

# Ace of Brats

Loki Renard

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## Chapter One

Blake West sat on the balcony of his favorite bar, relaxing after a long day's work. His tie had been loosened and the first couple buttons of his thick linen business shirt had been undone. His hair, dark and with a tendency to tight curls, threatened to fall into his deep green eyes. He brushed it out of the way impatiently as he sipped at his espresso. The quick unfurrowing of his brow suggested that he found the brew to his tastes. With a small sigh of relief he leaned back in his chair and laced his fingers over his midsection. The summer had tanned his skin a deep Mediterranean olive tone, and his skin was pleasantly dark in contrast to the white shirt

“So you're done with Sarah?” His friend and partner in crime, Adrian gave him a sympathetic look as he drew on his cigarette. Adrian was a slight man with thinning blond hair and keen features. Unkind persons might have described his eyes as 'beady', but he missed nothing. It had been Adrian who had first noticed the tensions in Blake's previous relationship, long before Blake himself had seen the problems that inevitably destroyed it.

“Yeah,” Blake nodded and took a longer drink, feeling the rough blend igniting his senses almost immediately. “She just needed too much. She needed to be micromanaged. Could barely get up in the morning without me.”

“Micromanaged, eh?” A far away look established itself on Adrian's face.

Blake smirked, the thin creases around his eyes becoming deeper as he smiled. “Yeah, she'd be your dream girl. Except she doesn't do bondage.”

The light went out of Adrian's expression as quickly as it had gone on. “Never mind then.”

Blake grinned wider still. Bondage might be a hard limit for some subs, but it was a must have for Adrian. Fortunately for him, rope tops were still in high demand. He wasn't the best looking guy on the block but the man couldn't walk into a club without being besieged by willing bottoms.

“I just want a woman with a bit of back bone,” Blake mused.

“Someone with a back bone who will also let you paint her ass red?” It was Adrian's turn to grin now.

“Precisely,” Blake nodded. “She can be bad if she wants, but she'll take her medicine when I decide it's necessary.”

“Careful what you wish for,” Adrian cautioned him, looking his watch. “What you're describing sounds dangerously like a brat.”

Cocking his head to the side, Blake considered the possibility of a brat. “What's so wrong with brats?”

“Oh god, where do I begin?” Adrian drummed his fingers on the table as he thought. “Well for starters, they hardly ever know what they want. They never look at themselves, they're always looking for someone else to fix them. And they're selfish. It's all about them, what they want – even though they don't know what it is they actually want. They'll brat you until you give them what they deserve and then they'll sulk because they didn't like it. Give me a submissive any day.”

“They can't all be that bad surely?” Blake said as nightmarish visions of endless pouting and complaining danced through his head.

“A brat is a submissive who doesn't know she's submissive yet,” Adrian declared self importantly.

Blake tried to follow Adrian's circular logic. “So you don't want brats, you'd rather a submissive, but a brat *is* a submissive?”

“Yes. But a larval submissive. A submissive caterpillar.” Adrian seemed particularly pleased with his analogy. “And some of them are poisonous,” he added as an afterthought.

“God you talk some rot,” Blake snorted with laughter.

“You'll see, young padwan,” Adrian smiled, checking his watch. “Let's get going. Maybe you'll get lucky tonight.”

“Maybe,” Blake stretched, feeling much better. It was a Friday and they were heading off to their usual haunt, Kanes, a semi-public club that catered to numerous fetishes. The last few months had been barren of any kind of kinky play, and he was ready to remedy that problem as quickly as possible.

The club was quiet when they arrived, though a steady low hum of activity suggested that the regulars were already at play. The moment they walked in the door, Adrian was approached by a couple looking for some advice and he was already reaching for the rope. Blake snorted to himself. It was a pity that rope work wasn't really his thing. He was mildly curious about it, but there was little point in being curious with nobody to play with.

He hung out by the alcohol free bar for a few minutes, letting his eyes adjust to the low levels of light in the place. It was dimly lit, which made everything feel more intimate, and gave people a feeling of privacy even when playing right out in public.

Kanes boasted several rooms to play in. The social area in which he found himself was largely devoid of play, but there was a range of implements for sale, leather crops, paddles and cuffs laid out waiting for new owners. He perused them casually, but nothing caught his eye. He preferred using his hand anyway, he liked feeling the increasingly hot flesh under his palm. He even liked the tingling pain he got in his palm after imparting a good series of hard swats to a deserving behind. Hand spanking was tactile and wonderful, even if it barely counted as play to many of the submissive women who frequented the club.

Blake was not a regular player, though he did enjoy the scene community. There were some very interesting people to be met in this subterranean gathering place. He said his hellos to the tops that were in residence, experienced men who had been around the block several times and could do things with whips and chains that defied belief.

Letting his attention wander from the conversation around him, he let his gaze drift around the room. Almost immediately, a young woman took his eye. She was a good deal younger than him, she looked to be in her mid twenties or so. He figured he probably had a decade on her, but the age difference only served to pique his interest.

“Who's she?” He leaned over and asked one of the other tops. Terry was an old hand in the scene. He'd seen more submissives than most people had hot dinners and Blake usually trusted his judgment. Old dogs might be difficult to teach new tricks, but what they knew, they knew damn well.

Terry looked over in the direction Blake pointed in and shook his head immediately. “Oh don't even bother with her.”

Blake was disappointed. “Why not?”

“She's a pain in the ass.” Terry shook his head. “And not in a good way,” he added as he saw Blake's expression of interest.

“Is she a bunny boiler?”

“No, she's got her head screwed on straight enough as far as I can tell.”

Blake looked over at the woman again. He couldn't see what the problem was, she was a neat little package, a nice ass, good legs and a decent rack to boot. Her hair was a little short for his tastes, but the dark bob suited her. Combined with the short skirt and long boots she was wearing, she put him in mind of a 60's mod girl.

“Seriously kid, I'm warning you, you'll regret it,” Terry's wrinkles formed shapes of rampant objection around his once handsome features. “She damn near got herself thrown out of here last week.”

Blake's brows went up in surprise. It was a rare occurrence for someone to get themselves into so much trouble that they were asked to leave. It was even rarer that the someone in question was a woman. “What for?”

Terry shook his head and waved his hand dismissively. “Antagonizing others. She's a mouthy little witch. She managed to get herself on Antonia's bad side. She's not particularly welcome here, not that she cares.”

Terry's tirade only had the effect of piquing Blake's interest further. Mouthy, was she? He could do mouthy. “What's her name then?”

By this time, the young woman was looking over at them, clearly quite well aware that she was the topic of their conversation. She didn't seem overly perturbed or pleased by that fact, but her clear gaze was interested in the very least.

“Calls herself Ace, don't know her real name, don't care to know her real name.” Terry turned away, clearly unwilling to openly pay attention to her. “Ace of Brats, that's what she is,” he added with a derisive snort.

“Hm.” Blake thought to himself, mulling the information over. He had been saying he wanted a more outgoing submissive. Sarah would never have gotten kicked out of anything, she would rather have disappeared into the earth than open her mouth and speak out of turn. He knew the DM Terry was talking about, Antonia was not one of his favorite people. The fact that Ace had stood up to her was actually rather attractive.

“Cover me, I'm going in,” he said, clapping Terry on the shoulder. Terry could only shake his head and groan at the folly of youthful dominance.

Blake approached Ace confidently. He had good reason to be confident. A lifetime of experience had taught him that not many women would turn him down, not at the outset anyway. He'd been told on more than one occasion that he had a gorgeous smile, and the way submissive types tended to melt in front of him was enough to give him a perpetual ego boost.

When he arrived at her table she was sitting by herself, looking at a distant scene with a slight sneer on her face. In the next room, two women were playing. The submissive was tied across a horse, bent almost double, her pert ass up nice and high. The dominant woman was busy striping her ass quite efficiently and enthusiastically with a flogger. Blake paused for a moment to admire the way the submissive's cheeks jiggled with every stroke. Glancing back towards Ace, he wondered why she was so scornful of the scene. There was no time like the present to find out. “Hey,” he smiled, stepping up beside her.

“Hi,” she immediately returned his smile. That was a promising sign. When she wasn't sneering, she really was quite attractive, in a cute way.

“Blake West,” he said, extending his hand. She took it and shook it with a firm grip.

“Ace Jones,” she replied.

Blake smiled charmingly. “I like it, but it's not your real name, I presume?” It was something of a crashing offense to go around asking people their real names at a scene gathering, but he got the feeling that Ace wasn't terribly big on protocol.

“Why would you presume that?” she said, a slight frown on her face.

“It's an interesting name. If it is your real name, your parents must have been interesting people.” He leaned up against the table, making himself comfortable.

“I suppose,” she said. Her eyes flicked away from him back to the scene she'd been watching. She was already losing interest, or at least feigning as if she was losing interest anyway.

“It's a nice night, isn't it?” He flashed his brilliant white smile as he continued to make small talk to break the ice.

“It is,” she nodded. He liked the way her short dark bob bounced when she moved her head. It was probably a cut designed to make her look hard nosed and business like. In this environment it made her look as if she'd fallen down a rabbit hole and didn't know how to return to reality. Pleasant head bobbing aside however, the two word answers weren't really cutting it for Blake. Feeling that his efforts at polite conversation were failing, he decided it was time to move the conversation along to topics that would interest them both much more deeply. “So my dear, what are you into?”

Ace's smile faded immediately and a distinctly hostile look came into her eyes. “What kind of fucking question is that?”

Taken aback by the vehemence of her reply, Blake frowned. “A logical question for a kink club?”

She scowled at him furiously, screwing up her face in a most unattractive way. “Why the fuck would I tell a total stranger what I'm into?”

Blake paused for a moment, letting his immediate irritation settle. She had a hell of a temper, that was for sure. Already he'd found something to work on, not to mention pretty strong motivation to have her over his lap. He ignored her rude question and asked one of his own. “Why would you come into a club like this if you weren't looking for someone to take you in hand?”

Ace sighed and rolled her eyes. “I'm not looking to be 'taken in hand',” she made dramatic quote signs in the air with bent fingers. “I'm looking for a good time.”

The smile returned to Blake's face. A good time. He could go for a good time, but he'd have to deal with her attitude first. “A good time with a mind reader, I suppose,” he said, keeping his tone light.

She looked at him with only slightly less derision. “What do you mean?”

He leaned against the table, looking over at the striped bottom in the mid-distance, then back at her. “You take such violent objection to being asked what you're into, whoever you end up with is going to have to be pretty damn good at mind reading.”

Shaking her glossy hair, Ace scowled. “When I meet the right person, it'll click. I won't have to answer a barrage of inane questions.”

Ah, there it was. The innocent naivety behind the sophisticated facade. She probably thought she was better than the other submissives, better than the woman being spanked by her Mistress, but she was just as caught up in romantic nonsense as every other submissive, possibly more so.

“What are you looking so smug about?” It was her turn to ask the question.

He made sure that he caught her eye and kept it as he answered her. “You're an inexperienced little girl with an attitude. It will be interesting to see how long you can keep that up once someone has you pinned down with your bottom bright red, your legs spread for the spanking and everything... and I do mean *everything* you have on display.” He spoke crudely on purpose. He wanted to shock her. She was sitting there so self possessed, waiting for an imaginary Prince Charming to sweep her off her feet. She didn't need a prince, she needed a villain to teach her a damn good lesson.

Her reaction was not what he had expected. He'd expected blushing and stammering, maybe an attempted slap in the face, or perhaps a horrified quick exit. Instead all he got back was a smirk. “I imagine I'd handle it a damn sight better than you would,” she said, her eye contact not wavering for a moment.

Blake was impressed. Most of the women he knew would have been staring themselves into the floor by this point. Usually a submissive woman gave submissive cues very quickly. Ace wasn't playing that game though, she didn't seem even slightly rattled by his description. He smiled as he responded. “It's not a position I'm likely to find myself in. I don't bottom.”

Ace's brow raised slightly “And what makes you think I do?”

Now she was playing with him. He could see it in her eyes. Oh, she wanted him to believe her, but there was a mischievous quirk to her lips that betrayed her. She might not be your typical soft, blushing submissive, but she was definitely one who belonged on the receiving end of things.

“It's written all over you, darling.”

“Is it now?” Her smile still lingered, playing about the edges of her mouth. In spite of her apparent confidence he could see a glimmer of uncertainty in her eyes, perhaps even hope.

“Oh yes,” he said, speaking quite seriously. “It's obvious, for instance, that you're into spanking.”

“Fuck off,” she laughed, shaking her head. “What makes you say that?”

There it was in her eyes, stronger now, the hopeful interest. The pieces were falling into place thick and fast. In spite of her attitude and contrary insistence on not answering questions, she was telling him what he wanted to know. “You can't take your eyes off that girl getting her ass spanked over there,” he gestured towards the two women, watching with enjoyment as a faint blush appeared on Ace's cheeks.

“Maybe I just like pussy,” she replied bluntly.

“Perhaps,” he acknowledged the possibility. “But if you liked pussy, you wouldn't be doing the rounds, giving everybody shit, trying to see who is going to grab you and give you the spanking you deserve.”

Several expressions chased one another across her cute face. He had her right where he wanted her, she was off balance and she knew that he had her figured out. “It's not the best idea,” he continued. “You're liable to make more enemies than friends that way, people don't like to be manipulated, and in this scene, they see that shit coming a mile away.”

He was telling her off, and she wasn't liking it, not one bit. He could see her shutting down right in front of him. Her expression became careful and closed. “I don't know what you're talking about,” she said stiffly.

“Sure you do. We both know you do.” She was scowling, but he kept steady eye contact, letting her know that her moods didn't scare him. She could be as sulky as she liked, but he wasn't going to go until he'd finished saying what he had to say.

“Listen, I am who I am. Not everyone likes who I am. Not everyone can handle me.”

He snorted derisively as she took refuge in the old 'I'm too much for you to handle,' excuse used by almost every poorly mannered submissive who has yet to find their place. “Little girl, you're not all that hard to handle. Being an ill mannered brat doesn't make you difficult, it makes you spoiled.”

“For fuck's sake,” Ace exclaimed, starting to lose her temper. “Are you done lecturing me yet? Is that your kink, going up to total strangers and telling them off?”

“No,” he smiled a slow smile. “My kink is taking bad girls and spanking them red. As for lecturing, I haven't even begun to lecture you.”

A slight redness began to spread over her cheeks. Blake held his breath as it deepened and her hips

began to sway back and forth where she sat. There it was. She was blushing and squirming and he knew he'd won. She wouldn't admit it yet, but he had her. A dynamic had been established and she was interested. She was more than interested. If he'd turned around that moment and walked out of the place she would probably have followed him. Her little bad girl act was nothing more than a facade hiding the fact that she wanted what so many other submissive women wanted, somebody to take her in hand.

Now that he had elicited his first submissive response from her, he changed tack. There would be plenty of time to take her down a peg or two and teach her how to behave herself. Now it was time to get to know her better. "I'd like to take you to dinner," he smiled. "Would you do me the honor?"

"Now?" He could see that she was slightly flustered by the speed at which things were going, but that was the way he wanted it. He wanted her to be swept up and surrender to his plans.

"Yes, now." He checked his watch. "It's not your bed time yet."

She laughed at the mention of bed time. "I really don't do that infantile stuff," she said, placing her hand on his arm.

"Is that so?" He nodded, acknowledging her, though he really doubted that she had any idea 'what she did'. She was so green as a bottom she barely knew her ass from her elbow. He glanced down at her hand, slightly impressed that she had been the first to bridge the physical gap between them. She might be a spoiled brat, but she could clearly be forward, perhaps even dominant when she wanted to be. She was a complex woman and he found her intriguing in spite of her glaringly obvious shortcomings.

## Chapter Two

Dinner was a very pleasant affair indeed. He enjoyed sitting across from a woman who was able to peruse a menu and make her own choices rather than one who simply sat there all doe eyed, waiting for him to make the decision for her. It also pleased him to discover over appetizers that Ace was quite the conversationalist. She was clearly well educated and well informed on a range of topics. It made a pleasant change from the rather inane conversation he'd become sadly accustomed to with Sarah.

Unlike women in other scene dates he'd been on, she wasn't trying to be a good little submissive and she wasn't trying to sub at him. She clearly expected to be conversed with as an equal and they had quite a stirring conversation on Middle Eastern politics. She became quite animated when she got her teeth into a topic and Blake found himself sitting back and listening as she explained her theories on the subject.

"So you see, it's almost a woman's issue," she said. "You can't have true democracy until you have true equality for women."

Blake nodded. "But many would argue that we do not yet have true equality in the West."

"Probably not, but it's better than what they have," Ace said, picking at her shrimp cocktail.

"But you have to acknowledge that not all women want to be equal," he continued, playing Devil's Advocate with glee.

It hit a nerve as he had expected it would. "All women *do* want to be equal," Ace disagreed.

He smiled at her naivety. "Trust me, they don't. There are plenty of women looking for alpha males who will look after them and direct them."

"Like children," Ace snorted derisively.

Blake shook his head. "I don't think they see it that way. I think they see it as a natural hierarchy. Every group of people has to have a leader."

"Maybe," Ace shrugged. "I still think most women want to be equal where it counts. Sure, they might want to be tied up and fucked silly, but at the end of the day, they're going to want a say in the family dog and where the kids go to school and what color the new couch is. They're going to want to live in a nice house in a good neighborhood. I'm pretty sure that these submissive super slave types would soon leave if their doms decided to become gypsies or boat people. They're submissive as long as their conditions are met, and that's not submission at all, that's fantasy play and convenience."

"Well there's always the disconnect between fantasy and reality," Blake nodded. He was impressed. Ace had her head screwed on better than it had seemed at first. She was perhaps overly critical of those who did not share her views, but that was one of the many shortcomings that came with being young.

"They pretend as if their fantasy is their reality when it's not," Ace pointed out, unwilling to leave the subject. "They act all smug and subbie and they love to talk about the gift of their submission, but all they're really doing is having kinky sex and doing the dishes afterward. It drives me mental."

“Is that why you start fights with them?”

“Who said anything about starting fights?” The words were innocent enough, but Ace's grin said it all. “I might have had a disagreement or two with people who thought they were better than me.”

“You're a very naughty girl,” Blake said, chuckling and shaking his head.

She pointed a shrimp in his direction. “Is that a spankable offense then? Having a brain and a mouth and using both?”

“It depends.”

“Are you being coy with me, Blake?” The smirk was back on her face.

“No, I am not being coy, Miss Ace. It depends on the situation and the effect of your words. Words are powerful, you know.”

“Oh I know,” she agreed blithely.

He smiled, knowing that she thought she had the upper hand yet again. She was clearly a bright young woman, accustomed to getting her own way, accustomed to arguing the toss whenever she saw fit. He doubt she'd ever truly submitted to anything or anyone.

“What are you smiling at?” She asked the question playfully.

“You,” he answered truthfully.

“What about me makes you smile?”

A forward question from a forward young lady. Blake leaned back in his chair, looking her over in a deliberate manner. “I don't think you quite know what you're getting yourself into. I think you're unaware of how deep you're already in.”

She laughed. “You have a tendency to be dramatic, Mr West,” she noted.

“Not at all my dear. If anything, I tend towards understatement.”

They smiled at one another quite warmly, but there was a tension between them. Slightly adversarial, very curious. He wanted to get to know her better, he knew that much. In one evening she'd challenged him more than he'd been challenged in the entire length of his previous relationship.

As dinner drew to a close, he offered to drive her home, but she declined in favor of taking a cab. He was not surprised, she had an independent streak a mile wide.

“Well I very much enjoyed your company,” he said warmly as they hovered by the front door of the restaurant, both unwilling to go out into the cold and break the spell of their date in the hustle and bustle of traffic and people rushing to and fro.

“And I yours, once you stopped lecturing me and started listening,” she smiled mischievously, holding out her hand. He looked at her askance.

“Give me your phone,” she ordered.

He raised a brow at her, but it was too early to really come down on infractions like cheekiness. “Here you go,” he said, handing her the slim device.

“Thanks,” she muttered, busily scrolling through menus. “It's not many men who would let a girl they'd just met snoop like this,” she glanced up and giggled.

“I've nothing to hide,” he said, watching as she found his contacts list and added her name and a number he presumed was hers to the list.

“How boring,” she teased as she handed the phone back. He took it from her, feeling the brief touch of her slim fingers against his larger, thicker digits. A definite crackle of unmistakable chemistry passed between them, running through his body and down his spine. Mustn't let this one get away.

“Perhaps we could do something like this again, next time at my place? I cook a mean pasta,” he said, adding the promise of good food as added bait. She liked her food, he had learned that much watching her devour her steak earlier that evening.

“Definitely,” she agreed with a broad smile, tossing her sleek hair. “Though I doubt you can manage anything mean, you don't seem the type.”

His answering chuckle was filled with dark promise, but he kept silent on the subject. There was no point claiming to be a big bad top, Miss Ace would discover that for herself in good time.

Ace nervously straightened her skirt for the millionth time since she left the house, all the while lecturing herself about how silly she was being. He was just a man after all, just a man. There was no need to feel this silly and giddy about him. Certainly when they'd only had dinner once a week a go.

She couldn't help it though. From the moment he'd smiled at her in that dingy basement club, she'd been thoroughly entranced by him. He was incredibly handsome of course, but that wasn't the only thing that drew her to him. He had an aura of control about him, not a horrible need to control others, but control of himself. He hadn't reacted to any of her jibes, or her rudeness. Even when he barely knew her. That had been a surprise. Most of the other so called tops had lost their cool pretty quickly when she tested them with a little casual rudeness. He hadn't, he'd simply brushed it aside, ignored it even.

Frowning to herself, Ace wondered if that meant that he wasn't really all that dominant after all. Maybe he just wanted to get into her panties. As her cab pulled up to his building, her nerves built to a sickening level. She forced herself out of the cab, reminding herself that this was what she wanted. She wanted to finally explore the cravings that had always existed in tandem with her sexuality. She didn't just want to be made love to, she wanted a man who could spank her ass red, a man who would put her back in line when she was naughty. At least, she thought she wanted that. In real life, the only guys

into spanking seemed to be 900 years old, perpetually engaging in multi-person fuck fests or dangerous control freaks of the not awesome kind.

She had pressed the doorbell and was still stewing on the issue when her thoughts came full circle and filled her mind with the sudden image of a bunch of extremely old men engaging in an orgy. She snorted with laughter, making a sound like an angered sow on Blake West's front stoop.

Naturally Blake chose that moment to open the door, probably because she'd rung the bell, but she still felt it was entirely his fault that he appeared at the same moment as she appeared to be having a mad fit of the humors on his doorstep.

"Hello my dear," he said warmly, flashing her his handsome smile. He looked dashingly attractive in an argyle sweater and well fitted jeans. Casual, yet still very neat and tidy. The faint scent of some musky cologne floated to her nostrils, tantalizing her with his masculinity.

"Hello," Ace said, wiping her face on the back of her sleeve, in case her laughing had dislodged anything that would better remain lodged.

"What's so amusing?" He asked the question as he ushered her into his house and took her coat for her. She shrugged out of it and tried how best to explain the joke. There really wasn't anything she could say about it that didn't make her sound like a nutter, so she simply shrugged and went with the time honored 'nothing.'

"Perhaps it is nervous laughter then?" He flickered a wink at her as he guided her into the sitting room, one large hand gently pressed against her lower back.

"Maybe," she acknowledged, looking around appreciatively. The place looked clean and neat without very much clutter, knick knacks or even personal photos. There was a smaller television than she'd expected, but two large book cases filled with books and a couch that looked like it might swallow her whole if she sat on it. The place was filled with the aroma of Spaghetti Bolognese being cooked to perfection. It was a scent that made her mouth water and her stomach growl slightly in anticipation.

"You have a lovely home," she said politely.

"Thank you," he tilted his head in acknowledgment. "And you look very beautiful this evening."

Ace felt as if she were taking part in a dance, a dance with very strict rules and moves to follow. First comes the home compliment, then the appearance compliment. Before long someone would ask how the other person's day was and an entire tedious script would be played out without any need for actual thought. "Thanks," she muttered, feeling rather low at the thought that this interaction might not be all that different from the others in her life after all.

"What's wrong?" He picked up on her shift in mood rather smartly.

"Nothing, I just hate small talk," Ace confessed.

"Oh well we don't have to do small talk," Blake said, rolling up his sleeves as he stepped into the open plan kitchen. "Let's start off with the deep stuff. What was a nice girl like you doing in a place like the club?"

Ace groaned, but she smiled as she did so. “So cliché,” she observed, shaking her head in mock disappointment. “I was there because I was curious. Because I was looking for something.”

Blake nodded as he wrestled with a bottle of wine. “Will red do?”

“Sure,” she said, perching on the edge of the couch. Even the edges of the behemoth threatened to draw her into its soft embrace.

“What were you looking for in particular?” His eyes were on her intently as he handed her a glass of wine. It made her slightly uncomfortable to contemplate answering that question. How could she tell him, a man who was almost a stranger, about her fantasies, her needs?

“I...” she took a sip of her wine, then another. “That's a difficult question.”

“It is, isn't it?” The skin around his eyes creased with amusement. “We can go back to small talk, if you like. You could tell me what traffic was like.”

“Or you could tell me what you were looking for first,” she suggested.

“Ah, I did ask you first. But very well, I shall take the lead in laying myself bare.” He was enjoying himself far too much for Ace's liking, but she couldn't help but smile at him as he leaned against his kitchen counter, his legs long and his hips slim, but powerful. He was talking, but she was transfixed for a moment, wondering what his body looked like under his clothes.

“Ace.”

“Huh, sorry,” she shook her head. He was frowning at her.

“It is customary to listen to the answer when one asks a question,” he informed her in silky tones.

“Sorry. I was distracted. The, er, wine...” she explained lamely.

“Oh I see,” he said, reaching forward and plucking the glass from her fingers. Her mouth fell open in an 'o' of surprise, but he was unrepentant as he put her glass on the kitchen counter. “If it goes to your head, it is probably best you don't continue drinking, yes?”

Ace tried not to pout, which resulted in a scowl of epic proportions taking up residence on her face. “I think I can work out when I have had enough to drink. I can usually manage two sips,” she said acerbically.

“You probably think you can manage to listen to a conversation you're involved in as well. It doesn't mean you're right,” Blake replied quite calmly.

“God, I am sorry,” Ace sat back awkwardly. The couch was just as large as it looked and when she sat on it properly her legs were too short to reach the floor. “What the hell is this, furniture for giants?”

“You should be sorry, it was quite rude,” Blake replied. He was still pushing the point, a fact that Ace did not appreciate in the slightest. She shuffled forward enough that her feet reached the floor and

looked at him askance.

“What do you want me to say?”

“Perhaps you should practice your small talk. It's almost as if you're unfamiliar with the customs and conventions of conversation,” Blake mused.

“I am very familiar with them,” Ace disagreed. “I was just distracted is all. I do want to know what you're looking for.” She looked at him earnestly, and he relented.

“I have to confess I'm not entirely certain,” he said, handing her glass back to her with a flicker of a wink. “I used to think I wanted a submissive woman. These days I am not so sure. I certainly enjoy spanking.”

A little thrill went through Ace as she heard his deep timbre intone that powerful word. 'Spanking.' She hid it behind a nod. “You enjoy spanking as an erotic activity, or for discipline?”

“As an erotic activity certainly,” Blake said, “I do enjoy discipline play also. Real discipline, well, that's a dangerous area.”

“Is it?” Ace wrinkled her nose. “Lots of people seem to enjoy discipline. Domestic discipline.”

“With the man as the head of the household and the woman as his dutiful subordinate, yes.” Blake paused thoughtfully. “I have to admit, the idea does have some merits.”

“Why is that?” Ace was enjoying asking the questions.

“Well, having a woman who knows her place and does as she's told - there are a multitude of benefits to that arrangement.”

“Yes, I imagine dire boredom is one of them,” Ace said, drinking deeply. “Tell me,” she said, “why is it that so many people into BDSM seem to view *The Stepford Wives* as something to aspire to and not a cautionary tale?”

Blake chuckled. “They don't actually,” he said. “Nobody I know does certainly.”

“But that's what you're describing,” Ace warmed to the argument. “A woman who knows her place,” she mocked his deep tone.

“Well she doesn't necessarily have to stay in it all the time, it would probably be rather enjoyable putting her back in her place when she strays,” Blake purred the words, making them sound more like a promise than an abstract idea.

“Perhaps,” Ace giggled nervously. She wanted very much to be put in her place by Blake, taken in those strong hands and turned over his muscled thigh. He didn't seem to be in any hurry to do that though, he seemed to be enjoying the conversation.

“So,” he said, coming to sit beside her. “Are you ready to share your shopping list yet?”

The couch dipped as he sat and though there were several inches of space between them, Ace could swear she felt the heat of his body. He was much larger than her and she felt instantly small. "I don't know," she said, toying with her glass nervously. "I was looking to explore BDSM I guess," she said, skirting around the truth.

"Explore BDSM? What aspects of it? Do you enjoy the idea of being tied up, or perhaps you'd prefer to have your feet tickled whilst someone drips wax on your bare behind?"

She laughed at his jokes, relaxing slightly. "No," she giggled. "I like the idea of spanking."

"Just as I suspected," he said, his voice a deep rumble. "You're a little spanko."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means you probably fantasize about getting your ass warmed every night as you go to sleep." He was right on the money, and Ace cringed slightly. Was she really so transparent?

"I'm also willing to bet that at this point, you're not altogether interested in much else BDSM has to offer. You don't think you're a submissive, you're not really interested in serving. You're only interested in being spanked soundly." He finished his wine and looked at her expectantly. "How did I do?"

"Pretty good," Ace admitted. There was no point trying to be coy, not when she had demanded and received directness from him.

Blake nodded and she was relieved to see the corners of his mouth turn up in a smile. "Well, there we are then," he said in satisfied tones.

"Yep," Ace agreed.

"Dinner time, I think," he announced, changing the subject abruptly.

The excellent tastiness of dinner almost made up for Ace's disappointment that they weren't talking about the 's' word anymore. As she ate, she replayed the memory of him saying the word over in her mind, savoring it more than she savored the meal.

"I've lost you again," Blake noted, dabbing his mouth with his napkin.

"No," Ace said, swallowing her mouthful. She ate slowly and she still had a great deal left on her plate, whilst his was entirely empty. "I was thinking about what you were saying."

"Oh, I like that," Blake said approvingly. "What were you thinking?"

"Well," Ace said, gathering her nerve. "I was thinking that seeing as how you like to spank and I like being spanked..."

"Yes?" He was pretending ignorance as to what she meant and she wanted desperately to throw a bread roll at him. "Well I was thinking maybe we could do that sometime."

"You were thinking maybe I could spank you sometime?" The sentence sent a little shiver of pleasure

through her body. It sounded delicious simply falling from his lips, how much better would it feel in reality? She couldn't wait.

"If you wanted to, of course," she said with an uncharacteristic demure attitude.

"I'm sure I could be persuaded," he smiled a wicked smile. "But tell me first, have you been spanked before?"

Ace shook her head. "No, never."

"Ah, you truly are a dyed in the wool spanko then," he said with the air of a physician diagnosing a patient.

"What makes you say that?"

"Because you're thoroughly obsessed with the idea of being spanked in spite of the fact you have next to no idea how it feels."

"No idea at all," Ace agreed.

He smiled wickedly. "I said *next* to no idea. I'll wager you've attempted to spank yourself a few times."

She felt her skin flush as he once again put his finger right on the button. She'd experimented with spanking herself in the past, but it just didn't do it for her. She needed someone else to be the one imparting the discipline. Spanking herself lacked impact, physically and emotionally.

"Okay Sherlock," she tossed her napkin down on the table and looked directly at him. "So are we going to do this or not?"

"Hold your horses," Blake held up his large palm like a cop directing traffic. "This isn't something to be rushed."

"It's just smacking an ass," Ace said, feeling a little disappointed.

"I think you're more than just an ass," Blake said, a note of censure in his voice. His thick dark brows had drawn together ominously, a fact which only served to excite her. Perhaps he would spank her for referring to herself as an ass.

"Well obviously," she said, injecting just the right note of irritation into her tone. Being a pain in the rear end had attracted him in the first place, maybe more attitude was what was needed now to convince him to go through with the spanking.

"Spanking is more than just slapping someone's bottom, at least, it is to me," Blake explained. "It requires a certain amount of submission. You might be surprised at how much."

"Okay, I can submit," Ace said, eager to assure him that she could handle his hand on her behind.

He seemed amused and doubtful. "Can you now? Let's see, shall we? Come with me." He stood up from the table and lead her back into the living room. She followed close on his heels, glancing eagerly

at the couch as they passed it by. Would he do it there? It would probably be comfortable if he did it there, it was so wide and soft.

She was confused by what happened next. Instead of stopping by the couch, he kept going, walking towards the far wall. She followed, but more slowly now. Her senses were tingling with suspicion. Something was definitely up.

When they reached the wall, Blake turned towards her. She felt a jolt as his eyes met hers. Something had changed about him. He was not glaring or glowering or looking angry in any way, but his energy was quietly commanding, his gaze serious as he glanced over at the corner.

“Stand in the corner for me, will you my dear?”

The request was uttered so calmly and matter of factly that it took Ace a moment to process what he wanted. “What?” She shook her head. “You want me to stand in the corner?”

“Yes, I believe those were the words I used,” he confirmed.

He wanted her to stand in the corner, like a naughty child. Hot flushing embarrassment came over her as she contemplated the idea. She'd never done such a thing before, and it had certainly never featured in her fantasies. She didn't want this, but he did, and he was supposed to be in charge if he was going to spank her. “I... er... right now?” She looked at him with wide eyes, searching his face for signs of reassurance.

She found plenty of reassurance in his warm gaze. “Yes, right now if you please,” he said, lightly placing his hands on her shoulders and directing her. She went with the gentle pressure and in short order found her nose not two inches away from the corner. “I'm going to go see to the dishes,” he said behind her. “Stay there until I come and get you.”

“Okay,” she said, her eyes darting around the bare wall. It felt silly to be standing there, especially as she heard him retreat and begin clearing the plates. “This is definitely not my kink,” she shouted, her voice a great deal louder than it absolutely needed to be.

“I doubt anybody has a corner kink, though statistically, there must be someone out there,” Blake mused from the direction of the kitchen.

After just a minute or two she began to feel quite claustrophobic. The walls, so close to her face threatened to close in on her, so she inched back a little to give herself some space. That relieved her irritation and boredom momentarily, but it was only a matter of seconds before frustration set back in. She could hear the water running for the dishes and realized that she was probably going to be there for quite a long time indeed.

“Can I come out now please? I don't like this.”

“Just a few minutes longer,” Blake said in the distance.

Sighing to herself, Ace began to reflect on how silly it all was. If he wanted to spank her, he didn't need to make her jump through hoops first. He was probably laughing to himself seeing her actually doing what he told her to. This could be a slippery slope. Before she knew what was happening she might be

crawling around on all fours and barking like a dog. "If you don't want to spank me, you don't have to," she called.

"What makes you say I don't want to?" He'd started doing the dishes now, she could hear the gentle clinks of cutlery as the knives and forks slid into the sudsy water.

"Because you're sticking me in a corner. I can take a hint," she said, turning where she stood to look at him. He didn't reply, just lifted one hand out of the sink and twirled a soapy finger in a silent direction to turn back around. Muttering to herself, she obeyed. "I must be totally mental," she said softly under her breath.

"Not mental," he said, suddenly close to her. "You're just not used to being a good girl." His strong hands turned her to face him and she looked into an approving expression that made her glow on the inside. "You did rather well," he complimented her, taking her by the hand and leading her back to the couch.

"Mind sharing the point of that with me?"

"Giving you a taste of what it is to submit to something you don't like," he said, nestling her under his arm. She smiled, feeling his body against hers. It was an innocent intimacy that made her feel very cared for indeed.

"But I'm not asking you to do something I don't like," she pointed out.

"You've never been spanked before, Ace" he reminded her. "When someone else spansks you, it hurts, my dear."

"I don't think it would hurt too much, I think it would feel good," Ace argued obstinately.

Blake nodded in acknowledgment of her point. "Well if you're just talking about a few love taps, then sure, that won't be too bad. But I distinctly got the impression you wanted a proper spanking."

"Yeah," Ace agreed. "I want a real one."

"And I also got the impression you wanted it to be delivered like a real spanking. You wanted to be taken to task and not let up until your bottom was nice and red."

"Yeah," Ace giggled. His words were painting delightfully sensual pictures in her head.

He squeezed her affectionately with his arm as he shook his head at her. "Well my dear, that sort of spanking hurts. It requires submission to allow yourself to be put in the position to take it, and even more to stay there once your flesh starts burning."

"Well I showed you I can submit," Ace said impatiently, barely listening to him. "So let's do this thing."

He threw back his head and laughed. "You are so eager," he shook his head. "I wonder if you will be as eager after you feel my hand on your bottom."

“Well show me,” Ace pleaded. She didn't know what had come over her. When she'd first met Blake she'd all but told him to fuck off. Now she was sitting next to him, her hands gripping his thigh as she begged him to spank her.

“Okay little one, I will give you a taste,” Blake relented. “Come here.”

Ace squealed with glee as he drew her over his lap. It was slightly awkward settling into position, but he seemed to be quite practiced at guiding a female bottom into place and she soon found herself laying over the soft couch, her hips positioned neatly over his thigh, which he raised slightly, putting her bottom into still more of an angle.

She didn't breathe a word as he reached for the hem of her skirt and slowly drew it up, folding it neatly over her back. There was a feeling of ritual to his movements as he placed one arm over her lower back, holding her in place firmly. His hand patted her panty clad bottom. He didn't pull her underwear down, and she silently cursed that she'd worn full brief panties. If she'd gone with a thong, she'd already know what his big, callused hands felt like against her bare bottom.

“How does this feel?” His voice rumbled above her.

“It's fine, it's good,” Ace reassured him, squirming with impatience. His hand was a heavy weight against her lower cheeks, a weight she wanted desperately to withdraw and then return with force.

He did not reply, but he took his time, stroking her cheeks and her upper thighs. “Well Miss Ace,” he said at last. “You wanted to know what it felt like to have your bottom spanked, and I am more than happy to oblige you in that. I will start with one swat.”

Ace opened her mouth to complain about receiving just one swat, but his hand had already drawn away and returned with snapping stinging force that caught the underside of her cheeks, pushing her crotch down against his thigh and sending a tingling burn across the surface of her bottom. “Oh my god,” she panted gleefully.

“Oh you like that, do you,” his voice was filled with amusement.

“Mmm yes,” Ace purred, stretching like a kitten. The feeling was everything she had imagined it would be. His strong legs under her, supporting her as his hard hand made her backside tingle. This was what she had needed for so long. “More, please.”

“Well, as you asked so nicely,” Blake said, tightening his grip around her waist as his palm drew away from her bottom and then returned with another slap. This time it was harder, and it did not come alone. As soon as it landed another followed close upon it as he unleashed a volley of hard swats on her tender cheeks.

“Oooo!” She squealed, her hips bucking with each slap. The sensation was much more intense that time, threatening to pass over the border from pleasure to pain. When he stopped he did nothing for a minute or two, letting the harsher sting settle in. “That was intense,” she gasped, wriggling her hips happily over his lap. It felt oddly comfortable to be over his lap she realized, although she'd only known him for a few hours in total, this didn't feel forced. It felt as if she belonged here, her bottom pink and slowly turning red under his ministrations.

“Beginning to get some idea of how it might feel if I were to continue on to spank you thoroughly?” He asked, his voice thick with desire. She knew what he must be looking at, the pink curves of her bottom visible where her panties ended. Her hip was pressing against something hard, something that would have telegraphed his arousal even if his voice hadn't been full of it.

“Oh yes,” she said, gyrating her hips to tease him.

“Good.” Resting his palm on her bottom, he leaned down and dropped a kiss on the top of her head. “Then we will continue next time.”

Her wail of despair would have frightened any cats in the vicinity. “No! Now!”

He chuckled and shook his head. “Ah you see, this is where the submitting part comes in once again. We do this as I see fit, not as you see fit, young lady.”

Ace's stormy expression did not abate until she was back at home in her own apartment, eating ice

## Chapter Three

Meeting Blake had changed everything. Ace had never really imagined that anyone like him truly existed. She'd been about to give up on the scene entirely before he'd sauntered over to her and said something crude about her being spoiled and needing to be tied up and thrashed.

She often wondered what it would be like to be spanked by him, really spanked – and lectured too. The idea of those burnished golden eyes on her as his deep timbre chastised her for real made her squirm all the way to her toes. Unfortunately, he didn't seem inclined to play with her yet, not like that anyway. There were hints of what it would be like, when he lowered his voice for a moment or two and grew all intense, but then he would go back to smiling and chatting pleasantly and she would be left wanting him once more.

He was something of a mystery to her. He obviously liked her on some level, but was he interested in more? She didn't know. In spite of his crude speech on their first meeting he'd been nothing but a gentleman ever since. She missed that darker side of him and though she knew it existed, he was keeping it carefully away from her.

As her impatience and curiosity grew, so did her propensity to misbehave. She'd never been one of 'those' bottoms, one of those women who resorted to silly pranks and bratting to get their top's attention, but she found herself more and more tempted to try something as the days went by. It was made all the harder by the fact that she only saw him once or twice a week, he often worked late and his job seemed to consume much of his life.

Left to her own devices to dream of what could be, it seemed like forever before she saw him again, but finally their agreed date night rolled around. It was another date at his house. She'd been very pleased when he asked her to come over, aside from the prospect of more good cooking, at his house there was a chance something might happen.

She knocked on the door and waited impatiently, feeling nerves flutter into her throat as his shadow became visible beyond the frosted pane. He opened the door and her smile grew wide with pleasure. "Ace, my dear," Blake welcomed her with open arms and she sank happily into his embrace, resting her head against his chest. It felt wonderful to feel his arms around her again.

"Hey you," she said, downplaying her happiness to see him as much as possible. If he had any idea how much she thought about him, how much she day dreamed about him he'd probably run a mile. He was already holding off on the play thing, she didn't need him to spook like a startled fawn and run from her completely.

"How have you been?" He asked the question as he ushered her inside and onto his comfortable couch, the guiding hand never far from her lower back. His mere presence calmed her, made her forget about the outside world, forget about everything but him.

"Good," she smiled. "How have you been?"

"Very well," he said, reaching for the red wine he had waiting for them and pouring glasses for them both. They sat on the couch together, sipping at the velvet fine liquid and chatting about things of little consequence. Ace enjoyed these times, times where they got to enjoy one another's company. The

thought of spanking was never very far from her mind, but she kept it on the back burner, doing her best to actually have a civilized conversation and not throw herself at him like a half baked harlot.

Blake's choice of beverage didn't make that easy for her. It was a very nice wine and it did not take long for her cheeks to grow rosy red from the effects of the alcohol. Ace had never been one for moderation. If a little was good, then a lot was better. She hadn't realized how quickly she'd been drinking, but she was near draining her second glass when Blake reached over without breaking the flow of conversation and placed her glass on the coffee table.

“What did you do that for?” Her pout was genuine.

“Slow down a little,” he said. “We've got all night.”

An impudent retort came to her lips, but she pursed them tightly together before she could say anything silly that would get her into trouble. Blake took her silence as assent and continued talking about the state of the economy, a subject that had suddenly grown very bland for Ace. Her eyes kept darting back over to her glass and the quarter full bottle beside it as he spoke. When he finally excused himself to go and tend to the roast he had cooking in the oven, she struck like a waiting adder and sucked down the rest of the wine from the bottle, funneling it into her mouth with great gusto.

“What are you doing?” He was already looming over her, his hands on his hips. She placed the bottle back on the table quickly, but she was pretty sure he'd already seen what she was doing, on account of the fact that his eyes worked and he was looking right at her.

“Nothing,” she said, pretending innocence.

“I told you not to drink that, didn't I?”

She squirmed, enjoying the deep tone of censure in his tone. “You told me to slow down. I drank it very slowly.” Realizing that wasn't entirely true, she amended the statement. “Compared to a bath tub.”

He was not pleased by that, not pleased at all. His brows threatened to touch they were drawn so fiercely together. “Is that what we're going to play at now? Nonsense and semantics?”

“I'm not good at Semantics. Monopoly though, I kill at Monopoly,” she nodded, attempting to change the topic. “Do you like Monopoly? You look like more of a Chess man to me.”

Blake sighed and ran his hand through his hair. “Is it really this difficult, doing as you're told?”

Her attempt to change the subject had failed, as she knew it would. She was very close to winning the battle and getting what she wanted. She hung her head, hiding the secret thrill that ran through her body. He was totally going to spank her now. All the signs were there. The hands on the hips, the furrowed brow. Any moment now he would take her over his lap and give her what she desperately wanted.

Blake was controlling himself, but he didn't like the slight note of mocking in her tone. He didn't like

the way she looked at him, so self possessed, so sure of herself. In spite of her pretenses of obedience and her earlier claim that she could submit, she wasn't submitting at all. She still wasn't getting the fact that these things happened on his terms, not hers. He leaned down towards her, placing his large hands on the couch. "Listen to me Ace. You do as you are told, or you pay the price. I am willing to bet that you won't like what the price is."

She looked up and rolled her eyes at him. "You keep saying things like that. I'm beginning to think that's all you are. Words."

His brows drew together in a glower. "Go and stand in the corner, Ace."

Her face fell for a moment. He could almost see what she was thinking she was so transparent. She hadn't wanted to go to the corner, she'd wanted a more immediate, more visceral consequence. He stood, waiting for her to stand and flounce into the corner as he'd directed, but instead she shook her head with a smirk on her face and said two little words that changed everything.

"Make me."

He stared for a second. A blatant challenge like that was rare, even for a feisty submissive. Oh, one might say it as a joke, as a teasing invitation to play, but this was no tease. She meant it. She wanted him to overpower her, to show her who was boss. Ironically, she wanted all this on her own terms, in her own time. She was playing him like a puppet. He'd known that she was a bratty little wench, but he wouldn't stand for being manipulated.

"No." He folded his arms over his chest and looked down at her. It was a pity it had come to this, but she had to learn he meant what he said.

"Didn't think so," she said in snarky tones. She was trying to look triumphant, but he saw the disappointment in her eyes quite clearly.

He walked across to the kitchen, picked up his keys from the hook and glanced over at her. "Come on, I'll drive you home."

She couldn't hide her disappointment then. Her face fell entirely. "I thought we were going to..." She stopped before she could reveal what he already knew, that she wanted him to spank her. "Typical," she said, taking refuge in attitude as she stomped past him, "No-one can handle me."

He took her arm as she brushed past him and turned her back towards him. "I am handling you, little girl," he informed her softly. "You're not going to antagonize me into getting what you want. You're not going to manipulate your way through this relationship."

She looked confused. "What do you mean?"

"That little display back there, challenging me. It's your way of trying to make me jump when you want me to jump. It's your way of getting what you want without actually asking for it."

Ace's jaw dropped open. "So you're kicking me out?"

He laughed at her dramatic language. "I'm taking you home. We're done for the evening. Perhaps you'll

be in a better mood on Tuesday.”

Ace was quiet throughout the car trip home. She had an uncomfortable feeling that she'd been bad. It wasn't a feeling she often experienced and she found it very unpleasant indeed. Whenever she glanced over at Blake, he seemed to be his usual mild self. He didn't say much, but he didn't seem angry either. It made her wonder all the more why he was so determined that she should go home. She thought for a brief moment about apologizing and begging him to be allowed to stay, but she was sure that he would probably deny her. He'd probably say it was just her trying to manipulate him. Jerk.

“Sleep well, darling,” he said, pressing a chaste kiss to the top of her head once he walked her to her front door.

“Yeah, you too,” she replied, unable to keep the sulkiness out of her tone. Tuesday was four whole days away. For someone as impatient as Ace, that was a life time. She slammed her way inside her house without a second look back at him. Her hopes that he might knock on the door and try to make things right faded as she heard the engine of his car start up and the tires crunching on the gravel as he drove away.

She was enraged by the fact that he'd simply dropped her home. How could he? Clearly he wasn't all that interested in her after all. Clearly he was playing games with her. Fine, if that was the way he wanted to play it, she could play it that way too.

She didn't need him to spank her. There were hundreds of men, probably thousands who would love to get their hands on her, she thought rebelliously as she stomped into her bedroom and pulled out the drawers of her dresser, looking for something more revealing to wear. Her eyes settled on a very short red vinyl skirt that barely covered her behind. She'd bought it almost as a joke and never worn it before, but the mood she was in made it look like an excellent choice. She stripped out of her underwear and yanked the skirt up over her hips, still stewing about Blake. Hell, he hadn't even kissed her. He couldn't have been less interested if he tried. Well screw him.

In a fit of resentment she decided to go to a club on the other side of town. It wasn't one she'd been to before, but it had a reputation for being a larger, kinkier establishment. If she was going to find what she wanted, she'd find it there.

When her cab pulled up to the address she'd found online she was pleased to discover that Whips n' Kisses, a place that managed to make itself sound like a 80's hair salon, was actually a rather nice club. Unlike Kanes it was well signed and well appointed. Because she was a single female, Ace didn't even have to pay to get in, a fact she gloated over as she tottered up the stairs that lead to the first floor of the place. Single females were valued in this scene, if Blake wasn't going to give her what she wanted it was his loss.

She made her way directly to the bar and ordered a vodka orange. She was disappointed when informed by the black shirted bar tender that alcohol was not on the menu. She'd never tried to order a drink in a kinky club before and the news hit her hard. “What's the damn point of a bar then?” She asked the question with more aggression than it really warranted.

“To provide sustenance to those who come to play,” the bar keeper replied in politely anachronistic fashion.

She was about to reply with a choice set of expletives when someone tapped her on the shoulder lightly. She turned to look a stranger in the face. She didn't recognize him, but he was regarding her in a friendly, slightly familiar manner. “Ace, right?”

Ace scowled at the blond man. “Yeah, what's it to you?” she said rudely.

“I'm Adrian – I'm a friend of Blake's.” He looked at her expectantly, clearly expecting her to show him some kind of deference or politeness.

“Good for you,” Ace replied brusquely. “I'm surprised he has any friends.” It was a mean thing to say, but she was in a mean mood. She wasn't getting her own way in anything and that made her very frustrated indeed.

Adrian's expression darkened. “Does he know that you're out here?”

“He's not my keeper,” Ace snapped. “I can do what I want, when I want.”

Adrian nodded, made some lame excuse about having to do a scene and drifted off into the crowd, leaving Ace to herself. She wasn't alone long though, before long she was approached by a couple of male tops and even a female dominant. She managed to shut them all down with various snide remarks, but it didn't feel as good as it used to. Baiting tops had once been an amusing past time, now she felt almost wrong doing it. Still, she didn't let her gnawing sense of guilt stop her from snapping at anyone who happened to make a friendly remark, or god forbid, try to engage her in play.

Though she'd told herself she was coming to get her ass spanked, the moment she laid eyes on the crowd she knew there was no way she would let any of these strangers touch her. The realization made her all the more angry. Blake had ruined her for everyone else and he didn't even want her. Bastard.

“Why don't you fuck off to where you came from?” She posed the question to a refined looking gentleman who had gone to the effort of buying her a chocolate milkshake. He gave her a withering look and moved on without deigning to reply, taking his milkshake with him.

Her next encounter was not nearly so successful, or enjoyable. As she sat pertly perched on her chosen bar stool, scowling at the bar tender and trying to think of an insult that would be suitably cutting, two hands placed themselves on either side of her and a tall, bulky presence made itself felt close behind her. A voice purred in her ear. “What do you think you're doing?”

Blake. He was here. What the fuck was he doing here? Had he dropped her off then come to play? She struggled around in her seat to glower at him and saw that he hadn't even gotten changed since she'd last seen him. In a club full of men in see through mesh shirts and leather pants, he was wearing blue jeans and a white cable knit sweater. It was almost as if he'd come here suddenly, unplanned. It was a miracle he'd managed to get past the bouncer dressed like that. Unless...glaring around the bar, she spotted the blond man watching them from a distance. Adrian. That bastard, he'd betrayed her.

“What am I doing? I'm getting my ass spanked,” she finally answered Blake's question. “Seeing as you're not interested in me.” She pushed away the tendrils of guilt by reminding them both that this was

his fault, it was his fault for not giving her what she wanted when she wanted it.

“You want a spanking? That's what you want? Fine.” Without another word he took hold of her wrist, sat down on the nearest bench seat and yanked her over his lap. She'd always known he was strong, but now she felt his strength in a new way as his arm clamped around her slim waist like a vice and his other hand yanked up her skirt. She squealed at being bared so abruptly before an audience of strangers, but she didn't have much time to dwell on her embarrassment. His large palm descended on her bare bottom hard. There was no warm up, there were no gentle caresses, there was only hard slap after hard slap burning her flesh, making her ache. Her cries echoed through the club, mingling with the sounds other submissives and bottoms were making. A few interested parties stopped to watch her punishment, but many more passed on by, bound for more interesting sights.

“This is what you wanted, is it?” Blake didn't wait for a reply. Even in the dim light he could see that her bottom was a bright pink. It was a start, but he was going to need more than his hand to impart this lesson. Spotting Adrian nearby, he mimed a request for something a little more heavy duty.

“I'm sorry,” Ace sniffled in the interim. Blake did not reply. She didn't know what sorry meant, not yet. He'd wanted to ease her in to this, he'd wanted to slowly introduce her to the spanking she'd craved, but she'd seen fit to provoke him time and time again and now she was going to get what she'd worked so hard to achieve.

“This suit?” The paddle Adrian handed Blake was thick and made of stiff leather. Blake nodded approvingly. He didn't much care for wood, it tended to bruise a bottom far too quickly. A nice stiff leather paddle stung like the blazes but could be used for a long time.

“Perfect, thank you,” he said, adjusting Ace over his lap so that her bottom was up higher and she was forced to support herself with her hands stretched out in front of her on the floor. “Now then my girl,” he said grimly. “Let's see if we can't spank some sense into you.”

Her answering whimper was quickly lost in the sharp slapping sound of the leather meeting her bare behind. The paddle was an elongated rectangle, so it covered both cheeks easily and Blake wielded it with gusto, working it over her bare, round bottom and her upper thighs. It was almost as he had predicted it would be all those weeks ago. She was bent and bared with everything she had very clearly on display. He felt a tinge of regret that this first view he had of her tender slit was being shared with so many strangers, but it was a tinge that quickly transformed itself into disciplinary ardor. This little miss was getting her just desserts, no doubt about it.

It was quite clear that she was not enjoying her first taste of the paddle, or of public discipline. After just a few swats of the paddle she began to thrash around so much that he was forced to sandwich her thighs between his own. “Blake, please!” She squealed loudly, obviously hoping to attract some form of sympathy from somewhere.

“You wanted a spanking didn't you? When I wouldn't give you one you came here to try and find one from someone else. Well now you're getting what you wanted, little girl,” Blake growled. He was no longer angry, most of his anger had abated the moment he'd set eyes on her and seen her in yet another silly altercation she had no business being part of.

“It hurts, it really hurts. I don't think I can take it. Please don't spank me anymore,” she pleaded with him.

“You can take it,” he reassured her, bringing the paddle down smartly over her cheeks once more to illustrate his point.

“It's killing me!” Her plaintive squeal brought chuckles of amusement from the crowd. It looked like some regulars from Blake's usual club were in that evening, and everyone who had been party to Ace's antics earlier in the evening seemed more than happy that she was getting the spanking she deserved.

“It is not killing you,” Blake disagreed, reaching down to grasp her hair in his hand. With gentle pressure, he pulled her head up, making her arch her back. She looked gorgeous like that, held in position, her ass turning a pleasant cherry red, her slutty little skirt up around her waist, covering nothing at all.

He could barely contain his arousal as he applied the paddle again in quick, hard snaps of his wrist. Ace squealed and panted in response. A rush of erotic images flooded Blake's mind and he was sorely tempted to take her into one of the smaller private rooms and have his way with her. Her sweet little slit, pouting between reddened thighs was crying out for personal attention.

Releasing his hold on her hair, he placed the paddle down for a moment and reached between her thighs, stroking her soft lips with his fingertips. She was very wet indeed. She was still crying out and protesting against her treatment, but Blake barely heard her. He was much more interested in her writhing reddened behind than whatever she had to say at that point.

“I think it's time I showed you who you belong to,” he said, picking her up in his arms and tossing her over his shoulder in one easy motion. He carried her through the club like that, her red ass a beacon of warning to other brats who might have been considering stepping out of line.

## Chapter Four

“Oh god, not here,” Ace whimpered as they gained some pseudo privacy in a room in which a curtain passed for a door. Though there were soft padded seats, it reminded her of a department store changing room. That didn't dissuade Blake from tossing her off his shoulder with a growl of passion and yanking up her top to expose her bra clad breasts.

“Why not here? It would be fitting,” he said, pressing her up against the wall with one hand as he worked to release his cock from the confines of his pants with the other. “It's all about getting what we need, isn't it? Taking what we want?”

Thoroughly overwhelmed by what had just happened, what he'd done to her body and mind, Ace clung to him. She couldn't believe how badly her bottom hurt, how thorough he'd been with the paddle. She'd gotten far more than she'd bargained for and now, as he held her in place, exerting his strength as she'd fantasized about so many times before, it all seemed much too much.

“No, please,” she begged.

“No?” He relented slightly. “Why not?”

“It's too much... too fast...”

“Oh but you like to go fast, you like to rush things, don't you?” He reached behind her and squeezed her swollen bare bottom. She squealed as tears leaped to her eyes.

“What's the matter?” He asked the question unsympathetically, transferring his grip from her shoulder to the hair at the back of her head. With her hair held in a vice like grip she was entirely helpless.

“It hurts,” she whimpered. “Please, stop being so mean.”

“Mean?” His laugh was dark. “Oh I'm not being mean to you. You don't have the slightest comprehension of what mean is, girl.”

Looking into his eyes, she didn't see a trace of the kindly gentleman who had been courting her so generously these past weeks. She saw the hard eyes of a dominant in full swing and it scared her. “It hurts,” she whimpered, feeling hot tears rolling down her face. “Make it stop.”

Blake sighed a deep sigh and she saw his eyes change. The hand that had gripped her hair so tightly pulled her forward gently and he let her rest her face against his chest as she burrowed into his jersey and began to cry in earnest.

“I'm so sorry,” she sniffed through her tears.

“What are you sorry for?”

The question surprised her a little. She had been expecting to be comforted, to be told that it was okay. She knew very well it wasn't okay though, she knew precisely what she'd done wrong. “I'm sorry I made you spank me,” she said softly.

“Did you enjoy it?”

Another unexpected question, but this answer was easier. “No.”

“Why not? You've been begging me for it for weeks now.”

“It wasn't right, I... It wasn't right.”

“No, it wasn't,” Blake agreed, pulling away slightly so he could look down at her. His eyes held an expression of concern. “Is this what you do if your partner doesn't give you what they want? Do you just go out and fuck around on them?”

The harsh words were like a slap in the face. “No!” She protested. “I've never cheated on anyone.”

“It didn't take much to send you out looking to go over the lap of another spanker,” Blake noted.

“Because I thought you didn't want me. You never do anything with me. You never want to touch me.”

“Oh I want to touch you,” Blake growled, cupping her ass and pulling her close to his body. She could feel his hardness through his pants, a stiff rod just waiting to escape. His hand cupped her bottom cheek, his fingers curling around the tender red flesh and coming to rest on her pussy. His touch was commanding and demanding and she felt in the pit of her belly that he intended to take her soon.

“Not now, before,” she struggled to argue as his fingers started to move in a stroking motion, working the wetness of her body into her soft skin.

“Because I wanted to give you time to adjust to what your role would be with me. I wanted to introduce you slowly into my world. But you couldn't go slowly, could you? You wanted it all. Well you've got it all now.”

“I...” she shook her head. She was flooded with relief, relief that he wanted her, that he'd always wanted her. At the same time, her bottom was burning and throbbing with an intense sensation she'd never imagined was possible.

“No, not you. Me,” Blake corrected her, his hand working below his belt. “What I want, what I say. We work on my terms now.” She felt the tip of his erection at the entrance of her body, pressing insistently. Her eyes widened. He was really going to do it. He was going to fuck her. Their first time together was going to be in this seedy little back room of a kink club, with her ass paddled red, her eyes smeared with tears, her hair and clothes messed and rumped from the fray.

“Yes?” He looked her in the eye as he asked the question. Her fate hung on that question, she felt it instinctively. Say yes, go further down the rabbit hole. Say no, go back to looking for someone who could put up with her. It had been so long since she met anyone she didn't hate within five minutes of knowing them. She wanted him, all of him. If he wanted her here and now, then he could have her.

“Yes,” she nodded, holding her breath as he surged forward and claimed her body. The burning in her bottom was matched for a brief moment by the burning in her pussy. She cried out sharply and Blake stopped stock still, half way inside her.

“Goddamn you're tight,” he gasped.

“Well I don't get out much,” she squeaked back. Her pussy was already adjusting to him and she held on for dear life, her arms wrapped around his neck as he held her up against the wall and slid inside her with long strokes.

In the force of his passion the world went away. Even the pain in her bottom was no match for the pleasure that surged through her. He wasn't just a competent lover, he was a consuming lover. He took her body and pleased it until she was no longer sure where he ended and where she began. Everything became molten as she finally surrendered to him fully and completely, letting him take her as he desired.

When Blake had taken his pleasure and allowed her to indulge in hers, he wrapped her up in his arms and sat with her quietly. Pressed against his body, she trembled with overwhelming emotion. She'd never felt like this before. She'd never been so thoroughly taken, so totally possessed. He spoke quietly, but with authority. “This does not happen again. No girl of mine runs amok in the clubs, understand?”

She raised her eyes, shining with emotion. “Am I?”

“Are you what?”

“Your girl.”

“Most certainly,” Blake growled, pressing his lips against hers in a crushing kiss.

That was the beginning of many new things. Blake was more than a mere top, he was quite the dominant, and he expected obedience. It wasn't what Ace would have signed up for originally, but when she looked into his passion filled eyes, when she felt him hard inside her, his hands wrapped in her hair as he bent her to his will, there was nowhere else she would rather be. He had captured her as surely as if he had chained her up, but no chains held her, she came to him of her own free will.

That wasn't to say that she had suddenly become a submissive. She still thought of herself as nothing more than a kinkster, and a mild one at that. But she was willing to try to make it work with Blake. He had a very clear vision of what he wanted from her, and that was nice for a change. For once there was no need to fumble through a relationship with a guy who barely seemed to know why he was there. Ever since that fateful night in the club, Blake had been a man in charge.

Though he often challenged her and pushed her to the limits of her submission, he could be very patient when he did it and she appreciated that. She appreciated it particularly as she found herself in a rather compromising position one afternoon, bent over the back of Blake's big couch as he murmured soothing words and slid a small, well lubricated plug into her bottom.

Wriggling like an impatient puppy, Ace whimpered. “Why?”

“Because I say so,” Blake replied, tapping her bottom lightly. “Now hush and do as you're told.”

It was embarrassing, having the slim reinforced glass plug inside her, but Ace knew by now that refusal would only result in a trip over his lap and then having the plug put in anyway. She didn't much feel like being brought to heel by Blake that afternoon, it was a lazy Sunday and she was feeling far too mellow to really kick up a fuss.

He teased it against her bottom then slid it in slowly, taking advantage of the moment to pump it in and out a little, making it blatantly clear to her that he was taking her ass. She looked over her shoulder and saw that he was grinning with unbridled pleasure.

"How long do I have to keep it in for?" She asked, squirming her ass experimentally. It felt strange to have something in her bottom, curiously filling.

"Keep it in for the afternoon," Blake said, patting the plug.

"The whole afternoon?"

"The whole afternoon," Blake nodded. "And we'll be having company soon, so you might want to put something on." He patted her bare bottom, smiling broadly.

"What? Who?" Ace was wide eyed as she scrambled for her skirt, glancing at the lounge door as if she expected some lecherous spectator to have been there the whole time.

"You've met him before. His name is Adrian."

Ace's face fell. Adrian. The man from the club. The man she'd blown off rudely. The man whose paddle had been used to finally give her the spanking she'd been begging for. Just thinking about that night brought with it a rush of shame. "Uhm. You know. I think that I might have to maybe get my ROS reports in, for uh, work."

Blake shook his head. "You're not getting out of this one. It will be good for you to learn how to behave around people in the scene."

"So what, he's coming over in his official capacity as a top?" Ace could barely keep her tone polite.

Blake shot her a stern look. "And there's your problem. You almost foam when anything scene related is mentioned, my dear."

"I'm not into the scene, I'm into you," Ace pointed out rather glibly.

"That's very sweet my dear, but I do wish for you to become comfortable in it." He was implacable, and Ace knew that he was going to get his way. What was she going to do, run home with a hunk of plastic stuck up her ass?

"Okay," she agreed, knowing full well that her agreement was largely irrelevant. "I'm sure it will be fun."

"That's the spirit," he made to ruffle her hair and she squealed and darted away from his lube covered hand.

“Go wash!” She shrieked the order.

He laughed and wandered off to clean his hands, leaving her to pace the lounge and ponder the horrors of kinky social interaction that were shortly to be visited upon her. When the doorbell did ring, she almost leaped out of her skin. Her bottom contracted around the plug, reminding her of its presence and she had to fight down a sudden urge to dive under the couch and hide.

“Get that, would you?” Blake's voice floated to her from the bathroom. She sighed deeply and traipsed to the front door, feeling like a full bottomed Igor.

She opened the door for Adrian and dropped into an exaggerated curtsy. “Welcome,” she said, dramatically extending her hand in a motion that bade him enter the house. “The master is attending to his toilet,” she continued formally. “Can I interest you in a beverage?” She wasn't sure how good kinky people were supposed to act, so she'd dropped into a parody of a Regency servant. It seemed to be the best idea.

“Sure,” Adrian nodded in response. “I'd love a coffee.” He was dressed much more casually than he had been in the club. He wore a simple black t-shirt and jeans and he was carrying a leather rucksack over one shoulder, making Ace surmise that he probably rode the bus most places.

“Right away,” Ace took herself into the kitchen, then had a thought and popped her head out again. “Would you like a magazine to read whilst you wait? We have magazines about expensive cars and magazines about houses that would hurt to live in.”

“No thank you,” Adrian chuckled, seating himself on the couch.

Ace busied herself in the kitchen and to her great relief, Blake appeared and greeted his friend. They quickly fell into conversation about something or other and Ace stayed out of their way, watching the coffee percolate as if she were a monk meditating on it.

“Ace, aren't you listening?” Blake's tone, suddenly sharp, cut into her thoughts.

“Listening? No,” Ace confessed. “I was making coffee.”

“Does that absorb all your senses?”

“Sometimes.” She was confused. Blake looked irritated. She'd already managed to fuck this up and she hadn't even been trying. This had to be some kind of new record. Returning to her task, she made enough coffee for three people, then placed the whole pot on a tray along with three mugs and a small jug of milk and a sugar bowl.

“Here you go,” she said, placing the tray on the table in front of the men.

“So we pour our own?” Blake was mostly teasing, but he was clearly nonplussed at the non traditional method of serving the brew.

“Or we could drink it out of the pot communally, sort of like a coffee fondue,” Ace suggested

awkwardly.

“Brat,” Blake snorted.

“I am not a brat,” Ace defended herself. “A brat would have brought you a pot of mud and a bowl of salt. Which you might actually deserve.” She turned on her heel and walked away haughtily.

“Ace,” Blake came after her, his face a perfect picture of irritation. He cornered her in the kitchen. “Tone it down, would you?”

“Tone what down? I am being nice. This is me being nice.”

“Are you two coming back out here, or am I going to have to have the fondue coffee all to myself?” Adrian called from the lounge. It was an opportunity to diffuse the tension and they took it, returning to the social fray.

“You look happier than you did when I last saw you,” Adrian said to Ace with a pleasant smile.

“Yeah I guess,” Ace shrugged. She didn't feel happy at that moment. She felt confused. Blake seemed to want her to play some kind of role, but it was a role she didn't get at all. She simply stood there, awkwardly hovering over the gathering until he tugged her skirt and pulled her down to sit next to him. She sat, pouting vaguely.

“Oh cheer up,” Blake nudged her.

“Easy for you to say, you try to be cheerful with half a gallon of PVC in your posterior.” She hadn't intended to sound so crude, but the words simply burst forth from her mouth. For a shocked moment, the two men looked at one another, then both broke out laughing.

“It's not plastic, its toughened glass,” Blake reminded her, putting his arm around her as he sat back.

Adrian was smiling knowingly. “It has to be better than a hook.”

“A what? A fish hook?” Ace was horrified. She cuddled closer to Blake for protection, hoping that he wouldn't pick up any crazy ideas from this man he called a friend who thought hooks were a good time.

“An anal hook. They don't have barbs on the end. They're used for bondage when a top wants a sensitive level of control.” Adrian clarified, miming a butt hole with one hand and a hook with the forefinger of the other.

Ace's mouth fell open wide. “Why... what?”

“Oh don't worry, we won't start you off with a hook. Just a little light bondage.” Blake's voice rumbled next to her ear. She heard him, but she couldn't make sense of the words.

“I don't want bondage,” she said, shaking her head.

“Ah, but I think you'd look adorable all trussed up,” Blake replied, tipping her head back and dropping a light kiss on her lips.

Ace realized then that she'd fallen into a trap. This wasn't a social call. This was a kinky call. "Hey, I didn't agree to this," she said, shaking her head.

"Didn't agree to what?" Blake asked calmly.

"Didn't ask to be gift wrapped like a Christmas present, tied up like a turkey, bound like... you get the idea," Ace exclaimed heatedly.

"Aw, how cute, she thinks it matters what she wants," Adrian said.

"You fuck..." Ace growled, opening her mouth to unleash the full force of her displeasure at Adrian. She didn't get the chance to finish her sentence. Without another warning, Blake pulled her over his lap, flipped up her skirt and laid a very hard slap across her bare cheeks.

Ace's squeal wasn't just one of pain, it was of embarrassment and frustration. Here she was again, being spanked in front of Adrian. She tried to gain some form of control over the situation by glaring at the man, but Blake's palm thundered down again hard, making her cry out just as she made eye contact with Adrian. It wasn't just hard to look menacing whilst being spanked, it was impossible.

"Behave yourself," Blake's stern voice came from above her head. "You understand me?"

She hesitated in answering and he gave her another hearty slap, one that made the plug jump inside her tender bottom. "Yessir!" She whimpered plaintively. She felt like crying, not because the spanking hurt so terribly, but because Blake was taking her down several pegs right in front of his friend. A sore bottom was one thing, but losing face yet again was almost too much to bear.

## Chapter Five

Little Miss Ace had a lot to learn. Blake knew that very well and it was the prime reason he was holding her bare bottomed over his lap, giving her backside a good warming whilst Adrian sat across from them. He knew that Adrian would view the whole proceeding as entirely tame, common place even. Ace on the other hand, was clearly shocked and mortified. Being spanked publicly in the club had been one thing, being taken to task in the living room, that brought the lesson home even more firmly.

"I'm sorry," she apologized. He could hear her voice cracking a little. She sounded as if she were on the verge of tears.

"Good," he said sternly, not allowing himself to show any softness. She didn't need softness, she needed someone to teach her that there were actual consequences for behaving like a little bitch. He pulled her up by the back of her blouse and sat her back down on the couch firmly. Immediately she lowered her head and tried to hide behind her hair.

No further objections were made as the friends began discussing what was in fact, Blake's first lesson in rope bondage. He wanted to try it with Ace, but it was the first time he had done any rope work and he wasn't going to do it alone. There were too many horror stories out there. Adrian knew exactly what he was doing and he did it damned well. It just made sense to have him play tutor. The added advantage of making Ace behave in a scene context was just icing on the cake.

Letting his brat cuddle silently by his side, Blake sat forward interestedly as Adrian showed him the rope. "It's hemp, soft, but strong," Adrian said proudly, teasing the red cord through his fingers.

"Looks good," Blake nodded. "Let's do this." In spite of Ace's bad behavior, he was keen to see how this worked on her. He'd only had a passing interest in bondage or ropes in the past, but if there was ever a woman who needed tying down, it was Ace. He just hoped she wouldn't make this too difficult on herself.

Fortunately for the well being of her behind, she didn't. She stood watching petulantly as Adrian and Blake shifted the couch back to the wall and moved the coffee table out of the way, clearing most of the carpeted floor for their activities. When things were arranged to Adrian's satisfaction, Blake crooked his finger at Ace. "Come here." She obeyed immediately, though she walked over with all the aplomb of a man on death row.

"Kneel down in the middle, honey," Adrian instructed her.

Ace looked a little put out at being told what to do by Adrian. "Do as he says," Blake ordered gently, placing his hand on her warm bottom.

"I don't like ropes, I'm scared of them," she whimpered, kneeling down as she'd been directed.

"Nothing to be scared of," Blake reassured her. "I'm not going to do anything that harms you."

She looked at him with a trusting gaze and nodded. He was proud of her then, proud that she was actually pushing past her own preconceptions to obey him. It was a big step. The Ace he'd met in the club all those months ago would have probably tossed the coffee all over them both and run away never

to be seen again. Now she was kneeling on the floor between the two standing men, her eyes wide, her expression vulnerable.

Blake knelt down beside her and put an arm around her. "You're being a very good girl," he said encouragingly. She smiled a little, responding immediately to his praise.

"Okay, we're going to start with something simple," Adrian said, shaking out the rope expertly. It was incredibly long, snaking around the room as he laid it out.

"Damn, how long is that thing?" Blake exclaimed.

"Hm, about 40 inches."

Ace's sudden fit of giggles interrupted them. Blake smiled slightly and patted her bottom as she laughed nervously. "What's so funny, brat?"

She didn't take exception to the term that time, probably because he'd said it with obvious affection. "You're curious about his 40 inch thing," she giggled.

Adrian rolled his eyes, unimpressed with her cheek. "Maybe we'll start with a simple rope gag," he said severely.

Ace's laughter stopped immediately. "No, please don't," she asked very nicely.

"Good girl," Blake patted her bottom again, seeing Adrian's secret flicker of a wink as he handed him the rope. Adrian wasn't really that stern, but he was adept at keeping lively submissives in line.

"Okay, Mr Rope Top," Adrian said. "Let's get this show on the road."

To her credit, Ace stayed pretty still as Adrian began Blake's lesson, using her as the model. First Adrian demonstrated some basic rope work, deftly wrapping the rope around Ace's body, then he let Blake give it a try. It was not as simple as it had looked when Adrian did it, Blake discovered. When Adrian handled the rope it seemed to just go where it was supposed to. When he handled it, it was more troublesome than a live snake, slipping here, unfurling there.

"If you were my boy, I'd have to beat you," Adrian teased him after the rope slipped free and the basic harness Blake was working on tumbled to pieces for the third time.

Ace's giggle of glee was infectious, and even Blake had to smile. "Well it can't be me messing it up, it must be the brat," he surmised, putting the blame back on Ace.

"No!" Ace shook her head. "I am being good," she said proudly.

"She is really," Adrian agreed. "Though it would probably be easier if she had fewer clothes on. The rope stays better against bare skin."

"I'm not getting naked, you pervert." The words were out of Ace's mouth in an instant. Blake sighed. It was always one step forward, two steps back with this woman. "I'm sorry," she squeaked, seeing the ire on his face.

It was too late though, the infraction had been committed and punishment had to follow. “If you're going to insist on being rude to my guest, I may just decide to let him punish you,” Blake threatened.

Dropping the rope he was holding, Adrian stood up and walked over to his bag. He rifled through it for a moment then brought out the wickedest leather strap Blake had ever seen. It was thick and long and sliced in two for added impact. “See how impertinent she feels like being after she's felt this across her behind,” Adrian said, making stern eye contact with Ace as he handed the implement over to her Master.

“Oh god no!”

Ace would have done anything to avoid that horrible thing. She didn't need to feel it to know that it would hurt. She didn't have a choice though, Blake was taking it and saying something under his breath to Adrian. Adrian nodded, then went down on one knee next to her and resumed wrapping the rope around her body.

She was too scared of making the situation worse to say anything, even when she felt her skirt pulled up and the rope passed between her legs, once, twice. Adrian worked with dispassionate professionalism. Even when he pulled the leads of rope snugly against her bare pussy, she didn't feel that he was being lecherous, not like he could have been.

“I'm sorry,” she said as he worked. He looked at her briefly, nodded curtly, then returned to his task. She sighed inwardly. He thought she was just saying that because she wanted to get out of trouble.

“Stand up, girl,” Adrian said finally. She did stand and found herself turned towards Blake, who was sitting on the couch with the strap in his hand. She was surprised to find that the rope didn't actually restrain her. It didn't keep her arms bound or restrict her movement, she was wearing it more like a harness. The difference it really made was when she went over Blake's lap and discovered that the harness gave him several hand holds that allowed him to wrangle her all over the place much more easily.

He began the punishment the same way he began every session, with a simple question. “What are you being spanked for?”

She briefly considered giving him a smart ass reply and telling him that if he couldn't remember why she was being spanked then she certainly couldn't help him, but she sensed that would be a very bad idea. “I was rude,” she admitted.

“Yes, you were. And not for the first time,” Blake reminded her. “I will not tolerate you speaking to people that way.” He laid the tails of the strap over her lower cheeks and she shuddered. This was going to hurt.

“I am really sorry,” she tried pleading once more. “I know I was rude, I won't do it again.”

“No, you won't,” Blake said grimly. He whipped the strap down hard across her bottom and she arched

and squealed from the first stroke. Just as she'd suspected, it hurt like blazes with a cutting stinging sensation that made all the nerves in her bottom sing in pain. Just that one stroke made her feel like she'd been spanked soundly, but she knew that she wouldn't be getting off his lap after just one stroke.

She wailed as he strapped her, giving her one of the soundest punishments he'd ever given her. One, two, three cuts of the strap, on and on. The tears began to flow very quickly, both from the pain and her sense of helplessness. He ignored her tears, punishing her as she cried. It wasn't until he was satisfied that he stopped and slapped her bottom with his hand in a finishing move that made her squeal.

“You're very, very lucky I don't send you over Adrian's lap right now,” he growled down at her. “I will not keep correcting you for the same infraction over and over. Learn to speak politely to people or you'll find yourself gagged.”

She shivered as he spoke. He wasn't kidding, he wasn't messing around anymore. He was laying down the law and she knew very well that he meant every word he said. This wasn't her first punishment, but it was the first time he'd really taken her to task over a general issue of behavior. It made her feel small and subordinate. They weren't playing anymore. This wasn't some spanking she'd weaseled out of him by acting up. This was him enforcing a rule, his rule. Her tears began to dry on her cheeks as she realized just how significant the moment was. He had truly taken charge of her in every way. “Yes sir,” she said, her voice soft with submission.

“Good. Now go and apologize to Adrian.” He lifted her up off his lap with the harness and slapped her bottom again.

She padded across the room to the other man who stood impassively, watching her as she walked over to him, awkwardly pulling at the little bits her skirt she could get to under the harness to try to cover herself. “I am sorry Adrian,” she said softly, staring at the carpet.

“Look at me when you speak to me,” Adrian ordered.

She looked up to meet his eyes. “Apology accepted,” he said. His expression did not warm however, and Ace wondered if she truly was forgiven. She felt him take hold of her and turn her around. For one scary moment she thought he might spank her too, but he simply began untying the harness.

“You're going to bed when he's done,” Blake said. “Straight to bed.”

“Okay.” She didn't have it in her to argue. She felt emotionally drained from the events of the afternoon and though part of her still rebelled at the act of being put to bed like a child, she didn't have the energy to act on it. When the final piece of the rope fell, she excused herself and went and crawled between the crisp sheets of Blake's bed. She thought that she would feel isolated having been sent to bed, but the apartment was not a large one and she could hear Blake and Adrian moving about and talking in a low murmur. Secure in the knowledge that Blake was still there, and curled up in sheets that smelled just like him, she soon fell into a surprisingly content sleep.

Night had fallen and looking down at his sleeping submissive, Blake felt warm inside. She had misbehaved, true, but she had taken her punishment well and even now she was obeying him. He reached out and stroked her silky hair gently. She'd come a long way, that was for sure. He didn't

expect that she would ever truly lose the bratty streak that had drawn her to him in the first place, and he didn't want her to. At the touch of his hand, she stirred and opened her eyes. "Hello my dear," he said, sitting down on the bed next to her.

"Hey," she said sleepily, nuzzling against his hand. "Am I still in trouble?"

"No," he chuckled a little. "You've been good."

She stretched and rolled onto her back, squeaked in pain and smartly shifted back onto her stomach. "Did Adrian go?"

"Yes, Adrian went home a while ago. He said to tell you he enjoyed working on you."

Ace frowned in confusion. "I called him a pervert."

"Yes, but you took your punishment and you apologized nicely. The matter has been dealt with."

"Just as well, I don't think I could take anymore dealing with." Ace winced as she moved again.

"Let me see." He drew back the covers and examined her bottom. She'd worn nothing but a t-shirt to bed and he saw immediately that the strapping had left lines in her tender skin. Her hide had yet to be toughened by a great deal of punishment and he was glad that he'd elected to stop after twenty strokes. Any more and she would have been a complete mess. As it was, sitting was unlikely to be comfortable for some time.

He laid down on the bed next to her and she shifted over to curl up in his arms. For a long time they lay there in silence, enjoying one another's company. At moments like these, when she'd expended her brat energy and was floating in a calm submissive state he no longer minded her misbehavior. Her bratty antics were part of her, they were the other side to the coin. Without them, these treasured times could not exist.

"Thank you," Ace whispered.

"For what?"

"For not hating me," she mumbled. "I know I suck sometimes."

"No." He made sure he had her attention, tipping her chin up so that he could look into her eyes. "You don't suck. You're a spirited young woman who is dealing with a very new way of life. It is difficult. Even dyed in the wool submissives find it difficult sometimes. I love you just as you are. Even if I'm thrashing your bare behind, I hope you don't forget that."

She giggled with glee. "You love me?"

Looking at her, he realized that he'd never actually said the words before. He'd felt them for a long time, but he'd never put them out there for her to hear. "Very much," he said, holding her close.

"That's good," she smiled, crawling atop him to lay her head on his chest. "Because I love you too."

Stroking her red stripey bottom, Blake's heart swelled with emotion. She was perfect. A little brat who earned herself a good sound spanking and sought refuge in his arms when it was all over. He held her as she squirmed and made a little sigh of satisfaction.

“Will you always hold me like this?”

Her tone was filled with hope and a little fear. Fear that things would not work out. Fear that she would lose the connection that made her feel so safe. “Always,” he reassured her. “How could I be without my little Ace of Brats?”

She giggled. “Does that mean you're looking to collect a pack of us?”

“God no,” he groaned at the thought of fifty-one more brats. “The Ace is all I need.”

“Damn straight,” she agreed, gently grazing her teeth against his neck. He chuckled at her little gesture of dominance.

“Careful,” he said, toying with the plug in her backside. “If you get out of hand again, I'll have to give you a Royal Flush.” She giggled in response and nipped him as he'd known she would. She just never could leave well enough alone. He took swift action, rolling and flipping her over onto her back then held her down on the bed, enjoying her little whimpers as her sore bottom was pressed against the mattress. “Now,” he said, reaching between her legs. “I think its time we removed that plug.”

“Oh yes please.” Ace moaned softly as he eased it out. He reached for the lube he kept in the bedside cabinet, pleased that she watched quietly as he applied it to his fingers then reached down and began teasing her cute bottom. The plug had loosened her and she had no trouble accepting one, then two well lubricated digits inside her bottom.

“You know what's going to happen now?”

She shook her head, and he grinned. “I'm going to fuck this naughty ass of yours.” He sat up, keeping her pinned under the arch of his legs whilst he undid his pants and pushed them down, allowing his manhood to spring free. He'd been wanting to fuck her all afternoon and now was the perfect opportunity to reinforce his dominion over her hot bottom.

“That's never been done before,” she squirmed, mischievously shifting her bottom out of the path of his cock as he eased it towards her, covering her body with his own.

“No you don't,” he shook his head and sat up again, holding her hips and pulling them up to him. “I was going to do this the nice way,” he said, “but you had to misbehave, didn't you?”

“Lemme go,” she squealed playfully.

“Nope.” He guided his cock to her tight little ass and began to press inside. He went slowly and she accommodated him as he'd known she would. There were a few whimpers and winces as he sank his cock inside her, but she didn't try to defy him. She was unbelievably hot and tight and he groaned with unbridled pleasure as he sank himself into her intimate depths.

“How do you like this, Miss Brat? How do you like having your ass stretched around my cock?” He

slapped her pussy lightly, making her buck her hips.

“I fucking love it,” she gasped. “You should do it more often.”

He chuckled, seeing the game she was playing immediately. “Really? Do you really love it? Or is this another one of your little attempts to manipulate me, hmm?” He sheathed himself deep inside her, feeling himself grow harder as she squealed and wriggled.

“I would never think of considering of attempting to manipulate you, Master,” Ace gasped.

He shook his head in admiration. Even in the most compromising position, she could still summon her powers of mischief to aid her. He didn't mind. With her tight ass squeezing his cock, she could be as much of a brat as she wanted to be. He had her precisely where he wanted her, where she needed to be. He leaned over, covering her body with his own and began surging in and out of her tight hole, cutting off further back talk with swift, sure movements of his cock that reduced her to hot, writhing speechless flesh below him. She ground against him in response, pressing her wet pussy against his groin. This was turning her on as much as it was turning him on. She might be a mouthy brat, but she loved to be dominated, and he loved giving her what she needed, especially when it involved thrusting into her hot, tight rear until he spilled his seed deep inside her willing body.

With every stroke inside her sweet ass he was doing more than just fucking her, he was claiming her totally and completely. No matter what hand fate might deal him in the future, he knew one thing - the Ace of Brats was, and would always be, his.