut hair that led to my nether parts with his tongue. “Yes, you are,” he whispered. “*This* is beautiful.” He nuzzled my soft belly with his nose. “And *this*.” His head strayed lower, until he was kissing the top of my mons through my trouser waistband. “You have a real woman’s body, curvy and soft—not an ugly bundle of sticks like so many of my other clients. Touching you is a pleasure in itself, Madam. I don’t need to get paid to enjoy doing it.”

Reginald worked the fly of my trousers, making the unbuttoning and unzipping into an elaborate ritual. He took his time sliding the rough woolen fabric of each trouser leg over my skin until the garment was off. I blushed again when I remembered I hadn’t shaved my legs in a few days. Reginald didn’t seem to mind as he rained kiss after kiss on my razor-stubbed left shin. His soft, wet lips slid up and down the sensitive area—I never knew the shins were an erogenous zone—until they came to rest on my knee. He placed one more soft kiss there, then lifted my leg higher until he had access to the soft folds of skin behind my knee joint. He darted his tongue against the skin behind my knee—a part of the body that has more nerve endings than you’d expect.

“Mmm,” I groaned, feeling my nether parts turn hot. I searched through the fog of my deep arousal for the strength to speak. “You don’t even know my name, Reginald, and yet you’re treating me like the love of your life.”

“I don’t need to know your name,” he sighed into the crook of my leg. “I just need to know

that you're enjoying yourself. This is my way of thanking you for treating me like a person instead of as a cheap sex object." Reginald shot me a wink and then turned his attentions toward my nether parts, still hidden away behind the soaking-wet cotton crotch of my panties—which he whisked away with one hand and tossed across the room. Reginald parted my dewy folds with his fingers and gave my clit the same expert tongue bath he'd just given my leg and knee.

My eyes rolled back in their sockets as the entire world melted around Reginald's lapping head.

He worked my clit into the kind of white-hot, tooth-melting frenzy I'd only read about in books. My hips bucked wildly, sending my legs and feet kicking hard against the upholstered chaise lounge with soft little *thuds*. My head exploded. I saw stars. Every single cliché you've ever heard about mind-blowing orgasms, I experienced all at once. And just when I thought I was going to drown in a sea of pure ecstasy, Reginald sent me over the edge again—using nothing but the tip of his tongue.

After the second earth-shattering orgasm, Reginald had the good sense to let me rest. He gently closed my legs and pulled a spare silk comforter from the closet, which he laid over my still-heaving body. The weight of the thick, satiny-smooth blanket against my skin was enough to set me to sleep.

When I came to, I was alone in the room and the sun was low on the horizon. I got up and headed for the bathroom and discovered a sensual, raw soreness between my legs which told me that while my nether parts had thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon's proceedings, they still weren't satisfied. The walls of my vag ached with the pressing need to be filled up by something long, thick and hard. A romp with my dusty old Rabbit was probably in order.

I relieved my bladder and headed back out into the suite to search my luggage for the Rabbit. To my surprise, I found my suitcase had already been unpacked; my clothes were neatly folded and tucked away in the plantation-style bureau across from the king-sized bed, my toiletries neatly arranged on the vanity table next to the picture window. My Rabbit, however, was nowhere to be found.

Damn it, I thought as I frantically rummaged through the drawers one more time. I checked and re-checked my suitcase. I racked my brain, trying to remember the steps I'd taken when I hastily packed for the trip, and each time distinctly remembered packing my dusty, unused Rabbit and a fresh pack of batteries in the inside-lid pocket of my suitcase. I found the battery pack tucked inside a pair of my plain white cotton panties, but no Rabbit.

I hadn't forgotten my Rabbit. Someone took it.

In confirmation, a quick scan of the room revealed a note sitting on my nightstand. I snatched the card in my sweaty palm and rushed over to the window for better light to read it by. The hand was deeply slanted and elegant, and written on the resort's high-quality vellum stationery with an old-fashioned fountain pen:

Dear Madam,

I have taken the liberty of unpacking and arranging your things while you sleep. You will find everything in the bureau drawers, save for one thing—your marital aid. I have removed this from the room because a woman as lovely as you should have no need for such tacky plastic contraptions that are no substitute for a skilled human touch. If ever you are in need of servicing upon your person, you need only ring the bell desk. Ask for me by name, and I will appear.

And if by chance I am unavailable, I believe that several guests searching for your sensual favours have recently checked into the resort. Make inquiries with the front desk staff, who will be pleased to assist you in this matter.

Yours in service,

REGINALD

I laughed softly to myself as I neatly folded the card and tucked it away in my purse for safekeeping. This eloquent, handwritten letter left for me by a man who cared for me without even knowing my name was like something out of an historical romance novel.

My mind raced with conflicting thoughts. At one level I felt like I was exploiting this poor young man; on another I felt we had shared something special and memorable. Then there were thoughts of Rodney Doyle. Even though I owed the man nothing after all that had happened back in Washington, I couldn't help but feel as if I'd betrayed him by my little mini-tryst with Reginald. *How would he feel if he knew I'd cavorted with a total stranger—a male prostitute, no less—on a whim at a Caribbean resort?* I wondered. *And how would he feel if he knew I'm arranging to meet with several Washington powerbrokers, hoping to use my nascent sexual*

talents—which Rodney helped cultivate—to gain a leg-up in Washington?

I pounded my temples and shook my head back and forth to clear it of these thoughts. *Why the hell should I care what Rodney Doyle thinks of me?* I wondered. *That slick, slimy bastard had used and abused me.* I didn't care a straw for Rodney Doyle, and would be perfectly happy if I never laid eyes on him again.

Then why am I standing naked and alone in a hotel room, wiping tears from my eyes?

Chapter Sixteen

After a long and embarrassing fit of crying, I freshened up for an evening around the resort. After showering, I donned a simple black cocktail dress that clung to my ample curves just enough to suggest a womanly shape, yet still leave quite a few things to the imagination. I paired the dress with a set of strappy patent leather sandals with tiny kitten heels that I'd had for years but seldom had occasion to wear in my dreary, button-down life as a Washington PR staffer. A long silver pendant chain hung nearly to my waist and matched dangly earrings. I kept my makeup muted, but went for a dramatic hairstyle: a high French twist with a long tendril of curled hair hanging down by my left temple.

I took a step back and admired myself in the mirror. If I squinted my eyes and cocked my head just right, I looked like a much plumper version of Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

I grabbed my purse and headed for the resort's front desk to check my messages. I stopped by the bell desk on my way, hoping to see Reginald; but the bellboy on duty told me he'd gone home for the night.

I tiptoed up to the front desk, taking care that my kitten heels didn't clank on the travertine tile floor. "Excuse me," I whispered to the pleasant-faced young woman behind the desk. "I'm Jasmine Rand in Suite Eighteen. Are there any messages for me?"

The woman pursed her lips and raised her eyebrows. "Yes," she chirped. "Several, in fact." She bent down and flipped through a small file box, then retrieved a stack of pink message slips. "Here," she said, narrowing her eyes at me with disapproval. "You might want to tell all your *friends* that they can also leave a voicemail for you on your suite phone. We simply don't have enough staff here at the desk to take thirty messages in a single day for a guest."

"*Thirty* messages?"

"Yes, *thirty* messages," the desk clerk sniffed. "I hope you enjoy the rest of your stay here at

Silken Sands, Ms. Rand.” She turned on her heel and busied herself sorting a stack of check-out statements for the next morning.

I found an easy chair in a quiet corner of the hotel lobby and sorted through the huge stack of messages. Five of them were from Rebecca back at the office, all marked as urgent. Since I’d told no one in Senator Grayle’s office about my Caribbean plans, I had no idea how she’d found me. My stomach lurched at the thought of how my plan could affect her and her career if word got out back home. My mind swirled with second thoughts.

I didn’t even read the rest of the messages, which I suspected were from the various and sundry Washington powerbrokers Dexter drummed up for me to seduce. Before I did anything else to dig a deeper hole, I had to call Rebecca.

I ducked into the ladies’ room and was relieved to find it empty. I dug out my cell phone and called Rebecca. She picked up on the first ring, but I could barely hear her through all the static.

“Rebecca?” I shouted into the phone. “Rebecca, can you hear me? It’s Jasmine!”

“Who?” Rebecca’s voice was crackled and sounded a million miles away.

“It’s Jasmine! Jasmine Rand. You called me down in St. Lucia.”

“What?” Rebecca’s voice trailed off as I lost the signal and the line went dead.

I danced frantically around the room trying to pick up a signal again when the phone buzzed: Rebecca. I picked up, but this time the connection was even worse. I couldn’t understand a thing Rebecca was saying.

“This isn’t working!” I cried. “We need a land line! Call me back in five minutes in my room at the resort! Suite Eighteen!”

I dashed back to my suite just in time to hear the old-fashioned telephone ringing.

“Rebecca?” I asked, breathless. “Is that you?”

“Who the hell is Rebecca?” an angry male voice boomed on the other end.

Rodney Doyle.

“What the hell are you doing calling me here?” I screeched. “Get off this line. I’m expecting an important call.”

“I think *my* call is pretty damn important,” he shot back. “Considering the fact you cut me off in the middle of a sentence the last time I tried to talk to you.”

“I’ll be cutting *you* off this time, too!” I growled, my finger poised on the receiver button. I couldn’t bring myself to hang up, though. Some invisible force kept me from ending the call. The same invisible force was making my crotch itch.

“Fine,” Rodney seethed. “So cut me off then.”

“All right, I will!” And I wanted to. I really, really did. But I just couldn’t get my finger to press the hang-up button or my hand to lower the receiver. It was as if the mere sound of Rodney’s voice over a thousand miles of fiber-optic telephone cable was enough to paralyze me from the waist up.

I definitely *wasn’t* paralyzed from the waist down, however. Even if my top half seemed frozen inside a block of ice, my lower half was on fire.

“Look Jasmine, you’re obviously very upset with me,” he said. “And given what happened over the past couple of days, that’s perfectly understandable. But I told you before, and I’m telling you again, I had *nothing* to do with those stories being published about you. Not in my paper, and not in anybody else’s paper. I know it might be hard for you to believe—”

“You’re right,” I said, nonchalant. “It *is* pretty hard to believe. Frankly, I’d believe that a large flock of monkeys could fly out of my rear end before I’d believe any word you said.” Strengthened by my own assertiveness, I finally managed to unlock my frozen limbs and slammed down the phone.

Almost as soon as the receiver hit the cradle, it rang again.

It was Rebecca this time. “Jasmine? Are you there? I’ve been trying to get through for five minutes—”

“I know, I know, I’m sorry. Rodney Doyle was tying up the line. God only knows how he tracked me all the way down here.”

Rebecca coughed. “Um, well, there’s kind of a thing about that,” she stammered.

“What do you mean?”

Rebecca coughed again. “I, um, sort of told him where you were.”

“*What?*”

“Well, he showed up at Senator Grayle’s office demanding to know where you were. And he refused to leave unless somebody told him. He made quite a scene. So I told him.”

“All right, fine. But how did *you* know where I was?”

Rebecca paused and cleared her throat. “That’s kind of a long story.”

I sank backward into a chair. Someone had betrayed me. And that someone looked increasingly like Dexter.

“Jasmine? Are you still there?”

“Yes, I’m still here,” I said in a small voice. “So, how did you find out?”

“Well, it’s sort of complicated,” Rebecca replied. “I’m not sure I can explain it over the phone.”

I rolled my eyes. “How else can you possibly explain it? You’re a thousand miles away.”

Rebecca laughed. “Actually, no I’m not,” she said. “I’m at the St. Lucia Airport. My flight just touched down half an hour ago. I was trying to book a taxi out to the resort when you called my cell.”

“Rebecca, you aren’t making any sense.”

“I know,” she said. “Like I said, it’s sort of complicated. I’ll explain everything when we get there. Bye.”

“Wait a sec—*we*? Who’s *we*?”

But it was too late; Rebecca had already hung up the phone.

* * * *

Twenty minutes later, there was a knock at my suite door. I opened it and was stunned to find Rebecca standing next to Jacob Raleigh: a dapper, young and *single* two-term congressman from Rhode Island who served on the House Economics Committee for the past three years. There was no mistaking that *uber*-handsome face and body of his anywhere; in addition to making frequent appearances on C-SPAN, Rep. Raleigh graced the cover of *Washington Singles* when he

was named “The Hill’s Most Eligible Bachelor.”

“Hi Jasmine,” Rebecca said in an unusually assertive voice. “I’d like you to meet my boyfriend, Jacob.”

I looked from Rebecca to Jacob, then back to Rebecca. “You never told me you were dating a congressman.”

Rebecca blushed. “Jacob and I prefer to keep our relationship private,” she said. “For the time being, at least.” Jacob nodded in agreement.

“But why?” I asked. “I’d think your relationship would be good for *both* your careers.”

Rebecca’s cheeks went an even deeper red. “Jacob and I have some very unusual tastes in the bedroom department,” she said. “We think it’s best to keep quiet about our relationship, at least until all the hullabaloo in the press over you and Senator Grayle quiets down. I’m sure you understand.”

Now I was really baffled. “No, I’m afraid I don’t understand at all.”

Jacob and Rebecca exchanged looks. “Can we speak in private?” Jacob asked. I nodded and ushered them both through the suite’s foyer and into the sitting room. I double-locked the door behind them and turned up the air conditioning to muffle our voices in case anyone tried to listen at the door. Given how hot press scrutiny was back in Washington, one could never be too careful.

Jacob sat down in one of the suite’s overstuffed easy chairs. “I’m acquainted with your friend Dexter,” he said. “Many members of Congress are, in fact; as are any number of high-level bureaucrats. He’s quite the man about town.”

I raised one eyebrow. “Is that so?”

Jacob nodded. “Yes, that’s so. You might be surprised to hear this, but Dexter wasn’t always a cab driver. Once upon a time, he worked as an undercover agent for the FBI. On the international vice squad.”

My stomach did a flip-flop. “Oh, great. I guess that means I’m going to be arrested.”

Jacob laughed. “On the contrary. Dexter left the FBI years ago to strike out on his own. He’s

what you might call an independent contractor.”

“What do you mean?”

“Dexter got fed up with FBI corruption some years back and decided to take all the knowledge and contacts he built during his career on the road,” Jacob said. “What Dexter does is mostly illegal or borderline illegal, but it’s harmless enough that most powers that be look the other way. And the reason the powers that be do that is because they’re mostly Dexter’s customers.”

“I figured as much when I hired him to help me, Congressman,” I said. “But what has all of this got to do with you and Rebecca?”

“Rebecca and I are some of Dexter’s most loyal customers for certain matters,” Jacob replied. “So when we heard about your little planned shindig here on St. Lucia, we of course arranged to be among the first to arrive. We hope you don’t mind.”

I glanced from a beaming Rebecca back to Jacob, then back to Rebecca again. I could hardly believe what I was hearing. Rebecca had never struck me as the type who was into weird and wild nooky-for-hire. “This isn’t some kind of joke, is it?”

“No joke, Jasmine,” Rebecca said. “We’re here to get in on some of the fun. Jacob and I love nothing more than a good *ménage*. Unless, of course, you’d rather not work with us...”

I felt my nether regions get warm. “No! I mean, yes! I mean—” I rubbed my sweaty palms on my thighs. “I’m not sure if this is exactly what I had in mind when I set this whole thing up,” I said. “My goal was to try to advance my career and make some new connections, not sleep with my boss’ secretary and her powerful congressman boyfriend. No offense intended, of course.”

“None taken,” Jacob said. “If it makes a difference, I’m looking for a new publicist. Rebecca tells me you’re very good. Maybe we could talk about the possibility of a job in my office after we’ve traded favors, so to speak. Or not. It’s your call.”

“You don’t have to do anything you don’t want to do, Jasmine,” Rebecca added. “I know this all must seem very strange, given how long you’ve known me and all.”

My crotch was broiling. The prospect of hopping in bed with my secretary and co-worker of

the past two years—and her very hot, young congressman boyfriend—was admittedly strange. But that’s exactly what made it so appealing.

I dabbed at my dampening forehead with my sleeve. “You know, I think we could give it a try.”

Rebecca jumped up, giggled, and clapped her hands. “Yay! Jasmine, you don’t know how much this means to me.”

I chuckled. “You’re right, I don’t.”

Rebecca came to embrace me and gave me a wet kiss on the cheek. “I hate to admit it, but I’ve always had a bit of a crush on you. I don’t normally go for girls unless it’s part of a *ménage*, but you’re probably the only woman I know who I’d even consider going to bed with alone. I hope you don’t mind my saying so.”

I hugged her back. “I’ll take it as a compliment,” I said. “But I’d rather we did it as a threesome. I’ve never done that before, and I’ve always wanted to try it.”

“Of course,” Rebecca said, unbuttoning her blouse. “Let’s get started, shall we?”

Jacob followed suit and loosened his tie. “How about we order in some room service before we launch the festivities? I’m starving, and we can always make food part of the fun.”

I smiled at this, remembering the very sexy experience I’d had with food recently at the hands of Rodney Doyle.

“Sounds like a good time,” I said.

I scanned the room-service menu and placed orders for jerk chicken, fried plantains, conch fritters, and coconut-and-saffron rice; along with plenty frozen tropical cocktails. Rebecca ordered something called *callaloo*, and promised it would be the best of all.

While we waited, we decided to do slow stripteases for each other. Rebecca went first, and finished unbuttoning her white silk blouse. She slid the slippery fabric off her torso like melted butter. Once the garment was off, Rebecca twirled it around with her index finger and then waved it back and forth over her head like a battle flag. Next came her flirty little black skirt, which had a set of six delicate fabric-covered buttons at the back. She reached around behind her

and expertly unfastened each one, making a show of every tiny motion of her fingers. Once she'd loosened the waistline, Rebecca did a miniature belly dance to send the skirt sliding down her hips in a sultry display I found insanely erotic.

Rebecca stepped out of the skirt, still in her heels. Her stockings were held up by snowy-white lace garters that matched her lace demi-cup bra exactly. As a bonus, she wore no panties. Her pubis had been waxed satin-smooth, making her wide-open, sweating cleft the featured attraction. She slipped off her bra one cup at a time, then clasped her pearl-tipped globes in each hand and gave them a pert little squeeze.

I was seeing my old cubicle-mate in a whole new light.

Rebecca sauntered over to Jacob, whose enjoyment of the proceedings was illustrated by the growing erection in his pants. She ran her tongue around and around the inside of Jacob's left ear, making him shiver with delight. She pulled his loosened tie out of his collar, then tied it over his eyes in an improvised blindfold. Rebecca whispered something into his ear that made the tent in his trousers even bigger. She took his tie and wrapped it around his head, completely covering his eyes.

Blindfolded, Jacob stumbled in my direction. I met him half way, and he groped at the air until his hands found my shoulders. He pulled me close. "Strip me naked, Jasmine." He whispered.

"All right," I whispered back. "Stand still."

He obeyed. My clit fluttered as I felt a surge of power, just like I had back at the House of Flowers. I started by unbuttoning Jacob's conservative blue oxford shirt, which I could tell was custom-tailored by the fine stitching and the monogrammed initials on each cuff. He wore no undershirt, so each loosened buttonhole revealed a glimpse of his firm, muscular chest and light coating of sandy-blond hair. I threw wide the unbuttoned shirt and ran my palms up and down Jacob's chest and abdomen, hard beneath my fingers and slick with sweat. I traced my fingers in ever-narrower circles on his hard pecs until they landed on his razor-sharp nipples; which I pinched, rubbed, and plucked until he groaned. My fingers strayed lower to the dark "love line"

of hair leading to his groin. I ran my fingers up and down it slow and steady, until I finally settled on his belt buckle.

“Please,” he whispered, nudging me closer to his bursting crotch. “Please.”

I laughed softly. “Ah, but have patience,” I breathed. “I haven’t finished with your upper half just yet.”

I felt the rigid confines of Jasmine Rand slipping away, replaced by my alter-ego Hyacinth Slaughter. I wasn’t sure how much Jacob and Rebecca would appreciate a full-fledged S & M mistress; but given their rather unusual tastes, trying out some subtle master-and-slave tricks couldn’t hurt. *Much*.

“Jacob, from now on you will do everything I say,” I ordered in a soft, gentle voice. “You will remain quiet and patient until I have finished undressing you in my own way, no matter how long it takes. You will not remove your blindfold or try to peek through it. You will not speak unless you are spoken to. You will not question me, or ask me to do anything special; but you will enjoy whatever it is that I am doing to your body. Do you understand?”

“Yes Ma’am,” he whispered.

By the looks of his crotch, Jacob and I were going to do just fine as mistress and slave. And Rebecca was pretty turned on by the idea, too—she’d stretched herself out full-length on the chaise lounge, stroking her clit while watching Jacob and me.

I returned my attention to Jacob’s still-clothed shoulders, arms and back. I reached for one shirt cuff, then the other, slipping his solid-platinum cufflinks out of the sleeves and setting them carefully on the end table. I tugged at the end of one sleeve a little at a time until it slid off his shapely arm, revealing toned biceps and triceps. *Looks like the congressman could very well be spending more time in the gym than on the floor of Congress*, I mused. I tugged at the other sleeve until the shirt came off completely, then wrapped it around Jacob’s already-blindfolded head until it had become a thick, confining mask. I pulled up just enough of the cloth so his mouth and nose were exposed. “There,” I said. “Now I won’t have to worry about you doing any peeking until I’m finished with you.”

Jacob grinned.

I got down on my knees, so Jacob's crotch was eye-level. I reached for his belt buckle, tugged at the loose end of his belt, and eased the slack out of the buckle inch by inch. By the time I was loosened the belt prong from its slot, Jacob's throbbing member had practically ripped a hole through the front of his pants. I yanked the belt from Jacob's belt loops in one swift, leather-cracking motion. Then I seized his wrists and wrapped the belt tightly around and around, binding them together. Jacob licked his lips with pleasure at the notion of being tied up.

Now he was my prisoner.

Rebecca was getting mighty turned on by this point, too. She'd flipped over onto all fours to get a better view of me knocking her powerful congressman boyfriend into submission. And she was making good use of her considerable flexibility by reaching one hand back between her legs to stroke her pussy while maintaining her position. Rebecca was poised and ready for action from her powerful political beau as soon as he was naked.

Provided I released him to her pleasure, of course. I was having such a good time with Jacob under my power that it might be quite a while before he would be available to Rebecca.

I shifted my focus to the front of Jacob's trousers. They had an old-fashioned button fly; I found it a bit tricky to work those buttons because Jacob's swollen equipment was straining so hard against the fabric. Knowing it would take me quite awhile as a result, I decided to make the procedure into an unusual element of foreplay. I pressed my fingers against the top fly-button, gently pushing it inward against Jacob's throbbing, straining cock and balls.

That got his attention. The congressman jerked ramrod-straight and threw his head back in ecstasy. He rocked his hips forward against my pressing fingers, looking for more.

I gave it to him.

I pressed the top fly-button harder into Jacob's thick, erect cock, making him squeal with delight. Then I worked the button around and around in a slow circle of pressure, making sure to move the fly-fabric underneath along with it, creating an intense mixture of pressure and friction against his most sensitive parts. After almost a full minute of that, I finally worked the button

free of its buttonhole, revealing a tiny slice of the Congressman's bare skin and sandy blonde pubic hair.

The freshman representative from Rhode Island went commando. I wondered if they knew *that* on C-SPAN.

Instead of moving on to the next fly-button right away, I stroked and tickled the tiny slip of Jacob's bare genitals that revealed themselves between the narrow slit in his partially opened fly. It was the point where his cock met his groin: an important area that got far too little attention, in my opinion. I made it my business to give it the best treatment it had ever had.

I slid my finger into the tiny accessible space underneath Jacob's cock, found the throbbing main vein there with my fingertip, and pressed it in a slow, steady rhythm. Then I leaned forward and placed my mouth on the same point, sucking on the downbeat.

The Congressman groaned, liking that just fine.

Rebecca did, too. She abandoned her all-fours position on the chaise lounge in favor of splaying herself out flat and wide on the floor just to my right. She seemed perfectly content with the fact that it would still be quite some time before Jacob's member would make it inside her; and by the look of her bucking hips and sweating cunt, she was so focused on satisfying herself that she might not mind if I decided to let Jacob take *me* first.

After a minute or two of sucking and pressing on that oh-so-sensitive spot, Jacob's entire body shook. I could feel the tension and pressure building in his cock and balls almost to the point of no return; and knew that if I didn't let up a bit, he'd come all over his gray pinstriped Brooks Brothers before Rebecca or I had a chance to really enjoy him. I decided to pump the brakes.

I finished unbuttoning Jacob's fly without fanfare, then slid his pants off one leg at a time. His cock popped eagerly skyward the moment it was free, his balls already tucked high and tight against his groin in anticipation of blowing their load. But they wouldn't blow their load just yet—not if I could help it.

"Stay right here," I told him. "I'll be right back. Don't move an inch, or there will be

consequences.”

I left Jacob standing in the middle of the room and headed for the bathroom, where I had a full ice-bucket waiting on the counter next to my condom supply. I grabbed the ice-bucket and a clean washcloth, which I soaked under cold running water from the tap. I also made sure to grab several condoms. I returned to the main suite with both items in tow. Jacob stood obediently still in the middle of the room, right where I’d left him. Rebecca, meanwhile, had sidled herself up behind her naked lover, and was rubbing her body against his. She ran her breasts up and down his back and stroked him between the buttocks; probably to see if she could elicit some kind of response. To my delight, Jacob resisted all her efforts in order to obey my command to keep still.

I placed myself between them. “If you don’t mind, Rebecca,” I said, “I need to chill the congressman out a bit. “Otherwise the fun will be over before we even start.”

Rebecca’s face fell. “Don’t worry,” I reassured her. “There’s something fun in this ice bucket for you, too.”

“Oh really?” Rebecca asked. She didn’t seem convinced.

“Allow me to illustrate,” I replied. I motioned for Rebecca to lean back upon the bed, with her lower hips and legs hanging off. She obeyed, but still looked doubtful.

“This is one of my favorite things to do to pleasure myself,” I said. Which was true, even if it had been a very long time since I’d done it with any regularity. But in my college and young-adult years, my favorite private masturbation game was straight out of *9 ½ Weeks*. I felt my crotch sizzle at the thought of making Rebecca’s freeze, and buzzed with the intimate knowledge I had about the kind of mind-blowing pleasure she was about to experience. I only wished I hadn’t been so uptight for the past several years, so I could have enjoyed it more myself.

I spread Rebecca’s legs wide and planted myself between them on the floor, the ice bucket in easy reach. “Brace yourself,” I said. “This will be a little cold. But you’ll love it, I promise.”

I selected a large, long chunk of ice and slid it into Rebecca’s vagina. She yelped and squirmed, all the while spreading her legs wider. I slid five more chunks of ice inside Rebecca, filling up the empty space left when the first chunk melted; then filling and stretching her even

more when she seemed ready to burst. While continuing to keep Rebecca's vag full and stretched to the limit with ice, I used the large chunk of ice in my right hand to stimulate her clit. I ran the ice chunk around and around her red-hot button until it sought cover underneath its tiny hood. Rebecca moaned, cried, bucked her hips and came, shrieking and thrashing. Her jerking body finally came to rest; but as soon as she caught her breath, she begged for more.

"I need to move on to Jacob now," I said. "But there's plenty of ice left. You can use it to please yourself. You'll probably like it even better that way. I know I always did." I poured a pile of ice into one of the large water glasses I found on the bedside table and left it in Rebecca's reach.

Now it was time to chill out Jacob's overheated parts just enough so Rebecca and I would be able to enjoy them to their full potential.

The ice inside the bucket was about halfway melted, leaving a frigid, slushy mixture of ice and water. Perfect for what I had in mind.

Jacob still stood masked at attention in the center of the room. His cock pointed straight upward dripping pre-come, and his balls were pulled back; tight and ready to blow.

I dipped my fingers in the ice-cold slush and ran them down the Congressman's chest. His breath caught and he shivered, but made no sound.

"I'm back, Jacob. Did you miss me?"

He nodded vigorously.

"I was servicing your lady friend, and now I'm here to service you so all of us can get busy together. I'll just need to do a little work downstairs so you'll be ready for the festivities. Hope you don't mind." I shook the ice bucket next to Jacob's ear so he could get a sense of what was to come.

"This will be cold," I warned. I dipped my fingers in the slush again and then traced a line of ice water down the length of Jacob's shaft. He shuddered and a slow grin spread across his face. "Do you like that?" I asked.

He nodded again.

“Good. Because things are about to get a lot colder. Brace yourself.” I took the ice bucket in both hands and lifted it over and around Jacob’s equipment; fully immersing it in the frigid brew. He cried out and breathed heavily.

“Too much for you?” I asked. “If so, just tell me to take it away.”

He shook his head vigorously and grinned even wider to indicate he enjoyed the edgy mix of pain and pleasure.

“Excellent,” I said, giving the ice bucket a little shake for good measure. “Let me know when you’ve had enough.”

Jacob wasn’t even close to having enough, it seemed. He bucked and swirled his hips so the ice-slush mixture could get maximum friction around his genitals. I moved the ice bucket to meet his thrusts. Jacob, the ice and I bumped and grinded that way for almost five minutes. By the time he’d finally had his fill, the ice was totally melted and the water was warm.

The Rhode Island congressman’s equipment was generating so much heat, in fact, that a little cloud of steam rose visibly from his cock and balls.

I set the ice bucket aside and went to inspect Jacob’s machinery. I manipulated his dick with both hands, measuring its thickness and hardness. It was rock-hard, perfectly straight, and nearly as thick as my wrist. It also was no longer on the verge of exploding. His balls and scrotum had relaxed back down, keeping their load in reserve. The ice water had done the trick.

I took one of the condoms and slid it onto him, making sure to keep another within easy reach. If he was going to fuck both of us, he’d need at least two.

I slowly and carefully removed the leather belt from the congressman’s wrists, then unwrapped the improvised mask and blindfold from his forehead. Like a good slave, he kept his wrists together and his eyes clasped tightly shut until I gave him the command to relax and open them.

“You are good and obedient, Jacob,” I said in my heaviest Hyacinth Slaughter voice. “You may speak now if you wish.”

“Thank you, Mistress,” he said. “May I call you Mistress? And would you mind calling me

Slave instead? I love it when a woman dominates me.”

I seemed to have a real talent in the dominatrix department. *Maybe it was high time for me to go invest in a leather jumpsuit and some whips*, I thought with a smile.

“Yes, Slave,” I boomed at the congressman. My voice was so deep, loud and sultry that Rebecca stopped pleasuring herself mid-stroke and jerked her head in our direction. “But I also hereby command you to address me as Mistress Hyacinth from now on. That command applies to both of you. The name Jasmine Rand does not exist in our sex play. Understood?”

Jacob nodded. Rebecca smiled, got up from her perch on the bed, and sauntered over.

“Understood,” she cooed. “You know Jasmine—I mean, Mistress Hyacinth—I always thought you’d make a good dominatrix.” She kissed me open-mouthed with lots of tongue.

I kissed her back for a moment, relishing the taste of her; but then remembered my position and pushed her away.

“If you’re going to be my Slave,” I chastised, “then you can’t touch or kiss me without permission. On the other hand, if you’d like to be my co-dominatrix—”

“Then we can *both* dominate Jacob,” she finished. “Which is exactly what we had in mind when we came down here in the first place.”

“We can continue this discussion after *this* little bit of fun is over,” I said. “In the meantime, Rebecca, I’ll need you and your cute little congressman here to get on all fours.”

They obeyed without question.

There was a sudden knock at the door: our room service. I directed Rebecca and Jacob to crawl on all fours to the space on the other side of the king-sized bed and hide from the delivery boy.

“Don’t come out until I say the coast is clear,” I said.

When I opened the door, I was stunned to find Reginald standing there with a rolling metal cart that carried our meals.

“Good evening, Madam,” he said with a wink and a bow. “I have brought your dinner. I must say, it is quite a lot of food for just one person. Do you have guests?”

I evaded the question and tested the waters. “Why, Reginald! What are you doing here? The bell desk said you’d gone home for the evening.”

“Home for me is just the dorm on the far side of the resort. It’s not far for me to go to come back to work.”

I raised a suspicious eyebrow.

“And when I heard you had ordered so much food,” he continued, “I just had to come and find out why.” Reginald raised his own eyebrows suggestively. “The *callaloo* served here on the resort is based on my mother’s old-time family recipe, by the way. She made the best *callaloo* on the island. Very, very spicy.”

Reginald swept past me, pushing the cart before him. He removed the chrome lids from steaming dishes with a flourish and slowly arranged the plates on the dining table.

“Tell me, Reginald,” I cooed. “You’re not *really* back at work right now, are you?”

He blushed underneath his beautiful coffee-colored skin. “Alas, no. I am here for my own selfish reasons only. And also I feel a little guilty for what I took from you this afternoon.” He reached into his deep apron pocket and produced my Rabbit vibrator. “I was wrong to take this from you,” he said. “I wonder if perhaps you have already missed it?”

I smiled. “As a matter of fact, I was just thinking about how much I needed this right now.”

Reginald placed the Rabbit in my outstretched hand. My fingers closed around it, savoring its cool, slightly sticky resin surface. “Thank you for returning it, Reginald. You don’t know how much it means to me.”

Reginald gave me a slow, single nod to show he understood. He finished fussing over the food and pushed the empty service cart toward the doorway. Then he stopped short.

“Will you be requiring anything further, madam?” he asked, his gaze sweeping my body from stem to stern.

“Why yes, there is one more thing,” I replied in a husky voice. “My friends and I are having a little dinner party. It would be lovely if you would consider joining us.”

Reginald grinned a mile wide. “My pleasure,” he said, giving me another one of his

gentlemanly, Old World-style bows. “I am at your service. Anything that you and your friends desire, I shall provide. You need only say the word.”

“Good,” I said. “Follow me, please.”

I guided Reginald over to the far side of the suite, where Rebecca and her Congressman lover waited patiently on all fours like two immovable, naked human tables.

“We were just getting ready for dinner, you see,” I purred. “You’re just in time.”

Chapter Seventeen

A very large, very pointy tent rapidly formed in Reginald's red polyester bellboy trousers.

"Shall I serve dinner now?" he asked. "I think I know the most delicious way possible for you and your friends to enjoy our wonderful island cuisine."

"Of course," I said, eager to see what Reginald had in mind. "Go ahead."

"I think perhaps the young gentleman here would like to start out with some nice warm *callaloo* and a side of fried plantains," Reginald offered. He took the bowl of steaming hot *callaloo* from the table and ladled it onto Rebecca's bare back. She hissed as the hot, spicy stew scalded her skin; then, her body adjusting, she arched her back to create a little bowl in which the aromatic island dish pooled. Reginald decorated the edges of her back with a ring of crispy fried plantains. The effect was a beautiful, artfully arranged serving of St. Lucian *haute cuisine*, as neat and lovely as anything served in the resort's four-star restaurant.

Rebecca swayed a little from her efforts. Jacob glanced over his shoulder in my direction, his expression quizzical, awaiting my instructions.

"Slave, you may eat your meal now," I said. "But you are *not* to use your hands. Hurry up, it's getting cold."

Jacob leaned over Rebecca's body and began lapping up the *callaloo* with his tongue. Taking brief pauses between licks to gobble up the plantains, he lapped and sucked until the thick, hearty stew had almost disappeared from Rebecca's body. Rebecca bleated and cooed with pleasure as Jacob nudged, smacked and tickled his way across her backside with his mouth, lips, tongue, and the tip of his nose. Just before he was about to lick the platter clean, Jacob turned to look at me over his shoulder.

"Do you wish to speak, Slave?" I asked.

He nodded.

"You may do so," I said.

“Mistress, may I please have a drink of water? This has got to be the spiciest stew I’ve ever tasted. My mouth is on fire.”

I’d been noshing on my own bowl of *callaloo* while I watched the proceedings, so I knew full well just how potent the stuff was.

“No, Slave,” I said. “You may *not* have a drink of water. But I know an even better way for you to take care of that raging fire in your mouth.”

Reginald beamed at me as he dished me up another plate, this one piled high with fried conch and jerk chicken. I could tell he already knew exactly what I had in mind.

I finished my helping of jerk chicken and fried conch, taking care to smack my lips and lick my fingers as often and as sensuously as possible, all the while never breaking Jacob’s gaze. I handed Reginald my empty plate and started doing my own little striptease for everyone present; paying extra attention to Jacob.

I unbuttoned the bodice of my cocktail dress first, making each motion into a miniature dance. I sashayed the short dress sleeves off slowly, then used them as a mock-boia, dangling them over my outstretched arms while shaking and shimmying my whole body like an old-time burlesque performer. The dress’ flowing skirt portion was next. I loosened the drawstring at my waist and the dress fell off my body like a dropping stage curtain. Jacob’s eyes sparkled when he saw that I wore no panties; something I’d decided to do throughout my stay on the island so I could enjoy the full effect of the tropical breezes on my pussy.

I laughed to myself and set to work on my new lace demi-bra’s tricky front clasp. After several tries, the plastic clasp finally popped open and I released my breasts. I gave each a playful squeeze, then rotated them separately in another tribute to the days of burlesque. As my final tease, I dipped my finger in the dregs of my *callaloo* bowl and used it to draw a spicy brown design on my belly that pointed straight downward to my nether regions. Jacob licked his lips in anticipation of lapping the spicy *callaloo* off my body.

But I had other plans for him.

I took the last bit of *callaloo* from the bowl and shoved it in Jacob’s mouth with my fingers.

“Slave, you will now proceed to eat Rebecca’s pussy,” I commanded. “That will be the best way I know to take care of the raging fire in your mouth, and give the lady some pleasure in the process.”

Rebecca squealed with delight and positioned herself so her plump, curved rump was directly in front of Jacob’s face. He spread her cheeks and dove right in. Rebecca cried out the instant his tongue touched her most sensitive parts; the spicy *callaloo* burning her up in all the right places.

Once I was satisfied with Jacob and Rebecca’s latest tryst, I cast my eyes over at Reginald. It was high time he and I got in on the fun, too. Reginald caught my meaning right away, and was completely out of his bellboy’s uniform before I could blink. The sight of his huge, coffee-colored cock had me wetter than a tropical storm. I handed him a condom from my stash. He rolled it on with a smile.

I picked up my Rabbit from the end table and tested the batteries. The toy buzzed and whirled like a motorcycle engine. Suddenly getting an idea, I retrieved a few more condoms from the bathroom and put a lubricated one over the Rabbit.

I knelt down behind Jacob’s ass and motioned for Reginald to do the same behind me. Before he did so, though, he made a point to make a stop in front of me so he could lick the dripping *callaloo* design from my belly from underneath. When he was finished, he used the tip of his tongue to make a long, wet trail around my body from my belly button to my backside as he took up his position behind me.

I licked the whirring Rabbit up and down the shaft to lubricate it further, and got a mind-blowing buzz in the process. My whole body tingled with arousal.

I spread Jacob’s cheeks and touched the tip of the Rabbit to the entrance of his back passage to test his reaction. Instead of resisting, Jacob relaxed and rotated his hips so the Rabbit could get a bit more leverage. I pressed it against him softly, letting him enjoy the feeling of its vibrating tip against the sweaty red rosette of his anus. Once the opening was slick enough with my saliva and Jacob’s own secretions, I eased the Rabbit’s tip inside.

I turned up the vibration setting on the Rabbit and switched on the Rabbit’s “ear” appendage,

which I pressed against Jacob's prostate. He groaned with pleasure and pressed himself against the whirring appliance. Meanwhile, the Rhode Island congressman stepped up the intensity of his tongue-lapping on Rebecca's clit in time with his own increased arousal. Rebecca was coming over and over again, bleating and kicking and purring as her hips bucked and her legs vibrated with her exploding orgasms. Jacob laughed heartily into Rebecca's pussy each time she came, thoroughly entertained at how wild she'd become.

I set the Rabbit on "MAX" and pushed home.

The congressman cried out, but soon got used to the idea. Once his back passage had stretched enough to accommodate the Rabbit comfortably, Jacob set his own rhythm; bucking and grinding to the same beat as the pulses rocking Rebecca's body. I barely had to apply my own strokes at all.

The three of us moved as one giant sexual being, our strokes and undulations a carefully conducted sensual symphony. Our collective pleasure was almost complete.

Reginald pinpointed the exact note in the symphony where he and his magnificent instrument should make their entrance. Without asking my permission, he slid his giant cock into me on the downbeat, and reached around to finger my clit on the upbeat. He filled me up fuller and tighter than I'd ever been filled before. Reginald's cock was one for the record books; and he knew exactly how to use it. He banged me so long and hard that my entire body shook from each thrust. It was rough sex in the fullest sense of the term—and I couldn't get enough of it. I was on the verge of coming by Reginald's third thrust, and floated onto another plane while one blazing orgasm after another rocked my body.

As I paused to catch my breath between orgasms, my eyes surveyed the amazing landscape: four bodies of varying sizes, shapes and ages, moving together as one in pursuit of the same goal. The sweaty skin, open mouths, half-closed eyes, and musky smell of mingled body secretions formed the ultimate aphrodisiac. I came again just from taking in the sights and smells from all the rollicking, heaving bodies.

From my vantage point just behind Jacob's shoulder, I could get a full view of the

congressman's swollen, purple cock sliding its way in and out of Rebecca's slick, pink pussy in perfect counterpoint to the thrusts Reginald gave me from behind.

With one last, enormous thrust, Reginald and Jacob both exploded; bringing the rollicking, bouncing, many-headed sex monster that our bodies had jointly become to a slow, grinding halt. I saw stars as the biggest orgasm yet sent me over a precipice. From somewhere far, far away, I could hear the whimpers and cries of Rebecca's final climax mingling with my own.

The four of us collapsed together onto the plush carpeting, each of us spooning and snuggling with whichever person was closest until we all fell into a delightful, post-coital sleep.

* * * *

When I woke, it was the dead of night. The moon was high in the sky, filtering lazily through the room's gauzy curtains. Someone had moved me from the floor to the bed. I rolled to my side and discovered Rebecca asleep beside me in the bed. Reginald and Jacob were gone.

I rolled out of bed to relieve myself. As I headed for the bathroom, I caught sight of the pile of pink "While You Were Out" messages that I'd picked up from the front desk before Rebecca and Jacob arrived. Someone had arranged them into three neat stacks on the bedside table, just barely discernible in the dim moonlight. On a whim I gathered up the three stacks and carried them with me into the bathroom to look over while I was on the toilet.

I gingerly stepped into the bathroom and shut the door behind me before flipping the light switch so I wouldn't wake Rebecca. Once the glaring fluorescent lights were on, though, I was stunned to find someone had taken a thick black marker to all the message slips; blacking over the information they contained. I held the message slips up to the light to see if I could read the writing from the other side, to no avail. Whoever had done this—Reginald or Jacob, I could only assume—didn't want me to know who else awaited my sexual services at the resort.

I crumpled the message slips into a ball and dashed out of the bathroom without bothering to pee. I flipped on the suite's overhead light.

Rebecca immediately stirred in the bed, rubbing her eyes and looking around the room frantically.

“Wha?” she mumbled. “Wh-where am I? Where’s Jacob? What’s going on?” She lifted up the covers and seemed shocked at her nakedness. She was even more shocked at mine.

“Jasmine, what are *you* doing here?” she squealed. “And why are you naked?” She surveyed the surroundings: the luxury hotel suite; the room service cart; and the crumbs of our pre-coital island feast. “Is this some kind of weird dream?”

I sighed and rolled my eyes, exasperated. “Rebecca, you need to wake up.” I found the overturned ice bucket and took it to the bathroom to fill it with cold water, then used it to splash some water in Rebecca’s face.

She came to immediately. “Oh my God, Jasmine. We had sex.”

“Actually, you and Jacob had sex. I just told him what to do with you.”

“Same difference,” she sighed. She stood up and stretched. “Where the hell is Jacob, anyway? It’s not like him to fuck and run.”

“I was about to ask you that question,” I said. I handed her the crumpled wad of ruined message slips. “You don’t happen to know anything about this, do you?”

Rebecca flipped through the slips of paper, clearly disappointed. “No, I don’t. Who would have blacked out all the information? Jacob and I were really looking forward to using these to set up some killer *ménages* with you.”

“Why would somebody want to put a stop to that?” I wondered. “And who could have done it?” Reginald had no reason to do such a thing. *What could he possibly want with my personal life?* I wondered frantically. *He doesn’t even want to know my real name.*

Rebecca flushed red and stared at the ceiling. “Actually, I think I have a pretty good idea,” she muttered.

“Oh, really? Who?”

Rebecca flushed even redder. “I think it was probably Rodney Doyle.”

“*What?*” I shrieked. “That’s impossible. He’s a thousand miles away.”

Rebecca’s expression suddenly became very serious. “Actually, Jasmine, no he’s not.”

I sat down beside her on the bed. “What do you mean?”

Rebecca sucked in her breath, then blew it out slowly through her mouth. “He’s here, on the island. He took the same flight down here as Jacob and me. I wanted to tell you right away, but, well, things happened, and I sort of forgot all about it. Until now.”

I sighed and rubbed my temples. “Is he here at the resort, then?” I asked.

Rebecca shrugged her shoulders. “He must be. I didn’t think he’d be staying here, since I know he likes his privacy too much. I figured he’d be at one of those ultra-luxe, private-island places off the coast that the Hollywood celebrities like. But—”

I cut her off. “But you *did* tell him where I was.”

“*Technically*, yes, but I didn’t actually think he’d just show up here in the middle of the night and break into your private hotel suite. I mean, that’s pretty outrageous.”

I smacked a palm to my forehead, exasperated. “Of *course* it’s outrageous,” I seethed. I stood up and headed for the closet where I’d stashed my suitcase, searching for something to wear. “You have to understand, Rebecca, that you can’t just drop sensitive private information about my personal life right into a man like Rodney Doyle’s hands and not expect him to do anything with it. He’s a tabloid publisher, for God’s sake. Messing up people’s lives is what he *lives* for. He’s built a billion-dollar media empire based on it.”

Rebecca wrapped herself in a sheet and headed for the bathroom. “What makes you so sure he’s intent on messing up *your* life?”

I threw up my hands in disgust. “Duh! What do you think he’s been doing all along?”

“I don’t know,” Rebecca sighed as she stepped into the bath suite. “But I do know what *you* ’ve been doing all along.”

“Oh, and what’s that?”

“Making up every possible excuse to avoid a man who’s obviously in love with you,” Rebecca shot back, and shut the bathroom door behind her.

Rebecca’s words hit me like a steel pole. *Rodney Doyle, in love with me?* I sank down into an overstuffed chair, suddenly nauseous. Maybe it *wasn’t* his fault. Maybe Rebecca had been right when she said that the terribly unflattering story about me could have been planted in his paper

without his knowledge. Maybe I'd misjudged him.

It was high time for to stand face-to-face with Rodney Doyle and find out the truth.

Chapter Eighteen

I dressed quickly and headed for the lobby. There was only one person working the resort's front desk at this ungodly hour, and that person was fast asleep at his post.

I knocked the desk clerk hard on the shoulder with my knuckles. "Excuse me," I shouted in his ear. "I need some help here! Pronto."

The clerk jerked awake, then stumbled around the reception area searching for his spectacles—which he put onto his face crookedly when he finally located them.

"What? Oh, yes Madam. Was I asleep?"

I nodded.

"I begga your pardon, Madam," the clerk stuttered in a thick island patois. "Can I help you?"

"I need to know what suite Rodney Doyle is staying in," I barked. "I have urgent business with him."

The clerk gave me a blank look. "There no be anybody named Rodney Doyle staying here, Madam."

I stamped my foot, livid. "And how would you know that?" I barked, a little embarrassed by my nasty tone. "You didn't even look at the register."

"I have the entire guest book memorized, Madam," the clerk replied, adjusting his glasses. "'Tis part of my job to know that. And there be no Rodney Doyle here, I promise you."

Remembering Rodney's penchant for Dickens characters, I reached over the registration counter and snatched the red-leather bound hotel register book. I scanned the most recent page until I found the name "Nicholas Nickleby" listed in the entry line for the presidential suite. I thrust the register back at the stunned clerk.

"Thank you, sir. You've been most helpful."

I turned on my kitten heel and headed through the courtyard to the private Presidential Suite.

* * * *

After an almost 10-minute walk through the dimly lit brick paths winding through the resort's heavily vegetated outer grounds, I arrived at the gated entryway to the presidential suite—which wasn't a suite at all, but rather a heavily guarded private villa.

Two uniformed security guards, both with sidearms, blocked the door. I recognized one of them as the same bulky, hulking guard on duty at the *Beltway Times*' offices and Rodney's apartment building.

"Excuse me," I stammered. "I umm, don't know if you remember me, but—"

The huge man cut me off with a curt nod and a grip on his gun holster. "You wanna see Rodney Doyle," he boomed in his deep, Barry White-on-steroids voice. He made Ving Rhames sound like a child's teddy bear.

I swallowed hard. "That's right."

"Sorry, no can do, Ma'am. Mr. Doyle don't wanna be disturbed."

"But I *know* him!" I protested. "He specifically flew all the way down here just to see me."

The two guards exchanged looks and shrugged. "Sorry, Ma'am," the familiar one said. "We have our orders. You'll need to run along now."

The bodyguard was inches away from manhandling me across the courtyard when a disheveled-looking, pajama-clad Rodney appeared in the doorway.

"What's the trouble, George?" he asked the hulking guard. He did a double-take when he saw me. "Jasmine! What are you doing here in the middle of the night?"

"I should ask the same of you," I retorted. "What gave you the right to fly down here on a moment's notice just so you can break into my hotel suite and steal all my phone messages?"

Rodney looked sheepish. "So you figured out that was me," he sighed.

"Actually, my friend Rebecca did. She's the one who told me you were here. What do you think you're doing, showing up here on a remote Caribbean island unannounced just so you can ruin my vacation?" The two security guards took their cue to leave us alone and took up a new post on the far side of the courtyard. "That really takes a lot of balls, Rodney, considering what you pulled on me back in Washington."

Rodney bit his lip. "I've tried to tell you, Jasmine. *I had nothing to do with those pictures ending up in any of the papers.* Including *my* paper. Why won't you give me a chance to explain?"

I shoved past him into the villa. I wandered from room to lavishly appointed room until I discovered a wet bar, and poured myself a strong drink of local 100-proof rum.

I heard Rodney's footsteps just behind me. "I thought you didn't like hard liquor," he said.

"I don't," I shot back. "But you've driven me to drink."

He took the bottle from my hand and poured a shot for himself. "Likewise," Rodney said.

I gulped down my drink and gave Rodney the evil eye. "You've been itching to explain yourself," I snapped. "So do it already."

He gulped his own drink, then poured another. "Jasmine, I think you'd better sit down. This is going to take a while."

* * * *

Rodney paced the room for 10 minutes in silence.

"Will you please just stop pacing and start talking?" I blurted. "It's the middle of the night and you're wasting valuable sleep time."

He came to a stop in front of me and sighed. "I'm sorry," he said. "I just don't exactly know where to begin."

"Just pick someplace and start there," I snapped. "Otherwise, I'm going back to bed. This whole situation is getting ridiculous."

Rodney ran a hand through his sandy blonde hair. "You're right, the whole situation *is* ridiculous. And it's just going to get worse. I doubt you realize just how bad it is already."

I rolled my eyes. "Why don't you enlighten me?"

Rodney pulled a ladder-backed wooden chair away from the wall and straddled it in front of me. "For one thing, you friend Dexter the taxi driver isn't who he seems."

"I kind of figured that," I said, remembering my backseat bribe session with him in distaste. "And I just found out from somebody he used to work for the FBI. Is that true?"

“Yep,” Rodney says. “But he hasn’t been with the FBI for almost thirty years. Now, he’s—”

“An independent contractor?”

Rodney lifted an eyebrow, surprised at how much I already knew. “You could say that,” he said. “Although calling him an ‘independent contractor’ would be putting it a bit too nicely.”

“How would *you* put it, then?”

Rodney winced. “I would call Dexter a sleazebag for hire, among other things. He’s basically a professional character assassin. He seeks out easy targets with big-ticket connections—people like you, for instance—and uses them for his own ends. The cab driver act is just a cover. Newspapers, magazines, TV networks, political campaigns, and even foreign governments hire him to dig up dirt on people that can be used to destroy them in the media. His work has decided elections, ended careers, and even overthrown a few governments overseas. It makes what I do at the *Beltway Times* look like child’s play.”

“That’s insane,” I said.

“Yes, it is,” Rodney said. He was getting agitated. A sweat broke out on his forehead and he fidgeted with his hands.

“Why does he do this?” I asked. Although I had some idea.

“Dexter’s very good at his job, and gets paid handsomely for it. Rumor has it he made close to a million bucks on an exposé job he did during the last presidential election. But nobody knows which side hired him. Personally, I think he might have done work for both.”

“How do you know all of this?” I asked.

Rodney frowned. “Easy,” he said. “Dexter’s my uncle. In fact, he raised me. My parents died when I was five, and named Dexter my guardian in their will.”

My mouth dropped open. “*What?*”

“After my parents died in a plane crash, I went to live with Dexter. He actually didn’t do a whole lot to raise me directly at first, putting me under the care of a nanny while we worked international FBI assignments. Then when I was around ten years old, Uncle Dex left the FBI and went out on his own. I didn’t understand much about what Uncle Dex did until I was a

teenager, when he started grooming me on the family business. One thing I'd never known about my parents until then was that they'd actually had spent some time doing international espionage, and that they died under very questionable circumstances. Dex had worked as a government spy, too, before he was an FBI agent. When he went freelance, he used all his own FBI and CIA contacts, as well as those of my parents, to start his business. And he became very successful, very quickly."

"Successful at ruining people's lives?" I ventured.

"You guessed it," he replied. "From what I understand, my parents were the good guys. They did the kind of espionage that helps prevent wars and protect democracies. Dexter took all the work they risked their lives for over the years and corrupted it by turning it into a cheap blackmail service that sold its wares to the highest bidder without regard for ethics or morals. The consequences of what Uncle Dex chose to do were devastating."

Rodney went back to pacing. "When I was about thirteen or so, Uncle Dex and I had an argument about what Dexter did for a living when one of the public officials he helped expose as a homosexual committed suicide. Crazy enough, Uncle Dex usually gets paid a *bonus* when something like that happens with one of his targets. He actually works those kinds of clauses into his contracts." Rodney shook his head in disgust.

My eyes flew wide.

"I didn't like how Uncle Dex did business, and I told him so," Rodney went on. "He responded by packing me off to boarding school and never speaking directly to me again. From then on I was cared for by boarding-school matrons and Uncle Dex's lawyers."

"Oh," I said, my voice very small. "I'm so sorry."

Rodney sneered. "Don't be. I'm better off without Dexter, believe me. My uncle has spent the past thirty years making my life miserable. Nobody holds a grudge like he does. He's spent all these years trying to find a way to sabotage the *Beltway Times* and derail my career, so I'd have no choice but to come crawling back to him on hands and knees. Frankly, I'd rather die than let that happen. So I've done everything in my power to make my newspapers and media

outlets a more legitimate alternative to the kind of business Dexter does. I know that might sound laughable to you, but I do think I conduct my affairs with a bit more compassion than my uncle. And it infuriates him to no end that a lot of people around the world who used to pay *him* buckets of cash to spy on people are now able to rely on papers like the *Beltway Times* to do their dirty work for free. I'm also proud to say that nobody has ever *died* because of something the *Times* published. I'll admit to embarrassing the hell out of a lot of people, but I don't have anybody's blood on my hands. That's a vast improvement over my uncle's record, believe me."

I was too shocked to speak.

"I suppose you got caught up in his latest scheme to punish me for backing out on his operation all those years ago." He paused, choking back what had to be tears. "I know all of this probably sounds hard to believe," Rodney said, taking my hand. "But it's true."

I stared into Rodney's deep-set eyes and saw unimaginable pain there. "I do believe you," I said. "But I still don't understand what's happening."

"My aides have been following this for awhile. Apparently my uncle is working for some overseas media moguls who would like nothing more than to see my empire crash and burn. He's been searching for ways to infiltrate my inner circle for a long time. He discovered you completely by accident. But now that he's found someone close to me, he's moving in for the kill."

Close to him? "What exactly do you mean, I'm *close* to you?"

Rodney squeezed my hand hard. "Jasmine, I've said it before, and I'll say it again. I happen to care very deeply about you. Probably more than I've ever cared for any woman. I honestly don't know why I feel this way, but I do. So there it is."

I jerked my hand away. "If you care about me so much, how could you let those photos of me get published in your paper?" I stood up and began to pace as well. "I *know* you knew about it ahead of time. You knew about it the night you threw me out of your apartment."

Rodney's face went deep red. "You're right. I *did* know. Unfortunately, I found out too late to do anything about it. The papers had already printed and shipped. I sent you away that night

because I was afraid that one of Dexter's spies would find you at my apartment and leak *that* to the media, too."

I sighed. "Honestly, I don't think that would have made much of a difference in what anybody thought of me," I said. "*Or* you."

Rodney held up his hand. "That's not the worst part. I'd received several mysterious phone calls that day from a caller with an electronically distorted voice that threatened to do you harm. I put two and two together and deduced that Dexter's people were having you followed. It's not outside the realm of possibility that one of the freelancers Dexter has working for him could resort to violence to obtain the information he or she was hired to get. I wanted you out of harm's way until I figured out a better way to protect you."

My head spun. "*Dexter* picked me up himself in his cab at your building that night," I said. "He told me to call him anytime I needed a ride, day or night. He showed up five minutes after I called!"

Rodney shook his head. "That's because he'd been laying in wait for you," he said. "He must have known you were there all along. Jasmine, I think Dexter has a mole working somewhere in my staff. I haven't figured out who it is for sure yet, but I think that mole is responsible for hacking those photos you took at the House of Flowers off your phone and slipping them into the morning edition under the radar."

I sank back in a chair. "Dexter was so nice to me whenever we spoke," I said. "He was almost like a grandfather. I can't believe he was just using me the entire time."

"He was," Rodney said. "He's using you now, too."

"How do you mean?"

Rodney's expression became gravely serious. "Jasmine, I know that you planned a little sexcapade of sorts for your stay down here. I know you planned to leverage some of the new bedroom skills I helped you cultivate to try to revive your career. And I know Dexter helped broadcast that fact with a number of very highly-placed officials so you could make your services available to the broadest possible market. From what I understand, that market includes a sitting

congressman and the editor-in-chief of the *Washington Post*, among others. Am I right?"

I felt the bottom drop out of my stomach. "How did you find all of this out?"

"I have my sources," he said. "You're swimming in very shark-infested waters, Jasmine. My uncle set you up. If you'd gone through with your plans for this week, you not only would have been the subject of a massive exposé in the *Post*, you might have even been looking at federal criminal charges."

I was aghast. "*Criminal* charges? What kind of criminal charges?"

Rodney ticked off a list on his fingers. "Bribery, racketeering, improper campaign fundraising, tax fraud, I could go on and on. I'm not necessarily saying you're guilty of any of these things. But the powers that be probably wouldn't have seen things that way. So I had to intervene, before it was too late. That's why I'm here."

"How exactly do you propose to intervene in this fiasco, Rodney?" I asked. "Especially considering you're in the thick of it yourself."

Rodney reached into his pajama pocket and pulled out a small black address book. "I took the liberty of taking down the names and numbers of all the people who left you messages here at the resort, looking for trysts. Most of them are already here on St. Lucia. Some are even staying at this resort. I blacked over their names and numbers on your message slips so you wouldn't call them before I had a chance to talk to you first."

I chewed my lip. "I'm still not crazy about the fact you broke into my hotel suite," I said, "however honorable your intentions might be. I could even call the island police on you if I wanted to."

Rodney blinked. "You're right, you could. And you'd be totally justified, in my opinion. But the fact is, you'll end up in trouble with the island police yourself if you don't at least hear me out."

"Go on," I said nervously.

Rodney handed me the address book. I was stunned to see it not only the names of Rep. Jacob Raleigh and Rocky Robinson, editor-in-chief of the *Post*, but several senators, two state

governors, a Democratic Party leader, and a member of the cabinet.

Rodney took both my hands in his. “It’s my understanding that Mr. Robinson from the *Post* is here basically as an undercover journalist,” he said. “He’s planning to pose as someone who’s interested in procuring your services in exchange for offering you a job at his paper. But his real goal is to expose what you’re doing here as front-page news, along with outing all the identities of the movers and shakers Uncle Dex arranged for you to meet with while you’re here. For the *Post*, it would be the political scoop of the century; on par with what they uncovered during Watergate. For you, it would mean the end of your professional career, and maybe jail time. The *Post* was going to position the story around the assumption you were setting up an illegal offshore campaign-finance party, with you as the entertainment. If the *Post* had been able to conjure up any evidence that even *suggested* you might be doing that, you’d be looking at a federal indictment.”

My stomach lurched when I remembered Dexter’s lighthearted suggestion on my way to the airport that I tell my guests tax-free campaign financing was the purpose of my little getaway. I thought he’d been joking.

“So he basically entrapped me,” I said. “How could I have been so stupid?” I put my head in my hands and bit my lip until I tasted blood.

“You’re *not* stupid, Jasmine,” Rodney said, his tone soft and reassuring. “My uncle is a master of deception. He’s managed to trap and expose world leaders. He can trap anybody he wants to. He saw you as a way to get to me. You didn’t stand a chance. Your friend Rebecca and her congressman boyfriend are at risk, too. I’ve already spoken with Rep. Raleigh about this mess, and he’s gone into temporary hiding just to be safe.”

I groaned. *My life is over*. “So what do we do now?”

Rodney stood up and stretched. “Well, I do have a plan, if you’re interested.”

“I’m all ears.”

Chapter Nineteen

“I’ve been wanting to clean up the *Beltway Times*’ image for a long time,” Rodney explained. “All these years, I thought I was getting back at my uncle by publishing low-level political dirt in my newspapers. I thought I was one-upping Uncle Dex, doing something more legitimate than he did. I honestly thought I was bettering society by using everything at my disposal to manipulate public opinion against more than half the body politic. Can you believe that?”

I chuckled. “Yes, I can believe it. But I’m not sure anybody but the chairman of the GOP would agree with you.”

“I know,” he replied. “But since I’ve met you, Jasmine, I’ve discovered that I don’t have to do things the old way anymore. In a nutshell, I was just doing what my uncle had always done. And I don’t like that idea one bit.”

I smiled. I liked this new side of Rodney very much. “So what are you going to do about it?”

“I think we should use this opportunity to accomplish two things,” Rodney said, his face lighting up. “One, we can finally give my uncle his come-uppance. And two, we can turn the *Beltway Times* from a lowbrow political tabloid to a highbrow investigative news outlet in one fell swoop.”

I was intrigued. “How do you propose to do that?”

“Congressman Raleigh and I have discussed my plan at length and I think it will work. First, he’ll lure Dexter down here with promises of a good time at a tax-free political shindig. If we play things right, Dexter will think that Congressman Raleigh is knee-deep in your little sexcapade scheme. Once Dexter is here, I’ll have you meet with him disguised as a dominatrix. Not many people know this, but my uncle has a real weakness for that sort of thing.”

“Must run in the family,” I offered with a laugh.

Rodney flushed deep red. “I suppose that is one trait we share,” he admitted. “When you’re in your dominatrix disguise, you can use your considerable talents to slowly draw the truth out

of Uncle Dex. I've made some discreet inquiries, and I think we can arrange to have not only the *Post* editor present, but also several of the other high-ranking officials who've made their way down here look on in secret while you do your thing. I'll also have the proceedings recorded. Once we have the evidence we need, we'll go public with all the information Uncle Dex reveals about his undercover business. I'll share some of the scoop with the *Post* so they'll cooperate, but the juiciest parts will be released exclusively by the *Beltway Times*. Jacob even thinks he can use his position on the House Economics Committee to launch a congressional investigation into Dexter's business activities, as well as all the people who've hired him illegally."

Hearing how Rodney wanted to hinge his entire plan on my burgeoning dominatrix skills had me excited, but very apprehensive. "Do you really think I can get that kind of information out of Dexter just by playing dominatrix with him?"

"I have every faith in you," he said.

"Are you sure? Because I'm still pretty new at the whole bondage-submission thing."

Rodney grinned. "Jasmine, trust me on this. Even judging by what little you've done already, you are by far the most talented sex mistress I've ever encountered. And I'm speaking as a connoisseur."

I still wasn't convinced. "I find that pretty hard to believe," I said. "I've never really learned how to be a proper dominatrix. I just sort of flew by the seat of my pants the few times I've tried it. And I could never be as good as Mistress Violet."

Rodney's expression softened. "That's not true at all, Jasmine. Dominatrixes aren't made; they're born. You don't train to become one, you *are* one. And believe me, you were *born* to boss men around in the bedroom. When Dexter gets here, just do what comes naturally to you. Nature will take care of the rest."

"All right," I acquiesced. "But I don't have any dominatrix clothes. How will I hide my identity? And shouldn't I have a whip or something? And what about my name? I can't exactly call myself Hyacinth Slaughter anymore, with what happened in the papers the other day."

Rodney enveloped me in a hug. "That's my girl," he said. "Don't worry, I'll take care of

everything.”

* * * *

I don’t know how he managed it, but somehow Rebecca’s congressman boyfriend Jacob lured Dexter down to St. Lucia with promises of a wild offshore political fundraiser featuring exotic entertainment. Dexter couldn’t believe his luck; thinking he’d improved upon his sinister set-up of me entirely by accident, he was en route to St. Lucia by charter flight the very next morning. Dexter probably thought he’d stumbled upon the exposé of his career

Meanwhile, Rodney set out to convert his presidential villa into a domination den. That morning, Rodney, Rebecca and I took a shopping tour of the tiny island, making the rounds at the tourist ports-of-call as well as local hangouts. Using some tips gleaned from Reginald, we found the best sex shops on the island along little-known alley in downtown Castries. At Night Moves, a run-of-the-mill adult store aimed mostly at tourists, we were able to load up on the basic necessities: lube jelly in several flavors, extra Rabbit vibrators, nipple clamps, and the like. Good Vibrations, the second of the three shops, carried an exciting array of boudoir costumes. Rebecca outfitted herself with a classic “Naughty Nurse” outfit made of leather and PVC; Rodney helped himself to some baggy pirate pants and a matching eye-mask and hat set; And I selected a shiny red PVC catsuit with zippers at the nipples, neck and crotch—along with a matching red half-mask decorated with marabou feathers.

But by far the most exciting bedroom gear came from the last shop in the alley. Hidden down a dark, rickety flight of stairs practically was a small, brown, unmarked door leading to a store called “The Dungeon.”

The Dungeon had no sign advertising its presence, and its door was kept locked. Its only customers came through word-of-mouth. Per the detailed instructions Reginald gave us, we had to knock three times on the door and wait for the owner to unlock it. Back at the resort, Reginald had explained that absolute secrecy was necessary for the shop to stay in operation. Apparently, the St. Lucian authorities considered much of what was for sale inside The Dungeon illegal because most of it could be construed as weapons.

Once the owner—a stout, elderly Creole woman named Genevieve—let us inside, we found ourselves in a veritable dominatrix’s paradise.

I was blown away by what we found. The Dungeon’s walls and ceilings were draped and hung with every possible kind of S & M harness, suspension apparatus, restraint, whip, and sensual weapon known to humankind. There were things in there I’d only read about in books. There were even things I’d never known existed.

After sifting through the store’s exotic stock, Rodney, Rebecca and I decided to keep things simple for Dexter’s little party. I selected a classic braided leather whip with a single wooden bead embedded in its tip, along with two sets of black leather binding cuffs and a matching blindfold. I also chose a pocket-sized hand whip with multiple metal-tipped leather strands. While a leather-aproned, tattooed and pierced Creole clerk rang up the purchases, Rodney disappeared into the store’s dank back room with the proprietor Genevieve.

“To place a special order,” he explained.

Rodney re-emerged after a few minutes carrying a mysterious invoice, which he tucked into his pocket before I had a chance to read it over his shoulder. We gathered up our purchases and headed back to the resort.

Once there, we found a handwritten message from Jacob taped to the front doorknob:

Co-Conspirators—

The trap is set, and the bait has arrived. The Post editor and numerous other guests have been summoned. Ring the bell desk when you’re ready to begin festivities. I will accompany the bait to his party myself.

—J.R.

“All right, ladies,” Rodney sang. “Time to get this show on the road.”

Rebecca, Rodney and I donned our disguises. Rodney rehung the semitransparent window drapes across the middle of the room to create an improvised submission chamber. I would occupy center-stage in the curtained room, with various spectators watching through the fabric. The room would be kept dark enough so Dexter would think the curtains were opaque and we were alone; at least until the costumed and masked Rodney and Rebecca joined the fun. Rodney also rigged a digital recording device underneath a small end table he’d placed in the room for

me to store my equipment in.

“We’re just about ready to begin,” Rodney said. “Just one last thing remains, Jasmine: your new dominatrix name. What do you think about Mistress Intrigue? I think given all that’s happened, it suits you.”

I smiled. “Mistress Intrigue it is.”

Rodney placed a discreet call to the bell desk. Several guests filed into the villa soon after. Rocky Robinson, the *Post*’s chief editor, was among them; dressed inconspicuously in gauzy white island madras shorts, sunglasses and flip-flops. In addition to Robinson, the party’s clandestine audience consisted of three senators. I watched them all file in from my hiding place just inside the villa’s bath suite.

Jacob led Dexter in last. I was surprised to see Dexter had cleaned up his appearance quite dramatically since I’d last seen him driving his phony cab. He was clean-shaven, and had recently had a haircut. Instead of the wrinkled khakis and denim shirts I’d seen him wear behind the wheel, Dexter had on a custom-tailored English suit and highly polished Italian wingtips that together probably cost as much as my last car.

Jacob directed Dexter to take a seat on a footstool Rodney had set up in the domination chamber. The voyeurs were silent as mice. Dexter made no indication that he noticed their presence. Jacob whispered something inaudible in Dexter’s ear, then disappeared behind the curtain. It was my cue to enter.

I strode into the curtained chamber with confidence and authority. The sound of my platform heels on the travertine tile was deep and deafening. I took special care to make my disguised dominatrix voice match the tone of my footsteps. I dragged my braided whip behind me like a devil’s tail.

“Greetings, Slave,” I boomed at Dexter, not even bothering to ask if he wished to be dominated that fine tropical evening. His mere presence in the domination chamber was enough consent for me. “I am Mistress Intrigue.”

Dexter gazed straight into my masked eyes, obviously searching for recognition. I gave him

no sign that I'd seen him many times before; he did the same.

"Greetings to you, Mistress Intrigue," he said, eyeing me from head to toe. "That's quite a getup you have on."

I cracked my whip. "Silence, Slave!" I leaned forward into Dexter's face until my nose was mere centimeters from his. "You will *never* dare speak to me without express permission! If you disobey this or any other of my commands even once, our sex play will immediately cease for the evening and you will be denied satisfaction. Do you understand?"

Dexter gave me a single nod. The growing tent at his crotch showed just how he felt about my rules.

"Good, Slave," I said, twirling the end of my whip around my index finger. "Just to show I am a just and ethical Mistress, I will assign you a safe word. If at any time my domination becomes too much for you and your weak, boyish little body to take, you need only say 'Banana,' and our games will immediately come to an end. Do you agree, Slave?"

Another nod.

"Excellent," I said, my voice lowering an octave. "Then let us begin. First, Slave, you will disrobe completely."

Dexter stood up, then hesitated.

"Do you have a problem with my order, Slave?" I boomed, cracking my whip mere inches from his wing-tipped feet.

He shook his head, never breaking my gaze.

"Then carry it out, Slave! Or there will be penalties!"

He obeyed. Dexter shimmied out of his custom-tailored suit, silk oxford shirt with platinum cufflinks, Italian wingtips, and white undershirt. He left on his Patek Philippe watch, along with his very ordinary white cotton boxers. Reduced to this state, Dexter looked like a scrawny, pathetic old man—not a powerful international freelance political spy feared by elected officials and governments alike. His chest had a light smattering of white hair, his shoulders were stooped, his neck droopy, and he had a mild case of psoriasis on his left shin. There was

no mistaking his sexual vitality, however: His cock pointed due north. And to my shock, he appeared to be even more well-endowed than his nephew. *The man probably owns a \$1 million in stock in the company that made Viagra.*

Dexter stood and waited for my next command, still not shimmying off his boxers.

“Are you forgetting something, Slave?” I demanded.

He shook his head no.

I sighed. “You may keep your underwear on if that is what you wish,” I said with distaste.

“Though there is little I can do to satisfy your urges that way.”

Dexter shrugged his shoulders and grinned, as if that were perfectly all right with him.

I sighed again. “Well, Slave, you aren’t making my job very easy,” I said. “I will give you permission to speak so you can tell me what it is you are looking for in a Mistress if you refuse to disrobe completely.”

Dexter swallowed hard three times, his Adam’s apple bobbing up and down. “I wish to be tied up and whipped,” he said in a small voice. “And then I would like to watch you satisfy yourself, Mistress.”

A slow smile spread across my face. *I could have some fun with this.* “Slave!” I shouted. “May I remind you that *you* are *not* the one who is supposed to be giving orders!”

“Yes, Mistress,” Dexter said meekly. “Forgive me, Mistress.”

“You are forgiven, Slave, for so long as you don’t speak out of turn. Now because I am a good and ethical mistress, I am willing to entertain your proposal on one condition. I will satisfy myself under your gaze on the condition that you will answer truthfully any question I put forth to you during our games. *Any* question at all, on any topic. If at any time I suspect that you are lying, our sex play will stop and I will not grant your request. Do you agree to these conditions, Slave?”

Dexter smiled and nodded.

“Good,” I said. “Then let us begin.”

I went to the small end table Rodney placed in the chamber ahead of time, and pulled out

its single drawer. From there I retrieved the two sets of black leather bindings and a matching blindfold. I directed Dexter to sit in the prisoner of war position, his arms linked behind him and his head thrown back. I bound his ankles and wrists tightly, then affixed the blindfold over his eyes. To test his vision, I flicked my fingers right in front of the blindfold. He didn't flinch.

Satisfied he couldn't see a thing, I flung open the curtains so the gathered voyeurs could get a better view. Rodney gave me a smile and a thumbs-up signal. The *Post* editor-in-chief was taking prodigious notes, while the senators and other officials stared with wide eyes.

I set my long whip aside and pulled my hand whip out of my waistband. I circled Dexter's seated body three times, crashing my platformed heels hard against the tiles so the sound would disorient him. It worked: Dexter jerked his head this way and that, trying to figure out where I was standing.

Once I knew I had him off-guard, I decorated Dexter's stooped back and shoulders with light slaps from my hand-whip. He threw his head back even deeper into the prisoner of war position with each blow, his mouth open with ecstasy. I dusted him with light, stinging blows until the skin on his upper back and shoulders was bright red. Once I had him teetering over the edge, I tucked my hand-whip back into my waistband and withdrew several steps. Dexter jerked his blindfolded head about, trying in vain to discern where I was. His erection grew limp. He was obviously distressed that the blows had stopped so abruptly. He opened his mouth to speak, but then clapped it shut again, fearing my reprisals.

Once I was about eight feet away from him, I clapped my hands and began to speak. "Slave, before you will be permitted any more of my precious blows to your body, you must answer the following series of questions. Answer them truthfully. If at any time I suspect you are lying, our session will end. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Mistress Intrigue," Dexter said, his voice trembling with pent-up sexual tension.

"Good. Slave, here is your first question. Why did you come to St. Lucia? What business do you have here? Tell the whole truth, please." I took my long whip from its spot on the end table in anticipation of Dexter's unwillingness to tell the whole truth.

Just as I knew he would, Dexter hesitated. “Well, ah,—” he mumbled. “It’s sort of a long, complicated story.”

I cracked my whip. “Slave, I don’t care how long or complicated the truth might be. Just tell the truth or I will banish you from the chamber. Understand?”

Dexter bit his lip and hesitated some more. I glanced down at his crotch and studied just how large his erection had become. There was no going back now, and we both knew it.

“All right, Mistress, I’ll tell you,” he said. “But you might have a hard time believing what I say.”

“Try me,” I said in my deepest dominatrix voice. “You might be surprised.”

Dexter breathed a heavy sigh. “I came to St. Lucia because I had business here,” he said in a small, timid voice.

I pounded my whip handle against my fist, startling him. “What kind of business, Slave?”

Dexter cleared his throat. “I’m an independent contractor,” he said.

Big surprise there, I thought. “You’ll need to be more specific than that, Slave,” I said.

“Essentially, I’m an information broker,” Dexter went on. “I gather sensitive information about important people and then I sell it to the highest bidder. Sometimes I work on a limited contractual basis, too. I came to St. Lucia because there was information here I wanted to obtain.”

Dexter’s evasive answers were trying my patience. “You are not giving me the information I want, Slave,” I boomed. “Get to the point, or you’ll need to get out of here.”

Dexter winced. “All right, all right! I came here because I set somebody up specifically to generate the kind of information I like to sell.”

Now we were getting somewhere. “Go on,” I said, deepening my voice. I couldn’t risk Dexter recognizing it.

“I met a young lady who was romantically involved with my nephew,” Dexter went on, his voice quavering now. “A young lady who also happened to be a PR staffer for Senator Hanforth Grayle. You know, the one who got caught with his pants down on TV a couple weeks back. So

it goes without saying she was desperate for a new job. And I got her one, hook, line, and sinker. She doesn't know it yet, but she works for me. Only *I'll* be paid for the work she does, not her. Pretty sweet, huh?"

"Mm hm," I mumbled, slapping my hand-whip against my palm over and over again. It was all I could do to keep myself from strangling him with it. "And what exactly did you have this young lady do?" I asked, my voice lowering even more.

Now Dexter was completely infatuated with himself. "She wanted to have some kind of political sex party down here in the islands in order to bribe someone into giving her a job. I hooked her up with a bunch of high-powered officials with odd sex tastes who'd be willing to do just that. And I also arranged for the editor-in-chief of the *Post* to be in on it, so the *Post* would think they'd be getting the sex-scandal scoop of the century. The thing is, what the *Post* editor doesn't know is, the parent corporation that currently owns his newspaper wants to oust him as chief editor and bring somebody new in. Except the current chief editor still has two years left on his contract, so they needed to come up with a justification for him to be fired outright."

Just behind me, Rocky Robinson gasped. Dexter was so full of himself that he didn't notice.

"So the parent corporation hired me to lure him down here in what he thought was a big scoop, but really is a way to trap him in unethical behavior. Which isn't exactly legal, but that doesn't matter as long as nobody important knows the truth."

This statement made my blood boil.

"And the paper plans to run the sex story regardless," he said, proud of himself. "It's a win-win situation for them, so long as they don't get caught. And it ought to be, since they paid me a cool million to accomplish it."

I circled Dexter again, switching the hand whip for the full-length one and cracking it at every step. "So a greedy news corporation hired you to frame their chief editor," I said. "That's certainly something to be proud of, Slave. But something tells me you're still hiding something. That isn't the only reason you came to St. Lucia, is it?"

Dexter swallowed hard. He knew I'd caught him. "No, it isn't, Mistress," he stammered.

“Then why don’t you tell me the whole truth, Slave?” I shouted, cracking my whip just outside of Dexter’s reach. “Or else we’ll consider this session of fun over for good.”

Dexter’s masked head turned in the direction of the whip-cracking sound; he obviously longed for its stinging touch upon his bare skin. But it wasn’t to be unless he obeyed my final demand. I could tell he wasn’t thrilled at that prospect. A cold sweat had broken out on the sliver of forehead that wasn’t covered by the mask. His whole body shook.

“I also came here to settle some personal business of my own,” he whispered. “Personal, private business.”

“Is that so, Slave?” I whispered, inches away from his ear. “What kind of personal business?”

Dexter fidgeted his bound wrists and hands along the floor. “Well, it was a few different things,” he said, quaking with fear. I wasn’t sure if that fear was of me and my whip or the fact he was about to reveal a deep, dark truth about himself. “I wanted to see if I could get in on some of the sex fun myself, for one—but to do it in a way that nobody would find out. Which is exactly why I’m here with you, Mistress. I hope you’ll keep that a secret. I can *pay* you to keep it a secret, if necessary.”

I gave Rodney and Rocky Robinson a sidelong glance in the gallery, just to make sure they’d registered that comment. Now we had on the record that Dexter wanted to bribe me to keep silent about the fact he’d participated in the illicit sex party he’d baited me into setting up in the first place. Rocky Robinson was scribbling away on his reporters’ pad. Rodney’s expression had gone cold and pained underneath his pirate’s mask. I wasn’t sure if Rodney was upset by the increasingly tangled web that Dexter wove, or just by the fact that he had to watch his uncle get humiliated. Whatever the reason, I was walking on thin ice. I decided then and there to wrap things up.

“You won’t need to pay me anything, Slave,” I said. “Your secret is safe with me.” Which was technically true. *I* didn’t plan on saying anything publicly about what I’d just learned. But of course I couldn’t control what anyone else in the room did.

“Thank you, Mistress,” he said, breathing a sigh of relief. “There’s just one more little thing I

haven't told you."

"And what's that, Slave?"

"I also came to St. Lucia because I have a score to settle with my nephew. And I know he's here somewhere. I just haven't figured out which hotel he's staying in yet."

Now it was Rodney's turn to gasp.

"I see," I said. "And what exactly do you wish to discuss with your nephew?"

Dexter chewed his lip. "This is where it gets embarrassing, Mistress," he said. "You see, my nephew—who I raised like a son—and I had a falling out many years ago, and I've always felt badly about it. He and I always disagreed about how I did business. But we're actually quite alike. His newspaper just does a legal version of what I've always done in the shadows. And I think that after all these years of hassling Rodney about how he chooses to make his living, that I should give up my own business and join forces with him. It's something that is very hard for me to do, but in my old age I've come to learn that sometimes the hardest thing to do is also the best thing to do."

I was stunned. This was the last possible thing I could have expected Dexter to say. Perhaps the man really was human after all. And the sad expression on his face—visible despite the blindfold—was proof enough he was telling the truth.

"You are a good and obedient Slave," I said. "You have told the truth, as I demanded. And now you shall be rewarded." I raised my whip above my head, preparing to land the final, delectable blows that would bring Dexter to climax.

But Dexter heard the whip's *swish* through the air and jerked to attention "Wait!" he cried. "There's still more I haven't told you, Mistress."

I stopped the whip just in time. "Go on, Slave."

"The time has come for me to retire from the freelance media spy business altogether," he said. "I'm getting too old for this kind of thing. And I've come to realize after many years of doing it, that it's just plain wrong. There are better ways to do this kind of business, and I think my nephew has found that better way with the *Beltway Times*. The *Times* might not be the best

newspaper out there, but it *is* a newspaper—a public venue that tries to serve the public interest instead of attacking people from the shadows. I decided that this big score here on St. Lucia would be the last thing I ever did on my own. I was planning to take the money I made on this deal and offer it as an investment in Rodney's company, and then offer myself as a consultant. I only hope it's not too late for me to patch things up with him."

Rodney stood. "It's not too late, Uncle Dex."

Dexter jerked his masked head in Rodney's direction. "What? Rodney! Where are you? What's going on?"

Rodney dashed to the middle of the submission chamber and tore off his uncle's mask, then his own. "It's me, Uncle Dex. I'm here. I've been watching and listening the whole time." Rodney unbuckled the leather bindings from Dexter's wrists and ankles, and hugged him.

Dexter was flabbergasted at this turn of events. His cheeks were beet-red with surprise and embarrassment.

"But why? What are you doing here? Why did you watch me and the mistress go on and on for so long?" He glanced around the room, rubbing his eyes as they adjusted to the lights. "And who are all these people?"

I stepped back. "Just some of the folks you were hoping to trap in your little web," Rodney said with a chuckle. "You're not the only one who can bait a good trap, you know."

Dexter flushed even deeper. "Well, I've really gotten myself into some deep shit, haven't I?"

"It'll be all right, Uncle Dex," Rodney said, exuberant. "We'll work this all out in a way that benefits everyone."

Dexter hugged his nephew back, then turned to me. "Well, Mistress, I think I'll have to take a raincheck on the rest of our session. My nephew and I have a lot of catching up to do."

I gave Dexter a single nod. "You are a good and obedient Slave, I said, keeping my voice in its deep, low Mistress Intrigue disguise. "And it was a pleasure to dominate you."

"The pleasure was all mine," Dexter replied. He gave my tight dominatrix getup a last once-over, and licked his lips. "You're a fantastic dominatrix, Mistress Intrigue. Forgive me for saying

so, but something about you seems awful familiar. Have I worked with you somewhere else? I've visited lots of S & M places over the years, and I could swear I've heard your voice somewhere before—"

Rodney took his uncle by the arm and started dragging him away. "I'm sure it's just a coincidence. Come on, let's go." Rodney shot me a wink as he threw Dexter his pile of clothes and led him out of the room.

Rocky Robinson looked up from his reporter's pad and made a beeline for me. "Well, I guess that means we'll be missing the main event," he said, disappointed. "Though I did glean some very juicy information from that little display you put on." He sucked in his breath while undressing me with his eyes. "That's quite a talent you have there, Mistress," he said.

"Thank you, Mr. Robinson," I said flatly. "But if it's all the same to you, I'd prefer we kept our relationship strictly business."

"Of course," he said, nearly choking on his tongue. "If you'll excuse me, I have a few interviews to conduct." He disappeared into the crowd of senators and officials gathered in the rear of the room, all nervously whispering and glancing over their shoulders at me. They all seemed to know full well that they'd dodged a bullet.

Rebecca sashayed up, still in her nurse uniform. "Well, all's well that ends well, as they say," she sighed. "It looks like Rodney has his uncle, the press—and everything else—under control. Our careers might just survive after all." She paused and gave me a brash look. "Though I *was* looking forward to watching you satisfy yourself, Jasmine."

I gave her a sly smile. "There may still be a chance for that," I said with a wink. Then I gathered up my scattered domination implements and slipped away back to my hotel suite.

* * * *

Still dressed in my red catsuit, I kicked off my platform heels and stretched out on my bed for a nap. It had certainly been an interesting day. Thanks to my fledgling skills as a dominatrix, it seemed that not only had a major political sex scandal been averted and numerous careers (including my own) saved from destruction, Rodney's relationship with his uncle was about to

change for the better. But there were still plenty of questions left unanswered.

Like, what would happen to the *Beltway Times*? What path would my career in Washington take next? What would my relationship with Rodney be like from now on?

And perhaps most important of all: *when was I going to get some good-old-fashioned satisfaction?*

I unzipped the zipper at my crotch and spread my legs. The combination of thick plastic PVC fabric, body heat, and the sexy preamble of my play with Dexter had already lubed my female parts up quite nicely. I poked and prodded all my folds and crevices with my fingers until I got my juices spread out the way I wanted them. And then I went straight to work on my clit.

There would be no slow burns tonight: I was well past due for a red-hot orgasm, and I was going to take the straight and narrow path to get there. God only knew when I might have another opportunity to get down and dirty with Rodney Doyle.

I rubbed my index finger back and forth over my clit in a circular motion, harder and harder, faster and faster, until I was inches away from my orgasm. I squinted my eyes and gritted my teeth, placing every shred of concentration I had in meeting that goal. And just when I thought I was about to get there, the door to my suite burst open.

I gasped when I opened my eyes and saw Rodney Doyle standing between my splayed legs. “I could help you with that, you know,” he said. “Though you seem to be doing a pretty good job on your own. Maybe I’ll just stand here and enjoy the view.” He looked down at me and smiled.

“So now it’s just you and me,” he went on. “It’s about time.”

I raised myself up on my elbow and smiled. “What do you mean, *it’s about time?*”

“We’ve never really been alone together,” he replied. “Not *truly* alone. Even when it was just you and me in the room together, there was always something hanging in the air. Your desperate need for career help. My desperate need for information. Your desperate need for sex. Hell, *my* desperate need for sex. But things have changed, Jasmine. Neither one of us is desperate any more. We have new horizons and new opportunities. We don’t need to use each other or anyone else any more. We are finally in a position to just be with each other for the sake of it. Isn’t that

incredible?”

He was right. Rodney had a new relationship with his uncle and a new era beginning for his business. I was out of work completely and couldn't care less. All I cared about at that moment was sharing the most intimate act on earth with a man I loved.

I love him. It hardly seemed possible, but there it was.

A few weeks earlier, I was a celibate, hard-hitting workaholic Washington PR staffer who hadn't been on a date in two years. And now I was unemployed, naked in bed with one of the most powerful media players in Washington, D.C., and quite possibly looking forward to a new career path as a professional dominatrix. To say it was a 180-degree turn in circumstances was probably an understatement.

The only question now was, *what happens next?*

That was a question I'd have to focus on another time. Right now, I had other priorities. Like getting Rodney's giant throbbing cock inside me.

And in the grand scheme of things, what could possibly be better than that?

The End

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