



Loose Id

Undercover Submission

MELINDA
BARRON

UNDERCOVER SUBMISSION

Melinda Barron

LooseId^(R)
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Dedication

Special thanks to Maryam for helping mold the story. I hope you enjoy getting a taste of Cedric, a wonderfully dominant man who just wouldn't let me forget about him after his short foray in Graceful Mischief. It's been a lot of fun to visit old friends again.

This book is for Tia, a wonderful friend who is always there for me. Big hugs! Mel

Prologue

Halloween 2007

The English countryside

“You’re going to freeze your ass off out here, literally. At least cover your dick, you’re making mine cold just looking at you.”

Cedric Davenport turned to his friend and costar Toffer Shelley, aka Drake Dawson, who held out a thick robe. Then he looked down at his cock, which lay flaccid against his thigh. He took the robe and shrugged into it. “He’s fine. Worn out, but fine.”

Toffer laughed. “It was a rousing scene, wasn’t it? Thanks for helping me live out a fantasy and pull Grace a little more out of her shell. She’s always worried about her weight.”

“She’s gorgeous.” Cedric’s words were soft, his gaze now fastened on the English countryside before them.

“Thank you. Just don’t forget she’s my wife.”

“No, I didn’t mean it that way.” He turned to see Toffer studying him.

“What’s eating you?”

“You are,” Cedric replied, a frown marring his handsome features.

“Excuse me?”

“You two, your relationship.”

“Now I’m a little concerned. Was this a bad idea, our ménage? You have designs on my wife?” Cedric almost laughed at the barely controlled anger in Toffer’s voice.

“No, that’s not what I meant. The way she looks at you, and you look at her. The love there. I’ve never had that. Not once. Women flock to me because I’m Cedric Davenport, the big star. They want what they can get out of me, a little fame, some hot sex, expensive toys, and gifts. I want a woman to love me the way Grace loves you. How did you do it?”

“You can’t engineer love, Ced. Grace and I met over the Internet, setting up a party for a mutual friend. I didn’t tell her who I was at first, and when she found out, she wasn’t too happy with me. However, by that time a bond had formed, and we built on it. I couldn’t live without her. She’s not just my wife and my sub, she’s my life.”

“It’s why you defend her when the media attacks her size.”

“If I could get away with it, I’d deck a few of them.” They both chuckled at the idea before Toffer continued, “You’re a good Dom; I can tell from what happened tonight. Find yourself a good subbie.”

“I’ve had a few, except the bond’s never really formed. One of them was only too happy to sell her story to the press: Cedric Davenport flogged me, film at eleven.”

“Makes you leery.”

“Humph, yeah.” Cedric sighed heavily, then turned to Toffer. “You guys know anyone? Someone who would submit to me, and then not run to make a buck from it?”

“Sorry.” Toffer shook his head. “At least you don’t have to hide your dominant side.”

“Oh yeah, my former publicist loved that, let me tell you. Freaked her out. She screamed about how the general public would look at me now, told me I had to change, that

it would scare off moviegoers. I dumped her, quick, because she just wouldn't let it go. I don't care who knows I'm a Dom. I'm not changing who I am for anyone."

"Well, you are an action hero, and I'm sure it just built you up in some people's eyes and made you a freak in others."

"Yeah, it hasn't hurt profits from my movies. Still going strong." Cedric gathered his dark, shoulder-length hair into a ponytail, then let it fall again. "I'm forty-three years old. I make millions, the public can't get enough of me, and I can't find a woman who loves me just for me. Life sucks."

Toffer stood and clapped a hand on Cedric's shoulder. "Take heart, my friend. Someone's out there for you and you'll find her. If Grace and I can help, we will. I guarantee it."

Chapter One

August 2008

Hollywood Hills, California

Kennedy Tyson pushed the button on the intercom system outside Grace Shelley's house and waited. Warm August air filled the car as she waited for a response. She couldn't believe she was here, about to have dinner with Grace Shelley. *The* Grace Shelley. The author whose books she'd come to love. She rubbed her sweaty palms together as Grace's disembodied voice drifted from the speaker.

"Hi, Kennedy. Just follow the path to the house." The gate rolled open and she drove through, looking in her rearview mirror as it shut behind her. This place was a huge step away from her apartment in Bakersfield. It had taken forever for her to get here, and cost more than a small fortune in gas. It was worth it to have dinner with a writer she admired so much.

The idea still boggled her mind. When she'd attended the book signing last month, she'd never expected to get more than Grace Shelley's autograph. When the two women had

talked about writing, and the process, Grace had asked her to stick around until after the event was over. Then they'd sat in the coffee shop and talked for an hour.

When she'd noticed it was past time to go, Grace handed her a card, with a phone number and e-mail address written on it, asking Kennedy to keep in touch. Not having her own card, Kennedy had written her e-mail address on a piece of paper and given it to her new friend. Then she'd debated on how long she should wait to get into contact. A day would seem too eager. Two days maybe, or three? On the second day, Grace had e-mailed her, asking to meet for coffee at the bookstore.

Even though it was a more than a little bit out of her way, Kennedy had agreed. They'd spent the afternoon discussing writing. After that it became a regular thing. They met once a week, on a Thursday, when Kennedy was off from both of her two jobs. Kennedy never told Grace where she lived, or how long it took her to get to the Hollywood Hills area. She was just thrilled to discuss writing with someone who had been there.

At first, Kennedy had been surprised at the way the relationship developed. After all, she and Grace only had a few things in common: writing and the fact they were both larger women. Where Kennedy still struggled with her writing, Grace had hit it big. Where Kennedy, at age thirty-nine, didn't have a man in her life, Grace, who was in her mid-thirties, was married to one of the biggest stars in Hollywood. Where Kennedy held down two jobs to make ends meet, Grace had received a hundred thousand dollar advance on her last book.

Two weeks ago, Grace had taken Kennedy's manuscript, promising to critique it. At their weekly meeting just a few days ago, she'd asked Kennedy to come to the house for dinner. Kennedy had been floored, but she'd managed to accept without making a total fool of herself, or at least she hoped she hadn't. Grace had smiled sweetly and given her the address.

"Just punch the button on the system when you get there and we'll buzz you in." Now, as she piloted her old clunker toward the house, Kennedy's nerves were once again on edge.

She topped a hill and looked down at the four-story gleaming white-and-glass house in front of her, and her stomach dropped. This was so far out of her league. A bright red sports car sat in front of the home, and off to the side she could see a garage with four doors. They had four cars, and she had one that she worried would make it to the Hills and back to Bakersfield every week.

Her heart went into overdrive, but she knew she couldn't back out now. Grace was sweet, and would never mention that the twenty-five dollar bottle of wine Kennedy had brought as a hostess gift was probably not even close to the vintage they were used to drinking. Before she could chicken out and make a U-turn back toward the gate, Drake Dawson and another man appeared on the balcony and waved. Drake, who Grace said liked to be called Toffer, motioned for her to park next to the sports car. She nodded, then turned her attention to the man standing next to him, her eyes widening even more.

Oh. My. God. Cedric Davenport. Her mouth went dry and she tightened her hands on the wheel, wondering how fast she could turn around and speed home. They started down the outside stairs and she eased off the brake and popped the clutch, the car stalling. Embarrassment flooded her as she started it back up, then coasted down the hill.

She came to a stop just as Toffer reached for the door handle. "Welcome." He held out a hand to help her from the car and she took it with one hand, reaching for the wine with her other one. She hoped her hand didn't shake too much. When he'd closed the door behind her, he smiled.

"My mother always said when making introductions you had to make sure to repeat names so people wouldn't forget, and make sure to introduce each person to the other, so no one feels left out." He pulled her into his side in a friendly hug. "So with that in mind, Kennedy, I'm Toffer. Kennedy, this is Cedric, and Cedric, this is Kennedy."

Like I'm going to forget your names. Right. "Hi. Mr. Dawson, um, Shelley. Mr. Davenport." Her voice was barely above a whisper and her mouth felt as dry as a desert. Did she just screw things up? She was pretty sure she had.

“Mr. Shelley? Mr. Davenport? Are our fathers here?” Cedric looked around, then gave her a sheepish grin. “It’s Toffer and Cedric.”

“Cedric.” She laughed nervously, then handed the bottle to Toffer. “Toffer, just a small gift to say thanks.”

“Great. We have a bottle of this very same wine in the fridge right now. Maybe we can open them both and get sloshed tonight.”

“Sounds like a plan,” Cedric said. He motioned to Toffer, then leaned toward her as if imparting a secret. “You have to watch this guy, though. He’ll try to keep all the booze for himself.”

“I’ll share with Kennedy and Grace. You’re on your own, though, smart-ass. There’s a liquor store down the road. If you hurry, you might make it back before dinner comes out of the oven. If not, hit the burger joint next to the liquor store.”

“Screw you. Remember, I’m the one who brought the bottle of wine in the refrigerator.” Surprise registered in Kennedy. They’d brought the same bottle of wine? That was weird.

“I love this vineyard,” Cedric said. “I shot a movie up there. They sent a bottle to my room one night and I was hooked. Now I buy it by the case at the first of the season. Delicious.”

Kennedy silently thanked the liquor store clerk who’d recommended the wine when she’d asked for something good, but not too expensive.

“Cheapskate,” Toffer said. “You brought a bottle of wine from your own cellar?”

“It’s the best,” Cedric replied. “And I brought flowers for your beautiful wife, didn’t I? You don’t deserve flowers.”

“Hey, respect your betters, buddy.” Toffer pushed on Cedric’s shoulder. Kennedy tried to hide a grin when Cedric pushed back.

“Betters? You? When pigs fly.”

Their banter eased Kennedy's nerves. She wasn't sure what she'd been expecting: maybe that they would demand she fawn all over them, the big movie stars. Instead, they were just like two regular guys, ready to enjoy a Saturday night with friends.

"Kennedy!" Grace's voice drifted down from the balcony and Kennedy smiled up at her friend, who waved down. "Ignore them and get up here. Dinner's almost done. We'll eat, and then I'll give you a tour of the house."

Both men stepped back and waved her toward the stairs. "After you."

She led them up the stairs, grateful she'd worn a skirt and not jeans that would hug her hips. At the top, Grace hugged her and they stepped into the house. Kennedy tried not to stop and stare. The house was stunning, a dazzling showplace that still seemed lived in.

"I made vegetable lasagna and some three-cheese ravioli," Grace said, moving off to the left. "I love pasta. We do vegetarian every other night, so I hope that's okay with you. We still do dairy, though. Come on into the kitchen and you can help me with the salad. I thought we'd eat outside and enjoy the summer air."

The men followed them into the huge kitchen. "Kennedy, would you like to cut some tomatoes? Toffer, please open the wine. Cedric, will you get the glasses from the table?"

The three of them went about doing as she'd asked, and when Cedric came back from another set of stairs, he sat four wineglasses on the table. Toffer filled them as Grace pulled dishes from the oven. The heavenly smell of garlic, cheese, and tomato sauce filled the air.

"Yum," Cedric said. "Grace, if you weren't married to this lump, I'd snatch you up in a heartbeat."

"Sweet talker." Grace took the glass that Toffer offered her. Toffer playfully sneered at Cedric, who handed a glass to Kennedy. His fingers brushed hers, his warmth making her skin tingle. He winked at her, and the tingle spread through her body. Her nipples, unused for many years, tightened and Kennedy swallowed hard.

The look he gave her showed he knew what she was feeling. *Of course he does, you idiot. He's adored by women young and old; he knows the effect he has on the fairer sex. You're just one more horny woman to him.* And, of course, the best thing about him was he was dominant. Very dominant from the stories she'd read in the tabloids. Of course, they could be just that -- stories. He'd never denied them, and when a respectable interviewer had asked about it he'd just shrugged and changed the subject. That could mean the stories were true. *Too bad my submissive side's been on the shelf so long it's growing dust. Maybe he could help me take it down.*

Kennedy imagined herself on her knees, naked, her hands clasped behind her back. Soft tendrils of a flogger trailed over her shoulders and breasts, which tightened almost painfully.

"Do you deserve a whipping from me?"

"Yes, Master Cedric. Please whip me; please, Master, I'm begging you."

"Who do you belong to?"

"You, Master Cedric, only yo --"

"Kennedy?" She blinked rapidly, dragging herself back into reality as Cedric clinked his glass against hers, then took a sip, his eyes sparkling as he gazed down at her. "It's wonderful to meet you."

"You too, Cedric." She took her own sip, then held her glass up in salute toward her hosts. Toffer took a hearty sip and Grace gave her a sly smile over the rim of her glass. *Oh good Lord, she meant this as a setup, as if a man like Cedric Davenport could ever be interested in someone like me.*

* * * * *

"Am I bad?" Grace put her hand on Kennedy's arm. The men had gone upstairs after dinner to let the women "talk writing." They'd consumed the first bottle of wine and were

well into the second one. Kennedy knew she had to slow down so she would be able to drive home.

"No, just off the mark," Kennedy replied, pushing her glass away. "I appreciate the thought; however, he's way out of my league."

"No, he's not. He's really a nice guy, and he just wants someone to like him for himself. I think he likes you."

"Right. I saw his last date, twenty-something bimbo with fake boobs and platinum hair." Kennedy reached for her glass and took a huge sip; then, remembering she had to drive, she set it down and pushed it away again.

"He dated Missy Tompkins, and she's not pencil thin," Grace replied. "She's at least a size fourteen. He does have dates to premieres and such, but he doesn't really *date* those women."

"Right. Tell me another whopper." She reached for her glass, then caught herself and clasped her hands together.

"Drink up," Grace said, taking a sip from her own glass. "You're staying here tonight. I wouldn't let you drive after we've had so much alcohol. And Toffer won't let Ced drive, either. The four of us will have breakfast together, trust me."

"Grace..."

"We have lots of room, really we do."

"Did you read my manuscript?" Kennedy hoped Grace didn't take offense at her avoidance of the subject. She picked up her glass just to give her hand something to do.

"Yes, I did. And I loved it. I have some suggestions and then, when my agent is here in November, I'm going to introduce the two of you."

"What?" Kennedy's hand stopped in midair, the wine in her glass sloshing almost to the rim.

"It's really good. I'm serious. You don't think so?"

“Well yeah, I do. I don’t expect you to introduce me to your agent.”

“Why not? I say, ‘If you have connections, use them.’”

Kennedy’s smile faltered. “I don’t want you to think that’s the only reason I want to be friends with you.”

“I don’t think that at all.” Grace sighed heavily. “Listen, Toffer and I have been married for four years now, and I love him so much; he’s my world. And those same Hollywood bimbos you talk about, well, they accept me because they have to. Behind my back, I know they talk about my fat ass and how bad they think my dress looks because I have curves. Toffer and Cedric are my only true friends here. Even my best friend from back home, Lindsey, used to live here, then moved to New York with her husband, Peter. And then I met you and I felt an instant connection. I’ve missed my friends back home so much, and you remind me of them.”

“Did you feel a connection because we’re both large?”

“Partly, and also because you’re smart, and you’re nice, and you can be yourself. That’s why I wanted us to be friends.”

“I like that,” Kennedy said. “Thanks.”

“Let’s go upstairs and get your manuscript. I’ll tell you what I think. You can look at the whole thing later, at your leisure, and ask me questions about what I marked. I know Toffer’s going to be up for a swim later.”

“I don’t have a suit.”

“We’re about the same size,” Grace said with a wink. “Although I think you might be a little smaller.”

“Not much.”

“Well, either way, we’ll have fun. Have another glass of wine, then we’ll eat the torte I made for dessert, take a swim, or watch a movie. And you can crash in one of the guest rooms. I’ll be sick with grief if you say no.”

Kennedy laughed. "Sick with grief? Only a writer would say something like that."

"Yeah, well you know what they say, 'When you work with words, words are your work.'"

They both laughed as they carried dishes toward the house.

* * * * *

"Well?"

"Yummy," Cedric said as he watched the ladies move toward the stairs.

"Grace is sure she's submissive."

"I think Grace is right. Her nipples are pierced." Cedric gave Toffer an exaggerated leer. "I noticed it right away. They got hard when I touched her."

"Well, that doesn't mean she's submissive. I'm not surprised you noticed that, huh?"

"Among other things." Oh yeah, he'd noticed. He'd loved her short-cropped dark hair, and her big hazel eyes, which at times seemed frightened of him and at other times perfectly relaxed. It was an interesting mixture. She had a luscious hourglass figure, with large breasts and full hips. All through dinner he'd imagined her as his table, lying still while he ate off her stomach, his hands tweaking those pierced nipples from time to time.

"I bet her clitty's pierced, too."

"Probably," Toffer replied. "One way to find out."

"Right, like I'm going to jump into bed with her and get burned again. I'll feel her out, but I'm not going to fuck her tonight."

Toffer laughed evilly. "Right. Tell yourself that again. You might actually believe it."

Chapter Two

“I think we’ve had too much alcohol to be in the pool.” Toffer swallowed the last bite of his torte and exhaled loudly. “Extra crunches tomorrow.”

“Got that right,” Cedric said. “Worth every bite, Grace, as usual.”

“Thank you, Ced.” Grace winked at him. “I’m glad you enjoyed it.”

Kennedy took another bite, then sighed. She wanted to add something witty to the conversation, but words failed her. Her eyes drifted to her manuscript, lying on the counter not far from them. She wanted to tear into it to see what markings Grace had made, read what she’d thought of the plot.

“How about a movie? Or we could play some cards.” Toffer smirked at Grace. “Would you like that, Gracie?”

“Yes, Master, I would. Let me just clear these plates.” She grabbed dishes, refusing Kennedy’s offer of help, then walked through to the kitchen.

“What about you, Kennedy? Do you like to play cards?” Toffer’s smile was genuine. Kennedy’s mind was still locked on the fact Grace had called her husband *Master*, like a good sub would. She cleared her throat, pasting a bright smile on her face.

“Yes, that would be fun.”

"I agree," Cedric said. "How about strip poker?"

"Why am I not surprised at your suggestion?" Toffer laughed as he stood. "How about we make it an adult card game, yes? However, not something that's going to embarrass our guest. Before we start, I'm going to go have a chat with Gracie. I'll be right back."

Kennedy had long ago switched from wine to tea, but a dizzy feeling still came over her as she realized Cedric was staring at her like a hungry lion who'd just spotted his mate, sitting with her hips in the air in invitation.

"We're all friends here," he said, his voice deep. "As a submissive, I know you caught Grace's little slip."

"I don't know what you're -- I'm not a submissive." She cast a nervous gaze at him. There was no way she was admitting to it, not with him. Her heart ticked faster.

"A good Dom always knows." His smile was gentle and she relaxed just a little. "There are subtle hints. The way you lower your gaze, your eagerness to please, to serve at the table, to help when things need to be done. It's been a while, though, hasn't it?"

"You're wrong." What was she doing? He was making a move, all but offering to top her, and she was being an idiot. *Do it, Kennedy, do it.*

"I'm not going to hurt you." The hungry lion look was back. This time it came with a lustful grin. "Unless you want me to."

I belong to you, Master Cedric, only to you. Whip me. Mark me. "Well, since I'm not a sub, that's a good thing to know."

He slid his hand slowly over the wood table and stroked her arm. "Relax. Nobody's sceneing tonight. At least, not right now."

His touch burned, the heat searing through her to center in her nipples. Her clit begged for attention as his thumb moved down to her hand. Another denial sat on the tip of her tongue, except it wouldn't come out. There was no sense denying it, really, since he already knew. What would he expect of her? And could she scene with Cedric Davenport?

“Take a deep breath. I’m not going to strip you and chain you to the wall.” Kennedy’s nipples tightened even more. The erotic image slammed into her body and her already-aching clit throbbed even more. *Please do, I like being chained.* His hand was still on hers, his touch gentle but firm. She focused on his hand, then lifted her gaze to Grace and Toffer as they came back in the room.

Toffer set down a deck of cards, then started to separate them into piles. “The name of the game is Truth or Dare. We each get a suit from the deck. We shuffle them, then lay them out one at a time. Winner gets to ask the loser a question. And, of course, the rules of Truth or Dare apply. If you don’t want to answer the question, you have to take a dare. And, if we think you’re lying...well, we’ll handle that situation when we come to it. Everyone game?”

“I’m in,” Cedric said. He’d moved his hand when their hosts came back, and Kennedy missed his warmth. Her subconscious was screaming at her to say it was late and ask which room she was going to sleep in.

Instead, she nodded. “Me too.”

“Good.” Toffer slid a stack of cards toward her. “And, for the sake of saving a question, I take it you’ve already established the fact Kennedy is submissive?”

“Yes,” Cedric said at the same time Kennedy said, “No.”

“That *no* sounded like a question,” Cedric replied as he shuffled his cards. “We already talked about it. Don’t be embarrassed to let people know your true nature.”

“Excellent,” Toffer said as he put a stack in front of Grace. “Then there’s no question about any of us. Two Doms. Two subs. One deck of cards. Let the game begin.”

Go upstairs, Kennedy. Go up now. She repeated the words to herself as she studied the cards in front of her. This was dangerous. Very dangerous. There’s no telling where it would lead. And if it did lead somewhere, was she prepared to follow through? It had been so long. She missed submitting to a Dom so very much.

The worst part of this was she was so frigging transparent he'd noticed her true nature right off the bat. She needed to learn to shield herself more, obviously.

The fact Grace was a sub really didn't surprise her. The idea had occurred to her as she'd watched the two of them together, so obviously in love, with it being clear Toffer was in charge and Grace loved it that way. Besides, it wasn't hard to figure out the black lace choker she wore was really a collar. Why couldn't she have found something like that in her own life?

"Are you all right?" Kennedy answered Grace's question with a nod.

"Yeah. Let's play."

They each turned over a card. Toffer had the king of spades, Grace the two of clubs, Cedric the three of hearts, and Kennedy the ten of diamonds. She let out a breath she didn't know she'd been holding and Cedric chuckled.

"Gracie" -- Toffer turned to his wife -- "truth or dare?"

"Truth."

Toffer stroked his chin as if he were considering asking her something it would be hard for her to answer. Then he lifted his eyebrows to her. "Have you ever been arrested?"

"No." Laughter filled the room and Toffer's laugh turned mock sinister.

"She may not have been in jail, although she loves handcuffs." Grace slapped at her husband's arm playfully and Kennedy relaxed just a little. Maybe this wouldn't be so bad after all.

They went through several rounds, with innocuous questions about high school pranks, drinking, and brushes with the law. Just when Kennedy thought things would be fine, the cards were laid out. She had the deuce of diamonds, and Cedric had the king of hearts.

The look he gave her turned her insides into mush. "Truth or dare?"

“Truth.” She spat the word out, worried that if she said dare, he’d think of something for her to do that would embarrass her.

“When was the first time you submitted to someone?”

She could lie, except it wouldn’t do any good. Denial didn’t do any good. They all knew she was submissive. Still, the silence grew as she fought to control her urge to spit out a falsehood. Finally, she took a deep breath, then said on the exhale, “When I was twenty-six.”

“See, that wasn’t so hard, was it?” Cedric’s gaze bore into her and she shook her head.

“No, Sir.”

“Good girl.” His praise made her tingle with anticipation. Toffer started the next round immediately, and they went through a few more, with Grace and Toffer both answering questions about sex that Kennedy didn’t really hear the answers to. All she could think about was Cedric, and his dick, and his hands, working her, stroking her, spanking her. *Good girl.* He’d called her a good girl.

“You little liar.” The words jerked Kennedy out of her own little world. Toffer stared at Grace, a frown marring his handsome features. “You deserve a punishment for that.”

Kennedy wanted to ask what she’d lied about. She didn’t want to admit that while she was going through the motions and turning over her cards, she’d really been thinking about Cedric, and his topping her.

“Stand up.” Grace complied with her husband’s command. “Take off your clothes. Then go upstairs, put on your leather collar and lead, and meet us in the third-floor playroom. You have one minute.”

Toffer hit a button on his watch as Grace hurried from the room, pulling clothes off as she headed for the stairs.

“Shall we go?” Cedric stood and offered her his hand. She took it, then rose to her feet. “Not going to run out on us, are you?”

“I’m thinking about it.”

“Grace has been building up to a punishment all day, doing little things,” Toffer said. “She wanted it to happen tonight, in front of you. She enjoys people watching, even if she won’t admit it. This helps pull her out of her comfort zone.”

“Yes, Sir.” He nodded at her, then turned and walked up the stairs. Cedric took a step closer, his hand on the small of her back.

“Does this excite you? Do you want to play? Or do you want me to show you to your room? It’s your choice.”

She wanted to say no, she wasn’t excited. It would be a lie. And what was the harm, really, in dabbling for a night? Obviously, nothing would come of it, since Cedric was so far out of her league; however, they could enjoy each other’s company, she could give him her submission, for one night. She could relish the feeling of giving herself to him, obeying him. The memory alone would keep her happy for months.

Although, she didn’t really know him, except for what she’d seen on the screen and experienced tonight.

As if sensing her fears, he gently caressed her through her blouse. “Nothing heavy. Just some light things for the two of us to enjoy. Nothing painful or humiliating.”

His words calmed her, and his touch excited her. This was a once-in-a-lifetime chance that would never come her way again. How could she resist? “Yes, Sir, I want to play.”

The hand on her back moved down, and he cupped an ass cheek and squeezed. “You’re mine right now, aren’t you?”

A thrill shot through her, and she moaned under her breath. “Yes, Sir.”

“Good girl. You may address me as Master Cedric, and you will obey me.”

“Yes, Master Cedric.”

Without saying another word he propelled her toward the stairs, his hand still cupping her behind. Her nerve endings quivered as they mounted the stairs. She was fully aware of him behind her, the heat from his body, his strong hand pressing into her soft flesh. She

wanted to melt into him, to have him wrap his arms around her, then order her to her knees. Lord, she was weak. So very weak.

“Go left.” She obeyed his command, and they headed toward the only open door on the floor. Inside, they found Toffer standing beside a swing suspended between poles that ran from ceiling to floor. The swing hung about three feet off the ground, and the leather was hard, not soft, with enough area for a person to lie down with their legs and arms outstretched. Grace was nowhere to be seen.

“Further proof that she’s itching to be punished,” Toffer said. “She’s late. Very late.”

“I’m sorry, Master.” Kennedy moved her head toward the doorway where Grace stood, naked. A leather lead hung from her high-posture collar to the floor.

“Excuse?”

“I couldn’t find the leash.”

“Right. Well it was in the same place as the collar. I know because I put it there after this morning’s session.” He stared at her and Kennedy could feel the friction crackle between them. “Into the chair.”

“Yes, my Master.” She sat gingerly, grasped the hard leather, and slid the heels of her feet into leather stirrups. Grace stretched her arms out onto the space made just for that purpose. When she was in place, Toffer took her collar and gently jerked.

“Who do you belong to?”

“You, Master.”

“And what’s your purpose?”

“To serve you, in every way.”

“Why were you misbehaving?”

“I don’t know, Master.”

“Not good enough, Lolly.” He ran the lead down her body and attached it to a hook on the chair.

When he was done, Toffer turned to Cedric.

“May I borrow Kennedy to strap my Lolly-girl to the swing?”

“Of course. Kennedy, bind her ankles and wrists.”

This was something totally new to her. She’d witnessed many scenes before; however, she’d never been asked to take part in one with other people, even if it was to fasten bindings.

“Now, Kennedy.” Cedric’s hand was on her back and he gave her a reassuring pat. She moved to the swing, using the leather cuffs to secure Grace. As she moved around, she realized the apparatus could be moved so that the person strapped in would face the floor if their master wanted. Steel bars ran along each side of the seat and lined the places for legs and arms. When she’d done Grace’s wrists and ankles, Toffer stepped up next to her.

“Use the one around her waist, too.” Her hands shook as she obeyed, and she tried to catch Grace’s attention, except the other woman stared at the ceiling and Kennedy could tell she was already in that wonderful space where you were aware of nothing apart from yourself and your master.

Cedric sat on a leather sofa now, and, when she turned to him, he pointed to the floor next to him. “Knees.”

“Yes, Master Cedric.” She knelt next to him and he patted her head as if she were his pet. The feeling hiked up the nervous energy she felt.

Toffer wrapped a blindfold around Grace’s eyes, then reached down and tweaked a nipple.

“Have you been a bad girl?”

“Yes, Master.”

“Why?”

“I have no excuse, Master.”

“That’s right, you don’t.” He pulled harder on Grace’s nipple and Kennedy’s own nub reacted with a twinge of need. Toffer walked to a refrigerator and opened the top portion. He withdrew a glass cock and Kennedy’s eyes widened as he walked toward where she sat.

“It’s Grace’s favorite toy. We have several of them, in various sizes. This larger one will stretch her good, the cold biting into her pussy.” He touched it to Kennedy’s arm and she pulled back from the extreme cold, earning her a sharp, “Hold still,” from Cedric.

“I’m sorry, Master Cedric.”

Toffer walked back to Grace, stepping between her outstretched legs. “Are you ready, my Lolly?”

“Yes, Master.”

“Then stay silent and remain still until I speak with you again.” He worked the glass cock inside her and Kennedy shivered as she watched. The glass had been freezing cold and she wondered what it would feel like in her pussy, the cold mixing with the warmth of her body.

Grace remained motionless and didn’t make a sound, and Kennedy marveled at her self-control. Once upon a time, she’d had that sort of discipline. Long before, when she’d had a master who cared about her. Now she’d probably scream bloody murder for him to stop. When the cock was inside Grace, Toffer stepped toward the wall where he opened two large doors, revealing an inner compartment.

Inside hung several different floggers, canes, and crops. He took a narrow case from the bottom shelf, opened it and extracted two nipple clamps. He attached weights to the clamps, then took a third clamp and did the same.

Kennedy felt as if she were on fire. She knew what was next, and she wanted to be in the chair, with Cedric attaching the weights to her sensitive spots. The clamps would hurt; in Grace’s position, however, the weights wouldn’t be that bad, Kennedy knew. Then she

remembered the swing could be inverted, and she shivered, knowing what was about to happen. She watched as Toffer used a lanyard hook to attach another weight to each clamp and Kennedy averted her gaze back to Grace, who lay still, the glass cock firmly inside her.

“The glass holds the cold,” Cedric said, his voice soft. “I imagine our Grace is quite chilly right now.”

Toffer silently walked to his wife. He caressed her body, his hand roaming up and down, lightly touching at times and pulling harder at others. After a few minutes, he attached a clamp to each nipple, and then to her clit. Still, Grace didn’t utter a sound. Kennedy’s own chest rose and fell in excitement as she watched, wanting to be on the receiving end, remembering how much she loved having her nipples clamped when she had an orgasm, how it heightened the feelings.

When the clamps were in place, Toffer stepped back and flipped the swing so that Grace faced the floor. The weights fell and Kennedy moaned softly.

“Quiet,” Cedric said. “Watch Grace; she’s in her zone, loving her submission.”

The position would put great pressure on Grace’s body, the pain from the clamps shifting into erotic pleasure as she stayed still, allowing herself to submit to her punishment.

Toffer undid four latches on the hard leather swing, removing a piece to bare Grace’s ass. He went back to the cabinet and fingered a few floggers, finally selecting a bright red one from the middle. Kennedy knew little about floggers. She guessed it to be about twenty-seven inches long, between the handle and tresses.

As Toffer moved toward Grace, Cedric spread his legs, indicating Kennedy should come between them, facing toward the room. He put his hands on her shoulders and caressed her, his touch soft yet firm. Toffer lightly trailed the leather over Grace’s ass. Every once in a while he would strike, not hard, just enough to make Kennedy’s body tense.

After a few minutes of teasing, which Kennedy knew would warm Grace up, he stepped back and began to strike her ass, the flogger hitting harder with each stroke. Grace remained silent, and Cedric's fingers dug into Kennedy's shoulders as Toffer worked.

The more he struck her, the more Kennedy wanted to take Grace's place, to be in the swing while Cedric wielded the flogger above her, leaving strap marks on her behind. She could imagine the feel of the leather, the bite of the clamps, the pull of the weights.

"Master Cedric." She whispered the words, and was surprised when he leaned in and replied, "Soon, just watch for now."

Toffer flipped Grace back over, pulling the clamps from her nipples and clit. Her body jerked ever so slightly. He moved between her legs, taking hold of the cock and fucked her with it, slamming it inside her repeatedly until Kennedy herself let out a loud moan.

Cedric didn't reprimand her, instead, his fingers dug into her shoulders, the feeling like steel biting into her skin. Kennedy loved it.

Toffer pushed the cock back inside Grace, then picked up the flogger, this time trailing it over her breasts and pussy lightly until he started to whip her, the leather cutting into her already-abused flesh.

Kennedy grasped Cedric's pant leg, licking her lips as he pulled her back into him. When Toffer whispered, "Come, Lolly, now. You may move and make noise," Kennedy thought she would fly off with her. Grace's body shivered and shook in its bonds as her orgasm came.

"Master!" She bucked against her restraints as he continued to flog her. "Master, I love you, oh, thank you, oh. May I come again?"

"Yes." The flogger came down harder as Grace cried and moaned, the sound a mixture of pain and pleasure that Kennedy knew came from being in a place few people ever reached. It was the place where a sub was so far into the scene, and felt such joy from what was happening, that it was almost as if she were out of her body. Kennedy had only been

there a few times, and she remembered the euphoria, the feeling of closeness that wrapped itself around the sub and her master.

Watching Grace hit that high struck a jealous cord in Kennedy that she didn't want to admit. It was a place she wanted to be; she knew it took a commitment between Dom and sub, and she wouldn't be there tonight. Still, she could feel part of it, couldn't she? Feel the joy of submitting to Cedric? Kennedy turned and buried her head in Cedric's thigh.

She nestled her head against the hard muscle. He stroked her hair, increasing her need for physical contact, her need to open herself to him.

"Please." Oh, she hated to beg, hated to show how weak she was, still she couldn't stand to watch anymore. She needed to be touched. Needed it now. He continued to pet her as the room grew silent. Seconds passed, and then the only sound was heavy breathing, and Toffer's soft whisper for Grace to "come back" to him.

Cedric stood and offered Kennedy his hand. She took it, her excitement level higher than it had been in years. As they passed the swing, Kennedy watched Toffer stroke Grace's forehead and whisper to her how proud he was of her submission, how much he loved her.

They stopped in the doorway and turned.

"Second floor," Toffer said, his gaze still on Grace. "Help yourself to whatever you like."

Chapter Three

Kennedy took stock of her surroundings. It seemed to be a den, with a large-screen TV mounted on one wall. A huge leather sofa sat across from it. Farther back was an area with two overstuffed chairs gathered around a table and lamp. The whole room, like the rest of the house, had a comfortable, lived-in look.

Cedric turned a floor lamp to its lowest setting, then sat down on the sofa. “Come and kneel before me.”

Kennedy, her mind still reeling from watching Grace submit to Toffer, didn’t hesitate. She knelt down, putting her hands behind her back. She needed to come, now.

“You’ve been trained,” Cedric said. “I’m not stepping on another Dom’s toes, am I?”

“No, Sir.”

“So, you were twenty-six the first time you submitted to a Dom, or was it a Domme?”

“A Dom, Master Cedric.”

He settled back into the cushions, his gaze trained on her face. “Tell me about it.”

“Don’t you want to...play?” Her body surged with need. She didn’t want to talk; she wanted to submit. Now.

The imperious look he gave her only served to heighten the desire she felt. It also made her fear for her ability to sit down in the coming week. "I'm sorry to question you, Master Cedric."

"As well you should be." The look changed to one of expectation and she cleared her throat.

"He was the older brother of a friend of mine. He was thirty-two."

"And?"

"We were skiing in Tahoe, at Jack's parents' cabin. There were about nine of us, and we'd had a long day on the slopes and had just eaten dinner. We were in the kitchen, cleaning up, and Jack popped a towel against my ass. I jumped and let out the requisite 'don't do that.' Later that night he woke me up, around two in the morning. Told me to put my shoes on and come with him."

"Forward, wasn't he?"

"Well, I'd known him since I was about fifteen." Kennedy's eyes clouded in memory of Jack, his strong, capable hands and dominant nature.

"What happened next?"

"Jack took me to the small cabin on the property that his parents called their 'guest house.' It was empty because the other cabin was so big."

"Sounds intriguing. And you submitted to him?"

"Yes. He wanted to know if I knew about D/s. I told him it had been covered in a psychology class I took in college. He told me he was a Dom, and he was certain I was a sub. To prove it, he told me to strip. And I did."

"You've never questioned your submissive tendencies?"

"No, just denied them to others, like earlier tonight."

He stretched out his arms across the back of the couch. "Then what happened?"

“Master Cedric, please.” This wasn’t going as she’d planned. The idea had been to submit to him, physically, have an orgasm or two, and be done with it. Drive-by submission so to speak. Why wasn’t he getting on with it? She hazarded a glance at his crotch. He was hard, his cock straining against the fly of his pants. He wanted sex as much as she did.

“Does it make you uncomfortable to talk about it?”

“Yes, Sir.”

His eyebrows furrowed in bewilderment. “Why?”

“Because I hardly know you.” Even as the words came out of her mouth, she knew it didn’t make sense, and she knew he would point it out to her.

“And yet you’re kneeling in front of me, ready for me to give you an orgasm, ready to take pain and pleasure at my hands. But you don’t want to talk about your first taste of submission.”

Kennedy gave a nervous laugh. “I suppose that says something about me.”

“Oh yes, it does. You’re much more comfortable with the physical aspects of submission than the mental, and that’s a very good thing to know.”

She looked directly into his eyes. “You plan on messing with my mind?”

“Could be fun, for both of us.”

She slumped just a little bit, sitting up straighter when he cleared his throat. “I’d rather you played with my body, Master Cedric. Unless I’m not thi --”

“Don’t even try to top me from below, or to talk to me about body image. Who’s in charge?”

“You are, Sir.”

“That’s right. You will answer my questions, not pose ones of your own, or try to introduce a new subject. Not another word on that subject. You’re here because I want you here. If I hadn’t found you pleasing, I wouldn’t have offered to top you. Your body is very

appealing to me, and we will play. *After* you tell me the rest of the story. What happened next?”

“He spanked me.”

“He went straight to the point. Did you like it?”

Heat spread through her cheeks and Kennedy swallowed hard. She felt very exposed, as if she were lying on a table, wide open for him to see every inch of her.

“I’ll take that as a yes. Now I want to hear you say it. So answer my question.”

“Yes, Master Cedric.”

“Did he use his hand or a belt? Or something else he found in the cabin? Describe it to me. Don’t leave out any detail.”

This was not what she’d expected. Maybe because Jack, and the only other Dom she’d submitted to, Brad, had both jumped in feet first. She’d thought Cedric would do the same, play with her a bit and get them both off.

“He made me bend over the couch, and then he spanked me with his hand. He told me I was a bad girl, and it was obvious to him I needed discipline in my life. He was going to give it to me. He spanked me hard, and when I tried to get up, he spanked me harder, putting his hand on my back to keep me in place. When he was done, and my ass felt like it was on fire, he made me come. And then I stayed, bent over, while he jacked off. I wasn’t allowed to turn and watch. After that, he made me get dressed and go to bed.”

He nodded thoughtfully. “Tell me how you felt afterward, while you were trying to go to sleep that night, and then the next day, while you and your friends were skiing.”

“Sore. And a little confused. A person’s not supposed to enjoy being spanked.”

“Did it frighten you?”

She was starting to calm down, partly from the relaxed way he asked questions, easing her nervousness. She could tell he was genuinely interested in her answers. He wanted to get to know her. She didn’t think of him as Cedric Davenport, the actor, now. She thought of

him as Master Cedric, the man who would bring her pleasure tonight, whom she would pleasure in whatever way he chose.

“Yes, it frightened me. Especially since I wanted more.”

“How long was he your Dom?”

“Seven years.”

His smile tied her stomach in knots. “Stand up.” When she was on her feet, he narrowed his eyes in contemplation, and she wondered what thoughts ran through his mind. “I’d love to hear more about how you tumbled into submission with your friend; however, what I really want is to see you naked. Follow my directions to the letter. You are a slave girl on the auction block, and I am examining you for possible purchase. Take off your blouse.”

Oh my Lord, yes. At that moment, Kennedy was grateful her one indulgence to herself a few months back had been a satin bra and panty set on sale at a small boutique in Bakersfield -- and that she was wearing it right now. She took off her shirt, giving it to him when he put out his hand.

“Now, lift your bra over your breasts and let it lie on your chest.”

Her breasts jiggled as she freed them, the elastic tight against her upper chest.

“Very nice.” He leaned forward, his eyes wide in appreciation. “Nice big nipples and such beautiful piercings. You’re perfect for clothespins, or clamps with weights. Did you like watching the other slave with her weights?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“I could tell. Your body tensed, and I knew you wanted it to be you in that swing.”

She needed to watch herself. He was far too adept at reading people.

“Lift your skirt and tuck it into your waistband.” Now she was thankful that, although she didn’t have a Dom, she still shaved and waxed regularly, keeping her mons bare.

“Legs wide, arms behind your back, head bowed.” Kennedy tried, and failed, to slow her breathing. When Cedric stood, it increased even more. He stepped in front of her, their

bodies almost touching. And then he put his fingers on the elastic of her panties and tugged the soft material to her knees.

He sat back down and examined her carefully, his eyes seeming to take in every inch. "So beautifully submissive."

"Come to me, my little slave girl." She hobbled toward him, stopping at the place he indicated.

Cedric trailed a finger down her body, starting between her breasts, trailing over her belly button and down to her mons. He traced her outer labia as she shivered. Then he spread her lips and tugged on her slave ring.

He pulled again and her clit pulsed under the pressure. "Very nice. Turn around."

Kennedy moved slowly, her panties still tight around her knees. With her back to him, she felt very vulnerable. He traced her buttocks lightly, the sensations spreading straight to her clit. And then he grasped her cheeks and spread them, exposing her anus to him.

"Excellent." A finger dipped into the valley and caressed her rosette. "Would slave girl let me take her here?"

"Yes, Master Cedric." Would he want to do something that intimate tonight? Surely not. He was just exploring, right? Pushing her to see what her limits were. This was bad. Very bad. Having him touch her could be very addictive, and knowing it was just for tonight didn't make this any easier.

Maybe she should stop it, tell him she'd changed her mind. And while her brain said yes, her body said no, and it pushed against his finger.

"Bad slave girl." He smacked her behind and she groaned. "Hold still."

Her clit was on fire now. She knew all it would take for her to tumble into orgasm would be one little tug on her ring.

"Turn back around." She faced him, keeping her position. "Tell me, slave girl, how do you take a spanking?"

He glanced up at her, their gazes locking. With one look he let her know he'd said no pain, except that promise was about to be broken. The one slap he'd given her didn't count as pain. If she wanted it, if she enjoyed it, he would give it to her. This was her chance to say yes or no. It was too late, now. Her indecision was gone. As much as she knew she would probably get hurt in the end, there was no way she was backing out.

"Very well, Sir." He stood and disappeared behind her. She could hear cabinet doors opening. Seconds later he was back, attaching cuffs to her wrists that he then hooked together. He propelled her toward the couch, stopping at the edge.

"Put your knees on the cushion, then lean over and put your head on the back." Her breathing intensified, and she felt as if she might hyperventilate. She was half-naked on a couch, her arms bound behind her, her legs spread as wide as her panties would allow. And Cedric Davenport stood behind her. No, not Cedric Davenport. Master Cedric, a man thinking of buying her on the auction block.

"Calm down, slave girl." His touch was gentle on her back, and her breathing eased. "I want to see how you take a punishment before I spend my hard-earned money on you."

"Yes, Master Cedric. I'll be good, I promise."

"Would you like to belong to me? I know I'd like to own you."

Oh, you have no idea how much I want to belong to you. "Yes, Master Cedric, I'd like to be your property."

He went back to the cabinet and she heard him rummaging around. It occurred to her that Toffer seemed to have toys placed in every room of his house. Convenient, she supposed, for topping his wife whenever the mood struck him, without having to go and search for something.

What would Cedric use on her? Not his hand, obviously, if he was going to retrieve a toy. A paddle? A flogger? A cane? No, he'd said a spanking, not a whipping, so it would probably be a paddle.

When he rubbed a piece of smooth, cool wood against her bottom, she knew she was right. "Show me you'd be worth my time if I bought you, slave girl. Beg for it."

"Please spank me, Sir. I'll be your willing slave." The paddle smacked against her behind, the touch just enough to sting.

"What would you do for me?"

"Anything you want, Sir." Another smack, this one a little harder. The sting intensified and her breathing kicked back up.

"Be specific." Two more strikes spread heat through her buttocks.

"I'll suck your cock, Sir."

"And?" The spanking picked up. Cedric alternated sides, the burn increasing.

"You can fuck me, fuck my pussy, Sir."

"And your ass?" Two harsh hits landed on each buttock and Kennedy tried to sit up. He responded with three more strikes. "Back into position, slave girl. I asked you a question and I expect an answer."

A question? He'd asked a question? Kennedy racked her brain trying to remember what he'd asked. She was so into the spanking, enjoying the intensity of the strikes, that she hadn't been listening.

"Bad slave girl. Maybe I won't buy you. You're obviously not worth the money if you can't even answer me when I speak to you." He stepped away and need coursed through her. *Don't leave me like this. I need more.*

"I'm sorry, Master, no, wait, um..." What had he asked? *Think, Kennedy, don't concentrate on your clit. Concentrate on him.* "Yes! Yes, you can fuck my ass."

The paddle landed again, the smack shooting straight to her clit. If she wasn't careful, she'd come just from the spanking and the way it pressed her hood bar into her clit. She'd done it once before, with Jack.

"Tell me what you are."

“Your slave.”

“Not yet, but we’re getting there.” The paddle struck continuously, and Kennedy tottered on the edge of orgasm, fighting it with all she had. As her buttocks smoldered, though, she could fight it no more. She had to let him know, to ask permission, or she would come without it and ruin everything.

“Master, I’m about to come; please, may I come?”

The paddle hit harder than ever, and then Cedric’s fingers were on her ring, tugging. “Then come. Now.”

Kennedy’s body shuddered as he pulled again, her orgasm slamming into her like an earthquake.

“Master!” She bucked against him, rocking against the fingers that pulled and played with her wet folds. He slid his thumb into her pussy, fucking her with short, swift thrusts that pushed her even higher. Flames seemed to lick at every part of her, and then she collapsed, her body held up only by the arm he’d snaked around her.

“Good slave girl,” he whispered in her ear. “You might be worth the money I spend on you.”

He lifted her knees off the couch, setting them on the floor, and then he mounted her, putting his butt on her back as if she were a horse. The fingers that had just pleased her appeared before her face. His free hand wrapped in her hair and pulled her head back.

“Do your duty to your master.” Kennedy licked his hand, the creamy taste of her juices sliding over her tongue as she sucked his fingers in one by one as he bounced on her back.

She wanted him to free himself, to move behind her and slide his hard cock where his fingers had been. Instead, he got up and sat down next to her, sliding his zipper down slowly as she watched.

When his cock appeared, her eyes widened. Nice and long. What really attracted her attention, though, was his girth. Good heavens, she’d said he could fuck her ass with that.

“Lick me, slave.” She tried to scoot over in front of him and he stopped her. “From there. Lean over.”

The position was uncomfortable for her, her body stretched across his hard thigh. She had to press her toes into the carpet to get leverage. His hands were in her hair again, holding tight as she licked his cock, sliding her tongue over the vein, loving the shudder that ran through him.

She lowered her tongue to his balls, lavishing them with swift movements, her eyes widening as they drew tight. She knew he was on the edge, ready to come.

He pulled her head back and grasped his cock, slapping it against her mouth. She opened her mouth wide and stuck out her tongue. He hit his cock against it several times, the sensation pure bliss. His hand was moving now, pumping himself as he slapped her. She wanted to suck, to see if she could open wide enough from this position to take all of him inside her.

As if reading her thoughts, he eased his hold on her. “Just the head.”

Kennedy closed her mouth around him, swirling her tongue around the slit, sucking him hard. He seemed to grow even wider. She didn’t suck long before he moved her away and stood, pulling her into position before him.

“Hold still while I fuck your mouth.” She opened wide as he pushed inside, his hands on either side of her head. His movements were quick and hard, and Kennedy loved every minute of it. His cock hit the roof and sides of her mouth, and when he shoved to the back, she gagged. He held her in place, thrusting harder as hot jets of cum slid down her throat.

“Oh fuck.” His hips pistoned into her and she fought panic and her gag reflex. “Swallow it all, don’t miss a drop.”

When he finally pulled away, he drew her head against his thigh. “Slave girl, are you all right?”

“Yes, Master.”

“What about Kennedy? May I talk to her?”

She laughed softly. “I’m fine, too, Master.”

“I’m glad to hear that. Damn, that was good.” She rubbed her cheek against his jean-clad thigh.

That was more than good; that was incredible. “Yes, Master, it was.”

They stayed locked together until his breathing settled, and then he moved behind her and undid her bonds.

She felt an acute sense of loss at their removal, then reminded herself it had only been for one night. No more, no less. Maybe they’d play once more before the sun rose. She certainly hoped so.

Chapter Four

“You have a beautiful woman in bed, and you’re up here using the rowing machine?” Toffer stepped into the gym, eyed the clock on the wall, and then turned his gaze to his friend.

“I have a seven a.m. call at the studio. I told her last night I would have to leave early.” Cedric pulled back on the machine’s arms, let the tension ease, then pulled back again.

“I take it you’re pleased.”

“That, my friend, would be an understatement. I’m ecstatic. She’s perfect. She even likes it rough, just like I do.”

Toffer sat down at the weight bench and picked up a barbell. “I’ll tell Gracie not to wrench a muscle while she’s patting herself on the back.”

“Let her pat all she wants. I came so fucking hard last night I thought my balls would empty permanently. I haven’t been this comfortable with a sub in years.”

Cedric stood and wiped his sweaty face with a towel. “She even played slave girl with me, and you know that’s my favorite thing. I can’t wait for a weekend at my house, just the two of us and all my toys. Some bondage, some role-playing, and some sweet, submissive pussy wrapped around my dick.”

“Nasty little bastard.”

“Damn straight.” Cedric threw his towel in the bin and glanced at the clock. “I gotta run and shower or I’ll be late. Tell your wife I said thanks again.”

“Glad we could help.”

Cedric whistled as he sprinted to the stairs and took them two at a time. Inside the bedroom he found Kennedy still sleeping, her short hair mussed from the pillow and from their play the night before. The ideal bed head.

He couldn’t believe his luck in finding a woman who fit him so perfectly. After they’d rested from their heavy play, he’d made her kneel in front of him, naked, and finish telling him about Jack. He’d learned she’d had one other Dom, Brad, and she blamed her failure with him on the fact that she hadn’t gotten over Jack yet.

“And now, are you over him?” he’d asked.

“Yes, Sir.” She hadn’t elaborated and he hadn’t pushed her. There would be plenty of time to talk later, after they’d worked out arrangements between them, and after he’d collared her. For he had no doubt that he would. They were a perfect fit, like table and chair.

Then he’d stood over her and stroked himself while she’d licked his balls. She’d brought herself to orgasm on his command while he’d shot his load into her mouth. It had been a struggle not to fuck her, though it was way too soon for that. He wanted to wait for that, until the bond was stronger between them. It would make the experience that much more pleasurable for both of them.

Last night had gone way beyond his expectations. He hadn’t planned on whipping her, binding her. She’d loved every minute of it, just as much as he did. They hadn’t talked enough, hadn’t discussed a safe word or talked about limits. He’d been too carried away by her obvious desire to submit.

They'd have to remedy that, though, and discuss the relationship building between them before they went much further. Rules had to be laid out, expectations for both of them had to be enforced.

He leaned over and kissed her forehead, and her eyes fluttered slightly. He glanced at her mouth, remembering how talented her tongue was. It was tough not to wake her up for an early morning session, except duty called. A little bit of postproduction work on his next picture and he would be off work until the first day of December.

His agent had tried to talk him into a movie that would have started production in August. Cedric had declined. He needed a little bit of a break. Now that he'd met Kennedy, he thought of it as karma, a lucky break that would give him time to spend with her.

Cedric hit the showers, thinking about tonight. His house wasn't too far from here, and he could have Kennedy meet him there. They could have a leisurely dinner and another nice, hot session. And then they would talk about a permanent arrangement. Something he knew they both would enjoy.

He let the water sluice off him as he thought of the best way to proceed. It wasn't like him to rush into things. After all, he'd told Toffer less than twenty-four hours ago that he didn't want to do anything that would cause him to get burned, again. This felt perfect. And he knew she felt it too.

Twenty minutes later he was clean, dried off, and dressed. He found Kennedy still sleeping and planted another kiss on her forehead. This time she stirred, opening her eyes enough to blink at him.

"Don't go too far," he said. "I'll call later."

She mumbled an answer and he hurried to his car, happy it was a Sunday and traffic wouldn't be too heavy. This would be the first time in a long time he wanted to hurry through work and get home, eager to spend time with Kennedy.

* * * * *

Kennedy turned her back to the mirror, then looked over her shoulder. Her behind didn't look too bad, just a few reminders of last night's spanking. Her clit tightened and she closed her eyes and sighed, the memory of Cedric's cock pulsing inside her mouth making her body heat with need.

She tweaked her nipples, wishing Cedric were there to do it.

Stop it, Kennedy, right now. Those thoughts will get you nowhere and you know it. You went into this knowing it was just one night, so don't think he'll call, or ask for your phone number. Last night was fun. Put it in a special place in your mind and move on.

A deep sigh escaped her lips. She nodded resolutely and took a shower. Dressing in the same clothes she'd worn last night seemed a little strange, especially when she thought of how she'd worn them last night, exposing herself for Cedric to look at. That had been particularly arousing, to be half-dressed for him while he was fully clothed.

Grace was in the kitchen, toasting bagels. She turned to Kennedy and laughed, and Kennedy noticed she had a leather collar around her neck with a gold heart dangling from the small ring.

"Hi."

Kennedy returned the greeting, then eyed the coffeepot.

"Help yourself. Toffer's outside swimming laps. How are you?" Her grin was infectious, and Kennedy laughed.

"You're terrible, and you know it. I'm fine, thank you very much."

"Have fun?"

"Yeah." She hurried to the coffeepot and poured herself a cup. "I really should get going, though. I have to work this afternoon."

"Really? I thought maybe you could stay for a while."

Kennedy added cream and some fake sugar to her coffee. “Well, it’ll take a while to get back, and I’m scheduled to work at three. I have to stop by the apartment and change my clothes, put on my work uniform, you know?”

“Where do you live? I just realized I have no idea.”

“Bakersfield.”

Grace’s eyes widened in surprise. “Are you serious? That’s more than a hundred miles one way.”

“I know, which is why I really need to get going.” She took a sip from her coffee, fastening her gaze on the bagels.

“At least have something to eat.”

“Sure,” Kennedy said. “Sounds delicious.”

“Good, sit down.” Grace put a plate of bagels next to the container of strawberry-flavored cream cheese. Then she added a bowl full of bananas, oranges, apples, and pears to the table.

Kennedy slathered a bagel, then took a healthy bite. “Delicious.”

“Yeah, they’re one of my weaknesses.” She picked up her own bagel and doctored it up before taking a bite. “Where do you work?”

“Today, I’m working at Java World. I’m a barista. During the week, I work at an insurance agency, as a data input clerk.”

Grace washed her bite of bagel down with a sip of coffee. “Two jobs and you still have time to write? I’m impressed at your motivation.”

“I really want it. You know I sorta flitted around for a while, going from odd job to odd job, thinking I would finish my novel and sell it to the first agent who read it. When that didn’t pan out, I took the job at the insurance agency. I’ve been there for about five years now, except, well, it doesn’t exactly pay all the bills.”

Grace put down her bagel and rubbed her hands together to clear the crumbs. "I wish I'd known you lived so far away. I would have come up to see you. So selfish of me to just assume you lived around here."

"Don't worry about it."

Toffer came in, a towel wrapped around his waist. "Good morning, ladies. How is everyone today?"

"Great," Kennedy replied. She tipped up her coffee cup to hide her smile. "And you?"

"Fantastic." He winked, then leaned down and kissed his wife.

"You're dripping water on my clean floor." She frowned in mock anger and he laughed.

"Life's not fair, is it? I'm going to go change. Don't eat it all before I get back."

He grabbed an apple before he left. When he was gone, Kennedy stood. "I really need to go or else I'll be late."

"I don't suppose I can talk you into coming back for dinner?"

"No, I don't get off until nine." Kennedy picked up her purse, which sat atop her manuscript. "I really appreciate all of this. All of it."

"What about Cedric?"

Kennedy's heart lurched. "What about him?"

"Did you give him your number? Do you want me to?"

"Oh no." Kennedy shook her head. "It was just a one-night thing."

"That's not what he told To --"

"Tell Toffer I said thanks. I'll call you." She made her way toward the door, Grace hot on her heels.

"I'll come see you this week, for coffee and our weekly writing discussion. Maybe on Thursday?"

“Sounds great.” Now at the bottom of the stairs, Kennedy turned and hugged her friend. “Thanks, really.”

“No problem. Don’t think you’re going to wiggle your way out of this. I think --”

Kennedy kissed her cheek. “Bye.” She climbed in her car, dug out her keys, and depressed the clutch. She turned the key and was met with silence. She tried one more time, then banged her hand against the steering wheel.

Grace stood at the bottom of the stairs, watching her. When Kennedy held up her arms in surrender, Grace walked over.

“Battery?”

“I don’t know. Do you think Toffer could look at it?”

“Sure. I’ll run and get him. Hold on.”

Kennedy got out and stood by her twelve-year-old clunker, hoping this wasn’t going to cost her too much money, and wondering how long it would take.

* * * * *

“I wanted whipped cream. There’s no whipped cream on this.” Kennedy took the cup from the teenager and tried to smile.

“Sorry.” She took out the container and upended it, ready to coat the top of the coffee drink with the cream.

“No, I want a new one.”

“What?” Kennedy put the canister down. “You haven’t even taken a sip of this one. Why would I give you a new one?”

“Because you made it wrong. Do it again.”

Kennedy narrowed her eyes at the teen, then planted her hands firmly on the counter. The day had gone from bad to worse. Toffer hadn’t been able to figure out what was wrong

with her car. He'd called a mechanic to tow it to a garage, which Kennedy was sure would cost her a fortune.

Despite her misgivings, one of the Shelleys' cars sat in the parking lot of Java World. They had insisted she borrow it, and it was the only way, really, for her to get to work on time. Then, the day had been filled with jerks, like the one standing in front of her right now.

"What are you waiting for?"

"How about for you to act decently and not think you're better than everyone else? Have you looked around you? This place is packed full. There is nothing wrong with this drink. I'll add your cream and give it to you. I'm not making everyone wait longer just because --"

A squeal near the doorway caught Kennedy's attention.

"Oh my God! It's Cedric Davenport!" The loud voice rent the air, and female screams of delight filled the room. Kennedy looked away from the problem child to see Cedric, a smile on his face and a twinkle in his eye, holding up his hands and grinning.

"One at a time, one at a time." The amusement in his voice made Kennedy smile, and then she remembered the deep, commanding tone he'd used when he'd called her slave girl and ordered her to her knees. She shivered with the memory. The whirl of cell phone cameras filled the room as Cedric signed autographs and slowly worked his way toward the counter.

Kennedy glanced at her problem customer, who watched the unfolding scene with interest. He took his own cell phone from his pocket to snap a photo. She grabbed his cup, covered the drink with whipped cream, then popped on a dome top and pushed it toward him. When he took it without question, she smiled to herself.

Thank you, Cedric. He was almost at the counter now, his smile still in place. He stopped near the front to pose for several picture with fans, then turned to Kennedy and winked.

“Hi there.”

“Hi.” She hoped she didn’t sound like an idiot; she was pretty sure she did.

“Toffer sent me.” He winked at her. With that one blink of an eye, her nipples drew taut and her pussy grew wet. This was bad, very bad. She had to convince her body not to react to him every time he walked into a room. Last night was over.

“Oh, you’ve come to get the car. Right, I’ll go dig the keys out of my purse. It’s in my locker.”

Cedric put his hand on hers to still her, then leaned in. “No, he sent me inside. He and Grace are in the car, waiting. We were afraid the both of us coming in would cause too much of a stir. Besides, I wanted to see you.”

A low moan escaped her lips and she cleared her throat to give herself time to recover. “Thanks. And you’re right; the two of you would have started a melee.” More cell phone clicks filled the air, and Kennedy was sure there would be a photo in some magazine of her and Cedric: her in her uniform and him in tight jeans and a black T-shirt, his hand on her arm. *Cedric Davenport seduces barista for free coffee. See page 2 for the juicy details.*

She wished she had photos to remember last night, maybe a picture of him slapping his cock against her mouth. She shook her head to clear it. “I get off in thirty minutes.”

“I’m going to send them ahead to Diamond Lou’s. We saw it on the way in.”

“It’s a dive.”

Cedric gave her his patented smile. “I like dives. Besides, it didn’t look too crowded.” His thumb caressed her hand. “I’ll go tell them, and then I’ll come back in and wait.”

He fought his way back through the throng of people, signing more autographs as he moved. Kennedy turned to her young coworkers, who all stared at her with bright eyes.

“What?”

“You know Cedric Davenport?” Charity, barely old enough to have a job, fanned herself with a napkin. Kennedy hoped the girl didn’t faint on the spot.

“Yes,” she said at the same time Tisha, her thirty-year-old manager, ordered everyone back to work.

The bell tinkled again and Cedric stepped back inside, looking around, then moving toward the counter where he took a seat at the bar, Java World’s idea of being different from other boutique coffeehouses. Her coworkers pushed against each other to be the ones to wait on him. Kennedy took an order from the next person in line, watching as Cedric winked at, but didn’t flirt with, the girls.

The next thirty minutes were torture. Kennedy was painfully aware of Cedric, who watched her intently even as he chatted with people and signed autographs. Her body was on fire remembering the way he’d made her soar last night. One more scene wouldn’t hurt, would it? One more night as his slave girl, and then she’d be done.

As the place slowly emptied, and the hands of the clock crept toward nine, Kennedy wondered where they would go. Her apartment was clean, but not fancy. Of course, he knew she was just a woman who had to work for a living and had a car that had just died. Vague thoughts about the cost of repairs drifted through her mind and she pushed them away. She’d think about it tomorrow.

After closing, she hurried to the back room, checking her makeup and washing her hands quickly. She dug out the keys and came back to find Cedric talking to Tisha. Seeing him with the small blonde brought about a spurt of jealousy that Kennedy didn’t want. She tried, and failed, to fight it.

The minute she came out of the back, though, he saw her and his smile brightened. She walked to him and he held out his hand. She dropped the keys into his palm and he nodded.

“Tisha, it was nice to meet you.” He transferred the keys to his other hand, then grabbed Kennedy’s hand. “You take care.”

He led them to the door and out into the warm summer air. In the car, he leaned over and kissed her cheek. “Have a good day?”

“Not really.”

“I’m sorry. Undo your pants.”

“Here?”

The same commanding look he’d given her last night was back. “How quickly they forget. Would you like to try that again?”

“I’m sorry, Master Cedric.” Her hands went to her waistband, quickly unbuttoning and unzipping. She was so weak.

“Good. Now play with your pussy. I bet it’s nice and wet.” He started the car and put it in reverse.

“Yes, Master, it is. Ever since you walked in.”

He chuckled deeply. “Good. Now tell me why you’ve had a bad day.”

“Well, my car died.” She moaned softly as her fingers found her clit.

“Pull on that ring. Let me hear you.”

“Oh, Master, it feels wonderful.” She sighed and moved her hips, a quick, hard orgasm building.

“I’m glad to hear that, my little slave girl.” He pulled into the left turn lane and stopped at a light. “What else happened, besides the car?”

“Dealing with grumpy customers.” She told him about the kid with the whipped cream and he laughed. “Sometimes I wonder if it’s worth it.”

“Just ignore him. When something like that happens, think about kneeling before me. About sucking my cock, taking me deep in your throat. Or bending over and spreading your cheeks, so I can spear that tight asshole.”

Kennedy rubbed harder as the image took hold. “Master, may I come?”

“You may not. A little denial for forgetting my proper title at first.” He pulled into the parking lot and rubbed her thigh after he parked. “Give it one more good tug, then zip back up.”

“Oh.” Her fingers worked the ring; then she slowly withdrew them from her pants. Only then did she think about someone seeing her as they drove. She’d been so intent on obeying him, so thrilled to be with him, the idea hadn’t even crossed her mind.

“Very nice.” He shut off the car and turned to her. “You might get to come later, maybe not. We’ll see how you behave.”

Her clit pulsed with need. “Yes, Master Cedric.”

“Good girl. Wait right there and I’ll come open the door for you.” Kennedy surveyed the area. They were in a dark corner of the parking lot, and he’d backed in, so her side of the car faced a wall not too far away. The door opened and she climbed out.

Before she could move off, however, he pinned her to the car, grinding his erection into her pussy.

“Clean those fingers, Kennedy. Let me see you suck ’em.”

She obeyed him quickly, tasting her own juices as he watched.

“Good girl. Would you like to suck my cock?”

“Yes, Master.”

“I’ve been hard for you all day.” The sound of a zipper going down made her shiver. Surely he didn’t mean here, did he? In the parking lot? True, it was dark; still, anyone could walk by, and Grace and Toffer were waiting on them.

“Are those fingers clean?”

“Yes, Master.” He took her hand and pressed it down his jeans. His cock fit into her palm and she inhaled sharply.

“Jerk me.” She obeyed without question and he stroked her cheek. “So beautifully submissive, so trusting. Tighter. Harder.”

“Master.” She closed her eyes and obeyed, savoring the feeling of his hardness inside her fingers. After a few minutes he stopped her.

“Get on your knees and cup your hands.” Gone was the idea of being discovered, of being in public. All that mattered was Cedric and her submission to him.

When she was in front of him he exposed himself more, then started to pump. It didn’t take long before he emptied his balls into her cupped hands, his free hand stroking her hair, holding her tight.

“Now lick it up, all of it.”

The salty cream of his cum slid easily over her tongue as she bathed her hands.

“Such a good slave. That’s my girl, lick it all up.” He was righting himself now, hiding his cock and zipping up his pants. Then he chuckled. “I hope there wasn’t a security camera out here.”

He helped her to stand, then caressed her cheek. “You all right?”

“Yes, Master.”

“I bet you need to come.” When she nodded, he cleared his throat. “Just a little more denial, maybe later I’ll allow it. Who am I?”

“Master Cedric.”

“And who are you?”

“Your slave girl.” *For tonight, anyway.*

“What’s your purpose?”

“To serve you, Master.”

“Good. Now let’s go inside.”

Chapter Five

“You want me to do what?” Kennedy reeled from the news that her car was dead, as in terminally dead unless she wanted to pump thousands of dollars into repairs on gaskets and an engine block. And now, Grace was saying she wanted Kennedy to move onto their property, and work for her.

“It’s a great plan,” Grace said. “I need an assistant, really I do. The guesthouse is empty. You can move in, you’ll have time to work on your writing, and I’ll get caught up on correspondence and editing and all that nasty stuff.”

The idea appealed to her, except she knew they were only trying to be nice after seeing how far below them she lived.

“No, I can’t. I’m sorry.” She put her hands flat on the table and shook her head furiously.

“Why not?” Cedric took a bite from his pie. His appearance in the diner had caused quite a stir, and they’d all laughed when Toffer discussed how he’d received the same reaction. They’d sat in a back booth, and still every once in a while someone came up to ask for an autograph from the two stars. A few even asked for Grace’s. They’d all ignored Kennedy.

“Because, I...well...um --”

“You think it’s charity,” Grace said. “I can see it on your face.”

“I guess.” Kennedy shrugged and looked out the window at the parking lot. That’s exactly what she thought. But why? Grace had been very nice to her, and there was no reason to think she felt sorry for her or saw her as inferior in any way.

“We expect you to work,” Toffer said. “A thousand a week, plus your house. You can pay rent and the bills if that will make you feel better, although I’ll pay you more salary than a thousand in that case. Listen, Grace came up with this idea because she wants you to succeed.”

“Your manuscript is good,” Grace interjected. “It does need work, and if you’re going to have it ready for my agent to see in November, then you need time to improve it. You work four to five hours a day for me, then you work on your own stuff. No more data input or making coffee, except at the house.”

Kennedy looked at the table, contemplating the offer. She wanted Cedric to say something, to tell her it would be good because they could spend more time together, she could serve him more. He didn’t say anything; he just kept eating his pie. His silence reinforced the fact what happened between them, both times, wasn’t permanent. It was just a Dom and a sub, enjoying each other’s company for a while.

“I have to think about it.” The disappointment on Grace’s face made Kennedy’s stomach plummet. What was she doing? How could she turn down this offer? Even if it didn’t work out, where would she be? No worse off than she was right now, with a dark apartment that cost a fortune, no real friends except for Grace, and no family in the area. Now she would have to replace her car.

Would it hurt to take this chance? Or would she be a fool to pass it up? In her heart, she knew Grace wasn’t offering a handout; she offered a way to help Kennedy hopefully live

out her lifelong dream. And if she didn't do it, Kennedy was afraid she would regret it for the rest of her life.

She glanced at Grace, who smiled back, her disappointment clear on her face.

"I'll get the check," Cedric said. He motioned to the waitress, who rushed to see what he wanted.

Kennedy sighed deeply. "Will I get to use the pool in my off hours?"

"Absolutely," Grace said, her disappointment turning into anticipation. "And the gym, and the movie room, and anything else in the house. Right?"

Grace turned to Toffer, who nodded. "I'll second my wife. Absolutely."

"Okay then, I'll turn in my notices tomorrow."

* * * * *

It was hard to believe her life had come down to this: three suitcases of clothes, ten boxes with books and knickknacks, a leather recliner that she loved to sit in and write, and a few houseplants. Toffer and Cedric had already moved the recliner, so all that was left were the boxes and suitcases. Kennedy stared at the last load. The car sat in her assigned place in the parking garage, ready to be loaded.

She hadn't had a lot of furniture to begin with, and most of what she did have was secondhand. A garage sale had gotten rid of all of the furniture except the recliner, which she'd wanted to keep. It didn't match the swanky furniture in Grace's guesthouse; she'd already put it in the bedroom, and it made the place feel like home.

Neither of her bosses had been particularly sad to lose her. Kennedy knew workers came and went and Beverly, her boss at the insurance agency, said she was surprised Kennedy had lasted as long as she did.

The sound of a horn came from the parking lot, and she knew Grace was here with the second vehicle, "just in case." Kennedy knew everything would fit in the SUV Toffer was

insisting she use, since her car was dead and all his car did was “sit in the garage anyway.” It had been two weeks since Kennedy made this decision, and the more she’d thought about it, the more she was sure she’d done the right thing.

She wasn’t getting any younger, with forty being just around the corner. And if she didn’t try to make it as a writer now, then when? This was the perfect opportunity. Of course, there was the issue of Cedric. It would be painful to be without him. She’d known it was coming.

Since the night at the diner the two of them had been so busy they hadn’t had time to play. It didn’t surprise her, even if it was horrible to go without him. He had the most dominant nature of any man Kennedy had ever known. Her body, and her mind, craved him with a passion that was almost painful.

Like losing Jack, she would get over it. She was just glad it happened now, and not after she’d grown attached. She mentally slapped herself. *Who are you kidding, Kennedy? You’re already attached to him. Which is why you’re going to have to turn him down if he asks again. Better to end it now and work through the pain than get your hopes up and end up sobbing for weeks on end when he disappears for good.*

“This is it!” Grace appeared in the doorway, two bottles of diet soda in her hands. “Are you ready?”

“What’s the old saying: ready, willing, and able? Let’s get it done.”

It took them less than an hour to load the first SUV, and as Kennedy predicted, it all fit. When they were done, she opened her soda and took a huge swig.

“This seems so unreal.”

“For me, this is thrilling,” Grace said. “I hope you don’t faint when you see the stack of work I have for you to do.”

“That’s what you’re paying me for, remember?”

“True,” Grace said with a laugh. “Shall we go?”

“Yeah. I have to swing by the office and drop off my keys, and they want to do a final walk-through with me, to check for damages and to talk about getting my deposit back. Then I’ll be ready to hit the road.”

The whole thing took about forty-five minutes, and after Kennedy had been promised her full five hundred dollar deposit would be mailed to her within six weeks, she handed back the keys.

“I’m ready.” The trip to Hollywood Hills took a little more than two hours in afternoon traffic. When they pulled onto the 101, Kennedy silently said yippee that she’d never have to go to Bakersfield again, unless she wanted to, which she didn’t see happening.

Cedric and Toffer were in the driveway, throwing a football back and forth. Kennedy parked the car near the entrance to the back of the house, so they were closer to the guesthouse. Her heart raced as she watched him. Then again, it always did when he was around. That was something she had to get used to.

It had been almost two weeks since she’d seen him, though, and today’s thrill seemed harder to handle than the others, knowing her time kneeling before him was probably at an end.

He ran up to open the door for her.

“Hiya, sexy. All done now?”

“Yup. I’m officially a resident of the Hollywood Hills.”

He leaned in. “Glad to have you in the neighborhood.”

“Glad to be here.” He walked around her and opened the back of the car, grabbing a few boxes. He started down the path toward the house and she took one herself.

“Let me.” Toffer took it, then turned to Grace. “Baby, will you go get the dolly from the garage? That will make this go quicker.”

They had the car unpacked in no time. As Kennedy looked at the boxes, Grace and Toffer silently left.

“Can I help?” Cedric moved to the first box, examining the label. “I have to go to a meeting with a director tonight. I can work for a while, and then I’ll be back. We can play.”

“Um, well --”

“You’re right; you’re going to be too tired tonight. I’ll give you a day to rest, slave girl.” He wiggled his tongue and she swallowed a laugh.

“It’s not that. I think maybe we should, um, not play anymore.”

His eyes widened in surprise, and Kennedy felt as if a lightning bolt had hit her.

“You mean tonight, or at all, as in never again?”

“As in never again.”

“Why?” He sat on the arm of a chair and leaned forward. “I thought we clicked, and were having a very great time. We’ve been busy these last few weeks. Now that you’re here, why are we not going to be together? Is it because we haven’t been on a date? Or did I say something wrong?”

“No, it’s because you’re Cedric Davenport.”

His look of shock made her feel terrible. She wanted to run and hide under the bed until he left. “Now I’m really confused. This is the first time I’ve been rejected for being famous. And that’s the reason, isn’t it?”

“Yes. It’s because we’re so different.”

She watched him process her words; then he cleared his throat. “We’re not different, Kennedy. Being famous is my job. I’m just a man, a Dom, looking for a sub who fits me perfectly, and that’s you. You felt the connection when we were together, just the same as I did. Admit it.”

She swallowed hard. “Yes, I did. And that’s what makes this so hard. That’s why I have to do it.”

The tension was thick as the silence grew. “Why don’t you explain it to me, so I understand where you’re coming from?” He crossed his arms over his chest, and it looked to her as if he was fighting his anger.

“The way I see it...it will never last. And in the end, I’ll be hurt, my heart will be damaged.”

“Are you telling me it doesn’t hurt you now, to reject me?”

“No, it hurts. If I wait, it will hurt more.”

The silence grew again, and then he narrowed his gaze at her. “Jack really did a number on you, didn’t he?”

“How dare you! That’s none of your business.”

“Oh yes it is, because you’re pushing me away because of what he did to you. You told me you were his sub for seven years, and then one day he just said it was over with no explanation.”

“You should leave now.”

“I know he hurt you, but don’t disrespect me, and yourself, by throwing away what could be a great relationship because of him.”

“Cedric, please don’t.” Tears swam in her eyes and she turned her head.

“The problem was him, not you. If he’d been a good Dom, he would have talked to you; he would have explained things, whatever his reasons were. Especially after seven years.”

She kept her head turned away from him, afraid if she made eye contact she would give in, and then they’d have to go through this all over again.

She tried not to snifle. “The night Grace offered me this job, you didn’t even say anything about me taking it, almost as if you didn’t care.”

“That’s because you’re not my collared sub. I’m not a tyrant who wants to control everything in my play partners’ lives. If you belonged to me, permanently, then I would have

said something. So let me say it now. I'm thrilled you're here. Kennedy, don't push us apart. Please."

She shook her head and looked at the floor.

"I'll go if you want me to go." He stood up and moved closer to her. "You have to say it. You have to say, 'I want you to go,' and you have to look me in the eye while you're doing it."

Kennedy blinked to rid her eyes of tears, and then she lifted her gaze to him. "I want you to go, please." Her voice trembled, and she could see the sorrow mixed with anger in his eyes.

"Fine, for now. I'm not giving up. I'm giving you fair warning. And I don't fight fair when I'm going after something I want."

Chapter Six

Work to-do list:

Finish edits on Grace's manuscript

Print out responses to fan letters and prepare them for Grace's signature

Do research on city of St. Louis

Personal to-do list:

Go over last ten pages of revisions, check spelling, and prepare for another edit from Grace

Swim a few laps before going to bed

Try not to think about Cedric all the time

Kennedy checked her list, then snapped her folder shut and headed toward the main house. It was almost October and she'd been living at the Shelley house for a month now. Things were going fine, professionally. Personally, they sucked.

Despite Cedric's warning that he didn't give up on something he wanted, she hadn't seen him since that night. To be fair, though, she knew he'd had to fly to London to meet with someone about something to do with work, or that's what Grace had told her.

Surely he was back, though. Kennedy didn't have the courage to ask Grace, and his not letting her know he was leaving, or if he was back, only reinforced her decision not to play with him. She mentally head slapped herself as she walked to the house. *He doesn't owe you anything, Kennedy. You're the one who ended it. Why should he tell you when he leaves, or where he goes? Or who he goes with?*

The last thought made her stomach churn. She was sure he'd already found someone else to play with, someone else to call his slave girl. *Stop it! Right now.*

She tried to tell herself that's what she should do, but it was hard. Truthfully, being away from Cedric had not made things easier. It had done just the opposite. The more time she spent away from him, the more she thought about him, about his hands on her body, about submitting to him.

She wanted him to whip her, stroke her, tie her, and fuck her. Not necessarily in that order, and definitely more than once. She'd thought several times of going down to his house, of telling him she'd changed her mind. She was probably right. It was too late now. Otherwise, he would have acted on his warning of going after what he wanted, which obviously wasn't her anymore.

"Hey, Kennedy." Toffer's greeting pulled her to a halt. He sat near the pool, drinking a cup of coffee. "How's it going?"

"Good. I have a meeting on November fifteenth with Mr. Blakemore, and I hope, with Grace's help, my manuscript will be done and I'll be ready to pitch it to him."

"Great." He gave her the smile that melted a million female hearts a day, and all it made Kennedy think of was Cedric, and how his smile, to her anyway, was a thousand watts brighter than Toffer's.

“Coffee?”

“No, thanks. I had some at home. I’m going to get to work. Grace wrote a bunch of letters to fans yesterday, and I need to check them for spelling errors and print them out.”

“Yeah, she was busy. Take care.”

She nodded in return, amazed he’d never said anything to her in Cedric’s defense. Then again, neither had Grace, which surprised her. Cedric had to have told them she’s rejected the idea of being his play partner. It surprised her they didn’t try to push them together, since they were the ones who’d set up the initial meeting.

She went inside and climbed the stairs to the third floor where Grace had an office set up. She was already behind her desk, working feverishly on a piece of paper on the desk.

“Hey, boss.”

“Hi,” she said distractedly, holding up a finger. She finished writing, then closed the folder. “How are you this morning?”

She told Grace the same thing she’d told Toffer, then headed toward the outbox on Grace’s desk. “More things for me to do?”

“Yes, and starting tomorrow you’ll be working with the caterer to put final details on the parties.”

Kennedy wrinkled her nose in confusion. “Parties? What parties?”

“The Halloween parties. Five of them, to be exact. The first one is a week from Saturday, on October fourth. Then there’s a party every Saturday until the last one, on Halloween, which is a Friday this year. They’re all costume parties; the first four are preliminaries for the best costume contest, and the winner will be announced on October thirty-first.”

“Wow, five parties for Halloween thrown by one couple. That’s...interesting.”

Grace laughed. “You mean excessive. I can hear it in your voice. Toffer loves Halloween. And it’s sort of special to us.”

“Oh.” Kennedy waited for Grace to elaborate, and when she didn’t, Kennedy picked up the papers in the box. “I’ll just go to work now. I’ll see you at lunch?”

“Absolutely. We have our first meeting with the caterer today. So come hungry.”

Kennedy went down the hall to her own office, sliding behind the desk and powering up her computer. She set her papers down and flipped through her calendar. When she got to October, she made it through all the dates, then frowned.

Grace hadn’t told her about the parties, and that raised a huge question as to why. She thought Grace would have delegated the task of picking out a caterer to Kennedy long before now. Instead, Grace had set it up herself and invited Kennedy to lunch to help critique possible menu choices.

What did that mean, exactly? Was Grace upset with her? No, that couldn’t be right. Things had been going fine, and if they hadn’t, she knew Grace would let her know. So why were the parties such a huge secret?

She tried to put the questions out of her mind as she worked on reviewing the letters Grace wrote yesterday. Grace took her fan letters very seriously, and she read and answered each one she received, even though Kennedy did proof them and get them ready for the author’s signature. She printed out twenty of them before lunch, put them back in the folder, and took them down the hall to Grace’s office.

She wasn’t there, so Kennedy put them in her inbox. She sniffed the air in appreciation. Lunch was obviously being served, and it smelled delicious. She went down the hall to the kitchen, stepping inside the doorway and stopping dead in her tracks.

Cedric sat at the table, his gaze trained on the spot where she stood.

“Hello, Kennedy. Hungry? I know I’m starved.” The look he gave her let her know exactly what he was hungry for. Her nipples tightened and she let out a soft moan. “Nice to see you too. I’ve been in London for a while. I love London; still it’s always nice to come home.”

"I imagine so." She looked around for everyone else and noticed they were alone.
"Welcome home."

"Thank you, slave girl. How are you?"

"Where is everyone?"

"Answer me." His look drilled her to the floor, zinging her with bolts of pleasure. She lifted her thumb to her mouth and chewed on the nail.

"I'm fine," she said, lowering it when she realized what she was doing. "Sir."

His lip curled up slightly; then his mouth flattened into a line again. "Everyone's outside sampling ham, turkey, green beans, potatoes, and various treats made with pumpkin and nuts and other Halloweeny ingredients."

"Maybe we should go join them."

"Not yet." Why wasn't she moving? Just because he was staring at her?

"Cedric, I --"

"I did a lot of thinking in London, about us, and how I could claim you as mine."

I already am yours. "It won't work. You know it won't."

"Why don't you put your hands over those hard nipples and tell me again it won't work. Or try and forget about that wet pussy between your legs. I know my cock's hard, thinking about you sucking it."

"I'm going outside now." She started for the third-floor deck, stopping as his words wrapped around her.

"Kennedy, in the end, you'll beg for us to be together. After I collar you, after I snap the lock in place, it's never coming off."

"No."

"Yes, I'll have the only key, and you'll wear it everywhere, so every person on the planet knows I own you." He was behind her now, his hands on her hips, his breath hot on

her neck. He pulled her next to him and she felt the hard ridge of his cock against her ass.
“Who do you belong to?”

“You.” She whispered the word, praying he didn’t hear it.

“That’s right. Your body knows, and that’s what answered. Now we just have to convince your brain.”

Chapter Seven

Work to-do list:

Schedule book signing at store in Beverly Hills

Call warehouse to make sure Grace gets the extra books she ordered to use as giveaways from her Web site

Pick up costumes for party

Personal to-do list:

Edits, edits, and more edits

Buy batteries for BOB

Try and stop thinking about Cedric, and how he makes me feel

“You’re going as a cat and dog?” Kennedy put the costume bags on the chair beside Grace’s desk.

“Toffer thought it was would be fun. I wanted to do something more traditional, something that would show we were a couple. He says everyone knows that, and this would throw them for a loop. Did you look at your costume?”

“Yes, I did. I’m not so sure about the corset.”

Grace laughed, then put down her pen. “Do you know who you’re dressing as tonight, then?”

“Oh yes, it had a little card on it. I would have left it at the store if the clerk hadn’t told me you threatened death if I didn’t bring everything home.”

“Yes, I did order him to make sure it came home with you. And you know, I could get used to ordering people around. It’s sorta fun.”

“Is there some point to this costume?” Kennedy sat down in the other chair and glanced at the clock. It was after four, and Grace was still at her desk.

“I’ll come down and help lace you up before the party starts. And I’m warning you, if you lock me out, or refuse to cooperate in any way, I’m sending Toffer down, and you won’t be happy with the way he’ll help. I guarantee it.”

“Threats from my employer. Interesting.”

“Threats from your friend,” Grace countered, rearranging things on her desk, a sign she was done for the evening. “I want you to have fun tonight, so be a good girl and play along.”

* * * * *

Kennedy pressed her hoop skirt to her legs, hoping she wouldn’t hit any table holding food and send it flying. How women in history ever wore these things was a mystery to her. Getting into the corset had been torture, with Grace pulling on strings until Kennedy thought she would burst. And then Grace had pulled more.

She didn’t want to hurt her friend’s feelings, but she didn’t plan on staying long. It was hard to enjoy a party when you couldn’t breathe.

Kennedy scanned the crowd to see if she could discern which partygoer was Cedric. Since everyone wore a mask, it was hard to determine. There were lots of pirates, witches, and superheroes. There were also famous people from history and mythology. Zeus, Henry the VIII, and Napoleon were all in the running for best costume, as were Helen of Troy and Martha Washington.

Grace, in her cat suit, looked very impressive. Kennedy felt like a wallflower in the group of mostly couples. She nibbled from some of the treats, and after an hour of feeling as if her breasts would pop out of her southern belle costume, she decided it was time for her to go.

First, though, she had to find Grace. It would be easier to just disappear, except Grace would be furious with her. She finally found her near the stairs, a worried look on her face. Grace and Toffer were the only mask-less people at the party.

“What’s wrong?”

“I can’t find the prizes Toffer gave me to hold on to for the winner. I think I left them upstairs by the side of the bed. If I leave to look for them, he’ll know I misplaced them. Would you go for me?”

“Sure. It’s the scepters, right? Two of them?” Kennedy thought it had been a good idea for each costumed champion to get a scepter for winning that week. Then, on Halloween, the ultimate victors would be crowned.

“Yes, thank you.” Grace leaned closer. “Although I love getting spanked, I’d rather not have it happen tonight.”

Kennedy hugged her and started for the stairs. She didn’t think Toffer would spank Grace with all these people around; then again, you never knew. At the stairs that led to the fourth floor, and Toffer and Grace’s bedroom, a guard stood ushering people back the way they’d come. When he saw Kennedy, he stepped aside and indicated she should go up.

Interesting. He didn't even ask her what she was doing, or where she was going. She needed to report that to Grace, let her know the guard would let people pass. As she neared the top of the stairs, though, a nagging doubt tickled the back of her mind. He was turning others away, sending them back downstairs. Why would he let her pass?

She stepped into the bedroom and stopped near the bed. She'd been in this room before, when Grace had given her a tour. The space was enormous, and the huge bed took up a great deal of one wall. What struck her tonight, though, were the candles. Big, fat white candles set in various points around the room that provided the only light.

"You know what I always thought Rhett's problem was?" Kennedy swirled toward Cedric's voice, her hoop skirt arcing out. "He wasn't dominant enough. He let Scarlett get away with murder."

He sat in a chair, one ankle draped across a knee, with a cheroot hanging from his mouth. His costume was perfect, a man's suit from the Civil War era, form fitted to his muscular body.

"Cedric."

"Not tonight. Tonight I'm a southern gentleman, ready to take his lady in hand."

Her chest rose painfully against the tight corset, which she knew thrust her breasts out. "So, you're saying if Rhett had been a Dom, Scarlett would have behaved?"

"What he should have done, in my book, was spank her that first day he met her, when she threw her little temper tantrum about Ashley Wilkes." He stood and crossed to her quickly, pulling her into his body with one muscular arm. "Just like I'm going to spank you, for denying us the pleasure we could have together."

He stepped back and shrugged out of his jacket, throwing it onto the bed. As he rolled up his sleeves, all she could think was how dashing he looked, and her excitement level kicked up. Once more wouldn't hurt, would it? She'd been craving him for weeks now, wearing out the batteries in her vibrator as she dreamed of submitting to him.

She was so weak. Her pussy throbbed with need, and in her mind she could see herself walking down the stairs while her soft folds screamed for his touch.

"Take off the dress and the pantalets. Leave on the corset and the hoop," he said around the cheroot he chewed.

"And if I don't?" She would, of course, but if he wanted a southern brat, he was going to get one.

"Then your bottom will be redder than the flesh of a watermelon. Obey me."

She glared at him, ready to play his game tonight. "No."

He grasped her wrists and pulled her close, their faces inches apart.

"You will mind me."

"I'll do no such thing," she said in a fake southern accent she knew was horrible. "You can kiss my grits."

She expected him to get angry, to throw her on the bed, and somehow lift the skirt over her head so he could spank her bottom. Instead, he held her close, his hands tightening on her wrists. "I can wait all night. You will do as I say."

His fake southern accent was better than hers, sending chills up her spine.

"Cedric, I --"

"Stay in character. Obey me, Scarlett."

She sighed, then put her forehead on his chest. She could hear his heart beating steadily under his bones and muscle.

"Rhett, please don't punish me."

"Do as you're told and it will be much easier for you." He released her wrists and moved back to the chair he'd been sitting in. "Skirt, bodice, and pantalets. Right now."

Her hands went to the bodice, unlacing it slowly. She loved the way he watched her, his need seeming as great as her own. She undid the bodice quickly, letting it drop before her

fingers worked the hooks on the skirt, thankful for the modern fastenings. She stepped out of it gingerly, keeping one hand on the bed so she didn't topple over.

It was harder to take down the lace undies, though, with the hoop ring still around her waist. When she bent over, one breast popped out of the corset, a ring hanging down from her nipple.

"Beautiful. Take the other one out." She put her hand inside the corset, freeing her other breast. Her breath came easier, and she licked her lips in anticipation. She finally stepped from the undies, then stood, nervous energy shooting through her body.

"Come to me." When she was in front of him, he reached below the chair and pulled out wrist cuffs. He made quick work of strapping them to her body, then used lanyard hooks to attach the cuffs to the hoop skirt.

"You've been a bad girl. And what happens to bad girls?"

"They get punished."

"That's right." He stared at her breasts, pushed himself closer, then captured one in his mouth, tugging at the ring, nibbling on the tight bud with his teeth. She moaned under his touch as he moved to the other one, giving it the same, sweet torture.

If this is punishment, I'll be bad the rest of my life. He suckled each nipple again, licking them both before tucking them back into the corset. Then he stood and led her to the French doors.

"We're going outside? Isn't it a bit cold for that?" He ignored her and led her to the deck, stopping just in front of the railing. "Someone's going to see me. We should go back inside."

The chances of being caught were slim, she knew, since they were four stories up. Still, that chance was always there. Someone walking in the gardens, or near the pool, could look up and see her, standing there half-naked. She was so busy concentrating on her fear of discovery that she didn't realize he'd attached the cuffs to chains secured to the railings.

“Ced -- Rhett, what are you doing?”

“By punishment, I’m sure you thought I meant a spanking. It’s not always spankings. Tonight I’ll test your ability to stay silent, and therefore, undetected. You will submit to what I want, won’t you?”

“Yes.” The word came out before she could stop it. “Not out here, though. I’m cold, and I don’t want anyone to see me.”

“Like I said, Rhett was too easy on her. I don’t plan on making that mistake with you.” He knelt down and crawled under the hoop skirt. Kennedy tried to back up, her movements hampered by the cuffs and chains that kept her in place. When his tongue ran the length of her slit, she gasped.

His fingers parted her outer folds and his tongue delved inside, sliding around in her wetness until her she felt weak in the knees.

Small moans escaped her lips, and the more he moved his tongue, the harder it was to stay silent. He tugged on her slave ring, the tension setting her clit on fire.

“Cedric! Please, I’m begging you.” His mouth left her pussy and he lightly slapped her aching folds.

“Stay in character. And if you come without permission, your punishment will be much worse than your worry about discovery.”

He held her lips apart and used the tip of his tongue to expose and torment her clit, lightly flicking over the sensitive nub until Kennedy no longer cared who saw her chained to the railing. Her movements had freed her breasts again; they jiggled as she bucked against Cedric’s mouth, thinking that if Scarlett had received such pleasure from Rhett, there would have been no room for Ashley in her mind.

He stopped licking, his face still close to her pussy. His hot breath blew against her wet flesh and she stomped a foot. “Please, may I come?”

“No.” He started again, making slow, even passes over her clit. Kennedy thought she would die of frustration. She shivered as he urged her legs apart, then speared her with two fingers, fucking her hard as she closed her eyes in contentment.

“Rhett, please!” He ignored her plea, adding another finger to stretch her wider. The pressure was great, and it brought pleasure beyond her imagination. He thrust harder as she kept her lips clamped together, and when he licked her clit and whispered, “Now,” she flew, bouncing against the fingers inside her as his other hand grasped her hip to keep her in place.

While she quivered with aftershocks, he ran his tongue over her clit again, then slowly withdrew his fingers.

“That’s a wonderful punishment, Rhett.” He extricated himself from the skirt and stood.

“Do you think?”

“Definitely.”

His grin seemed almost evil in the moonlight. “So you like standing half-naked where you can be seen. That’s a good thing to know. I’ll remember it.”

She leaned toward him, hoping he would kiss her. Instead, he moved to a chair sitting against the wall.

“Are you going to unchain me?”

“Not yet.” He stroked his crotch, then freed his cock.

“Please, let me play, Cedric.”

“You don’t deserve it. You want all the fun, but none of the trappings that go with it.” He pumped himself harder. “I’ve never met a woman like you. Most are worried about when the men will call them, want to be with them again. Not you. You’re a wham-bam type of woman.”

She could tell by the sound of his voice he was getting close to orgasm. He slowed his hand and pinned her with his gaze. “For these four weeks we’ll dress up as four famous pairs

of lovers. Hopefully, by Halloween, you'll realize what I'm trying to teach you, what I'm trying to say."

"Which is?"

"Think about it hard and maybe you'll realize it."

He closed his eyes and jerked his cock, inhaling sharply as his orgasm hit and he spilled over his hand.

Chained to the railing, and the skirt hoop, Kennedy could do nothing except watch, her mouth aching to suck him, to taste the sweet nectar that still flowed from his slit. He gave a final hard tug, then took a towel sitting on a small table next to him and cleaned himself.

"I can do that."

"No." He stood and zipped up, straightening his clothing before walking back to her and undoing the chains. "Get dressed, and then come back down. I'll see you next weekend."

She watched him leave, just like Rhett had walked out on Scarlett. Her heart felt as if it would break in two. She knew, though, that if she went after him now, he wouldn't listen to what she had to say. He'd set some sort of game plan in motion tonight, and he would want to play it out.

It would frustrate her, but she would do it. And in the end, she was sure it would change nothing, except give her a few more orgasms at his hand.

* * * * *

Cedric slammed through the front door of his home and crossed the wood floor to the bar. He poured himself a drink, took a sip, then slid it away.

"Crap, what the hell am I doing chasing a woman who has no plans to ever let me permanently into her life?"

Unless this works, unless she realizes you did all this just to be close to her. He and Toffer had cooked up the idea as Cedric had lamented the fact he'd found a woman he could love, and she pushed him away because she feared commitment.

"Give her four examples," Toffer said. "Four famous lovers who wanted nothing more than to be together, who all had tragic endings because one of them realized, too late, they loved each other."

Cedric had been skeptical. He'd agreed, though, and they'd decided on the couples, then planned the parties. They compromised and split the cost, even though all of the parties would be at the Shelley house. Still, next weekend Kennedy would come to him here for the next couple, this one torn apart by circumstance and their station in life.

Her words still rang in his ear when he thought about her rejection. "It's because you're Cedric Davenport." He'd never once been rejected because of who he was, and it was a horrible feeling he never wanted to experience again.

He hoped this would work, that going undercover as famous lovers would help her to see how far he would go to keep her in his life. Because if it didn't work, he wasn't sure what he would do.

When he'd been in London, he'd gone that whole month without female companionship. He'd gone to a club, tried to find a woman to top, and every one of them reminded him that he wanted one woman, Kennedy.

It wasn't in his nature to force someone, that wasn't what Domming was about. Despite his bravado with her, he'd thought he'd lost her totally until he and Toffer came up with this idea. Tonight was a good start. She'd tasted like sweet wine, and she'd responded exactly like he thought she would, straining against him, her submissive nature not caring people might have been able to see her, half-naked and writhing in sexual pleasure.

He pressed down on his cock, which would be screaming at him to go back and fuck her if it had a voice.

“Next week,” he said, standing and stripping quickly. He dove into the pool, hoping the water would cool down his body. Lord knew he needed something, and what he really wanted, Kennedy, was ten miles away, probably trying to figure out what the hell he was up to.

Chapter Eight

Work to-do list:

Pick up costumes for tonight's party

Open boxes that arrived yesterday, set them out for Grace to sign

Answer e-mail from store in San Diego about sending said books for sale

Edits on Grace's MS

Personal to-do list:

Shave

Look over final revisions on MS (if time)

Be strong. I enjoy Cedric's mastery over me, yet I know it will end up in disaster. I will play out his game, yet I can't let myself slide into the idea I can't live without him. I know where that will lead. Nowhere.

This week's costume was easy to figure out. Cleopatra dressed as Venus, ready to be delivered to Mark Antony to try and dissuade him from taking her to Rome to face Augustus

Caesar. A diaphanous white gown with gold ropes to wrap around her body. Two arm bands in the shape of asps. A long black wig and the crown of Egypt completed the outfit.

Kennedy rubbed the material between her fingers and closed her eyes in pleasure. It was soft, like silk, and she knew wearing it would be a pleasure. If she could forget the fact you could practically see through the material, which would attract attention from other partygoers.

She glanced at the clock. It was almost eight, and the party would be starting soon. She needed to get dressed and go inside, see what Cedric had planned for her this week.

The idea made her shiver with delight, even if she knew in her heart things wouldn't work out. When it ended, though, she would have the memories, glorious memories of Cedric's creativity and the wonderful way he worked her body and made it soar with joy.

The idea of backing out flashed through her mind. She couldn't do that to him, not after he'd gone to so much trouble. Wouldn't it be easier to disappoint him now, rather than act out the four fantasies he'd planned?

A knock at the door drew her attention. She walked over and peered through the peephole. Grace stood on the other side, dressed as Queen Elizabeth I, her face covered with white powder. Kennedy pulled open the door and laughed.

"So what is Toffer if you're the queen?"

"Robert Dudley," Grace said, wiggling her eyebrows up and down. "We figure Robert was the queen's Dom, or that's how Toffer's playing it. May I come in?"

"Of course. It's your house."

"No, it's your house." Grace stepped over the threshold and shut the door behind her. "Why aren't you dressed?"

"I don't think I'm going tonight."

Grace's glare made Kennedy frown. "The queen commands it. I'll even do an unroyal thing and help you dress."

“But why?”

“You’re right...he’ll just have you naked almost as soon as you arrive.”

Kennedy laughed softly. “That’s not what I meant. Why should I go? This relationship isn’t going anywhere, and we all know it. Why drag out the inevitable?”

“You really think so little of yourself that you would give up without even trying?” The anger in Grace’s voice made Kennedy wince.

“No, it’s because I’m thinking of me, of my heart. I don’t want it ripped in two.”

“Bullshit.”

Kennedy stepped back as if she’d been shot. “What did you say?”

“You heard me. If you like, I’ll say it again. Bullshit. You and Cedric are perfect together. The only problem is that you won’t even try.”

Anger raged through Kennedy. “Is that what you think? Well, let me assure you, I know where it’s going. Where relationships always go. Nowhere. We can’t all be perfect like Grace and her Toffer, who have never had a problem in their life.”

Grace snorted out a laugh. “Is that what you think? Toffer and I have had our share of problems, even when we were getting together. I trusted him, and myself, enough to not give in, to work through things knowing our love was strong enough to overcome my doubts, and others’ nasty mouths. You’re closing yourself off from what will be the best thing to ever happen to you. Why would you do that?”

“Because in the end, I’ll be alone. I don’t fit in with him. We’re from two totally different worlds. Besides, I’ve never had a relationship that lasted. Never.”

“Neither had I until I met Toffer. My first husband was a real creep. He treated me like garbage and damaged my self-esteem because of my size. Toffer helped me through all of it and showed me how a master’s love can wrap itself around you and never let go.” Grace took a deep breath. “And you think Toffer and I came from the same world? Wrong. I was so hurt when I found out who he was. I thought he had lied to me just to use me and degrade me

like my ex. I was so wrong. And you're wrong about Cedric. He sees a future for the two of you."

"There is no future, Grace. Good sex doesn't equal commitment."

Grace's eyes narrowed in anger. "Maybe not; when one party wants the fun without even trying to make something permanent, then there's no chance it will go anywhere. Couples have problems; you work through them because you love each other. And when you're alone, wondering what happened between the two of you, remember that he tried, and you didn't. And that, to me, makes you the huge loser in this whole thing."

Grace walked toward the door, her anger evident in her heavy steps. Kennedy wanted to call out to her, tell her to stop and come back so she could explain. She didn't, and within seconds Grace was gone, the door slamming behind her.

Kennedy stared at the door, tears welling in her eyes. Why couldn't anyone see it except her? They expected her to just say, "Fine, I'll be with him always and know there will never be a problem."

Of course, she knew that wasn't true. They knew there would be problems; every couple had problems. She just wasn't willing to put herself in the situation where she had to deal with those problems. In the end she'd lose, right?

Doubt crept into her thoughts, and she wondered if Grace was right. If a couple cared about each other enough, maybe they could work through the problems. What if they didn't and she ended up alone, with no warning or explanation, like she did with Jack? How could she be sure Cedric wouldn't do that to her?

In the end she couldn't know for sure, of course. She would just have to trust her instincts that he was a good man, who wouldn't use people. If he didn't care, he wouldn't be doing what he was doing now, would he? He would have just let it go.

She moved to the sofa and sat down, leaning over until her head was on the cushion. Grace was right; she was a loser. No, not a loser in life, that's not what Grace had meant.

She'd meant Kennedy was a loser in the relationship, because she'd turned tail and run; she'd hidden.

When had she become a person who didn't want to live life? Was it just Jack's betrayal that had made her this way, or was it that wrapped with other things, including her failure to meet her goal of being published by thirty-five. She was late doing that, yes, but it could still happen. It would still happen.

She thought positively about her career, didn't she? She'd taken the chance of giving up her jobs and moving here so she could concentrate on her writing. Why couldn't she gear her optimism in Cedric's direction, too? She wiped away a few stray tears that had managed to leak onto her cheeks. Then she stood and walked to the bedroom, wondering how long it would take her to lace the ties around her body.

* * * * *

"That way." The man dressed as a Roman centurion pushed a sword onto the path to block Kennedy's progress toward the house and pointed toward the lower portion of the grounds.

"What?"

"That way." He pointed again and she walked in the direction he'd pointed. The outfit didn't seem as see-through in the moonlight, and she felt a little better. Of course, following the directions on wrapping the cords meant lacing around her midsection and breasts, which molded the material to her body. She wondered who the guard was and what he thought of the woman wearing a strange crown.

At the bottom of the path another soldier pointed toward the pool house, and Kennedy went that way without putting up a fuss. She knew the house contained a lap pool and a hot tub, as well as various chaise longue chairs. When she opened the door, she found herself looking at a place she'd never seen before.

Candles had been set up alongside the pool, their light glittering off the surface. The chaise longues were gone. Sitting against the corner was a huge mattress, covered with colorful pieces of fabric and large pillows. A table held a tray of fruits, vegetables, cheeses, two goblets, and a large carafe of reddish liquid, which Kennedy presumed was wine.

She stepped inside, the humidity of the room enveloping her immediately. It felt as if someone had turned up the heat in the hot tub, just to create the hot, clinging atmosphere.

“Cedric?”

“My queen.” His deep voice was low, and she looked around and didn’t find him. “I know you are accustomed to being waited upon; tonight, however, you are the servant, and I am the Master. You will bow and serve me.”

A thrill shot through her. “I am Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. I bow to no one.”

Movement at the far side of the room caught her attention. He walked along the edge of the pool, the light from the candles shining on him. He was dressed not as a Roman but as an Egyptian, wearing a tight kilt around his waist. His chest was bare, his hair hanging long around his shoulders. And in his hand he held...Kennedy swallowed hard, a flogger.

He stepped up next to her and put the end of the flogger under her chin, lifting her gaze to his. “Tonight, you are mine.”

“Never. The queen does not serve, she is worshipped like the goddess she is.” The tails of the flogger trailed over her breasts, making her nipples harden in excitement. Moisture pooled between her thighs. She wanted to beg him to use the flogger on her, to bring it down across her bare buttocks and thighs, to claim her as his slave.

“What arrogance you have. Let’s see if I can convince you, shall we?”

She flashed a challenging look at him. “Go ahead, try to subdue me. It won’t work.”

“Won’t it?” His grin made her nervous. He dropped the flogger from under her chin, then snapped the fingers on his free hand. Instantly, two sets of male hands grabbed her arms. Kennedy fought against the two guards from outside as they dragged her between two

columns, using ropes hanging from the top to stretch out her arms and bind them to the posts. They did the same with her legs, wrapping the cords around her ankles so she was spread-eagle. Then the men bowed to Cedric and left.

“Let me go.”

“No.” He moved so his body was flush with hers, his bare chest pressing against her breasts. “As I said, you are mine tonight, my queen turned slave.”

Kennedy glanced over her shoulder at the doorway where the men had exited.

“Are you worried they’re watching? Maybe I ordered them to. Maybe I want you to know the two of them, who you don’t even know, will watch me whip you, watch me fuck you.”

His hot breath tingled against her cheeks. Her chest rose and fell rapidly, and she licked her lips.

“Master.”

“That’s right, I am. Say it again, slave girl.”

The idea someone might be watching excited her more than she’d ever thought possible. Her body trembled as she strained against her bonds. “Master.”

He ran the top of the flogger over her lips. “Open your mouth.” She had barely parted her lips before he pushed the handle between them.

“Hold this while I prepare you for my lashing.” His fingers made short work of the ties, undoing the fastenings holding her dress closed. When nothing was left except the binding around her waist, he gave her a smile that made her tremble even more.

Then he took the bodice in both hands and ripped it down the middle.

“Cedric!” The flogger dropped to the floor as she yelled his name. Her breasts broke free as he ripped the stays at the shoulders. Then he leaned over and picked up the whip.

“Bad girl. Did I say you could drop it? Did I give you permission to speak, to call out my name?”

“Forgive me, Master.”

“Not quite yet. The queen must suffer for her mistake.” He studied her for a few moments, his gaze intent, the silence grating along her nerves. And then he placed the flogger against her lips again. She opened them and took it inside, swaying against her bonds as he crouched down and ripped the skirt up the middle. He stood, crossed behind her and did the same thing, then ripped both pieces in two, tying them in knots so they hung at her thighs.

“Much better. I like a half-naked slave queen.”

Kennedy’s body was on fire for him, flames licking at her clit and nipples. She knew he was behind her, but she didn’t know where, and she was afraid to look, lest she upset her master.

She grasped the ropes above her hands, trying to calm herself, trying to wait for what he wanted instead of doing what she really wanted, to drop the flogger and beg for him to whip her, to fuck her.

Kennedy closed her eyes, trying to concentrate on the sensations running through her body. *Touch me, Master, touch me. Please.* She breathed slowly, her eyes flying open when he grasped her hips and pulled her back against him, the soft kilt rubbing against her bare buttocks.

His erection pressed against her and she silently begged him to take the kilt off, to put his cock in her -- in her pussy or her ass. She just wanted to feel him pulsing inside her body. He thrust several times and she moaned around the flogger.

When his fingers moved around and up her body, cupping her breasts, her moaning increased. He took the flogger from her mouth, letting the ends trail down her body as he moved his hands back to their original positions.

“I’m going to whip you, Kennedy, leaving my marks across your beautiful body. First, I’m going to make it more intense for you. Do you have an idea how I could do that?”

She shook her head, and then realization dawned and her head movements increased.

“No, please.”

“Yes.” He stepped to the table and popped open a case. “One weight for each nipple and one for your clit. How much would you like? An ounce or two? Maybe three?”

“No, Master, please.”

“We’ll do four then. A nice size to swing while I’m lashing your backside.” He moved in front of her, holding up the clamps for her to see. “Do you like them, my slave queen?”

“Yes, Master.” Weights always made her feel as if she would lose control, as if she would come the minute they were attached. She tried to keep her body in check as he stood in front of her, watching her intently.

Cedric leaned toward her, his lips inches from her ear. “We haven’t talked about safe words while we’ve played. I’m giving you one now. Tiger. Repeat it.”

“Tiger, my Master.”

“Very good. You know how to use it properly, don’t you?”

“Yes, Master.” Kennedy closed her eyes and tried to concentrate on anything except his fingers as he attached the weighted clamps to her nipples, the teeth biting into her flesh, the weight pulling on her hardened buds. When both were in place, he nodded in approval, then bent down and stroked her wet slit. It parted easily for him and he found her clit, sitting right under the bar of her hood piercing.

He attached the clamp and her hips shot out as sensation rushed through her, the pain ricocheting through her pussy.

“Master.”

“That’s right, master.” He stood and cupped her head, pulling it inches from his own.

“Who are you?”

“Your slave.”

“That’s right, and for this little exercise my slave can come as often as she likes. The only rule is you have to be loud. Very loud. And after each orgasm you will thank your master. Do you understand me?”

“Yes, Master.”

“If you disobey the rules, I add more weight. Let us begin, my slave queen.” He trailed the flogger gently over her buttocks and thighs, the sensation soft and arousing. Kennedy relaxed into it, loving the feel of the soft leather against her skin. It tickled and aroused her and, coupled with the bite and pull from the clamps, it was a fantastic sensation she hadn’t felt in years. She knew all it would take was a few strikes with the flogger, a few swings of the weight on her clit and she would come, and come hard.

It happened quickly. After a few minutes of playing with her, Cedric stepped back and let the flogger fly, the strands landing on her ass, she gasped as a second, then third, strike landed. By the fourth one she was rocking against her bonds, the weights swinging from their clamps.

On the fifth strike she came, soaring into space as the pain shook her nipples and clit, her orgasm slamming into her body.

“Master! Oh, Master, thank you. Thank you.”

The strikes landed harder and with more frequency. Several more on her buttocks made sensations swirl through her, and when the flogger landed on her upper thighs, on the area where they joined with her buttocks, she came again, rising up on her toes.

“Master, more, please, thank you. Thank you.” He crossed the flogger over her back and shoulders, the tail ends of it sometimes striking around and slapping her breasts, making her moan and rock more.

Kennedy lost count of the number of times she came. The only thing that held a place in her mind was Cedric, and the flogger kissing her skin repeatedly. She floated as if on air,

the pain the most erotic thing she'd ever felt. When the soft strands of the flogger gently caressed her pussy, she opened her eyes to find Cedric in front of her, a smile on his face.

"Come back to me, my slave queen." He pulled the clamp from her clit and Kennedy gasped as the blood rushed back into her aching bud. She leaned forward as far as her bonds would allow, placing her head on his shoulder as he pulled the weights from each nipple. The abused buds ached, and she kissed his shoulder.

"Thank you, Master."

"We're not done, yet." He tipped his head up and kissed her, his lips gentle against hers. "It was beautiful to watch you take my whipping. You were made for this, made for me, weren't you?"

She gazed up into his eyes, and the fierce desire she saw there made her stomach clench. "Yes, Master."

"Good. I'm glad we've cleared that up." He kissed her again, lightly touching his lips to hers. "Open up." He placed the flogger back in her mouth, then moved behind her again, his fingers trailing over her stomach, and then over her aching back and buttocks. She heard the tear of a condom package and her heart raced.

Yes, oh please, fuck me.

He was behind her in seconds, his hands on her hips, the tip of his cock probing her soft folds, looking for an entrance. He found it quickly and pushed home, his thickness filling her as she groaned around the flogger.

"Mine. My slut. My slave. My sub." He repeated the words as he thrust into her harder, his cock sliding over her G-spot until Kennedy thought she would die of pleasure. He gave several hard thrusts, then reached around and pulled on her slave ring.

"Come." She exploded at his command, sensations seeping into her bones. He put his other hand on the small of her back, bending her forward as much as her bonds would allow, slamming into her with such ferocity she was sure he would rip her in two.

She came hard, the intense feeling almost painful as he pulled harder on the ring. She heard his labored breathing, felt his cock pulse inside her as he came. When he was finally still, he let go of the ring, his cock still buried deep inside her.

“Drop it.” The flogger fell to the floor and Kennedy gasped for breath. “You’re mine, Kennedy. All mine. Aren’t you?”

“Yes, Master. All yours.” Kennedy knew that, for her part, truer words had never been spoken.

* * * * *

Cedric trailed his fingers in the water, leaning his head back against the raft’s cushions. “More grapes, slave.”

He loved the look on her face right now, a mixture of irritation and pure bliss. It was almost as beautiful as watching her respond to his lash, watching her body twist and buck as she begged for more, thanked him for each orgasm.

She was without a doubt the most perfect submissive he’d ever had in his care. And she’d realized, tonight, that they were made for each other. Still, they would play out the rest of what he had planned. There was no way he would take a chance at losing her.

She held a bunch of grapes in front of his mouth and he bit one, chewing and swallowing. She walked into the water. Under his command, she still wore the tattered remains of the dress. He’d have to purchase the outfit, of course, but that was fine with him. He planned on buying them all, keeping them to use over the years to remind her of the way he’d fought for her. He’d think of new scenarios for each costume, playing with her body until she begged him to stop. Of course, he would know her begging was really a plea to continue, to make her come.

She fed him more, then bit her lower lip. “What happens now, Master?”

“Now I eat a little more; then I claim that sweet ass of yours. My dick’s already throbbing at the idea.” He loved the way she shivered at his words.

“What about after that?”

“Next Saturday’s party will be fun.” The slump of her shoulders let him know she didn’t like the idea of spending another week apart from him. Good. Absence made the heart grow fonder. One more week and he might be able to claim her fully. Now he worried that she’d still freak out if he mentioned the collar he’d already bought for her, three of them as a matter of fact.

A training collar he’d use for their first few sessions as Master and collared sub. That way she’d know it was her duty to learn what he liked, the way he liked it. Of course, it was so similar to what she liked that it shouldn’t be too hard. The second leather collar was to wear around the house after he’d moved her in. The lock would keep it in place until he removed it for one of her other collars.

The D-ring was perfect for binding her in whatever way he chose, including a leash to take her for a walk outside in the backyard or to tie her to his bed every night. It would always help her to remember her purpose, to serve him. And the third one was a beautiful golden choker that she would wear in public, a sign for the both of them to remember the bond between them.

His cock grew at the idea of fucking her sweet ass, and he reached out and tweaked a nipple.

“Ouch, Master.”

“Sore?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“The water should be soothing against your beautifully striped backside.”

He loved the blush that spread across her face. “Yes, Master, it feels good.”

“I’m glad to hear that. Move me toward the stairs.”

She walked along side him, gliding the raft toward the built-in stone stairs. They would be perfect for what he had in mind. When she reached the edge, she stopped.

“Go and get two towels.” He slid off the raft as she climbed from the water. He stood long enough to sheath his hard cock in a condom, then sat back down. The water barely hit him here, and he watched her as she walked to the towel rack, taking down two huge, soft-looking sheets. He sat down on the second step, keeping his head turned so he could watch her. Good Lord, she was beautiful, with her large breasts and cushiony hips. He loved the way they felt under his fingers as he’d held her close while he’d fucked her, sliding in and out of her wetness, feeling as if he’d gone to the highest point in the heavens and firmly planted himself there forever.

She stopped at the top of the stairs and juggled the towels, as if questioning what to do next. “One on either side of my body, right behind my shoulders. Then climb back in.”

She was so beautifully submissive as she followed his orders, eager to please him, obviously excited that her submission would bring them both pleasure.

“There’s some lube on the table. Get your pretty little rosette ready for my cock.”

His dick throbbed as she followed his orders, keeping her back to him so he could watch her spread her cheeks and rub the lube on the spot he longed to fuck. He needed her. Now.

When she was back in the water, she stood in front of him, head bowed, hands clasped behind her back. If he could get his hands on Jack right now, he’d have two things to say. He’d trained her well, then he’d treated her like crap. And for that, he was a discredit to Doms everywhere. It was because of Doms like him that BDSM got a bad name. He hoped he never met the man. On the other hand, he wanted just one chance to break his nose.

“Climb onto my lap, slave.” She knelt on the steps, straddling him as he clasped her hips.

“Now, one foot on either towel so that you’re lying back, your head in the water.” He could see the indecision, could see her coping with the idea she’d be so vulnerable in that position. She didn’t say no, though, or tell him it wouldn’t work.

Instead, she trusted him to hold onto her hips as she shifted. Putting her legs over his shoulders and lying back. Just as he suspected, her bottom was right in line with his dick, the perfect position to fuck her tight ass.

He knew she got the idea of what was happening right away. She nestled herself further down, arms floating out.

“Play with your nipples.” He positioned himself at her opening, loving the feel of the tight rosette, ready for the taking. He pushed gently, felt her slight resistance, then felt her body relax and push down. He slipped inside, tensing at the sound of pleasure that escaped her mouth.

“Master.” She said the word so low he barely heard her.

“My beautiful slave queen.” He pushed inside more, stopping when he felt her tighten against the intrusion. He loved the fact no one had been inside her, in any part of her, for years. She was his, his to take, his to command, his to love.

It took all his self-control to hold still when he was fully inside her. He stroked his finger over her clit, tugging gently on her slave ring. His gaze locked on her hands, doing the same thing with her nipples.

He waited as long as he could, and then he grasped her hips and pulled her back and forth, sliding in and out of her tight passage.

“Play with your nipples, play with your clit, don’t come until I say so, slave.” He knew his voice sounded wobbly, that he didn’t sound as in control as he should, but he didn’t care. All that mattered was the woman whose body was wrapped around his dick.

The water lapped at her as he moved her, sliding up over her torso and thighs. Her hands moved between her breasts and pussy, her breath coming in short, heavy gasps that edged his excitement higher and higher.

He closed his eyes and imagined collaring her, waking up to her every morning and going to sleep with her beside him every night. When he traveled she would travel with him, because he couldn't stand to be without her.

The water lapped harder as he pulled her back and forth faster until his balls drew up and he came, pulsing inside her tight ass until he thought he would die.

"Master, may I?"

"Yes, my slave, you may." Her body writhed and slid up and down on his still hard cock, causing a slight tremor to pass through his balls. He dug his fingers into her hips as she cried out again, and then he pulled her close, grasping her chin and claiming her lips in a brutal kiss.

He looked into her eyes and knew at that moment he could take her home with him and she wouldn't go back to the wishy-washy, I-don't-want-to-be-hurt Kennedy. She was his now. Still, it was too soon. Maybe next week. Just one more scene to be sure.

Not for him. He already knew he couldn't live without her. He wanted her to be positive, wanted her to have absolutely no doubts when she accepted his collar, because once it went on, it wasn't ever coming off.

Chapter Nine

Work to-do list:

Pick up costumes

Go to electronics store to buy two new jump drives

Remind Grace of the book signing the week after Halloween. Advance books still haven't been signed.

Fax letter about edits to Grace's editor

Personal to-do list:

Try to figure out a way to let Cedric know I have to have him, and not make myself look like a fool in the process

Kennedy piloted the car around the winding lane, wondering again about the costumes sitting in the backseat. Tonight, Toffer would be a priest and Grace a nun, an interesting combination for her friends. She didn't even want to know what they would do with the outfits after everyone was gone.

It was her own costume, though, that confused her. Obviously early British, around the sixth or seventh century. Cedric had said it would have something to do with a pair of famous lovers, and she had no idea who would wear the costume she had with her.

At the house, she didn't find Grace in her office, so she left the costumes by the desk. No one was in the living room when she walked through, and no one was at the pool. Back at her house she made herself a glass of iced tea, then spread the outfit out on the bed.

A long, flowing gown of deep purple color, trimmed with faux fur around the wide bell sleeves and deep scooped neckline. Guinevere, maybe, to Cedric's Lancelot? Or Maid Marion to his Robin Hood? Goodness knows he was stealing her heart, one little bit at a time.

The danger of opening her heart to him was gone. She'd wanted to stay last week; he'd said one more week, just to be sure. And then he'd been gone all week, staying away so that he didn't crowd her. Right now she could use a little crowding.

This week had been hell. It was obvious the old adage of absence makes the heart grow fonder was true in their case. She felt a need for him that wrapped itself around her and wouldn't let go. Yet how did she come right out and say, "I'm ready, please don't make me wait anymore"?

A knock at the door caught her attention. She opened it to find Grace standing there, a bag in her hand.

"May I come in?"

The worried tone in Grace's voice reminded her that she'd been less than cordial to her friend this week. She'd been peeved about the fight they'd had; she needed to let go of that too. Grace was one of the best things that had ever happened to her. It was time to open herself up again. "Of course. It's your house."

"No, it's yours, I keep telling you that. I did bring food and something for tonight."

"I'm intrigued. What is it this time?"

Grace walked into the kitchen, setting down the bag of food. "Food first. This will tide us over until the party, or tide me over. You're not going tonight."

Kennedy's heart fell to her toes. "Oh. Um, sure, I understand."

"No, you don't understand." Grace handed her a sheet of paper. "Nine o'clock, precisely."

"What is this?" She opened the paper and realization dawned. Cedric's address.

"He'll open the gate at nine. Don't be late." Grace dove into the bag, digging out a chocolate croissant. "One of my weaknesses, as you know."

Kennedy took the offering and laughed. "Mine, too. Can we talk while we eat?"

"Any time, you know that."

Grace accepted a glass of tea, and the ladies went out to the small deck attached to the guesthouse. "First, let me tell you, I was mad for a while. I was sure Cedric had told you everything, and then you'd plotted and schemed together, conspiring against me."

"He told us nothing, all he'd said was you'd rejected him, and it hurt him so much."

Those words made Kennedy's heart ache, for two different reasons. She was thrilled he'd kept her confidence, and angry at herself for hurting him. "I had a Dom for seven years, and one morning he woke up and said, 'It's over; we're done.'"

"Just like that."

"Yes. I'm sure there had to have been signs that I didn't see. That idea left me thinking that I was just plain stupid where people were involved. I waited almost a year, then tried again. And I did to him what I did to Cedric, ended it on my terms, so I wouldn't get hurt that time. Brad let it go. Obviously, he didn't really care."

"Cedric does care. For a while now he's wanted a woman, a sub, to complete him. He knows that sub is you."

Kennedy tore tiny pieces from her croissant, piling them on the plate. "How can he be sure, though?"

"Is anything a given in life? When I met Toffer, he didn't tell me who he was. We met over the Internet, and he kept it a secret. When I found out, I was so angry with him, and then I thought, maybe he just wants someone to like him for himself. We'd all like that. I didn't know if it would work, but it has. I can tell you this: I wouldn't give up one second of what we've had together. If it ended tomorrow, I'd have the most fantastic memories I'd carry with me forever. It's better --"

-- to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all. Thanks, Mom."

"Words to live by."

Kennedy pressed the tattered crumbs of her croissant together and took a bite. "Can you at least tell me who I am tonight?"

"Nope. That's for Cedric to do." Grace clasped her hand around Kennedy's. "Don't be afraid of him. I know him very well, and he's not the type of person, or Dom, to hurt someone intentionally. He's very grounded, and he has a great need for you."

"That scares me, because I feel the same way. You have no idea how hard it was to send him away. I thought it was for the best."

"Well, let me be the first, no, the second, to tell you that you were wrong."

"Just don't rub it in."

Grace sat back and took a sip of tea. "I won't, I'm sure he will. And you're gonna love every minute of it."

* * * * *

Cedric's two-story, Mediterranean-style house wasn't exactly what she'd thought it would be. The stucco was a light coral color, and there wasn't a garage in sight. There were turrets on each side, though, that gave it a castle-style appearance. Perfect for a man like Cedric. She was sure there was a pool, hot tub, and all the amenities of good living inside.

She parked under the porte cochere, then headed for the front door. Her nerves were frayed, and she wondered exactly what he had planned, here in his own home. He certainly had a playroom, or even a dungeon he could use tonight if he wanted.

That idea excited her beyond belief. The few times she'd been with Cedric had been fantastic, and she couldn't imagine what he'd be like with his own toys at hand. Should she tell him now she'd decided he was right? She wanted to beg to wear his collar, hear the lock click shut around her neck, knowing he had the only key.

She knocked on the door and it slid open. "Hello? Cedric?" She stepped inside. The house was dark, except for a small ray of light coming from the right. She shut the door and turned in that direction.

"Cedric?" Something akin to fear spread through her belly. Why wasn't he answering her? She had the right house. The address matched, and the gate had opened precisely at nine.

Kennedy swallowed her fear and moved further into the house. "Are you here?"

"Yes." That one word sent shivers up her spine.

"Where are you?" She stopped in the hallway, wondering if she should go toward the small source of light, or try to find a switch that would provide more light.

"I'm in here, where I've waited for you since regaining my strength."

Regaining his strength? She moved toward the light into a large living area. Cedric reclined on a leather couch, his head propped up on pillows as if he'd been ill. His clothing made her catch her breath. Tight leather pants encased his muscled thighs. He wore a tunic trimmed with fur much like that on her outfit. A wide leather belt held it in place. Thigh-high boots completed the outfit.

"Hello, Isolde. You've taken a while to get here."

She closed her eyes and sighed in pleasure. Tristan and Isolde: at first enemies as he took her to meet her betrothed, the king, then lovers after she'd nursed him back to health

from a possible poisoning. Such a tragic ending, though, with him dying as she raced to his side.

"Tristan." She stepped closer, then knelt down next to him. "Are you well?"

"Better now that you are here." He took her hand and brought it to his lips. "Tell me, Isolde, what are you thinking right now?"

Did she dare say it? Isolde would tell Tristan she loved him, that she wanted to be with him always, despite the fact she was to marry the king. Should she stay in character, like he'd wanted her to do the night of the first party, or should she answer as Kennedy?

"I was worried about you, Tristan. Very worried."

"Were you? And why is that?"

"Because I did not want you to die."

His eyes softened just a little. "And why would that matter? I mean nothing to you, right? You care nothing for me, or what happens to my body."

"That is not true." This was her chance. Speaking as Isolde she could tell Cedric, as Tristan, how she felt, how she'd made a horrible mistake and she hoped he would forgive her and give her a second chance.

"I do care." Her hands shook and he clasped them tighter. "Cedric, I -- Tristan, I --" Her words stuck in her throat as her pulse rate skyrocketed.

"Yes, Isolde?" His gentle tone encouraged her and she put her head on his chest, her eyes gazing away from him.

"I was wrong about you. Forgive me."

"Look at me." Cedric's demanding tone had returned. She turned her head toward him, a shy smile on her face.

"Say it again; this time I want to hear it from Kennedy."

Having said it once, even if it was from Isolde, the second time around brought no fear. She had nothing to fear from Cedric. Why hadn't she thought about that a month ago?

"I was wrong. I listened to my fear instead of my heart. I'm sorry." She watched his eyes carefully, expecting to see triumph. Instead, all she saw was happiness, a deep-seated emotion that made his handsome face glow.

"Over and done. And now, Tristan would like to thank the lovely Isolde for nursing him back to health. And he knows just what she likes."

"Does he?" Kennedy sat back on her heels, anticipation about events to come mixing with the knowledge that she'd done it, she'd opened herself up to something she wanted and, though she was still nervous, she wouldn't back down now.

"Oh yes." He stood so quickly she reeled back. "Someone likes it rough, don't they, my little submissive?"

"Yes, Sir."

"You expected to be spanked last weekend, so I intend to see that it gets done, now." Heat rushed through her as he licked his lips as if she were a morsel of food. "Stand up."

When she was on her feet, she put her hands behind her back and lowered her head.

"Very nice." He cupped her neck and put pressure on her until she tilted back. "What would my beautiful girl like tonight? Tell me."

"A whipping, Master." Her body tightened at the idea and he moved his hand to her shoulder, lightly squeezing.

"Maybe. Maybe not. What else?"

"Anything my Master desires." When she said the words this time, they went straight through to her core, their meaning sinking into every inch of her body. Tears sprang to her eyes, and the look of concern that popped onto his face warmed her even more.

"Why are you crying?"

"Because I'm happy and because I was such an idiot."

They examined each other, their gazes intent. Then he leaned over and claimed her lips, effectively telling her she was his. She knew now that no matter what she said, whether or not she had doubts, he would be able to talk her into the proper headspace, make her realize they belonged together.

“Take off that dress.” She made quick work of the button on the back of the bodice, then turned to him.

“You’ll have to unzip me, Master, if you please.” As the clothing loosened she let it drop, grateful she hadn’t worn any underwear.

“What a naughty girl. Did you want to be bare under your dress, with the possibility of anyone seeing you?”

“I wanted to be bare for you, Master.”

The look on his face said he didn’t believe her, and she wondered if it was play or real. His profession could prove to be a problem, since she wouldn’t always know if she was seeing Cedric or a part he was playing.

“Get down on your hands and knees and follow me.” She crawled behind him as he walked up the stairs. This sort of thing was what she missed the most. Following orders ramped up her excitement like nothing ever had before she’d learned about submission, or since.

At the top of the stairs he turned left, opening a door that led to yet another set of stairs. He flipped on the light before climbing up, and she knew this had to be the turret and his playroom. Or did he have another playroom in the other turret? Was one for whipping, the other for something else? Did they have the same types of toys? She couldn’t wait to find out.

He waited at the top of the stairs for her, pointing for her to enter before him. As she passed, by he smacked her bottom for “being slow.”

A medical chair set in the middle of the room and Kennedy's heart froze. This one was padded and had legs that looked like they could be spread apart, then lowered or raised as the Master saw fit. She'd never been in one before. A few subs at the clubs Jack took her to expounded on their virtues, saying how much fun it was to be strapped into one and examined.

"Up."

She obeyed without question, nervous yet excited.

"Bind your legs." There was something embarrassing about binding yourself, especially while your Master watched. The leather straps fit perfectly around her ankles, and when both were secured, she sat back.

Cedric came up and pushed the legs apart, spreading her wide open for him to see. Then he inched each leg up so that she was bent at the knee.

"Arms to your side." He strapped her arms down, then pressed a button and the chair lay flat so that she was on her back.

Cedric leaned over and stroked her forehead. "Tell me again what your safe word is."

"Tiger, my Master."

"You're such a good girl."

"Thank you, Master." He patted her head, then moved away. "Look at the ceiling, nothing else."

He was taking off his clothes now. The belt loop clattered as it hit the floor. She imagined the shirt landing on top of it.

Kennedy focused on the ceiling as she waited, the sounds of opening drawers filling the silence. She breathed in through her nose and out through her mouth, in an effort to stay calm. When he touched her shoulder, she pulled against her bonds.

“Easy. I know it’s been a while, so nothing too heavy tonight. Well, maybe.” A stinging sensation hit just above her left breast and Kennedy moaned, then she closed her eyes as realization hit.

Pinwheels. She’d never been a big fan of the little toys, which could cause a great deal of pain.

She jumped when he ran it over her hard nipple, and he abandoned it and walked to the wall, coming back with a riding bat, which he swung against her nipple. “No moving. No talking. No noise. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Master Cedric.” She saw him out of the corner of her eye, still wearing the leather pants and thigh-high boots. He looked sinfully delicious. He put the bat in front of her mouth and pushed.

“Open.” She took it inside like a horse bit, and he nodded in approval. “Just hold it like a good slave girl until I need it again.”

The pinwheel was back now, rolling over one breast and then the other, its sharp teeth biting into her sensitive nipples and catching on her rings, pulling them down. She groaned against the bit and he pushed down harder, the teeth right on her nipple.

“Did I say quiet?”

“Yes, Master,” she mumbled around the bit.

“When I say that, I mean absolutely quiet. No noise at all.” He rolled the metal back and forth and the burn in her nipple intensified. “I believe you understand now.”

“Yes, Master.” Kennedy stared at the ceiling again as the metal roamed her body, moving over breasts and arms and hips, the pace and intensity varying.

“There’s an interesting club in town where we can go. When I’m masked, no one knows who I am. Of course, after your photo appears with mine, we’ll have to make sure you wear a mask, too.”

He ran the pinwheel over her mons, and even the biting pain couldn't replace the pleasure she felt at his words. He ran the wheel over her outer labia quickly, changing directions and intensity until Kennedy thought she would burst.

She settled her head against the back of the chair, closing her eyes, and concentrating on the sensations, on the bite of the wheel that would soon turn into intense pleasure. She was with her Master, the man who would care for her, pleasure her, command things of her that would bring them both satisfaction. She could give herself to him completely, with no reservations at all.

Her body felt light, the nip of the wheel still there, now turning into that wonderful mixture of pleasure and pain. He spread her labia and dipped the wheel into her folds, rolling it over her tender insides.

It was coming now, that space she'd been at only a few times before. Everything disappeared except for her Master, herself, and the way he worked her body. The wheel ran over her clit, pressing down and an airy feeling surrounded Kennedy.

She stifled a moan, loving the "good slave girl," he whispered. He kept the wheel on her clit, gliding it back and forth until Kennedy thought she would scream. She stayed silent, her body tingling with sensation.

"Come for me. Come hard for your Master." The wheel pulled on her slave ring and Kennedy soared, her body pulsing with energy as he pressed the little instrument of torture harder into her. Pinpricks of pain hit her toes and fingers as she came back down.

Cedric's fingers were on her clit now, stroking gently. He leaned up and took the bat from her mouth.

"Who are you?"

"Your slave girl, Master Cedric."

"That's right. All mine, to do with as I please."

“Yes, Master.” Her voice sounded as if it were coming from someone else, someone who was floating alongside her.

“And what will you do, slave girl?”

“Anything you want, Master.” Her mind vaguely registered the tearing of a condom package. She turned a heavy gaze his way to watch him lower his pants enough to free his cock. He sheathed it, then slid it up and down her wet folds before stepping back and plunging inside her. She arched against her bonds as he pulled her hips down, slamming his cock into her with such force, she yelled out.

He pumped her hard, his thrusts hitting in all the right spots. He pushed on her knees, which pulled on her bonds. She was right on the edge again, ready to soar along with him. When he groaned and thrust harder, she knew he’d come. She could feel his cock pulsing inside her, her walls gripping him tightly.

“Fuck me running,” he said, collapsing so that his head rested on her stomach. “That’s the first time reality has ever beat a fantasy.”

He stood and shook his head, then pressed the wheel into her clit with such force she came bucking against it as the sharp prongs hit her over and over.

Kennedy tried to pull her mind away from her throbbing clit, off the wheel that still rested against it as if it would attack again. This was so much better than fantasy.

“Master?”

“Yes, slave?”

“Don’t send me away again.”

He looked down at her, a smile tugging at his lips. “What do the three couples we’ve acted out have in common?”

“Nothing.” She frowned at him.

“No, baby, there’s something. Think about it long and hard, and give me your answer next Saturday evening.”

Tears burned her eyes. “Does that mean I have to leave?”

“No, you’re not going anywhere. You just gave yourself to me, and I’m keeping you. We do have one more scene to act out, one more little tableau that will strengthen the bond we have right now.”

“Party or no party, you’re no longer a resident of Toffer’s guesthouse. You live here now, with your Master.”

Chapter Ten

Work to-do list:

Absolutely nothing! Bless Grace for giving me the whole week off

Personal to-do list:

Go to the house and pack up clothes (Of course, what do I really need? Master likes me naked)

Continue research on what the three couples in our scenes have in common

Orgasm precisely at ten, noon, and two

Be ready for the costume delivery man at three sharp

Party at Grace and Toffer's house at nine, be dressed at eight sharp

Kennedy had only done one thing on her list today and that was to come at ten and noon. She still had the two o'clock orgasm to go. Having set times to masturbate was a little strange, but her Master demanded it, and she would follow his directions. The "to-do list"

was a new thing to her. Grace had started her on keeping lists, and now she could hardly live without them.

The week she'd spent in Cedric's house had been the happiest week of her life, much happier than the seven years she'd spent with Jack. They'd discussed issues such as trust and communication and honesty, things Cedric said were paramount in making sure a relationship worked.

Jack had discussed those things with her, too, except with him it had seem to be just that, talk. She'd never really felt it. She'd been comfortable with Jack, never feeling half of what she felt every time Cedric had stopped her, no matter what she was doing, and lifted her chin so that her gaze was locked with his.

And when he'd say, "Who are you," she'd shiver when responding, "Your slave, Master."

The bond they shared made her feel whole. She'd never understood that until now. Tonight was the final party, and she'd yet to figure out what the three couples, and the fourth one that wasn't yet revealed to her, had in common.

All couples who had been immortalized in fictional works, all famous lovers, and all known by almost everyone. She wondered what the fourth one was, and if that would give her a clue to what linked them. As it was, she was stumped.

There was a link somewhere, or else Cedric would not have picked the couples. They weren't even from the same region: one from eighth-century England, one from the Roman age, and one from the deep south during the Civil War. Where would tonight's couple be from?

Of course, there might not be a note with this one. There just might be an outfit and she would have to try and decide who it was, and then try and figure out what that one had in common with the three others.

It was frustrating, still she would try her hardest to figure it out. She'd tried several days this week to get Cedric to give her clues. Each time he'd given her "the look," and declared it was time for punishment. His punishments were creative and consisted of things she'd never done before. For the first one, he'd made her don the corset she'd wore for the Scarlett scene, tying it so tight it was hard for her to breathe. Then she'd gotten on all fours beside him while he sat in a chair watching TV. At times he would play with her pussy, bringing her right to the edge, the excitement making her breathe harder and making the corset feel even tighter.

It had been an interesting experience that had made her rethink the corset. Another time, he'd tied her to a table outside, sat and read a book while she'd squirmed, then tortured her with a feather.

Each experience had made her wonder why she'd waited so long to open herself to him. She was glad now, though, that she had.

At precisely 2:58 she put on her clothes to await the costume delivery guy. She took off the larger training collar her Master had given her and slipped on the smaller one, which looked as if it could be a choker.

The bell on the gate rang at three and she buzzed him up. After she'd made sure he'd left through the gate, she carried her package upstairs, stripped, and changed back to the training collar.

She carefully unzipped the bag, then stared at the costume. She had no clue who she was supposed to be, or what country the costume was from. It was a long dress, with a low-cut bodice that laced up the front. The bell sleeves gave her no clue, and neither did the color of the dress, deep purple. A black cloak completed the outfit.

Kennedy stared at it, wondering what to make of it. She might place it in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Country of origin? She had no clue.

What sort of punishment would he decide on if she couldn't figure out what he was trying to tell her? Something she would enjoy, like spanking, or something like the feather, which had driven her insane with the light touches that aroused her, and left her begging for more.

She took a long, hot bath at seven, then donned her outfit, making sure the bodice was laced tightly. Her breasts felt squished together, displayed just like her Master would like them. He'd instructed her to sit on the couch, head down, hands clasped behind her back until it was time to leave.

This position always aroused her, and it did it more so now with Cedric than it ever had -- a wonderful feeling. The bell dinged at eight, indicating the gate was opening. Perhaps Cedric's outfit would give her some clue.

The front door opened, and she waited impatiently for him to arrive. When Toffer's voice rang out, she sucked in her breath.

"Your Master will be happy to hear you were in position, and at the correct time. Very good."

"Thank you, um, Sir?"

"Sir is fine." He motioned for her to stand. "We have a full house already, and your Master wants his sub, very badly."

His words made her blush. She looked over his outfit, then laughed. A colonial suit complete with buckle shoes. "Benjamin Franklin, I presume?"

"As a matter of fact, yes. Grace is dressed as a kite, so I can fly her or make her fly, anytime I want."

During the trip, Kennedy wondered if Cedric would be in the main house, or the pool house, or the guesthouse for that matter. He hadn't done a role-playing scene in the same room since this started, so there was no telling what would happen tonight.

When Toffer parked the car, he turned to her and winked. "Inside."

“Yes, Sir.” She opened the door and walked toward the stairs, jumping back when a man in a blue suit jumped out at her. The suit had tight pants, a shirt with lace around the collar. He wore a vest and a jacket and a cape much like hers. He also had a hat with a large plume on it.

That’s not what let her know who he was. It was the mask, complete with the extra large nose that made her smile.

“Cyrano?”

He nodded, then held out his hand. She laughed as she took it. When she touched him she realized this wasn’t Cedric. What was the story she should be remembering? Cyrano loved Roxane, but thought she wouldn’t love him because he was not handsome enough. So he wrote the words for letters sent by Christian, professing his love for Roxane. Roxane fell in love with Christian, not realizing it was really Cyrano who was wooing her.

A second Cyrano came down the stairs and Kennedy’s eyes widened. Obviously, she was going to have to figure out which Cyrano was Cedric. Her heart beat just a little more when a third one, and then a fourth appeared.

Soon there were six of them standing near the car. Would there be more inside? One of them had to be Cedric, she knew that now. They were all dressed exactly the same, though, and whereas the first one had taken her hand, none of the others ones had. They all stood the same height, and the masks covered their faces completely.

The idea of the test was easy, of course. Roxane didn’t know it was Cyrano she loved. Suddenly, with beautiful clarity, the common thread of the couples all came together. All of them desperately in love, and all of them had tragic endings, most because they didn’t realize soon enough they were in love.

Scarlett realizing too late she loved Rhett; Isolde not being able to be with Tristan until his death; Antony and Cleopatra dying alone, and in love; and now, Cyrano, thinking he was

not good enough for the woman he loved, using someone else to tell her how he felt. And, of course, they had a tragic ending too.

No tragedy for us, Kennedy thought as she stared at men, wondering which one was her Master, her Cedric, the man she knew she had to have in her life.

She glanced from man to man, all of them staring at her, hats in hand. She looked at the hats, at the hands holding them in place. Which set of hands had given her such pleasure this past month? Whose hands had wielded a flogger with such expertise, had stroked her clit until she thought she would die, had tied expert knots on ropes to keep her in place while he teased her to orgasm again and again?

The hands would be the telling part. She looked back at Toffer, who indicated she should choose one man. Kennedy started to walk through, her eyes down as she examined each one. One set of hands looked close, but they lacked the truly strong fingers Cedric had. She made it through five of them and was just approaching the sixth when excitement raced through her belly.

Without looking at the hands she knew this was Cedric, could tell by the set of his wide shoulders. She looked up into his green eyes, which stared back with amusement.

“Cyrano,” she said softly. “It is you I love.”

He peeled back the mask, revealing a smile that made her heart race. “And I love you, Roxane. Are you certain? Very, very certain?”

“With all my heart.” A look of smoldering passion came across his face. He dropped the mask and gathered her in his arms, pressing his lips against hers, his tongue diving into her mouth as if seeking to join them forever.

Her head whirled with passion as she wrapped her arms around him. Cedric gathered her close, his arms around her waist. “Upstairs with you, slave.”

The words made her shiver. “Here? Now?” The other sessions had been away from the main house, and Kennedy could tell the house was packed with people. Surely if they used

the main house for a session, someone would hear them. She wasn't sure she was ready for the world to know.

"Right now." He stroked her cheek and that single movement let her know that, while she might be hesitant about becoming possible gossip fodder, he had no such compunctions. That right there let her know how much he cared, and how he would take care of her.

Kennedy kissed his chin, then started for the house. She saw Grace on the stairs, wearing a black outfit with a gold lightning bolt blazoned from shoulder to calf. When Kennedy walked past, she reached out her hand and grasped the other woman's, squeezing it in thanks, knowing if she hadn't met Grace this never would have happened.

Once inside the house she stopped. Cedric came up behind her, his hands placed possessively on her hips. She knew people noticed and heard the click of a few camera phones. The photo of him in the coffee shop had never shown up in the tabloids. She was sure this one would. He leaned over and turned her face to his, his hands gentle on her chin. Another whirl of cameras. And then he kissed her, his tongue once again delving inside, slower this time, as if he was deliberately posing for the cameras, his touch lingering so they would get the best shot possible.

There were a few sighs from the assembled women, and then a gasp when he smacked her bottom, the sound muffled by the cape. "Second floor. The first room I topped you in. Now."

The crowd seemed to part for them as they headed toward the stairs. By the time they reached the second floor, Kennedy's body was on fire, not from exertion from climbing the stairs, but from complete and utter need to have Cedric inside her, now, to kneel in front of him and feel his hands in her hair as he praised her.

He slammed the door as soon as they were inside, then came up behind her and reached around her neck to undo the cape.

It fell to the floor and, when she started to move away from it, he put his hands on her shoulder.

“Stay in place.” His fingers were on the lacings of her bodice now, making short work of undoing what had taken her so long to fasten. When it was partially undone he pushed the material off her shoulders, down far enough to free her breasts, the costume effectively holding her arms in place.

“Mine,” he growled in her ear. “Say it.”

“I’m yours, Master Cedric.”

His growl deepened and she shivered. “Knees.” When she was in position, her head bowed, arms behind her back, he walked around her, as if trying to decide the best way to take her.

“The first time I saw you, I knew you were submissive. I told Toffer I wasn’t going to fuck you, not going to push it. I’ve been burned too.”

Her body stiffened at his words. She’d never thought of that, never considered that he hadn’t wanted the story of the starlet he’d topped to make the papers. Of course he wouldn’t, would he? Who would want their sex life splashed around for everyone to see and talk about?

“After having you just once, I knew you were my perfect submissive. The one woman who I could keep in my life forever, who would never betray me and what we shared.”

This time his words cut into her. “I’m sorry it took me so long, Master.”

He crouched down so they were face to face. “No, you misunderstand what I’m saying. Yes, I’m sorry about that too. I’m thrilled that I’ve found you, that we’ve found each other. I never want you to leave me, Kennedy. I want to collar you tonight, here, just the two of us. And then, later, I want you to marry me, to be my wife. Do you want that too?”

Her lips trembled as she nodded. “Yes, Master, I want to be your wife, and your collared sub.”

Cedric stood and walked to the desk. He was back seconds later, holding out a golden collar that made her heart beat even faster. He held it between his hands, stretching it out for her to see the small, golden links, perfect for clipping things on if her Master so desired.

“Kiss it for me, slave.”

The metal was warm against her lips. Cedric dropped one end and stroked her hair as she kissed it again. “That’s my girl. So beautiful.” He crossed behind her and attached the collar quickly, the jewelry snug around her neck.

“I claim you, Kennedy, as mine forever. I promise to care for you and to never harm you in any permanent way. You’re mine now.”

“Master, I think I’ve always been yours.” She nuzzled her cheek against his hand. “Forgive me for doubting it.”

“Maybe.” The humor in his voice made her giggle softly. “Perhaps I need to reinforce the fact. On all fours.”

He lifted her skirt over her hips, stroking her bare buttocks. “No underwear. What a bad girl you are.”

“Forgive me, Master. I thought it would be easier this way.”

“Good of you to think ahead. Though you might wish for something down there later tonight.” He crossed to the table and picked up a riding crop; then he tucked something into his hand she couldn’t see.

Moisture flooded her as he walked toward her. She noticed for the first time he wore the same thigh-high boots he’d had for another session, and she silently prayed he’d bought them, and they were not rentals. She loved the way they looked as he strode toward her, riding crop in hand. It was a sight she’d never get tired of.

He knelt next to her, his hands stroking down over her mons. “Wider.” She obeyed, spreading her legs for him. She groaned in pleasure as he slipped a small vibrator inside her.

“You’ll wear it all night at the party. And I have the control, as you’ve figured out.”

The vibrator buzzed. Kennedy groaned and bucked her hips, earning her a sharp slap with the crop. "Hold still."

"Yes, Master." He stroked her clit and tugged on her ring, sending vibrations of pleasure through her body.

"Ten strokes now, hard enough so you feel them all night. And then later, a good, hard whipping for my slave."

Her pleasure soared. "Yes, Master. Thank you, Master." He stood, rubbing the tip of the crop against her backside until she moaned softly and arched her hips, letting him know she was ready.

Cedric struck, delivering ten hard cuts with the crop that Kennedy was sure left welts. Then he delivered five more as the vibrator started to buzz again. The pleasure was almost unbearable. He trailed the crop over her back as he walked to the couch. She watched him undo his pants, then sit.

"Crawl to me." She tripped over the skirt a few times, laughing as she uprighted herself and completed her journey. She licked her lips as he stroked his cock.

"Hungry?"

"Yes, Master."

"Then suck me as my collared sub. And when I come, don't miss a drop." His moans were like nectar to her ears as she swallowed him, sliding her tongue over the head, teasing the slit, nibbling on the sensitive spot behind the head.

She took him in and out until his breathing skyrocketed, and then she kept him in, working the head with her throat muscles and the shaft with her tongue. It didn't take long for him to flood her, and when he did the vibrator inside her hummed harder, sending her clit into spasms of pleasure.

"Come, slave." Her fingers found her clit as she sucked his still-hard cock, her tongue bathing him, taking the last of his cum into her throat.

The vibrator kicked up yet again and Kennedy pulled on her ring, her orgasm overpowering her as she clutched Cedric's thigh.

"Master!"

"That's it, my slave. So beautiful, and all mine."

"Yes, Master, all yours. Forever." She placed her head on his thigh as he stroked her, her body still trembling from the force of her climax.

"People will notice the new addition to my costume," she said softly.

"You should be more worried about the fact you have to wear the vibrator all night. And if it comes out, you'll receive the crop even harder than I'd originally planned."

Kennedy sighed and stroked his thigh. "If that is your desire, Master, it is my deepest wish to please you."

"Even when I'm Cyrano? Or Rhett? Or anyone else I choose?"

She lifted her head from his lap, leveling her gaze with his. "It doesn't matter if you come to me under the cover of any other lover. I'll know it's you. Just like I knew it was you in all those Cyranos."

"Because we belong together."

"Yes, Master, we do."

"My beautiful Kennedy. You've captured my heart. Tell me who you are."

"I am yours, Master, in whatever guise you want me. I'll always be yours."

 THE END 

Melinda Barron

Melinda Barron loves to explore Egyptian tombs and temples, discover Mayan ruins, play in castles towers, and explore new cities and countries. She generally does it all from the comfort of her home by opening a book.

A multi-published author of erotica, Melinda is the fourth of five children born to an Army officer and his wife. A longtime newspaper journalist, Melinda loved to read and write from an early age. Now she lives in the Texas Panhandle with two cats, and enough books to, according to her brother, open her own library. In addition to reading and writing Melinda enjoys travel, cross-stitching, watching movies and spending time with her friends and family.

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