



EVER UNKNOWN

CHARLOTTE STEIN

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

EVER UNKNOWN

Charlotte Stein

Dedication

To TG, for those eyes, and that mouth, and the power that doesn't have to be big and aggressive.

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Chapter One

The email looked like nothing at all, really. No fancy fonts, no exclamation points—red or otherwise—nothing with any urgency in the subject line. Just the words, *‘for your attention,’* without a capital letter amongst them.

Followed by a few abrupt sentences about nothing in particular. Molly Hunt had read a thousand like it before, and never batted an eye.

But she batted an eye for this one. Oh, she batted an eye, all right. Mainly because of the last line, which at first glance, didn’t seem like anything at all.

I would be deliciously pleased if you could rectify this issue.

Until she looked back, and found that, yes, this person really had, in fact, included the word “deliciously,” right in front of “pleased.” And whoever it was had used the word “pleased,” too, instead of something far more innocuous, like grateful. As though the email sender derived the greatest possible satisfaction from the idea of her filing her forms in the exact precise place.

Because that’s what the rest of the email had been about. Filing. This person had noticed that she’d filed something in the red box, instead of the green box, and he’d be *deliciously pleased* if she managed to rectify said filing mishap, as soon as possible.

Then he’d signed it not with a name she could search out, or a company ID she could unearth, but his initials...E.U. Like the conglomeration of European countries, only smaller, and hopefully a person. Even his email address looked to be an outside one, and said little more than those two letters—EverUnknown@hotmail.co.uk.

He could have been anybody—maybe it wasn’t even a *he* she was dealing with. Maybe it was Louisa in accounting who had a fetish for the word deliciously and hated bad filing. Maybe it was all just a mistake, some overzealous punching at the keyboard and somehow the word deliciously just fumbled its way in there, elbowing past more sane word choices to sit proudly amidst an otherwise normal email.

She'd had similar brain farts herself, though usually they involved typing the word *butt* when she'd meant *but*, as in that notorious email to the head of marketing. The one that had somehow ended up suggesting he use his *ass* instead of premium stock white card.

These things happened. So she wasn't sure, exactly, why she was still thinking about it hours later. The word grew huge and curling behind her eyes, like something enchanted out of a genie's bottle. It danced, and wriggled its hips, and said disturbing things like, *if you reply, use a similarly incongruous word. Make it really out there like, "I'm so glad you caught my sexy error. I'd be only too happy to stroke it to correction."*

She wasn't even sure what *stroke it to correction* meant, but God it sounded wrong and possibly filthy. Had he meant it in a filthy way? Probably not. Maybe he'd just intended it to sound sweet and about food. Perhaps he'd seen her eating a sandwich, and wanted to reassure her that it was okay to spill most of it down her front.

She liked him already. He deserved an email in reply, even if doing so made her heart beat a little faster and her mind say, *yeah, he meant it in the filthy way. He meant it like "your bum is delicious." He meant it like, "I just want to take a big bite out of each cheek." Reply and he'll get the wrong idea, and start saying even ruder things to you.*

But her mind didn't know what it was talking about, because first of all, no one in the office even remotely looked at her that way—she was invisible, and knew it. And second of all, some pretty mysterious parts of her woke up, apparently, at the words "bite" and "cheek" and "ruder things."

The cobwebs all over her libido didn't mind the idea of ruder things. Not at all.

Though none of that was the reason for her responding email, oh no, no, no. No, she just wanted to be polite, and show that she was a good filer, a careful employee—the sort of employee who always did things right. He deserved to know that, because he was obviously the type of men who appreciated someone who did things by the book, and that was rare in this day and age.

So she typed...

Dear E.U.,

I promise, in future, to always do what I'm supposed to.

Sincerely,

Molly Hunt

Which had almost no rude connotations. She was sure it didn't. If anything, on reflection, it sounded a little sarcastic or snide, as though she thought he was being petty and wanted to stick it to him. The idea made her panic, slightly, and want to write another email to say she hadn't meant the first—it had come out all wrong, and she'd actually found his initial message really polite and diligent in a way the men in the office usually weren't, and how it was nice to hear from someone so...delicious.

Or not delicious, exactly. Some other word that didn't sound as if she got turned on by filing.

She wasn't surprised to find that she then fretted about the whole thing, all day. Fretting was her usual state, and said state continued all through lunch and the meeting about sales targets, right up until five-thirty, by which time he still hadn't replied. Of course he hadn't! He probably enjoyed her fretting, which was why he'd used the odd word in the first place.

Or at least she kind of thought so, until an email appeared—just as she was putting on her coat. Only by that point, all the thinking about it and wondering made that little bolded subject line too big. Too big, and possibly angry looking. The whole thing had swelled to something too important in her mind, and opening it while sweaty-palmed and vaguely excited would only give credence to the hold it had over her.

So she clicked casually. Not really interested in the contents. Why, she couldn't have cared less—the buttons on her coat were far more intriguing.

Until she read the damned thing, naturally.

Dear Molly,

Stop worrying. I'm not mad. I could never be mad at you. You know, I think you worry a little too much. I expect you to stop, immediately.

Sincerely,

E.U.

She attempted not to answer immediately. She attempted to, but failed, miserably.

Dear E.U.,

And if I don't?

Molly

This time he emailed back almost straight away, any pretence at patience gone. She wondered again if he'd dangled that word, that single little word—*deliciously*—as some sort of bait. Just waiting for her to catch it and respond in a very particular sort of way. She wasn't sure if this was anything like the sort of way he'd imagined, but his next reply seemed to suggest it got close.

There wasn't even a, "dear Molly." It just plunged right into the subtext that had probably been there all along.

I don't know. "I'll punish you," sounds so clichéd.

She found her breath stopped, and didn't know why. It wasn't as though he was *promising* to punish her, or even that she'd like something so patently ridiculous. When had she ever got excited over the idea of a man punishing her?

Never. And she especially refused to when the man was anonymous, and clearly spying on her. He couldn't have found out about her fretting any other way, after all. Obviously, he had to be watching her over the top of his cubicle, or lurking by the vending machines in order to catch her wiping her sweaty palms on her skirt.

She mentally ticked off the potential men who could have seen her, during the day—that idiot from human resources, or the assistant manager, Gregson. Bullish and frankly gorgeous Walsh, from sales—it couldn't possibly be him. Benjamin somebody who did something in IT and finally—her boss. Her boss, Mr. Davidson, who was almost as bullish as Walsh, and who seemed to absolutely love giving out orders.

Because that was probably the criteria, wasn't it? This guy obviously enjoyed...telling people what to do. Maybe he even thought she was really into that, and found the idea of "punishing" her very exciting.

Well. She had news for him.

I'm sure I don't know what you mean.

A shame, really, that it came out sounding like the words of an eighteenth-century schoolmarm. Plus he just came back with something even worse, as though he wanted her to know exactly how eighteenth century and schoolmarm-ish she looked, saying stuff like that.

I mean – stop thinking about me spanking you, for worrying too much.

She thought two things, then. One was—*but I've never thought about anything like that*, while her body went hot and cold all over, at the same time. The other was—*I bet he's just as nervous as me, typing words like those*.

And somehow it was the latter, that really pushed her over the edge from “weird hot and cold feeling” to actually, possibly, really aroused. She pictured him biting the edge of one nail, tapping his free hand on the keyboard, waiting. Waiting for her to reply with something angry or mean, threatening sexual harassment suits or similar—anything but what she found herself replying.

You wouldn't.

Then she was the one biting the edge of her nail, tapping her keyboard and waiting.

Are you really so sure? Maybe you should test me, and find out.

This guy was unbelievable! It had to be Walsh, from sales, even if he was far too handsome to be making suggestive comments to her. She could just see that shark's grin of his in her mind's eye, and those big hands, itching to get at her...well, her ass. Not to mention those broad shoulders of his—God. He'd swing one hell of a hard smack. And if he said things like that while he did it—just that hint of wryness behind the words, she felt—she couldn't imagine feeling anything other than arousal.

It was arousing. Why deny it? She'd never thought about being spanked, before, or having someone boss her around, but there was something about the flavour of his cheeky little messages, just trying their luck...and so out of the blue, too.

Who did things like that? No one. Crazy people. Crazy people who chose other, much more attractive and fascinating women to do said things with. People never chose her to do this sort of stuff – not even her actual boyfriends.

All right. Tell me something to do, and let's see if I do it.

It seemed like an crazy thing to say. She realised after typing and sending it, that she'd given him carte blanche to respond with absolutely anything. Maybe he was a maniac, and would ask her to do something so gross, so vile and horrendous, she'd pass out just on seeing the words. Then he'd come and find her unconscious body, and put his penis in her ear hole.

She wasn't sure why it was her ear hole. But who knew, really, what maniacs were into these days?

Like knickers, for example. Or more to the point, a *lack* of knickers.

Tomorrow, come to work without any underwear on. You can wear trousers if you like, but I think a better effect would be achieved if you wore a skirt.

There could be no denying it. He almost definitely *was* a maniac.

* * * *

If he honestly thought she was going to do something like that, he was crazy. There was just no way. She wasn't that sort of girl, and even if she had been, all of her skirts were just too damned flippy. The slightest breeze sent them skywards, and what then? The entire world would get to see her bottom, or her front bottom, or the fact that she'd awkwardly waxed the hair down there so it looked kind of like a question mark.

As with all things, she hadn't really intended to do it. Just like now, when she really didn't intend to go without knickers and yet somehow ended up doing it anyway.

But she felt she stuck one in his eye, by picking out a really long skirt. The longest she had, in fact, with little pleats all around the hem and barely anything flippy about it at all. He could go on saying vaguely thrilling and absolutely cool, calm and collected things like, *a better effect would be achieved* all he wanted. She wasn't going to just give in.

Even if the shivering air of the office felt so, so good against the bare heated expanse of her pussy.

It didn't start out feeling good. There was something strangely pleasant about her thighs rubbing together around a complete lack of material and going over potholes and speed bumps in her car had felt somewhat nicer than usual – but nothing spectacular.

Until she got to the office, sat down on her chair, and spread her legs. Then that air conditioning brushed over everything and oh. Oh. Not to mention the reaction she got from walking by this guy or that guy, imagining it was him and that he knew. He could tell just by the way she walked and minutely shuddered every few minutes or so.

Or at least, that was what it looked like, when she got into the elevator and Walsh just glanced over...nothing too unusual...nothing that suggested he knew why she was biting her lip and trying to think of other things.

She didn't have to think of other things. This wasn't affecting her at all. Except when she looked at Walsh's handsome face in profile, strong jawed and completely still in a way that suggested he was probably pretending not to pay attention. In fact, she could almost feel that pretence like a real, alive thing, sizzling against her skin and adding another layer of sensation to the already aching pout of her sex.

He was good. If it was Walsh, he was very, very good. And he knew exactly the right things to say, too, because when she got back to her desk there was another message, waiting.

I knew you'd do it. Does it feel good?

She admired his economy with words. Too much and it would definitely push the whole thing over the edge into seedy or perverted, too little and the point would be lost amidst a myriad of other meanings that engulfed an office. Even now, he could have easily been talking about some promotion she'd just been given.

Though his next email veered ever so slightly on the side of *we're just going to be filthy, now*. He replied almost immediately after her response to him – *it feels as if I'm wearing no knickers* – and not in the admonishing sort of tone she'd been expecting. She waited for the words "answer me properly," but he gave her...

Just thinking about you walking around bare, so close to exposing your pussy, makes me want to go and masturbate again. I masturbated last night, you know, thinking about you. Thinking about you, deciding whether or not you'd do what I'd told you to. Thinking about how much it excited you, if it did at all – how wet it made you to wriggle in your seat the way you're probably doing now, with barely anything between your clit and that firm cushion.

Rock against it, then tell me how it feels.

She thought about saying no. She thought about not replying. But the opportunity for doing so was obviously long, long gone. It was a distant memory, in which she acted like a normal person and almost never recognised when her body wanted something. There were days when she forgot to eat. She wasn't in the least bit surprised to find she didn't know what or when or how she got turned on.

Only that him saying the words "masturbate" and "tell me" made it happen. They felt as if someone was squeezing the trigger on a gun. They felt as if a door was being opened.

She obeyed, and rocked, and had to cover her mouth with her hand. But typing out a description for him increased the sensation tenfold.

I can feel how slick I am, when I do it. It makes pressing down against the seat feel slippery and good, really good. When I did it, it made a little noise come out of me and I had to put my hand over my mouth. I really want to do it again, but I'm afraid of the sounds I'll make if I do. I think I'm actually close to coming.

It felt good to type the unvarnished truth. No euphemisms, nothing flowery. Just straight and to the point and everything that her body was telling her to say. There was something very...*light* about that, and it lifted her up and made things easy. It should have been hard to talk so graphically to a stranger – and a probable maniac, at that – but somehow it wasn't at all.

Oh, that's good. You've exceeded my expectations, I have to say. I didn't think you'd be so eager and responsive, but I should have known. I should have known.

It was embarrassing how good his praise felt. Everything grew another notch lighter, until her whole body seemed full of helium and any second, any second she was going to

float right out of the office. Only her avid attachment to the computer screen kept it from happening, and said attachment doubled when his next message popped up. She wanted to scream at him to switch to some sort of instant messenger provider, but of course her demands were not what this was about.

If she made demands, it would shatter the whole game—and the game could not be shattered, now. Not when it seemed to be playing out like her favourite TV show, with her hooked all the way.

But now, Molly, I want you to prove yourself further. Do you think you're up for it?

The word *yes* had never seemed to have too many letters in it before, but somehow it did right at that moment. She almost went with just a 'y,' then caught herself before she became the maniac. She'd felt sure, prior to this, that he was the one—but oh no.

She was the maniac. It was clear, now. She'd tried to write an email with just the letter 'y' in it. You couldn't get madder than that.

* * * *

Walking proved difficult. It should have been easy, really—the item in question was only small—but in practice, sliding a mean little vibrating egg into your pussy, then walking around your office as though nothing was going on...yeah. Much harder than it looked.

And much more exciting than the simple suggestion had seemed.

Because of course he didn't *order*. He'd made that clear a week or so ago. He wasn't about *ordering*. He was about suggestions, and if she wanted to follow those suggestions, why, she could just go right ahead.

He was a sly thing, really. A sly thing, full of the most awesome suggestions.

Of course they'd started off small—on a level with the knickers.

Wear stockings with tops that can almost be seen underneath a too short skirt, touch your left breast while talking to a client until you start to get aroused, brush a hand over Gregson's ass when you're in the elevator together, then pretend you did nothing.

That sort of thing.

Then progressing to slightly bolder, and more than one a day. On Monday he'd tried for a biggie—cajoling and needling her into masturbating in the bathroom. Telling her how good it would feel, how much her juicy, swollen pussy needed attention. He knew, of course, that she'd been rationing her orgasms, refusing to touch herself too often because that took the pressure off and made it too weak. He knew, because she'd told him so. She'd told him in great and graphic detail, about the incredible climax she'd stroked herself to, thinking about him doing the same, or telling her to do worse things.

She figured it was those two words she'd used—worse things—that had triggered this slow tumble into insanity. Bright, bubbling, glorious insanity. The insanity was so glorious, in fact that she wanted to lick it off her fingers.

Just like he told her to, when he suggested she masturbate in the bathroom.

Then taste yourself, Molly, and tell me what exactly it is you taste of.

That had been the best one to date, because after she'd described the whole encounter—the firm feel of her clit beneath her busy working fingers, how slippery she'd been, so slippery that it had worked its way down to the crack of her ass, how electric the orgasm had been—he'd described for her what he was currently doing.

Like a reward. A reward that included such gems as...

I have my hand inside my trousers, and I'm stroking myself too frantically. Someone's going to see, but I don't care. And one day, I'm going to make you not care, too. I'm going to make you so wild, so wanton, that you'll do yourself right at your desk and not think anything of it, and when you come you'll call out my name.

He was a little late, on that score. She already called out his name, almost constantly. The initials *E* and *U* had tattooed themselves on her tongue, until he became simply Ever in her head as though the initials just stood for his name, and Ever was it.

Of course, she knew that was ridiculous. Nobody on earth was called 'Ever,' and even if they were, her mystery man certainly wasn't ridiculous enough to have that as his actual name. He had such a lack of ridiculousness, that he could say things like—*I've just licked my*

palm...you know, to make it nice and slick...and slid all of that slickness the entire length of my cock – and not sound ridiculous at all.

Even if some of the things he asked her to do made her feel just ever so slightly that way. Some of the things like now, as she tried to reach towards the coffee pot in the lunch room and felt that slight pressure, that threat of something shifting just a little too much until...God. God. He'd said it would feel good, but she hadn't really believed him.

No one had ever made her do something so lewd before. No one—but now he had. Maybe it was through anonymity and furtive emails and Lord knew what he looked like or who he really was—perhaps he didn't even *work* in the office—but it felt real and as if his hands were on her, none-the-less.

When she touched her clit, she felt his imaginary fingers taking over the task. When she used the vibrator he'd told her to buy, sliding it in to the hilt, it was his cock she thought of in her and him she fantasised about having over her. If it was Walsh—and increasingly she was starting to believe it was, judging by his sneaky looks in the elevator—he was big, and would have absolutely no trouble pushing her into the mattress. He'd have zero difficulty doing what 'Ever' had described in email number 455,675...

I want to lay you out on your bed, face down. You're not allowed to look at me, and know that if you do, I'll stop. So you wait, and slowly, so slowly, I spread your legs.

She thought of that word a lot—spread. He seemed to know that variations of it—spread this, spread that, spread your legs—were some sort of hot button for her, but then, he seemed to know about a lot of things that were hot buttons for her.

Sometimes she imagined he'd found out through some creepy activity, like going through her rubbish and finding booklists she'd discarded, with titles on it like *Do Me Hard*, or *Kinky Things I Didn't Know I Wanted*. Or maybe he'd just watched her that closely, and knew from emails he'd caught glimpses of, or YouTube scenes from hot movies she'd watched that he'd paid attention to.

But mostly, he just appeared to be that good. He was just clever, and she was just eager to overplay her hand, and he picked up on every little thing. He'd picked up on the greedy little push in one of her first emails, after all—it almost made her embarrassed now, to look at it.

And if I don't?

At the time, she'd thought it so bolshy and rebellious! But even the word 'rebellious' suggested something very specific about her, didn't it? That she wanted to rebel against restraints, and have them impressed on her even harder.

This felt hard. The trouble with it was—she'd known just by looking at it that it was one of those vibrating ones, but it hadn't come with a remote. No button on it to press, nothing to set it going. Just the silver egg, waiting for her in a box on her desk.

And all she could think was—*someone has the remote control. Someone has something that's going to set it off any second, and all I have to do is pass by them or move too close to wherever they are and bam.* Fizzing, burring pleasure. Probably more than she could take, too.

The thought alone was almost too much. She found herself clenching around it, waiting, strong threads of sensation pulling through her without any effort employed at all. Just walking past certain people—Walsh and Gregson, notably—made her cream and go weak behind the knees, until she had to sit down at her desk again and pretend to be concentrating on work.

He'd probably only press the button from a secret hiding place, anyway. Likely he'd had the whole thing planned out, and knew when the woman in the cubicle behind hers went to lunch. Then he'd duck down in the safety of said cubicle, and press and press and press until she did the thing he'd been hankering after.

Coming at her desk. Moaning while she came. Jesus, if this went on much longer, she was going to get in trouble for not doing any work. Her eyes wouldn't focus on the computer screen and all her body wanted to do was clamp down hard on that needling little toy inside her. Everything felt flushed and swollen down there, and the slightest movement coiled pleasure tight in the base of her belly.

She felt pretty sure she'd informed a client that their paid would be monthly in instalments.

And the worst of it was, he knew! He even emailed her, to crow.

Having trouble concentrating?

She immediately wanted to get out of her seat, and look over the tops of the cubicles. At the best of times they felt like a prison, now they felt like a labyrinth *surrounding* a prison. Inside a wardrobe. Anyone could have been anywhere, watching from all sorts of vantage points. Peering round corners she wasn't aware of, making sure they were in the right place at the right time so that they could catch her squirming, red-cheeked.

Though in all honesty, her red-cheeked-ness wasn't limited to the time she spent at her desk. She was red-cheeked in the lunchroom and red-cheeked by the water cooler. Red-cheeked in the morning and red-cheeked at clocking-out time. Her entire body felt perpetually hot and full to the brim with exquisite pleasure. Until the real pleasure came, and she forgot what that ridiculous impostor had been all about.

He did it while she was sat in her little cubicle...that nerve-jangling buzz. It made her teeth knock together and her hands tighten around the edge of her desk, suddenly too breathless and brilliantly shocked. Of course she knew she shouldn't have been shocked. She'd known this was what he was going to do right from the off, right from seeing it.

But it was, all the same. It felt too good to be anything but a shock. She bit her lip and tried to hold it in, only he chose that moment to do it again, so her plan didn't work out quite as she'd intended. And the buzz went on for longer this time, too, so long that she felt sure she was going mad.

It was torture, plain and simple. Like being electrocuted, only from the inside out and with an orgasm at the end, instead of death. She clicked on her email, but he didn't have any messages for her, no words of vaguely teasing advice or reassurance.

Rebellion burst through her again, and she considered standing and really looking for him. He had to be close. But what then? What if she found him, and he turned out to be awful, or else completely different without the veil of anonymity? What if he became enraged by her refusal to sit down and take this amazing, thrilling, undeniable pleasure?

How ungrateful she was. What a silly little nothing.

She sobbed into her fist, and hunched all the way over her desk. If she hunched, no one would know that everywhere between her legs felt like molten lava, or that she was just an inch away from coming over something as slight as a mild buzzing against every sensitive place inside her.

Of course, it didn't feel like something slight. It felt immense, and even more so when he pressed it and pressed it and pressed it. It got to the stage where she felt sure there was

barely a pause in between each one, and yet she gasped for it to come back every time it went away. She rocked against that pressure, and bit down hard on her fist, and willed him to do it again—just a little faster.

Then he obeyed, and she begged him not to. After a while, she wasn't even sure if she was begging him in her head, silently, or not. Maybe Mavis in the next cubicle could hear her, groaning for him to do it *faster, faster, please, make me come*.

Only then it stopped altogether for what seemed like a vast amount of time, and that sob she'd pressed into her fist became a real one. He was a bastard, an utter bastard. She knew what he was trying to get her to do—it was obvious.

He was trying to get her to finish the job, herself. At her desk. She'd laughed at him the first time he'd suggested it, and this was what she'd got. Punishment. Awful, hideous, electrifying punishment.

And an email.

Think you can do it, now?

So that's what this was about. Because she'd said, *I don't think so*, and laughed. And now he was testing her, pushing her, trying out things that would get her to that place without having to demand or even suggest.

She wanted to roll in his inventiveness. In truth, she couldn't think of a single man she'd ever been with who'd had even half of Ever's ingenuity. It didn't seem like much on paper, but oh, up close and personal it was delightful. Exquisite. *Delicious*.

Never, she typed, with shaking fingers. Then sent it, in the middle of such wonderful squirming, that really did nothing at all. Him responding with the words, "*you're a bad, bad girl*," did more.

She felt them all the way to the roots of her hair. On reading them she briefly forgot to continue looking over the rest of his email, and rocked and squirmed until a great surge of pleasure ran through her, brilliant and beautiful. She locked her thighs together around it, and it billowed into something so close to an orgasm, so close it almost was.

It gave a modicum of relief. But in the end, it only made her hunger for more, more, while her need to know who he was grew deeper. It had practically burrowed its way right to the centre of her, by this point, and the rest of his words only exacerbated that feeling.

I think I'm going to have to punish you, for a word like never. Apparently, bringing you off with a sex toy just isn't enough – and really, why should I let you off so scot free? I asked you to do it to yourself, after all, and you just relied on me. What am I to do with you?

She thought of many possible answers. Most of them ended in the word, “spanking.” Unfortunately, her fingers could barely type, and her body felt too limp to do anything other than sprawl over her desk, while her legs dangled like noodles beneath. He'd wrung her out, just like that. Not even a powerful orgasm, to show for her dazed, lax state.

It took her forever to send him what she hadn't dared before.

Who are you?

And even after she'd typed the words, she found she didn't want to send them. What if he never replied? What if he did reply, and the answer was something terrible?

She deleted the words, and tried again.

Is this James Walsh?

That seemed more fitting. Or at least, it seemed more like something he could definitely accept or deny. Or would it just be silence, silence that she could then take as a yes or no? She didn't know, but sent it anyway.

Then waited. And waited. She waited for what seemed like longer than her slow crawl towards an orgasm had been. It felt as if the end of time came and went. Three clients called and asked her questions she could only just remember how to answer. She responded to other, less interesting emails about nothing.

Then finally, finally.

I think I'm definitely going to have to punish you, Molly. Yes. I think that's what I'm going to have to do.

Chapter Two

There were many ways he could choose to punish her. He'd already done a lot of them—maddening sex toys, those cool, teasing words, making her do naughty things like taking dirty trips to the bathroom. Playing with her limits, throughout.

But she still couldn't guess what he might have in store, next. While staring up at her bedroom ceiling, she imagined some of her newest favourites—being tied up, being spanked, being told ridiculously filthy things as he fucked her.

Unfortunately, all of them invariably included him, revealing who he was. And somehow, she just couldn't push her fantasies to something as wild as that. He hadn't responded to the accusation of *James Walsh*, which more or less solidified him as said person in her mind, and that definitely meant he wasn't yet ready for any kind of reveal.

It even suggested the dreaded—*he might never be*. He might never want to reveal himself, and instead, leave her perpetually in the dark. Maybe one day he'd even stop replying altogether. Just fade away as though he'd never existed at all.

She almost didn't dare switch on her computer. And it was an embarrassing relief, to find his name amongst the various other items in her inbox. Or at least, it was a relief until she remembered what he'd said the day before.

Then her mind went right back to punishment, again. And oh, this was a doozy.

I've arranged something for you, my lovely little Molly. But don't think of it as a punishment, oh no. It's not a punishment, really. It's a gift, I think, like everything I want to give to you.

Such a romantic. Except, you know, while being an anonymous pervert who sent her dirty emails. It made her giggle with nervous delight that he kept her on the edge of her seat no matter what.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it—and oh, I know you will, my luscious partner in deviant pleasure—is to remain at your desk until six-thirty. Later, if there are still people in the office. And yes, I know I told you that I'd like nothing better than to see you exposing yourself to strangers and colleagues alike, but this is different. This is very specific, indeed.

When the office is empty, I want you to go to the second floor—to the office where Paul Sanderson used to work. The one that's now empty. Once there, you mustn't speak. If you do, I'll know you have—you'll understand how when you get there.

Then I want you to follow the instructions I've left for you on the cards I've placed on the desk where Paul Sanderson used to sit every day. Do you understand, and accept?

Several things went through her mind, all at once. That he was possibly crazy, truly crazy. That he had to be someone in the office, now, and not just the sandwich boy or a passing client or some other crazy thing, like a window cleaner. And finally, that she was probably crazy too, because she knew right down to her bones that she was definitely going to obey. It probably meant being laughed at by a gang of office assholes who'd been stringing her on all along, but what the hell.

In for a crazy penny, in for an insane pound.

Plus, she wasn't stupid. She had her pepper spray, in case things turned out horrible and hideous. She had a panicked text message ready, for Mavis—who was always the last to leave the office, and so would be the first one to make it back and save her from maniacs and assholes and whatever else was lurking beneath Ever's surface.

Even if she didn't really believe that anything was. She believed in him, even before he sent her a second message, unprompted and eerily as if he'd read her mind.

If at any time you want to stop anything, the safe word is delicious. And if you're worried about anything else, the office is right next door to Gregson's. He'll be in there until six-forty-five, in a meeting with Benjamin Everett. You can leave upon seeing whatever's in the room, if you so choose.

She wanted to be sarcastic about the message—say something like, *you're such a kind sort*, or similar—but couldn't. It sent a warm feeling through her that she could neither laugh at, nor deny.

* * * *

It took some almighty patience, to get to six-thirty. The time simply didn't want to come. Not even picturing what could possibly be in that secret, empty office made the

minutes fly by, and oh, she did a lot of picturing. Mostly with Walsh as the star, and all kinds of frightening apparatus as his guest.

She looked up a good deal of bondage and domination sites, and they didn't paint an easy and comfortable picture. Did people really attach themselves to racks and frames, and wait for someone to prod them with things? Not to mention all the outfits, and hoods, and things to put in people's mouths!

He didn't seem to be that kind of dominant, and she didn't feel as if she was that kind of submissive—if those terms did, in fact, apply to both of them—but who knew, really? The whole thing was obviously going to end up in the land of minor discomfort and sweating inside latex.

She was sweating now, and latex wasn't even involved. She had to go to the bathroom at six-fifteen and clean herself up. If he was going to strip her clothes off and fondle her all over, she wanted to at least smell nice for him. Somehow she imagined him being scrupulously clean and tidy, and, indeed, James often looked that way, so he deserved something as good, in return.

Which included the underwear she'd started wearing, just for him. Just in case today should be the day. Everything was matching, and everything was cream silk. And though she'd usually think herself too fat for it, or too pale for it, or some other nonsense thought that strayed into her mind even at the best of times...now? Now her mind never went to those places, and not because he'd assured her otherwise.

Just because. Because all the things she'd never known about herself were now firmly in the awareness column. Because as much as it was him in control, she felt as if something was in her grasp, something powerful.

Her heart pounded, but never-the-less she *strode* to that office door.

Along the way she heard Gregson in his office, just as Ever had said he'd be. The IT guy, Benjamin, coming through loud and clear, too—he had a distinctive, ever so slightly flat voice that always made her think of the slim, corner-less line of his mouth.

Though she thought of nothing at all, when she finally got to the door. Sanderson's name still in brass on the door, daring her to open it. She got the overwhelming urge to press her ear to it, just to see if she could hear, first. Hear his breathing, or maybe the breathing of a second person, or the sound of some bizarre torture device that she hadn't been able to find on ThingsUpMyBum.com.

But there was nothing. No breathing, no whirring. Goddamn it, maybe there wasn't even anybody in there! Until she pushed down on the handle and opened the door, and found that there was. Of course there was. It had been him all along.

James Walsh.

Even so, it didn't make knowing what to do any easier. If anything, it made it worse. He'd told her not to speak, but all she had were a million questions bunching together at the end of her tongue. For a start, she wanted to know why he wasn't turning around. Mainly because there couldn't be any doubt that it was him.

He had on the same too-tight blue trousers she'd seen him filling out in the elevator earlier on. No jacket, and her view of his firm, round ass was completely unfettered and delightful. And that hair! That blond, almost *too* long hair. A person couldn't mistake James Walsh, from either the front, or the back.

They could, however, wonder why he had his hands tied *behind* said back. Yeah, they could probably wonder about that.

Again, the urge to ask a million questions welled up inside her. She wasn't quite sure what held her back, either. Was it really the fact that he'd told her not to speak? Did he have that much power over her, already?

Probably. Almost definitely, in fact. After all, she had done that thing with the knickers, and the stockings, and the sex toy, and now she was walking over to the desk he stood in front of, to retrieve the instructions he'd promised he'd leave.

Why he couldn't just tell her, she didn't know, but she glanced at the side of his face as she collected the little stack of cards, looking for some sort of clue. He seemed fixed and resolute, mouth set into a firm line, gaze forward on nothing but the wall. He didn't even flinch when she leaned around him a little bit, trying to catch his eye.

Whatever this was, he was good at it. Plus, he'd done a great job of tying his own hands behind his back. In fact, he was so good at this, she was starting to suspect...

She glanced at the cards. They were neat and uniform—the kinds of things people used for presentations—and on each one was a section of typed words. They looked as if they'd been done with a typewriter, too, which gave her a little frisson of excitement that she couldn't quite understand.

It was probably due to the time he'd taken. The care. The almost filthy looking state of the near wobbly letters. Only careful perverts used typewriters, she was sure, and apparently they typed things like...

You should have known it wasn't James Walsh.

Making her want to faint, standing up.

The weirdest thing was, however, she *had* known. As soon as she'd seen the words in black and white, she'd known. James Walsh could never in a million years have been this inventive, this sly, this able to use a typewriter. James Walsh was too big and handsome and...conventional.

Although apparently not so conventional that he was beyond having his hands tied behind his back, by an anonymous benefactor.

She glanced back at the card, searching for further explanations, anything, even some more of that mocking tone would do. Thankfully, he had it in spades.

Our buddy James here is in to something far, far different than the things you think I'm in to. He likes being tied up, and punished for being a bad boy, and I all I had to do was say – hey, go in this room at this time, and someone will come in and give it to you.

What do you say, Molly? Do you think you're up to the task?

She thought of all the ways she was *not* up to the task. They included, but were not limited to – her newly discovered liking for the opposite of this, the fact that this was James Walsh, who she'd have to see every day after probably humiliating him roundly, and finally, God, where was Ever? Where was the real Ever? Did he even exist?

She was starting to think she'd developed a split personality, and one of them was him. She fell asleep, and he woke up and wrote emails and typed on cards – like in *Fight Club*, only with less punching and more sexual desires she couldn't admit to.

She flicked to the next card, and it was even worse than the first.

Unbutton his trousers and push them down. Do it slowly. A submissive always enjoys the tease.

Oh God, he was mad. He was absolutely right, but that didn't make him any less mad. Or her any less inclined to do what he said. She desperately wanted to say to James, *"is it okay if I do this?"* but oh, inside herself she knew that was the wrong thing to do. He didn't *want* okay. She didn't want okay. She just wanted to do it and then see Ever's face—just once.

James didn't move when she reached around him, and fumbled for the buttons on his pants. All those fantasies featuring him and his blond hair and his big, bulky body, and here she was excited because of the orders on a piece of card, instead of the way he looked and smelt and probably tasted.

She didn't even want to taste him. Unless Ever told her to.

But the next card just said...

Now his underwear.

Every part of her screamed to ask him if it was okay, if he was bothered by this, if he wanted to be naked, or not. But all she could see was herself reflected in him, and knew the answer without saying a word.

Of course he wanted to be naked. Of course he wanted what was on the card after that.

Now stroke his bare ass, as though you're going to be nice. Listen and feel for his responses – if he trembles, just give him a hint of your nails. Like a promise, almost, like you want him to know where this is leading.

She couldn't even think about where this was leading. More than likely towards making her very, very wet. She could feel it already, soaking through the knickers she was glad she'd worn. If she hadn't, James Walsh would probably be able to smell her arousal, now, and know how turned on this was making her—even if he couldn't see the hard peaks of her nipples through her shirt, or the heat that had spread over her cheeks and down her throat.

She wanted to rub herself against him, but settled for doing as she'd been told. Just a hand on his bare ass, every nerve in her prickling to feel it. He had a slight sprinkling of hair, but it felt largely smooth and good, and oh Ever was right. When she stroked, he trembled all over as though struck.

So she dug in her nails. Just a little. Just like he'd said — a hint.

Then she watched him squirm and squirm. She thought about herself, wriggling in her seat, so impatient. It made her want to both race to the next card, and hold off until it made him insane. Though in the end, she went with the sweetest, kindest option.

After a while, when he's nice and unprepared, bring the palm of your hand down on his ass, really hard. Don't hold back. Don't cup your hand. Straight from the shoulder — a good, firm whack.

This time her mind went to what Ever must have been feeling, when writing all of this stuff. Had he jerked off afterwards, thinking about her cracking someone's ass in the same way he probably would, if he got his hands on her? She thought so. It must have been the case. She wanted to masturbate right now, and all she'd done was read the damned stuff.

Then she smacked, just like he asked her to.

Her palm stung briefly, once the deed was done. And true enough, the sting threaded its way through her body, tweaking her nipples as it went, stroking over her plump sex on the journey down. But it was more the *sound* he made, that affected her — such a guttural, desperate groan. The sound made her aware of her clit, and the sharp tingles she could produce if she mashed her thighs together.

God she wanted to echo that sound.

She held it in, however, and smacked him again and again, just like the cards told her to. The air grew muggy and thick and tight with a weird kind of tension, but she kept on because the cards said to do so. The cards said...

Don't stop, not even if he begs you to. Go steadily faster and faster, and harder and harder, and wait for him to bend over the desk — he will do.

Which only made her think that Ever had done this before. Not just to some random woman, but to this exact person standing here in front of her. He'd spanked and spanked James Walsh until he groaned almost continually, thighs trembling as though they didn't want to hold him up, a tumble of words mixed amongst the panting breaths.

She felt sure he was saying *please, please*, but all she could think was, *did you say that to Ever? Did it make it worse that it was a man spanking you, telling you how bad you were, did you think – God, is he going to fuck me after this?*

She didn't know whether he had or not, but it made her clit jump and slickness run down the inside of her thigh, to think on it. She almost didn't stop when James collapsed over the desk, she was thinking on it so hard.

But then she managed to gather herself, and take a shaking step back. Just enough to regain her senses and press the now heated palm to various parts of herself – oh, the feel of it. Red hot and perfect. And James calling out to her, unable to control himself now.

"Please don't stop," he said. "Please, please, I need it. I need to come."

The word sounded so much filthier than anything they'd been doing. She'd been spanking him and obeying orders and getting wet, so wet, but that one word...*come*. And so quickly followed by the bittersweet permission of Ever's final card.

You can touch yourself now, Molly. Don't worry about him. Just give yourself that orgasm I know you're dying for, then leave the room.

Unless you still want to fuck James Walsh, that is.

Man, he was a bastard. Such a perfect bastard. He knew everything so exactly, every unknown, unearthed part of everything—in what sort of world could she possibly have disobeyed?

Instead she shoved her skirt up roughly, almost brutally, and pushed her hand into her knickers. It was awkward with the cards still gripped in her fist, but then the whole thing had been awkward while trying to hold onto them and read them and let all of their shiver-inducing words sink in.

Now she had a brief moment of freedom, and it felt as good as the obedience. It felt good to find her swollen clit with just the tip of her finger—anything more and it would be too much—and touch herself to the sound of James Walsh trying to hump the desk. Big, bold, Captain of Industry James Walsh, sobbing with frustrated pleasure, the handprints on his ass so red and glorious, right in front of her.

She couldn't help gasping. She couldn't help calling a name that wasn't James Walsh's. Her clit felt huge and her wetness seemed to have spread just about everywhere, all over her

arousal-plumped lips and through her soaking slit. Just a few short strokes, and she was there.

The orgasm went on for a long, long time. So long that she hardly heard him speak.

"You're going to leave me like this, aren't you?"

She hardly heard herself leaving the room, either—suddenly she was at her desk, pulling her coat on. Legs still weak, fingers still sticky, the memory of it burnt behind her eyes.

She could have been disappointed. She kind of thought she should be. And yet, as she shoved the crumpled cards into her bag and staggered towards the elevator, she couldn't think of a single thing to be disappointed about.

* * * *

The first thing he asked her in the next mail he sent was not what she expected. She expected further orders, something even darker and stranger. Instead he wrote...

Are you angry with me?

As though she *should* have been disappointed. And when she wrote back that she wasn't, he then asked why. It seemed pretty silly of him to enquire, as the answer came to her so simply.

Because I apparently find a lot of pleasure in doing what you ask me to.

There was a long, long silence, after that. Four phone calls, instead of three. James Walsh passing by her desk, eyes front, face steaming red. She laughed into her hand, but didn't really care all that much if he heard her.

Something had changed, now. Something good. The office no longer seemed quite as lonely and empty, with Ever around. Despite the fact that he took a while to reply, she knew it was coming. She'd never seen his face, and yet felt more secure in him than any other man she'd ever known.

And sure enough, ten minutes later...

He said that you didn't express any desire to make love to him.

Was that a hint of insecurity, beneath the cool, calm veneer? It sounded like it, to her. It made her heart beat faster in a different sort of way to the things he'd said and done before, and her mind went to a whole new set of possibilities. Ones that included that word he'd used, about the kind of thing that her and James Walsh might have done. That he probably *expected* her to have done.

Make love.

She replied with three words, and didn't think anything more needed to be added...

Why would I?

But he responded with many things, most of which made her shiver harder than any of the strange domination games they'd been playing.

I confess, I thought he was what you wanted. But if he isn't, then perhaps we should try something different. If you trust me, that is, which I think you do.

So this is what I want from you. It may be the last thing I ask you to do for me, but that largely depends on you – and I'm sure you'll see why, in time.

I want you to go home, tonight, and do everything as you normally would. Shower, get ready for bed. I'd prefer you to be naked, but if you'd rather wear something slight, like a nightgown, I won't object.

On two points I won't be moved, however. I want you to leave your front door unlocked, and I want you to put on a blindfold. You can sit anywhere you want in your apartment, and take any safety precaution you feel necessary – though I hope you know by now that I would never do anything to hurt you.

I think you do. I think you also know the depth of my feelings for you, though I hardly understand it myself. Whether you choose to do this or not, that feeling remains. I think it always will.

I'll be there at eleven p.m.

Yours always,

E

It was the strangest thing. She didn't think of games, or guessing at who he was, or any of the other things that had defined this odd relationship. She thought, instead, of girls with boyfriends and husbands who came home after a day's work or a night out, and did things that boyfriends or husbands do, like kiss their girlfriend's cheek or make love to them. She thought about how much his email had a flavour of that, as if some weary guy was just waiting to come to home to her – only with extra weird kink piled on top of it.

It made two feelings inside her want to go to war. One side wanted to reply that she had feelings, too, the other side didn't know what the fuck those feelings were about. The other side said – *you don't even know what he looks like! He could be anybody, you massive dumbass!*

Her hands hovered over the keyboard and didn't have a clue what to type. She wanted to go with something neutral, but neutral wasn't agreeing to what he wanted. Neutral was much more like – *go home, eat a microwave dinner, watch TV until you fall asleep. Wait for someone nicer and safer to come along, and stare into the middle distance throughout your entire life. Have nice, safe children and live in a nice, safe place, and never want for anything more because your husband who tells you he'll be home at eleven p.m. means it in an entirely different way. He means it with all the sweetness of – I'll be there and love you if you want me to – but without the added deliciousness of blindfolds.*

The always and ever deliciousness of not knowing.

She thought of those two words, when she replied. They seemed like too much, too silly, too big for every dirty thing they'd done, but she put them in anyway. If someone as cool and aloof as him could manage *feelings*, she could manage this.

Yes. Always and ever – yes.

Chapter Three

He'd asked for naked, and that's what he was going to get. Any qualms she'd had about any of this had long since been stripped away—she didn't mind accepting that. If he were going to be a maniac, he'd have been one, way before this. If he were going to push her past her limits, he would've prior to her wrapping a scarf around her eyes.

It was just a woolly wintery sort of thing, not anything fancy, like silk or rubber or some other stupid material they always used in movies about women embarking on sexual journeys that never seemed real. Until they happened to you.

She knelt in the middle of her bed and thought...*that's what I've done. I've embarked on an actual sexual journey. Like Kim Basinger, only not hot and not cool and not any of the things that women usually are, when Mickey Rourke decides to pour the contents of a fridge all over them.*

But then, he probably wasn't Mickey Rourke. Or maybe he was, but modern-day Mickey Rourke. Kind of falling apart, too-much-plastic-surgery Mickey Rourke. Mickey Rourke with a bald spot and a potbelly and a whole host of other things she found she didn't care about at all. She didn't care.

She didn't care as long as he walked into her apartment like her husband coming home, said, "*hi honey, did you miss me?*" Then did the kinds of things that didn't belong in that cookie cutter conventional world at all. As long as that happened, what did it matter?

As long as she could feel this anticipation, for someone who might well be a third rate Mickey Rourke. As long as she could carry on bristling the moment she heard the door go, and hear her own breathing become so grating and loud, as though the darkness of the blindfold made everything else bigger and so much more.

She could make out every squeak and click of his shoes, on her hardwood floors. And she knew when his breathing joined hers, largely even, but with just that hint of roughness, as if he'd jogged up the stairs to her apartment. The apartment he couldn't possibly know the number for unless he had access to that information.

He probably had access to a lot of her information—just little details, though. Where she lived, her contact number. That sort of thing. Nothing he'd used until she'd invited him to, of course.

Nothing he'd used until she kind of knew who he was. She kind of knew because he didn't speak, and speaking would have marked him out, immediately. He had a very distinctive voice, after all.

And cold hands.

She flinched away almost directly, but mainly because of the giddiness that suddenly flooded her, rather than the chilly feel of his touch. He wasn't what she'd expected, not at all, not in a million years, but something about that was utterly thrilling and strange and new, and it made her want to rip off the blindfold immediately.

She didn't, however. Anticipation, after all, was half the fun. And besides, it was his game. She wanted him to do the revealing. She wanted him to do it, slow and careful, and she wanted him to run his hand down her naked back again, before he spoke.

He did so. Just the back of his hand, she imagined, and barely doing anything beyond trailing, soft and feather light. It felt like being pulled apart, one tiny piece at a time. She sobbed, but hardly cared that the noise sounded so undone and ridiculous.

He deserved it.

Then he pressed his hands over her shoulders, and dug deep into the muscle there like a touch-message telling her to relax, and he deserved it so much she wanted to turn around and throw her arms around him.

But oh no, no. Anticipation. Waiting. Slow. Those were his watchwords, and she obeyed them even when he didn't say them. Just the feel of his hands spreading down over her arms, in no hurry at all – it made her obey.

His palms felt as soft as anything. And his touch was as assured as his typed words, so deliberate that she felt mapped out and newly discovered. When his hands found hers and linked with them, briefly, all the hairs on the back of her neck stood up.

She sighed, but sighed more deeply as his touch moved on, to find its way around her body.

It seemed like a hundred years since he'd started, but really she suspected he had only a little more patience than her. His hands slid around and up, cupping her breasts before a minute or so had gone by, and when he did she heard *him* sigh.

She felt it on the nape of her neck. Something made the bed dip, and she imagined him giving in to one knee on her bed. Just to get closer, just to get more, palms pressing into her ridiculously tight nipples but not yet going for anything like a grope.

She doubted *grobe* was even in his vocabulary. His thumbs pressed inwards, his fingers stroked and stirred over her flesh, but nothing got close to *rude*. There was something cool and glassy, even in his touch—but underneath. Oh, underneath. She could sense his body humming, just beneath the surface of all of this restraint. His breathing had grown a little hoarse, and when his hands slid downward, she was sure she could feel the tremble in them.

“Delicious,” he said, and it was a shock, a real shock.

She had somehow imagined he’d stay quiet forever, right up until his body spread over hers and perhaps beyond, but he’d spoken. He’d given himself away, completely.

It was him. It really was.

Something like delight and joy poured through her, so fierce that his name almost ripped itself right out of her. She wasn’t even sure how she managed to stay quiet. Especially when he continued speaking, and the words did not fall short of the things he’d said to her through a computer screen.

“You have no idea what you look like. So lovely, so perfectly giving yourself over to me. I thought...sometimes I thought, when I saw you around the office, I thought I knew. But I never realised what you were capable of, not fully. You’re amazing, Molly.”

She wanted to say something back, anything back. Just words that represented the strange charge that went through her, when he spoke. God, he had a beautiful voice. So still and calm, just like him, with that hint of hoarseness and need buried underneath.

It made her want to turn, again, and take off the blindfold, and look at him. Just look, look, look at him. It made her want to so much that she found herself blurting the question out.

“Can I take it off?”

But in response his hand slipped away from her. She felt him move off the bed, and almost cried out in desperation. It wasn’t just arousal, now, there was something else, something terrible about all of this and if he could just let her...

“I don’t want you to be disappointed.”

Now it was her turn to go silent. She froze in position on the bed, body half turned, palms flat to the sheets. Behind the blindfold, her eyes searched for the space he occupied—*somewhere towards the door*, she thought, but not quite leaving. Maybe not leaving at all. Oh God, she hoped he wasn’t leaving.

She had to say something before he did.

“Ben, wait!”

Seconds became hours, again, mainly because of all the *‘what ifs.’* What if it wasn’t him? It could be that she’d guessed wrong. The voice sounded right and it fit in all other respects—he worked in the IT department, so he’d easily be able to find out where she lived. He was typically fussy about the filing systems that were kept next to where he worked. He’d been in the office with Gregson, most likely to make sure she was safe. He didn’t fit what she’d thought a dominant man would be in most physical regards, but in all other ways...oh yes.

She remembered those clear green eyes staring up at her when she came to him with this or that problem. Something minor and irrelevant, now. But those eyes, Lord those eyes—she wanted to call them deadpan, almost, as though he knew a secret joke that he’d never told anybody.

She supposed it was kind of like that, even if it wasn’t a joke at all.

“When did you guess?” he said, and a weird sense of relief went through her. It was him. It was definitely him. Cute, slight little Benjamin from IT!

“I don’t know. I knew for sure when I heard your voice.”

“Really? I didn’t think anyone paid that much attention.”

The words should have sounded wounded or whiny in some way, but they didn’t. His voice bent easily into a wry, light sort of tone, and she thought of his email address. Ever unknown. He might as well have called himself Mr. Invisible.

“Will you come over to the bed again?”

“I probably should—you are naked, after all. It seems kind of weird that I’m managing to stay all the way over here.”

Again, that sense of relief. The barrier of anonymity was down, but everything was still somehow how the same. A little lighter, even. She laughed, and when he came to her his hands went immediately to her face, to push the blindfold up and off.

He looked as lovely as she remembered. She ran a hand over his cheek and into the neat fall of his short, dark hair, watched his eyes drift closed, briefly, in a way that made her crave that clear green all over again.

“How could you ever think I’d be disappointed?” she said, and quite unexpectedly her voice came out wavering, as though there were tears at the back of her throat.

“Because I’m just me. I’m not really powerful, or magnetic, or —”

It didn't take much to reach up and kiss him. But oh, the rewards were great. His mouth felt amazing—so soft and good and for a moment, almost relaxed.

Then his hand went into her hair, and he made a sound like someone drowning, and the kiss deepened into the thing they'd started only a few minutes earlier. When his free hand ran over her back this time, it felt scorching hot and all too eager.

She only let him break away to start peeling off his clothes. They were almost comical, really—no business suit or anything with a hint of machismo about it. Just jeans and a T-shirt, a hoodie over the top and trainers on his feet. She watched him toe them off and shuck the T-shirt, suddenly breathless but with that same stillness in his gaze.

It was the gaze, really, that did the trick. You could miss it in him, that streak of dominance, that magnetism he claimed he lacked—if you missed the eyes. But when he looked at her it thrilled through her body the same as the emails, the same as the typed cards.

Then he spoke, and that thrilled through her too.

"Lie back on the bed," he said, without a single inch of room for any sort of disagreement. "Hands above your head, crossed at the wrist."

Of course she knew it was coming. He'd lingered over it enough, in his emails. But even so, it sent a bolt of pleasure through her already swollen and definitely aching sex.

"Now spread your legs, baby."

It made it even sweeter that his firm line of a mouth curled up at just one corner, when he said it.

"I've been wanting to taste that sweet pussy since you first wore no knickers for me. And now I get to do it, while you lie there and take it."

The words he used, the tone of his voice, it made her want to close her legs again. She felt suddenly vulnerable and exposed, more naked than him, even though he was spectacularly, awesomely nude. He was as slender as he'd looked in those casual clothes, but so firm and honey coloured all over, cock standing up thick and stiff and almost at his belly.

All of this contributed to the wetness pooling between her thighs. Especially when he slunk towards her across the bed, and she actually did try to close her legs. Just briefly, just a little, and only because he looked so good and everything was just so overwhelming.

Then she had to watch, as his mouth curled into an even more predatory smile. And he wagged one finger at her, cheeky as anything.

"You're not going to be bad now, are you? Because I can think of so many, many other ways to make you pay, outside the safety of emails. You did know that, right?"

"I thought you said you weren't powerful and magnetic," she said, and his wicked smile deepened.

"Well – maybe you just bring out the best in me."

He licked a long, cool stripe the length of her inner thigh.

"Now hold still."

Another stripe, and this time very, very close to her exposed sex. He murmured something like, *you smell delicious*, but she knew why he said it. Not to make her feel good, exactly. More to tease her into a state of perpetual arousal and need.

She felt his breath ghost over her swollen pussy, before his mouth moved onward, to the other thigh. Then another lick, this time from the tender inside of her knee, all the way up and around to the groove just below her hipbone – purposefully and obviously avoiding the place just a little to the right.

She wanted to nudge him, but nudging him would imply that he didn't know where to go. That he was a fumbler, an unsure and unsteady fool, but of course he was anything but. In fact, every one of his moves seemed so considered and deliberate, she wouldn't have been surprised to find a diagram and list of instructions in his back pocket.

Torment Molly here. Tease her there. Wait for her to beg before you proceed with anything more interesting.

But she wasn't about to beg. Oh no. Not yet, at least. He had a long, long way to go before anything like that happened. She could take his little pointed tongue all day, trailing cool, wet stripes over her skin. And his fingers, too. They could play all they wanted over the trembling expanse of her belly or the curving rise where her breasts began. He didn't have to rub her clit or pinch her nipples, turn her onto her front and fuck into her like a man possessed.

Unless he really wanted to, of course. Unless he really wanted to, in a under a minute or so, before she went insane and gripped great handfuls of his hair.

"Ready to beg, yet?"

Instead she blurted out some breathless words.

"Where did you learn to be so cruel?"

He replied with his mouth open and hovering over that sensitive place, between her thigh and the swell of her sex.

"I took a class."

He was as sly and bastardly as he was in his emails, but oh, in such a good, good way. Then his breath ghosted over her heated flesh, and the barest hint of his slippery tongue slid over the very outer edges of her pussy, and she couldn't help bucking up at him.

Of course he put a firm hand over her hip when she did so, but that was okay too. Oh, that was more than okay. He had a good, wiry strength about him, but even if he hadn't, there was something beyond physicality holding her down. An electricity that passed between them, a locked tight feeling that came from the spread of his fingers, curling around her body. The warmth of him and the tease of his mouth and it all just led to...

"Please. Please."

His smile showed teeth this time.

"Good girl."

She bucked up again, for that. Unfortunately, he was now holding her firmly in place and even if he hadn't been, she wasn't sure she'd be able to move all that far. The heated promise of his mouth held her fast, though it wasn't his tongue that touched her there, first.

He brought his left hand up, instead, and just ever so lightly traced a line around the outer lips of her pussy. Almost absently, as though he didn't really mean it or hadn't intended it.

But she felt it as though he had, all right. It made her gasp—just that little nothing touch.

"Should I go on?" he said, and this time she fell to real and proper begging.

"God yes, yes, please. Ben, please—"

"And what should I use? My fingers, or my mouth?"

She couldn't think straight. Was this a quiz? And if it was, why did multiple choice suddenly seem so impossibly hard? One of the answers had to be right! Hell, both of the answers seemed really, really right. So right that she mixed them together, in her answer.

"Fimth."

"I don't think that's a word. I tell you what, Molly—I'll make the decision for you."

He used just a single finger, to slide the length of her slit. Barely probing inside at all, but even so, the sensation was incredibly intense. Tingly, like the usual sort of feeling provoked by past boyfriends who'd been down there, but brighter. Almost unbearable.

"So *wet*," he said. "I can feel it, and I'm not even really trying. Do you usually get this slippery, or is it only when someone teases you to the point of madness? Because I have to say, it seems worth it. I bet this feels amazing, right?"

She tried to nod, and failed.

"It's okay. I can tell it does. You're all flushed and squirmy and oh—oh, your clit's so swollen and firm. Does that feel good, baby?"

This time, everything failed her. Apart from her back, which apparently wanted to arch.

He had such a fine, spidery sort of touch! It was almost like not being touched at all, which kept the whole thing dancing on the edge of tease. Or at least, it did so until he decided to slide two fingers suddenly and shockingly all the way in, to the hilt.

Of course, it wasn't anywhere near enough. But it felt like blissful relief, compared to what he'd been doing up until that point. The walls of her pussy clenched tight around the intrusion and he made a little amused sound—one that caused a deeper blush to spread over her cheeks and probably other places, too. Yet somehow, that only added to the rush of release, the feeling of some of the tension, draining away.

Then he breathed over her clit, again, and she had to moan loud and long.

"I'm going to take a wild guess and say that's good," he said. "But you know, I think I can make it much, much better."

She almost yelled out her delight, but stopped herself with a little squirming against the bed. At last, at last he was going to lick her, or maybe stroke her, or just something that was bound to make her come within ten seconds or so. She felt like coming right there and then, with nothing but his hot breath on her and his fingers sliding minutely back and forth.

"Do you know where your G-spot is?"

More quizzes? No, it couldn't be. He couldn't be going with more quizzes. Especially when they were about subjects she'd forgotten to study, back in twelfth grade biology. Or back in the office, last Wednesday, with that sex toy he'd given her that definitely stirred something inside her.

If only she'd paid more attention, at the time! It had felt kind of like...

"Here," he said, and nothing more needed to be answered or said or explained. He just curled his fingers and rubbed at something she wasn't sure existed, and oh. Oh. "And if I do it hard enough, and fast enough, well. I think you'll enjoy the results."

He was such a card. She wanted to laugh and sob with pleasure, all at the same time. Then he lapped over her clit, just once, hot and wet, and pleasure won the day. Pleasure made her body curl and sound catch in her throat. How anyone could look at him, and know—no one would ever know. They couldn't possibly.

He was far, far better than anything about him suggested he would be. He kept just the very pointed tip of his tongue on her clit and circled it, unwaveringly. No getting tired, no complaints, and oh the feel of his fingers twisting and fucking into her, insistent and assured. Too good to take.

She came in a great wave, every inch of her body jerking through it, pleasure pushing intense and thrilling through that place he'd found, and through her clit, her belly, the tips of her tits. It went on for far too long and no matter how in charge he was, she had to push him away. She had to curl up into a little ball and work her way through it, then out the other end.

Somewhere far away he was laughing, but it sounded warm and joyous and it went well, with his arms suddenly around her.

"That was good, huh?" he said, and there was something about the way he said it—something just ever so slightly insecure—that made all of his forcefulness and his mastery just a little bit lovelier. He was lovely. He didn't give her any qualms about turning suddenly to throw her arms around him.

"Yeah," he said. "That was good."

He made no move, immediately. She could feel his erection pressing against her lower belly, and everywhere her hands roamed, he felt feverishly hot, but he didn't seem to be in any rush.

So she asked him.

"How did you know I was like this?"

It had played on her mind for so long, she could have sworn it was a bigger question than it sounded, once it was out. Once it was out it seemed like nothing at all, as though more words needed to be added, further explanations needed to be given.

But of course, he didn't need anything. He had a lock of her dark hair curled around one of his fingers, and was examining it, until she spoke. Then those clear eyes locked on hers, and her entire body went liquid.

"I wasn't sure," he said, after a moment. "I thought you seemed like...you wanted something more. Like me, you just seemed to want something more."

And that was true enough. However, he still had something more to say on the matter. Something great.

"I would have given you anything you wanted, but this...this was what you seemed to respond to best. And then, when you asked about James Walsh...I thought perhaps..."

"It's *you* I want. The person who wrote those emails—that's who I want. I don't care what you look like, though you should know, you're pretty damned gorgeous, and I don't care what job you do or how you dress or any of it. I just. Want. You."

She watched his barely-there smile grow, throughout her little speech. It hovered over his lips, straining for full-blown happiness.

"Now give it to me, okay? I've been waiting for you to give it to me for what seems like weeks. And don't hold back—I don't need you to hold back. Just be you."

His cool gaze trailed over every inch of her face, drawing it out, she knew, then finally he pushed her onto her back. Slowly, as though he wasn't really in any rush. Of course she knew he was, but the pretence was good. The pretence was golden.

"I'm going to fuck you, now," he said as though it was his idea. The awesome thing was, it *felt* like his idea. The notion had just popped into his head, and she was going to have to comply whether she liked it or not.

She could have squeezed him to her, he was so unbelievably awesome.

"Turn over," he said, and that was awesome, too. She did it with squiggly fizzing things going off, low down in her stomach. Her legs had mysteriously turned to rubber, and the rubber needed him to help it complete the action.

But that was okay, because he knew that. She didn't even have to ask him for help. He just arranged her on the bed like a doll, and ran soothing hands all over her back, and murmured in her ear about how much he couldn't wait to be inside her.

Then louder and far more commanding, "Keep your face in the pillow and your legs spread."

An—an—nd more fizzing. More tingles.

She heard him get off the bed, but didn't turn and look. Somehow the noises made the whole thing filthier—him rifling through something, then the distinct sound of a condom wrapper being split. That rubbery, slippery sort of snapping, while she waited and waited and shivered with the waiting.

"The anticipation is good, right?" he said, but that amused note to his voice was better. He just *knew*, every single time.

He climbed back onto the bed slow, slow. The hint of one hand, high up on her thigh. Another at her shoulder, briefly. Then nothing.

Of course, she knew what was coming.

"You have to beg me, Molly."

His voice had gone as flat as it probably went, and she felt her sex swell to hear it. The earlier orgasm had done almost nothing, it seemed, to take the edge off, and now here she was, lost in it all again.

"Really, I get no enjoyment out of this."

She tried to hold still. Bit her lip, to help that stillness on. She'd asked how he'd known already, and he'd answered, but still it kept playing through her mind. *How* did he know her so well? How did he understand all of this so well, before she'd even had a chance to comprehend it herself? How did he know that such a simple sentence, loaded with some sort of cool indifference, could affect her so powerfully?

His tone even *said* that he knew, secretly. He knew that the pretence at indifference would make her squirm.

"Fuck me, oh God, fuck me," she said, not quietly, either. Her voice sounded shrill and desperate, even to her ears.

"What? I didn't hear you. Say it again. Be more graphic, just so that it's completely clear."

She could almost see him cupping a hand to his ear, the bastard.

"Fuck me, Ben. Fuck my pussy."

"You're going to have to do better than that, for me to even consider it."

She stuttered over her next attempt. It had previously felt as if she was anything but a prude, but somehow he brought out the best in her. Or was it the worst?

"Put your cock in my pussy. Do me hard, until I scream."

"I would...I really would...but pussy's such a...tame word, wouldn't you say? Try something else, and I might consider it."

"God! You're maddening!"

He did what could only be described as a *snigger*. It sounded both hugely frustrating, and completely glorious.

"Yeah, but that's what you like about me, isn't it? Now say the right words."

"Fuck my cunt with your big, hard cock. Okay? Just do it. I'm wet, and ready, and I want you to fuck my cunt."

His hands smoothed over the backs of her thighs, for that.

"Ve—er—ry good, Molly. Very nice. Can you feel how wet you are, yourself?"

"Yes."

The word came out small.

"Without touching yourself? Has it all run down into the crack of your ass?"

"Yes."

Smaller still.

"And you're just swollen and aching, am I right?"

"Yes."

So tiny this time, so minute, it was as if she hadn't spoken at all. Maybe she didn't exist in the same way he didn't, just all of her burned away and floating on the wind, light as a feather. Perfect.

She felt his body spread over hers.

"I'm going to make love to you now, Molly," he said.

She nodded her head. There weren't any words she wanted to get out. Her face felt wet.

"You don't have to worry about anything, okay? Don't worry."

He brushed away her hair, and kissed the nape of her neck. It felt like a relief. Everything felt like a relief—his cock sliding all the way into her, most of all. He filled her up solidly, giving her something to concentrate on and anchor herself to.

But God, he went slow. Of course she'd expected him to. But even so, she found it hard to bear, at first. He rocked in, then almost all of the way out, teasing her with just the tip before plunging back in again. In fact, every stroke in felt like something *plunging*, something fierce and fast and almost enough, but then he'd stop and wait and draw back out so agonisingly slow.

Still, he moaned before she did. In fact, he moaned a lot more than she would have imagined. She saw the conflict between his restraint and his desire, clearly. One obviously told him to hammer into her, while the other made him take his time, made him stretch the whole thing out like a length of taffy.

Both were represented in the grip he had on her upper arms. She had them spread out on either side of her, flat to the bed – almost like a diamond-shaped frame for her head. And he just pressed each individual fingertip into her flesh, and pushed her down, down, into the mattress.

No doubt she'd have bruises, tomorrow. He asked if she wanted him to go faster, harder, but all she could think was, *squeeze tighter. Make some bracelets around my upper arms. Make me feel it, make me feel it – oh.*

He did. Despite his probable best intentions, his thrusts grew jerky and erratic. He picked up the pace whether he wanted to or not, and that sensation he'd provoked not long ago sparked again. She said his name without meaning to, and that made him say her name, and finally one of his hands went to her hip to bring her in tighter, and closer.

"Oh yeah that's good," he panted, and she couldn't disagree.

It felt so good that when he demanded she touch herself, she barely thought twice about it. She just squirmed and shoved one hand beneath her body, searching out her clit.

She came the moment her finger pressed over that little bud. Her body tried to go rigid, but he was pulling her up into every rough thrust—it made it hard. It made it hard to do anything but go with the ebbing, tingling pleasure, and gasp that she was coming.

Then he groaned that he was too, and that made everything even sweeter. He emptied into her barely a second after she'd climaxed, jerking against her body and pouring out a series of unintelligible noises. Though in amongst them, she definitely heard him say...

"I knew, God, I knew you'd be this good."

And that was all right. Yeah, that was pretty sweet.

* * * *

It was on the tip of her tongue to ask, but every time she went to say it, it just seemed so ordinary and dull and provincial. And though he was much less mysterious than he had been, in many ways he was still cool. And still kind of mysterious.

She glanced across at him, but that wasn't a good idea. She hadn't expected him to be just looking at her. Though why that seemed so oddly thrilling when they were both laying naked on her bed, like little strange bookends, she had no idea.

"So. What do we do now?" he asked.

That was a good opener. She was grateful to him, for making it. But even so, she couldn't quite say the words. She couldn't quite say, *"what are we, now? Are we lovers? Are we in some kind of relationship? Are you still going to email me, every day?"*

If he answered no to any of them, there would definitely be some disappointment.

"I'm not sure. You fancy a pizza?"

That big version of his smile spread over his face. He looked pretty young, anyway, but even younger when he smiled like that. Hell, he was probably younger than she was. Twenty-eight, she judged him at. Maybe one year between them.

"I could go for pizza."

She swallowed. "And then what?"

It was as close as she was going to get to the big questions. For now, at least. Though really, she should have known that she didn't have to hold back. She should have known him, ever and always.

"Then we be together. Because I say so—and apparently, I'm a very masterful sort of person. Wouldn't you agree?"

She would. Oh God, she absolutely would.

About the Author

Charlotte Stein has been published in numerous erotic and erotic romance anthologies, and has written her own longer length works for both Black Lace books and Total-E-Bound. She has been writing for more than half her life, but only recently worked up the courage to submit something to actual publishers. Thankfully, the story ended well.

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