

Naughty Girls: Be Careful What You Wish For

By Carolyn Faulkner

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Published by Blushing Books®,
a subsidiary of
ABCD Graphics and Design
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901

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Faulkner, Carolyn
Naughty Girls: Be Careful What You Wish For
eBook ISBN: 978-1-60968-493-8

Cover Design: ABCD Graphics

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Chapter One

That finger was back. The one that had been slow torturing her all day long, delving gently between perpetually plump lips to claim the most intimate part of her, settling possessively over a bit of flesh that ached and strained to meet him, pulsing and throbbing long before any contact was made.

He'd seen to that.

She did her best to obey his edict – that she not move while she was being touched – although it took everything in her to achieve it, siphoning off some of the intensity of what he was doing to her because she needed to concentrate so hard, which was probably exactly as he intended.

Sometimes he knew her entirely too well.

Brynn and Gray had been together long enough that he did seem to read her mind a lot, but her trials and tribulations today – and the rest of this weekend – weren't a result of that. They were because he'd been reading other things.

Her laptop had died recently – giving up the ghost without even the Blue Screen of Death, just flatly refusing to turn on no matter how she heaped invectives – under her breath, of course – upon it or begged it to boot up just one last time so that she could back up all of the important things she had on it.

But it stubbornly refused to comply, which only served to reinforce Brynn's withering thought that all computers were basically men in technological clothing – contrary to the end.

Her first strategic mistake was made when she brought her situation to her husband, expecting and getting sympathy – at first – about her predicament. “We'll take it in to a repair guy and see if he can fix it, but I think we should defer getting you a new one, if it comes to that, hon, until after our vacation.”

Despite the fact that they were, in fact, relatively well off, especially compared to lots of people in the current economy, Gray was very conscious of how they spent their money and kept them – most especially her - on a tight budget since they were planning to take a big vacation shortly with their friends Hank and Kim. It wasn't that Brynn was a spendthrift, she wasn't. Sometimes he had to force her to buy things for herself. But occasionally, just occasionally, she got a wild hair and bought something that she inevitably ended up returning at his behest because Gray thought it was a more expensive version of something they could get much cheaper elsewhere, although he was also careful to make sure that she had what she wanted a lot, frivolous to him or not. He was

much more likely to go without something he wanted so that she could have what her heart most desired, and that was perfectly fine with him.

“Yeah, I suppose,” Brynn agreed, allowing him to cuddle her close to his hip as they sat on the end of their enormous bed together.

“You have all of your vital stuff backed up, anyway, right? Onto our external hard drive?” he asked casually, not really paying much attention to her response as he tried to find the channel he was looking for on the big screen TV that sat across from the end of their bed.

But her lack of response was alarmingly conspicuous, and, even as he was flipping through the schedule, he turned to her, eying her suspiciously. “You did do as I asked you to months ago, didn’t you, Brynn? You transferred all of those files over onto the hard drive and set up a backup schedule on your computer?”

Still no response. Worse than no response, because she seemed to be trying to shrink against his side, as if hoping she would just disappear beneath the intensity of his gaze, or, even better, slip out from under his arm before it inexorably contracted, holding her in place until he deigned to let her go. These were sure signs that she knew she was in trouble.

He was too quick for her – he always was, dammit – tightening his left arm – which was *supposed* to be his weaker one since he was predominantly right handed, although Brynn had never seen any evidence that he had a weak arm of any sort, especially when it came to disciplining her – and clamping her tightly to his side.

Although she already knew the answer to his questions, she always tested the limits of his strength, although her experiments always yielded the same results: she wasn’t in any sort of pain, but his arm was like an iron bar around her, and she knew she would be here until he decided to do something else with her. Brynn knew that as soon as he extracted the answer from her – which he definitely wasn’t going to like – that he wasn’t going to be letting her go any time soon.

But that didn’t mean she was just going to let him hold her there without letting him know that she wanted out.

At least until she heard his softly spoken, steel backed, “Brynn.” And then she settled down, still trying to hide from him by burying her head against his arm despite the fact that she knew he wasn’t going to let her get away with that for long.

Before she knew it, he had her chin tipped up so that she had no choice but to look him in the eye - the patient but resolute eye. “Let me guess. You didn’t back anything up onto the external hard drive?”

Brynn bit her lip in lieu of actually answering him, but knew that that wasn't going to fly for very long, either.

"If I have to ask you again, Brynn, you're going to be answering from over my lap while I blister your bottom."

That was quite enough impetus for her, despite the fact that she realized that she was quite likely to end up in that position any way for having disobeyed him. "No. I didn't. I tried it once and couldn't find the Z drive in our home network, and I didn't try it again. I'm sorry."

Gray leaned down and kissed her gently on the lips. "I know you think some of my rules for you are frivolous -"

"Like bedtimes," she interjected vehemently. There was nothing she hated worse than having to stop doing something she enjoyed just because he thought she didn't get enough sleep when left to her own devices about when she went to bed.

He chuckled softly. "I know how you feel about those, sweetie. You've made your displeasure known." Gray never had any problem with her disagreeing with him, as long as she did it respectfully – the same way he disagreed with her sometimes.

But he was the undisputed head of their household, and despite all of her protestations, he knew that she wouldn't have it any other way.

"Yes, but that hasn't changed anything about them! I still have to go to bed at a ridiculously early hour for someone my age!" she wailed, almost forgetting about the original point of this discussion.

At least until he reminded her of it, frowning down at her and saying, with a wealth of warning in his tone, "Are you sure you want to go down that road right now, Love, considering the situation you're already in?"

Her answer was the way her teeth clicked abruptly together, and no more than that, except perhaps the way her jaw ticked a little, like his own did sometimes.

"Could your friend Ira help me get some stuff of it, do you think?"

Gray shrugged. "I don't know. I'll ask him if he's willing to look at it." A sudden thought struck him. "There wasn't anything from work on there that you've lost, was there?"

Brynn frowned. "Of course not! Everything for work is on my work laptop."

"Damned good thing," he said, "since you chose to ignore what I'd told you to do."

“I did not!” she whined, although that wasn’t at all the right tact to take with him. He detested whining. “I just got busy and forgot.”

As Gray inexorably moved her into the position she was all too familiar with, head down over his lap, arms extended so that her fingers were pressed into the celery green deep pile carpeting to steady herself - not that she thought he was going to let her fall, but just as a reflex – he said, in that scolding voice she absolutely detested, “Well, let’s see if I can do something to help you remember to do as you’re told the next time, hmmm?”

It was early morning, and she hadn’t changed yet, which meant that she was still wearing the baby doll pajamas he preferred her in, minus the bottoms, which was another requirement. They were all very pretty and lacy and diaphanous – in pastel blue and pink and green with tiny embroidered roses – essentially no protection at all from him, not that she felt she needed it . . . usually.

But Brynn longed for even just those barely there thong panties that had come with them, just because they would have been a reason to delay her punishment, if only for a second or two.

As it was, because of the shortness of the baby dolls, the moment he drew her over his legs she was laid completely bare to him, the extremely short nightie riding up to mid-back, leaving the long, pretty length of her generous bottom and gorgeous legs open to his less than tender attentions.

And Gray didn’t waste a moment before he began to color that expanse of lightly tanned skin first a soft pink, then a brighter, blushing rose that matched her cheeks, he knew, even thought this was hardly a new situation for her. She blushed each and every time he disciplined her, just as she did every time he made love to her, and he found it exquisitely charming that she was still so shy around him.

But her bottom wasn’t finding his attentions charming in the least. By now her backside was a livid, angry red from stem to stern, and he showed absolutely no signs of stopping, despite the way Brynn tried to wiggle away from each terribly accurate swat. Even though she knew that he would immobilize her immediately when she began to have any kind of success in dodging those all too crisp, blazing swats, she couldn’t stop herself from making those self preservation moves, twisting and turning and trying to get that paddle hard palm to land somewhere – anywhere – that it hadn’t already fifteen or so times.

All she managed to do was exactly what she expected. She was drawn even closer against him, his possessive free hand holding her even more firmly against him, which effectively barred her from much of any movement at all.

“You know better than that,” he chided. “Or you should. You know what wiggling like that gets you, Brynn Emmons.”

“No! Gray, please! That’s enough! Really it is!”

She had never succeeded in convincing him of that, but had to make the attempt.

“What does wiggling and trying to avoid your punishment get you, Brynn?” he asked, not missing a beat of applying the unforgiving flat of his hand to his now stilled target.

Brynn cried out with each startlingly loud crack, waiting as long as she dared before she answered him, “Twenty five swats that are not a part of the spanking, Sir, that I have to count out loud.”

“Good girl,” Gray praised. He knew how hard this had to be for her because, despite the inherent titillation, it wasn’t easy for him, either. When he punished her, he caused her pain, and there were always very real tears. He knew that her attempts to avoid her chastisement were not just so much play acting.

Nor was his strict response.

She was howling from the moment she said “one” until the breathy, tear choked “twenty five” passed her lips minutes later. When she earned a spanking within a spanking, he was careful not to rush it. Each swat was soundly applied for maximum effect, and he always reached that goal, using most of his considerable strength in the application of each fierce smack, his hand raised well back each and every time as he steeled himself against the effects her tears and wails had on his heart, making him want to ease up on her when he knew that that was the exact opposite of what was best for her.

“Now for the remainder of your lesson,” he promised in that low, warm voice of his. No anger, no recriminations or sarcasm. Even in the ritual that reduced her to a blubbering mass – and maybe more so then than almost any other time in their relationship – his pure love for her shone through.

He loved her enough to discipline her when he felt she needed it, and this was definitely one of those times.

A though struck him as her begging and sobbing increased by threefold in volume due to the tremendous swats she’d just received. “Did you have the only copy of our wedding photos on your computer?”

It was hard to experience such complete relief while she was in such a humiliating position, but every pore she owned oozed it when she answered him, haltingly as his hand was still rising and falling rapidly on her exposed flesh. “No – you – have – have – them and – and so – does Kim.”

“Damned good thing,” he muttered.

Her bottom was already a flaming, mottled red, but he didn't let that deter him. When he stopped again, for the last time, her entire backside was swollen and seared a livid shade of glaringly angry red, almost evenly from the very first ascent of what had been a creamy, unblemished hillock to just above the backs of her cutely dimpled knees.

But he didn't let her up immediately. "And what are you going to do the next time I ask you to do something, my Love?" he asked, patting that well seared rump.

Brynn was still choking on sobs that doubled in volume even at just his gentle taps. "Do – it - immediately," she barely got out through waves of misery.

"Good girl."

He brought her back up to lie on his lap, gingerly, of course, and hugged her tight, distributing soft kisses all over that damp, tear stained face. "I'll see what I can do about getting your information if you'll tell me what you want most. But no new computer for the time being. We'll just have to share my laptop."

She didn't have the balls to sniff at that. Instead, she did the smart thing and thanked him heartily for his generosity, although looking back, she would have to say that she wished she had pushed for a replacement, despite the danger to her newly singed butt.

It might have saved her from what actually happened.

Brynn had to admit that Gray was more than generous with his laptop. He set her up as another user, but she did note that she was not an administrator, which was fine with her. It was, after all, his computer. She was, in the beginning, very careful to erase her browsing history, just in case he should see it, and also to shut the computer down completely, so that there wouldn't be a chance of him seeing anything she had been doing.

But eventually she became much more lax and less careful to make sure that the history of what she did and where she went on the web was not blatantly available to him, often forgetting to shut down, leaving him logged in as her.

That was a big, big mistake.

When Gray picked her up at Manchester airport after she'd gone to New Mexico to spend some time with an old friend, she was surprised by how affectionate he was, as if she'd been gone for several months instead of less than a week. He lifted her off the ground and whirled her around in his arms, kissing her deeply all the while.

"My, my, my! That's an enthusiastic reception! I'll have to remember to go away for a few days more often."

His answer was to look her straight in the eye and growl, low in his throat, before grabbing her hand and tugging her to the luggage carousel, then out to their waiting car, barely saying a word to her all the way home, but, at the same time, utterly refusing to relinquish his hold on her hand, occasionally raising it to his mouth to kiss the back of it.

“Are you all right?” Brynn asked. He’d always been the quieter of the two of them, but this was a bit abnormal, even for him.

“I’m fine. Much better now that you’re home where you belong.”

Brynn smiled, but only relaxed just the slightest bit. Something was up, and she wasn’t at all sure she wanted to know what.

“I really don’t like being home while you’re gone. The dogs and I mope about the house – all of us thinking of nothing but when you’ll be back.” She laughed softly at that idea. “They don’t even sleep with me. They staked out their places so that they can stare at the back door, waiting for you to come through it. If I wasn’t here picking you up, I’d be right there with them.”

Brynn had been well known for getting herself into untenable situations trying to rescue dogs, and Gray had put a moratorium on them adopting any more than the gaggle they already had. He allowed that they could foster, but Brynn knew that she would have to give up whatever extraneous pups they had to a suitable family once one was found.

“Aw, that’s sweet.”

Gray turned his eyes from the road for just a second, catching hers and making her draw in a breath with their intensity. “It’s absolutely true, Love. Nothing’s right when you’re away.”

Her husband wasn’t always so blatantly romantic in his speech, so his effusive words made her blush furiously. “I agree,” she whispered, squeezing his hand. Gray wasn’t as likely to surprise her with flowers or other overt romantic gestures as she might want, but he endeavored to make her feel loved and courted and paid attention to in many other ways. She never opened or closed a car door – or any door – herself when he was with her. He had vowed – early on in their relationship – to tell her honestly if he thought a dress or outfit didn’t look right on her for whatever reason, and he had made his bones with her about that by telling her – gently but firmly – that he thought a pair of cheap jeans she’d gotten from Goodwill were too tight, which was something she had suspected herself.

Sometimes she took his advice and changed, some times she didn’t, but she always appreciated his honesty.

He had her back in any situation, quite literally whenever they went to the city, and was never anything less than wholeheartedly on her side whenever she needed him. He had

seen her at her best but still loved her even when he suffered through her worst; despite more than ample cause in crankiness, messy hair, and horrific bouts praying to the porcelain god, he had hovered lovingly over her throughout the occasional bout of stomach flu or stubborn cold that – without his almost overprotective tendencies – had often become bronchitis for her in the past.

But not on his watch.

“When we get home, there’s something I want us to discuss.”

Despite the fact that she had no doubts whatsoever about his feelings for her – and even less about her own for him – that calmly delivered sentence had her stomach immediately twisting and dancing within her. “That sounds ominous.”

“It’s not meant to be at all.” Gray could feel how cold her fingers had gotten; a sure sign that she was uneasy. “Really. There’s nothing to worry about.”

“You’re not leaving me for someone younger and much better looking?” she only half joked.

“Brynn! Of course not! I should turn into the next rest stop and bend you over my knee for even thinking that. You know how I feel about you denigrating yourself.” He was glancing over at her as if he was actually considering the pros and cons of pulling the car over, which had Brynn even more on edge. “No. Like I said, it’s a *good* thing.”

“So why don’t you tell me now and ease my nerves?”

Gray kissed those icy fingers. “Because this is a subject that should be discussed when we’re in bed together, all snuggled and warm, and neither of us is distracted.”

And that was exactly when he brought it up again, and not before. Not when he brought her in and left her bags in the car, unable to keep his hands off her for a moment longer than he had to, tugging her into their room and barely making it to the bed before he covered her much smaller body with his own. Gray groaned ferociously when he finally joined their bodies together, reveling in the way her body arched up to his – as always – feeling her shiver around him and reaching down to splay a big hand under her bottom, forcing her to accept even more of him as she whimpered and moaned at his every movement.

Exhausted and nearly asleep, despite the possibility of impending doom, she nonetheless jerked wide awake when he said, “Perhaps we should put off our discussion until tomorrow -”

“No!” He wasn’t prepared for the force of the swat to his chest. “You have to tell me! You promised!” Brynn raised her hand again, threatening him, until he caught it and turned it against her, using it to press her to his chest.

“Enough,” Gray warned as she raised her other hand, his eyebrow going up towards his hairline until she lowered her hand. “I wanted to talk to you about something that happened not long after you left.” He could feel how stiff she was in his arms, and wished he could put her to ease. He didn’t have a very good way with words, and he knew that he was inadvertently causing her much more consternation than he should, so he figured that the best thing for him to do was to just say it.

“When you left, my laptop was on, and you’re usually so good about signing out of your own account and into mine that I assumed that I was already in my account.” Brynn was just looking confused by now, but no less nervous. Gray caught her eye. “I inadvertently saw some very interesting bits and bobs of both your search and your browser history before I realized that I wasn’t in my own account.”

He waited a moment, not saying anything further, but letting the meaning of what he’d said set in.

“You saw my search history -” she whispered, her heart beginning to pound.

“You know how helpful Google is, filling things in and saving that history for you on the toolbar?”

Brynn was beginning to understand the enormity of what he was saying. “And my browsing history?”

“Pages you’ve been to already were suggested and shown to me, and I have to confess that, once I realized what I was seeing and who the source was, I did delve a bit further than just the surface, and I apologize for invading your privacy.”

Brynn thought that if she blushed any harder, she was going to faint dead away. Of course, she wouldn’t fall very far, snuggled as she was tightly up against his chest so that she was half lying on top and half off it.

She tried to move away, tugging at the wrist he still claimed, getting absolutely nowhere. So, instead, she buried her face in his chest, not wanting to discuss the subject any further, now or later.

Chapter Two

“My only question is why didn’t you talk to me about what you wanted? Am I that unapproachable? Don’t you feel comfortable talking to me?”

Despite her mortification, Brynn most certainly didn’t want her beloved husband thinking that she was reluctant to share her heart with him.

He *was* her heart.

“No, no, of course I can talk to you about anything!” Brynn moved herself up, towards him, which Gray allowed, tucking her head just under his chin, where it seemed to belong.

“But not this?” came the query. It was made as blandly as he could, with no recriminations.

She clutched at his chest, desperate to communicate to him the fact that she felt she could talk to him about anything, despite the fact that she hadn’t opened up to him about what he’d seen she had been reading about on the internet.

Gray tipped her face up to his, their eyes meeting in the dim candlelight. “Talk to me, sweetie. You know I always want to do what’s best for you.”

Tears appeared out of nowhere at his gentle words, overflowing and falling in wet splotches onto his bare chest. “I know, really. I do know.” She had never once doubted that Gray was more than willing to do whatever made her feel happy and fulfilled – with the caveat that he had to approved of it and really believe that it was in her best interests. She knew he would never sign on to doing something that he considered to be abusive. Spanking her was a big part of giving her what he felt she needed – regardless of how she felt about it at the time and she’d come to realize that, although it wasn’t something she wanted to delve into much, because it was also something her mind – if not her body – hated, it had been very good for her to have him around to take her to task when she did things she really knew she oughtn’t.

Not that she was in any hurry to admit that to anyone, least of all him.

But when she went online, she allowed her imagination – and her libido – to run wild. What she investigated there was a more sexualized version of the relationship they already had, as well as places where husbands were even stricter than the already strict Gray was.

Those more unusual desire weren’t things that she spent much time thinking about. They were simply pursuits that were driven by her libido rather than her mind. And she hadn’t

necessarily thought that she would ever reveal them to her husband, although that choice seemed to have been taken out of her hands.

Seeing how reluctant she was to discuss this topic – as she was about most of the more intimate aspects of their relationship – Gray tugged her all the way over, so that she was lying full length atop him, her head on his shoulder as he stroked her hair.

“I have to admit, some of those places were a bit dicey even for me. But I’m glad I saw them. I wish you had told me about them yourself, though, honey. I don’t want you feeling as though you can’t trust me with your innermost desires.”

Brynn lifted her head. “But I do – I just didn’t necessarily want to get into that in our relationship.”

“Get into what?” He deliberately pinned her into having to say exactly what it was that those very interesting websites revealed about her deepest desires.

She frowned down at him. “That.”

“What? I want you to tell me.”

He recognized that stubborn, clenched jaw look. She was going to refuse to answer. But one big hand clamping her bottom had her reconsidering the advisability of adopting that attitude and she spewed it out as if it was worms in her mouth, in a very perfunctory manner. “They’re about a husband controlling his wife completely. Even more completely than you do me already.”

“And?”

Brynn squirmed, trying to clench her legs together in a move that he recognized as betraying the fact that she was becoming aroused, but he kept her in place with striking ease, adjusting her legs so that they were, instead, held well apart, one on either side of him, pressing her steadily down onto his fully erect cock.

Her eyes drifted closed and she caught her breath as he penetrated her slowly and deliberately, slick as always when she was around him, but still more than tight enough that his presence within dragged against every inch of her, showering the rest of her in the sparks of her instantly heightened desire for him.

But he stopped in the middle, his hands still claiming her hips, whispering hoarsely, “Tell me, Brynn. Tell me what you want.”

She groaned, trying to sit up and claim the rest of him by that simple act, but he held her close with a big hand splayed at her mid back, subduing that move with ridiculous ease.

“Put your hands behind your neck,” he murmured, pressing his lips to her temple.

Brynn whimpered, but did as she was told. “I want you to take more control.” He could barely hear the whisper.

“Of you?”

She could only nod, whimpering as he delved just a bit further inside her, then withdrew the same bit again.

“How much control, Brynn?” He was already very strict with her, but was less overt than she apparently wanted him to be. He’d never been much of a control freak, despite his firm belief that spanking his wife was best for her which he felt had more than been born out by her actions and demeanor once they’d come together. But the sites he’d seen had intrigued him, and he was *very* surprised to find that they also apparently interested his very competent, very liberated wife. If anything, by her very vocal protestations every time he had to discipline her, he would have bet that she would have preferred that he ease up instead of clamp down.

It was an eye opening weekend in many ways.

Gray wasn’t usually so far off target reading his Love’s needs and desires. But apparently he had badly miscalculated just how far she was willing to go in her submission to him.

“All of it,” she barely breathed.

“You’re sure?” he asked, running his hands possessively over her bare back.

Another slow nod.

“Well, then that’s the way it’ll be. I’ve been letting you get away with entirely too many things.”

Brynn tried to raise her head and protest loudly; he never let her get away with anything! But his hand – and hers at the back of her own neck – prevented that movement. “But you don’t! You discipline me for every little thing.”

She felt his strong arms wrap around her as if she was the most precious thing in his world, and she knew without a shadow of a doubt that she was. “But there are still areas where you don’t feel quite safe enough, do you, my Love? Where you need my firm hand to remind you of just how loved you are. And I’ve slacked off some since we were new, haven’t I?” There was genuine regret in his voice as he realized the truth of his own statement. “So, no more. I think a strict schedule is in order, and some changes in your diet and definitely a bedtime.”

As he spoke, Brynn began to wonder if this was going to turn into one of those times when she should have been more careful what she wished for. She should have been more careful about what she let him see she'd been exploring. It sounded like her bottom was going to be paying for her mistake.

And it did. In spades.

When she met Kim at the Fork in the Road for lunch one Monday that they both had off a few weeks later, she asked for a table rather than a booth, and her friend knew exactly what that meant without Brynn having to say a word having been in much the same situation herself frequently, and without having seen how gingerly she took her seat, knowing that she hadn't wanted to have to slide her sore bottom across the sometimes sticky plastic seat of a booth.

"What did you do that got you into trouble this time?" she asked, her voice full of sincere sympathy. Her husband had the same philosophy about how a husband should see to his wife as Gray did, but they had been almost incommunicado for a while so Kim was left wondering what had happened.

"Nothing."

Kim's eyebrows disappeared into her bangs. "Really? Nothing at all?"

"Nope. Sunday nights are maintenance spanking nights."

Kim's face went white at the thought. "Maintenance spanking?" Even the words were an affront. "I don't think I want to know . . ."

"Believe me, you don't. It means that every Sunday night at eight, I'm to present myself – and my paddle – the one he got off the internet from Hank's suggestion that's so God awfully wicked – to him for a spanking."

Kim swallowed hard in horror at what her best friend was saying. "You have *got* to be kidding!"

"Oh no. And it's all my own fault, too."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because we ended up sharing his laptop 'cause mine died, and when I went to New Mexico, I left myself signed in to my own user account, of course. He didn't realize it until it was already too late, because up till then I'd been very scrupulous about signing myself out and just completely closing the computer down. And he saw both my search history and my browser history, because, of course, once he saw one page he had to see them all."

“So what, exactly, did he see?”

Brynn sighed and ordered a thick vanilla milkshake when the waitress came over, wishing she could apply it to her still very sore – perpetually sore, it seemed lately – rump. “Everything. Stuff I really didn’t want him to see, frankly. Some stuff that I’m not necessarily that into, but you know how one site leads you to another and another and another . . .” she trailed off, shifting uncomfortably on the hard wooden seat.

Kim nodded.

“Well, most of mine were just about husbands taking their wives in hand, even more strictly and firmly than either of our husbands does currently, unfortunately.”

“More strict?” Kim parroted, shocked at the very thought. “Is that even possible?”

Brynn smirked. “Oh, believe me, it’s possible. You remember how things were when you were first together? How vigilant Hank was, attentive and careful of you and your behavior?”

“Oh, yeah.”

“But haven’t things settled down a bit, especially since you’d been together for a while? I mean, it eases off some just from . . . well, life. You know him better and what he expects from you, and you can avoid spankings pretty easily.”

Her words were greeted by a loud snort. “Speak for yourself.”

The waitress placed a huge milkshake, complete with whipped cream and a cherry, in front of Brynn, who began to devour it immediately. After several medicinal swallows, she met her friend’s eyes. “Really? How often Hank spansks you hasn’t diminished one bit since you were first together?”

Kim poured cream into her coffee and took a sip. “I’ve never really thought about it, because when he does spank me, it’s so awful that it colors my perception for a while. But you’re probably right. Life gets in the way, even in the best marriages. Not that he hesitates to spank me if he catches me doing something he doesn’t like, or that’s against my rules. But I follow the rules . . . mostly. And like he says all the time when he’s taking me over his knee, I don’t have very many.”

“Well, for me, that almost hyper vigilance is going to be all the time now, and he’s added more rules, like the one about the weekly maintenance spanking.”

“What else has he added?”

“Naps on the weekends, in the afternoon. He says I’m sleep deprived. Earlier bedtime during the week. A no argument rule, which is atrocious. When he makes a rule, I can

discuss it with him at the time and give him my input, but once he's said that it's in force, I can't argue with him about it without getting spanked, and that includes rolling my eyes and sighing."

"Oh dear. I'd never sit comfortably again!" She gave her friend a threatening glance. "I'm sure I don't need to say that you are never, ever to mention any of this to Hank?"

"Of course not," Brynn reassured her, then added, "But it's not me you have to worry about, you know. It's Gray."

Kim was silent for a moment while that sank in. Since the guys had become such good friends at their wives' behest, there was little either of them could do to keep them from talking about this. They already knew that the two of them and their need for correction was a topic they definitely discussed between themselves. Kim could foresee a time when Hank would decide that this kind of thing would be better for her, too, dammit.

"Is this why you haven't been on the computer much, and you've turned down my last two invitations to go out? I was beginning to get a complex and wonder if I'd said or done something wrong."

"I know. That's the tact I used to come here today. He wanted me not to accept any social invitations for a month or so, so that I would 'settle in' – his words – to our new regimen, but I told him that I thought you were probably worrying that I was dodging you or that I was angry at you and hadn't said anything about it or some such thing, which is not the case." She sucked down the last of the milkshake, saying, "I almost wish it was – then my butt wouldn't be in a sling all the time!"

A large order of loaded cheese fries, laden chunks of apple wood smoked bacon and big sides of sour cream appeared before them, and Brynn dove in. "He's been on a health food kick for us, too. I'm so damned sick of salad I can't even tell you. I swear, if I see one more piece of lettuce going to turn into a rabbit!" She lowered her voice and admitted, "And he's already screwing me like one. Granting him all of this power over me has had a definite effect on his libido." She wrinkled her nose at her girlfriend's prompting look and said, "Yes, yes, and mine, too."

"You said 'granting him all of this power'."

"Yes. He's been very staunch about reminding me that I can revoke this debacle any time I want by rescinding the control I've given him. He's very keen that I realize that, even though he's in charge, he's there because I *put* him there, and I can tell him to stop any time." She munched thoughtfully on a mouth full of luscious fries. "Which is almost worse than him reaching out and *taking* it from me. You know, using his strength to subdue me and force his will on me, which he would never, ever do. Instead, I have to live with the fact that he's only doing what I told him I want him to do when he blisters my bottom for the umpteenth time that day."

Her life had changed from that fateful moment when she told her husband just what exactly it was that she wanted on, but in a more subtle way than when they had first gotten together. He reevaluated, tightened up and added to her existing rules, and did institute a very rigid schedule for her, and, as she had when he first took her in hand, she balked a bit at first – needing, he realized, to reassure both herself and him that she was not some sort of pushover – but then tamed nicely to his hand.

He might not ever get her to admit it, but just as she'd blossomed by the attentions he had paid her at first, she bloomed beautifully when he tightened those restrictions. Gray hadn't told her to decline social invitations for a month just to be mean or prove his power over her. He wasn't the type for the former and didn't need to do the latter. She'd given him whatever power he had, and he made sure she knew that if she should decide to revoke it at any time in the future, there would be no negative consequences to their relationship or from him in any way.

But he thought it might give her time to come to grips with what was happening between them, and, as she'd repeated to Kim, to settle into being even more thoroughly discipline and dominated than she had before.

It suited the both of them quite well, especially when he instituted a moratorium on her saying no to him about something he had already decided to institute.

"Do you trust me to do what's best for you, Brynn Alexandra?" he'd asked, before telling her that he'd decided she should have a severely restricted use of the word "no" and that he wasn't going to put up with her whining and moaning every time he ordered her to do something she didn't particularly want to do, or when he decided she'd earned a punishment, which was when she was most likely to argue or talk back.

She'd frowned fiercely, but nodded her head.

"Say it then. I want to hear it from your own lips."

"I do."

His eyebrow rose. There had been a time when he might have let her get away with that, but those days were gone. "You do what, my Love?"

She met his eyes because she had no other choice, considering the way he was holding her jaw in his hand, with his other on her bottom in silent threat – or promise. "I trust you to do what's best for me."

"Sir," he prompted.

“Sir.”

“Now say it again, correctly,” he ordered, cracking her bare bottom ruthlessly until she’d done as he requested.

“I – ooh – I trust – ow – you to do – ohwow – what’s best for me – ahhhhh stop!”

That last, loudly issued command earned her an even worse correction. She would not be allowed to order him to do anything, except in an emergency, of course. She could moan and howl as much as she wanted while she was being corrected, but she could not beg him – and certainly couldn’t order him – to cease and desist.

When she was well and truly thoroughly chastised, having endured a much more severe spanking than he would normally have given her for such a slip, he tugged her back into his arms, pressing his lips to her ear and whispering, “I’m glad you trust me in this way, Brynn. I’ll always do my best to honor that trust.”

And he did. Although he initially had restricted her from seeing her friends – except that one time with Kim – he did ease off that edict once five or so weeks had passed, and their lives had settled into the strict routine he had drawn for them. In increasing her own restrictions and creating a schedule for her, he had also scheduled himself, not that he minded.

And although she found herself regimented and forced to dance to the tune he chose for her, he knew that there would always be areas of her life that didn’t – and shouldn’t – include him. It would never enter his mind to try to deny her the opportunity to see her friends entirely, although he certainly reserved the right to essentially ground her whenever he thought she needed it, and keep her home for a while as a part of an overall punishment. But the reality of his deep love for her was that she had to be truly happy in order for him to be, and he knew that being forced to jettison her friends would be very detrimental to her.

Not that he didn’t reinforce what he expected of her behavior even when she wasn’t with him, especially once he found out what she’d eaten while she and Kim had gotten together that Monday. He had deliberately not given her any direction about her diet when she was out from under his watchful eye, and had required her upon her return to recount to him – over the phone, as he was at work – exactly what she’d eaten.

That had put Brynn on high alert, wondering if she was going to be called to account for her choices. She knew that she couldn’t make anything up, either, because this Gray wouldn’t hesitate to call Kim and ask, and Kim would tell him the truth, because she knew she’d get in trouble with her own husband if she didn’t.

Brynn learned the depressing fact that he expected her to eat sensibly even when he wasn't with her, unless she called him and asked – in front of whoever she was with – for permission to have some sort of a treat.

She had balked at that, as he had thought she might, but he had right on his side. Since he had severely restricted her junk food and sugar intake over the past few weeks in favor of more vegetables and fruit – not allowing sugary or salty snacks in the house – she had already confessed to him – under only a moderate amount of duress – that she felt better overall than she had in a long time, and that was all he needed to hear to know that that policy needed to continue, and be extended to include times when he wasn't with her.

Part of how she paid for balking quite vehemently at that pronouncement was what that finger was doing to her just now, teasing her incessantly, all day long, when she'd already been informed that she would find no release that day, or, indeed, probably for the next several days.

But on that day in particular, he had kept her nude in the house, however nervous he knew it made her. He had drawn all of the curtains in the house and made quite sure himself by wandering around the perimeter that there was no way for anyone to see her. Besides, he lived in the woods, well off the main road, not in the middle of a busy housing development. Having done everything he could to soothe her nervousness, Gray disrobed her himself, hanging her clothes in her closet and pumping up the heat a bit so that she wouldn't be cold.

He thought that it was a good idea to challenge her boundaries every once in a while. Those sites she had been to were a wealth of information on the subject of the proper care and feeding of a submissive wife, and expanding her boundaries every once in a while, in a positive way, seemed to be of benefit to a lot of submissive wives.

So he had had her doing the chores he'd assigned her completely naked. He'd allowed her an apron and gloves when she was washing dishes, but that was about it. An every hour or so – sometimes more often – he required that she attend him so that he could molest her. He was in the bedroom, folding laundry and moving the heavy furniture so that she could vacuum the entire room. He kept a tube of lubricant at his side the entire day, sometimes on a nightstand, sometimes in his pocket, depending on what he was doing, and he occasionally called her over to him. She had been shown in the morning what position to adopt when he did this, although of course he was free to rearrange her into any position he liked, when she first arrived in his presence, she was to stand in front of him and bend over, her legs well apart so that he could get to the heart of her with a minimum of fuss.

Chapter Three

It got to the point, much earlier in the day than he would have thought, that he abandoned the lubricant all together because she was producing more than enough of her own. As a matter of fact, he rudely pointed out to her that, when she got up from the couch to take their lunch plates into the kitchen, she'd left a good sized damp spot behind her.

Brynn was mortified, but Gray wasn't about to let her wipe it up – at least not immediately. He had other ideas. Instead, he moved the chair next to his at the head of the table, then bent her over the back of it, with her face inches from the seat that bore the mark of her own wetness – blatant evidence of her body's own involuntary response to what he'd been doing to her all day - and spread her legs obscenely wide so that he could finish his coffee and play with her at the same time.

She knew she wasn't allowed fulfillment and she knew how harsh the penalty for disobeying that particular commandment would be. But her ability – or lack there of – to ward off her culmination wasn't Gray's problem, and he used every trick he knew to pleasure her – well, all but one, but their position didn't lend itself to taking her in his mouth unless he laid her out somewhere, and the only place in the house that he felt was comfortable enough for her was their bed. But that room was still torn apart from being cleaned. He pressed two of his thick, hard fingers up inside her and used the remaining ones to continue the torture he'd begun of her clit, holding her open as he knew she adored as he stroked her, enjoying the way she moaned and danced slightly in place, knowing also that too much movement would earn her a further roasting of her already seared behind.

He had not neglected her punishments today at all, either. In fact, a brisk spanking usually followed the almost unbearable pleasure he created within her, so that it was always balanced with the element he intended to bring more of into her life: thorough, unyielding discipline.

Gray gave her a tad bit more leeway regarding outbursts during a punishment, but he had become much less tolerant than he had been, and the words “no” and “stop” were definitely out of her vocabulary in almost every situation, not just when she was being chastised.

Brynn had thought that she was going to die from pleasure that day, and then, by the end, she worried that she wasn't. The last thing he did was to take her almost roughly from behind, keeping a hand on her shoulder to prevent her from moving as far away from him as she might have liked during each heavy thrust, mortified that it hadn't taken him longer to reach his pleasure, but the changes he had made in their relationship had definitely affected him, too.

He'd never been quite as close as he was to Brynn with any other woman, certainly not his former wife. And, although he had been startled and a bit concerned when he'd learned her secret desires, he had found that, when put into action, the tighter he controlled Brynn, the more she clung to him, and, with the occasional entirely understandable outbursts, the more deeply he demanded she submit, the more calm and relaxed she seemed within herself. She slept better, she felt better, and she acted better. As the early weeks progressed, she seemed to accept his guidance – verbal or physical – more readily, and truly seemed to embrace the much deeper level of submission he had brought her to.

The only remaining thorn in their sides was her job. It made her crazy, and forced her out of her more natural demeanor from nine to five every day, and it took her a while to settle back into it every night, especially if she'd had a bad day.

And they all seemed like bad days lately. She had been unhappy with her job for a while; more and more was being demanded of her yet she wasn't offered anything more in the way of compensation. Overtime was expected, even on the spur of the moment, sometimes ruining their plans for the evening. She adored the people she worked with, but it was getting to the point where that just wasn't nearly enough. Many a night found her sobbing inconsolably on his chest, and not because of the spanking he had just given her, but because she dreaded having to go to work in the morning.

One Friday afternoon, Gray picked her up and she was already bawling before she got into their big truck. He immediately took her into his arms and began to rock her back and forth, trying to illicit from her exactly what had happened. Once he determined that she was physically okay, and that this was all about office politics with her higher ups, he pulled a little away from her and took her face in his hands, drying her tears gently. "This has got to stop, Brynn. I know you love your staff, but I can't have you miserable all the time like this. Is your boss in there, or has he left for the day?"

"He's in there," she answered obediently, afraid of what he was going to say next.

"Good. I want you to go in there and give him your notice. Tell him you'll work out your two weeks, but I want you to quit right now. Tonight."

She was always free to say anything she wanted to him, respectfully, at least when a rule was brand new. He wanted her feedback about what he did for her, because it was *for her*, and if he instituted something that she truly thought would be detrimental, then he wanted to hear about it. She would find her butt roasted if she *didn't* tell him about it.

But he was stunned when, mere seconds later, she left the cab of the truck without a word to him and came back moments later.

"What did you do?"

“I did as you said and quit. I think I need a drink.” She put her head in her hands, rubbing her forehead with the tips of her fingers. “I can’t quit; we need the money!”

Gray pulled her into his arms, wishing they were anywhere else. “No, we don’t. You know how tight I am. We can live the exact same way with you not working. We’re fine.”

“But what about our vacation with Kim and Hank?”

“That’s still on. Really, we’re fine, honey. You know what a worrywart I am about money. We’ve got more than enough for twenty trips, if we wanted to go on them, and I’m very proud of you for what you did.”

“He wasn’t happy.”

Her boss. The one that was piling all the work onto her and not giving her any added recognition or recompense, either.

“That’s too damned bad,” Gray growled. “Maybe that’ll teach him to value the good people he still has.” He kissed her fingers as he pulled out of the parking lot, keeping her hand on his thigh. “But you don’t have to worry about them any more. You’ve only got ten more days of work, and then we’re on vacation in Florida with Kim and Hank!”

“Shouldn’t I be spending our vacation time looking for a new job?”

“Only if you want to. As far as I’m concerned, I’d be very happy for you to stay home.” He never thought he’d find himself saying that to a woman of his, but it was absolutely true. He loved the idea of keeping her home, despite the fact that he considered himself a great supporter of equal rights and a woman’s right to pursue whatever career path she wanted. Their situation had heightened his already dominant nature to even more of a peak, and he was inches away from telling her that she wasn’t allowed to look for another job.

She was chewing her lip, but her face didn’t reveal how she felt about his statement.

“Does that appeal to you at all?” he asked.

“It certainly does right now. I’d love to hang around at home and do nothing for a while.”

“Well, I don’t know about that. I’m sure we can find you things to do. But you wouldn’t have to worry about having a horrible boss.”

“Yeah, I know.”

Gray didn’t want to press her right now. The idea was new to him and he wanted to think about it some more before he talked to her again. And, unless she specifically *told* him

that he could make this decision for her, he didn't think he should impose his own preference on her about this particular part of her life. Personally, he got a tremendous boost from his work, and he didn't want to deny her that feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment just because he liked to picture her being at home – preferably nude – as a lady of leisure. He was surprised to find he had such a chauvinistic bent, since his mind immediately conjured the fantasy that she was waiting for him to arrive home from work with baited breath, but then, considering the turn their relationship had taken, he guessed it wasn't that unusual.

Her last two weeks of work were a breeze because she knew that the end was in sight. On her last day, Hank and Kim and Gray all took her out to dinner at her favorite restaurant, and Gray had already told her that, since this was a special occasion, she could eat whatever her little heart desired, including drinks, appetizer and dessert, if she had room. Although, of course, he wasn't going to allow her to eat – or drink – until she made herself sick.

Hank and Kim both hugged her, congratulating her on having gotten out of that bad situation. Kim, in particular, of course, knew just how horrible it had been for her, probably even more so than Gray, because she often lunched with Kim; their offices were close together downtown, and she got the scoop first hand about what was happening.

The first thing Gray did when they all sat down was order his wife the largest margarita the restaurant offered, and, although he liked them too, he vowed that – after a sip – it was all hers. He didn't even rescind that statement when the glass arrived in nearly took over their whole table.

Everyone dipped a straw in to take a taste, but only Kim left hers in, with her buddy's permission, of course. There was no way that Brynn was going to be able to finish that drink alone, she knew, and she didn't mind sharing at all.

In the middle of their loaded potato skins and onion blossom appetizers – Brynn's choices – Hank cleared his throat as he brought a sauce laden chunk of crunchy onion to his mouth. "I hear you've made some changes in your household, Gray."

Both Brynn and Kim stopped – mid sip – at his words. Brynn's eyes drifted to Kim's, who looked a lot like a deer caught in headlights.

"No you didn't," she said emphatically.

It wasn't Brynn's eyes that Kim needed to be wary of. It was Hank's, especially when he turned and gave her that look. "Yes, I did, honey. And I've also heard that it's been a big success."

Had Kim been blabbing to Hank about Gray and Brynn? That seemed contraindicated in the extreme. The last thing Kim wanted was for Hank to start thinking that Gray's way of doing things was going to be better for her, too.

Although he was aware that Brynn – and Kim – were frozen in place, and that Brynn in particular hated it when they talked about things like this together, despite the fact that all four of them knew that they each practiced the same lifestyle. She always spent the entire conversation a shade somewhere between beet and cardinal red, and he got an earful afterwards about how horrible it was to have to sit there and listen to the men talking about them and how they were often naughty girls who needed to be disciplined.

Brynn especially dreaded having this discussion in a public place. It was only slightly better, as far as Brynn was concerned, when this type of conversation occurred at either of their houses. She would have much preferred that this topic never raised its ugly head at all. Ever.

But the men seemed to enjoy their wives' discomfort, and took every possible opportunity to either discuss it in depth or make offhand comments that reminded the women of a fact of their lives that they weren't likely to forget, since they were both usually sitting on recently warmed – or even currently hot – bottoms when they got together.

“Yes, I did. And it was – surprisingly – at her own behest, really.”

Brynn was understandably indignant. “It most certainly was not! It was the result of you snooping into my user account.”

Gray turned in the booth so that he faced Brynn, reaching out to lay his fingers along the side of her jaw, forcing her to look up at him. “But that's not the exact truth, now, is it, darlin'?”

“Well,” Brynn amended after a long beat, “you should have stopped looking as soon as you realized you weren't in your own account.”

“Ah, but those websites were so interesting and informative, I couldn't tear my eyes away.”

“Which websites?” Hank asked.

Kim interjected with hopeful nervousness, “You don't need to know that, do you, Hank? This is Brynn's night. We should be talking about what she wants to talk about.”

As he caught his own wife's eye, he asked Gray, “Anything different from the ones you've already sent me?”

The women were aghast and annoyed. They had obviously already talked about this subject – probably by email or phone – and had just been stringing the women along by intimating that they'd never discussed it.

Kim smacked Hank's arm, and Brynn did the same to Gray without thinking, then bit her lip hesitantly. She wasn't sure how their new situation might effect what she'd done out of habit. But Gray leaned down and kissed her, saying softly, "No worries. But you know there are very few situations where I'd consider that that was acceptable behavior, don't you?"

Brynn nodded, then impishly smacked him again. "That was a horrid thing to do – to play us like that!"

But the men just laughed. "I've been talking to Gray about some of the new things he's implemented, wondering if it might be a good thing to clamp down on you, too, Kimberly."

She hated it when he used her full name. It was usually indicative of the fact that a spanking was imminent, and that had her squirming in her seat even though it wasn't. "Nah, that's not necessary. You're always telling me how well behaved I am."

"Yes, but maybe that's because I'm overlooking something, or allowing you to hide things from me to avoid a punishment that you need. I think there are aspects of what Gray's doing with Brynn that I'm definitely going to adopt."

Kim glared at Brynn. "This is all *your* fault, you know!"

Brynn had the grace to look sheepish. "Sorry."

Later that evening, when Hank drew Kim into his arms under their beautiful pink and sea green quilt, he brought the subject up again, in a less casual way. "I like some of the things Gray is doing for Brynn now, and I'm going to start using them on you."

That was exactly what Kim didn't want to hear from her loving - and already quite stern enough as far as she was concerned - husband. "We don't need to rock the boat, now do we? We have a system that works well for us. Don't want to fix what's not broken." She wondered how many other platitudes she could come up with that he was probably going to ignore, anyway.

"No, I don't. But I still think that there are things that I could do for you that would help you -"

"But this all started because of what Brynn was into – that they talked it out and she agreed that she preferred that he take more control over her life for her. It's not necessarily something *I'm* into, thank you very much."

Kim should have known that – especially now – Hank was very in tune with not only what she said, but how she said it. "Not necessarily?" he pointed out, hearing her sigh exasperatedly.

“You know what I meant.” She made as if to turn over, away from him, like she was going to sleep when he knew she was doing no such thing. She was trying to avoid the subject, and he wasn’t going to put up with it.

With her next breath, Kim found herself splayed ignominiously over her husband’s lap, his arm across the small of her back, keeping her in place with very little effort on his part, that ham sized hand of his almost more than covering the plump rise of her vulnerably bare bottom, since he insisted she sleep nude. He emphasized his words with tremendous swats that were all the more unpleasant because she hadn’t mentally prepared for them. She’d really thought she was going to sleep, but instead she ended up bawling over his lap within the first few smacks, as always when he had her in this position. “I don’t appreciate that attitude, Kimberly. I was asking you a serious question, and our discussion definitely wasn’t over yet, and yet you gave me your back.”

She didn’t like the tone he was taking at all. It seemed uncomfortably close to what Brynn told her about how Gray spoke to her more often nowadays, reinforcing her submission to him verbally.

“Hank, no! I don’t want this!”

It wasn’t as if Hank didn’t realize that. He knew she didn’t want the spanking she was receiving or to have him curb her behavior any more than he already did. And he was very aware of the fact that she’d already pointed out so huffily – she hadn’t been the one who was looking for more restrictions.

Still, Hank thought that at least readdressing and recommitting to keeping a weather eye on her wasn’t a bad thing. He wasn’t going to demand that they follow in Gray and Brynn’s footsteps, unless he saw that that was what was best for her.

“I know you don’t. You never do want to be spanked, do you? But I’ve never let that fact bother me before, and I’m going to be even less likely to in the future.” He patted the back of her thigh, which was his signal to her to spread her legs as far apart as she could. With every movement reminding her of her already very sore behind, she nevertheless did as he bade, giving him unrestricted access to the parts of her she knew he most sought.

“But what have we here? Lots of dew on my finger for someone who’s being subjected to something she supposedly doesn’t like.” He brought the well baptized finger in question to his mouth and cleaned her involuntary tribute off very slowly and delicately, like a cat enjoying a particularly wonderful saucer of cream.

Kim whimpered, unable to turn away from the sight.

“But there’s ample evidence to the contrary, wife.”

Her shudder was body wide, all the way from the roots of her hair to the tips of her pink tinged toenails.

“So. I’m going to be doing some reevaluating, which by the way, I should have been doing all along, and revisit your rules to see if there’s anything where I think you could benefit from a closer scrutiny by your loving husband. And I’m going to borrow an entire page from Gray’s book and have you napping in the afternoons on the weekend. I think he hit the nail right on the head about Brynn being sleep deprived, and I think you are, too.”

She should have known that he would take this opportunity to get her to sleep more. She was a night owl who was forced by circumstances to ignore her inner time clock, which left her yawning through the week until she could sleep late in the mornings on Saturday and Sunday.

But she didn’t want to take naps! They were for three year olds and old people!

Kicking her feet as she gave him a piece of her mind about that idea was the wrong thing to do. It got her nowhere with him in regards to getting him to change her mind, and, in fact, it earned her a series of unbelievably painful cracks to the backs of her calves, which convinced her almost instantaneously to keep her feet firmly planted on the quilt beneath them.

“I trust I won’t have to do this again for a while, Kimberly,” Hank said, still cracking his hand loudly down on that tender, rarely punished flesh. “You are to keep your legs down at all times, but then you know that already, don’t you?”

She did. He’d instituted that rule the first time she’d hit his hand accidentally while doing so and caused him to swat her lower back with her paddle instead of his intended target. The spanking had been halted completely at that point so that he could gather her into his arms and comfort her. Hank had been appalled at the idea that he had accidentally hit her back, which she already had problems with, and set the rule right then and there that she was never to kick up at his hand.

“And that movement just earned you a second spanking tomorrow, Lovely.”

He picked up the current spanking he’d just begun to the sounds of her anguished groans. He wasn’t sure exactly which they were for – the continuation of her punishment or the announcement that she had another one coming.

Kim was very careful not to kick again, considering how thoroughly she’d just been punished for doing so, although it was a hard thing to not do, especially since she’d had some success – earlier in their relationship – in diverting where his swats landed. Hank had been much more upset at the fact that he’d accidentally paddled her on her back than she had been by a longshot. Her reassurances had fallen on deaf ears and he seemed to be quite traumatized by the event.

She was just happy that he'd stopped spanking her – for the moment. He had refused, that one time, to continue it the same day, but despite her fervent prayers and blatant attempts to distract him, he continued it the next day just before bedtime.

But she knew she wasn't going to get such a wonderful reprieve this time, however.

And she didn't.

Hank had always spanked her very thoroughly – his philosophy of spanking being along the “in for a penny” lines. And this time was very much along those lines, only much much worse. He seemed to be spanking harder, each bright, loud cracking of his palm against her rear only serving to emphasize her submissive position, driving home the fact that he was going to be much less tolerant of what he considered to be disrespectful behavior – such as giving her back to him – than he ever had been.

Kim wouldn't have thought he could become even more dominant, but the next month – and even over their vacation - proved her very, very wrong.

Chapter Four

Their trip to Florida, though, was only conducted a bit more soberly than it would have been if neither of their mates had decided that the ladies' disciplinary needs should be more fully addressed. They flew down to Florida from Manchester Airport at the crack of dawn, and at that point neither of the women – or the guys, really – were particularly awake, so their husbands' warnings, given practically in unison as they road to the airport made both ladies blush prettily, but there were much less protesting going on about being reminded that they were expected to behave themselves – as if they were both five – than there would have been if they had left later in the day.

But once on the plane, high spirits overtook the both of them despite the fact that it was oh-dark-thirty. Brynn and Kim sat together, directly behind their husbands on the plane, giggling and chatting excitedly while their mates did their best to try to get back to sleep. This wasn't the first vacation they'd taken together, but it was the first one in a while and the girls were definitely looking forward to having some time off, both together and with their husbands.

It was Brynn – as usual – who started off getting them into trouble, courting it when she already had a spanking coming each night for the next three days. She started to bang her leg against the back of her husband's chair, saying in an abominably whiny voice, “Are we *there* yet?”

Kim had the good grace to look appalled at that action, and not copy it, because she knew exactly what was going to happen, and it did. Gray turned around and gave Brynn a look that promised that if she didn't cease and desist immediately, she was going to be in big trouble.

Brynn was feeling so good that – even in the face of her husband's stern look – she merely leaned forward and kissed him. “I'm so excited – we're finally on our way!”

“I know you are, but you also know that I expect you to behave, and banging the back of my seat does not qualify. Am I making myself crystal clear?”

Being verbally chastised in front of what was essentially the whole plane, since the close proximity of the other travelers around them didn't provide for much privacy despite his hushed tone, seemed to sober her up a bit. Gray didn't want to put a damper on her fun – she'd worked herself almost to a nub at a job she detested, which he knew made the work just that much harder, and he wanted her to relax and enjoy their vacation. She deserved it.

But he deserved to know that his wife was going to behave herself, and he certainly wasn't going to hesitate to do whatever it was that he thought she needed to assist her in doing so.

So when the flight attendant came around with the drink cart and he heard Brynn order a beer, he turned back immediately and corrected her, saying directly to the surprised attendant, “The lady will have a Diet Coke, please. Thank you.”

He watched Brynn take the soft drink reluctantly, wearing a grimace of distaste. She had wanted to start celebrating early, but apparently that was not going to be allowed.

When the cart and flight attendant had gone several steps down the aisle beyond them, he turned around again to say, “I suggest, Missy, that you don’t push me. You should know by now that I would have no compunction in the least about taking you by the hand and pulling you into the bathroom for a talking to if I need to.”

His demure language didn’t fool Brynn. She knew that if he did as he threatened, there would be precious little “talking” going on in that bathroom, except the kind between the palm of his hand and her cringing bottom. The impish smile fled from Brynn’s face and she adopted a much calmer demeanor immediately. She knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he would do what he’d just said he would, because he’d already done something very close – although not quite as public as he was threatening to here – to her several nights ago, when they were having dinner over at Kim and Hank’s.

Kim had made her famous lasagna, layered high with homemade meat sauce, tons of mozzarella, sausage and ricotta cheese, along with a big, fresh tossed salad and plenty of crispy, cheesy garlic bread. Even though she’d made an enormous amount of it, the guys left almost nothing in the way of leftovers.

They ended up lingering as they always did over coffee and dessert right at the table. Kim’s dining room had a pocket door as the far wall, and it was just getting warm enough to have it open a bit out into their big backyard, bringing all those loamy, deep scents right into the room.

It was getting somewhat late, although no one seemed to be in the mood to leave, except apparently Gray, who, watching his wife talking animatedly to her friend, took a last sip of his coffee and said, “Well, I think I’d better be getting this one home to bed. She’s tired -”

Without thinking – or even looking at her husband’s face – Brynn responded with a wealth of huff and indignation and interrupted him with, “I most certainly am not!”

Gray’s soft, almost understated, “Excuse me?” should have been enough of warning to her that she was treading on thin ice, but it wasn’t.

And she couldn’t even blame it on the wine, because she hadn’t had any. She just wasn’t thinking, especially not about how ultra strict he had become about her attitude as well as her behavior.

Unfortunately, she started her sentence before she turned to look at him or she would never have started it at all. “But Gray, I’m not tired in the least -”

Brynn came to a full stop right then and there, having laid eyes on her husband and seen the expression on his face.

Then he did something that she never in all her days would have thought he’d actually do – not that he hadn’t threatened it all throughout their relationship, and even more so recently, since tightening the reins on her: Gray stood and took Brynn’s wrist – very carefully not her hand, but her wrist - tugging her up to stand next to him.

Then he turned to Hank – again, distinctly not looking at Kim – and said, “May I borrow your spare bedroom for a moment? Someone is in dire need of an attitude adjustment, and I’m not willing to wait until we get home to do it.”

Kim’s mouth opened immediately to deny him permission, at least until her husband looked directly at her and then she it closed again instantly. Hank kept his gaze on his wife as he spoke to Gray. “Be my guest. It’s down the hall to the left.”

“Hank!” Kim finally got out as Gray lead a very reluctant lady behind him to the bedroom. “We can’t let him - ” she stumbled on the word “spank” and said, instead, “ – do *that* to her now – here!”

“On the contrary, Kimberly, we can and we will. I would expect the same accommodation from him if you acted out while we were at their house.” Just before the other couple disappeared behind a closed door, Hank called helpfully, “There’s a hairbrush in the nightstand.”

Hank and Kim could hear Brynn’s outraged squeal at that tidbit, which bode even more dire consequences to her fanny than she would have had without Hank’s eager assistance.

Kim had her hand raised to smack her husband for contributing to her best friend’s most certain misery, but she put it back down again at the look in his eye.

“Smart move, honey. I suggest you don’t put up too much of a fuss or you’re going to end up in your own bedroom, getting a taste of your *own* hairbrush, and I don’t care who the hell is in our house at the time.”

Although she fumed, she didn’t fuss outright, knowing he would be as good as his word.

In the spare room, Brynn had rounded on Gray as soon as he entered, closing the door behind him tightly. But the both of them knew – Brynn more acutely – that a closed door wasn’t going to be much help to her. There would be no drowning out the sounds of what was going to happen to her in just a few moments.

“I can’t believe you just did that – dragging me in here like a child to be disciplined in front of our friends!”

Gray wasn’t waiting for her to complete her little temper tantrum. He crossed the room and extracted the hairbrush, which was right where Hank had said it would be, then sat himself down on the end of the bed and patted his leg, holding his hand out to Brynn to assist her over his lap, as calmly as if they were in their own house.

Brynn was having a very hard time coming to grips with her current circumstances because she knew that her friends were going to hear pretty much everything that was said and done in this room and the thought thoroughly mortified her. Somewhat more mollified than she had been, she looked first at her husbands imperiously outstretched hand, and then at his resolute face, realizing that he wasn’t going to let her wheedle or weasel her way out of this one, regardless of the considerably heightened embarrassment factor.

More probably *because* of it.

Slowly, glacially slow, she reluctantly put one small sneaker clad foot in front of the other until her hand ended up in his.

From there, all she could do was surrender to his will, or be bent to it. Either way, she knew she was in for a real spanking. He wasn’t going to play act and make it lighter because they had an audience.

And, before he put her over his knee, he took both her pants and panties down. Brynn desperately wanted to protest, but thought better of it, allowing herself to be draped over his lap and positioned the way she always was now, arms outstretched to support her weight and keep them out of his hair, legs split wide open over one knee.

There was no preamble, no warm up spanking, but there certainly was a lecture throughout about watching her attitude towards him, and interrupting him – behaving naughtily in front of their friends. “I can see that we have work to be done on those things, don’t we, Brynn Alexandra? I think you need a daily reminder for the next week or so, so you don’t forget such important things.”

She wanted to scream, A week? It couldn’t be a week! That would bleed over into their vacation, and she didn’t want to be spanked on their vacation! It wasn’t fair! But considering how he was lighting into her bottom with that horrible brush, she wasn’t about to raise a protest of any kind beyond the moans and howls that accompanied each firmly delivered smack.

At their dining room table, Hank and Kim couldn’t hear the actual words that were said as they were too indistinct, but the tone was humiliatingly familiar and the sound of hard wood cracking against quivering bottom flesh was unmistakable.

Kim made as if to get up, saying, “I can’t listen to this,” but her husband caught her hand and tugged her back down into her seat.

“You can and you will. It’s a good object lesson for you. Some time in the future, you can bet that your roles are going to be reversed, and I know Gray’s going to make Brynn listen to you getting your fanny warmed.”

Frowning, Kim did as she was told, cringing with the unwelcome sounds of every spank. She certainly didn’t want there to be a second spanking going on in this house at the same time – one was entirely too much as far as she was concerned!

In the bedroom, Gray was continuing his lecture as he disciplined his recalcitrant wife, finding that the combination of both a strict lecture and a good, hard spanking did wonders as an attitude adjuster. “For the next week, you will present yourself and your paddle to me every night just before bed. I think being put to bed still snuffling and with a very hot red bottom is just the ticket to help you remember your submission, Brynn.”

At this point, she didn’t think she’d ever forget it again, and she still had seven nights to go. She knew he wouldn’t count tonight as a part of the week. So on the first few days of their vacation, she was going to have her regular bedtime, and her poor butt was going to be roasted in the hotel, and she knew he wasn’t going to be any easier on her because of that, either.

He continued to swat her, bringing that heavy, unyielding implement crashing down on her defenseless rump, ignoring how sore and uncomfortable looking it had become under his tender ministrations, mottled as it was with the imprint of circles from the ingenious addition of strategically placed holes that cut down on wind resistance and gave each hearty swat even more emphasis to the miscreant. It might not have been the best actual hairbrush, considering the modifications that had been done to it, but it was a wonderful disciplinary implement. “Now, when we get home, you’re to go directly to bed. No phone, no TV, no internet. Have I made myself perfectly clear?”

Despite her conversion from someone who eschewed modern technology to one who embraced it and was quite used to spending much of her evening online with the television on, she found she couldn’t bring herself to care much about those relatively tiny restrictions. Brynn could barely speak. She had long since been driven past the point of caring whether or not their hosts heard her cries of misery. But she knew he expected an answer. Her watery “Y- yes, Sir” was squeezed in between short, sharp squeals and longer groans conjured by the continued rise and fall of the paddle on her tender flesh.

“Good. I don’t expect I’ll have to repeat this lesson again after the next week, will I?”

On a broken sob, Brynn answered, “No, S-sir.”

Finally, after what seemed like an interminable amount of time to Brynn, the spanking stopped. But the punishment didn't end there. Instead of helping her up so that she could pull her pants and panties back into place, Gray instead assisted her onto her feet, but then guided her into an empty corner of the room. "Nose. Corner. Until I come back for you."

She knew the routine, her hands lacing behind her neck automatically as she pressed her nose into the corner, jeans and pretty pink panties still heaped, around her ankles.

He exited the room and closed the door, a fact that Brynn was ever grateful for, and rejoined their friends.

"Where's Brynn?" Kim asked, her worry for her friend making the words come out much more harshly than she intended, almost accusatorily.

Gray was about to answer when Hank stopped him, turning his wife to face him and cupping her chin in his hand. "She is wherever her husband put her after he punished her. You'd be in the corner with your pants around your ankles if you were the one in there instead of Brynn. But he doesn't answer to you, Kim. I know you're concerned about Brynn, but you are not to question her husband's techniques."

"Yes, Sir," she answered softly.

"That's exactly where she is, Kim, with her nose in the corner until I come get her. I find it helps her focus after a punishment."

Hank nodded in agreement.

Kim huffed and waited nervously – wishing to the high Heavens that she wasn't hearing her husband and her best friend's husband discussing the vagaries of punishing their wives, trading hints and tips as if they were talking about something as mundane as golf - until Gray rose and headed down the hallway to his wife not too much later. He deliberately left the door open this time when he crossed the room to tug her into his arms, carrying her the short distance to the end of the bed, setting her down in front of him to help her pull her jeans and panties up, ignoring her protestations as the material scraped over her singed backside, then cuddling her on his lap like a child, rocking just a bit since she was still sobbing softly.

"You know I love you beyond detraction, don't you?" he whispered against her temple, gratified and relieved, as he always was, that she could remember that even when he disciplined. "Good. Because I always will. You are my angel, my reason, my heart, and I'll never shirk from doing whatever I think is best for you." His lips took hers, then, in a soft, tender kiss.

"Shall we rejoin our hosts and say goodnight?"

Brynn nodded, but still clung to his shirt.

Gray saw absolutely no problem in carrying her out there.

Kim's face looked relieved once she saw that her friend was all right. She'd always known it intellectually, but hearing that spanking and her cries and groans had set her on edge.

Except for a puffy face, she looked fine, and had her arms looped around her husband's neck, her face buried against his chest.

"We're heading out. Someone's going to be put to bed immediately once we get home."

Why did he have to tell them that? She wondered, her already bright blush deepening.

Gray shrugged his shoulder, encouraging her to lift her head. "Say goodnight, Brynn."

She raised her head, barely, and whispered in a tiny voice, "G'night. Thank you for a lovely dinner."

Hank stood and drew Kim to him, saying, "You're very welcome."

Since that instance of being spanked in the same house as Kim, essentially all but in front of their friends, Brynn had been very aware that she really didn't know to what lengths he would go to see that she was kept in check as he thought she needed to be, and she realized she couldn't put anything past him.

Nothing.

If he thought she needed to be spanked on the plane, she had no doubt that he would, indeed, find a way to do just that, not paying one whit of attention to how embarrassed she would be about it – not just about the spanking itself, which was always inherently humiliating, but the fact that everyone around them would know exactly what he was doing.

She would faint from the mortification . . . she fervently hoped, anyway.

Although each couple was free to do anything they liked, and both planned to take time for private time with their spouse, the four of them enjoyed each other's company so much that they had planned most things to be done together. The girls, in particular, had thought of a few things for them all to do while they lounged around, which included a lot of that as well as plenty of eating out, too, but also trips to Disney World and Bush Gardens. Despite the fact that they were four adults, they thoroughly enjoyed Disney,

spending a lot of time riding the Smokey Mountain Railroad, and lots of the other rides, eating their way through Epcot center and riding Space Mountain.

Nights were spent eating sumptuous dinners during which no calorie counting or talk of health food was allowed, per orders from the girls, then reclining by their private pool. They had deliberately chosen a resort that offered an Olympic sized pool for everyone if they wanted something larger, but they had each gotten big suites that were adjoining, and that shared a good sized pool that was shared between them that was more than big enough for the four of them.

It was like a non stop party, except for those few days early on when Gray would get out of his lounge chair at about ten thirty and extend his hand to his wife, who dutifully stopped what she was doing and came to him, even though she knew what was going to happen to her when they got into their rooms. She didn't want to compound her problem by throwing a tantrum just when her punishment was winding down.

So she sat more gingerly than the rest of them in their rented, smallish SUV the next morning and on the monorail and the Pirates of the Caribbean, at least for the first couple of mornings they were there.

And he didn't neglect her maintenance spanking, either, which she got on top of the last night of her week of spankings.

But then she was free – relatively. As free as he allowed her to be. In truth, though, she never felt stifled in the least, even with him ramping up his expectations of her submission. It felt exactly as she expected it would feel when she was reading through the web pages that had encouraged him to become even more vigilant in regards to her behavior: she felt loved and cared for. He paid attention to her, unlike a lot of her friends' – with the noted exception of Kim – husbands, who tended to ignore their wives unless they wanted sex.

Gray and Brynn loved to be together, and it felt very natural to her to have him lovingly correct her, especially in most circumstances when she knew she'd done something wrong that she would have had a lot of guilt about without his stern assistance. She occasionally forgot herself and was sarcastic or smart to him, but she was quickly learning that that was not acceptable any longer.

The only time she had a hard time submitting to him was when she truly felt that what she'd done didn't warrant a punishment. And he didn't just forge ahead with it, ignoring the way she was struggling, but instead did his best to try to help her understand where he was coming from. There was never any doubt that she would end up chastised in the manner he chose in the end, but he didn't want to add more stress to her life, or have bad feelings about a punishment fester into resentment of what he was doing for her. He wanted to relieve stress for her, and one of the unusual side effects of being thoroughly paddled was that one's debt was paid, and the slate was clean. There was no baggage to

carry around. It was all worked out between the flat of his hand – or his belt or whichever implement he chose to use – and the crest of her bottom.

The men had decided to take a day and go deep sea fishing. Neither of the girls was in the least interested in that pursuit, so they had a day to themselves. The men had rented a car for themselves, and left at an hour that was what the women considered to be ridiculous hour to get up on one's vacation, and although they were both awakened for a good bye kiss and a strict verbal reminder to behave, neither of them was particularly awake for it.

The girls had decided to treat themselves to several treatments at the hotel's excellent spa – they got facials, manicures and pedicures as well as hour long massages that had them wanting to be poured into their rooms. By the time they were done, they were starving, and decided to take the rental car to a nearby restaurant, where they stuffed themselves with juicy bacon burgers, baskets of hand cut fries and, for dessert, something called Death by Chocolate that had them riding a sugar buzz all the way out to the car.

Chapter Five

Brynn was driving since Kim didn't like to have to maneuver through so much traffic, and as she rounded the end of the car - which was parked near the back of the restaurant by the dumpster because the place was so popular and they had arrived during the height of the lunch rush - a whining sound caught Brynn's attention and she couldn't help it, she had to follow it. She was surprised to find that the door to the dumpster was open and pushed it open. The whining stopped for a moment then returned quickly once there was no loud scraping noise.

Brynn knew what she'd found, although she couldn't see them and she didn't know how many there were, but she knew that some horrible person had . . . She leaned as far into the dumpster as she could, trying to get at them, and very much in danger of falling in, flicking a big flat piece of cardboard aside to reveal just what she'd thought she'd find: a clutch of clearly abandoned puppies, at least three that she could see, although there could have been more than that elsewhere in the big pungent container. They were small and obviously frightened, whining for their mommy, not more than six or so weeks old, she guessed.

"What is going on over there? You *aren't* going to do what I think you're going to do, are you? You're going to climb in there, aren't you?" Kim couldn't believe what she was seeing, although she really should have been so surprised, considering how well she knew Brynn and her lack of sound thinking when animals needed to be rescued. She could hear the distressed whines of the pups, too, but was already wondering what they were going to do with them once they got them out.

And that was if Brynn survived a trip into the dumpster in shorts and a light, sleeveless blouse without killing herself, to say nothing of getting her and Lord knew how many wiggly puppies out of there.

"Come here - I need to hand you something," Brynn - who was already standing inside the dumpster, however precariously - yelled to her friend.

Kim began to take very reluctant, tiny steps towards her friend's voice. She wanted to help starving puppies as much as the next person, but not to the detriment of her own rear end, and she already knew how this was going to turn out. "You and your animals! You're going to get us both into trouble. The guys aren't going to be happy with the idea of sharing our suites with stray pups, you know! Isn't your bottom still sore from the beginning of the week? How can you ask me to . . ." Her mouth clamped shut as soon as Brynn reached out an already filthy arm to hand her a tiny, trembling ball of dirty fluff.

"Here, take this. And this. Put them in the car on my jacket and come back. I think there are three more at least."

Sighing and giving into the inevitable, Kim did as she was told. When she returned, Brynn handed her three more pups who were equally as frightened and even dirtier than their littermates, but she managed to get all of them into the back of the car before making her way back to her friend again.

“You realize they’re going to ruin the back of the car.”

“So? It’s a rental, and we’ll do what we can to mitigate damage once we’ve gotten them to a safe place.” Brynn said, not really paying much attention to her friend but instead trying to determine whether or not there was another pup to be found in those dangerous confines without accidentally stepping on it herself, or, in searching for it, not pushing something heavy onto it as she was moving stuff around.

Finally, she simply stood stock still in the middle of the dumpster and listened.

When Kim opened her mouth, she got such a fierce glare from her friend that she immediately thought better of what she was going to say and closed it again.

“I think we got them all, but I’m going to want to come back here again, just in case, to check it out again once we get these guys settled.” Brynn began to work her way out of the dumpster with help from her friend, but they still ended up in a heap on the ground. “Sorry about that,” she apologized for essentially bowling her friend over on her way out.

Kim emitted a long suffering sigh. “That’s okay. I’m used to it by now.”

Brynn gave her a withering glance, and turned her attention to the back seat of the car and its cacophonous occupants. They seemed all right for the moment. The trick was to keep them corralled while they drove the short distance to the hotel.

She already had everything arranged in her mind about what was needed to take care of the pups for as long as she needed to find a rescue in the area that she could leave them with. When they arrived at the hotel, she went into her own suite and emptied out Gray’s big duffle bag, which she used to get the pups into the “strictly no pets” hotel incognito.

Then she set them up in the bathroom after spreading papers around the floor and sacrificing the nice leather jacket she’d found at Goodwill for five dollars several years ago to the pups, along with all of the clean towels she could scarf.

Then she sent Kim to the grocery store for food, dishes, etc. while she sat online in the bathroom, surrounded by the curious babies. They seemed to be relatively healthy, to her, if filthy and fragrant.

Kind of like herself.

So finding them a home got put on hold until she’d washed the little buggers thoroughly in the tub one by one. They seemed much less than appreciative, but she was as gentle as

she could be. It seemed that some of them were permanently stained by garbage, but the small bottle of baby shampoo she'd brought along did most of the trick.

And while she was at it, she washed herself, too, and changed her clothes, knowing that she'd become a large source of the rancid odor in the room, too. But she knew she was going to have a hard time convincing Gray that they should keep the pups until they found a rescue that would take them, and cleanliness would only count in her favor.

If only the rental car would clean that easily . . .

It wasn't long before she heard the door open while she was on the phone with a likely candidate to take the pups in. But it wasn't Kim returning with the requested canine provisions as she'd hoped. It was Gray. He was carrying the bags of dog stuff she'd asked Kim to get, but he didn't look any too happy about it.

She concluded her conversation with the lovely woman at the rescue, who would be coming over shortly to collect the pups.

But she knew she had worse problems than placing them, and he was standing right in front of her.

Brynn decided to put the best face on the situation, and greeted him warmly, relieving him of the bags and setting a food station up next to the water station she'd already improvised using what should have been the ice bucket from the room as a water dish. "Thanks for bringing these in! How was your day fishing?"

"Long," came the clipped reply as he closed and locked the door behind him.

Brynn shuddered at the click but was determined to bull her way as far as she could through this. "Did you guys catch anything?"

"Yes, but we decided to release them."

"Good. I never did like the idea of uselessly killing fish just for the fun of it, myself. Thank you for doing that." He was right directly behind her, she knew, but then she had an innate sense about where he was in any room with her, anyway, and she was so attuned to him that it almost always seemed as if he was by her side. She already had goose flesh and every sense was on alert.

She decided to meet him head on and turned around, hugging him tight, which he never failed to return, bless him, no matter how mad he was at her at any given moment, and she figured that this time was right up there on the scale.

"Well, Kim and I pampered ourselves all morning, and then went to lunch at Puddy's, which was scrumptious. When we got back to the car, which was parked next to the dumpster for the restaurant, I guess, I could hear these whines and yips, and I knew

something was alive in there.” Brynn looked down at the pups, who were playing at her feet, but they kept looking nervously up at Gray.

Even the dogs knew who was the dominant person in the room with absolutely no doubt.

She did too, unfortunately.

She snuck a look at Gray’s face, and immediately wished she hadn’t. Thundercloud didn’t cover it. Her nerves got the better of her and she began to ramble a bit, talking about the rescues she’d called, finally saying what she hoped would help her cause. “The last one that I was talking to when you came in is going to be here shortly to take them off our hands.”

Gray put the lid down on the commode and took a seat, opening his arms to her, and she went into them without a second’s hesitation, snuggling up against him as if she didn’t know she was in big trouble.

The pups had all gravitated towards them, yipping excitedly and nipping playfully at his shoes. Gray couldn’t help but watch their amusing antics for a moment. “They’re very cute,” he admitted begrudgingly.

“They are. I think they’re cross somewhere between a retriever and a collie, judging by the hair and coloring, but there’s no telling, of course.”

“You found a good place for them?”

She was touched that he’d even think to ask, considering that he was always much more concerned with her own safety than that of any animal. “Yes, I did. The woman on the phone sounded wonderful, and she said she was going to foster them until they were a bit older, and then they’d be adopted out.”

“It’s a no-kill place, of course?”

“Of course. She said we’re welcome to come with her to her place or stop by before we leave.”

“We might could do that.” Gray bent to kiss his wife deeply. “You know you’re in trouble, Brynn, don’t you?”

She frowned, looking down. “Yes, Sir. But I couldn’t just leave them in the dumpster, could I? They’d be killed!”

Gray sighed. “You’re not in trouble for rescuing the dogs, although I’ve seen the interior of the rental car and I’m very unhappy with the idea that you didn’t do more to protect it. You could have sent Kim to get a tarp or towels or something . . . we have to ride around in that car for the next three days and it smells like the inside of the dumpster you’re even

more in trouble for having jumped into.” His pointed look alone had her trying to burrow away from him.

“It was the only way I could get to them -”

A big finger crossed her lips, silencing her. “No arguing, Missy. I believe we’ve already had the ‘don’t climb into dumpsters’ rule for quite some time, haven’t we? Goes right along with the ‘no risking your own health and safety to help an animal’, right?”

Brynn nodded slowly.

“And what are you supposed to do instead of diving head first into a dangerous compartment full of Lord knows what?”

“Call you,” she answered by rote, but then tried to add in her own defense, “But you were deep sea -”

And all she got for her efforts was a warning in the form of a raised eyebrow. “And what are you supposed to do then?”

Brynn wanted to sigh, but didn’t quite dare. “Wait for you. But what if they’d come to empty that dumpster?” she looked down at the playfully frolicking puppies. “Or even if someone had just put something really heavy in there - they’d all be dead!”

Gray sighed heavily enough for the both of them, looking deeply into her eyes and trying to convey all of the love and concern he felt for her. “I know that you have a wonderfully big heart and that you want to save everyone – well, every four footed everyone, anyway, and me – you can, but you can’t save them all, sweetheart. That’s just a cold, hard fact of life. And my concern – as cute as they are – is for you, not them. I can’t bear the thought that you could have been seriously hurt dancing around in the gunk in that garbage bin. There could have been hypodermic needles in there, glass, knives . . . to say nothing of just how unsanitary it is in general to be doing that.”

He hugged her tight, then drew back a bit to look her in the eye. “I don’t want to lose you, and I’m sorry, but I’d rather have a live you than a live puppy – or kitten or fawn or raccoon - any day.”

“I know,” she said softly.

“So you know you have a big punishment coming for this – for wrecking the inside of the car, which Hank generously volunteered to clean out for you by the way – but worse, for risking life and limb by climbing into a dumpster.”

Eyes already full of tears at the thought, Brynn nodded.

But before he could continue in that vein, there was a tap at the door. The rescue lady had arrived, and it took them a little while to get the pups arranged, but at least she came equipped with a big SUV that had crates in the back for the little foundlings.

All of them thanked her profusely for picking them up so quickly, and she, in turn, thanked Brynn for helping the dogs. “Your friend told me what you did. Not many folks would go dumpster diving just to save some stray puppies.”

Brynn blushed, and Gray hugged her to his side.

But she knew that all of the heartfelt praise in the world wasn’t going to save her from her fate.

Gray turned to Hank and asked, “How’s the car looking – or more importantly – smelling?”

“Much better than it did. It’s almost back to the way it was before, but not quite. I’m hoping that multiple scrubblings and applications of heavy duty Febreze will take care of anything unpleasant that lingers, though.”

“Is it drivable?”

Hank nodded, understanding exactly where his friend was going with that. “Oh yes. And you won’t even need a clothes pin . . . as long as you keep the windows down.”

“Lovely,” Gray grimaced, taking Brynn’s wrist firmly in his hand. “We’ll be back shortly. We have some . . . business to attend to.”

“We understand,” Hank answered for his wife and himself. “If you need a private place, try down by the warf.” He grabbed Kim just as she was trying to make her escape to prevent further embarrassment. “The coordinates are set into the GPS. We’ve already, uh . . . made use of it. It’s really pretty private.”

Brynn couldn’t help but roll her eyes, but it was Kim who got on her husband. “Hank, stop helping poor Brynn! She’s in enough trouble already without you giving hints to her husband about where he could . . .” She trailed off there because she didn’t really want to discuss the fact that she and Brynn were subject to their husbands’ stern ideas of what correct behavior was for their wives.

It was kind of a weird thing, but she knew Brynn agreed. She and Brynn discussed their lifestyle, and Kim knew that her husband and Gray did occasionally when they were together, but neither of the women wanted it discussed as openly as the men seemed to favor when it was the four of them talking in a group. The men were the ones who were most likely to make a comment or do something overt that revealed their wives’ submission. The girls would just as soon pretend it didn’t exist, at least when the four of

them were together. There was a big embarrassment factor that hadn't seemed to dissipate, despite how long they knew each other.

Flustered and bright red, she continued, "Well, you know what I mean. Stop helping Gray find ways and places to have 'discussions' with his wife!"

Gray urged Brynn towards the rental as Hank turned to Kim. "Do we need to have a discussion of our own, Kimberly?" he asked in a tone that was uncomfortably familiar.

"No, Sir," she answered promptly.

"Damn straight. We husbands need all the help we can get keeping you girls in line, and I don't want to hear another word about it."

Her annoyed frown let him know that she would demure this time, but that they were probably going to have that discussion in the near future.

Meanwhile, Gray buckled Brynn into the passenger's side, then joined her, while casually throwing a small gym bag that she recognized as being a makeshift implement bag into the back seat.

Hank had been right, the car had not quite finished off gassing from its adventure this afternoon, so they road with the windows down, letting the GPS guide them to the private spot Hank had found. It didn't look it from the road, but it was a beautiful spot where you could drive out onto a pier and have the water surrounding you, and was surprisingly uninhabited.

Unlucky for Brynn. She had hoped fervently on the way over that the place would be overrun with tourists, but it wasn't to be.

But she was entirely unprepared for the fact that, once he turned off the car, he actually got out of it, and came around to her side of the car, opening the door and offering his hand to help her out.

She looked confused, but let herself be coaxed out of the false safety of the car and into the relative safety of his arms.

But, although he hugged her and kissed her and told her how much he loved her, he then released her and brought her to the hood of the car and, after expertly throwing a light blanket over it to protect her and her clothing, he pressed her over it, its height forcing her to stand on her tip toes.

Not that she had any choice about the matter, but Brynn thought she would probably be okay being disciplined out in the open like this. She'd just have to do her best not to make too much noise, lest someone's curiosity be aroused by the sounds of her inevitable distress.

His next move, however, blew away all of those illusions when he divested her of her shorts and panties in a matter of seconds.

She wasn't supposed to argue with him about punishments. It would be especially inadvisable, she knew, to complain about what he'd just done, but the impulse rose up in her so fast and undeniable that she literally danced her unhappiness, whimpering slightly with each step.

A swift crack to her right bottom cheek had her settling down almost immediately. "That's enough. You got yourself into this predicament, and I'm going to spank you out of it." He reached into the bag that suddenly appeared on the ground near the right bumper. "Or, more accurately, strap you out of it."

He had brought that vicious strap of his – or rather – of hers. The one he had modified so that it was of a better length and to make it fit into his hand more comfortable as he swung it.

He put the strap on the small of her back and began spanking her with no preamble as he lectured, giving her no time to dwell on the fact that she was essentially completely exposed to any boatload of tourists who wandered by. They were going to get an eyeful of her bare – and she was sure thoroughly reddened – backside that she knew would make her wish she could run away.

And the strapping she was going to have to endure was only going to compound that feeling a thousand fold.

" – since you just don't seem to understand that you are never, ever to endanger your own safety for an animal."

After leaving distinct, livid red handprints all over her from rump to knees, he took up the strap to emphasize what he was saying even more vividly. "Never. Ever. I will not have you acting so irresponsibly when you know better and you've been disciplined for the same thing before. Apparently those times weren't enough to help you to remember that this is a hugely important rule."

He paused for just a second, saying in a low almost growl. "I'll have to see if I can rectify that situation."

And he more than achieved his goal.

Brynn thought she had been dancing before, when he'd taken her pants and panties down, but that was nothing in comparison to the jig she did on the tail end of that expertly wielded strap as it laid dark, angry stripes on her otherwise flawless flesh. And by the time he was through with her, she wasn't striped any longer. He'd covered every inch of

her skin and then some, traversing that bare expanse multiple times, until he thought she had reached the proper level of penitence.

When she heard the strap being thrown to one side, Brynn collapsed and Gray was there to catch her as she'd known he would be, swinging her up into his arms and smothering her damp face with kisses as he rocked her tight in his embrace.

"I love you, honey. I love you. You know I couldn't bear it if anything happened to you. I'd just . . ." His own eyes were filled with tears. "I'd just die if I didn't have you."

Trying to tell him without words she couldn't yet express that she felt the same way, Brynn clung to him as if he was her only port in a storm.

And he was. He was her rock, her protector, her husband, her lover, her dominant and her disciplinarian and her best friend, all rolled into one, and she knew how she'd felt if some tragedy befell him that he was completely capable of avoiding.

"I'm sorry," she croaked against his neck.

"Shhhhh. I don't want apologies, sweetie. I just need to know that you're going to obey me on this."

Brynn nodded without hesitation, saying, "Yes, Sir."

"Good girl."

He held her in his arms for what might have been hours but felt like mere seconds; they were so involved with each other that they couldn't see anyone else until they started to hear catcalls and whistles, and looked up, realizing that the fabled boatload of tourists were getting an eyeful of Brynn's well punished behind.

"Let's go back to the hotel," Gray suggested, depositing her gently into the car and buckling her in, then hurriedly getting into the driver's side, as if he couldn't bear to be without her for more than a few seconds.

Brynn leaned over to him and said, her heart in her eyes, "I don't care where we go, as long as I'm with you."