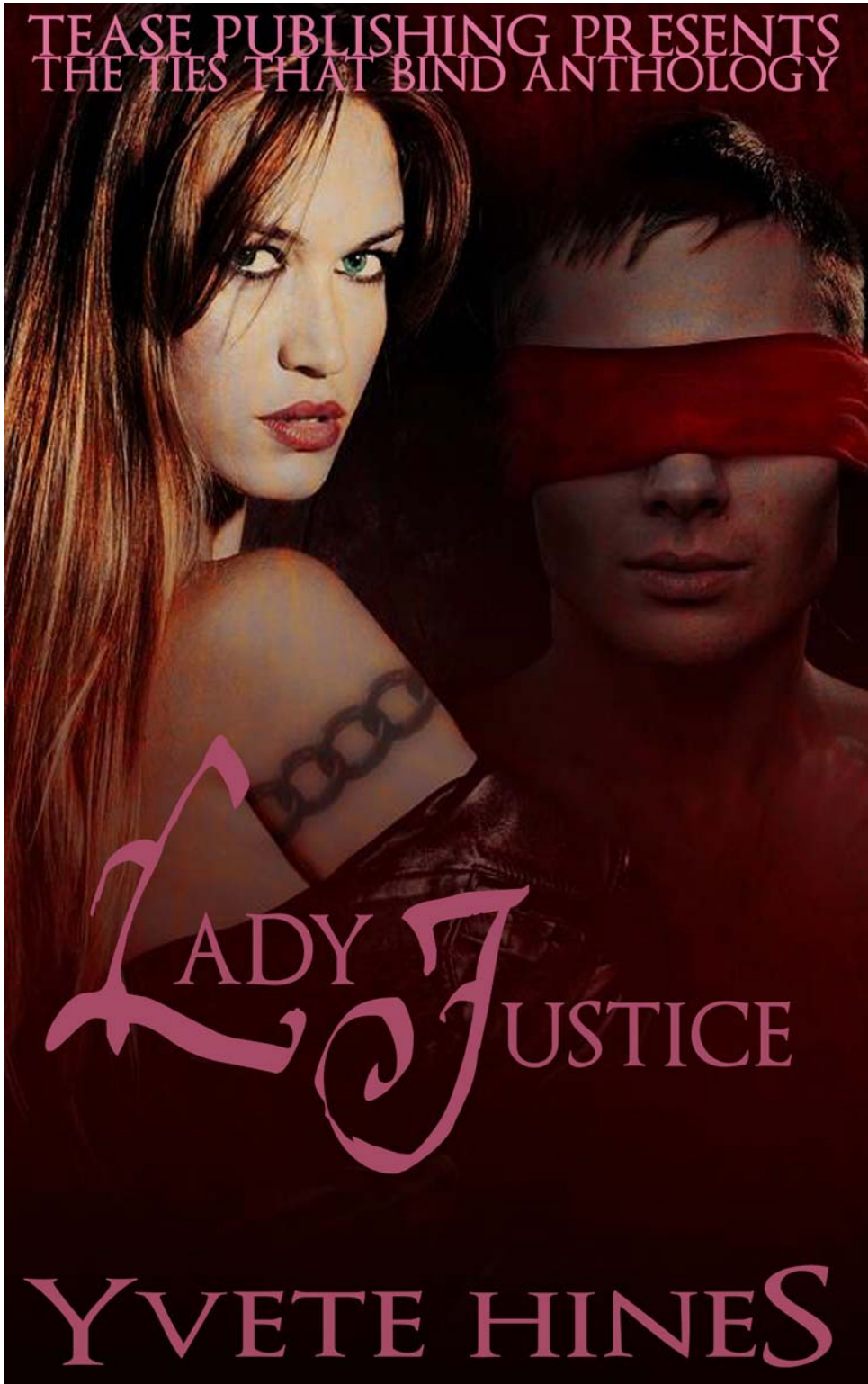


TEASE PUBLISHING PRESENTS  
THE TIES THAT BIND ANTHOLOGY



LADY JUSTICE

YVETE HINES

# **LADY JUSTICE**

**BY**

**YVETTE HINES**



**TEASE PUBLISHING**

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## **Lady Justice**

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## One

“Nubia is moving back -- home.” Kareena slathered a thick helping of garlic butter on her wheat toast, the compliment to her plate of spaghetti. As usual he was having breakfast, while his roommate ate dinner.

“You’re joking, right?” Quentin stared at Kareena with his *Frosted Flakes* filled spoon halfway to his mouth. The last thing he needed in his life right now was Nubia Swanson back in the same state. Even worse, the same city.

“Nope.” She sank her teeth into the bread. “She called me last night and said she lost her job.”

“Oh, man. I know how much she loved that job. Hell, she loves Seattle and the West coast. She barely has come back in almost two years, except for a few days.” Quentin kept his tone neutral, it was an art form he’d mastered years ago dealing with Nubia. “So, she going to your parent’s house to lick her wounds then heading back home to look for a job?” He continued to eat. He hated soggy cereal and if he wanted to get breakfast in, with Nubia being the main discussion, he needed to move quickly and remain focused.

Kareena placed a hand on his arm resting on the table. “She asked to stay with me. She couldn’t bear moving back home, she’d feel like a complete failure.”

“Stay with you?” He stopped eating. Kareena was currently living with him, where she’d been for almost two months, while her house was being renovated, which gave him a couple weeks before Nubia sailed back into his world. Then something Kareena said hit him. “Moving?” Apprehensive, he asked, “She’s planning to return here, permanently?”

“Yea.” Kareena said dejected, as if feeling her sister’s sadness. “Nubia said she couldn’t bear the thought of not having her job anymore and since that was the only reason she had moved to Washington, she was coming home to North Carolina for good.”

“She could job hunt there. Where she lives and all her stuff is, instead of paying the cost to ship it all here. The job market in Seattle has to be rising faster than in Carolina.” Pushing his now soggy cereal away and hating his loss of appetite, because he knew he’d be hungry again soon. By then he’d be deep in the middle of a case. Being a cop didn’t always leave time for regularly scheduled meals. Food was the least of his problems.

“You know Nubia, Quen, once she gets an idea stuck in her head, my baby sister is relentless.” Kareena finished her last bite of toast then rose, taking her plate and his bowl to the sink.

Shaking his head, he said, “So, she’ll be here in two weeks or more. Has she told your parents yet?”

“No, she was going to wait until she got here to tell them. But.” Kareena was leaning with her back against the sink and looking down at the floor.

The hair on the back of his neck stood up and Quentin had an eerie feeling he wasn’t about to like the next words that came out of her mouth. “But, what?”

Glancing up at him, she fingered her short dyed jet black curls around one ear. “She’s coming in tomorrow.”

Tomorrow. “That’s not possible. Your place is still under repair from that old tree crashing into your front window.” There was no way Nubia could come tomorrow.

She wiggled around on her feet. “I know, but she sounded so heartbroken when I told she’d have to wait, so I said she could stay here with me.”

“*Here at my house.*” He was standing now, no longer able to sit and digest the fact that his life was about to be inundated with a woman he avoided for good reason like the second coming of the plague.

“Quentin, she won’t be a bother. She’ll be looking for a job most of the day while you’re sleeping.” Kareena began talking fast and waving her hands around in front of her. Any other time he would have picked with his best friend about her hand talking but there was nothing humorous about this moment.

“Why can’t she just wait a few weeks?”

“She had the movers pack her house and ship her things to a storage facility here.”

Already sent her things? “When did she get fired?”

“I don’t know. A week ago, two weeks ago. I didn’t ask. I didn’t want to upset her.”

That was Kareena always considerate of other people’s feelings. Nubia wasn’t inconsiderate. She was just impetuous and feisty. Her very presence was invasive and disturbing to other people’s emotions. Mainly his own. “I don’t know if this is a good idea, Kareena.”

“Where is she to go? You know mom and dad will just drill her about moving away from the family in the first place and bring up how they thought it was a mistake to take that job the whole time.”

He growled under his breath. He hated being guilted into things and that’s just what was happening now. “A hotel. I will pay for her to stay at a hotel.”

Stomping her foot, Kareena chided him. “Now, that’s just silly, Quen. Nubia won’t be a bother and you know it. You act like she’ll be the house guest from hell. She’s neater than I am. Besides she was so excited about being able to stay at your house and visit with you.”

Catching up on old times was the last thing he needed. Something’s should just remain buried. He let out a heavy breath. Unless he wanted to appear to be an insensitive asshole, he’d have to let her stay, telling himself it would only be a couple of weeks. He sent up a prayer that Kareena’s house would be ready sooner rather than later.

“Fine. She can stay.”

“Yea!” Kareena jumped up and down then rushed at him for a hug.

He gave her a quick hug then stepped away. Grumbling about having to get to work, he grabbed his keys off the table and headed toward the door.

“You won’t regret this, Quen, I promise.” Her words followed him.

“I’m already regretting it.” He spoke to himself as he pulled the door behind him and moved toward his car. Instead of going to work he wished it was his day off, because he’d much rather be hitting a punching bag at the gym about now or at his favorite club release some of the tension that was burning along his spine.

Nubia. Her name made his muscles tense.

His home would never be the same after tomorrow.

~YH~

“Sissy!”

Nubia heard the shout as she headed down the airport corridor towards the baggage claim. Kareena, her older sister by four years was waving her arm high over her head with a big smile. Stepping up her pace, Nubia rushed to her big sister and gave her a hug.

“You make me sound like a three year old.” She chided scrunching her nose at the nickname.

“You will always be three to me.” Kareena kissed her on her cheek as they broke apart.

Groaning, Nubia returned the kiss, landed a loud one on her sister. “Well three years on the other side of the country does a lot to make a girl grow up.”

“I’m sure.” Kareena took her laptop bag from her as they moved with the crowd of passengers to the luggage carousel. “It’s good to have you home though.”

Flinging her arm over her sister’s shoulder, who was shorter, Nubia smiled. “So am I.” That was true for so many reasons. She had not lied when she said she’d grown up in Seattle, she had made it a point of her living there. Living there gave her the opportunity to spread her wings and discover herself, firmly decide what she wanted for her life, without the shadow of her big sister or her parent’s disapproving glances. It had provided other advantages as well. However, something’s didn’t change for her, especially where Quentin Randolph was concerned.

Spotting her large purple and black polka dot suitcase on the metal belt she stepped up and claimed it.

After claiming the car in the garage they were on their way.

“It seems so strange being here without Perry.”

"I'm sure you still miss him a lot." Kareena briefly glanced at her before focusing her attention back on the road as she maneuvered through the other drivers.

"I do." Her throat tightened at the thought of him. "I just can't believe he's gone. Even though it has been over a year."

"You and Perry were close. It's to be expected." Kareena patted Nubia's knee.

Perry was the reason she was here. The one person who made her choose to stop hiding away, it had taken her a year to put things in their proper place.

"Do you remember when Quentin and I came to see you and Perry in college and we went camping in the Appalachian Mountains." Kareena was smiling as she exited off the interstate. "We went fishing and Perry was excited he finally caught a fish and while he was reeling it in he slipped."

Nubia was laughing along with her sister now. "He landed in the bucket of fish guts Quen had been dumping the parts in while he cleaned the fish for dinner."

"Oh, man... he stank... so bad." Kareena was struggling to get out the words as she roared with laughter.

"Quentin made us dump him in the lake." Nubia pushed away the tears of joy streaming down her face. "He said Perry's smell would attract bears and he refused to let him in the camp smelling."

"Goodness." Kareena sighed, attempting to still her laughter. "I can still see him sitting by the fire in his boxers waiting for his clothes to dry while he ate."

"Those were good times." Nubia mumbled, her mind still back to that night, but she wasn't recalling Perry as much as she was recalling Quentin. That trip changed a lot of things for her, most importantly her relationship with Quentin.

Once again her mind assured her, she was making the right decision. It was time for her to come home.

Pulling up to the house, they got out of the car and headed inside.

"Welcome to your temporary home." Kareena announced standing in the living room.

"It's very nice." She glanced around taking everything in at once. "I need to thank Quentin for letting me crash here with you." Listening for noises in the house, she asked, "So where is he?"

"Work. He pulled a double shift at the last minute."

"Oh." She wondered if he was going to try and avoid her the whole time she was staying at his home.

"Let's get you settled in, so we can figure out dinner."

Grabbing her suitcase from beside the door, Nubia followed her sister. "Great, because I am starving. I would love a pulled pork barbeque sandwich and a large glass of sweet ice tea."

"I figured you would." Kareena teased as they headed down the hall.

Quentin had a large house with a stone front. She hadn't been here since her graduation party he'd helped her parents throw for her. He'd just gotten the house with the pool in the backyard and a huge grill. She admired his home and the masculine feel of design and coloring as Kareena led her to the spare bedroom. It wasn't really a room, more like his office with a pull out couch.

"I hope this is okay. Quen said he wouldn't need the computer much in the next couple of weeks while you're here, so you should have your privacy."

Two weeks. "It's no problem. I don't need a lot of space." Entering the room she set her suitcase beside the closet. An oak desk took up most of the room and then there was a couch; which she assumed pulled out. Above the couch was a stereo console mounted against the wall. "Are you sure your place will be ready by then."

Glancing around the room, then back at her, Kareena's face held an apology. "Definitely, maybe even before if the weather stays nice. So, no worries you will not be crammed in here long. But you can rest your head at night while you look for a job."

She nodded. "Give me about twenty minutes and I'll be ready."

"You got it." Before exiting the room, Kareena pulled her into a tight hug. "It is good to have you home, Sissy."

Returning the embrace, she looked around the room once again over her sister's shoulder and took in the room, Quentin's things. "It's good to be home."

~YH~

His dick stretched to its full length as he watched her tongue slide slowly around the side making her eyes light up with pleasure. She was thoroughly enjoying the act, a moment in time with her special treat. Rotating it, she took small nibbles along the edge in between her licks and his mouth went dry.

Closing her eyes, she indulged fully as she flattened her tongue and dragged it across the center collecting every last drop of the cream. She moaned in satisfaction.

Quentin bit into his tongue to stifle the groan rumbling up from the depths of his stomach. Two weeks was too long. A man could go mad in that amount of time.

Taking a deep breath he tried to calm the blood raging in his body, boiling along the length of his cock making it harder.

Glancing at her again, seeing her lounged innocently on the couch reading a book in sweatpants and a tank top. Her legs were thrown over the arm of his couch as her bare feet bobbed over the edge.

"Don't you know those cookies cause tooth decay." He barked, moving out of the hallway heading through the living room toward the kitchen.

"Well, good morning to you too, Quentin." Nubia smiled, raising herself up on her elbows as she tossed the bare golden cookie half on the plate with several others missing the crème filling, one lone sandwich remained.

He grumbled more. Entering the kitchen he came to a halt as he noticed the coffee filled pot.

"I figured you'd want a cup when you got up." Nubia spoke from behind him.

Glancing over his shoulder, he could see she'd gotten up from the couch and followed him to the kitchen. "Thanks." Obverting his gaze, he asked, "What are you doing up? Last I remember, you were a snooze fiend."

Stepping deeper into the kitchen he went to the refrigerator for eggs and bacon. Keeping himself busy at anything besides staring at Nubia.

"A girl grows up when she's on her own. Besides, Kareena said you get in from work around this time. When I heard the shower running, I got up and made coffee. I want to be a service to you."

He paused in his action. Her words made his scalp tighten. He brushed his thoughts away pretty sure she didn't mean it how he took it. Grabbing the pan spray and the microwave tray out of the cabinet, he said, "You didn't have to do that on my account. You're only job while you're here is to look for a job. Not...serve me."

She chose that moment to cross the room and lean against the counter beside him. Her baggy sweats had sank to her hips leaving a gap between her top and pants revealing the soft, smooth curve of her abdomen to his sight. At twenty-six, her body was toned but plump in all the right places. He looked away placing the greasy maple back strips onto the plate before placing it in the oven.

"I know I didn't have to but I wanted to. So, I could personally thank you, Quentin, for allowing me to stay with you." She placed her hand on his shoulder, a light touch.

The heat of her hand seared his senses and pushed his mind to that night in the forest. The night he'd held her in his arms and kissed her. His gaze moved from her hand until it reached her face. Those plump lips beckoned him, not giving in he traced her cocoa butter shaded skin passed her broad nose to her almond shaped hazel eyes. Her mother's eyes, evidence of her half Korean heritage, just like her lips and plump ass revealed her Black genetics. She was too close.

This was his best friend's little sister. Even though Nubia was not a child, she was still off limits for several reasons. He had to keep that in mind while she inhabited his house. Stepping back, he turned away from her delicious sight and grabbed creamer from the cabinet. "You mean with your sister. You owe her the thanks."

"I've already thanked her. But, until her place is ready I'm stuck here with you." Her voice lowered to a soft husky tone.

Snapping his head toward her, he assessed her. Trying to see for himself if his ears deceived him. She stood in the same place with her arms crossed underneath her breasts, her eyes appearing clear of intent. Her tank top stretched across her breasts and displayed the tight tips of her nipples. He stifled a groan with a thought of how they would taste if he was to drag his tongue across the peaks as she had done to the cookie she licked earlier. The urge to lift her top and reveal those lovely breasts assailed him.

“Why is everyone up so early?” Kareena came into the kitchen rubbing sleep from her eyes. Her short hair was tussled around her face. “It is Saturday.”

He was thankful for her intrusion. He needed as little time as possible alone with Nubia if he was going to keep his sanity. “That’s my question, too.” Pouring three cups of coffee, he said, “If you two have a seat at the bar I’ll make breakfast.”

“Great.” Kareena called out as she moved her sleepy shuffle over to the breakfast bar and slid onto a stool.

Nubia added creamer and sugar to two mugs and just sugar in the other mug, his. She remembered how he drank his coffee. Dark and sweet. Raising his eyebrow he stared at her.

She winked at him, then walked away with the two mugs and passed one to Kareena. He noticed the top of a blood red rose peeping out from the center of her back above the waist band of her pants.

Breakfast was his favorite meal of the day, especially since he worked the night shift at the station and breakfast always reminded him he was off from work. He loved being a cop, but he also enjoyed the peace of his home. Glancing at Nubia, he knew peace would not be a word he used to describe his home until she was gone.

Kareena and Nubia talked as he prepared breakfast. He considered the two women, just as he had done many times before. They were sister’s but as different as night and day. Kareena was short with a complexion that looked like melted chocolate like their father. Her curly hair she kept short. Besides her height she had their mother’s eye shape and quiet sweet disposition. Her eye color was the same as Nubia, light brown with green flecks.

Shifting his gaze to the younger sister--the wild card. Nubia was taller, lighter in complexion with straight dark brown hair to the center of her back, now sporting blond highlights. She was impulsive and unpredictable. It was that raw unexpected energy that drove him crazy and turned him on. Made his mind wonder to thoughts of her in the sheets he shouldn’t be having. Nubia was not for him. He had eccentric desires that she wasn’t prepared to take on, no matter how her eyes beckoned him to take what he wanted from her.

*Off limits.* Her heart belonged to Perry. She’d loved Perry. Now he was gone. That thought was enough to cool his longing for her--temporarily.

When the food was ready he took plates to the high table.

“So, what’s everyone’s plans for today?” Nubia asked, piercing her eggs and bring a forkful to her mouth.

“Sleep.” He stated keeping his focus on his food. “I have work tonight.”

“I thought we’d go see mom and dad today.” Kareena nibbled her bacon.

He looked up at Nubia waiting for her reaction.

Pushing her hair back behind her ear, she lowered her eyes to her plate. “Sure. I was planning to see them tomorrow after church.” Looking at him then her sister, she said, “But, I guess today is just as good.”

Quentin’s forehead tightened as he frowned. Was Nubia hiding something? Was there a reason she was putting off seeing her parents? He knew that her and their mother didn’t see eye to eye all the time, but that didn’t seem like a reason not to see them. Especially when she’d lost her job.

“They will be excited to know your home again.”

Taking smaller bites now, Nubia said, “Dad, will anyway.” Pushing her food away, Nubia picked up her cup and sipped her coffee.

“You know mom wanted you to work here after college.”



“Only to keep me under her thumb.” Getting up, Nubia took her plate to the sink.

“Nubia?” Kareena called out.

Quentin figured Kareena was getting ready to deny Nubia’s words.

“Save it, Reena.” Nubia walked out of the room not looking back.

He couldn’t help admiring her strut as she kept her head held high and her shoulders back, Nubia had a lot of pride. Amazingly his mind conjured up an image of her strapped to a St. Andrews cross with just as much strength and energy.

*Definitely off limits.*

## Two

“Nubia, whatever you’re cooking smells wonderful.” Kareena entered the house carrying her briefcase. Her sister worked at the hospital in the human resources department.

“It’s roasted chicken, so I hope you’re hungry.” She informed her sister.

“Famished. Let me get out of this work armor and I’ll be back.” Kareena disappeared down the hall.

She heard Kareena and Quentin exchanging a few words, cuing her in that he was on his way to the front of the house. Taking a container out of the cabinet she filled it up with food, snapping the lid on it and rushed out of the kitchen. She was just in time to see him crossing the living room

“Quentin, I made you a plate to go.” She rushed toward him, breathless.

He always jumped as if startled by her. Facing her, he stared into her face then lowered his gaze to the Tupperware she held out to him as if he wasn’t sure if he could trust what was inside.

“Usually we all just grab a quick meal from a to-go restaurant.” He still didn’t take the food from her.

Feeling unsure of herself she gave him a small smile. “There’s no need to get unhealthy food when a great dinner is made for you.”

Nodding, he took the container. “You’re right.” He cleared his throat. “Thank you.”

She’d been there a few days and she’d rarely seen him since the first morning. He stopped coming to breakfast after work. She was positive he was avoiding her, but why that was she wasn’t sure. Every cell in her body told her that he was just as attracted to her as she was to him. He only looked at her when he thought she didn’t know he was staring, like the morning she was eating her favorite cookies. Knowing that he was watching her made her savor the treat even more.

Those feelings for Quentin were the reason that she’d made the decision to come home. She was tired of fighting her emotions. Perry’s death had showed her that life was too short. Quentin had secrets, some of them she knew, but she wanted to uncover them all as she revealed some of her own.

“No problem. Cooking is *one* of my enjoyments in life.” She stared deep into his light grey eyes, the color of fog and just as mysterious.

“I am comfortable and ready to eat now, Sissy.”

Kareena’s cheerful voice entered the room and invaded her time with Quentin. Nubia almost groaned in frustration. Between Quentin’s avoidance and Kareena’s invasion she would never be able to progress in her plans for Quentin.

“I didn’t know you were still here, Quen.”

“I’m on my way out.”

“So, will you be home early now, since you’re going in earlier?” she asked, hoping he could hear the hopeful note in her voice.

“No, I’m pulling a double shift.” Grabbing the door knob he held up the dinner. “Thanks again for the food.” Then he was gone.

Turning, she headed back to the kitchen and her sister.

“How was the job hunting, today?” Kareena grabbed plates and silverware and placed them on the counter.

“It was okay. I got a few possibilities dangling out there. I hope to hear from one of them soon. It’s weird applying for them on line. As much as I hated filling out long applications at HR offices, I do miss them. Until something breaks, I have a pretty good savings in the bank and I’ll be able to pull my weight at least for a little while.”

“I don’t care about that. I don’t need help. You can stay with me as long as you need.” Smiling, Kareena helped put food on the plates then they both headed to the dining room.

“So, how was your day?” Nubia asked.

“Not too bad. But, I will have to leave you for a few days.”

“Why?” Nubia began eating.

“There’s a conference on a new software program we will be using at the hospital. The heads of each department are supposed to go. My boss found out her daughter is going to be induced so she can’t go.”

“How long will you be gone?” Nubia wanted to cheer. She loved her sister and most times enjoyed spending time with her, but what she wanted most of all was some alone time with Quentin without Kareena being around.

Kareena finished chewing then said, “About five days. I leave in the morning to head out to Minnesota.”

“Well, at least you’re going to a place with great shopping.” Nubia commented.

“I will leave you my car so you’ll be able to get around.”

“Great.” She had five days alone with Quentin. Five days to show him how much she cared about him. To show him that she wanted to be a part of his secret world. Five days to chisel down that wall he kept around himself.

~YH~

Quentin heard the car pull up outside. Nubia would be in the house soon. Leaving the kitchen with his soda and bowl of popcorn, he sat down on the couch. He’d already adjusted his receiver and insured all the levels for his surround sound were selected for optimal performance for the movie.

He was off for the next three days and he needed to keep away from Nubia, especially with Kareena out of the house. No one was around to play interference. No one to distract his feelings from what and who they wanted.

Tonight was a movie, the next two he’d be at the club. If nothing else worked he always found serenity in the nefarious atmosphere.

“You’re home and awake.” Nubia’s eyes lit up when she spotted him on the couch.

“I have a few days off.” His eyes couldn’t help assessing her in body hugging jeans and the sweater clinging to her breasts.

Closing the door and placing her purse on the small table by the door, she said, “If I would’ve known you were here, I would’ve stopped helping my mother with the room redecorating. I would’ve made dinner.” She crossed to him, with purposeful strides.

“No biggie. I fend for myself pretty good.” Shifting his gaze away from her long legs, he pressed play for the movie to begin. “Now, I’m about to watch a movie.” He tossed a couple of pieces of popcorn in his mouth.

“Great. I’m going to change in to more comfy attire and I’ll be back.” Moving toward the hall she asked, “What’s the movie?”

This was the moment he waited for that would give him some space in his own house. At least for tonight he wouldn’t have to hide himself in his room. “*Paranormal Activity.*”

He didn’t miss the expansion of her lids. Her eyes were wide with trepidation. Nubia had always hated scary movies.

“I heard that’s, uhm--”

“Really good? I know. I’ve wanted to see it for a while and borrowed it from a buddy.”

Swallowing she licked her lips, before she spoke. “Okay.” She cleared her throat. “Just give me a second.”

With a show of concern, he said, “I know you don’t like scary movies. So, you don’t have to watch it.”

Tossing her hair over her shoulder, with a show of bravado, she said, “When I was smaller they bothered me,” she allowed a fake giggle to pass her lips, “but I know that stuff isn’t real now.”

What? “Are you sure?”

A broad smile curved her lips. “Absolutely. Be right back.” She rushed out of the room before he could stop her.

Damn, had he been wrong? He didn't believe so, he could see the nervousness in her gestures, Nubia still didn't like them but she was attempting to be brave. A part of him couldn't help admiring that show of strength. It made him think about other ways she could exhibit it.

True to her word. Nubia was back, dressed in shorts and a T-shirt and her hair pulled up in a ponytail. She looked sixteen. Her look made him sigh with relief. She was cute but not sexy, which made it easy for him to put his feelings aside and enjoy the movie.

~YH~

Nubia lay on the pull out couch staring at the ceiling. She was kicking herself for her stupidity of watching the movie. It had freaked her out severely. The only thing that didn't cause her to go running out of the room in terror was her pride. Her pride be damn, she should have just let Quentin have his space instead of forcing herself on him. Now she couldn't sleep. Every time she closed her eyes she thought she heard strange noises. Images from the movie continued to plague her. After the movie, she had gone to take a shower, then head to bed, trying to convince herself the whole time it was only a movie.

But, her mind wasn't convinced. The last two hours she'd been lying awake had proven that.

Taking several calming breaths, she attempted to close her eyes again and think of happy thoughts. She focused on the beach, conjuring up ocean waves and squawking seagulls. She began to feel herself calm, when something tapped against the window. In a flash she was out of the bed and headed down the dark hall to Quentin's room.

Standing on the other side of the door she tapped on it. There was no answer. She tapped again and was greeted by silence.

Unwilling to go back to her room to the scary thoughts and sounds, she slowly turned the knob and entered the room. Waiting a moment until her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she found him sleep on his back in his bed.

The desire to kick him pulsed within. How could he be sleep after that movie and peaceful at that. He didn't look as if he were battling evil images.

"Quentin." She called out softly as she approached the bed, not wanted to startle him. The man was a cop after all, the last thing she needed was him pulling a gun on her or capturing her in a chokehold. "Quentin." Fingering the hem of her oversized nightshirt, she stood there anxious.

Through the dim light coming in his window from his outside lamps, she saw him shift around in the bed, then turn his head and look at her with sleep hazed eyes. "Nubia? What are you doing in here?"

"I'm scared. Can I sleep with you?"

Rubbing his hand briskly over his face and hair, he stared at her. "Nubia, I don't think it's a good idea."

Stroking her arms, feeling a cold chill and fear that he was going to send her away, she pleaded, "Please, Quentin. I will never sleep again if I have to go back to my room."

His sigh was heavy and loud. "Fine." Grabbing two big pillows from the floor, he placed them in the middle of the bed. "You take that side and I'll stay over here."

At this point she didn't care if he gave her the floor as long as she was by him. Earlier today she never would have dreamed she'd be in bed with Quentin, especially not if she knew she'd be freaked out instead of turned on. Slipping under the blanket, she rested her head on the pillow and faced away from him.

She smiled as sleep finally claimed her as she heard Quentin beat the pillows once again, as if he were attempting to nail them down between them.

~YH~

Flowers and cherries. It was a strange but titillating scent to awaken to. Quentin wasn't sure if he was dreaming or what, but the scent seemed to envelop him. It was everywhere making his mind conjure up images of a warm willing woman with supple curves. His cock leaped to attention as he

fantasized about that woman being in his bed, in his arms where he could touch her. He didn't want to awaken from the dream, but something was pulling at the edges of his mind.

When he felt something move against him, he opened his eyes. In the pre-dawn light he noticed the long brown and gold strands of hair covering the pillow before him. He was also aware of a warm body snuggled deeper under the covers pressing a lush ass back against him. Nubia. Pillows gone.

"Wake up, Nubia," he whispered. "I need you to get out of my bed." If he didn't get her out of his bed soon he wouldn't be responsible for whatever came next.

"I can't." She wiggled her hips against him.

"Why?" Was she playing some game? It was almost morning, she still couldn't be scared.

"Because you're holding me." Taking an assessment of his body and all its parts, he realized she was correct. Both of his arms were curled around her. One against her stomach, the other cupping her breast and his top leg was thrown over both of hers imprisoning her body. He didn't give but a second thought to the fact that his shaft was cushioned against her lower back.

Slowly he released her.

He was caught off guard when Nubia turned her body toward him. In the soft light, he couldn't help but be pulled in by her sexy hazel eyes. It was the way she looked at him with sincere trust. A man could get addicted to those kinds of looks. They made him envision her on her knees before him, or over a bench. The desire to see her restrained and at his will called to his primitive and dominate nature.

"Nubia, I warned you to get out." He shook, not with fear, but restricted passion.

"But, I'm where I want to be, Quentin." Her hands slid up his chest and around his neck until they were buried in the hair at the nape of his neck. "I want you." She pressed her body against his. The scent of cherries, flowers and aroused woman arrested his mind and summoned his body.

He refused to deny either of them.

Capturing her mouth in a fierce kiss he rolled forward and pinned her beneath his length. Taking control of the moment, he gave himself permission to show her, his strength, his passion.

As his tongue entered her mouth, he recalled the first and last time he'd kissed her. In the woods hours after midnight. He'd escorted her to the bathroom, on the way back she had tripped and he'd caught her. The kiss happened without either of them knowing who initiated it, but when it ended doubts and guilt had flooded his mind. He'd escorted her back to the tent she shared with her sister and stayed far away from her.

Now as their tongues circled and stroked each other, he regretted every day that he missed out on kissing her. Right now, he didn't care who still owned her heart. He didn't care about wrong or right. He only thought about one thing, getting inside of Nubia. Feeling her wet pussy flex around him and suck him deeper inside of her.

Leaving her mouth, he licked her chin as he lowered himself to her breast as he fisted her shirt, lifting it above her breasts. He paused for a second to take in the beauty of her skin, the beguiling complexion of her cocoa butter breasts with their cinnamon painted areoles. Leaning down he stroked one with his tongue feeling it bead up as he listened to her moan.

He circled the stiff peak and felt her body come alive underneath him as she wiggled her hips against his own. Palming her ass as he suckled her nipple and gyrated his hard length against her sex.

"Please, Quentin," she whimpered, pulling his shirt up and running her hands over his chest.

Hearing her call out to him, turned his already flaming blood into hot lava. Releasing her nipple, he took hold of the material of her panties and shoved them down her legs and tossed them over his shoulder not caring where they went. His own underwear went next, then his shirt. Stroking the length of her smooth legs, he cupped her sex and ensured himself that she was ready for him.

Wet and pouty, the bare lips of her sex welcomed his fingers. Caressing her, he brushed her distended clit and felt her arch into his hand. He continued to fondle her sex, slipping his fingers into her heat. Locating the small bead inside her walls, he stroked it until she was shaking underneath him. Her climax struck and forced her body into a quivering mass.

Her bliss was lovely. He watched her until her tremors came more infrequently and her breathing slowed.

“Tell me you want me, Nubia,” he demanded, levering himself above her. His gaze roamed her face and held her eyes.

“I want you.” She placed her hands on the side of his face and allowing him to see the truth of her words.

Placing his cock at the apex of her thighs, he commanded her, “Say my name.” He wanted to guarantee she knew who was fucking her. Not the ghost of a dead man, but a man that was alive with blood pumping in his veins.

“Quen-tin,” she cried out as he entered her in one smooth thrust.

Feeling her tight heat almost brought him to an end. Pressing his forehead to hers, he inhaled a sharp breath, taking control of his body. He’d be damn if he finally got inside Nubia and came soon after.

Fisting her hair, he began kissing her, waiting for her body to relax around him. She wasn’t a virgin, but her body proved that she hadn’t had a lover in a long time.

Rotating her hips, she let him know she was eager for more. Ending the kiss, he whispered along her lips, “You may want to hold on, baby, this isn’t going to be a short ride.”

She clutched his shoulders, as he hooked one of her legs over his arm until it rested on his shoulder. Pulling out, he once again buried himself to the hilt inside of her. She moaned and screamed, as she dug her nails into his shoulder.

The small amount of pain egged him on. They moved together in perfect symphony as their rhythm blended and matched as one.

Quentin couldn’t believe how perfect and right, Nubia felt in his arms. His bed. His home. Blocking out the temptation to keep her there always, he pressed his face into the curve of her neck and focused on the here and now.

Feeling the fingers of desire curl around his balls and draw them tight against the base of his shaft, he knew his end was near. He continued to thrust into her, each time pressing in deeper than the last.

He rejoiced in her love chants as she begged for more and told him how good he felt inside of her. Raising her other leg, he lifted himself high on his knees for deep penetration. Lowering his hand he found her clit with his thumb and circled it slowly as he pumped into her. He developed a pattern: circle, thrust, circle, thrust.

A steady pace continued until, Nubia came calling out his name. Her cunt trembled and pulled along his length as he spread her thighs wide and fucked her hard, an attempt to imprint her essence into his bed for ever night she wouldn’t be there.

When he finally came, slamming his palm into the headboard he emptied himself into her, praying he hadn’t lost his heart in the process.

Collapsing onto her, he lowered her legs back to the bed and massaged her thighs. He enjoyed the light glide of her hands along his back. All too soon, the cool air in the room alerted his mind and body to the reality of the moment.

His semi-hard dick was buried inside Nubia. Kareena’s kid sister Nubia. Perry’s lover Nubia. The woman who now smelled like cherries, flowers and him. *Fuck.*

Pulling out of her, he rolled away and sat up on the side of the bed. Keeping his back to her, he lowered his head as the cape of shame he’d worn for too many years cloaked him.

He started at Nubia’s light touch along his spine. Moving away from her, he headed toward the bathroom hoping that she would be gone when he returned.

In the bathroom he splashed water on his face, refusing to look at himself in the mirror. This was Nubia, not a girl he’d picked up at the club, a willing woman he could slake his lust on. Kareena had been gone only two nights and already he’d spread her sister’s thighs and imprinted himself there.

Shit. What was wrong with all the control he professed to have. Gone out the window. Pulling his robe off the hook by the shower, he grabbed a washcloth out of the closet and ran warm water on it. He stepped into the room with it in hopes Nubia was already gone.

That was not the case. Belting his robe closed, he stared across the room at her. Beauty in repose. Appearing as content as a stuffed cat, she lay on her side, her body discreetly covered in the oversized shirt she still wore; however her smile was all too revealing.

“Nubia, this was a mistake. I’m sorry for allowing lust to rule my mind.”

Shock caused her brow to pucker, as she sat up in bed, her smile dropping from her lips. “No. It was both of us. I wanted this as much as you did, Quentin.” Moving to the side of the bed she rose and took a tentative step toward him.

“It shouldn’t have happened. I’m not going to make excuses.”

“The only excuse is that we care for each other and this,” she gestured to the bed, “Proves it.”

“That proves nothing.” His jaw flexed as he glanced at the bed and its twisted sheets. Guilty thoughts echoed in his head. “You don’t know me. I’m not the man for you.”

He watched as she lowered herself to the floor and balanced on spread knees. Lowering her head she pulled her hands behind her back.

“If not you then who, Quentin?”

His heart stopped beating as he stared at her in a proper submissive pose. Where had she learned that? Who told her of his secrets? Everything around him dimmed except her. His spine tingled and his shoulders bunched with the desire to instruct her, guide her and bend her to his will and desires.

Shaking his head, he filled his lungs with air and cleared his mind. “Get up,” he barked.

There was a sharp lift of her head. “But, Quent--”

“Now!” He took a step toward her and froze, if he closed the gap he would touch her. If he touched her, he would have her again--in an utterly primal way. “Nubia, leave my room. This should have never happened. It will never happen again.”

Rising, her green eyes were dark and edged with fire making her appear more like the impetuous Nubia. That was a Nubia he could handle. One he could distance his self from.

“You’re going to stand there and tell me this shouldn’t have happened, even now while your cum is running down my thighs.”

Shit. What an idiot. He had a nightstand drawer full of condoms and hadn’t for a moment thought about retrieving one. That’s all he needed to make matters worse was to get Nubia pregnant. “I’m sorry, I should hav--”

“Don’t you dare apologize to me!” she yelled. She stepped forward.

He stepped back. Not out of fear of her anger, but apprehension that she would touch him. A man only had so much willpower.

“Nubia, listen to me.” He stared her down.

“Not if you’re going to pretend that we don’t matter to each other. That you haven’t wanted me since we went camping my sophomore year in the Appalachian Mountains.” Her voice softened. “That kiss happened because there is something strong that pulls us together. We made love for the same reason.”

If he wanted to survive the next couple of weeks around her, he had to strike deep. “That wasn’t love, Nubia, it was fucking. Pure animal lust between two adults.”

She laughed. “You’re wrong and one way or another I’m going to show you.” Not allowing him to deny her words she turned and stormed out not even bothering to collect her panties from the floor but leaving them as a reminder of their passion.

Angry at himself, he swiped her underwear and his clothes off the floor and chucked them and the wash cloth into the hamper across the room. Sitting down on the edge of his bed, he buried his face in his hands.

Fuck.

### *Three*

It was mid-afternoon when Quentin entered the house from the gym.

"Can we talk?" Nubia stood in the foyer and noticed the hesitation he showed when he noticed her there. The expression on his face was tense, he even glanced over his shoulder before closing the front door, as if he would've preferred to turn around and go back out than to face her.

"There's nothing to discuss." Closing the door, he attempted to bypass her on his way to the kitchen. He smelled of sporty male, the sweat glistening on his skin from his workout made her temperature rise.

She took a step with him and noted his raised eyebrow. She lifted her's along with him. "We need to talk. You can't keep avoiding me." He had done just that since that morning after they'd ended up having sex. It was one of the most head spinning and heart stopping moments of her life. And he didn't want to talk about it.

"Watch me." Quentin grabbed her by the waist, picked her up and moved her to the side strolling passed her with purposeful steps to the kitchen.

Grudgingly, she had no other choice but to follow.

In the kitchen, Quentin grabbed a bottle of water out of the fridge and downed it. He then pulled a second bottle out.

"Quentin, yesterday was not just a fluke that happened. We didn't fall into bed on accident. There is something between us."

Unscrewing the bottle top, he chucked the plastic top into the trash can. "Wrong. You." He jabbed his finger in her direction. "Ended up in my bed, because you." He pointed that accusing finger at her again and continued, "Tried to play big girl and watch a movie that freaked you out."

Placing her fists on her hips she stepped toward him, purposely invading his space and arching her back so her breasts thrust upward toward his face. "I think you've noticed, Quentin, I've been a big girl for a while now. At least since my sophomore year."

Quentin eyes dropped to view the display of her breasts underneath the clinging fabric of her shirt. She didn't miss the smothered growl as he tipped back the water.

He drained half of that bottle, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and added, "You should have just gone to bed from the beginning and none of this would have happened." He brushed passed her, walking out the kitchen.

"You can't keep pushing your feelings aside and hope they go away." Rushing to him, she attempted to get him to understand. Reaching out she touched his arm, saying, "They just grow strong--"

"Don't touch me." Snatching his arm away from her, he stood before her with a look of apprehension in his gaze as if her very touch wasn't safe. The tension between them was palpable.

She watched the heavy rise and fall of his chest, the tension in his jaw and the spreading of his eyes and in those three words she knew he wasn't fighting her attraction to him, but his own towards her. The thing that pulled at her heart strings was the fact that no matter how he felt there was some reason he refused to allow her in.

Her mind raced with ways she could break into the fortress of his heart.

The ringing of his cell phone interrupted any further conversation. With relief etched in his features, he pulled it out of the pocket of his sweats and answered it. He greeted the person on the other line, allowed his gaze to roam the length of her body slowly, shaking his head, he mouthed, 'Let it go.' Then turned and walked toward the back of the house.

"Yeah, Simian, I'll be at Force tonight." His voice echoed down the hall, as he spoke confirming he'd be at a place called Force that night. He continued to talk as he shut his room door and placed another barrier between them.

*Oh, hell, no.* She screamed in her head. Quentin didn't know, but *this* was the very reason she'd moved home. *This* was what she'd been fighting against. She refused to not put all her efforts into



seeing if *this* was meant to be. She'd give him his space for now, but his day of reckoning was fast approaching.

~YH~

Quentin was sitting at the bar drinking a heavily iced *Cheerwine* with rum and immersed in the peace of his surroundings. Club Force was in full swing on a Wednesday night, when most vanilla clubs were closed or practically empty. This was a world that never slept and he loved it. As a cop, he worked a scheduled that constantly changed every few weeks. He appreciated the fact that this part of his *lifestyle* accommodated his schedule, his needs. It was an old house that had been converted to a club years ago. Its distance allowed much needed privacy from the city and normal club goers. Force wasn't a place you happened in on. Everyone who came here was looking for the pleasure that could be found inside. Most nights he loved being at home, as much as he enjoyed his favorite BDSM club. When Perry had died, this place had helped him regain control of his life, emotions, allowing him an appropriate outlet to exorcise his demons. However, since Nubia arrived, serenity could no longer be found at home, so he retreated to his second home. Especially after he'd fucked up yesterday morning and made love to her.

He tried to brush away thoughts of how good it had felt to be inside of her. His ears still rang with the sweet sound of her sigh as she contracted around him. It had been heaven that put him in his very own hell. That one taste had compounded all his feelings and emotions over the last five years, making him desire her even more. Not just sexually either. Intimately.

Glancing at the cornucopia of Doms and subs in the room, it made him dream of what it would be like to have her in his world. By his side. Wearing his collar. He washed those thoughts away with the rest of his drink. This wasn't for such an innocent as Nubia. He could never bring her into the lifestyle. If he allowed her to see him without restraints, in his element, it could traumatize her, ruin her and their future platonic relationship-already tarnished. No, he couldn't do that. Now that she was back, he confessed how he wanted her to have some part in his life, even if small. He'd missed her laughter, smiles and even her reckless spirit while she had been in Seattle. He would leave her to her white picket fence fantasies.

"Que." Simian a tall, wide shouldered black man who used to be an NFL safety for the Charlotte Panthers moved through the crowd wearing a navy blue pair of Vaqueros and a loose fitting white shirt, pulling Anya behind him.

Stepping away from the bar, he moved to his friend and embraced him with a firm pat on the back. "It's good to see you man."

They moved apart.

"Me. You mean you. Is there so much crime in the city that you can't get away? It's been almost a month since I've seen you last. I don't think you've ever been away that long."

Simian's sub stood with her head lowered and silent beside him. She was a beautiful Hispanic woman, with short brown hair she kept cut in a blunt fashion below her ears. The couple was married with four children, who he was the godfather of, they had been in the lifestyle for eight years together and were still very active and at the club twice a week or different events. Anya wore a light blue Bolero jacket with an attached ruffled collar with long sleeves and matching panties. Her bare breasts with cherry-red painted nipples were proudly displayed like so many other submissive in the room. Just like other subs she wore no shoes. The medium length chain trailed from her collar to his friend's hand, keeping Anya close by his side.

On other occasions he spent with his friends, he would have hugged and greeted Anya with a kiss on her cheek. But, on the couples play nights, she was not allowed to speak or be spoken to except by Simian. Respecting that he didn't acknowledge her.

"We've had some holes in the shifts due to illnesses and child births so I pulled extra time."

"Well, you picked the perfect evening to be here. Exhibition night is always fun."

They both took a moment to scan the room, easily picking out all the available subs who would possibly be involved in the demonstration. Women and men of various shapes and sizes. Some

frequent club attendees and others who were new faces. The music thumped around the room and just as many people filled up the dance floor as were around the balcony viewing the upstairs rooms. The single exhibition area downstairs was roped off displaying an empty oak and leather St. Andrew's cross, beside it hung a rack with several floggers, a cane and a whip.

"Maybe, Dillion will allow you to participate. You look as if you could use the exercise." Simian's brown eyes assessed him.

Quentin wondered if his friend could read the guilt he was harboring about Nubia.

"Not tonight. I'm alright just watching and being here. Maybe later on I'll take one of the subs to a private room for a session."

"Well, if you do. Consider the beauty on the back couch that can't seem to keep her eyes off you."

Both of his eyebrows lifted in question to Simian.

Simian nodded passed his shoulder. Turning Quentin scanned the area that was a little dimmer than the rest of the club. A calm place that a Dom could soothe a submissive that had been played with in a vigorous fashion.

He could see a woman there, but the details of her face were held in mystery until she rose and began walking toward him. The hair at his nape stood up on ends and the muscles in his jaw flex repeatedly as she drew nearer to them. Her long ebony hair was banded below her right ear and hung over one shoulder and along the side of her breast ending at her waist. She wore a high-waist champagne colored baby-doll dress that belled out and stopped at mid-thigh. The bodice of the latex dress was so snug across her breasts they practically spilled over the top edge scarcely leaving her cinnamon tipped nipples covered. Her neck was bare as if begging to be collared. Her bare feet completed the look. A vision of sinful submissive.

This was not happening. Before him had to be a mirage, a hallucination brought on by his body's desire. There was no way this woman had entered the very depth and heart of his world.

"Hello, Master Que." Standing before him, she spoke and turned the illusion into reality.

He couldn't allow himself to think about the warmth that slid down his spine as he heard the respect of his name on her lips. "What are you doing here, Nubia?" he pushed out the question through gritted teeth.

"Anya and I can see you all have something important to discuss. We'll leave you to handle your business, Que." Simian said.

Quentin gave a stiff nodded acknowledging the other Dom's words.

"I'm here for the same reason that you're here." Her voice was low and husky, the same tempo and pitch she held when she called his name in the heat of passion. "Master Que."

Grabbing hold of her arm, he stirred her toward the door. "I didn't give you permission to speak my name. Hell, Nubia you shouldn't be here." He told himself not to think about the soft heat of her flesh in his hand.

"I don't want to disappoint you, Master Q-ue", she verbal stumbled over his name. "But since you wouldn't remain at home for us to talk then I figure--"

"You'd invade my entire life." He kept his voice low for only her ears, as he pulled her unwilling body beside him, heading toward the front. He intended to tell Jasper to keep her out for her safety, as well as his own sanity. "Go home, Nubia."

"Quentin." She dug her feet into the ground jerking them to a momentary halt. "I have every right to be here. It is a free country. Besides I paid my dues already."

"I'll reimburse you." He started moving again.

Pulling against his hand she struggled in an attempt to break his hold.

Not wanting to draw attention to them and have one of the club's patrol men come and investigate, he quickly moved to a side alcove. "Look, Nubia. I don't want you here. For the last time there is never going to be anything between us. So, just let it go and move on." Glancing away from the pain in her eyes and down at her outfit, he bit off, "And stop pretending to be something you don't know anything about."

A small laugh bubbled out of her mouth. "Sometimes you can be so pig-headed, you can't see the truth before your very eyes."

"I know what is exactly before me. A spoiled child who thinks that my life is a game." He stepped back and spread his arms wide wanting her to see him truly in his element, the reality of his life.

"How can I prove to you I'm not play--"

"Save it." He sliced his arms through the air and stomped off.

~YH~

"Dom's and subs, gather around." The DJ, Master Rough, spoke into his microphone letting all who desired to watch the exhibition know that it was about to start.

The music lowered some, but not completely, so that people could still dance.

Quentin noticed the crowd that was gathering around the demonstration area and moved slowly in that direction with a few of his friends. His mind was fully on the show as he drank his soda. He regretted his decision not to take his allotted second alcoholic beverage of the night. Maybe then he'd be able to wipe Nubia's appearance from his mind.

"I guess your vanilla friend is not so vanilla. Or she's one bold woman."

Simian's words jarred the edges of his conscious. Looking past Master Dillion who was speaking to the throng on the outside of the rope about the purpose, position and benefits of the St. Andrew's cross, Quentin stared at the woman already fastened to it.

Nubia. There was no mistaking her. Even with the skirt of her dress tucked high under the back of the bodice revealing her bare ass and rose tattoo to the on-lookers.

Shit. That woman must be out of her damn mind. This was not a way to get back at him, if this was a prank, the joke would be on her.

Even in his shocked state, Quentin understood he had few options. Dillon would have had Nubia sign a waiver for the demonstration as well as discussed with her everything that would have been involved. Dillon was not only the owner of Force, but he had been in the lifestyle for over twenty-six years and was used to tempering new subs.

As he stared at Nubia restrained by wrists and ankles to the cross, he considered his decisions. His two choices were either allow Dillon to lay the instrument of submission against her beautiful skin or step in. He knew there was no way he could allow someone else access to her supple flesh. If Nubia wanted to play sub then he'd master her.

Passing his glass to a serving slave, he shouldered his way through the crowd. When he reached the rope he called Dillon to the side and spoke to him privately.

"Good to see you, Que, what's up?" Dillon stared at him with concern.

Quentin spotted Nubia out of the corner of his eye staring at them. There was a worried look in her gaze. He was sure she believed he was about to reveal her secret and possibly have her tossed out on her fake ass. Looking at the owner, who was not only a friend of many years, but someone he respected, he said, "She's mine. I told her to go home and evidently she decided to disobey me and volunteer for your showing. I'd appreciate it if you allow me to yield the flogger as you instructed the audience."

A wise Dom, Dillon never allowed his gaze to waiver from Que as pondered his decision, then said, "You normally don't keep a sub, Que." Glancing back at Nubia, Dillon continued, "Maybe you should consider not letting this one go."

Standing silent, Quentin didn't respond. Dillon didn't understand the history and issues between him and Nubia. She could never truly be his. Except at this moment.

"Permission granted." Unhooking the rope Dillon allowed him to enter then latched the rope back in place.

When Quentin passed the other man, he asked, "What are you instructing?"

"Figure eight," Dillon gave him a lopsided smile.

Quentin's hands began to itch and his spine tingled with excitement. Dillon knew this was one of his specialties. Nubia didn't know what she was in for. But if she wanted in, he was going to take her

all the way in; which meant he wasn't going to treat her any different than he would any other newbie who had volunteered--it was only fair. He would take her through her paces, learn her and try to push her to an unimaginable height without breaking her.

Crossing to the wall, he chose a double elk long tailed flogger. One that would afford him the thud that he liked to feel in his hand while producing the right amount of sting to a subs skin, perfect for technique that called for a certain flair.

Setting the flogger aside, he finally moved to Nubia who stood wide-legged making and X restrained to the cross, following him with her eyes. She remained silent, but the nervousness in her hazel eyes was evident. He wasn't sure if her emotions were due to the fact of what she had gotten herself into or the fact he was going to administer the session. Pushing the desire to question her away from his mind as a Dom he had to concentrate on what was needed for the sub.

"Bullet is your safe word. Repeat it sub."

She licked her lips then swallowed, in a clear voice, she said, "Bullet."

"Again."

"Bullet," she spoke without pause that time.

Unable to keep himself from saying, "There's no dishonor in using it." He allowed his gaze to lock with her own, communicating to her that he trusted her to not allow herself to be hurt just to prove a point to either of them. That was one of the worst things a sub could do. An action such as that could bring embarrassment to both Dom and sub.

"Yes, Master Que."

Nodding, he stepped back, going to the tall table set up beside it, he grabbed the small rippled plug.

He could feel Nubia's gaze, eyeing her for a reaction of horror, he applied lube. Some women freaked out at the thought of anal play. There was no fear there, just trust and it shook him to the core.

Approaching her, he blocked everyone but Nubia out. His mind vaguely registered the sound of the crowd's excited murmur or Dillon's baritone voice as he explained the purpose of using such toys and how it heightened the session for the sub. Touching her at the top of her spine, he allowed his hand to lightly stroke her, drifting down her back until he cupped her ass, caressing it with his thumb as he gently inserted the anal device. "Relax. Don't fight it," he whispered repeatedly to her as he pressed the toy in and out, easing the way.

He heard the small moan leave her lips as he felt some of the tension easy out of her body. He patted her ass when it was firmly in place.

Going to the flogger, he positioned himself and felt the weight of the flogger in his hand, allowing it to become an extension of him. He mentally calmed and checked himself, emptying his mind of all emotions he zeroed he focus on the sub. His sub for the moment.

"Are you ready, Master Que?" Dillon asked.

"Yes." He relaxed his shoulders.

"Begin."

He began with a few basic flogging strokes to warm up both of Nubia's beautiful ass cheeks, the area he would be working. Her muscles flexed with each stroke, however she didn't show the normal jumpiness, shying away or shock at the sting that is customary for a newbie. A thought tickled in the back of his mind that it was possible Nubia had experience with the flogger. *Probably a slap and tickle session with a boyfriend.*

Pausing, he placed the back of his hand along her backside, feeling the warmth emitting from her skin, signaling she was ready to begin.

Unlike most Doms, who started with forehand swing, he started with the backhand arching up he brought it back across the front of his body giving her the first sting. He took note of the flinching of her body at the contact followed by the quick intake of breath as he brought his arm around in a fluid stroke and ended the forehand catching her in the same spot--completing the figure eight.

He continued.

After repeated contact with her flesh her cocoa butter skin tone held a nice red hue on one cheek as he began on the sister orb. Nubia's hands were fisted, and she was up on her toes with each new contact, but he watched as her spine curled settling into each sting.

Quentin is impressed with Nubia during the flogging session. When he notices how her body begins to tremble and she bows out from her core availing her ass to him, a signal that an orgasm is close. He stops the figure eights and gives her light basic taps until she appears calm once more and her body rises and falls in deep breaths. Then he starts the figure eights again.

He refused to allow her to orgasm, keeping her body on edge, it is a pleasure that he decided he wants all to himself. Nubia's head is bowed and her fists are balled tight as she pulled against the binding. When the trembling happens again, starting at her legs and moving up until her entire body is shaking he ends the session. Dropping the flogger, he grabbed the rabbit fur blanket on the hook above the table of toys and then moved to unfasten her from the cross. Her legs gave out and he caught her in his arms, scooping her up, he cradled her lithe frame to his body.

One of the club patrol men, unlinked the rope assisting him in his exit. He requested the man lead him to an available back room. Following the CP he could hear the applause of the viewing crowd and knows it is not only in awe of his form, but for Nubia's endurance, willingness and trust in the session. His heart swelled with pride as the desire to continue their time in the club in a more private fashion mastered him.

## ***Four***

Nubia curled her body against Quentin's muscled bare chest and rested her head on his shoulder loving the scent of his skin. Her backside was on fire, but her body had never felt more alive and sensitive. The anal plug that was still lodged between her cheeks had caused each bite of the flogger to reverberate from her ass up along her spine, exploding in every nerve ending throughout her body. Regardless of what he might assume she wasn't new to this lifestyle. She was still a novice in a lot of ways, but she'd felt the sting of the flogger before and had other experiences. All of them had led and prepared her for this night, this moment with Quentin.

She enjoyed hearing him whisper words of admiration at how well she performed as they followed one of the men with the fluorescent green arm bands up two flights of stairs and down a corridor to a back room. Her eyes began to burn and she fought against the tears that wanted to spill out. This was not the time for crying, not even in joy, but for pleasure.

"I'll make sure you are not disturbed." The other man said as he held the door open to a bedroom.

"Thank you, Zen." Quentin replied.

The door was closed sealing them inside.

"What now, Quentin."

"Oh, no, you started this honey and were going to finish this the same way." Crossing the room, Quentin placed her on the bed. "Master Que is the only thing you can call me, here."

Unlike her nervousness she'd felt downstairs when he had stepped into the session, it intensified tenfold. For a moment, Quentin or Master Que seemed more dominant in the room than with a flogger in his hand.

Staring up at him, from her prone position, she licked her lips. "Master Q--"

He frowned. "Sub, tonight you can only speak when given permission by me. Understood?"

"Yes, Master Que." The trembling in her body started to increase again, but not from the sting of a discipline instrument, but from the strength and power around the man over her.

"Bullet is still your safe word." A slow smile bowed his lips upward as he lifted her hands above her head. "The one good thing about bedding a cop is that we come with our own hand cuffs." Reaching around his back, he pulled out a set of silver cuffs, that had been dangling all night from his belt loop and efficiently snapped them around her wrist.

He connected them to latch at the end of a thick leather strap in the center of the head board. She had no doubt that this room was fully equipped with every BDSM necessity. With Master Que's sharp mind, she was sure that the restraint was only the beginning of things to come.

Testing the lead, he stared down at her as he ran a single finger along her arms from wrist to shoulder.

"Normally, I would use the wider padded cuffs, but I've imagining you in my silver bracelets for too long." The passion in his metal grey eyes shocked her.

She was sure Quentin, who normal kept his emotions closed like a bank vault, didn't intend to reveal the fact he had thoughts of her that were far from platonic.

Her heart swelled.

Leaning down, he kissed her. Just like an artist paints a canvas Master Que mastered her with the same fervor and precision. When the kiss ended she wasn't the only one who was breathless.

Getting up, he went to a cabinet and pulled out a bundle of binding. Returning to the bed, he placed her thighs in cuffs and connected them to straps hooked to bedposts at the head of the bed.

"You are a vision of erotic beauty, Nubia." He gazed between her spread thighs at her sex. Pulling down her bodice until her breasts popped out, he arranged it so the snug latex kept them high and available to him.

She felt exposed but not ashamed. It was thrilling to know he was pleased by her sight. Allowing her eyes to stroll along his body, she could see the evidence of his excitement in the print of his hard cock behind his pants.

“You see how much you turned me on tonight,” he said, seeing the focus of her attention.

Kneeling on the bed, he moved closer to her as he unlaced his rocker style black pants and pushed them down his hips, brazenly revealing his sex to her. His long thick shaft made her sex clench at its sight. She could see the small pearl of fluid peeping out of the slit at the crown.

“Taste me,” he commanded.

Anxious to feel the warm steely length of him in her mouth, she turned her head and met him as he guided himself to her. Licking the droplet first, she proceeded to swirl around the plump head several times before taking him deep inside. Due to her restraints she was limited in her movement, causing her to whimper in frustration.

Picking up on her cue, he started to thrust into her mouth as she suckled him. He called out encouragements to her and told her how much he enjoyed fucking her mouth.

His crude crass words turned her on as much as the act did. She was sure if given the chance she'd be able to come from pleasuring him.

He took the opportunity from her when he lean over and licked her pussy. His tongue traveled along the inside of her labia, then back up to her clit and seized it between his lips. Like a decadent game of twister, they feasted on each other.

When she was finally able to release the orgasm that had been building since their audience laden session, she felt as if she would never stop coming. Her body shook violently, as Master Que continued to lick her sex and removed the plug from her, causing another storm to erupt inside of her. He pulled his dick from her mouth and allowed her to scream her fulfillment.

As her body began to calm, he moved around her body and grabbed a condom from inside the nightstand drawer. After protecting them both, he positioned himself between her thighs. Without preamble, he pushed inside of her, burying himself to the hilt in one smooth thrust. She cried out as her body stretched to accommodate his length and girth. Even though they'd had sex one other time, the feel of his shaft was still new to her.

Grey eyes met hazel ones as they sat like that for a moment, gazing at each other. Communicating emotions that neither one of them could bring themselves to verbalize.

She was the first to move, as she arched her hips up to press him deeper still, flushing her sex against the base of his cock. She wanted all of him, since this was the only thing he was ready to give she didn't want there to be any space between them.

As if a dam broke he gave her what she desired, what her body needed even while denying her heart. With each powerful thrust he took her body closer to the brink of ecstasy once again.

He licked and nipped at her nipples, deliciously torturing her as he played with the tight tips. She didn't know how much more she could take. Her clit felt large and swollen as it brushed repeatedly against the hair at the base of his shaft that titillated her and kept her on edge.

Taking her tender backside into his hands, he lifted her higher, thrusting at a new angle that catapulted her into oblivious pleasure.

~YH~

Coming hard, his body shook as he groaned through his release, yet and still, he couldn't get enough of her. He continued to piston his hips against her, driving himself mad as his sensitive flesh rubbed along her walls. Pulling out from her and without little effort, he efficiently unhooked her thigh cuffs, then turning her over, he propped her up on her knees.

He couldn't help the overwhelming sense of pride at the sight of her rosy plump ass displayed before him, almost as red as her rose tattoo. The rose was leaning over with one petal falling from it.

“When did you get this?” He asked stroking it with his thumb.

She attempted to turn her head, even though she could only go so far because her hands were still fastened to the head board. “At the end of my sophomore year in college.”

He was sure there was a story behind it, but he decided to let the conversation go, not wanting anything to intrude on the evening.

With the lightest touch he caressed the tender flesh of her ass and heard her moan as she curled her spine and pressed herself against his hand. Moving from her cheeks to the wet rosette, he couldn't help but admire the fact she was coated in lubrication, her juices--a passionate concoction. He slipped his finger inside and took pleasure in the feel of her nether walls tightening then relaxing around him as he stimulated the channel.

Removing his hand, he guided his cock to the puckered opening and gingerly pushed inside. Moving past the first muscle, he then backed out. Pushing forward again he worked the nefarious tunnel of pleasure in and out, until he was seated deep, his balls slapping against the back of her thighs.

Aware of her inflamed skin he held her waist firmly as he pumped repeatedly inside of her, pushing them both passed their limits.

Her body began to quiver, as his balls tightened below his shaft, both signs that their ends were drawing near once again. Reaching around to the front side of her body, he grabbed her breast with one hand and pinched her nipple while his other hand located and stroked her slick clit.

Climaxing, her body bucked back as she screamed her release for the third time that night, but this time she called out Master Que. Evidence that she'd yielded to his dominance. Hearing his name coming from her lips in unbridled passion, more than anything else that night, it pushed him into the wall of sensuous pleasure along with her.

~YH~

The next morning, Nubia curled her nude body against the strong dominate man behind her. Last night had been more than she believed she would get from Quentin. After they'd made love he released the last of the restraints, his cuffs. He'd licked the small red marks on her wrist and the ones on her backside and then he'd washed her body gently in the shower while he spoke words of admiration to her. Now, she waited for him to awaken and distance himself from her.

"Good morning, Nubia," he stirred and whispered in her ear.

Rolling over slowly, she accessed him. His eyes appeared undistorted by clouds of doubt. "Good morning, Master Que."

When Quentin's distance didn't happen she convinced herself that maybe he'd finally accepted his feelings for her. The playful atmosphere continued as they showered together. *Could this be it? Our chance at last? Her* heart picked up a cautiously optimistic tempo behind her breast.

Brushing her long tangled strands from her face, he said, "I guess it is time for us to leave Force."

Her heart sank a little. She wasn't ready to let the world into their haven.

"Will Master Dillon be upset that we're still here?"

Giving her a sexy grin, he said, "No. Dillon and I've been friends for years. There are a select few members who have the privilege of using the four rooms on the third floor at their leisure. There's a suite up here also that Dillon lives in just as much as his own home."

Getting up, they dressed. She had felt bad about not straightening the room until he told her that Dillon had a cleaning crew that came in every afternoon to handle disinfecting and organizing the rooms' toys and equipment.

She hated to part with him in the parking lot as they both got into their separate cars. The kiss he bestowed on her curled her toes and made her core melt. It amazed her that her desire for him could be so instant and fierce after the night they'd spent together.

In her car, she started the engine and smiled at him as she saw him waiting for her to drive away first.

When they arrived home Kareena came racing up the hall. "I'm so glad you're here."

Nubia tensed wondering if her sister was about to drill them about where they were so early. Then again she hadn't expected her sister until tomorrow, so it was possible Kareena knew they had been gone all night.

"Kareena, what are you doing home?" Nubia asked, taking in the smile on her sister's face.



“The training went by faster than they expected so we got to leave a day early. Yesterday, I got a message from the contractors, my house is done.” She was now practically doing a dance in the middle of the floor. Kareena was so excited she didn’t even question them about the clothing they wore. “So, pack your bags, Sissy, we are outta here.”

“I thought the people said it wouldn’t be until after next week.”

“He said they’d made a lot of headway and it didn’t take as long as they anticipated. There are still a few minor things on the outside of the house, but nothing that would keep us from moving in.”

Nubia glanced at Quentin whose face now held his usually mask over his emotions. She wished they could step back in time until about an hour ago when she was still curled along side of him. Apparently, walking into the door with Kareena here was an ice cold cup of water in the face of all his mental hang-ups on why they shouldn’t be together.

Kareena stepped to him and hugged him. “Quen, you are truly my best friend. You took in me and my sister. But now you can finally have your house back and your peace.” She laughed.

“Yea, peace,” Quentin said crossing his arms over his chest.

“Oh, Nubia, your cell phone was ringing and I answered it. Perry’s parents want to know if you’d come by for dinner on his birthday next week.”

Nodding, she said, “Sure. Maybe we all could go. They would probably love that.”

“I’m surely up for it,” Kareena responded.

Nubia noticed Quentin’s face. If it had been closed off before, now it was drawn tight as well. She stood there trying to catch his gaze, hoping that he’d express some reason why she shouldn’t leave, especially after last night, but he remained silent.

Stepping away from them he headed toward his room, not bothering to look at them as he said, “Well, let me know if you all need anything. I have to make a call into the office. When you two are ready for me to help pack the car, yell.”

“Will do,” Kareena called back, still obliviously excited.

Following the line of people down the hall, it was hard for her to rejoice with her sister while she felt like she and Quentin had just taken five steps back away from each other.

~YH~

Quentin walked around his empty house, feeling like he wanted to kick himself. Every ounce of his being wanted Nubia not to leave. When he saw Kareena he was prepared to experience guilt over all the things that had transpired between him and his best friend’s little sister. However, that feeling never surfaced, not then.

They did when he watch Nubia drive away in the passenger seat of her sister’s car. The same car moments before she’d driven away from Force and their night together. Fixing himself a sandwich he took his plate onto his back porch. A storm was brewing and the soft winds were just what he needed to clear his mind and put things back into perspective. There were valued reasons why he and Nubia should not be together and with Perry’s birthday approaching it was a ghostly reminder of the wall between him and Nubia that should never have been crossed, not once. The fact that he’d crossed over it twice was practically unforgivable.

~YH~

By the time she got into her sister’s home and unpacked the car with the suitcases they both had lived out of at Quentin’s house during the temporary stay, Nubia was furious. Gray clouds had moved in covering the sky, warning the city that rain was imminent, a mirror of her emotions and a reminder of Quentin’s eyes.

“Okay, Sissy, spill it.” Kareena placed a large mug of a citrus tea before her then took up a seat on the couch.

Curled up in a big overstuffed chair, Nubia picked up the cup. “Spill what?”

Kareena looked all of her four years seniority as she lifted one single, perfectly arched eyebrow at her.

“Fine.” Sipping the tea, she sighed. It was time for her to get all this out and deal with it. Maybe her sister could tell her what to do to either get Quentin or get him out of her heart permanently. Plunging forward, she said, “I’m in love with Quentin.”

“Tell me something I don’t know.” Kareena eyed her across the room as she took a liberally drink of her tea.

“You knew?” Nubia was shocked her sister never said anything.

“Yup. You have always displayed your emotions in the open. So, how long have you been sleeping with each other?”

Good gracious, her sister was astute. “Just recently. It has only happen twice for the most part.” Her face became warm as she thought about last night. “We kissed once when you all took Perry and me camping in college. I probably had some kind of kiddie crush on him before that.”

Kareena nodded. “By the outfits you all had on this morning, I take it you know he’s into the BDSM lifestyle and your okay with it. Accept it?” Kareena gave her a sharp look, one that combined older sister authority, defender and best friend. “If not, then leave him alone. His lifestyle, even though it’s not for me, I know it helped him through some very rough spots after Perry’s death. He is shouldering a lot of guilt.”

She had sensed that Quentin took Perry’s death hard, but didn’t realize it was to this degree. Standing her ground, Nubia spoke candidly. “I don’t plan on giving Quentin up. Neither will I walk away from him because of his way of loving. Perry told me about it, shortly before he died knowing how I felt about Quentin. I tried to learn and experience something’s in the last few months.”

“Good to know. So, what do you plan to do with a heart full of love and a fist of knowledge?” Kareena placed her mug on a table coaster.

“I don’t know?”

“What? Where’s my reckless, free-spirited baby sister?”

“Maybe I’m growing up.”

Kareena laughed. “Well, don’t do it before you go after that man you want with both barrels.”

Launching herself out of her seat, Nubia announced, “He won’t talk to me.”

“Make him.” That said Kareena stood up. “I’m going to take a nice long bath in my own tub.”

Her sister walked out of the living room, leaving Nubia alone to ponder her decision.

## Five

Nubia pulled up at Quentin's house for the second time that day. She knocked on the front door, when he didn't answer she stepped back, a few lights were on and his car sat in the driveway. Deciding to walk along the side of the house to the back, she found him sitting on the back porch alone.

With his police skills he honed in on her, seeing her within seconds of her discovering him. He didn't acknowledge her, just watched her every move as she climbed the porch steps. She stood there in silence for a moment, then admitted, "I want to be with you. I want us to be together. This yo-yo game has gone far enough. Why don't you just come straight with me and tell me you care about me too."

He gave a dry chuckle. "Even if I wanted to deny my feelings, I think after this week, after last night you know how unhinged and out of control I am with thoughts of pleasing you. Satisfying you. Commanding and making you mine, in every way."

"Then why don't you stop fighting it? Fighting us."

"It's not that simple. Between men, there's a code. You belong to someone else. Between officers there's a deeper code. He died. I broke them both."

"What are you saying?"

He rose quickly from his chair, in an instant he stood before her, all-consuming male. "The night Perry died I wasn't there for him. We'd been tracking some big time dealers and art thieves in the area. We were off that night and I went out to Force. I had been looking forward to a night off for a few weeks." He reached his hand out to her then pulled it away. "Ever since he came back from seeing you. You were all he could talk about. How beautiful, smart, sweet and great you were. I ate it all up. Every word of it like a starving vulture and when we got those days off I headed straight to Force. To lose myself and purge you from my mind." He sighed and shoved his hand through his dark hair making it eschewed.

She wanted to reach up and run her own hands through it, she refrained. "I'm not seeing how his death was your fault."

"That night he tried to call me. I didn't get his message until hours later. He had gotten a tip about an informant that a transfer was going down. When he couldn't get a hold of me, he went to check it out on his own and got shot. He got shot while I was in the club trying to whip and fuck every woman with soft, light brown skin and long dark hair I could find. Every woman, but the woman I would have sold the air in my body to make love to. Perry's woman. You." Stepping away from her, he dropped back in his chair. "That's why we can't be together, Nubia."

Now she understood. Now she saw what Kareena knew. The piece of the puzzle Perry couldn't provide her with because he didn't know how Quentin felt about her before his death. Quentin had beat himself up for so many years, probably since the kiss in the forests, that if he would have once spoken to her about his feeling or Perry then they would not have wasted all this time. Angry, Nubia stepped off the porch it had already begun to rain lightly. "You're a pig-headed fool, Quentin."

He rose from his chair with a scowl firmly in place, but she wasn't afraid him. She was hurt. "Perry may have been your partner, but he was my best friend, not the love of my life. You are Quentin." Her throat became tight, but she struggled to push the words out, "You asked me about my tat last night. The rose. I got it after you kissed me. That one petal falling was my wish *he loves me*. You love me. You just never opened your eyes or your heart to know it." Rain came down heavier and blended with hot tears as the water streamed down her face. "The last time I saw Perry when he visited me in Seattle we talked about you, about my feelings for you. He tried to encourage me to move back East and tell you how I felt. I told him that you didn't feel the same."

"It doesn't matter," Quentin said.

"The hell it doesn't. Everything matters, Quentin. I never got fired. I quit my job when they wouldn't transfer me."

She saw the shock in his gaze at her revelation, but continued on.

“I love you so much that after Perry died so young I didn’t want to waste another minute without you. Without knowing what it was like to be in your arms, to submit to you? To be loved by you in every way. To *me*, you were bigger than *any* doubt in my mind.” She shook her head, finally saying, “Perry’s death wasn’t your fault. He was a cop. He knew the rules. He was irresponsible in going to spy on those thieves alone. Not you.” Finished, she turned away from him.

~YH~

Quentin didn’t know what to say to her announcement. His heart was thumping louder than the sound of the raindrops pelting the ground. The lady now storming her way through the downpour, walking away from him was bringing her own brand of justice. She was making him choose whether to live for love or hide behind a ghost, the memory of a friend. Watching her close the steps to her car, he realized that he wanted to live.

“Sub!” He bellowed, allowing his voice to carry through the rain and wind.

Nubia stopped mid-stride, one foot inches from the ground. She slowly lowered it beside the other and turned. Staring at him, her long hair, darkened to black by the rain was now wavy from the excess amount of water and plastered to her face and body. She waited.

“I don’t believe I gave you permission to remove yourself from my presence.” He moved with purposeful steps swallowing up the distance between them.

He took note of the small smile on her lips and the light in her eyes.

Without concern for the soggy grass, Nubia lowered her head and dropped to her knees. Her jeans quickly soaked up the mud as her blue shirt drank in more rain revealing the outline of her full breasts and pert nipples.

“I await your command, sir.”

Gazing upon her, he knew this was what he wanted--she was what he needed. Long sure strides closed the remaining gap. Standing in front of her, he brought himself to his knees before her and grasped her chin. Lifting her face, he placed his lips against hers and whispered, “Love me, Nubia.”

“Always, Master Que,” she responded and submitted to his kiss.

~The End~

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