

ELLORA'S CAVE TABOO

Roses
and CHAINS

1-800-DOM-help

DELPHINE
DRYDEN

Roses and Chains

Delphine Dryden

A book in the 1-800-DOM-help series.

Take one adorable suburban couple just starting to realize their D/s relationship isn't quite enough to satisfy. Add one cute and quirky sub who can't seem to find a Dom to suit her tastes. Place them in a room full of sex toys and candlelight, roses and chains...

And after a few smoking-hot nights of pleasure and exploration, all three just might find what they're looking for.

Ellora's Cave Publishing



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Roses and Chains

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ROSES AND CHAINS

Delphine Dryden

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Coke: The Coca-Cola Company

Pyrex: Corning, Inc.

Prologue: The Magic

The magic begins with the appearance of the business card. Sleek black print on a pristine white background – unassuming in its appearance. Those brave enough to call the number will begin a journey that will explore their greatest desires. Once the call is made, the Operator goes to work. Somehow he knows just what every caller needs, always able to find the answer the caller seeks.

Callers may be directed to Unfettered, a new club in town, one nobody has heard of. It provides a safe haven for all who enter. Members are free to explore their every desire...even those they weren't aware of. Little do they know Unfettered will disappear once those yearnings have eased.

Submissives who don't know how to handle their Dominants. Masters looking for the perfect sub. People who need just a little push to admit vanilla isn't their favorite flavor. The card finds them all.

And once you dial 1-800-DOM-help, *anything* can happen.

Chapter One

Scenes in the main room at the club weren't Mara Tyndall's favorite thing. But they served their purpose.

Tonight, that purpose was to make her forget her very stupid recent attempt to date outside her flavor. He was Plain Vanilla, she was Rocky Road. She should have known it could never work.

"I think this side's done. Time to turn you over and toast the other side, slutski."

Mistress Amie was relentlessly perky. Her kitten-with-a-whip insouciance struck a particularly cruel note tonight, because she knew exactly why Mara was there. She knew what Mara needed. And in her relentless, perky, cruel way, she was not saying "I told you so."

She was not saying it *very loudly*, with everything she did and every expression on her face.

"Fucking...cheerleader from hell," Mara gasped as Mistress Amie loosened the leather cuffs around her ankles. For her sass she received a brisk slap on the upper thigh where the flogger marks were still flushing, blending into one blotchy pink map of the pain she'd endured thus far this evening. Mara groaned when the Mistress released the restraints around her wrists and she lowered her arms too suddenly.

"I can see we're not quite there yet. Okay, stretch it out then face the cross."

Amie really did sound as if she were leading an exercise class. Which was appropriate, because she was a Pilates instructor and personal trainer. The kind who made a lot of money making wealthy people hate her guts, but love the results she helped them achieve. After all, Amie was an expert at getting people to take more pain than they ever thought they could tolerate.

Mara knew the heights Amie could inspire her to. They had spent close to a year, off and on, exploring those heights, and although her mind might resist returning, her body was already responding all too eagerly to the cheerful Mistress's wicked ministrations.

"And now," Mistress Amie chirped, shackling the leather back into place as Mara inspected the top crotch of the St. Andrew's cross she was now facing, "let's work that rear."

The paint's chipping. Tad needs to touch this thing up.

"Count off."

The flogger cracked against her butt and she reflexively shouted, "One!" before her brain caught up. "How high, Mistress?"

"I'll let you know. You know math isn't really my thing, sweetcheeks."

"Two!" Against the upper thigh.

"Three!" *Really hard* across the shoulders.

The unpredictability slowly lost its edge, ceased to engage her mind and instead forced her to relax, to accept that there would be a blow, that she wouldn't know where the pain would land next. She was buffeted this way and that, just a leaf, and Amie's flogger was the wind.

"Do you need to come?" The chipper, smug voice in her ear was accompanied by a surprisingly gentle hand that traced the line of her spine from neck to ass. "Hmm? You want me to make you come for me, Mara?"

The hand dipped lower, following the curve of one cheek, ending up cupping the top of one inner thigh. Amie wouldn't touch her pussy unless Mara asked for it. Tonight was just a favor, and an orgasm would be another favor. Another reason for Amie to avoid saying "I told you so".

But she needed it too much. She needed to come, in order to feel as if the scene was over for the evening. Submitting to her own needs was more important than submitting to Amie. It took more humility.

She nodded.

"No. You know better. Say it."

"Please make me come."

"No. You know what I need to hear, slut." Amie paused then added more quietly, "You know what you need to say."

"Mistress. I need to come, please make me come, Mistress."

"Thank you. My hand or the flogger?"

Oh, a touch. A touch was so nice, so personal. She knew Amie would do it just right, apply just the right amount of pressure. Press her perfect, leather-corseted breasts against Mara's back as she slid two fingers inside her to tease, then finished her off with that brutally, beautifully merciless stroke against her clit. Strapped to the cross, in plain view of everyone in the club. And Mara knew, with the part of her mind that remained aware of such things, that everyone was watching. *Everyone*. Watching the adorable cheerleader pinup whipping the naughty little Goth girl. It had once been the highlight of everybody's week at the club, watching the two of them go at it on the cross.

"The flogger please, Mistress," Mara whispered.

It wasn't really what she wanted. But it would be enough to get the job done.

Amie paused, squeezed her thigh briefly then backed off. She would never touch without permission. She loved rules, enforcing them as well as following them. She would never cross lines.

She had never been able to push Mara in the way she needed to be pushed. The way that had nothing to do with physical pain.

But she knew how to work a flogger. The snap of the leather between Mara's legs was gentle; a caress, a tease. Not quite hard enough. Because Amie was a Domme, after

all, and enjoyed withholding. Mara enjoyed it too, moaning and working her hips, trying to push her ass out farther to present a bigger target. The next flick of the whip wrapped under and up a tiny bit, a zap of high-voltage pain over her clit and pubic bone, drawing the first true scream of the evening from her lips.

Amie hit a rhythm a few strokes later, slap and swing and slap and swing and *slap* and *oh...there*.

It hurt to come, and Mara screamed again as the flogger continued to drum against her. She craved the feel of fingers or a cock or *something* inside her, and the climax ramped higher and higher and felt almost spiteful because it wouldn't let her go and it didn't satisfy.

Then there was a second sharp peak, and after it ebbed she finally achieved a resolution of sorts, a release that wasn't quite the relief she had sought. But Amie pulled her down from the cross and into her arms, letting Mara weep into her honeysuckle-scented curls.

And she didn't say "I told you so".

A few minutes later, Mara was seated on the floor next to Amie's chair. As she dutifully finished off a bottle of water and plucked idly at one of Amie's bootlaces, the Domme leaned down and pressed an unexpected kiss to the top of her former sub's head. Then she handed her a business card. Mara took the card and stared at it for a moment before looking up at Amie.

"Mistress?"

"Somebody gave it to me. But I think you need it more than I do, sweetie. You're just barely holding it together, aren't you?"

Mara wanted to crumple the little white oblong into a ball and throw it back at Amie, but she knew her frustration wasn't the Domme's fault. It was her own. She looked at the card for another long moment before answering carefully.

"I'm sorry if I didn't please you tonight, Mistress. It was very kind of you to —"

"Don't. Don't bullshit me. We were never like that." Amie gave a sharp little sigh and pulled her ankle from Mara's reach, then stood up and tucked a finger under Mara's chin to force her eyes upward. Mara was too well-trained to jerk away, no matter how much she wanted to.

"Honey, we had a good time here in the club. It never worked outside, and we both knew that. But we gave it a good try, and I can respect that. What I cannot respect," she said with a soft little faux slap against Mara's cheek, "is a sub who plays passive-aggressive bullshit games, and won't let herself get what she needs from the arrangement."

Mara knew better than to apologize. She bit down on the automatic "I'm sorry" and nodded her head.

"I'm not sure what you need, Mara. And I don't think you're sure either. But there's no reason to feel bad about that. It's brave just to be out there trying. You don't need to beat yourself up for not figuring it out faster."

"I know. I know."

"Especially not when there are so many people who would be thrilled to do that beating *for* you."

She couldn't help but smile, and Amie grinned back, the million-megawatt, slightly evil smile that attracted subs from miles away. *The prom queen has decided she wants to whip your ass...you'll take it and like it, so bend over.* Mara had been one of the first in line, and would never regret the experience.

But Amie really had been a popular former prom queen, and Mara really had been a disaffected, Indie-rock-listening, former Goth girl. And though they'd tried to find some common ground outside their scenes, it had simply never gelled.

"Mistress, may I worship your boot?" A groveling young man in a studded black leather thong had knelt down near Mara at Amie's feet. It happened all the time, and Mara knew to just wait. She didn't blame him. She felt much the same about Amie, even though they were no longer together and she wasn't a boot fetishist.

This one made the mistake, though, of making a move before he had received permission. He was already leaning in, mouth open, when Amie spoke.

“Move that tongue any closer to my boot, little worm, and you’ll be thrown out of this club for a month.”

Then she turned back to Mara, ignoring the man, who was smart enough to squirm away without another word. He did whimper, however. He had almost certainly enjoyed the rebuke on some level.

“Pushy asshole. Look, just call the number. I trust the person who gave it to me. And I wouldn’t give it to you if I didn’t think it would help. It’s worth a shot, anyway. So be brave, okay? And I’ll call you tomorrow to check up on you.”

With another little pat to Mara’s cheek, Amie was gone, strolling away across the main floor of the club like the Queen of the Dommies, off to review her subjects.

Leaving Mara alone to consider the merits of calling the number on the little white card.

She looked at it again and frowned.

“1-800-DOM-help? What the fuck?”

Chapter Two

There came a moment when it all balanced perfectly, suspended in time, fragile and magical. The pleasure and the pain, the need to come and the desire to cling to delicious arousal. The struggle, and the sweet inevitability of submission.

That was the moment that always made it worth doing in the first place. What it was all about. And lately, Delia just couldn't seem to get there.

Daniel was a wonderful husband, and when Delia had finally confessed that she needed something edgier in the bedroom, he'd gone along enthusiastically. But it wasn't his native tongue, Dominance. He was still learning. Usually the knowledge that he was learning for *her* was more than enough to compensate for any momentary lapses. The past few weeks, though, the timing had just been off.

"On your knees, Dee. Hmm. Why are your clothes still on?"

She paused, not sure whether to kneel or strip, and he sighed in a manner that seemed more pissy than masterful.

"I'm sorry, Sir, I stopped to brush my teeth."

"Did I tell you to do that?"

Oh Daniel. Did you really want me to skip it, since I ate onions on that burger earlier?

"No. I'm sorry, Sir."

But it didn't ring true, she couldn't suspend disbelief. Daniel was still Daniel, not Sir, and she was still worried in the very back of her mind that she might have forgotten to put the wet clothes in the dryer that afternoon as she'd planned. And he hadn't told her to take her clothes off, she was sure of it. She would have remembered.

Delia knelt as gracefully as she could, wishing like anything she were already out of her jeans and tank top. It was so much easier when she was naked; it seemed to help both of them work their way into the scene.

"I know you'd rather be naked, Dee."

Then again, sometimes he did display that uncanny ability to read her mind. Delia smiled as she settled into place to wait.

"Don't you want to know *why* you're still in your clothes?"

"Yes, Sir." Now she was really confused. She'd thought the clothes were just an oversight on his part. She also wanted to know why Daniel was still in *his* clothes.

"Because we're going on an adventure."

The way he said *adventure* piqued her interest. Outside the house? Daniel hadn't liked playing at the last club the Fosters had tried, because he didn't like other men seeing her naked, or even semi-naked. And she wasn't sure if there were any clubs close by that had private playrooms. It wasn't the right night for a Munch, and she didn't know of any classes scheduled.

Daniel was rummaging around in the closet, and came out still wearing his jeans but with a close-fitting black t-shirt on in place of the bright red walkathon freebie he'd been wearing. He was smiling like a kid with a secret, but he still somehow looked Very Serious with his rimmed glasses and closely cropped beard and goatee. His jeans were just low-slung enough to draw the eye to his trim waist, and just tight enough that a discerning eye could tell he had an extremely nice ass. Sexy intellectual.

Hipsterlicious, she thought, stifling a giggle.

"Does that shirt have one of those elastic things in it?"

"A shelf bra?"

"Dee, work with me here. I don't need to know what it's called."

"Yes it does."

"Sir."

"Sorry. Sir."

"Good. Take off your bra. Are you wearing panties with those jeans?"

"Um, yeah. A thong."

Daniel walked around behind her and bent over, tugging the waistband of her jeans down just enough in back to reveal the thong. It was plain pink cotton, nothing fancy.

"You can keep that. But lose the bra."

"Yes, Sir."

It took her a moment to work the thin straps of her bra around her arms, loosen the back clasp and draw the whole thing free. Once she had, Daniel snatched it up and leaned into the open bathroom door, chucking the bra in the direction of the hamper. Then he returned and stood in front of her, staring down her red tank top as though assessing whether he liked what he could see.

Delia was officially off guard now, with no idea what to expect. And she was thrilled to realize it was kind of making her hot.

"Now play with your nipples. I want them hard. Like you just stepped out of a walk-in freezer, that kind of hard."

She reached up with both hands and tweaked her nipples obediently, knowing he liked to see her do it roughly. Pinching, twisting...they had already been hard, now they were harder and a little sore, and if she didn't get to put her bra back on, rubbing against the shirt would keep them erect all night.

Delia knew she should be concerned about that. She never went out braless. It was tacky, and she was big enough up top to be just a little saggy – though Daniel insisted that wasn't the case, that her boobs were perfect and perky.

"Chin up, Dee. Hold your hair up out of the way."

He had a leather strap in his hand...her collar. The one that usually went on after her clothes came off. It had become an informal signal between them that the scene was

really starting. It was half an inch of soft white leather, with a buckle and a d-ring. No spikes or rivets, no “slave” spelled out in diamonds. Tasteful.

But it was still no street collar.

Daniel finished fastening it around her neck then stood up, but didn’t step back. Dee could see he was already aroused, so she wasn’t too surprised when he undid his jeans and pushed his boxer briefs down just enough to free his erection. If he was going to be able to concentrate at all on whatever excursion he had planned, he needed to lose this edge first. She didn’t even realize she had licked her lips in anticipation until Daniel chuckled.

“Eager tonight, my little cock-worshipper?”

“Yes, Sir,” she admitted with poorly feigned chagrin.

“No, not Sir. We’re trying something else tonight. Master. Say it.”

“Master?”

“Okay. Now say it and try not to look at me like I’m crazy.”

She snickered, she couldn’t help it. Then Daniel put his hands on her head and tipped it back, meeting her eyes as she looked up. He wasn’t smiling. Dee swore her heart skipped a beat, just like it had the first time they’d ever kissed. “Say it, Delia.”

“Master,” she breathed.

“Better. Now be a good girl and suck your Master off so he doesn’t accidentally cream his jeans ogling your tits in the car later.”

And just like that, the delightful tension broke. But for a moment...for a moment, Delia had forgotten all about the laundry, and the clothes she had on, and everything but the look in Daniel’s eyes and the too-tempting proximity of his very stiff penis.

That part, of course, she could always handle. She was bending toward him, lifting up a little on her knees, when Daniel threw her another curve ball.

“Hands behind your back.”

His hands were still holding her head firmly, thumbs playing suggestively along her lower lip. Delia looked up at him, uncertain, but he just waited for her to comply. When she did, slowly, he teased her mouth open and pushed one thumb inside. She suckled obediently, suddenly hungry for something bigger.

She didn't have long to wait. He dragged his thumb out and pressed his hips forward, encouraging her to wrap her lips around the wet tip of his cock. She tried to spread the moisture but wasn't quite quick enough. Her lips caught against his skin, and he frowned and pulled back just a bit. Then forward, a little easier this time, pressing just deep enough to be slightly uncomfortable.

And then he held still and continued to hold her head tight, and Delia felt torn between the urge to escape and the urge to do...something. Whatever this was, this new thing Daniel apparently wanted from her. What had he been reading or watching?

"I like it when you suck me off, Delia," Daniel said in a voice that was calmer than she would have expected. It was a little surreal, hearing him sound that in control when her mouth was full of his cock. "But I think what I really want is to fuck your mouth. Which is a different skill. So tonight you're going to learn how that works."

Oh, sweet Jesus. She moaned a little, nearly choking on him in the process. *Bless him, he's been watching bondage porn.*

"Fortunately you already don't have much of a gag reflex. So we'll just try this carefully at first and see how it goes. When I push to the back of your throat, I want you to swallow. Like you're going to swallow my dick. Got it?"

"Mmm."

"I'll take that as a 'yes, Master'."

He pushed, she swallowed, and then she panicked for a second as his thick cock pressed her tongue down and cut her air off completely. She caught her breath when he pulled back, and felt helplessly grateful for the encouraging squeeze of his hands against her skull.

“Good. A little longer this time. You want to just keep your throat open like that if you can, not try to swallow me each time.”

Another inexorable motion of his hips, and Delia gulped as he filled her throat again. She found she could breathe out, though not in again. She fought the urge to gag and tried to relax. To accept.

He moved out and in again, and she realized it was getting easier because her lips were coated with spit.

Crap. Drooling. Automatically she started to lift a hand to wipe it away before actual slobbering could occur, but a sudden tug on her hair made her stop.

“No, Delia. Hands stay behind your back. What, is it the spit? Are you worried about looking gross?”

She nodded as best she could. She wanted to do what Daniel said. But she really, *really* wanted to wipe the spit off her lower lip.

“If you move your hands again, you won’t get to wear my collar out tonight, sub.”

Or maybe he’s been reading bondage porn.

“It’s not gross, anyway. It’s sexy.” Out and in again, just a little deeper. “Like you don’t even care what you look like, all you care about is taking your Master’s cock like a good little slut. And when your hot little mouth is nice and wet, it’s much easier to fuck. Which I think you’re ready for now.”

Oh, talk some more dirty talk. And haven’t we already been...oh.

Yes, this was different. He’d been experimenting before. He’d been giving her time to figure it out. Now he wasn’t stopping, he was just fucking, filling her mouth with his cock in the uneven, shuddering beats she knew meant he wouldn’t last long.

She couldn’t quite get enough air. She was dizzy, she was slobbering. Her blood roared in her ears when Daniel’s hands shifted and covered them. Then he came, spurting straight down her throat, which was already open to take whatever he gave.

And she had never, ever been so turned-on in her entire life.

Chapter Three

The car ride was a surreal cross-town odyssey. Delia had asked to change her jeans, and Daniel hadn't let her. Now, though, he could smell all kinds of sex from across the car. Her arousal, his own smell on her face, mixing into an aromatherapy aphrodisiac. It was distracting enough that he had to force himself to concentrate on the road.

To act as if he wasn't affected, as if he was in control and knew the plan.

Delia liked it when he had a plan. And he liked it when Delia completely lost her shit with lust. So if his having a plan made that happen...

"Small price to pay," he muttered, slapping the turn signal a little too hard. He felt as if cartoon steam might be coming out his ears. His married friends had all suggested that after a few years of togetherness, the new-bride smell would wear off and he'd cease to be this hot to jump his wife's bones all the time.

His friends were obviously idiots.

"Hmm?"

"Nothing. We're almost there."

He had gone for broke tonight. He'd had to do something, change things up. She had been starting to lose confidence in him, he could tell. After seeing her hit that spacey, dreamy plateau a few times, he knew when she wasn't hitting it anymore. And damn, but he liked being the one to make her look like that. Feel like that.

So he'd done something he rarely did, and thrown caution to the wind. He'd filched some books off Delia's computer and spent precious minutes at lunchtime and after work for the past few weeks, sneaking in some reading. Even looked at her browser history—no good, she'd cleared it—then gone out on an internet quest of his own to find kinky porn.

It had turned out the internet was really quite a good place to find a lot of kinky porn. Too much, if anything. The difficulty was in finding the quality stuff. Filtering through it all took some time. But Daniel had manfully soldiered through until he found a site that seemed to be a nice balance of production values, dirtiness and authenticity.

It was really the authenticity that had sold him. Or that had been sold *to* him, to be more accurate.

Now he had a subscription. It was a savings, really, in the long run.

"Master? Are we going to the club?"

"Nope. Stop asking, you'll know when we get there. It's a surprise."

Was he supposed to tease like that? Or punish her for asking? Sometimes he lost track. But he was learning fast.

He liked being called "Master". He hadn't expected to like it quite so much. Hearing her say it just solidified his resolve to make this work. To be the Master she wanted. And the Master he apparently wanted to be.

His resolve wasn't the only thing solidifying. Damn, he couldn't remember the last time he'd been this eager to fuck again so soon after coming. Daniel considered pulling off into Dimfield park, finding a convenient bush for cover and —

No. He was pretty sure a real Master would have the control to wait until he got his sub back home from the adult toy store.

"Delights! I love this place!"

Delia smiled and clapped, bouncing in her seat like a kid about to rush into a candy shop. Not that kids were allowed in this particular candy shop.

"Delia," he said, trying to sound stern as he put the car in park and turned it off. He reached for the ring on her collar and looped a finger through it. "Behave yourself."

The look on her face, the way her big blue eyes got even bigger, was priceless. She even blushed a little. Little dimples kept appearing then disappearing at the corners of her mouth. Everything always showed on Delia's face.

"Yes, Master."

He held the door for her, but let her set her own pace inside the store. She opted to follow a few steps behind him, and Daniel suspected she was toying with the role, trying out different ways to act like a sub in public. Figuring out what felt right.

He walked straight to the back counter, because he knew what he wanted, then turned to her as he gestured to the clerk.

"I'll be here for a few minutes. Go pick a lube. Flavored is fine, but no piña colada."

"All right, Master."

She blushed again, because the clerk was there listening. Absolutely freaking adorable.

Daniel felt about ten feet tall, knowing the dude behind the counter had overheard. And could see his collar — *his collar* — on that stone fox's neck.

Mine.

Ten feet tall with a dick made of pure steel.

In your face, kinky toy store dude.

The kinky toy store dude was checking out his wife's ass. But he decided that was okay, because his ownership was so very evident and all the dude could ever do was look and wish he had one of his own.

"Nice," the dude said with a casual nod Delia's way. Then he looked at Daniel every bit as appreciatively, his mouth curving in a blatantly sensual way. "So what can I help you find this evening, sir?"

Daniel felt only about eight feet tall by the time he'd finished making his selections. He was pretty open-minded, but he was also very straight. He wasn't so much uncomfortable with guys flirting with him as he was baffled.

On the other hand, when he looked over his shoulder for Delia and realized she was staring dreamily at a rack of lesbian porn videos, he almost forgot about iron control.

“Honey?”

She looked up with a guilty flinch and scurried over, handing him the lube bottle with both hands as though presenting the king with an important message. He took it without a word and the clerk added it to the bag and rang it all up.

Daniel remembered he was trying new things tonight. Blowing out all the stops. He put on the stern Dom face he’d practiced in the mirror for an hour yesterday afternoon, and turned to look at his wife. Then he raised an eyebrow, because he knew she found the Spock thing kind of sexy.

“Delia, did you see something else you liked?”

It was a challenge. She blinked then nodded hesitantly. He cleared his throat, and after a second the little light bulb popped on over her head.

“Yes, Master.”

“Show me.”

As if he did this sort of thing all the time, he sauntered after her to the video rack, where she pointed as briefly as possible at the girlie videos before her nerve failed her and she wrapped her arms behind her back. Stared at the floor, blushing up a storm.

He took a deep breath and tried to pretend he was observing the covers like a connoisseur. But he couldn’t get the image out of his mind of watching Delia watching any of these videos. On the television in their bedroom. Naked. Wearing just the collar. And doing any number of obscene things to him.

“Any one of those,” he said, stabbing his finger at three random covers. He’d hit it lucky; one of them had obviously already caught her interest. She didn’t even blink, just snatched it and handed it to him.

“Thank you, Master.”

"Go wait for me by the door."

Because he needed the distance. Or he would throw her on the floor and ravish her in the middle of the kinky toy store, and he was pretty sure that would tip the clerk off that he wasn't exactly the suave, jaded Dom he seemed to be.

But the clerk already knew. Oh, he knew. He smiled a little too broadly when Daniel returned to the register to buy the video. But it wasn't an unsympathetic smile.

"You're doing great," he said softly. "She's hooked."

"She was already hooked, she's my wife," Daniel muttered, willing his heart to stop racing.

"Yeah, I saw the matching rings. Cute. Was she in the lifestyle before?"

"She'd dabbled a little," Daniel confessed. "I'm just doing my best to keep up."

The clerk tilted his head, not quite flirting, and cocked his eyebrow at Daniel just as Daniel had done earlier. "I wouldn't normally say this, but I think you'll get there. You've got the instinct for it. And it turns you on, right?"

"So fucking much."

They chuckled together, and Daniel relaxed his face enough to smile. He hadn't realized he was so tense.

"You're worried she likes chicks more than she likes you. I don't think you need to worry too much."

"How did you—"

"I talk to horny people all day, man, it's my super power. Look, take this. I think you might find it helpful. Your sub too."

Daniel flipped the card in his fingers, looking for more than the single phone number printed on one side. It was blank other than that.

"It's a club? Something local?"

"Not exactly. Just call and talk to the guy. It's kind of hard to explain. But I know these folks helped me out when I had some questions."

“Okay, maybe I’ll check it out. Thanks.” Daniel tucked the card into his pocket and slid the video into the plastic bag with the rest of his purchases.

By the time he had Delia back out to the car, he’d forgotten all about the card.

Chapter Four

Amie had called Mara to check up on her as promised. And she'd taken her to task for not calling the number on the business card she'd given her.

"How do you know I haven't called?"

"Because you just haven't, that's how I know. You hate taking help, which is just so pointless for a sub. I mean, there's masochism and then there's masochism, you know?"

Outside the club, Amie's mannerisms often translated as just a little too blunt, to the point of being unkind. She always, always thought she knew best. And she was right just often enough to make it really annoying. Which was one of the reasons she and Mara had split up.

"I'll call when I hang up on you, how about that?"

"If you don't, I'll know. Have you had at least two big glasses of water today? You were sweating really hard last night."

"Yes."

"Liar. You've had a cup of tea and maybe a Coke."

"And you've already been to the gym, showered, and done your hair and makeup."

Amie laughed. "Of course I have. It's nine in the morning. Just because it's Saturday —"

"That's no excuse to stay in bed all day," Mara finished for her. "Yeah, I'm in like, sweats and a wifebeater that I dug out of the laundry hamper. But I've been playing this awesome new computer game public beta, and I've leveled my dwarf cleric to five already this morning. So, you know, I got that going for me."

After a long, pointed moment of silence and a very telling sigh, Amie asked, "Are you at least eating the baked kind of chips?"

"Oh God, no. I ran out of cheese puffballs so now I've moved on to snack cakes."

"Okay, I have to go now. Mara, just call that number. And at least...go outside in the sunshine for a little while or something, okay?"

"I will. Call the number, I mean. You know if I go in the sun my skin will spontaneously combust."

"Goodbye, Mara."

"Bye, Amie!"

She turned the phone off and put it down on the desk, freeing up her hands to slaughter a few more dozen wildebeest to finish up her current quest in the game. But she'd no sooner turned the quest in and leveled up when she noticed a hint of white near her hand.

Something was sticking out from under the keyboard. She picked up the hardware, brushed a fine layer of yellow cheeseball dust from the edge of the little white card she'd found underneath and turned it over.

"Oh, fuck me."

1-800-DOM-help.

As if she needed more help from a Dominant. Hadn't Amie just given her an earful of unasked-for advice? And how had the card ended up there anyway, when she was sure she'd thrown it away before she even left the club last night?

Mara reached for the phone before she even realized what she was doing. She put it down again and tapped the card on the desk thoughtfully, trying to figure out what was going on. She finished the cream-filled cupcake she'd been working on before Amie called, but it held no answers for her.

She thought about Jeremy, who was probably also already awake, playing a different computer game. The game she no longer liked to play, because it had been something they had in common. But it hadn't been nearly enough.

Freak, he'd called her. The first few times it had been a joke. He hadn't minded trying a little slap and tickle. He'd liked it a little rough, like a lot of guys. But it had awakened his inner asshole. And when she'd tried to latch onto that, to coax it into something else...

Freak.

No, he hadn't wanted to try bondage. He certainly had *not*. Not when it was clear she wasn't just asking out of curiosity, but very real desperation. That she wasn't just a girl who liked to mix it up in the sack on occasion, but was in fact the kind of girl who owned several whips and paddles, a lot of things like handcuffs that weren't remotely fluffy or pink, and a bunch of other exotic devices Jeremy didn't even have names for.

His fault for opening the toy chest while she wasn't looking.

Her fault for forgetting to lock it when she knew he was coming over.

The look on his face when he'd held up the anal beads was certainly something she'd never forget. But it was the strap-on that sent him running.

That might not have been the best time to try to explain pegging. But she'd known he was out the door anyway, really. And he'd called her a freak, and meant it in the worst possible way. His expression of horror when he thought she wanted to fuck him in the ass with a dildo was entirely worth it.

"I'm just kidding, dipshit. I only use it to fuck other girls. See? It goes both ways."

No, thinking back, *that* had been the thing that made him run screaming. But still, totally worth it.

It had taken months before she'd broken down and called Amie. She'd tried to resist. She'd tried to find somebody else. But it was tricky, everybody already knew her at the one bondage club in town. She'd already been with most of the people she had any remote interest in. Amie had been hands-down the best of that bunch, at least when it came to giving Mara what she needed in a scene.

Because you can do a lot of things to yourself, but you can't give yourself a thorough beating. And sometimes, nothing else would do.

Her fingers had tapped out half the phone number already. The number clearly wanted her to dial it. Which meant that, deep down, she really wanted to dial the number. She needed help, as much as she hated to admit it. Submitting to herself was so much harder than submitting to another person.

"Thank you for calling 1-800-DOM-help. This is the Operator. How may I be of assistance?"

Whoever he was, he had one hell of a voice. Deep, controlled. He sounded like every sub's wet dream of a Dom.

"Hi. Sir. Um, a friend of mine gave me this card...?"

"Amie Templeton. Yes, I've been expecting your call."

"You – okay, that's kind of creepy."

The dream voice laughed. He had a good laugh too. Soothing. "I'm going to put you through to Dru. I suspect you'll be more comfortable talking to her, Miss Tyndall. She can answer any questions you have. Hold, please."

Then there was elevator music for a few seconds, which wasn't what she'd expected to hear while on hold for a bondage helpline.

"Hello? Mara?"

"Um. Yeah, hello. How do you all know my name?"

"It's nothing sinister, I promise. We're just selective about who gets our number in the first place. If this is Saturday and we're getting a call, it must be Amie's friend Mara Tyndall."

The woman sounded friendly enough. And Mara trusted Amie, and Amie said she'd gotten the number from somebody *she* trusted. So...okay.

"I'm Dru, by the way. And I'm really glad you decided to call when you did. Because I have a problem and could use *your* help, as it turns out. Are you free this evening, by any chance?"

* * * * *

Mara was free that evening, as it happened. And while she might not enjoy accepting help, she was sort of a sucker for giving it when asked nicely by somebody who really sounded like they were in a bind.

Which was how she found herself in a slightly dodgy part of town at about nine that evening, pulling up to a valet parking attendant in front of a club she'd never heard of before Dru mentioned it.

Unfettered.

Classy sign, polite valet, *huge* bald doorman who looked as if he was about to go fight the Leather Wars on some distant planet. And probably kick all kinds of alien ass.

Just inside the door, Mara was greeted warmly by a woman who looked a little bit like a classed-up version of herself. A little taller, more curves, but the same coloring and the hint of Goth that went with it whether she liked it or not. Long black hair, fair skin, short red dress. Fishnet tights and some really killer boots, but she could have walked down the street without anybody knowing she'd come from a kink club.

She introduced herself as Dru, and it was clear she was in charge from the way she walked through the place, leading Mara over to the bar and ordering a cup of coffee and an ice water.

Mara felt a little over the top in a black leather corset, even with jeans still covering up the matching boy shorts. She hadn't been sure how to dress, whether she should go the normal club route or wear something more conservative. Looking at Dru's outfit, she started to fear she'd gone the wrong direction. Though she was certainly covered up compared to most of the more obvious subs she spotted among the gathering crowd.

"Thank you for coming on such short notice, by the way."

"I didn't have plans or anything," she said with a shrug. She'd taken a sip of the ice water before realizing Dru had ordered it for her without asking. Domme? If she was, she wasn't pushing it very hard. Just in case, Mara added, "Ma'am."

Dru's mouth quirked up at one corner. "From what Amie says, planning isn't your strong suit. But that's okay," she reassured Mara. "It's not what I need you for. I just need an experienced sub to help mentor a couple new to the lifestyle. With any luck, they'll be arriving shortly. If you're all right with that? We're new to the area, so I don't have a whole lot of contacts to work with in the community."

"Oh. I guess so. What would I need to do?"

Nothing she hadn't done before, most likely. Her usual club got new visitors from time to time, some starting out and some just curious. It was a safe space to play, and she'd donated her back to a few relatively inexperienced floggers in her time. As long as they were closely supervised by somebody who knew what they were doing.

"Well, how far you go with it is really up to you. Primarily just show them the equipment, explain anything they need. You'll have a private room, but one of the regular dungeon monitors will be on call if you need him."

"I have to ask, wouldn't *they* normally be the ones showing people the ropes?"

Dru smiled over the rim of her coffee cup. "I don't have a subby monitor right now. And I have a feeling this very new Dom might feel more comfortable with a female sub than with somebody like me or one of the other big Dom monitors who look like bouncers. It isn't intentional," she shrugged, "but that's who we have at the moment."

Laughing, Mara looked around the tastefully appointed main room of the club. There was some play taking place, nothing too heavy, and the two men she saw standing nearby in *Unfettered* t-shirts were indeed big and practically oozed dominance.

"His wife is a little more confident and has more experience," Dru went on. "But I think that's probably not helping. He needs a boost. In fact, to the extent you're willing to play along with it, he probably needs to know he can be a Dom with a sub who isn't his wife. He needs to realize he's doing this for himself, not just for her."

"I'll do what I can, Mistress." It had just slipped out. Mara tried to cover with another sip of her water.

“I’m not your Mistress, Mara,” her classier doppelganger said a bit too kindly. “You can just call me Dru.”

Chapter Five

Delia felt too jumpy, too aware of her surroundings. She wanted to let herself go, to follow Daniel. But she knew he was unfamiliar with the club too. What if he led her into a hallway with business offices, or out a fire exit that locked behind them?

He's not an idiot, she reminded herself.

And he definitely looked hot in the silky maroon shirt and black jeans. She'd bought him the shirt but never thought he'd wear it. Seeing him in it had been a pleasant surprise. Seeing him give her a look as if he were wearing it to *humor* her had been so hot it was unsettling. The look had said he would expect her to make it up to him.

And oh, how she wanted to.

She peeked around the club as she followed Daniel. It looked, frankly, quite a bit nicer than the club they'd been to before. She wondered how long it had been here, and why she'd never heard of it before Daniel had told her about the phone call he'd made.

The wood was polished, the bartenders were cute. The doorman had been just scary enough to keep out anybody who wanted to gawk.

"Are you Master Daniel?"

A soft voice stopped their progress. From her position directly behind her husband, Delia couldn't see the speaker. Which meant she must not be any taller than Daniel's shoulder. Delia's size, in other words.

"Yes. Are you Dru?"

"I'm Mara, Sir. Dru asked me to assist you tonight with anything you needed. She's reserved a room for you. I can show you back whenever you're ready."

Delia stood on her toes for a second, but only caught a general impression of pixie-cut black hair and very pale skin.

“Thank you, Mara. Can we get a tour first? It’s our first time here.”

“Mine too, actually,” she said. “I’m just helping out for tonight. But we can see what’s happening on the floor. Sir, somebody keeps peeking over your shoulder.”

Tattletale.

“Oh, I’m sorry. This is my wife Delia.”

He turned and scooted her forward with an arm around her waist, and Delia got her first real look at the owner of the pixie hair.

Wow.

The pixie girl—Mara—was staring back at her with a look that Delia told herself was just friendly. Not hot, not sultry. Not clearly interested.

Daniel was looking from one of them to the other with a very strange smile.

“Do I tell the two of you to shake hands here, or what? Arm-wrestle? Do you have to have a submissive cage match?”

“Two of us would enter, but only one of us would leave, Sir,” Mara quipped. “And where would be the fun in that?”

Daniel chuckled at the punch line. Mara just grinned and wandered deeper into the club, letting them follow at their own pace. A pool of light in one corner illuminated a large St. Andrew’s cross, where a very slender blond man was bound while a very muscular, very bearded bald man worked on him with two floggers.

They stopped to watch, and Delia found herself aching to take the boy’s place. He was so obviously enjoying it, though he was more vocal about expressing his preferences than Delia would have ever been.

“Fuck, Terry. Shoulders, more on the shoulders. Oh, fuck yes!”

"You're such a demanding little bitch," twin-flogging Terry retorted. "Don't make me get out the ball gag again." His arms never stopped moving, weaving an intricate ballet of black leather across his happy victim's heated skin.

"I should learn to do that," Daniel murmured, as if to himself. Delia tried not to look too eager as she hummed a nonverbal agreement.

"He's had a lot of practice," the dark pixie commented. "That's Master Terry, he gives lessons through the club on Seventh Street. If you look on their website, there's a schedule."

She was a wealth of information, although she looked a little puzzled about something. Delia didn't give it too much thought though. She was too eager to get to the private playroom Mara had mentioned. It was a huge relief when Daniel asked Mara to lead the way.

* * * * *

The sign outside the door had indicated it was the Rose Room, and the name was certainly accurate. There were roses in every color imaginable in vases everywhere, on top of a big chest of drawers, on the coffee and end tables surrounding the two low, backless couches. Indirect lighting—one very ornate central chandelier, and little votives and candle lanterns—lent layers of soft glow to the already warm scene. Where the walls weren't paneled in more highly polished wood, they were painted a deep raspberry-rose color. Throw pillows of cream and pale yellow and pink. It was —

"Holy crap. It's so freaking *pretty*," Mara said, startling Delia from her stunned observation of the room.

Well, that was certainly one way to put it.

"It does not look like BDSM as I know it," Delia agreed.

"Thank God," Daniel added. "Because for a second there I was seriously confused. I thought it was just me. Jeez, are those couches or benches?" He pressed his hands on one of the wide, backless platforms, testing the amount of spring.

"Lounges, I guess," Delia suggested. "Since they only have arms and no backs?"

Mara had ventured deeper into the room to investigate the drawers.

"Aha! Here's the good stuff."

She turned around, brandishing a set of leather cuffs. Delia gasped at the coincidence. White leather, not black. Her favorite. What else was in there?

Before she could move forward, Daniel stopped her with a firm grip on her shoulder.

"Hold up. Where do you think you're going, missy?"

"Oh. Um, sorry, Master." She aimed a sheepish grin his way and then dropped her head, trying to look penitent. She was so eager to root around in the drawers full of goodies that she'd forgotten herself.

"Maybe later, if you're a good girl, I'll let you play with some of the toys. But for right now I need you to kneel here and wait."

"Yes, Master."

She had worn a very short leather skirt, and he'd told her not to wear anything under it. Delia knew that kneeling in it with her knees spread, as Daniel preferred, was pretty much going to put an end to any modesty she had. She wondered if the pretty pixie girl would notice. Or care. She knew Daniel would.

But he wasn't really looking. He walked over to stare into the drawer with Mara, pulling things out and examining them. His broad shoulders blocked them all from Delia's view.

"You're here to answer questions, right?"

"Yes, Sir. Dru said you were relatively new to the lifestyle."

"Cool." He had opened another drawer, and now Delia could see him pointing to something. "So what the hell is *that*?"

"Oh, nice choice, Sir," Mara replied instantly. "That's a —"

She turned and looked at Delia, then up at Daniel. And then resumed her explanation in a low murmur, so Delia could only catch a word here and there.

"Murmur murmur murmer very, very safe. Pyrex, actually. Murmur murmur."

"Murmur murmur murmer too hot?"

"Not if you're careful. But if you're anxious, you could always go the other way with it." Mara pointed across the room to the largest of the tables, where a full pitcher of ice water sat sweating on a tray next to an even larger pitcher of pale salmon roses.

"Oh, I like that idea. Okay, we'll definitely try that out. What about *this*?"

"You might want to save that for a special occasion."

"I'll take your word for it. So I wonder where all the stuff with batteries and wires is?"

Mara opened the third drawer, and Delia heard her inhale sharply.

"Whoa."

"I know what that is," said Daniel, pointing. "And that thing there. I *think* I know what that is, but I have no idea why it would be here. And I'm not ashamed to admit the rest of it just looks scary as hell."

Mara laughed, nodding her head. "Yeah, there's stuff here even *I* don't know what it is. I think I saw somebody use one of *those* in a porno once, and you're right, it is scary as hell. But you know how to use *that*, right?"

"Yep." He sounded very pleased with himself. "I've seen people use that in a whole lot of pornos. That's a classic."

Delia was about to explode. And she knew Daniel was probably well aware of that.

"Looks like this last drawer is all whips and stuff."

"Hey, these cute little bottles up here are lubes. Look, they're labeled and everything." The pixie opened a bottle and took a cautious sniff. "I love this room."

Delia whimpered; she couldn't help it. Not only was she dying to see the contraband, they were standing over there talking as though they'd forgotten she

existed. She felt like yelling, "Hello, horny person over here. Sex toys are for sharing, you know."

But instead she just whimpered, and earned a steely glare complete with raised eyebrow from Daniel. It made her wet.

Or rather, wetter.

As did the look Mara shot her way, clearly taking in all the exposed parts and enjoying everything she saw. It was not a friendly look, it was sultry, and no amount of lying to herself would change that. Between the hot pixie's come-hither gaze and her Master's sexy Spock eyebrow, Delia thought she might just burst into flames on the spot.

Her brain registered, in a very quiet and methodical way, that she'd just thought of that guy standing over there as her Master.

"Mara, will you hand me those cuffs, please? Just the wrists for now. And that chain."

Delia hadn't even noticed the big, exposed ceiling beam, but now Daniel was standing under it with a determined expression on his face. He rolled up his sleeves as he surveyed it from one direction then the other, then turned to Mara again and took the cuffs she offered.

"Do you think you could go ask somebody if those eyehooks up there are safe for, oh, about your same weight? I'd hate to assume and then find out the hard way they were just left over from somebody's Boston ferns."

"Of course, Sir. I'll be right back." And off she went, closing the door behind her, while Daniel approached Delia with the cuffs.

"Left hand up."

She dropped her gaze and lifted her wrist, trying not to squirm as he fastened the cuff into place and checked the fit carefully before releasing it.

"Right hand."

Was he going to say anything? Ask her what she thought? Tell her what was in the drawers, now that their tour guide was out of the room?

Apparently not.

“Stand up and strip.”

She stood up, but her fingers hesitated over the clasp that secured the neck strap of her halter-top. “Master? Isn’t she coming back? Did you want me to wait until –”

“I *want* you to take your clothes off, sub.”

He was very clear. He was not smiling. He seemed, in fact, sort of pissed off that she wasn’t already naked.

Swallowing hard, Delia unfastened the clasps at her neck and waist, letting the soft fabric fall into her hands and then to the floor as she bared her torso. The zipper to her skirt seemed hard to undo, until she realized it was just her hands shaking. She took a deep breath, forced herself to calm down, and let the leather slide down to join the shirt with a quiet *flump*. She stepped out of it automatically then stood waiting to see what would happen next.

Unable to ever let clothes remain where they fell, Daniel quickly scooped up the two pieces and arranged them over the back of a chair. It occurred to Delia that he should probably be making *her* do that. A real Dom would make her do that.

Then he pushed a finger through the loop on her collar, tugged her close enough for a hard, fast kiss, and was away again before she could even bring her hands up to embrace him. Not another word, completely ignoring her while he arranged the chains and perused the items in the drawers some more. She was still standing there, clad only in the collar and wrist cuffs, when the door opened and Mara the pixie came back in the room.

She walked right past Delia as if she were part of the furniture. Stood next to Daniel with her head lowered and her hands clasped behind her back. Just waiting for him to acknowledge her.

“Yes?” Daniel asked impatiently. He didn’t even spare a glance at the woman.

“Sir, Dru said the rings are safe up to three hundred pounds, but as the equipment is new to you, she requires that I stay to assist. Or if you would prefer somebody else, I can get one of the dungeon monitors.”

“No,” he said just a fraction too quickly. “You’ll do fine. You can help me figure out how to rig this chain, for starters.”

“Yes, Master Daniel. There’s actually a pole for that.” Mara stepped quickly to a shadowed corner of the room and returned with a long black pole sporting a funny hook on the end. Perfect for attaching clips to eyehooks at a distance. He took it and gave it a little toss, catching it in the other hand.

“Awesome.”

Within what seemed like seconds, he had arranged a carabiner a third of the way up the light chain’s length, and snapped it into place on the ceiling hook.

“Bring me those other two clips,” he snapped, and Mara placed them in his hand almost before the words left his mouth.

And something turned in Delia’s chest, sliding down into her stomach to lodge itself there, a thumping, uncertain heat. Because something critical had changed over the past few minutes, and it had finally identified itself loud and clear as she watched her husband—her shiny, new, made-to-order Master—interact with this *other* submissive.

Daniel wasn’t acting, Delia realized. He wasn’t glancing over to her for confirmation that he was getting it right. This, what he was doing, wasn’t for Delia’s benefit. It was what *he* wanted.

This isn’t just about me anymore.

Chapter Six

Mara had been inclined to dismiss the couple from the start. From about the time Dru indicated they were married, her first thought had been that they were lookie-loo types, playing around to be edgy because it was hip and daring. They would act cool and reveal their ignorance in painful ways, most likely, and they would forget all about the lifestyle once they started trying to get pregnant.

Her first glimpse of the Fosters did nothing to change her mind.

Oh, they're just freakin' adorable, she'd thought.

He was Mr. Thinking Dominant, probably trying to overcompensate for never being as big and brawny as the rest of the dudes on the football team. In other words, probably an asshole with control issues who took himself way too seriously.

And she was obviously a Bad Sub.

Bad sub! No biscuit! Mara said to herself when she saw the little blonde head popping up over the hubby's lanky shoulder. And she hid her smirk when she tattled, but there was certainly a smirk.

They wouldn't last long.

She should have known she was in trouble when she got her first full eyeful of the wife and had to mentally peel her bottom jaw off the floor.

The pouty, pink blowjob lips, the bouncy cheerleader ponytail. But with a cute white collar and a very charming doe-eyed blink. She was Amie in sub form. And despite the moment of cognitive dissonance that association had caused, Mara had to conclude it was a very good look.

And then he'd laughed at the *Thunderdome* joke, revealing humor and geeky depths to go with the glasses, and the deal got just that little bit more interesting.

When she left them in the Rose Room, she took a moment to catch her breath and gather her thoughts. Considering what Dru had told her in a new light, Mara put her initial judgments aside and tried to figure out the Fosters' deal.

He had the vibe down, that much was clear. He was a Dom and didn't really even know it yet, but he was obviously getting there fast and enjoying the trip. The way his eyes lit up when he saw the glass dildo and the ice water made it pretty plain he was anticipating torture with all the delight of a seasoned top. And he was perceptive enough to exert that little bit of control Mara had offered, playing the mind game with his sub, not letting her hear more than a word here and there.

So she had no choice but to be a good little sub and wait, patiently or not.

Good sub.

No biscuit.

Dru had mentioned the wife had the experience, that the husband – Master Daniel, she decided, thinking she should start calling him that in her mind so she didn't forget when she went back into the room – was the newbie. Was probably doing it because Delia had talked him into trying it.

And that was the problem, right there. The wife didn't think of him as a real Dom, she thought of him as her husband being a good sport. And Mara knew that the last thing a sub should be thinking about her Dominant is, "Gee, what a good sport." So Mara's job would be to help Master Daniel realize he was doing it right...and help Delia see that, regardless of what she'd started out with, what she had on her hands now was a Dom. Who deserved all the focus and attention and service a sub owed a Dom.

After confirming the obvious, that the eyehooks in the ceiling were for the purpose of suspending submissives, Dru had fixed Mara with a very direct look and asked her what she thought of the Fosters.

When Mara had hesitated, Dru had smiled and cut off her fumbling attempt at a response. "Stay with them, please. Liability issues. Congratulations, you're officially a

part-time employee tonight. Your job is to make sure nobody gets hurt in there. Let me know if he'd rather have one of the gorillas from the floor, all right?"

"Yes ma'am." Mara couldn't help grinning. "If I'm an employee, can I still play? With the Fosters? I mean, if they ask, may I..."

"An employee of this club? Flirting and playing with patrons? Of course not, Mara," Dru mugged. "I'm shocked, *shocked* that you would suggest such a thing. But I also assume you're smart enough to lock the door, ask the Master nicely first if you may play with his sub and be discreet about whatever takes place."

And so when she returned to the Rose Room, her black leather corset adjusted just slightly to show off a bit more cleavage, it was all "Yes, Master Daniel" and trying to pretend she wasn't affected by the Master's enthusiasm. Or by the hot naked sub they were arranging to chain to the ceiling.

Once she'd helped suspend the chains and secure the clips to the cuffs on Delia's wrists, Mara stepped back a little bit and tried to get some perspective on the scene. She had felt too close, too fast, with these pretty strangers. But taking in the big picture was even worse in its way.

There was Delia, arms overhead and legs spread, just testing the play in the chain to which she was shackled. She couldn't quite reach her heels to the floor. Gorgeously naked, with skin that glowed a little golden in the faux candlelight. Mara had determined with some relief that the many, many little candles deployed to such effect around the room were actually LEDs, but they still flickered and gleamed. And they still provided a romantic overtone that was so unusual for a dungeon.

The white collar and cuffs, and the links of the chain, caught the moody lighting and drew the eye, helping to make a centerpiece of the suspended sub. And just in the foreground, the Master paced in a short arc, toying with his sleeves and looking thoughtful. He was trim and graceful, with economical movements and an air of decisive calm about him.

Delia was watching him. He was studiously ignoring her. Getting into character, Mara decided, working himself into the scene like an actor about to perform.

When he stopped and turned to observe his sub, Mara's breath caught for a few heartbeats. The anxiety in Delia's eyes, in every line of her body as she struggled to keep her balance, was such a sharp contrast with the serene elegance of Master Daniel's posture as he looked at her for a few seconds and then released a gentle sigh.

"What are you expecting, I wonder?" he mused, almost as though he were talking to himself. He stepped off again, this time circling behind the sub. Mara could see Delia struggling with herself not to turn her head to watch him, then losing that struggle after a few seconds.

"No. Eyes front, Delia." Not barked, not growled or snapped. Just stated. Mara liked that. It was controlled. If Master Daniel was just learning, he clearly had a certain knack.

"Mara," he said next, to her surprise, "since you're staying with us for the evening, would you like to help?"

She had been standing with her hands clasped behind her back, a loose approximation of parade rest. Now she was glad he couldn't see her wringing her hands together. Would she like to *help*? Even without knowing exactly what he had in mind, she thought she would very much like to help.

Mara nodded. "Yes, if it pleases you, Master Daniel."

"It does. Or it will. Get the clear item we were discussing, put it in the pitcher. And then bring me the thing I left lying on top of the other items in that bottom drawer. And as for you," he said with a brisk slap to Delia's bare ass, "it's time you were introduced to some of the purchases I made the other day at your favorite store."

Mara rushed to find the glass baton and smuggle it across the room without Delia catching a glimpse. Fortunately, the table where the water pitcher sat was out of the other sub's sight line, so she wouldn't be able to see the long, ribbed dildo being plunged into its ice bath.

She would be able to feel it soon enough. As she would feel the long, slender tawse that Mara fetched next. When she returned to Master Daniel with it, he just nodded. He was knotting a black silk scarf in place over Delia's eyes, so it was clearly to be a night of limited information and many surprises for her fellow sub.

"Kneel right there and wait with it."

Still holding the forked strap, she knelt, the movement placing her next to one of Delia's feet. Mara wasn't certain how much to fall into line, how far Dru would want her to go. But she felt a definite atmosphere in the room, a growing sense that Things Were Going to Happen very soon. She studied the sub and Dom in front of her, trying to feel her way into the scene with them.

Master Daniel had been jingling something in his pocket, something that didn't quite sound like coins or keys. Now, his attention back on Delia, he pulled his hand out and revealed two devilish-looking butterfly clamps, each bearing a little crystal weight.

"Safe word," Master Daniel said softly, and Delia took a moment to respond. She was already zoning out a little bit, Mara thought.

"Brussels sprouts."

"Blech," Mara said, thinking it was under her breath. When both the others turned her way, she shrugged. "Good word."

"Certainly not something Delia's likely to blurt out in the throes of passion," Master Daniel agreed. "And hopefully she won't blurt it out right now, either, when I put these on her nipples."

Mara sat transfixed as the fledgling Master started to work. He teased first, brushing a fingertip in a circle around one of his sub's nipples but avoiding the tightly furled peak until Delia was arching toward him, trying to angle for the touch. He just tsked and changed tactics, tweaking sharply and then grinning an evil grin when his victim squeaked in surprise.

Mara would have liked to soothe that hurt with her mouth. She could practically feel the heated, gathered flesh between her lips, under her tongue. The rosy color there

was deepening already, and the nipple was standing out proudly from its field of paler pink and white. As the Master fastened the first clamp into place over the swollen bud and Delia gave a groan of pained delight, Mara tried not to gasp in sympathy, in jealousy.

Again, though, Mara wasn't as quiet as she'd thought. Master Daniel looked down at her again, and this time followed the line of her gaze back to his sub's newly decorated breast. And then back to Mara's face, with a question in his eyes.

"Can you only help me with equipment, Mara? Or can you help me with her? Would you like to?" He let his eyes drift back to Delia, whose face was turned toward him as though she could see through the fine black silk. "I know I would enjoy watching that."

Delia only sighed, though it was a very telling sigh. She didn't protest, though Master Daniel was clearly giving her a chance to. They were having a whole conversation with their bodies, communicating wordlessly even though the blindfold was in their way. Mara felt that curious envy again, remembering this wasn't just a sub and Dom but a married couple. Having it all, or at least trying to for the moment. She wondered what it would be like to live with a Dom. To have a relationship with a Master outside the bedroom. She'd rarely even gotten as far as considering that with a significant other, much less finding a Dominant to marry.

"I'd like that very much, Sir. Thank you."

Chapter Seven

Two chicks. Two.

Daniel's mind had briefly stopped working, and he was trying to whack it back into some semblance of utility but it just kept getting stuck.

Threesome threesome threesome.

He looked from the beautiful black-haired woman kneeling at his feet, to his beautiful blonde wife dangling from the chains that led up to the ceiling. At the realization that Delia was going along with all of this, he got stuck on a new refrain.

Love love love GOD I love this woman.

He'd been so worried. So anxious about giving her what she needed. And he'd come so far, but now he had finally started anticipating, adventuring beyond what she'd asked for, and he knew a heady rush of power even greater than he had in the toy store. He could *do* this.

And now there might also be hot girl-on-girl action, a pretty much unexpected bonus. An inspiration. He knew Delia had batted for both teams, but she'd never suggested bringing in a third party. She'd never even taken him very seriously when he'd suggested it.

And this might not wind up that way, he told himself sternly. Agreeing to "help" was not exactly agreeing to a three-way. So he would proceed with caution.

"Well if you're helping, then get up here and see to this other clamp."

Mara hopped up in one quick movement and passed him the tawse, trading it for the second nipple clamp.

"May I use my mouth, Sir?"

Ohdeargodyespleasedothat.

"One taste. And I'll make you pay me for it later." He swung the leather strap in a wide arc, warming up his shoulder.

Then he let his arm fall to his side as he watched Mara lean in and take Delia's nipple very gently between her teeth. Just for a second. Then her lips closed firmly and she sucked hard, the movement of her cheeks and jaw suggesting she was working her tongue as well.

The sound Delia made was like a siren call to his erection.

"That's enough."

With obvious reluctance, Mara released the now very taut nipple and put the clamp in place. She set the crystal in motion with a little tap of her finger before stepping back, putting her hands behind her, legs apart. Waiting like a little soldier. A little sex soldier.

The candlelight played in the dangling crystals, sending reflections glancing here and there around the room. Now on the ceiling, now on the floor, now on Mara's leg. Daniel slapped the tawse against his thigh, hard, and smirked when both women jumped.

Stepping in toward Delia, he nudged her feet into a wider stance with his toe, just because he could. It lowered her down nearly to the end of the slack in the chain, and he checked to make sure the skin around the cuffs wasn't squeezed too tight. Safety first. Then he reached into his pocket for the next fun thing.

"Delia, there's one more clamp. I'll let you choose who puts it on you, me or Mara."

She turned her head again, trying to find him by the sound of his voice, but he was circling. Trying to keep her off balance and guessing.

"Mara, if it pleases you, Master."

"Oh, I suspect it will." He handed the slightly heavier clamp to Mara, who grinned like a lascivious fairy.

"May I use my mouth, Sir?"

"I'd be disappointed if you didn't, sub."

He thought her knees might bruise, as quickly as she dropped back down to the floor in front of Delia. Her short brush of black hair made a startling contrast against Delia's ivory body and the narrow strip of dark blonde hair on her mound.

Throw a pink tongue into the mix, and Daniel thought he might never recover. For a moment he couldn't breathe, as he watched Mara bend at the hips and reach with the very tip of her extended tongue. It made contact right on Delia's clit, and then lost contact because Delia jerked in surprise, nearly falling over but for the support of the chains.

Another little lick, more like a tap, from Mara's tongue and Delia's body went tense. She kept her feet but her back bowed, as though she were trying to spread herself ever wider.

Tap tap tap.

She looked like a kitten, with those tiny little licks. And Delia sounded almost catlike, practically wailing. Daniel could see the glimmer of fresh wetness, and wanted to dive into it.

"Lick her pussy," he commanded, and Mara complied very eagerly. That quick little tongue lapped up every drop of juice it could find. Daniel wondered what it would feel like on his cock, then pushed that thought away as probably hazardous to his health. His erection was already making it hard to walk.

"That's enough," he said at last. Not because he thought it was enough, as he could have happily watched that all day, but because he didn't want Delia to come yet. She might be physically primed, but she wasn't there yet emotionally. He didn't quite know how he knew, but he did. Not ready, not time. "Put the clamp on now."

Mara applied the clit clamp with a practiced touch and then sat back on her heels, awaiting further instruction. But for the moment, he just gestured her back to the seating area. The next part was up to him.

Another slap of the tawse on his leg sent a tremor through Delia's body.

"Do you know what that is, Delia?"

"No, Master."

"Good."

He had worked with a flogger and a paddle before, but the feel of the tawse was different so he started slow. Just a light slap on Delia's ass at first, the leather straps making a disproportionately loud noise. She seemed more startled than pained, so he leaned into the next one a little more. The gratifying crack of the leather and Delia's moan made him want to cheer.

He swung again, aiming for an upper thigh this time, and Delia cried out, tipping forward on her toes, twisting a little at the wrists as they took more of her weight. Her writhing made it more difficult to aim the next blow, but he lined it up carefully and laid a matching stripe on her other thigh.

That earned a scream. But not a safe word. He was still learning her limits, but he had a comfort level too. The next few strikes were no harder, and it seemed to work well. Another two, and then he switched to a rain of peppery little pops against the already reddened skin of her hindquarters. Never the same place twice, angling the tawse so the tip rather than the flat delivered the hit.

He stopped after a dozen or so of those love-taps, not wanting to bruise her. Too much.

"Your ass looks gorgeous, sub."

When she didn't answer with words, just a whimper, he walked around to look at her. She was sagging down on the restraints a little and her face was deeply flushed. Daniel reached a hand between her legs and made an instinctive soothing noise as he stroked his fingers along her slit. She was drenched.

At his touch, Delia's noise was anything but soothing. She moaned like a wild animal and came back to life, thrusting at his hand in a mindless, ancient rhythm.

He thought it was probably time to take things to the next level.

"Be still, sub. Mara, come help me take her down."

The darker girl was there in an instant, and looked as though she hadn't been bored at all in the interim. She unclipped Delia efficiently and held her firmly at the waist while she regained her balance, then let go and stood by in her parade rest again.

Delia just stood, sides heaving, trembling, as if she'd just run a marathon. Daniel was struck by the contrast between them, the flushed blonde and the pale, black-haired girl. Their coloring was dramatically different, but their builds were similar enough that he suspected they could share clothes if they wanted to. They reminded him of something, and it finally came to him.

"Snow White and Rose Red," he said softly.

Delia turned toward his voice. "Master?"

He smiled as he approached her and slipped the blindfold off over her head, working it free of her ponytail. "You two look like Snow White and Rose Red."

"I can't remember that one," she said, blinking her eyes back into focus. "Master."

"I don't remember the whole thing either. I'll look it up later. Come this way." He led her to the couch and sat down, spreading his legs and turning her around between them. Coaxing her to sit with her back to his chest, he looped his arms under hers and used his feet to hold her legs at the ankles. Then he nodded at Mara, who kneeled before them.

"Let's take some clamps off."

"Fuck!"

Daniel and Mara both laughed at Delia's reaction. He had used much milder clamps on her nipples before, little nooses that seemed more for decoration than anything else. But even those hurt her more coming off than going on. With the butterfly clips, he could only imagine the pain she would be in for. Which was why he had taken the proactive measure of restraining her.

"First one."

"No no no, just give me a minute, just —"

"Mara, do it now."

"Fuuuuuuuck!"

Mara had flicked the clamp off in one expert motion, and the reaction hit Delia's body a second later. It felt like holding a live wire, and Daniel wanted to chortle with glee at the fact that this fabulous woman actually let him have this much leeway with her body. The pain was a gift, just the outward sign, not even the most important part. It was the absolute trust—she would let him restrain her, exposed, while she endured these sweet agonies—that drove him crazy every damn time.

"Second one. Hold still, sub. We're not done yet."

"Owwwwwwwww ow ow ow!"

"Whiny brat."

"Owooooooch!"

Daniel looked down at Mara, whose eyes held a devilish glint as she contemplated the third clamp. He could see the interest, the hunger in her expression. And he knew he was nearing the limits of his own will power.

"Stand up, whiny brat. You stay there, sub."

Delia stood on shaking legs and Daniel quickly unfastened his jeans, shoving them down far enough to free his cock. He pulled her back down with one hand and lined himself up with the other, then pressed on her hips until she had slid down the length of his cock and seated herself in his lap.

The couch was the perfect height, nice and low. Delia's legs were just long enough to reach the floor on either side of his lap, giving her leverage.

"Ride me," Daniel commanded, as if she would do anything else. "Slow, now."

Reaching forward, he brushed his palms over her distended nipples, chuckling as she reacted by pushing into his hands and his lap at once. She was so wet and hot he felt like he might melt into her body, and her cunt gripped him in little greedy spasms like it did when she was just about to climax.

"Oh, you want to come, don't you?"

"Please, Master!"

So few words, so much expressed in them. And so much expression too in the huge, dark-brown eyes of Rose Red, who still knelt between his feet. Impish smile with a quick and clever little tongue.

"Let's get her endorphins nice and confused, Mara." With control he didn't know he possessed, Daniel pressed Delia's roving hips to a halt, stilling her body as he pressed her legs even wider with his own. "Lick her. Get her hot."

Say a Dom thing, idiot.

"But don't let her come until I say so. That's when the clip will come off too. I'm going to enjoy the feel of you milking my cock while you scream, pretty sub."

He gave himself a mental high-five and leaned back on his hands to watch events unfold. Sadly, with Delia's luscious body in the way, he couldn't see the licking itself. But her guttural sounds and the almost painfully tight clench of her body around his cock were pretty good signs that she was enjoying it.

In fact she was possibly reaching a limit of her own, Daniel thought. And as much as he loved being the one to make her space out from pain and pleasure, he felt very keenly the responsibility of making sure she returned safely from space. So after a few blissful minutes of feeling her at the brink, he spoke again.

"Delia, tell me when you're ready to come."

She nodded and then whispered, a nearly incoherent stream of something like, "Now, now please, oh please, Master now now, please..." And so on.

"Come when you can. But when you do, Mara takes the clip off."

She nodded, more aware than he'd thought. "I know, Master. Oh God. Oh godohgodohgodNOWohgodohg—"

He assumed that was when Mara took the clamp off. There was more or less a sonic scream, but he couldn't really care when Delia's pussy was squeezing him harder than

his own hand. When the blood was rushing away from his head to his cock. When a hot, clever little tongue was licking its way around his testicles...

Oh. Holy. Fuck.

Daniel was well aware that a Dom wouldn't let that sort of thing happen without permission. But the feel of one woman fucking him with raw enthusiasm while another licked his balls was enough to make any notions of what should or shouldn't happen fly straight out of his head. He came so hard he wasn't even sure he could remember his own name. He was pretty sure he'd shot some brains out along with the semen. And it went on and on, Delia's shivering body dragging out his pleasure as she came again, another spurt of wondrous testicular joy when he felt the distinct huff of hot, happy laughter against his sac.

And then there was a hiatus. Silent and sated and sticky. Him, flopped back on the wide couch. Delia, slouched over with her hands on his knees, trying to catch her breath. A silky brush of short hair against his thigh, where Mara was leaning.

So that's how threesomes work.

Daniel had to wonder why anybody ever did it any other way.

Chapter Eight

Delia pretended to fall asleep in the car on the way home. Not that it was much of a stretch. She was drowsy, and fuzzy, and had practically had to be carried out of the club.

Her ass hurt. Her thighs hurt. She felt wobbly. She felt like the real world was too shocking, too harsh on her eyes with the headlights and trees and passing street signs.

She hadn't wanted to leave. She had never wanted to leave. That place, that room in particular, seemed as if it had existed in a magic bubble, and by leaving the club they'd broken the bubble. The magical little pixie had vanished into the night. The man who looked like Daniel but was a Dom had faded away again. And she, Delia, had lost that astonishing sensation of being, finally and for the first time, fully and completely who she was meant to be.

"Here."

She opened her eyes to see Daniel thrusting a travel pack of tissues at her. His car was like that, miraculously clean but he could procure any sort of useful item within seconds from one of the many scrupulously organized compartments. Tissues, pocket knife, complete tool set, once even a carsickness bag. She had no idea where he'd acquired it, she'd just been thankful it was there, even if she hadn't ended up needing it.

"What are these for?"

"Because you're crying."

She felt her face, felt the tears, and realized she had indeed been crying. It was that sort of night. She couldn't even say whether they were tears of elation—*at last, at last!*—or of grief at having to stop.

It was clear which kind Daniel thought they were.

"I fucked up. I just...*fuck*." He banged a fist on the steering wheel for emphasis, or to try to knock some sense into the car. They were nearly home, she noticed. The drive had seemed to last only seconds. Maybe she *had* fallen asleep.

"What are you talking about?" The last thing she could handle right now was complicated emotions from Daniel, who was usually so stalwart and considerate.

She watched the muscle in his jaw pop out. He was clenching his teeth. Delia considered reminding him that the dentist had warned him about grinding, but decided against it. They were pulling into the garage now, and Daniel yanked up the emergency brake hard enough that it seemed ready to come off in his hand.

"Daniel? What were you talking about?"

He looked at her like she'd gone nuts. "What am I talking about? Jesus, Delia. You're sitting there weeping and you're asking me what..."

She started to reply then realized her lips were just flapping from habit. She had no idea what to say yet. And no energy to talk her way into whatever idea might come along.

"Let's go inside," she said softly, and Daniel was out of the car and around to her door before she could even finish opening it. He handed her out of the car like a gentleman, supported her at the waist as if she were an invalid and walked her straight back to their bedroom.

"What are you doing?" She was bemused enough to ask with a chuckle, because he looked so solemn and determined. Taking her coat off and draping it over the back of the armchair in the corner. Carefully removing her halter-top and skirt then arranging them neatly over the coat, which reminded her of the club. Pulling her feet out of her shoes one by one, supporting her so she didn't topple over during the process. And then picking her up and laying her in the bed so carefully, as if she were a piece of bone china.

"I'm taking care of you," he explained, somewhat after the fact. "And I'm sorry, sweetheart."

"I wasn't crying because I was upset, Daniel. Or, well," she corrected, "I was upset that it had to end, I guess. Letdown tears, or whatever. But not because of what happened. My god, honey, that was...I don't even have words."

If she'd had more energy, she would have cracked up at the look on his face.

Now I finally know what "gobsmacked" means.

"You liked it too?"

"Too? So I gather you liked it."

"If I had liked it any more I would have probably needed medical attention afterward."

She smiled, marveling that all the brilliant communicating they'd done earlier in the evening was so effortless when *this*, normal conversation with talking and no blindfolds or role-playing, was so often difficult and led to misunderstandings.

Potentially disastrous misunderstandings. Because if Daniel had gone on thinking she hadn't enjoyed the scene, and had therefore avoided a repeat, that would mean—

"Mara!"

"It's okay, I got her number," Daniel reassured her. "And she has ours."

"I just realized. She didn't get to come."

They were quiet for a moment, contemplating this.

"We'll make it up to her next time," he said at last.

"As long as you know there needs to be a next time."

* * * * *

It wasn't until the next day that the doubts started to creep into Delia's head. Late that afternoon, when she saw Daniel pick up his phone and put it down a few times, obviously trying to decide whether to make a call.

Did he really want this? And what was *this*, exactly, anyway? What were Mara's expectations? Delia wished she could talk to Mara outside the club setting, find out

what kind of person she was. If she was really the impish little pixie she seemed, full of whimsy and deviance. Or if, in real life, she was perhaps less enticing. She didn't think that would be possible.

She had the strangest urge to call her like she might a girlfriend, to go shopping or to a movie. To hang out. As if she knew her already. But Delia knew that was ridiculous. They had barely spoken.

"I'm going to call," Daniel announced.

She just nodded. Waited with him as the phone rang a few times. Met his eyes with an eager smile when Mara picked up.

But she couldn't quite make out both ends of the conversation, though she stood on tiptoe trying to listen.

"We are," Daniel was saying. "How are you?"

So formal. It was nerves. Daniel was using his business-call voice, although she didn't mind that. She found it oddly attractive.

"Absolutely. At nine. We'll need to talk first about limits."

That sounds more promising.

"Yes, I did. Oh, and I meant to reassure you about that last night. Delia too. I can bring condoms, though, if you're more comfortable—oh, okay."

Wait wait bring WHAT now?

He must have heard her thinking, because he gave her a stern look and did the eyebrow thing. Kept a straight face, snapped his fingers at the floor and nodded his head at her.

Delia slid to her knees, arms wrapping loosely around Daniel's calf, and she felt a deep and thrilling ease possess her as his hand came to rest on her head.

"Seriously?"

He sounded a lot less formal all of a sudden.

"What server? Wait, text me your character name and I'll find you on the database."

"Computer games?" she hissed up at him. "Oh, you have *got* to be kidding me."

"It's okay, honey," he whispered with a wink, "she plays on the good guy side."

* * * * *

By the time they arrived at the club that evening, Daniel had plenty to talk about with Mara. She was sitting at the bar waiting for them, and when she turned and waved, Delia's heart gave that funny lurch again.

She was wearing a little nothing of a black wrap skirt and even less of a little red-lace underbust corset. A black crochet shrug kept her shoulders warm and her breasts covered enough to walk down the street, but Delia could see enough to imagine the rest.

And imagining it made her feel all wobbly again.

She wanted Mara. Wanted to taste her, wanted to be tasted by her again. Wanted more than anything not to be blindfolded this time, so she could see what the other woman was doing.

A persistent image had haunted her all afternoon, of going down on Mara while Daniel did various lewd things to her from behind. It wouldn't leave her. She had needed to resist an almost constant urge to disappear into the restroom and ease the physical consequences of the image. But she knew she would enjoy herself more if she waited. The idea of having to wait, of needing to hold off until Daniel told her to come, only enhanced her mood.

And yet here were her two would-be lovers, talking in a language she could barely recognize as English.

"Are you planning to go resto with that cleric? I haven't played that class much in this game yet, I usually do tanking," Daniel said as he led them to the play room.

"Probably. My main is spell DPS, but the guild needs more resto so I'd probably get to raid more that way. But I've just started leveling this so I haven't really decided yet. I don't know, I really need to study the talent trees a little more, read up on it."

“Cool. I’m still trying to get Delia to play.” This last as if he’d belatedly realized they were leaving her out of the conversation.

“Oh, you totally should,” Mara urged her. “You get to run around and whack things or kill them dead with fireball spells, stuff like that. It’s very therapeutic. And of course, you can also gather flowers and mine for precious metals, if you just want to do that sort of thing. Make potions.”

They were already to the door of the Rose Room. Daniel ushered them in, and once again they all three stopped on the threshold to take in the room.

It was still rosy and candlelit. It still sported the low, very useful couches and chest of goodies.

A very large, somewhat Victorian-looking device had been added close to one corner, however, and that was what primarily drew the trio’s collective attention.

Gleaming, polished wood with delicate brass filigree inlay; a soft, rounded top of distressed, saddle-colored leather. Matching wrist and ankle straps with shiny brass buckles.

“Is that a spanking horse?”

Delia nodded, and noticed that Mara did too.

“Yes, Master,” she added, when it looked as if Daniel hadn’t seen their nods because his gaze was still transfixed on the horse.

At least it had taken his mind clean off the computer games.

“Giddy the fuck up!” Mara exclaimed, clapping her hands and bouncing on the balls of her feet. Delia recognized the gesture, the same one she’d made when she saw the toy store. It was odd, like watching a bizarro version of herself.

“Tally-fucking-ho,” Daniel said in agreement. “I like it. I can work with that.” He turned and observed them both, manic glee transforming his usually much more impassive face. “Oh, I can most definitely work with that.”

Chapter Nine

Mara had almost made herself late trying to figure out what to wear. Somehow it seemed much more important tonight, despite the fact that she suspected she would be taking all or most of it off pretty early into the evening.

She had decided on the red because it would expose more without her having to take it off. And because the idea of removing her skirt and shrug, standing in front of Master Daniel and Delia in just the scrap of constraining red lace around her rib cage and waist, was enough to drive her to distraction most of the afternoon.

Although she hadn't played too badly, despite being distracted. And it had been a sweet surprise to find Master Daniel played the game too. They'd had so much fun that after a few minutes they'd forgotten to flirt in game chat, and had just gotten on with playing. Which, in Mara's mind, had a certain sexy appeal all its own. She liked the way he planned and then implemented his plan, then tried again with the same calm determination if the first effort didn't pan out. Trying new things, experimenting, communicating what he wanted very clearly. She thought if Delia had met him that way, in the game, she might have had no trouble at all picturing her husband as a Dom from the start.

Mara wondered where they had met. What their history was, what their expectations were.

Silly. It's not like you're dating them.

But she sort of wanted to, was the thing. Each of them.

Both of them.

"Let's get this show on the road," Master Daniel was saying. He had moved to the chest of drawers and was taking things out, laying them in readiness on the end of one couch. The tawse. A cane, pulled not from the drawer but from a tall vase full of them

standing just beside the chest like a big, kinky flower arrangement. Something else from his pocket, removed carefully from a zippered plastic bag and set to one side with a jar of lube. He had sniffed the jars cautiously before selecting one.

"He hates piña colada," Delia explained in a near-whisper. Then the two women shared a conspiratorial smile, and Mara was tempted to wink. She no longer thought Delia resembled Amie quite so much. Her features were smaller, neater. She had the same pouty upper lip, but the expression was completely different; hers fell into a naturally sweet smile in repose, unlike Amie's characteristic irritation-face.

"Dee!"

"Master?"

He was gesturing her over, and Mara felt a little abandoned as Delia left her to confer with Daniel. Then she couldn't help but smile at the thought she must feel exactly as Delia had the previous night. Because the two of them were doing the same thing she and Master Daniel had, talking not quite softly enough to block out everything—letting her hear just enough to tease. Something about the horse, and tongues, and a sweet ass, all of which was enough to give Mara plenty of ideas.

"First things first," Master Daniel said after he had shared all this with Delia and she had nodded with a look of barely suppressed excitement. He took a seat on the couch, leaning back on his arms, getting comfortable like a guy does, with his legs spread apart. "Time for subs to undress each other. Leave the corsets and shoes on. Put on a good show and I might even let you both play with each other for real later."

Delia looked almost shy as she wandered back toward Mara. It was a charming look, completely inappropriate to the situation. Mara felt oddly moved. She was inclined to forget about Master Daniel entirely and just focus on the beautiful woman she got to undress. But she knew it had to be both, it had to be that balance, for her and for Delia. Taking pleasure in each other but always mindful that the ultimate arbiter of pleasure was their Master.

Their Master. Our Master.

Mara knew a moment of sharp pain, gone almost as quickly as it started. He might not be *their* Master, just Delia's, but at least they were sharing tonight. She would make herself believe that was enough.

So she started with the little pearl buttons on Delia's sleeveless, pink-silk blouse, and was pleased to discover it opened onto a corset not unlike her own. Only in white, which seemed to be Delia's favorite color for kink garb. It should have washed her out, Mara thought, but somehow she had just enough golden undertone in her skin to make it work.

The blouse was just for cover on the street, it hadn't even been tucked in. It was easily dispensed with, as was Mara's own sweater, which Delia pushed off her shoulders in one easy motion.

Then Mara gasped at the feel of Delia's fingers tracing down from her shoulders, over her collarbones, to the crests of her exposed breasts.

"Did I say you could get handsy?"

"No, Master. Sorry, Sir," Delia said meekly and got to work on Mara's skirt. But Mara caught the little twinkle she sent her way, not quite a wink or a smirk but just a little something amused.

Delia had it relatively easy. Mara's skirt was just tied on, and a single tug at the bow was all it took to release it. It swirled down and around her ankles, leaving her in her underbust and a matching thong, along with strappy black heels. She tried not to fidget, tried not to look nervous as Delia's slim fingers traced the spaghetti straps over her hips and looked at Master Daniel for permission.

"The thong too, Sir?"

He nodded, but said nothing. He didn't look particularly interested or impressed. Mara thought he must be getting better at the control thing every day. And then she didn't think as those same cool, slender fingers tucked themselves under the straps of her panties and pulled them down her legs. One hand clasped her calf gently, coaxing that leg up. Then down and around, off the other leg, and the thong was gone.

Nothing but a corset, heels and a whole lot of waxed skin. Mara's favorite outfit. With it came the feeling of delicious, naughty freedom. She was a wanton, and anybody looking at her in this hardly there ensemble would know instantly that she was a needy little slut. Which gave her permission, in her mind, to act like a needy little slut.

"Pretty," murmured Delia, making a stroking gesture with her hands over Mara's ribs but not quite touching the lace. Mara felt the heat and thrill as clearly as if she had been touched, felt her nipples and clit start to swell in approval of the goings-on.

"Delia," warned Master Daniel.

Delia snatched her hands behind her back and waited patiently while Mara unfastened her jeans. It took both of them to peel the jeans off and they were giggling by the time the process was over, but at last Delia stood in her lingerie, which didn't include a thong or other underwear of any sort. Just the underbust corset, which in her case came a bit lower on the hips than Mara's and featured garters. Any good garter deserves stockings, and she was also wearing those—very sheer, with lacy, white tops. Shocking pink-silk stiletto pumps that Mara thought might be some crazy-expensive designer brand.

"Snow White and Rose Red," Daniel said again. He sat up and scrutinized them both from head to toe and back again. "The story had a prince who'd been magically transformed into a bear because a dwarf stole his treasure. The two girls ended up killing the dwarf, the bear transformed back into a prince, and of course he ended up marrying one of the girls."

"Snow White," Mara said. "I looked it up too. Sorry, Master."

"I'll add it to your tab, sub. Let's see, where was I? Oh right. So the story goes, he marries Snow White. Rose Red marries some brother the prince pulls up from somewhere, that wasn't in the story. And they all live happily ever after. But," he said with a dramatic flourish, "I don't buy that ending."

He got up and walked to the bench as he continued, fussing with the straps and smoothing a hand over the long top surface. "I think the prince ended up with both of

them. Why pick one over the other, when they were both brave enough to help him get rid of the dwarf? Okay, who's first on this thing? Eeny, meeny, miney...oh fuck it. Mara, get your ass over here."

"Oh! Yes, Master." Mara had been caught off guard by the sudden shift. She was still puzzling out the possibilities of the revised story ending. She liked Master Daniel's version better than the original, she knew that much at least.

She liked the spanking horse too. It was big and solid, and felt sturdy enough to take anything she did to it. Kicking, screaming, biting. This thing had an air that said it had seen it all before. She climbed atop and straddled it almost reverently.

"All the way down," Master Daniel instructed. She pressed her chest and face against the padded leather, letting her arms hang down on either side. He must have gestured Delia over, because the next thing Mara knew was the feel of small, cool hands at her ankles, fastening her to the bench. And then at her wrists, shackling her firmly into place.

Mara turned her head in time to see Master Daniel pointing to the couch, obviously asking Delia to bring him something. But then he spotted her looking and smiled, palming her head with his long-fingered hand and gently turning it back to face the corner.

"No peeking. So yesterday, my sub reminded me that I had been horribly remiss. I owe you an apology."

"I don't understand, Master."

"You will. But there's also the matter of you sneaking in some activities that weren't authorized, isn't there?"

"Oh. Y-yes. I'm sorry, Sir. I just got carried —"

"No excuses. You knew you were over the line, didn't you?"

"Yes, Sir."

But she had not been able to resist.

"So today there will be some overdue rewards, but there will be some punishment first. You've told me your hard limits. But I also talked with Dru a little, and she says you're something of a pain slut. So I thought this might be a good time to explore that."

Mara took a deep breath, trying not to let it out with an audible tremor. She nodded, and then just let her silence speak volumes.

"You cool with brussels sprouts?"

"As a food or a safe word?"

"Smartass. That's just going to earn you more time on the horse."

She smiled. "And this is bad because...? I'm fine with brussels sprouts. As a safe word. If I forget, I'll use red light."

"Fair enough."

She had seen him with the tawse, so she felt fairly comfortable with his ability not to do her butt any lasting damage. Though she thought she might have to stop him before he got to the cane.

But it was soon clear that stopping him wouldn't be necessary. He began with a flogger, and he started so slowly she would have been concerned about falling asleep if she hadn't seen him leave stripes on Delia's ass the night before. But he was a fast learner; she was starting to get that about him. And he paid attention. Every moan, every flex and strain of her body against the leather, resulted in a little correction, until there was a whole silent conversation taking place between him and her, between the whip and her body. Give and take, give and take. Lulling her down, lulling her deep.

And then, the unexpected.

"Favorite movie?"

It took her a second, during which the tails of the flogger smacked sharply against her haunch again. She tried, and failed, to think of something that sounded impressive. Cool, hip, modern. Nothing.

"Princess Bride."

Whack.

Not her intent, not hip, probably. But at least it was the truth, so what the hell.

"Favorite class you ever took?"

Favorites, what the hell?

Whack!

"Astronomy of the Plains Indians."

"Seriously?" This from Delia. "Cool."

"Yeah, it really was. I was surprised."

Daniel shushed them, and Mara stifled a giggle that bubbled up from the depths of her soul. A conversation about astronomy class?

Whack! The flogger reminded her where she was.

Oh yeah, we were in the middle of doing that.

"Last significant other?"

Not quite sure I want to go there.

Whack.

"Amie. It's been over for months. Ouch! She's a Domme. Scenes were good but real life didn't work for us."

Mara's eyes had drifted shut and she was taken by surprise to feel fingers drifting through her hair, almost as if she were being petted. She snuck her eyes open a crack then shut them again. She *was* being petted.

Whack.

Delia was standing at her head, stroking her hair. While Daniel whipped her ass.

Okay.

Whack.

"Not seeing anybody else right now then?" This was Delia, her voice soft and musical, a melodic counterpoint to the whip's percussion.

“No.” Did she mean to sound so plaintive?

Poor little Mara, all alone in the world. Take me home like a lost puppy.

Delia’s hand was on her cheek now, smoothing hair back from her face. She let her fingertips rest over Mara’s temple, just above her ear.

Whack.

Mara felt a press on her cheekbone. Lips, rose-petal soft. She knew they were pink, even when the lip gloss had worn off them. She had noticed.

“Delia. Don’t get mouthy either. Yet.” His voice was soft too. It sounded warm and candlelit.

“Yes, Master.”

Whack.

This, Mara thought. This, yes.

Chapter Ten

There was a tempo to it, Daniel had realized. A way to pace things, to keep it all in hand. The pain, the rest, the repositioning. The natural end to one whip's usefulness and the logical time to pick up a different toy. He was better organized tonight, and determined not to accidentally deviate from his planned scene. He was still a little aggrieved that he'd forgotten all about the promising glass dildo, left unused last night in its pitcher of ice.

Mara's ass and upper thighs were rosy, glowing from the flogger but not so red he needed to stop yet. She was in subspace, and she was probably able to take a little more pain now. Give that freshly whipped skin a few moments to recover, he knew, and it would be sensitive beyond belief.

The cane was slender, some translucent fiber rather than bamboo, and slightly whippy. He tested it on his palm awhile, figuring out how it would fly in the air, realizing he would not need to use his wrist as much. Just a short, almost choppy, flat stroke.

It sounded thuddier than he'd expected. Mara's reaction, a shocked gasp, was very gratifying. He gave her a few seconds, to let her decide whether to continue.

More questions. He liked the apparent truth-serum effect of the whips. She had opened up a little online, while they were playing, but he wanted to know more. Delia had wanted to know more too. And asking her random things seemed to keep her from getting too trancy. Maybe it would let things draw out a little longer.

But after a few more questions and strokes of the cane, he was having trouble thinking up things to ask her. There was so much eye candy in the room he was really just proud of himself for not actively drooling. And Mara, he could tell all too plainly, was already so aroused. Her pert, rounded little ass was moving in tiny circles between

strokes, as she tried to rub against the nap of the time-softened leather bench. And her mouth kept making a little O shape that drove him insane with lust.

Not that it was any better to look at Delia. Sweet merciful heavens, she looked like a kinky angel in that outfit. Or a porno bride. And the look on her face, sweet and curious, as she bent down to kiss Mara...

He wasn't sure whether he wanted to fuck them, or just rub them both all over his body in some way, or what.

Mara's ass was turning to red-on-pink stripes, and her lollipop lips were getting dry from panting. Time to move on, maybe.

"You still with me, Mara?"

"Yes, Master Daniel." She didn't sound all that with it, but at least she was coherent.

He put the cane down and rounded the bench, running a hand over her hip before curling his fingers down the cleft of her ass, trailing them across heated skin until they reached her cunt.

Then he had to have another stern Dom talk with himself to keep from tearing his pants off and burying himself inside her right then. Because she was soft, and smoothly hairless, and hotter than hell and wet, so wet and ready. He couldn't resist pushing a finger inside her, then two, rocking them back and forth.

The next voice in his head was the one reminding him that he was standing with his fingers buried in a woman's pussy, a woman who was not his wife, and his wife was standing right there in the white porno wedding outfit, and what the hell was he thinking?

Delia was smiling. Her dreamy, turned-on smile. Watching his hand as if she wished she were in Mara's place, or possibly in the place of his hand, but certainly not as though she were pissed off at him for putting it there.

The Dom voice reminded him that he was in charge, and there were certain perks to being in charge, even if they came at the cost of torturing his already painfully hard, pussy-starved penis. So Daniel smiled at Delia and pulled his fingers free to offer them to her.

"Come and clean them off."

And she did, with great enthusiasm.

"Does she taste good, sub?"

"Yes, Master."

"If you're good, you'll get another taste later."

"Thank you, Master. If that pleases you."

"I can't really see how it wouldn't." He stroked a finger back along Mara's slit, and felt gently lower until he found the hot, throbbing little nub of her clit. Another very gratifying reaction from her. "Delia, go get the vibe that's on the edge of the couch over there. There's an outlet right next to this corner, you can go ahead and plug it in there."

While she was scurrying to do all that, he leaned over Mara and spoke low, next to her ear. Not to hide anything from Delia, but just because it seemed more powerful that way. "You know which vibe I'm talking about, don't you, Mara?"

She nodded and whimpered. Her hair was clinging to her forehead, damp and endearingly messy. Delia had missed a few strands, it seemed.

"You didn't get to come last night. That's why I owed you. If I make you come now, with the vibrator, will you be able to get there again later?"

Another nod. *Good*. Women amazed him with their ability to come more than once in a short period of time. Sometimes he really couldn't tell what the hell was going on with Delia's orgasms. He didn't necessarily understand where they came from. And it was like once she got going, she couldn't always stop. Whereas he had known himself to come twice in an evening if he planned ahead and timed it all just right, but that was a very rare event. Usually it was just the once, and he was fine with that because it

seemed a lot less complicated than the deal with vaginas and clitorises and G-spots. *Oh my.*

Delia handed him the big, corded vibrator and he flicked it on for just a second, recoiling a little at the strength of the vibration.

"You're already really close, aren't you?" he asked Mara, just to be on the safe side.

"Yes, Master. Please..."

"Shhh."

He slipped his fingers back into her, relishing the fresh rush of heat that greeted him, and pumped them a few times until her hips started to counter his movement. He could feel her channel tensing around him, feel the coiled readiness in her. And he almost felt bad for what he was about to do, because he knew it would probably hurt like hell even though it made her come her brains out. But mostly he was looking forward to seeing her come her brains out.

"Lift up," he coaxed, tugging upward with his happily ensconced fingers.

Then he flicked the monster vibe on, slid it directly under her pelvic bone, and pushed back down with his fingers so she came down to rest on the thing clit-first. And then he didn't let her move. And then he turned it up to full.

After that, it only took three seconds for Mara to start coming in a way he could only describe as "epic".

The scream was kind of intimidating. And Daniel heard some words he wasn't sure he recognized. Either she was cursing in two languages or speaking in tongues. Her body thrashed within the narrow limits of the restraints as she alternated trying to push away from the devil-vibe and trying to ride it. And Daniel never relented with his hand, kept fucking her pussy with his fingers until she was a twitching, trembling mess and her stream of obscenities had disintegrated into simple begging to stop.

He pulled the vibe away and handed it back to Delia, who took it with a look of frightened awe and turned it off.

"I think that evens things out a little. Don't you?"

Mara tried to nod, but her head only made it up and down one time. Daniel chuckled and made his way to the table where the water pitcher sat, pouring a glass for himself and taking a hefty swig before returning to the bench with an ice cube.

"Feed her this until it's gone," he told Delia. She took the cube and held it to Mara's lips, teasing them open until Mara began licking and sucking at the ice.

Daniel turned away from that, needing a break before he saw any more imagery that might set him off. He rolled his shoulders and neck, stretching his arms in a leisurely way, and strolled across the room to examine the stuff he'd pulled out. Took a few minutes examining other things in the drawers while his pulse evened out. And then, feeling a little restored, he turned back to the women, who had fallen suspiciously silent.

They were kissing.

He watched for a minute, completely enamored of the whole situation. Even after he realized he should be scolding them or something, he just couldn't bring himself to stop them. They looked so fucking hot.

He could bring himself to participate, though. And maybe even direct.

For instance, as the Dom, he thought he should get a say over certain details like wardrobe and hand placement.

He'd need to unshackle a sub for that, though.

Both girls jumped when Daniel pulled at the first leg shackle. He just smirked at them and went on with what he was doing. When they didn't resume the kissing, he played the eyebrow card.

"I didn't say to stop."

They both looked stricken with shyness, which was pretty damn cute. But then they started necking again. He finished releasing both of Mara's feet and moved to the

hands, pressing a kiss to his wife's shoulder before he ducked between Delia and the bench to undo the last restraint.

Probably not too Dom-like, he considered, the way he clicked his tongue and tapped Delia's shoulder to get her to move out of the way so he could pick Mara up from the horse. He was probably supposed to have some special "move out of the way" command. So much to learn. But whatever. He at least had a mostly naked, trembling girl in his arms, so he couldn't really beat himself up too much about these little details.

The corset was surprisingly scratchy against his skin, and Mara wasn't quite as heavy as he'd expected. It was a few steps over to the closest couch, where he managed not to dump her too heavily. He leaned against the low, broad arm of the thing for a moment, testing its strength. It was built solidly, and didn't even protest his weight.

"We need some furniture like this, Dee. They look like something Romans would lie around on while slaves fed them grapes. And then there'd be orgies and stuff."

"Especially orgies," Delia agreed. She had followed them over and sat on the edge of the orgy couch. She was trying to look submissive and attentive, but her eyes kept straying over to her fellow sub's chest.

Daniel really couldn't blame her. Mara's tits were pretty stunning. And he also found that, while the idea of Delia's bisexuality had sometimes left him vaguely concerned lest he be found wanting, in practice it meant he got to watch his wife check out another woman's stunning tits. And the whole D/s thing meant he could tell Delia to do stuff to them, and odds were very high she *would*. And then there'd be orgies and stuff. *Especially* orgies.

The whole situation just contained so much *win* he almost couldn't comprehend it all. But yet another great factor was that he didn't have to sit idly by while he waited for his brain to process all this good fortune.

"Back to making out, you two."

And they did that. Which was *awesome*.

Chapter Eleven

Delia could have kissed Mara forever. Her lips were soft and her tongue velvety plush, and they had the same style so it was as though Mara could read her thoughts and anticipate what she wanted before she knew it herself. She wondered if it felt the same to Mara. Like they had one mind.

When Daniel had told them to get back to it, she had complied happily. Now, though, hovering on all fours over Mara's limp, sated body, she wanted more. But she was frustrated too, because she wanted her Master to be the one to tell her to do more. That was what made it all right to do. That was what made her okay with it.

That's what makes it hot.

Sometimes it didn't do to overanalyze these things.

She leaned into the kiss a little more. Lowered her body just an inch or two, letting her breasts graze against Mara's. Hoping Daniel would be distracted enough by the garters and stockings framing her ass and pussy that he wouldn't notice.

He was a man, a horny man. Of course he noticed.

"Delia, making out includes groping. But since you seem to need some guidance, here, let me."

Daniel nudged his head between them just enough to catch Delia's nipple with his tongue. She angled herself to give him more room, felt his head working even as she swallowed Mara's groan, and realized he was alternating between them.

She pulled her head up, needing air, but he popped up, intercepted her and took her mouth in a hard, messy kiss. So different from Mara's, but just as good in its way. She had no idea what Daniel was thinking, and that excited her too.

Well. She had *some* idea. He kissed Mara next, the same way, hard and fast with lots of plundering tongue. Delia knew she was supposed to feel jealous. But she didn't. Not jealous of them, just impatient for it to be her turn again. With either of them. She didn't care which.

Daniel raised his head again, gave her a sultry scowl. "I showed you how I want you to suck her nipples, Delia. I expect you to get right on that."

Oh my God, who are you and what have you done with my husband? And does he ever have to come back?

And then...then her Master curved the long fingers of one hand over her head and pressed her down until her nose was just brushing the areola of Mara's right breast. "Now, Delia."

She opened her mouth, took a tentative lick at the ruffled skin. And then another, and then she rounded her lips to take in the nipple. Slowly, savoring it. Remembering what to do, as it had been years since her last girlfriend. Whose breasts had been nowhere near as lovely as Mara's.

The sensitive skin was tightening even as she worked her lips, flicked her tongue against it. She nipped lightly and Mara arched into her, the soft skin of her breast pressing pillow-like against Delia's chin and nose. Not too big, not too small.

Just right, Delia thought, and wondered why they were all so full of fairy tales in this room.

She sucked and licked her way to the other side, and wished that it weren't just a fairy tale. That nights at home could be full of this too, this languid exploration of all the possibilities. Knowing that nobody need ever go unkissed while having their nipples sucked. That going down and penetration need not be mutually exclusive acts. That clothing could perhaps, depending on style, be shared, and that Daniel could finally have somebody to play computer games with him.

When her mind veered off sex into clothes, she felt a shift, a new possibility come into being. A new way to see things, do things. Glancing up, she saw Daniel still leaning into Mara's mouth, taking his time.

"Does she kiss like me, Master?"

He pulled back but kept his eyes trained on Mara. "She does."

He was perspiring a little, a fine sheen highlighting the back of his neck, turning the brown hair almost black. His black t-shirt was clinging to his back in spots. Delia was the only one who hadn't worked up a sweat yet, but she found she didn't mind. Things were getting done. She was part of it. Sooner or later, it would be her turn.

"Can we keep her, Master?"

He just smiled, and Mara chuckled. The movement caused a wonderful ripple effect across her chest. Delia fastened her teeth back on to the closest nipple and scraped her tongue across the flesh, hard. Things were getting done. But she wouldn't mind more things, getting done faster. She wouldn't mind being one of those things.

With a final brush of a kiss against Mara's lips, Daniel stood and walked to the end of the other couch, where his various tools and implements of pleasurable destruction still occupied space. He cupped his hand around whatever it was he'd picked up and spread lube on. Something else he'd bought at the store, she thought. He'd been very cagy about his purchases, revealing them one by one. She wondered just how many items had been in that bag.

"You don't need to be watching me, you need to be paying attention to what you're doing, sub. Also, right now you have about five seconds to work your way down to her pussy, so you may want to move it."

She moved, not as gracefully as she should have. Down to the end of the couch, resting her feet up on top of the low, broad arm while she knelt between Mara's thighs and gently pushed the other woman's legs up and apart. Mara groaned and bent her knees, letting them fall open.

Delia wondered whether she should start waxing. The skin looked smooth and soft, and when she bent to test with her tongue, she tasted salt and felt velvet smoothness. A little warm, a little puffy from the earlier abuse. And Delia could just see the edges of the marks Daniel had left, the darker red creases from the cane still vivid, the pink from the flogger already starting to fade.

Her own rear was still a little worse for wear from the tawse last night. It had packed an unexpected wallop, and she had found a few little welts and bruises this morning. They were pretty, a spot of color on her otherwise barely tanned skin. Delia would like to see Mara's skin in the morning, see how much of a lasting impression Daniel had made. See what Mara looked like in the morning. Would she be chipper, or would she be grumpy until she'd been fed breakfast and plied with coffee?

Daniel's hand was on her head again, pushing.

"Get. To. Work."

She hadn't eaten pussy in years. But she found it was like riding a bicycle. At least in that one apparently never forgot how. Otherwise, it was completely unlike riding a bicycle. It was unlike anything else, a unique experience that combined some of the best bits of sex, kissing and eating. Salty and tangy-sweet, with an intriguing give under the tongue. Each little labial frill had its own level of response, its own tolerance for abuse. Rougher on the outer, with nips and pulling. Softer on the inner, a place for delving tongues. Feather kisses, ghost kisses across a clitoral hood still flushed from orgasm, or perhaps already swelling again with a freshly aroused surge of blood.

Mara was whimpering, shifting her hips restlessly. She liked having her opening teased while her clit was lapped at with little puppy licks.

Delia had almost forgotten about Daniel. He came up behind her now and tapped at her inner thighs, slapping from one to the other.

"Wider." And then, when she apparently didn't move enough to please him, another, sharper slap. "Wider, sub."

She edged her knees and feet out and pushed her butt higher, lowering her chest almost to the couch and curving one hand under Mara's thigh while she rested on the opposite elbow.

"Nobody comes until I say so," he reminded them both.

Delia tried to keep her focus on the task at hand, but it grew difficult once Daniel started on his own task. She realized quickly that what he'd purchased at *Delights* was a butt plug. Bigger than her existing one. A wider one—*not so fast, not so fast*—than the last anal bead on the string she was used to.

He slowed down, reading her as he always did, and teased his way around the tight opening with a lubed finger until she relaxed a little bit. The plug slipped deeper, and as her flesh stretched to accommodate it, the familiar slow burn started to spread over her back and legs. This form of arousal was almost too keen to stand, and Delia always thought it felt like experiencing an orgasm from the outside in. Every nerve alive, eager, anticipating, but threatening to overload the system in their zeal.

She sighed with relief and eased up a little more when the plug was finally seated. It felt thick and long inside her, solid and heavy. She hadn't seen Daniel get undressed, but she could feel his cock pressing against her now, slipping across her pussy. He was teasing her with it. Without thinking, she echoed the motion of his erection with her tongue across Mara's slit, a sympathetic tempo of desire carrying itself from one partner to the next. Mara moaned, Delia moaned, Daniel laughed and then started to work himself inside her. Slowly, because she was tight from the plug. And sore from last night. And already trembling on the brink of an orgasm, because she was so keyed up from watching Mara on the horse and everything else. Delia suspected he could see her readiness like a tattoo across her back.

The *thing* in her ass started to vibrate. Delia's head shot up, her back arched down and she opened her mouth to holler but nothing much came out.

"Guh!" she finally managed.

Daniel inched deeper and gave her a slap on the hip.

She took a deep breath and tried to sort them out, all the sensations. Too much, too many. So good.

Another slap. "Back to work, sub. That pussy's not gonna go down on itself."

Well, that didn't even make sense. But it was steadying, in a way, to know Daniel was affected by this too. As an army of fiery sprites began a spirited dance up her spine, Delia bent back to the luscious field of pink in front of her and attacked it with fresh intensity. Ferocity, really. She transferred all the emotions, all the things she couldn't express, into this one job, writing her desires out on Mara's sex with her tongue and finger in rapid, sharp strokes.

"Beautiful," Daniel moaned. He was holding her hips tightly, pushing deeper with each thrust. And Delia felt Mara's fingers on her hair, stroking delicately. Such contrast. Hot need seared her and she latched on to Mara's clit and sucked, her tongue racing, her fingers clutching up to press on the sensitive front wall, on the spot she knew was there.

There.

"Master, I need to come!" Mara sounded almost panicked, and Delia nearly stopped. She had forgotten, she had pushed too fast, she was going to spoil it—

"Yesss," hissed Daniel. His hand reached under Delia's body with the familiarity only a lover of many years can know, finding her clit and applying just the right amount of pressure instantly. "Do it, Dee. Make her come. And then I'll let you come. Do it, now!"

It was as good as done. Mara was already flying, and Delia's tongue just helped her stay aloft, keening and bucking through what sounded like an apocalyptic orgasm.

She was just coming down when Delia realized she was past her own point of no return, had headed off the cliff without intending to. Brush fire, raging from the outside in, sweeping over every nerve and scorching her to a crisp. From the sweetly agonizing vibrations in her ass, to the more rhythmic pounding in her cunt, to the flavor and feel

of sex in her mouth, she felt consumed. Completely used up, nothing left of her by the time the climax had its way and ebbed from her body.

The vibrator was off. And Daniel was not inside her anymore. She felt an echo, a memory of the vibration and the friction, a twang of remembered pleasure spasming through her clit every few seconds. But she could have been in outer space for all the rest she could tell. She could have been floating.

“Take a sip, Dee.”

Cold. A straw, pressed to her lips. She opened her mouth just enough to take a sip, and only then realized how dry her mouth and throat were. The water tasted sweet, and she would have gulped it all down if he’d let her.

But he didn’t. He took the straw away after a few seconds, pressed a kiss on her forehead and went away again.

She told herself she would open her eyes and watch him, see where he’d gone. In just a minute. When she had enough energy to open her eyes again.

Chapter Twelve

Pillows.

Mara was aware of pillows, softer than those on her bed, stacked up behind her. She opened her eyes and blinked at the candlelight, the pink and red and golden shades that slowly resolved into a room.

She was on the Roman orgy couch, propped up at one end with a mound of the multicolored throw pillows. And she had one leg wrapped over one of Delia's legs. Delia was lying next to her, looking as sound asleep as any fairy tale princess. A few long strands of blonde hair had worked loose from her braid and now clung to the pillow her cheek was resting on. Pink pillow, pink cheek, golden hair.

Mara carefully tucked the errant hair behind Delia's ear. Then she was taken over by a stretch that she gave into completely, catlike. Bones and muscles grumbled companionably and then felt as if they were popping back into place.

"Mmm."

Her hand flew to her heart at the sound. But it was just Master Daniel. He was perched on the opposite arm of the long lounge, his feet on the seat, his elbows resting on his knees. It looked as if he'd been watching them sleep.

She took a few seconds to drink him in. Jeans with faded spots worn into them by use rather than fashion. No shoes. No shirt. He'd put his glasses back on, which made her realize she couldn't remember exactly when he'd taken them off. Only that when she'd watched him come earlier, his long face transformed into something almost frightening but beautiful in its extremity, he hadn't been wearing them.

His hair was a mess. Even his beard somehow looked ruffled. She'd rarely seen a guy look quite so freshly fucked.

"You can keep stretching if you want."

"I'm good, thanks." The scene was over. She wasn't sure how she knew, but it just was. He was no lifestyle Dom. He no longer had his Master hat on.

"We missed you last night."

It took Mara aback. "You saw me last night. Remember?"

"No, I mean afterward. In the car, at home. It felt strange. Like...like we were leaving you behind."

She didn't know what to say. A hope she didn't feel entitled to raged sudden and fierce in her heart.

"Nggg."

Delia lifted her head and looked around her with all the clarity of a college kid the morning after a three-day-weekend bender. Her eyes took in Daniel, then Mara. After a moment she let her head fall back down, closed her eyes and snuggled closer to Mara's side.

"We're keeping the magic pixie, right?" she murmured.

Mara cracked up. Daniel displayed a bit more control.

"She's not a puppy, Delia. We can't just take her home like we found her in a parking lot."

"Parking lot, bondage club. You say potato..." Mara wasn't one to quibble over details like that.

"Mara, we would both really like it if you came home with us tonight."

She tried to picture their home, their cute suburban couple house, and found she couldn't. Cute suburban couples didn't bring home girls they met at bondage clubs. So it was hard to imagine what the whole thing would look like, her being at their house. But that didn't mean her mind didn't have room to grow. It didn't mean she couldn't learn to handle the consequences of having that rich, ferocious hope fulfilled.

"Maybe just this once."

Epilogue

It wasn't a very smart precedent to set, subverting a fellow sub just days after their double-collaring. But in Mara's defense, she had finally convinced Delia to try something Daniel had never gotten her to do. Not in years of dating and marriage. And it had only taken *Mara* two months.

That was the first thing that came to her mind, anyway, when Daniel opened the door and found the two of them together. Naked except for their collars and sprawled out with their equipment on the bed.

She cast a longing little glance at Delia as they stopped what they were doing, wishing they'd had a chance to finish before he caught them. They had been so close. But there was always next time.

Daniel took his time, loosening his tie and taking off his jacket, hanging it on a hanger in the closet, clearly choosing his words carefully before expressing himself to the two recalcitrant submissives who now knelt side by side between the bed and the wall where the big-screen TV was mounted. The graphic computer feed currently displayed on it was paused in mid-action, as was the content on the screen of Mara's laptop.

At last, jacket and tie neatly put away, shirt sleeves rolled up, the Master made his way back to the bed and stood looming over the two women, staring from one to the other in stony silence.

Delia broke first. She hated the waiting, and he knew it. "Master, we're sorry, we were just —"

"I didn't give you permission to speak, sub."

"Sorry, Master."

Mara wanted to grab Delia's fingers, squeeze them, tell her it would be okay. But she sat with her own hands clasped neatly behind her back, unmoving. She had never minded waiting, as long as she knew it would be worth her while in the end.

"I'm disappointed in you, Mara. I know you were the one behind this."

"I'm sorry, Master."

"You will be making it up to me in the dungeons later."

"Understood, Sir."

Daniel had to nudge some equipment and other stuff out of his way with his feet to clear space by the bed, so he could sit at the foot of it and continue his looming more comfortably.

The empty potato chip wrapper sounded particularly accusatory when it crinkled. Daniel's toe caught Delia's wireless mouse and it tipped over, winking its baleful red eye at her until he carefully righted it.

"Food crumbs on the floor. All this extra gear dragged up here. You two not waiting for me in bed like you were supposed to be. And yeah, I know I was a half-hour late getting home, there was a wreck on the interstate and traffic was backed up for miles and then my cell ran out of juice. But still."

He sighed, the deep and long-suffering sigh of a man with responsibilities, whose followers have minds of their own.

"But that isn't the real point. The *real point*, ladies, is that if I've told you once, I've told you a dozen times. The bedroom television is *not* for playing computer games." He fixed them one at a time with his best, steely, eyebrow-enhanced glare. "The bedroom television is for watching porn."

About the Author

After earning two graduate degrees, practicing law awhile and then working for the public school system for over ten years, Delphine finally got a clue. She tossed all that aside and started doing what she should have been doing all along, writing novels! In hindsight she could see the decision was a no-brainer. Because which sounds like more fun? Being a lawyer/special educator/reading specialist/educational diagnostician...or writing spicy romances?

When not writing or doing “mommy stuff”, Delphine reads voraciously, watches home improvement shows, noodles around with html and css coding, and plays computer games with her darling (and very romantic) husband. She is fortunate enough to have two absurdly precocious children and two rotten but endearing rescued mutts.

Delphine and her family are all Texas natives, and reside in unapologetic suburban bliss near Houston.

Delphine welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at www.ellorascave.com.

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