

ELLORA'S CAVE TABOO

A woman is shown from the waist down, wearing a black bikini top and high heels. She has handcuffs on her wrists and ankle cuffs on her ankles. The background is dark and textured.

Cindy Jacks
BLACKEST

NIGHTS

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BDSM-curious Georgia, aka Red, attends a lunch meeting of the Rocky Road Social Club where she meets a Dom who introduces himself as Black. Tall, caramel-skinned and truly gorgeous, Black has a commanding presence that draws Red in.

After one dinner together, Red agrees to explore a weekend as Black's sub. He pushes her to the limits of pain, pleasure and beyond. Though she delights in his firm hand and even firmer lash, when Black proposes a more permanent arrangement, Red wonders whether she's ready to submit—body and soul—to the man who dominates her blackest desires.

*A Romantica® **BDSM** erotic
romance from Ellora's Cave*

BLACKEST NIGHTS

Cindy Jacks

Chapter One

My hands shook as I entered the restaurant, but I was sure I could do this. After months on the message boards, this seemed the safest way to get a peek into this world that both fascinated and intimidated me.

“I’m here for the Rocky Road... uh, munch,” I murmured to the

hostess, feeling ridiculous.

Uttering the word “munch” in and of itself set my cheeks on fire. Yes, yes—it stood for “meeting for lunch” but given the people attending this *munch*, I couldn’t help but focus on the sexual connotation of the word. And at eleven in the morning, why couldn’t they just call it something more ordinary like “brunch”? Then again, I wasn’t here for an ordinary experience.

“Oh, right this way,” she

replied.

If she'd passed judgment on me and my fellow munchsters, she didn't show it. Bouncy and cheerful, the hostess led me to a private banquet room off to one side.

I didn't know what would greet me as she opened the door. I half expected heavy metal music to roar in the background and men in gimp suits or slaves on leashes to skulk around their masters' feet, but the scene was nothing like that.

Instead, a group of fairly ordinary folks milled about, mimosas and Bloody Marys in hand, surveying the buffet.

Sure, there were some people with alarming piercings, some with brightly colored hair and some wearing collars, but most looked just as vanilla as the other patrons in the main dining room. And no one sported a gimp suit.

Mildly disappointed, I thanked the hostess and slipped into the room.

A beautiful older woman with dyed black hair in a black dress and black Doc Martens greeted me with a toothy smile. "Welcome, welcome. I'm Rocky and this is my little family. Nice to see a new face here."

She took my hand and patted it.

A lump so large I couldn't breathe formed in my throat. "I-I..."

"Relax, dear." She rubbed my back. "You're among friends."

“Thanks,” I croaked. “I’m Georgia.”

“Is that how you want to be known? Most of us choose a play name, but since this is your first time we can go with Georgia.”

A play name? I hadn’t even thought of that. Online, I’d chosen the username “CuriousGeorgia” but I didn’t think it appropriate going forward.

I ran a hand over my auburn curls. “How about Red?”

“That’ll work.” Rocky clapped her hands, drawing the attention of the group. “Everyone, meet Red. She’s a novice so play nice...or nicely naughty.”

Some of the others flipped waves at me or smiled, but most went back to their conversations.

“Get yourself a drink and mingle a bit,” Rocky said, squeezing my shoulder. Then she waved at someone across the room. “Nice to meet you, Red.”

As soon as Rocky left, several men walked up. I felt like a wounded fish in the middle of a feeding frenzy. Sharks of all shapes and sizes schooled around me.

“Are you here to meet anyone specific?”

“Is this really your first munch?”

“What kind of play are you interested in?”

“Dom, sub or switch?”

Rapid-fire questions came from every direction and I didn't know

what to say. Searching the room for Rocky, I saw she was on the opposite side, deep in conversation.

Near the banquet table, a tall man with a caramel-colored complexion, cropped black hair and stunning bone structure stared at me. Well, not so much *stared* as he seemed to be drinking in the buzz around me. The cut of his shirt and slacks spoke of a man with a personal tailor. The clothing skimmed the outline of his well-maintained form without clinging

too tightly. His calculating gaze pierced me. I blinked, trying to turn my attention to the bevy of men around me.

“I’m really new at this.” I put out my hands, the universal sign for back away, but this only seemed to intrigue them more.

Showing up here might have been a mistake. I’d been reticent to dive into the lifestyle for this very reason. But what did I expect? Doms dominated. It was their nature. The fable about the

scorpion and the frog flashed through my mind. I felt even more absurd and out of place.

But then *he* materialized in the midst of the throng. Mr. Tall, Dark and Handsome. A mere flick of his wrist dispersed the other men, no objections.

“Wow. Thanks.” I drew the tie of my wraparound dress through my fingers.

He stared at me without reply, handing me a flute of champagne,

his hazel eyes never wavering. A gulp of the bubbly wine steadied my nerves.

“I’m Red.” I extended a hand, which he declined to shake.

“You can call me Black.” His lips twisted into a predatory grin. “Or ‘sir’ works just as well.”

My pulse quickened, pounding so hard I found it difficult to breathe. It was as if he’d drawn all the oxygen out of the room.

“What side are you on?” he

asked.

The meaning of his question took a second to register—he was asking me if I was a Domme or sub.

“I don’t know yet,” I mumbled.

“Oh, you know. You’re just afraid to say it aloud.” He brushed his thumb over my lips. Flinching at the overly intimate gesture, I shifted from foot to foot.

Leaning closer, he rested a hand my forearm. Fingertips brushing my skin, he murmured, “I can make

you scream out which side you play on."

A rush of breath escaped me—not so much an exhalation, but my body's way of saying *Yes, please, I'd like that very much*. My cheeks burning, my cunt equally as hot, I met his gaze.

He plucked a napkin from the table, scribbling a few lines on it. "Meet me here next Friday at eight. Don't be late."

Stare fixed on mine, he paused a

second. Maybe he was waiting for my reply or maybe the eye contact was for emphasis. My head swam, a thousand thoughts swirling around my brain. My body buzzed with excitement. Black was the one. No doubt about it.

“I’ll be there.” I took the napkin.

“I know you will.”

With that, he walked away and I watched his retreat, his confident strides hypnotic. Once he’d placed his glass on the table, he said

goodbye to Rocky then exited, stage left.

No one else approached me except Rocky. “You’ve captured Black’s attention. That doesn’t happen every day.”

“Thanks.”

I had no idea what she meant, but before I could ask, she skittered off to greet a new guest.

After finishing my glass of champagne, I hurried to leave.

Over the week, I wondered whether I'd really show up for the date Black had set. No, that Black had demanded. I hadn't had much choice in the matter, but were I honest with myself, that's exactly what I wanted. And if any man would be able to take charge of me, I was sure it would be Black.

I'd spent some time cyberstalking his online persona. There were no negative reports or

cautions on the female sub forums. If anything, he was considered an enigma because he approached few women and played with even fewer.

His interview process is tough. Too picky IMHO, wrote EatMe_BeatMe.

Great. Surely I'd never make it through the interview. There was nothing special about me at all.

Friday slipped by, a quiet day at work, and I returned home, the dress I'd chosen seeming to stare at

me from the hook on the closet door. Emerald-green satin that would cling to my curves, halter straps and a low-cut bodice—it was the perfect dress for my body type and coloring. I'd bought it right after I'd met Black. I knew it would make me feel sexy and I wanted to be sexy for him.

“I'm going, all right?” I snapped at the dress, sure I'd lost my mind. But I had to find out—would I measure up?

Taking meticulous care with my

makeup and hairstyle, I lost track of time. It was 7:50 before I noted the clock.

“Fuck,” I swore.

Slipping into strappy silver peep-toe heels, I hurried out the door. As if on cue, a taxi cruised down my block. Whistling as loudly as I could, I hailed the cab and gave the driver the address.

As I rushed into the restaurant, my watch read 8:01. The maître d’ led me to Black’s table.

“You’re late.” Black’s lips formed a flat, straight line and he didn’t bother to look up at me. Instead he inspected the menu and ordered a bottle of wine.

I’d displeased him. This was no way to start the evening.

Taking my seat next to him in the horseshoe-shaped booth, I smoothed my hair. His subtle, crisp cologne wafted on the aura of body heat surrounding him. A shiver darted through me as I breathed him in.

“I wanted to look nice for you.”

“My time is valuable. Don’t be late again.”

I nodded, swallowing hard.

“Say it. Say, ‘I will not be late again’.” He set aside his menu and met my gaze.

His hazel eyes paired with his deep skin tone cut through me.

“I will not be late again,” I murmured.

His expression softened. “Are you hungry?”

“Not just yet. The wine sounds good for now. If that’s okay.”

He set his hand on my thigh.
“Of course.”

A shiver coursed through me, his touch and his approval thrilling me.

The sommelier brought Black’s selection then Black sampled and approved it. Dismissing the man with a flick of his hand, Black poured me a glass.

“Taste it. You’ll love it.”

I took a sip and nodded. "Nice."

Swirling the wine in his glass, he seemed to study it, oblivious to me. But then he said, "Do you know why you're here?"

Our server approached the table, a petite blonde with perfectly golden skin and a stomach so flat I was sure I could eat off it. Disdain rippled through me, but I struggled to rein it in. It wasn't her fault she was perfectly formed...and I wasn't.

“Blessed” with red hair, freckles and a fleshy figure, I hated our waitress for no good reason.

“When I need you, I’ll call you,” Black told the woman without looking at her. She nodded once and retreated.

My affection for him swelled at his banishment of the evil skinny bitch.

“To you.” He held up his glass and clinked it against mine.

“To...” Well, I couldn’t very well

toast to myself. "To tonight."

He sipped from his glass and I followed suit. The lush fruitiness of the wine coated my tongue. Blackberry, oak and a tart finish.

Cocking his head to one side, he gazed at me. He seemed to peer through my dress, through my undergarments, and I felt naked before him.

"How do you want to feel when we play?" he asked.

"What do you mean?" I gulped

at my wine. His hand covering the top of the glass, he pressed it to the table and forced me to look at him.

“You didn’t show up at Rocky’s gathering only because you’re curious. You came looking for something specific. Tell me what it is.”

I thought about what he was asking. The words were on the tip of my tongue but I couldn’t speak them.

“Don’t be embarrassed.”

“I’m not,” I lied. I was totally embarrassed.

“Then tell me.” He called my bluff.

“I don’t know how. I don’t have the words.”

“This won’t work if I don’t know what you need. Acting out scenes isn’t only about me—it’s about both of us getting what we want. What we need.” He folded his hands on his lap. “Or should I treat you like a tissue, something to

be used and discarded. Is that how you think of yourself?"

My temper flared. How dare he compare me to a snot rag? "I'm not a Kleenex."

"Then tell me what you want or I'll treat you as I see fit."

Drawing a deep breath, I tried to picture where tonight would lead. I wasn't even sure I could do this. Could I cross the line from uninitiated to submissive?

I lowered my gaze. "I want to

test my limits. I want to see if I can take it.”

“Take what?”

Again, the words escaped me and my mouth ran dry.

“The force of someone else’s will?” he offered.

“Yeah. I guess that’s it.” But I wasn’t sure.

“Do you want to find out about pain and submission as part of pleasure?” he asked.

I shrugged, nodding a little.

“Say it, yes or no.”

“I think so.”

“Yes or no.”

Swallowing hard, I resolved to be honest. “Yes.”

A hint of a smile curved his lips. My heart pounded. I couldn't believe the things I was admitting to this man, but I wanted to admit more. I wanted to tell him everything. Already I longed to please him.

“You want to feel desirable

enough to be dominated.” He took a sip of wine.

“I don’t understand.”

“Close your eyes.”

I did as he instructed.

Lips to my ear, he murmured, “Imagine yourself, rope wound around your breasts and cutting into your swollen pussy, your hands tied behind your back. I’ve whipped your ass raw and filled you in ways you’ve only read about. You’re whimpering and

begging me to release you. Then I do release you, not from the ropes binding you, but from the self-doubt, from the fear that your red hair and freckles make you less desirable than our blonde and tanned waitress.”

The insight shook me and I opened my eyes to meet his gaze, my mouth agape. How had he seen that moment of insecurity? It had been fleeting, I thought I’d covered well.

“I will set you free by claiming

your body, mind and soul.” He drew in a long, slow breath. “There is no more beautiful woman in the world than one who has let me tame her, take her beyond anything she’s ever dared. Do you want me to want you like that?”

The image he’d painted unnerved me, but it also intoxicated me. My body buzzed with arousal, my pussy already swollen and throbbing and he’d hardly touched me.

“Yes, I want that.”

Black sat back against the booth, stroking my hair. “Very good.”

But I wasn't finished. Suddenly, I understood. In that moment, when he'd seduced me with his words, told me in no uncertain terms what he would do to me, time seemed to have stopped. All that existed was our bodies and our desires.

“I want to blur the lines of what's acceptable, what's normal. I want to embrace what I think I'd like to feel as opposed to what I'm

supposed to feel.”

He nodded, tenting his fingers and flexing them up and down. One touched his bottom lip as he seemed to consider what I’d said.

After a several seconds had passed, he covered my hand with his much larger one. “I’ll figure out how to get you there. Since you’re unsure of your limits, I’ll take it slowly.”

“What do you need me to do?” I chewed at the inside of my cheek.

“I need you to stop making that face.” He shook his head, his lips pursed a little. “It’s not ladylike and it’s a sign of doubt and weakness.”

The admonishment flustered me. Who said something like that? Clearly, Black did. I’d have to get used to his brutal honesty.

I shrugged. “I thought I was supposed to be the weak one.”

“Submissives are not weak. It takes more strength to endure a whipping than to give one.”

The realization broke over me that he was right. A seed of appreciation sprouted inside me. With just a few words, he had changed my view of myself. What would an entire evening with this extraordinary man do?

“What else can I do to give you what you need?” I asked.

He ran his hand over my cheek. “So eager to please already. I like that. All you have to do is give me honest feedback and obey the rules.”

He went on to detail what his rules were.

No one else was to touch me now that I was his. He did not share.

Black entered his cell number into my phone, but instructed me never to use it.

“I’ll contact you when I want you,” he said, handing me my cell.

I wanted to ask why, then, had he given me his number, but he answered the question before I

could voice it.

“You need to know I’m the one calling.”

Well, that made sense and I felt foolish that I hadn’t guessed as much.

“I don’t do degradation—no crude names, no bodily functions, no dog collars—it’s a base form of dominance and I prefer more...*sophisticated* methods of controlling you.”

I nodded, a little relieved.

Words like bitch, slut, whore didn't appeal to me either, but I'd been willing to put up with them as part of the process.

"Have you had an STD panel since your last partner?" he asked.

His bluntness surprised me. "Yes—as part of my annual physical—and I haven't been sexually active in almost a year."

"I've been tested too and I'm negative. I prefer no condoms."

"I'm on the Pill." To be honest, I

wanted him to fill me with his cum – wet, hot and sticky – dripping down my leg. “No condoms is fine with me.”

“Good. And you need to pick safe words. One that means ease up but don’t stop and one that means stop now.”

Our chosen pseudonyms flashed through my mind. “Scarlet for slow and midnight for stop.”

“You will spend the next weekend with me. Here is my

address.” He handed me a cream-colored business card with raised gold lettering. “Feel free to tell family members or friends that this is where you will be next Friday, Saturday and Sunday.”

I nodded. He’d allayed some of my concern that he was a serial killer, trolling for victims at the local kinkster munch. Perhaps I watched too many TV crime dramas.

“Thanks.”

“If we’re a good fit, I’ll let you know if I want you to stay. I’m not talking TPE, but we’ll need to make more permanent living arrangements.”

What in the world did that mean? “TPE?”

“Total power exchange. Not my thing, really. I don’t want you chained in the basement or at my beck and call...outside of playtime anyway.” A devilish grin lit up his face.

“Ah. Well, that’s a good thing. I’m thinking of this as a sexual experiment myself, not a lifestyle choice.”

“Any more questions?”

I shook my head.

“Then we’re all set to play.”

I glanced around the restaurant.

“Here?”

“Here.” He gave a curt nod.

“Are you wearing panties?”

“Yeah.” I furrowed my brow.

“Take them off and give them to

me.”

Excited that the training had begun, I rose to head to the bathroom, but he grabbed my wrist, forcing me to sit.

“Take them off here.”

“At the table?” I looked around. The restaurant was packed. No way in hell was I going to strip off my undies right here, right now.

“Was I unclear?” His grip on my arm tightened.

I couldn't do this, could I?

Frozen by my inhibitions, I couldn't have complied even if I'd wanted to. But I didn't want to...did I? Was I the kind of woman who could do something so brazen in a public place?

Staring at me, he didn't blink nor did his expression change. His grip on my arm didn't let up. *Get on with it*, he conveyed without words.

My tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth and I had to peel it off before I could speak. "I...I don't feel comfortable."

Digging his fingers into my skin, he tightened his grasp on my wrist, twisting a little. I gasped, half surprised and half aroused. He was going to force me to do this.

“I shouldn’t have to tell you twice.” He didn’t raise his voice and he didn’t seem angry, but all the same I was intimidated by his demeanor. His expression darkened, his mouth firmly set in a line, and then there was that penetrating stare.

“I want to do what you’re

telling me to do, but I can't. I really can't."

Releasing my arm, he slipped his hands beneath the tablecloth. A tremor passed through me as he hitched my skirt up my thighs. One yank and he'd tugged my panties to my knees. My throat clenched, my cheeks burning almost as hotly as my pussy. My pulse quickened and I struggled to catch my breath.

"Slip them to the floor, step out of them and give them to me."

I did as I was told, passing them to Black under the table. Using his napkin as cover, he held the silky garment to his nose and inhaled.

“Your cunt smells delicious.” He closed his eyes as if savoring the moment.

Tracing my lips, he tucked the panties into his pocket. “Aside from your initial disobedience, you did well. I expect you to comply more readily next time I tell you to do something.”

“It’s just we’re in public. I was uncomfortable —”

Clamping his fingers against my cheeks, he said, “You aren’t supposed to be comfortable. No excuses.”

When he released me, he motioned to the waitress. She scurried over. Black ordered for both of us—ahi sashimi and calamari to start with. I didn’t bother to mention I don’t like calamari. I knew it wouldn’t do any good.

After dinner—during which I discovered that properly prepared calamari is delicious—Black walked me to my apartment building. Folding me in his arms, he kissed me gently. His tenderness surprised me. Was he supposed to be kind to me? I didn't understand, but clearly he could do as he pleased.

As he receded, a half-smile played on his lips. "Good night, little Red."

“When will I hear from you?” I asked.

“When you hear from me.”

With that, he turned to leave.

I watched him disappear down the block. He didn't look back.

Chapter Two

For our first play session, I arrived early, reciting, “Scarlet, slow. Midnight, stop,” as I parked in his driveway. Once I’d inspected my makeup and smoothed my black skirt and spaghetti-strap blouse, I propelled myself out of the car. The humid night air threatened to kink up my hair. A

smile on my lips, I hoped my hair wouldn't be the only thing kinked up that night. My stomach did flip-flops at the thought of what Black had in store for me.

At 8:55, I knocked on his door. I heard him moving inside the house, but he didn't answer.

A couple minutes passed and still I stood on his porch, the crickets chirping in the cooling night air. Maybe he hadn't heard my knock. I rang the doorbell.

Another minute or so passed and every second that ticked by left me feeling foolish. Why was he making me wait? Finally out of patience, I fished my cell phone out of my purse and hit the auto-dial for his number.

As soon as Black jerked open the door, I knew I'd made a mistake. Lips downturned, eyes narrowed, he folded his arms over his chest.

The intensity of his stare unnerved me.

Fixing my gaze on the ground, I offered an explanation though he hadn't demanded one. "I wanted to be sure I was on time."

"But you aren't on time, you're early. Nine o'clock means nine o'clock."

"Oh. I'm sorry."

"Go into the dining room and sit." He moved aside to let me pass. "To your left."

Hurrying to do as instructed, I didn't have much time to take in

the decor of the house. Once I'd taken a seat, I studied the austerity of the mission-style dining table, chairs and china cabinet. One massive photo—at least four feet by six feet—hung on an otherwise bare wall. It depicted a close-up of a fig sliced in half. So suggestive of female genitalia was the imagery that I found myself averting my eyes, sneaking furtive glances. Every time I dared to look at it for more than a couple of seconds, my cheeks burned and butterflies

flitted around my stomach.

The door clicked shut and I heard his footsteps head in the opposite direction. Then he returned, cell phone in hand. Drawing his finger across the screen, he turned it so I could read. The glowing display showed his call log.

“Read the most recent entry,” he said.

“It says Red.”

“And is it an incoming call or an

outgoing one?"

"Incoming," I mumbled. I knew exactly what I'd done wrong.

"I said never to call me." He grabbed me by the hair and I flinched, more out of surprise than pain. He wasn't pulling all that hard...yet.

"I'm sorry." I looked at him out of the corner of my eye, excited by the control he exerted over me.

Setting the phone aside, he moved behind me. Leaning down,

he let his lips brush past my ear. I could feel his breath on my cheek and neck. Inhaling his cologne, I closed my eyes, my heartbeat quickening.

“You don’t listen.” He tightened his grasp, shaking me a little. I gasped, the pain sharper now, the throbbing of my pussy radiating throughout my body.

I didn’t reply, struggling to suppress a smile though I couldn’t figure out just why I felt like grinning.

“What’s funny?” He tugged at my hair.

The tug hurt so much my eyes watered. “Nothing.”

“Say it. Say ‘I don’t listen’.” His hand held my head back, forcing me to make eye contact.

“I—” My voice cracked, arousal and agony gripping my throat. “I don’t listen.”

“Do you need me to make you?”

“Yes...please.” My legs trembled, my pussy quivering at

the thought of what he would do to punish me.

Pulling me up and bending me over the table, he pressed my cheek to the cool surface, hand still tangled in my hair, but he'd eased up on the agonizing hold.

The skirt I'd taken so much care to pick out wound up crumpled around my waist. He ripped off my panties then caressed the swell of my ass. I heard the jangle of his belt buckle and the *whoosh* of it sliding out of his belt loops. Oh God, he

was going to —

Crack!

I cried out and squirmed, the initial sting so intense I could hardly stand it, but he held me down.

Crack!

The belt smacked against my ass, heat spreading over the entire cheek. I yelped and whimpered. A sharp burning sensation ran along the junction of my buttock and my thigh and I was sure he'd given me

a welt. The thought turned me on to no end. I was bare-assed, splayed out across a table and one of the most gorgeous men I'd ever met was punishing me. Oh yes, I wanted more.

Another crack of the belt and I could feel my juices wetting my pussy lips. The pain transformed from an unpleasant sensation to the heat of a lover's touch. Instead of a cry of objection, I moaned, writhing against the table.

"You like that?" He growled the

words, his voice even deeper than usual.

“Yes.” I arched my back, thrusting my ass toward him.

“Yes, what?” He caught me by the hair again.

“Yes sir.”

He whipped my buttock again and I called out, the skin raw now. My cunt contracted, so swollen and wet he could have easily slid inside me, no more foreplay needed, but I knew he wouldn't give me that

kind of pleasure yet. I hadn't earned it.

“Your pretty little ass is the most lovely shade of red.”

I felt him drop to his knees, running his tongue over the areas that stung the most. A hiss escaped me. Parting my labia with two fingers, he swiped at my slit.

“You're so wet. You're going to be fun to play with.”

I panted, desperate that he continue my training, but instead

he righted my skirt and helped me up. Swiping the finger coated in my cream over my lips, he moved in for a kiss. His tongue flicked at the musky fluid then plunged inside my mouth. I inhaled the scent of pussy mingled with his cologne, unable to get enough of the heady scent.

As the kiss tapered off, a smile formed on his full lips. He took my hand, gently interlacing our fingers. "Let's go to the playroom."

"Yes...sir." Dizzy with arousal,

I'd almost forgotten to tack on the salutation.

"You only have to call me sir when I'm punishing you."

"Oh." I nodded. So many rules. I'd never keep them all straight, but most likely he was counting on that fact. How else would he have the chance to correct me?

Black led me down the hall. I noted more suggestive photos—close-ups of fruit or flowers, abstract shapes that hinted at the

female body – though none of them depicted any actual nudity.

“Are you a photographer?” I asked, but he didn’t reply.

Okay – so no questions about his personal life.

He opened a door at the end of the hall and flicked on a light. At first it looked like a dance studio, mirrors lining three of the walls, but then I noticed the various tools and devices. Some were obviously for binding me in contorted

positions, some looked like overstuffed beanbags or loungers and some were just downright alarming.

“What’s this?” I removed a U-shaped metal rod from the wall. It had a ball on one end and a large eye at the other.

Plucking it out of my hand, he replaced it on its peg. “An anal hook. Do you want to experience it firsthand?”

“I don’t know. What’s it

designed to do?"

"I slip it into your ass, attach it to a posture bar and then lash your hands to the bar. It forces you to try to be as still as possible while I flog you or fuck you. I hear it's wonderfully painful as the ball bobs around inside you."

I swallowed hard. While the thought of this device in my ass while being bound and fucked sent waves of excitement through me, no way was I ready for anything quite so hard-core.

“I think we’ll have to work up to that one.”

“I agree.” He chuckled softly. It was the first time I’d heard him laugh. The sound rippled through me. I loved the deep richness of it and I was happy I’d amused him.

“May I pick out something else?”

“Yes, you may. I like that you asked first. You’re learning.”

He swept my hair from my shoulder and placed a kiss there.

A thrill fluttered in the pit of my stomach. I was starting to understand my role and what was expected of me.

Walking over to a strange machine, I ran my hand over the metal framework. There were bars on either side with shackles presumably for my arms and legs. Toward the back, a latex phallus extended from a cylinder, the height of which was adjustable.

“What’s this?”

“You like the advanced toys, don’t you?”

“I find them...intriguing. What does it do?”

Black moved behind me, wrapping his arms around me. His scent filled my nostrils as he bent me over, his chest pressed to my back.

Hitching my skirt over my hips, he rubbed a hand between my ass cheeks. “I put you on all fours, lock you into the restraints, and slide the

dildo in your pussy. The machine pounds your cunt while I pound your ass.”

Electricity coursed through my veins, my pussy clenched. My breathing quickened and I closed my eyes, imagining myself impaled on this machine.

“You like that,” he said, toying with my swollen labia.

“Yes.” The word escaped me with a heavy exhalation. Need flooded my entire body, my nipples

drawing to tight buds, my mound so tight and swollen it hurt. I wanted him to fuck me, to own me, to push me beyond the brink. The pain would bring sweet release, of this much I was sure.

Easing me up, he smoothed my hair and skirt. "You aren't ready for that either. I'll see how you do with what I have planned for you tonight."

I turned to face him, my lips brushing against his as I wrapped a leg around him.

In a split second, he'd grabbed me by the hair, spun me around and slammed me against a table in the center of the room.

"No," he said firmly, but didn't raise his voice. "You don't touch me unless I give you permission. Is that understood?"

"Yes," I whimpered.

His belt buckle jangled and I knew what would come next. Black pushed up my skirt and held me down, whipping my ass—the left

cheek this time. The leather strap lashed again my skin several times without a break between blows. I squealed, writhing in his grasp.

“Stop, please, stop,” I cried, but this only seemed to spur him on. And really, I didn’t want him to stop. The agony of each strike flooded me with arousal. My cunt throbbed. I wanted to beg him to fuck me, but I knew better. He’d never give me what I wanted if I asked for it. Not like this.

“I’m sorry, sir.” I panted, a tear

running down my cheek, my own juices dripping down my thighs.

After a few more licks, he did stop. I heard the belt drop to the floor and the rasp of his breathing. He was moving behind me but I couldn't make out what he was doing. Without warning, he pushed his cock inside me. I squirmed, dying to ride his hard shaft, but he held me firmly in place.

“Don't move.”

Pressing my hands against the

table, I braced myself. Black pounded in and out of me, my ass stinging worse as his pelvis slapped against it. Every stroke took me higher. I longed to cream all over his cock. I wanted him to fill me with his cum. I'd do anything he ordered me to do, if only he'd bring me to climax.

The force with which he drove into me shook the table. I yelped and gasped, struggling to manage the simultaneous agony and ecstasy, but I didn't move. I would

show him I could take it, that I could do as he commanded.

Suddenly, he slowed his rhythm, toying with my opening, only the tip of his shaft bobbing in and out of me. I groaned my objection, but I didn't move. Every inch of me longed to impale myself on his thick cock, for him to stretch and fill me as he had moments ago.

The teasing continued for what seemed like forever. My pussy felt on the verge of exploding and I wanted to explode. I couldn't take

the pulsing tension between my thighs much longer. My legs shook, I couldn't control them and I hoped he understood that. My body vibrated with unadulterated need.

“Please,” I whispered, unable to speak in a normal tone.

Snaking a hand around my waist, he strummed my clit and drove into me. I moaned, so close to coming. I needed the release, I craved it and would have done anything to have it.

“Don’t come,” he rasped.

My pussy clamped his cock. I panted, struggling to hold out. “I can’t—”

“Do not come.”

I spasmed, fighting against the ripples of pleasure emanating from my core. Any second they would break loose and I’d orgasm, failing him once again.

“I can’t stop it. I’m going to come,” I whimpered.

At once he withdrew, leaving

me empty and so disappointed I thought I might cry. The aching pulse between my legs was relentless.

“Black, please.” My pussy quivered as if trying to draw him back inside.

He didn't reply. Instead he jostled me to my feet then pressed me down onto my knees, shoving his cock in my mouth.

“Make me come.”

Not something I'd ever been

good at, I tried to suck at his shaft while moving it in and out. Immediately I gagged, catching his head on one of my teeth.

A sharp slap to my cheek startled me. He withdrew from my mouth.

“Cover your teeth with your lips. Don’t suck, just run your mouth and tongue up and down the shaft.”

I nodded. “Yes sir.”

Again, he pushed his cock into

my mouth. It took me a second to figure out how to cover my teeth with my lips, but once I did, I found it much easier to slide him in and out. Once I'd gotten his cock wet, he pushed deep into my throat then paused. As I knew I would, I gagged a few times, my eyes watering, and I choked, struggling to breathe. But then as I grew used to his head touching the opening of my throat, the spasms subsided.

“Look at me,” he said.

I peered up, meeting his gaze.

His stare bored into me, his face aglow, jaw slack. He looked drunk on his own power.

Bending me back a little so that I was a bit off balance, Black held on to my head, pumping in and out of my mouth so quickly I struggled to keep my teeth covered and I couldn't suck in a full breath. A burst of panic gripped me. I couldn't breathe, my lungs burned. Instinct took over and I pulled free of his grasp.

Sure he would punish me, I

panted, trying to catch my breath and holding up a hand. If only I could explain...

But before I could say anything, he told me, “Alternate two quick inhalations with two quick exhalations in time with my thrusting. Like this—”

He demonstrated, sounding a little like a Lamaze coach.

“Got it?” He caressed my cheek and I turned my face into his hand, nodding.

Placing my hands on his thighs, he slid his cock into my mouth. "Tap me three times if you're having trouble breathing and I'll slow down."

Black started off more slowly this time, giving me the opportunity to adjust my lips and practice the rhythmic breathing. Once I'd gotten comfortable, he leaned me back again, straddling my torso. I could still touch his thighs, but I couldn't extricate myself from his grip as easily I had

earlier. A twinge of fear heightened my senses, the feeling of helplessness and loss of control setting my body on fire. My cunt pulsed, ripples of arousal coursing through me. In this moment, I was his to do with as he pleased. I had to trust him to stop if I signaled him to stop. Even though we'd just met and we were still getting to know each other, I did trust him. He emanated power and confidence with an undercurrent of tenderness. A rare combination.

Little by little, he worked up to pounding my mouth. Focusing all my energy on breathing properly, I did my best to cope with the demanding rhythm. The harder he fucked my face, the more I wanted to please him.

He seemed to have unending stamina and I had no clue how much time had passed. Alternating between hard and fast thrusting and slower, deeper strokes, he varied his technique every so often, which gave me a chance to catch

my breath. My jaw ached and my throat was raw from the head of his cock slamming against it, but I held on.

His legs trembled and he bucked erratically. Finally he exploded, pulling out so that only the tip of his shaft pressed to my mouth. Thick ropes of cum oozed down my lips and chin.

“Lick it up,” he groaned.

Laving the sticky fluid, I found it tasted sweet, not as tart or

pungent as some men I'd known.

He pushed into my mouth again and held me still. When his spasms had subsided, Black wrapped his arms around my head, hugging me. "That was perfect."

His satisfaction sent a burst of pride through me. Granted, my pussy still ached for release and I couldn't wait for him to allow me to come, but his pleasure afforded me a different type of sated feeling. I relished his small bit of praise.

He withdrew and helped me to my feet. “Let’s take a break.”

My hopes of continuing the play deflated. How could he leave me like this—unfulfilled and dying for release? Apparently my disappointment showed on my face.

“We have all night and I will allow you to come. You need to be patient.” He zipped up his pants.

I nodded though I didn’t feel at all patient.

“Come on.” He took me by the hand and led me to the living room.

Chapter Three

Black told me to sit on the sofa while he disappeared into the kitchen. I settled in to await his return. Sinking into great mounds of downy stuffing, I was grateful for the fluffy sofa cushions. Clearly he'd thought about the fact that his guests would need something soft to sit on once they'd visited the

playroom.

Once he returned, he set a tray on the unadorned wooden cocktail table. He poured a glass of wine and handed it to me, then one for himself.

“Thanks, but shouldn’t I serve you?” I asked, taking my glass.

“No.” He took the seat next to me and offered no further explanation.

“I don’t quite understand what’s expected of me yet. As your sub.”

“What’s to understand? Did I tell you to serve me wine?”

“No.”

“Then why would you think you were supposed to? I think I’ve been clear—you do what I say, no more, no less.”

“Yes, you have been.” I took a sip of wine. “It’s my fault. I’m new at this.”

“I know you are.” He brushed a lock of hair from my face, tucking it behind my ear. “It’s one of the

things that drew me to you. You haven't been tainted by someone else's training."

Ah. Well, that explained a lot. It wasn't me he was interested in so much as my status as a novice. My ego deflated—I could hear the *whooshing* sound in my head as though it were a balloon with a slow leak.

"I said it's *one* of the things that drew me to you. Not the *only* thing." He took a drink, staring at me over top of his glass.

I chuckled, self-conscious that he'd read my mind yet again. "How do you do that? It's kind of spooky."

He grinned, shaking his head. "It's no big trick. You broadcast your feelings in your expression and your body language."

Studying his face, I had no clue what he was thinking. Apparently I didn't have the knack for it that he did.

"You asked earlier if I'm a

photographer. I am. I work so much with the human form that I've gotten intimately acquainted with its subtleties."

So this was how it worked. He'd mete out tidbits of personal information when and if he saw fit.

"And obscene cross-sections of fruit."

"Those aren't mine. A friend took them."

A friend. What in the world did that vague term mean? He'd

prohibited me from seeing other men while we were involved, but he'd given no indication whether he was allowed other playmates. I thought about asking, but in truth, I didn't want to know.

Instead I asked, "Are you a professional photographer or is it a hobby?"

"I sell my work in galleries up and down the East Coast and in Los Angeles."

I took in the quality of his

furnishings, his taste in clothes, hell, his taste in wine. This was no fifteen-dollar bottle from the supermarket, even my unrefined palette could discern that much. Clearly he sold *a lot* of photographs.

“That’s impressive.”

“I’m glad you think so.”

Feeling as though I were Alice after she’d drunk from the bottle in Wonderland, I shrank against the puffy back cushions of the sofa. Black took my glass of wine and set

it aside. I knew there was no point objecting that I wasn't finished with it.

"What do you do?" he asked.

"Nothing quite so interesting."

"I didn't ask you if your job is interesting, I asked you what it is."

"I-I'm a customer service agent at the cable company in town."

He wrinkled his nose. "You're right. That isn't interesting. You should find a better way to spend your time."

My cheeks heated and I struggled to control my indignation. We couldn't all be hoity-toity photographers. My job paid the bills and it was all I could find in this godforsaken economy and—

“I’ve upset you,” he said.

“No.”

“Don’t lie to me. Tell me why you’re upset.”

Really, I had nothing to lose by speaking my mind. If I offended

him, maybe he'd take me back to the playroom and teach me a lesson. Maybe this time I'd get to come. My labia and clit ached from the climax he denied me.

"I feel like you're making fun of me. I know it's a shitty job, you don't have to tell me that."

"What did you want to be when you were younger?"

"They're not very interesting dreams either."

"Answer the question." He took

my hand.

I sighed, sure he would make fun of me again. “I don’t know—a ballerina, Barbie, Mary Lou Retton.”

A gentle smile pulled at his lips. “Okay, but those are the dreams of a child. What did you aspire to be when you were in high school or college?”

I hadn’t finished college, a fact that further humiliated me. Clearly Black was educated and successful.

I was neither of those things.

“I dropped out of college.”

“Again, not what I asked you.”

He pinched my face, forcing me to look at him. “Why are you making this so difficult?”

Swallowing hard, I closed my eyes. Why was I being so evasive? But I knew the answer to that question.

“Because it’s too painful to think about things I’ll never get to do.”

He let go of my cheeks, taking

my hand again. "Open your eyes."

I did as I was told, but couldn't force myself to meet his gaze.

"Look at me, little Red."

After a moment's hesitation, I complied.

"What did you dream of being at this point in your life?"

At this point. I was staring down thirty. I had a shitty little apartment and a shitty little job and I'd yet to meet a man who made me feel anything but bored out of

my mind. Well, until I'd met Black.

Yeah, when I was younger I'd pictured a very different life for myself, but it hadn't worked out. So what? That didn't make me special. Everyone I knew was in the same boat. Except for Black.

And then it dawned on me. Maybe he knew something the rest of us didn't. Why, then, was I resisting him?

After steadying myself with a deep breath, I said, "I wanted to be

a writer.”

“So become a writer. You don’t need a college degree for that.”

“Right. But it helps if you have some clue about things like allegory, foreshadowing, denouement.”

“Take some courses, join a critique group.”

At this I laughed. “Been there, done that.”

“And let me guess—someone trashed one of your stories and you

gave up on writing altogether.”

“No.” I leapt to the defensive. “About thirty-seven rejection letters later, I gave up.”

Moving closer, he grazed his nose along the length of mine. I could smell the wine on his breath and the muskiness of his skin. Each exhalation caressed my cheek and I was dying to kiss him, though I knew I couldn't. He wouldn't allow me to bridge the gap between our mouths.

“And how do you know,” he murmured, “that the thirty-eighth letter wouldn’t be an acceptance?”

“I...” But I had nothing to say. He was right. I had no way of knowing what the future would bring, only that I hadn’t had the strength to pursue it.

He kissed me, slipping his tongue into my mouth, tangling his hand in my hair.

As we parted, he said, “Tomorrow you will spend the day

writing.”

“Because you’re ordering me to?”

“Because it’s what you really want to do. I’ll make some calls, I have a friend who runs a crit group. I’m sure she’d be happy for you to join.”

Again he left me speechless. Why did everything messy and complicated look so simple through his eyes?

“I don’t know what to say.”

“Thank you would be the appropriate response.”

“Right. Thank you. I don’t know how to repay you.”

“I have a few ideas.” He arched one eyebrow. “Let’s go back to the playroom.”

* * * * *

Since it was my first time being bound—by Black or anyone else—he said he wouldn’t bind me too tightly or use any complicated

Kinbaku variations. I didn't have a clue what Kinbaku was so I was grateful for the gradual introduction.

“Undress, but leave your heels on,” he instructed.

His unwavering stare flustered me. Granted, he'd seen my bare ass, knew what my pussy smelled and tasted like, he'd even been inside me, but he'd never seen me completely naked.

“Don't be shy. If I have to ask

again, I'll do it with belt in hand."

Though I knew the reference to a whipping was supposed to be a threat, part of me wanted him to hold me down, beat me and rip my clothes off. But we'd played that game already tonight and I was eager to try something new. Reining in my nerves, I stripped off my shirt then slid my skirt and panties to the floor. His gaze roamed over me. I could feel him assessing every inch. The same throbbing ache he'd left unresolved

earlier beat a tattoo between my legs.

“Get on all fours.” He continued to stare at me.

Lowering myself to the floor, I shed my bra then assumed the position.

Once he’d selected a length of rope, he squatted before me.

“Down on your elbows, wrists together.”

As soon as I adjusted my pose, he wound rope around my wrists

and elbows then crisscrossed it around my waist and between my legs. Black pushed my calves against my thighs, hooking the rope around my high heels. Once he'd finished, I was completely splayed apart and unable to move, my ass poised in the air. I didn't know how long I could hold this position. Already my elbows, knees and back ached.

The clank of metal-on-metal behind me drew my attention, but I couldn't crane my neck enough to

see what he was doing. Then I heard a clipping sound and felt added support from the harness he'd created around my waist. He'd tethered me to the ceiling, taking some of the weight off my legs and arms.

How thoughtful of him. A half-smile formed on my lips. And just how long did he intend to keep me here?

“What a pretty pink pussy.” He patted my exposed labia. “So swollen and wet. I bet it wouldn't

take long to make you come.”

Swiping a finger between my folds, he massaged my clit. A wave of pleasure coursed through me. No, it wouldn't take long, if only he'd let me. But he didn't. He extracted his hand and set a kitchen timer next to me.

“We're going to play a game.”

I felt lube sprinkling over my asshole and slit and then he pushed a dildo into my pussy. I gasped at the sensation of being suddenly

filled. A nub of silicon pressed to my clit.

“Your goal is not to come. No matter how good it feels. Understand?”

“Yes.” I breathed the word, sure I’d fail in no time.

“First round, you have to hold out for one minute. Do you think you can do that?”

“I-I don’t know.”

“You will be punished if you don’t.” He smacked my ass hard,

the heat from the blow spreading to my already engorged cunt. The spanking would only increase my need and he knew it.

The dildo sprang to life, vibrating me inside and out, my G-spot and clit stimulated at the same time. Pure pleasure racked me, the tension unbearable. He set the timer in front of me. Only a few seconds had passed. My inner walls clenched around the phallus. I panted, desperate to come and to avoid coming at the same time. But

how in the world could I stop it?
The vibrator felt so fucking good.

Slowing my breathing, I focused on the numbers ticking by. One second at a time, I chanted to myself, "I will not come."

"Good girl." He ran a hand over my ass. "That's it, take control of your body."

I flexed and released my leg muscles, I tried to think about a typical day at work, I stared at the numbers counting down in front of

me. Anything to distract me from the pure pulse of ecstasy shaking me to the core.

Despite my best efforts, the throbbing between my legs intensified, tears slid down my cheeks and my clit burned, overstimulated and swollen. Still, I did not give in.

I moaned and writhed against the restraints, but somehow that last second clicked by, the bell sounded and Black shut off the vibrator.

“Very, very good, little Red.” He dropped to his knees, kissing and licking my bare ass.

Removing the vibrator, he slipped his cock inside me. Slowly, he slid from tip to base, in and out. One finger toying with my clit, he set a leisurely rhythm. My pussy constricted around his shaft. I was so desperate to come, I moaned and groaned and pushed into his every thrust.

“Please, Black. Please,” I begged him.

I felt as if I'd lost most of myself and all that was left was this throbbing, aching, swollen bundle of nerves. If he didn't let me come soon...well, he just had to, didn't he? Soon I'd have no choice, my body would let loose even if I didn't want it to.

But I desperately wanted it to.

My legs trembled, my cunt bore down on his thick cock. Yes, I was at the threshold of orgasm.

And then he withdrew.

“No,” I cried. “No, you can’t leave me like this. Please.”

But my objections were futile. I couldn’t move, I couldn’t grab him and force him inside me. I couldn’t even finish myself off. The cool air of the playroom underscored the fact that I was empty, wet and unfulfilled.

Tears stung my eyes, but I didn’t want to cry. I wanted to come.

“You should see your cunt, little Red. It’s covered with your cream

and so plump. I bet it's aching."

"It is because you won't let me come."

"That's right. I won't let you. Your orgasms belong to me now. Is that understood?"

"Yes." I nodded, clenching my hands together as if praying for him to give me release. "My entire body is yours now, but please, please, please let me come."

Instead of answering my pleas, he pushed the vibrator inside me

again.

“Three minutes this time.”

“I can’t. If you turn it on, I’ll come. It’s that simple.”

His hand clenched my hair, yanking my head back. Searing pain gripped my scalp. “If you come, you will be punished.”

He held my gaze for a few seconds, then let go of my hair. Once he’d set the clock, the vibrator sprang to life again. There was no way I could hold out. I was too

turned-on, too close to the edge. I gave up trying to resist and set about begging him in earnest.

“Please, Black. Tell me I can come. Tell me it’s okay. I don’t want to do it without your permission, but I’m going to. I can’t stop it.”

“You can and you will.” He spanked my ass, his hand slapping my buttocks over and over.

My legs shook, my pussy clamped so tight it pulled the

vibrator deeper. I rocked back and forth, fucking myself as best I could. The heat from the spanking intensified the pulsing ache between my legs. I didn't want to hold out. I didn't care what he said. I didn't care what he did to me. I had to come.

With over a minute left on the clock, he withdrew the vibrator. Again, cool air replaced the warmth of the dildo. My cunt quivered, the emptiness unwelcome.

“No.” I sobbed, my forehead to my arms, my defeat evident in my limp posture. This was too much. He’d never let me come. He never intended to give me any pleasure, only to take his.

Black slid his cock inside me, but I didn’t allow myself to respond. I knew he would take me to the brink and then deny me pleasure again.

“That’s good, be my little rag doll.” He jerked my head back by my hair. I closed my eyes, letting

tears of frustration leak down my cheeks.

Instead of the same slow pace he'd used earlier, he pounded into me. I was so wet, his thick shaft moved in and out of me easily. His pelvis crashed against my ass, reviving the sweet sting of the spankings and whippings he'd given me.

My nipples tightened, my pussy quaked, pleasure radiated from between my legs throughout my body now that I didn't want it to.

“No.” I tried to tug my head from his grasp. “I’m not going to climax for you.”

“Yes, you will.” He punctuated each word with a hard and fast thrust. The head of his cock hit my G-spot every time he drove into me.

“No.” I clenched my eyes shut.

A hand still pulling my hair, he snaked the other between my legs and strummed my swollen clit. As soon as his fingertip massaged the

pearl at the center, my body erupted with massive contractions.

“No,” I called out, but there was no stopping this orgasm.

Juices pumped out of me like they never had before. I could feel myself squirting, my cunt spasming with ripples of ecstasy, each more powerful than the last. And the intensity didn't let up.

Black continued to hammer me, his fingertips now tugging at my clit as if milking it. I came for what

seemed forever, my thighs dripping with my cream. As I finally went limp, a few aftershocks still shaking me, he buried himself inside me, letting loose his own climax. I was too exhausted to do much more than let him fill me with his cum.

Releasing me, he collapsed on the floor, his chest heaving. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see his glistening cock and my cream all over his trousers.

“Look at the mess you made.” He huffed, chuckling as he tried to

catch his breath.

“It’s your fault.” I shivered, tiny spasms still darting through me.

Running a hand over my sticky inner thigh, he said, “I suppose you’re right.”

“I’ve never come like that before.”

“Of course you haven’t. You’re too impatient.” He slapped me on the ass and sat up, righting his pants.

My arms, knees and back ached

from holding this position too long. I wondered when he would untie me, but I knew better than to ask. I was here for his pleasure and clearly he wasn't through with me.

Then I felt him move as though standing and I heard him stride out of the room, the door clicking shut behind him. Was he through with me? Did he intend to leave me like this for the rest of the night? The rest of the weekend? A jolt of panic shot through me.

“Black?” I called out.

At first he didn't answer, but when I called for him again, I heard the buzz of an intercom. "I'll be there in a second. Didn't we just discuss your impatience?"

Fine, then, I thought, trying hard not to think about Stephen King's book *Gerald's Game*.

When Black returned, he put a straw to my lips. I sucked at it, ice water flooding my mouth.

"Thank you," I said once I'd swallowed.

“You’re welcome.” He set the drink aside. “Now that you’ve had some pleasure, it’s time to test your pain limits.”

A shudder of anticipation passed through me.

Chapter Four

“We’ll start slowly.” Black ran his hand over my ass. “If at any point you can’t take the amount of pain you’re in, use the safe word. Screaming ‘stop’ won’t help, remember that.”

My nipples tightened into small buds, my cunt pulsed with anticipation. What was he going to

do to me? Would I be able to take it? My body buzzed with arousal as I repeated the agreed-upon safe words, "Scarlet, slow, midnight, stop."

"That's right."

He clipped a clamp to each of my nipples then one to my clit that was attached to my nipples by a silver chain. I steadied my breathing, the sensation at first too much to bear, but as the pain intensified, my nipples and clit swelled, pulsing with need and

pushing the pain farther back into my psyche.

A cool drizzle of what I could only assume was lubricant dripped down the cleft of my ass. Without warning, I was filled, my anus straining to accommodate a butt plug. Gasping at the sting and burn, I panted. I would not give in so easily, though I'd never before had my ass invaded so completely.

“Are you ready for more?” he asked.

Though I wasn't sure, I nodded. I could take whatever he gave me. I had to if I was going to earn his respect...his affection.

Black massaged my labia with more lubricant then slowly pushed a dildo into my pussy. I cried out, feeling as though I'd been cleaved in two. My arms shook, my legs too. But I could take it. I had to take it.

"How do you feel?" he asked.

"It hurts."

"Do you want more pain?"

Oh yes. I definitely did. The heat from my ass and my cunt radiated throughout my body. I wanted to be his rag doll. His plaything.

“Yes. Give me more,” I moaned.

A slap from a lash exploded across my ass. He whipped me, over and over, the excruciating sting sending me skyrocketing toward some level of submission I’d only dreamed of.

“Yes,” I cried, my excitement spurring on the lashing. He beat me

again and again, my body absorbing every blow.

“Tell me how you feel,” he commanded.

“It hurts so much, but I love it, I want to take it. Keep whipping me.”

Each flog opened a new level of pain, a new level of ecstasy. Then, suddenly, the clamp on my clitoris sent a shock of vibration through my core. Oh God, it felt so good. I prayed he wouldn't stop.

“My cunt—” I groaned, my inner walls clenching around the dildo. Too big, too much, too painful. Wonderfully painful.

Slap!

“Tell me how you feel.”

“It hurts, oh God, yes, it hurts.”

Slap!

The agony and the pleasure burst through me. I needed to come and I would come soon, but only if my master willed it.

“What do you want?” he rasped.

“I want you to fill me, fuck me, punish me. Oh yes, I am yours, Black,” I moaned.

With the next sting of the lash, tremors shook me. I called out, unable to stop the powerful orgasm racking my body.

“No, no, no,” I murmured. I knew I shouldn’t be coming, but I couldn’t stop it. The climax rocked me to the bone. I came, my pussy contracting with such force that it pushed the dildo out of me. Still, my cunt quivered, constricting, my

juices dripping down my thighs.

And then the whipping and the clitoral stimulation stopped. Still, my body pulsed, aftershocks racking me. I shouldn't have come, he hadn't allowed it, and yet I had.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk." I heard the cluck of his tongue, his disapproval.

"I'm sorry," I whispered.

"Oh, you will be sorry."

I felt his retreat, though I couldn't see him. Glancing around as best I could, I searched for him.

What was he going to do to me? He owned my orgasms—that much he'd made clear.

“I'm sorry,” I said again, this time more forcefully.

“This,” he held up an enormous dildo in front of me, “is for pushing out the other one.”

“Black, I'm sorry.”

But my apology clearly meant nothing. The massive head of the new torture device parted my pussy lips. He shoved the

lubricated shaft into me, but not fully.

Even with just part of it inside me, I knew it was too big. My asshole tightened, the butt plug still in place. Would he rip me open? Was that his plan now that I'd displeased him?

He shoved the enormous dildo farther into my pussy. "You've almost taken all of it. Good, little Red. Keep taking it."

I panted against the excruciating

pain. I had to keep taking. Keep taking it. Finally I felt the massive thing slam home. I'd taken it, taken all of it. My pussy burned and stung, opening farther than it ever had before.

Without warning, he tugged out the butt plug and mounted me. His cock split my ass—no lube, no gentleness, just brute force.

“I can’t,” I cried, beads of sweat dotting my forehead. The pain was more than I could bear.

“You will,” he growled.

It was too much, too big, too deep, but I had to show him I was worthy of his Domination.

He pulsed his cock in and out of me. Each time he thrust forward, a fresh bout of agony racked me.

“I can’t,” I cried, tugging against my restraints. I had to get free of him and this pain that consumed me.

Whipping my back again, he rode me. Tears leaked down my

cheeks. This was more than I could bear. I had to stop him. The lash stung against my back and he pulled my head back, his hand entangled in my hair. I felt the pulse of his cock as he filled my ass with cum. I'd done it. I'd taken his punishment, but now, I needed to be free. I needed the pain to end as all my coping mechanisms failed me.

My lips trembling, I pushed out the word as loudly as I could, "Midnight."

I dissolved into tears, so ashamed I'd given in to my own weakness.

Immediately, he withdrew and removed the dildo. Once he unhooked the harness, I collapsed onto my side, sucking in air, the pain of being filled, torn and whipped still echoing through my core. Black freed my bonds, gathering me in his arms.

I clung to him, sobbing. "I'm sorry, I couldn't take it anymore. I'm so sorry."

“Shh, shh, shh, little Red.” He rocked me as if trying to chase away my fears. “Don’t cry. You have nothing to apologize for.”

But I did, didn’t I?

I shook my head. “I—I wanted to show you I’m worthy of your Domination.”

“And you did, little one. You did. You far exceeded my expectations. I promise you, I’m pleased.”

The unexpected kindness shook

me and I sobbed even harder.

“I know I pushed you tonight. I wouldn’t usually push a new sub so far, but you’re special, Red. We’re going to have an amazing journey together. Would you like that?”

I nodded, snuggling closer. His embrace was the only true shelter I’d ever known. In that moment, I knew he would protect me, cherish me, fulfill me as no other man ever had.

Scooping me up, he carried me

to his bedroom. I was too exhausted to do much more than melt against the downy mattress, but Black brought over a bowl of warm water and a wash rag. Gently, he cleaned my face, my cunt and my ass, then slipped a soft cotton t-shirt over my bare body. Wrapping me in his arms, he held me until I fell asleep.

* * * * *

Saturday morning began with his lips on mine, drawing me from a deep and dreamless slumber, each

lazy and meandering kiss bleeding into another.

“Good morning, little Red,” he murmured.

“What time is it?” I yawned and stretched, meeting his gaze.

“Time for you to receive your reward for doing so well last night.”

Memories of the bondage and training flooded my mind. Had I really had the courage to do such things? Yes, I had and this morning

I felt glorious, well, glorious and quite sore. Black had used my body in ways I'd never dared.

“Here.” He handed me a couple of pain relievers and a glass of water.

“How did you know?” But as soon as I'd asked the question, I knew it was foolish. I wasn't the first woman he'd trained and clearly he knew the toll it would take, at least until I grew accustomed to holding positions for long periods and opening my body.

Grew accustomed, the phrase rattled around my head. Would I stick around for more play? Would Black allow me to stay? Somehow I'd already made the mental leap that he was my Dom and I his sub. He had, after all, allowed me to stay the night. That had to mean something, didn't it?

"What's going on behind that thousand-mile stare?" He settled in next to me, his arms around me.

"I was just thinking how new all this is...for me...but that I like it. I...

I like you.” My heart pounded. If he rejected me I’d burst into flame right then and there. But he didn’t.

“I like you too. I haven’t had a woman in my bed in a very long time.”

Though I noticed the distinction he’d made between his *bed* and the *playroom*, I didn’t push him to clarify. Best not to ask a question I didn’t want the answer to.

With a gentle squeeze, he released me then laid out a fluffy

white robe. “You can put this on and join me in the kitchen when you’re ready for your reward.”

After relaxing for a while longer, letting the Tylenol kick in, I eased out of bed and slipped on the robe. The clock on the nightstand read ten past eleven. I’d really slept late and I was starving. The scent of coffee and eggs drew me down the hall.

Black presented me with a plate of eggs, fresh fruit and buttered wheat toast.

“I scrambled the eggs because I wasn’t sure how you like them. That’s something I’ll have to learn.”

“I like over medium, but scrambled is great. Thanks.” I took the plate and a cup of coffee.

“Cream and sugar?” he asked, opening the fridge.

“No, thanks.”

I settled into the bench seat of the breakfast nook, grateful for the ample padding. My pussy and ass ached despite the medication.

“Still sore?” he asked, splashing a healthy dose of cream into his mug.

“A little.”

Stirring some sugar into his coffee, he said, “We can take it easy today. No playtime if you’re not up for it.”

Something in the tone of his voice told me that even though he seemed genuine in his offer to let me rest, he would be disappointed if I said I didn’t want to continue

my training. Besides, I wanted to carry on. We'd hardly scratched the surface of all there was to explore in his world of pleasure and pain.

"I don't need a break." I took a sip of coffee, savoring the almost chocolate richness of the blend.

"Good." He grinned at me.

Once he'd taken a seat, I tucked into my food. He'd added something to the eggs, something I couldn't quite place, but they were delicious.

“This is fantastic,” I said around a cheekful of food.

“Don’t talk with your mouth full.”

Once I’d swallowed, I smiled. “Thanks for my reward. Breakfast is wonderful, I was starving.”

“Oh, this isn’t your reward.”

Furrowing my brow, I tried to decode his expression, but found him as closed off as he’d been most of the time we’d spent together.

“Fine. Have your secret.”

His eyes gleamed as he took another sip of coffee.

Once I'd finished eating and cleared my place, he held out a hand. "Come with me. Close your eyes."

Now I was really intrigued, but I did as I was told, letting him lead me through the house.

"Open your eyes."

On the dining room table lay a shiny new laptop with a carrying case, a leather-bound journal, a

Montblanc box and a copy of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

“What’s this?” I asked.

“You said it’s your dream to be a writer so I had my assistant pick up a few things to help you on your way. And here’s the number of my friend who runs a writers’ group.” He handed me a business card.

A rush of air left my body and for a second I felt as though I couldn’t inhale. Once I’d caught my breath, I ran my fingertips over the

sleek red laptop lid. I opened the Montblanc box and found a golden fountain pen that could have easily cost more than the laptop. A reward for our encounter last night, that's what he'd said.

Shaking my head, I crossed my arms over my abdomen. "This is a lovely gesture, but I can't accept this stuff."

Black knitted his brow. "You can and you will."

Lord knew I wanted to, but

taking a gift in exchange for a sexual encounter just didn't sit right. How to explain this to him without seeming ungrateful?

"I appreciate that you want to give me a gift and it's the most thoughtful gift, really, but...I don't want you to think that you have to give me presents every time we have sex."

"No. That's not what this is." He rolled his eyes. "Look, you opened up to me last night. You confided in me and I wanted you to know I

heard you. I see you, despite all your efforts to hide your extraordinary self in some very pedestrian trappings.”

I swallowed hard. The phrase “pedestrian trappings” stung a little, but I had to admit he was right. I’d done my best to conform to what I believed the world expected of me and how far had that gotten me? Were I honest with myself, I’d have to confess I was miserable.

“Well, I guess—if that’s the

intention with which you're giving me these things..." I shrugged.

"The proper response is 'thank you'."

"Thank you." I leaned forward and kissed his cheek. My face heated. I still felt a little strange accepting this present.

"And I had my assistant pick up a change of clothes for you." He motioned to a bag from a nearby boutique. "I had to guess at your size so if the shirt and jeans don't

fit, I'll have him run out again."

I glanced at the clothing labels.
"This should fit. Good guess."

"Well, I did get to know every inch of you last night." He winked.

Good point.

"I have a meeting today. While I'm gone, I expect you to write."

"It's been a while. I'm rusty."

"No time like the present to shake off that rust." He grazed his mouth over mine, softly at first but then his tongue parted my lips and

he leaned closer, deepening the kiss.

I melted against him, but then he spun me around, slipping his hand inside the robe. "How are you feeling?"

Though my naughty bits were a little worse for the wear, the pulse of arousal set off by his touch won out. "Feeling pretty good."

Brushing his lips against my ear, he murmured, "Are you familiar with the concept of enforced

availability?"

"No."

"Well," he bent me over the table and pressed his chest to my back, "it means that for the rest of the weekend, no matter what you're doing, no matter whether you're in the mood, I get to fuck you whenever and however I want."

My nipples hardened, his breath tickling my ear, his words setting my body on fire.

He pulled up the back of my robe and ran a moist finger between my pussy lips. "Does that sound like something you'd like to explore?"

"Yes." I breathed the word.

"Good answer."

Without warning, he slid his cock inside me. In my semi-aroused state, I wasn't wet enough to take all of him so quickly. I yelped, squirming against the table. He clamped a hand over my mouth as

he slowly moved in and out of me. Already raw from yesterday's pounding, my cunt spasmed. My legs tensed and I bucked against him, whimpering.

"Shut up." He smacked my ass with his free hand. I bit my lip to keep from crying out.

Little by little the pain subsided, replaced by tremors of ecstasy. The head of his cock slid over my G-spot, my juices flowed, wetting his shaft. Though he wanted me to be quiet, I couldn't contain the moan

that worked its way out of my throat.

But instead of punishing me, he said, "You may come any time you're ready."

Removing the hand from my mouth, he braced himself against my shoulder as he fucked me harder and faster. Now fully slick with my own cream, I pushed back to meet his forward strokes.

"Oh yes, harder," I called out.

Again, a sharp slap cracked

against my ass and he stopped thrusting. "Don't tell me how to fuck you."

"I'm sorry."

At first I thought he would pull out and leave me unfulfilled, but slowly, he rocked his pelvis back and forth.

An arm across my shoulders, his elbow digging into my shoulder blade, he held me down. "Don't move."

He pumped his cock into me

with brutal, short strokes. I did my best to comply though each time he pounded into my pussy, a wave of pleasure rocked me. The pain of yesterday's play only added to the engorged, hot sensation building between my legs.

I trembled, my inner walls contracting around his shaft. Soon I would come. No, he would make me come. Each thrust took me higher and, more than just my own climax, I wanted him to come with me. I wanted him to fill me with his

sticky semen, take his pleasure just as he said, whenever and however he saw fit. I belonged to him, at least my body did and maybe my spirit too. I'd never wanted to please a man as much as I wanted to please Black.

One last powerful thrust and he buried his cock in my pussy, pulsing forward as if trying to pry me open wider. The added stimulation to my G-spot pushed me over the edge. My body shook, juices pumping out of me, wetting

my thighs. I held my breath, desperate not to utter a sound. My cunt constricted, clamping around his shaft and I felt him coming inside me.

Yes. I closed my eyes. Yes. I loved the feeling of his cock pulsing inside me, each spurt pumping me full of his cum. His body shook, his breath ragged and irregular.

Once the climax had tapered off, he withdrew from me.

“Stay there until I come back.”

He panted the command more than spoke it.

I heard the slaps of his retreating footsteps. Though my back ached and the hard surface of the table crushed against my cheek, I didn't move. I waited patiently, still splayed out for him.

When he returned, he wiped my cunt and my legs then dropped down to clean the floor.

"We made a mess," he murmured, standing up.

Running a hand over the stinging areas of my ass, he bent down and kissed my neck. "You may get up now."

"Go dress," he said after I'd righted myself.

A smile played across my lips as I took in the scent of sex hanging in the air.

"Go." He swatted me on the butt and I chuckled, grabbing my bag of clothing.

Chapter Five

Once I'd put on the shirt and jeans—which fit me perfectly—I shuffled out to the dining room again. Black had disappeared, though I knew he hadn't yet left. His keys, wallet and leather portfolio lay on the table.

He peeked in from the kitchen, a dish towel over his shoulder. "I'm

going to change. Why don't you set up the computer?"

I nodded. Good idea.

As I booted up the laptop, I couldn't help but sneak glances at his personal effects. Despite my curiosity as to his real name, I would never rifle through his wallet. I did, however, wonder what occupied the portfolio.

"None of your business," I whispered, punching keys and hitting Enter as required by the

computer start-up program.

Besides, the case probably just held prints of his work. Though he hadn't shown me any examples of the kind of photos he sold, I couldn't see Black as the kittens-and-babies kind of photographer. Nor could I imagine rote landscapes being his style. But what was his style?

Curiosity won out over my sense of propriety and I unzipped the portfolio, letting it fall open. At first the images made no sense.

They appeared to be traditional black-and-white photos, a cityscape, but then I realized the gridded shapes weren't buildings with windowpanes. They were rows of blindfolded people, ropes crisscrossing their bodies, squares of dark makeup giving the illusion of tinted windows. Another photograph appeared to be a pastoral upon first glance, but depicted models hunched into a mound and tied to resemble haystacks. The meticulousness and

artistry of what Black had created amazed me.

“Did I give you permission to violate my privacy?” His voice came from behind me.

A shiver of trepidation shot through me. His tone was not the controlled one he used when we played. There was an undercurrent of something else—genuine annoyance, a splash of hurt. I turned to face him.

Black fiddled with a cufflink.

Charcoal-gray slacks and a pale-green shirt—again impeccably tailored—set off his eyes. His irises seemed to glow in the dim light of the hallway.

“No. I’m sorry. I—I just wanted to see your work.”

“You should’ve asked.”

He crossed the floor and took the portfolio. I expected him to zip it shut and then punish me, but he didn’t. Flipping through the pages, he inspected the imagery, then laid

the book open to a specific series of proofs.

“This is what you’re looking for.”

The photos featured a tiny woman in geisha makeup, nude and bound with elaborate knotwork in different sexually graphic poses. I flipped through the 8x10s that followed the proof pages.

“Who is she?” My fingertips outlined her body.

“Mika. She was my sub for

many years. My lover.”

That he'd been committed to one woman for years surprised me. From what I'd read on the forums, Black was finicky and easily lost interest. And it was the first time the word “love” in any form had crossed his lips.

“She’s beautiful,” I said.

“You’re like her in some ways.”

Faced with the woman’s thin, petite form, long black hair and snow-white skin, I couldn’t see any

similarities at all.

“Not physically,” he said as if he’d heard what I was thinking. “She was a brilliant photographer, but lacked the confidence to pursue her dreams. I helped her find her courage and after that she blossomed. She did the picture in the dining room and the ones in the hall.”

“What happened to her?” His use of the past tense told me this woman was more than an ex-lover.

“She died.”

I stayed quiet, unsure what to say.

“Aneurysm. She was here one day...and then she wasn’t.”

His expression turned to stone. I knew it belied what he really felt. He was the kind of man who shut down or exerted control when he couldn’t deal with a surge of emotion, that much I’d learned even in the short time we’d spent together.

“I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have been nosy.”

With a curt nod, he buckled his watchband and collected his portfolio. “I’ll be home by five. Get some work done and be ready to play by then.”

Before I had a chance to reply, he turned and strode out of the house.

* * * * *

By four in the afternoon, I

clapped the laptop shut. I'd gotten next to nothing written. Years of neglect had eaten away at my writing skills—the existence of which I still doubted. All the stories I thought lurked inside me had run and hidden now that they had the chance to see the light of day. Ridiculous.

I'd need daily practice to get back into the swing of things, but today was not that day. I needed a break from my failures both past and present. A bath, I decided,

would do the trick.

Padding into Black's bedroom, I shed my shirt and jeans, hanging them in the closet. A huge floor-to-ceiling mirror on the far wall reflected in the dresser mirror, showing me from an angle I didn't often see. Usually when faced with my full figure, pale, freckled skin and mass of curly hair, I would turn away as quickly as possible, but now I saw myself through Black's eyes.

Instead of disdain for my

fleshiness, I admired the curve of my hips into my waist, the roundness of my breasts and the lushness of my thighs. My ass and back bore the marks from the whipping Black had given me and I stopped to inspect them. Licking my forefinger, I traced the welts. My nipples hardened and I swiped them with my wet finger. The cool air from the ceiling fan licked at the moist spots.

My pussy contracted. I ran my hand down my torso and brushed a

finger across my clit. A pulse of arousal coursed through me. I thought about touching myself, but then again, that privilege belonged to Black now. True, he wouldn't know, but I would and I would admit to it. He deserved honesty.

I walked into the bathroom, the cool vastness of it only hardening my nipples more, but I tried to ignore the arousal. Black would be home soon. Turning the spigot to warm, I let the water run over my fingers and sank into the massive

bathtub. An array of bath products sat on a tray, all with labels in French. By the end of my scrubdown, I smelled fantastic.

Once I'd drained the tub, I put on a fluffy robe from a rack that held three. Just what this number of robes meant, I wasn't sure. Maybe he had a lot of overnight guests. Maybe one had been Mika's. I shuddered at that thought and stopped speculating. I always overthought relationships. This one was simple. Just like Black had said

—do what he told me to do, no more, no less.

Toweling off, I looked around the bathroom. It seemed so normal and spartan, just like the rest of the house. I'd kind of expected a sex swing and a rack of toys hanging here, maybe a selection of dildos, but it seemed Black kept his play life separate from real life. This endeared him to me even more.

I scurried into the bedroom and opened the walk-in closet. Flipping through the rows of fine thread

count cotton shirts, slacks, suits and Italian shoes, I selected a crisp white dress shirt. Hopefully he wouldn't whip me for borrowing something to wear. Then again, I liked when he whipped me so... I slid into the shirt, fastening only the two middle buttons. Checking the time, I discovered it was 4:50. Ten minutes and then he'd be home.

The door slammed. He was early.

I hurried to meet Black. Without

any greeting, he stowed his briefcase and stripped off his coat.

“Fix me a drink.” He hung his jacket in the closet. “Vodka and tonic, please.”

It was the first time I’d ever heard him use the word “please”. I wasn’t sure how to reply.

“Yes sir,” I said.

He caught me by the wrist. “You’re not supposed to call me sir now. I’m asking you a favor because I’m tired. It’s not an order.”

“Right. Sorry.”

He nodded and folded me into his arms. “You smell good.”

Hand running between my legs, he swiped a finger between my pussy lips then drew it under his nostrils. His posture stiffened and he clucked his tongue. “But your cunt should smell like me. I didn’t give you permission to wash up.”

My throat constricted. “I wanted to be clean for you. I didn’t think —”

“No, you didn’t.”

His breath on my neck sent shivers down my spine. Goose bumps dotted my arms.

“I’ll have to fill you with my cum again,” he murmured, his lips against my ear.

Turning to face him, I paused. I knew I shouldn’t kiss him though every fiber in my being longed to. My lips quivered, waiting.

Waiting.

And then he was on me.

He pushed me to the floor. "Get on all fours."

I did as he instructed, my pussy bare, pulsing with anticipation. Black pushed two fingers inside me.

"Get wet for me, little Red."

As he pumped his fingers in and out of me, my body responded instantly. My juices flowed, just as he'd commanded. I gasped, writhing against the hard wood flooring.

Then he entered me, his cock so

hard I felt as though he'd cleaved me in two.

"Oh shit." The words escaped me before I could stop them.

A slap crashed against my buttocks. "Bad girl."

"I'm sorry."

He grabbed me by the hair. "You will be sorry."

The jangle of his belt buckle and the *whoosh* of it clearing his belt loops told me all I needed to know about his intentions. My buttocks

clenched in anticipation of the first hit, but none came. Instead, he looped the belt around my neck, yanking my head back.

At first the pressure to my throat panicked me, but I forced myself to inhale slowly. Yes, I could still breathe. Fear of his absolute control over me sent my pulse skyrocketing. So defenseless. So exposed. My mound throbbed, clit and nipples tight nubs. I thrilled at the new game, but what if he went too far? I tugged at the restraint.

Black slapped my ass, his hand stinging as much as the belt would have. “Don’t touch it.”

Sucking in more breaths to calm myself, I closed my eyes. I imagined what I looked like, Black mounting me, his cock buried in my cunt, the belt around my neck. My pussy pulsed harder, contracting around his shaft. He knew my every desire—even the ones I never imagined testing.

A hand tangled in my hair, Black picked up his rhythm,

fucking me hard and fast. My cunt shuddered against his cock, cream wetting my pussy lips. Clit swollen, vulva so engorged it hurt, I loved being at his mercy. Each moment of helplessness only increased my arousal, my craving for the man inside me, the man ruling me. I gasped and moaned.

Black yanked at the belt again. This time I did choke a bit, just for a second, the belt cutting into my skin. Gulping air, I adjusted my posture to relieve the tension

against my neck.

“Shut up,” he commanded.

Rhythm slowing a bit, he plunged into me and then drew out the head of his cock. The variation drove me wild and though my arms shook, my legs trembled, I remained as still and silent as I could.

Releasing his grip on my hair, he snaked a hand around my waist and stroked my clit. Pleasure coursed through me. Quaking, I

struggled to contain my reaction. He pulled the belt tighter. His cock crushing my inner walls, he thrust with savage force. Giddiness overwhelmed me, I needed more air, but I also needed more of Black. I let myself go limp, completely at his will. Euphoria gripped me just as I neared orgasm.

And then I felt it. He exploded inside me, jerking the restraint harder.

“No,” I gasped, closing my eyes.

The belt cut off my ability to draw in air. Unconsciousness loomed behind my eyelids, which only served to heighten my arousal – arousal I knew he'd leave unfulfilled.

I collapsed forward and Black released his hold on the belt. All my weight on my elbows, I struggled to suck in a few faltering breaths. His cum wet my cunt, leaking out of me and streaming down my thighs.

I quaked, unfulfilled but

relieved that he hadn't choked me more. A few more pulses of his cock and then he jerked free. Immediately I felt empty. My pussy clenched, trying to recapture the sensation of his shaft stretching me.

"No," I murmured again.

"You don't deserve to come yet."

The belt loosened from my neck and then disappeared altogether. I looked back at him, his chest heaving as he seemed to struggle to

catch his breath.

“Take off my shirt. Wasn’t I clear this morning about touching my things?”

“Yes sir.” I cast my gaze at the floor. “I was only trying to please you.”

Sitting back on my haunches, I unbuttoned the shirt, hands trembling, and then slipped out of it. He snatched it from me, shoving me forward onto all fours again. Several powerful smacks crashed

against my bare ass. My eyes prickled with tears, the hot glow from the spanking radiating out, torturing my still swollen mound. I needed release, but I also knew I'd never get it if I asked for it or complained that he hadn't let me come.

“Go make me the drink I asked for while I decide your punishment.” He punctuated the order with a slap to my thigh, stood and then strode off toward his bedroom.

I struggled to my feet and wobbled into the kitchen. More punishment? My nipples hardened, cool air moving over my body, caressing my stinging ass and where the belt had rubbed my neck. Every inch of my skin thrummed with raw nerve endings. Even when Black wasn't in the room, he owned my body.

After mixing him a vodka and tonic, I returned to the living room to find him standing there wearing only a pair of linen drawstring

pants. At first my attention was drawn to the lines of his toned body—the bulge of his biceps, the cleft between his pecs, rippling abs that led to a ridge of muscle over each hipbone—but then I noticed the device he held.

“Put the drink on the side table.”

I did as I was told, careful to place a coaster beneath the sweating glass.

“What’s that?” I walked over to

him and ran my fingertips along the mass of chains from which hung an oddly shaped dildo—a five- or six-inch-long cone that tapered to a cylinder with a curved narrow base.

“This,” his lips twisted upward in a half-smile, half-smirk, “is your punishment.”

Setting the contraption on the coffee table, he pulled a bottle of lubricant from his pocket. “Bend over.”

I complied, leaning over the sofa and twisting my head around to watch what he was doing, but a swift slap to my face told me he didn't intend for me to see. Gaze straight ahead, I waited for whatever he had in store for me.

Cool lubricant dripped down my ass crack and then I realized what the strange dildo was for. It was a butt plug, one designed for extended wear. I braced myself, my asshole tense as he tried to push it inside me.

“Relax or this will only hurt more.” He slipped two fingers into my anus, opening me with quick thrusts, then replaced his digits with the plug.

Breathing through the initial burn and sting of my asshole stretching, I gritted my teeth.

The chains tickled as he secured them around my waist then attached the nipple clamps to my breast. I gasped at the bite to the sensitive buds.

“You may stand now.” He caressed my ass.

At first I felt as though I couldn’t stand up straight. Every time I moved, the butt plug shifted and my breasts jiggled, intensifying the discomfort of both devices.

Black picked up his now watery drink and frowned. “This needs freshening up. Do you mind?”

He punctuated the request with a wolfish grin. Walking seemed an impossibility, but I took the glass

and smiled sweetly.

“It’d be my pleasure.”

Settling onto the sofa, he fixed his gaze on me. After a deep breath, I took my first step. The plug slid out a little then thrust into me with the next step, the U-shaped base rubbing my clit. My breasts bounced and again the nipple clamps dug into the rosy buds. Legs trembling, cunt engorged and throbbing, I made my way to the kitchen. The trip was unlike anything I’d ever experienced.

Every movement sent a ripple of pleasure and pain through me. I loved it.

Chapter Six

Once I'd refreshed his drink, I gingerly returned to the living room. He patted the seat beside him. I winced at the thought of sitting down.

"Come on. Join me." He took the glass, then held my hand.

With a sigh, I resigned myself to his command. Inching lower, I

gripped his hand for support lest I plop onto the sofa and impale myself. Finally I came to rest, perched on the edge. The plug sank deeper inside my ass, the base crushing against my clitoris.

Black took a sip of his drink then grinned at me. "Uncomfortable?"

"A little." I cleared my throat, sitting arrow straight.

"Rock back and forth."

I did as he said, the shaft plunging farther into me, the base

massaging me. Ecstasy coursed through my veins, heating my thighs, my asshole, my cunt. My entire body crackled with need.

“Feels good?”

“Oh yes.” I let my fingertips skim over the clamps at the tip of each breast, continuing to fuck myself.

“Now stop.”

With a groan, I ceased the rocking motion, though my labia throbbed, my heart pounding.

“How was your day?” he asked, offering me a sip of his vodka tonic.

I took it. “Good. I didn’t get much writing done, but I made the effort and that counts for something, right?”

“It does.” He nodded, taking back the glass. “You can write about your experiences here. With me.”

That I could. After all, I’d never pushed my boundaries so far, never been inside a world so completely

dominated by pleasure. Who wouldn't want to read about that?

With a chuckle, he said, "You can hardly keep yourself from rocking, can you?"

My cheeks heated. He was right. Sitting here, ass invaded, nipples on fire, clitoris pulsing, I found it difficult to focus on small talk. "It's hard not to."

Tossing back the last of his drink, he crushed an ice cube between his teeth. "Come on. Time

to restrain you properly.”

A jolt of excitement shot through me as I eased to my feet. What did he have planned for me tonight?

The short walk to the playroom racked my body, the plug bobbing in and out of my ass, stroking at my clit. I struggled to contain my reaction, knowing Black preferred me quiet, unaffected.

“Get on the table.” He motioned to a padded island in the center of

the room.

Grateful for the stool beside the table, I eased onto the high, flat surface. Again, the butt plug delved into my asshole. I sighed, shivering.

“Are you cold?” he asked, carrying a bar about three-feet long that was adorned with two sets of cuffs.

“Quite the contrary.”

“Good.” He eased me back and grasped one of my ankles.

Attaching the bar between my

legs, he spread me open wide. Then he lifted my legs and attached my hands to the bar as well. A chain from the ceiling clipped to the center of the spreader, helping me maintain this unnatural position.

Splayed open, I felt the plug slide out a little, the pressure against my labia and clit lessening, but I knew Black had other treats in store for me and I waited patiently.

Slowly walking around me, he stroked my face, my breasts, my thighs and ass.

“Time to help you understand more about yourself,” he murmured.

“What do you mean?”

“For you to let go of your inhibitions, you need to understand why you’re here.”

This statement confused me. I thought we’d covered all that in the initial interview.

“I’m here to explore,” I said.

“Explore what?”

“Kinky sex.”

“No.” He slapped my thigh, the sting heating the flesh around it. “There are lots of types of kinky sex. You like something specific.”

He smacked me again, tugging at the nipple clamps. I cried out in agony, my pussy immediately throbbing with need. And then I knew what he meant.

“Pain,” I replied. “I like when you hurt me. I want to explore that.”

“But why explore pleasure from

pain?" he asked, running a hand over my mound and wet lips. He twisted the base of the butt plug, exposing my slit and clitoris. I strained to watch what else he was doing. A small shaft of silver flashed in the light, touched my clit, vibrations shook the pearl at the center. I panted, the sensation too intense. My asshole clamped around the plug. Bursts of ecstasy shook me.

A cry forced its way out of my throat, sweat beading my brow. My

cunt felt ready to explode, but I knew I couldn't come. What punishment would he dole out then?

I forced myself to answer, "I don't know. I just like it."

"You do know."

"I don't." I bit my lip, my whole body trembling.

"Hmm." He switched off the vibrator and spun on his heel. His retreat gave me a minute to catch my breath though I couldn't calm

the raging need drawing my mound and abdomen tight. My pussy throbbed, so swollen I could hardly stand it. The scent of my juices mingled with his cum hung thick in the air.

When he returned, I could see out of the corner of my eye he held a dildo that looked as if it were made of crystal. About a foot long and very thick. I couldn't wait for him to use it on me, but once he touched the tip of it to my skin, I gasped. It was cold, *freezing* cold.

“Is that ice?” I asked.

“It is,” he replied, drawing the tip across my chest

My nipples tightened, the clamps digging in to the crinkled buds. Oh my God. A dildo made of ice. I could only imagine how he planned to torture me with it. Drips of cold water raced down my torso, collecting beneath my back. I shivered, goose bumps rising on my skin.

Tracing a path down to my cunt,

he teased me with the shaft until I couldn't control my gasping. Every pass of the ice stung, the pain just a peek of what was to come. I could only imagine what it would feel like inside me. The anticipation turned me on even more, my whole body tense and crackling with electricity.

Once he'd whipped me into a shuddering mass of raw arousal, he sheathed the dildo in a condom and pushed it into my pussy.

“Oh—” My voice broke, I

couldn't speak. The shaft of ice stretched and filled me just as his cock would, but instead of delicious heat, it was so cold it burned. Excruciating and exquisite all at once, the sensation overwhelmed me. Panting, I writhed in my restraints, cold water from the melting dildo pooling beneath my ass.

Lips to my ear, he brushed the hair from my forehead. His breath, laced with lemon and vodka, warmed my neck. "Tell me why

you like this, little Red.”

“I don’t know.” I shook my head. “Please take it out. It’s too much, too cold.”

I couldn’t think straight and though I knew he left the frozen shaft in place for less than a minute, it felt like an eternity.

As soon as he extracted the dildo, a rush of relief swept through me. When he pushed his cock inside me, the warmth felt as though he’d penetrated me with a

smoldering fireplace poker. I groaned, clenching my teeth. My pussy pulsed, cream and ice water oozing out of me.

Twisting the chain between the nipple clamps around his hand, he fucked me hard and fast, each stroke bouncing my breasts. More delicious agony coursed through me. My cunt constricted, the slick suction reverberating around the playroom.

“Why do you enjoy when I hurt you?” he growled.

I shook my head, my mind reeling. All the vanilla lovers I'd had flashed through my head and though none of them had laid a hand on me, they'd hurt me in myriad other ways—none of which turned me on in the slightest. Why, then, did Black's aggression and mastery of inflicting pain set my body on fire? I tried to formulate an answer, but each pass of his cock against my G-spot rendered me less capable of thought.

Before I could stop it, a moan

escaped me, my pussy tightening around his shaft. A ripple of ecstasy passed through me, but I knew what he would do next.

“No, no, no.” He withdrew his cock, rubbing the oozing tip against my thigh. “You don’t get to come until you answer the question.”

Desperate to have him inside me again, I stammered out the first thing that popped into my head. “It’s you. It’s the way you do this. You make me like it.”

Black dotted my nose with one finger. "Flattering, but untrue. You didn't know me when you showed up at Rocky Road."

He reached for the ice dildo.

"No. Please, no," I whimpered, knowing he'd do as he damn well pleased.

Again, burning cold filled me. I shuddered, gritting my teeth. My pussy contracted around the icy shaft, cold water leaked down my ass. Panting to withstand the pain, I

could hardly hear Black as he murmured in my ear.

“Tell me what I want to know and you’ll get your release. Why do you like me to hurt you?”

I couldn’t think, couldn’t breathe, all I knew was that I couldn’t stand the iciness much longer. I could use the stop word, but what fun would that be? I still wouldn’t understand what he was trying to teach me. My past lovers ran through my mind. They’d all taught me something, though I

doubted they'd meant to. Black was open with his desire to dominate, to force submission.

Without another thought, I blurted out, "All relationships are painful. Ours is just more honest."

A smile parted his lips and he removed the icy shaft. "Very good, little Red. Keep following that line of thought."

As he eased his cock inside me, I couldn't think, the warmth branding my pussy. But I had to

keep going otherwise he wouldn't let me come.

The pain receded little by little, replaced by friction and heat...and waves of pleasure. He pounded at my cunt, the plug in my ass moving in and out with his thrusting. The sensation of being stretched to the brink over and over filled me with ecstasy. I bit my lip to contain the moan bubbling up in my throat.

Hand in my hair, he tugged at it and I yelped.

“You do love when I give you the gift of pain, don’t you?”

“Yes,” I cried, my body spasming, a climax not far off. I had to learn what he wanted me to learn so he’d let me come.

Why did I like when Black hurt me? Why?

He never inflicted pain without a reason. Whether to teach me or push my boundaries or to free me from my inhibitions, there was always a purpose to both the

pleasure and the pain. My mind raced along, freed by the ecstasy rippling through my body.

Suddenly, I understood everything—why I was here, why Black enjoyed inflicting pain and why I loved receiving it.

“With you—” I rasped, my pussy clamping around his cock. “I can control how you hurt me and you never hurt me without purpose.”

One final thrust and he buried

himself inside me, his free hand twisting and pumping the butt plug as I came. Each contraction took me higher and I cried out, not caring that he might punish me for being so vocal. Cream flooded my cunt, squirting out of me just as it had the first night.

The orgasm went on for what felt like forever, every twitch and ripple of my body uncovering a new layer of pleasure. Fixing my gaze on Black, I watched his face contort with his own climax, his

cock spasming as he unloaded inside me.

Little by little, we both descended from our peak. Gently he withdrew and tucked his still hard cock into his trousers. My body ached from the position I'd held far too long, though I hadn't realized how much it hurt, too distracted by his other methods of torture.

Once he removed the butt plug and nipple clamps, I immediately felt empty and longed for the

fullness to return. Even the throbbing ache of my cunt had receded to a quiet pulsing. All the delicious tension had left my body, replaced by the feeling of being spent.

He released my arms and legs from their restraints then scooped me into his arms.

“How do you feel?” he asked, nuzzling my cheek and carrying me to his bedroom.

“Exhausted.”

“Good.” He kissed me softly.

After depositing me on the bed, he fetched a warm, damp cloth and cleaned between my legs.

“Shouldn’t my cunt smell like you at all times?” I teased.

Leaning down, he kissed my pussy. “You still smell and taste like me.”

For some reason, this fact excited me. The now familiar thrum of arousal claimed my body.

His tongue flicked over my clit

and I shivered, still so sensitive. He sucked at the swollen bud, setting a lazy rhythm. I melted against the mattress, sure he'd never finish me off this way, but I was going to enjoy every second of him eating me out while it lasted.

Increasing the pressure, he alternated between nipping and licking my clit.

"Oh yes, Black," I groaned, my hand straying to the back of his head before I could stop it.

He pinned my arm to the bed and gave me a firm smack against my thigh, but he didn't stop pleasuring me. The heat of the slap radiated up my leg, adding to the tension tugging at my cunt.

Chewing at my lip, I did my best to remain quiet and still, though my legs trembled. Nothing I could do about that. Each swipe of his teeth and tongue took me closer to coming. My whole body began to shake and I prayed he'd let me have this orgasm. Maybe if he

didn't know I was about to come, I could rocket over the edge before he had time to deny me.

I felt the first contraction pulse from my pussy outward and I couldn't contain my cries. Dammit, he'd stop any second now, but I couldn't control my reaction. Ecstasy flooded my core, radiating out through all of me. My cunt clutched tighter and tighter with every ripple of pleasure. I quaked, tears running down my cheeks. He'd let me come and the release

filled me with joy.

Gradually, he slowed his rhythm, more pressing his lips and tongue to my clit than sucking at it. As one last shudder passed through me, he kissed my pussy, then my thigh and then came up to kiss my mouth. The scent of our juices mingled sent another pulse of arousal through me, but I suspected this one would go unfulfilled.

“You did good work tonight, figuring out your motivations.” He stroked my cheek with the back of

his hand. “Get some rest. I have to clean up from our playtime.”

Though I didn't want to fall asleep without him, I knew I had to comply with his wishes. One more kiss and then he left me. I snuggled beneath the comforter and drifted off to sleep, the echoes of my climax releasing the last tension left in my body.

Chapter Seven

Sunday morning began with lovemaking—not fucking as we did in the playroom, but tender and sweet, just like when he'd gone down on me the night before. There were layers to this man I didn't yet understand.

Lips grazing mine, he stroked my thighs and teased open my slit.

Two fingers delved into me and I groaned as he easily found my G-spot.

The groan passed without reprimand and I tested the waters further, wrapping an arm around his neck. He took my hand and pinned it to the headboard. Not to be deterred, I hooked a leg around his waist. This he allowed, sliding his fingers out of me, pressing his cock to my opening.

Instead of thrusting into me as he usually did, he slipped inside me

with a tenderness I'd never seen from him. I spread my legs wider, grinding my clit against his pelvis. His body heat engulfed me, surrounding me with his scent. The weight of his large frame bore down on me. Breathing him in, I felt as though I disappeared in his embrace. A tempest of emotion swirled in my chest, the beauty of the moment overwhelming me. I closed my eyes and let it sweep me along.

Clearly in no hurry, he set a

slow pace, more rocking against me than thrusting in and out. My pussy clamped around his cock as if trying to draw him deeper. I craved more of him, insatiable desire ravaged me. I longed to run my hands along his broad back and rounded buttocks, but he wouldn't allow it. Even in this tender moment, he maintained that bit of control.

But I could kiss him.

First I nuzzled his cheek then slowly turned toward him, our lips

meeting. More warmth surged through me as he kissed me back, his tongue running the length of mine, flickering against my cheek and teeth.

Each forward stroke sent a burst of pleasure through me, his pubic bone massaging my clitoris. Trembling down to my core, I rode the waves of ecstasy, clinging to Black as if they might wash me away. He broke free of the kiss, his breath, warm and ragged, grazing my neck.

Our bodies united, the sweet, slick sound of our lovemaking filled the air. For the first time, I heard him moan. A shudder darted through me. Taking satisfaction from my pain was one thing—something I loved about him, but his enjoyment from pleasuring me took our relationship to another level. In making love to me, he forged a bond that both bound me to him and unnerved me. What would happen if he broke the bond?

Banishing the thought from my mind, I focused on the here and now. On the ecstasy rippling through me. Lips to my neck, he rocked against me, our bodies slick with sweat. My thighs shook, my pussy clamping harder against his cock. Tremors spread through my entire body. I locked my legs around his waist and let the orgasm break over me, whimpers and gasps on my lips. A few more strokes and I felt his cock twitch, his climax drawing his muscles tight.

I clung to him, even as my trembling quieted. I never wanted to let him go. All too soon, he gently withdrew, releasing the hand he'd pinned to the bed. A soft kiss marked the end of our lovemaking.

Opening my eyes, I drank in his brown skin, almost the color of cinnamon with the flush of exertion. We lay in silence until his breathing slowed, his thumb brushing over my lips. I kissed the fleshy pad at the tip.

“You never cease to amaze,” I murmured.

“Why’s that?”

“Honestly, I didn’t expect this sort of tenderness out of you.”

His posture stiffened and I worried I’d said the wrong thing, but I was only being honest. He’d told me to voice my feelings.

If I’d offended him he gave no more indication. Instead he replied, “There’s sex and then there’s affection. I do know the

difference.”

“Does that mean you have affection for me?”

Black sighed, stroking my cheek, but he didn't answer. I didn't press him, his actions speaking louder than words.

“Get dressed, little Red. We're going to breakfast then we should buy you some more clothes.” He scooted out of bed.

Beautiful moment over. I set my jaw, blinking away the mental

residue of his caresses. He never ceased to amaze nor did he cease to confuse. The emotional jerking around seemed to be part of his regime of control—a sort of Stockholm syndrome lite, though I wasn't here against my will. I could leave at any time. But I wouldn't, at least not right now.

I put on the jeans and shirt from yesterday, finger-combed my hair and brushed my teeth, then pulled my makeup bag from my purse. I intended to put on a little

foundation, lipstick and maybe some mascara, but Black appeared next to me, shaking his head.

“You don’t need that stuff. You look beautiful the way you are.”

I inspected my reflection, hating the freckles dotting my nose, my pale complexion disrupted by more freckles on my cheeks.

“When you put on makeup, your freckles still show through. Why not let them show in their natural state?”

I pursed my lips, narrowing my eyes. "I think they're ugly."

"The only thing ugly is your hatred of them." He put his arms around me. "You're a beautiful woman, little Red. Naturally, honestly. Stop trying to fit some ideal of beauty created by corporations to sell you makeup in the first place."

Smiling wistfully, I closed my eyes and leaned against his broad chest. Didn't he understand how long I'd hated my reflection? I

couldn't change the way I felt overnight. Ignoring his objections, I put on a layer of foundation, a little mascara and lipstick. He watched, interfering no more.

With a kiss to my forehead, he left the bedroom then returned with a bomber-style leather jacket.

"It's too big, but it'll have to do. It's chilly out and I don't want you to catch cold." He draped the coat over my shoulders.

"Thanks." I kissed his cheek and

followed him to the garage.

He owned two cars, both luxury brands. One sporty, one more conservatively styled. Both were painted black, of course. Black steered me toward the sports car.

“We could go clothes shopping before breakfast, get you a properly fitting coat.”

“No. It’s all right. I’m starving.”

“As you wish.” He opened the passenger-side door, ushering me inside.

During the car ride to the upscale section of the city, I stayed quiet, considering what he'd said. I'd started this exploration because I wanted to cast off the conformity I'd allowed to take over my life. Flipping down the visor mirror, I inspected my face, the complexion I'd been at war with my entire life. Aside from the freckles, my skin was milky smooth, a pink undertone to it. Lips the shape of a cupid's bow, slightly exotic almond eyes. Still, I thought the smattering

of freckles over my nose downgraded me from pretty to merely cute. Just as I told Black, it would take some time to shift my opinion of myself.

He pulled into the valet parking area in front of the restaurant. A young man in a red vest opened the door for me and I stepped out feeling a bit like a rock star or a socialite. Ridiculous delusion of grandeur, but Black had chosen one of those white-tablecloth places I would admire whenever I visited

this section of the city, but that I could never afford.

Once he'd exited the car and handed the valet the keys, Black offered me his arm. I took it, clinging to him for support.

"I'm underdressed," I murmured to him, noting his tailored slacks, dress shirt and woolen overcoat.

He shrugged. "Who cares? It's the job of the restaurant staff to impress us, not vice versa."

True, but still. I could see all the fashionably dressed women inside and I regretted that I hadn't taken Black up on his offer to go clothes shopping.

Holding the door for me, he entered the restaurant as if he owned it. Hell, he might have owned it for all I knew of his enterprises, but if the maître d' knew Black, the man gave no indication that he did.

I followed the maître d' to a secluded table toward the back,

choosing the seat facing the window. After all, Black clearly dined at places like this all the time. I, however, did not so I was going to enjoy every second of it.

As he had before, Black ordered for both of us and again his choices were perfect. We lingered over the food until the brunch crowd had dwindled to only a few stragglers.

“Did you enjoy your meal?” he asked, taking me by the hand.

“I did. Thank you. Are you

ready to go shopping?"

"Not just yet. I was thinking we could have some fun. I want you to slip under the table and give me head."

I chuckled, sure he was joking. Casting my gaze around the restaurant, I noted that we were practically alone, but still...

Blinking at me, he tented his fingers. "Well?"

"You're serious?"

"Yes."

Looking at the partition that separated our section from the larger dining area, I realized we did have a certain amount of privacy. Plus the tablecloth was long enough to conceal me, at least until I crawled out from under. All that aside, did he really expect me to give him a blowjob right here, right now?

His expression indicated he expected just that.

I squirmed in my seat, my pussy tightening at the thought of doing

something so shameless. If I hadn't been able to slip him my panties in public, did he really think I could do this? I wanted to submit, but fear of being caught held me back.

“Black, I can't.”

“You can and you will or you will be punished. It's that simple.”

But it wasn't simple. While I longed to please him, to do whatever he commanded, we were in public and I didn't want to cross that boundary. Well, I did want to

cross it, but I couldn't. I just couldn't.

Shame heated my face and chest. My inhibitions were silly and childish.

"I'm sorry, I can't." My shoulders sagged as I admitted defeat.

With a sigh of annoyance, he fished out his wallet and peeled off several bills, tossing them on the table. He rose, grabbing me by the arm and jerking me to my feet.

“You’re hurting me,” I murmured, sure the waitstaff was staring at us.

“I haven’t begun to hurt you.”

He marched me out of the restaurant and several blocks down the street, stopping in front of a fast food restaurant.

Furrowing my brow, I tried to figure out what he had in mind, but as soon as he pulled me through the dining area and into the men’s restroom, I understood. He shoved

me into a stall and slammed the door behind him, locking it.

“Is this better? Is this what you want? To suck my dick in a bathroom stall like a five-dollar crack whore?”

“No.”

“I took you someplace nice and gave you a command, which you refused to carry out. Now you’ll do it here.”

I met his gaze, pleading with him. “No. Please, Black. This is

demeaning.”

“It didn’t have to be this way.”

He pushed me to my knees, the hard tile cutting into my skin. One hand clutching the back of my head, he freed himself from his trousers and shoved his cock in my mouth.

The salty taste of pre-cum coated my tongue. I tried to remember what he’d taught me about giving head. Covering my teeth with my lips, I took short

breaths as he moved his shaft in and out of my mouth. At first, I struggled to keep up with the fast, deep rhythm of his thrusting, but little by little I could take him farther into my throat.

His cock now slick enough to suck harder, I increased the pressure, proud of my improved technique. I relished giving him pleasure, a feeling of power rushing through me.

The main restroom door opened and closed and I heard someone

walking around. I froze, but Black caught the back of my head and forced me to continue the blowjob. Rendering me unable to control the pace, he shoved his cock farther down my throat than I could bear. I gagged, trying to contain the sound.

Whoever had entered the bathroom washed his hands and left, but Black wouldn't relinquish control. He continued to fuck my face, tilting me back so that I was off balance and powerless to resist.

Placing my hands on his thighs, I struggled to remember the stop signal. As he gagged me with his cock again, I panicked a bit, shaking my head as best I could.

“Stop it.” He slapped my cheek but he eased up on the depth of his penetration.

I imagined him thrusting in and out of my pussy, slapping my face as he just had. My cunt pulsed, need claiming my core. Relaxing as best I could, I focused all my arousal on pleasing Black. The

heady feeling of power over him returned and I sucked at his cock, greedy for his orgasm.

After several more thrusts, he came without warning, his cream flooding my throat. Again I choked, unprepared for the rush of cum. He ceased thrusting, holding my head still. I gulped down his sweet juices, drawing in as much air as I could. Once his cock stopped contracting, he withdrew from my mouth. My eyes watered from the repeated gagging.

Black helped me to my feet, offering a handkerchief. I took it and dabbed my eyes and lips. Arms wrapping around me, he pulled me into a warm embrace. I rested my head against his broad chest, his heartbeat soothing and hypnotic.

One finger beneath my chin, Black tilted my head upward, his mouth passing over mine. Tongue darting between my lips, he seemed to savor the taste of his cum.

As we parted, he murmured,

“The inhibitions that kept you from doing as I commanded in the restaurant are the same fears that keep you from achieving your goals in life. You must learn to be fearless.”

I furrowed my brow, unsure I bought into the parallel. “There are consequences to getting caught performing fellatio in public.”

“Such as?”

“I’m pretty sure it’s illegal.”

“You really think the maître d’

would call the police and cause a big fuss at the restaurant?"

"Okay, fine, but I'm sure they'd ask us to leave and never come back."

"And what's so horrible about that?"

"Well..." I felt a blush creep up my chest and to the roots of my hair. "They might be mean about it."

Cradling my face in his hands, he said, "Do you believe I'd allow

anyone to treat you rudely?"

Swallowing hard, I shook my head. Aside from his imposing physical size, Black's dominant nature would never allow anyone to be cruel to me in his presence, of that I was sure.

"I feel stupid." I cast my gaze at the floor.

"You shouldn't. Little by little we'll get rid of those inhibitions holding you back from doing what you want." He kissed my cheek.

“Go freshen up. We have shopping to do.”

He escorted me out of the men's room and I skittered through the ladies' door, hoping no one saw me. Okay, so I had plenty of work to do on those inhibitions Black mentioned. My reflection in the mirror silenced my self-doubt.

Mascara ringed my eyes and my lipstick had smeared. Dabbing at the smudges with Black's handkerchief, I took off a good deal of my foundation as well. Freckles

stared back at me, but my cheeks glowed with a pink flush. My hair perfectly tousled and my eyes alight with daring, I suddenly saw what Black saw—a beautiful, curvaceous woman filled with spirit. At least I thought that's how he saw me.

Reapplying only a little lip balm, I hurried out to meet him.

“I get it.” I hugged the arm he offered me.

As if he understood exactly

what I meant—and most likely he did—Black kissed me softly. “I knew you would sooner or later.”

Chapter Eight

The boutique we visited was “by appointment only”, which I could only assume he’d had his assistant arrange since Black waved away my questions. A personal shopper had picked out items in advance—a couple of dresses, more jeans, some stylish blouses and tasteful but damn sexy undergarments. All fit

perfectly and flattered my complexion and figure.

Black left without paying, flipping a casual wave at the attendant. Again, I could only imagine what arrangements he'd already made in advance.

Once he'd retrieved his car from the valet, we headed home.

"Do you like the clothes? You didn't say much at the store," he noted.

"I do. They're beautiful."

“You can leave them at my place and bring more of your things later in the week.”

The statement struck me as presumptuous. “Am I moving in?”

“Not immediately, but I expect that you’ll be spending lots of time at my place.”

“I suppose.”

“Yes or no. Do you want to or not?”

“I don’t know.”

“Indecision and inhibition.” He

clucked his tongue.

Staring out the window, I attempted to sort out my feelings. While I'd enjoyed every second that we'd spent together thus far, I wasn't sure where I wanted all this to go. Then it struck me that his admonishment was true. I was absolutely indecisive and inhibited. Especially about speaking my feelings.

A pebble of annoyance worked its way to the surface and I blurted it out before I had the chance to

think better. “You have to stop buying me things after we... You know.”

“I don’t know. Say what you mean.”

“After we *fuck*.” I gripped the handles of the shopping bag.

“I thought we’d been over this.” He sighed, rolling his eyes. “It’s not my intention to make you feel like a whore. If you don’t want the clothes, we can stop by the nearest thrift store and donate them.

Doesn't matter to me."

"Well, you did call me a five-dollar crack whore earlier."

A grin broke through his serious expression. "No, I didn't. I asked if you liked being treated like a five-dollar crack whore. There's a difference."

Touché.

"For the record, I wasn't crazy about the blowjob in the bathroom thing," I said.

"Then why did you do it? You

could've stopped me at any time."

"I wanted to try it, but I don't think it's my thing. Sex in public."

"Boundary noted." He kissed my hand, arching an eyebrow. "So, should I stop somewhere to discard your payment for services rendered?"

Black rustled the bag for emphasis.

"No. I like the clothes. I'm just trying to figure out how I feel about all this."

He dipped his head as if conceding the point. All this was new for both of us. It would take some time until we understood each other completely.

* * * * *

When we got to the house, Black said he had some work to do and told me I should try to write some more.

Sitting in front of the laptop, I stared at the blank open file, every blink of the cursor mocking me.

Finally I typed the word “Black”, but couldn’t come up with much more than that.

An hour later, he walked through the dining room. “How’s the writing going?”

“It’s not.”

He stood behind me. “One word. My name. That’s it?”

I sighed. “I know. I’m pathetic.”

“That you’re calling yourself pathetic is pathetic. Stand up.”

“It’s not playtime,” I reminded

him.

“Enforced availability,” he hissed in my ear. “Stand up or I will pick you up and force you to assume the position.”

The threat sent a pulse of arousal straight to my pussy, the aching throb he elicited with ease pounding between my legs.

I stood, facing him, his warm breath grazing my nose. Would he kiss me? Though we’d done everything else on the planet, he

rarely kissed me during playtime and I craved the taste of his mouth and tongue.

As though he'd read my mind, he eased forward, pressing his lips to mine, his tongue playfully stabbing. Melting against him, I prayed the kiss would never end, but all too soon he pushed my head back, skimming his mouth over my ear and neck. I shivered, the contact with such sensitive skin tightening my nipples to tiny buds.

Boosting me onto the table, he

didn't break contact, lips still teasing my earlobe. One hand slid up my back, cradling my head as he laid me back. He wasted no time stripping off my jeans and casting them aside. Once he'd freed himself from his trousers, he pulled me to the edge and thrust into me. I cried out, not yet wet enough to accommodate his length and girth, but he didn't stop. He shoved deeper inside me. I yelped again, which only elicited a growl. After several painful thrusts, he got my

juices flowing and the agony turned into pure pleasure.

Black hooked one of my legs over his shoulder and turned his face against it. He sucked and bit at my thigh. Heat radiated out from the bite marks, claiming my pussy. I wanted him to break the skin, maybe even draw blood.

“Harder,” I moaned.

Shoving a hand against my face, he held my head to the side. “Shut up. Don’t tell me how to fuck you.”

“But I want you to bite me harder.”

He smacked my ass, leaving a warm sting in his wake. “Do not tell me what you want. You’ll take what I give you.”

I moaned, thrusting my hips upward. I knew if I reacted enough, he’d have to punish me somehow, but instead of biting me again, he put a hand around my neck. “Be still.”

Though the pressure wasn’t so

hard I couldn't breathe, his firm grip kept me immobile. He hammered at my cunt, his cock slamming home with every forward thrust. I let myself go limp. Maybe, just maybe if I gave him what he wanted, he'd do what I'd asked.

But he didn't.

Instead, he buried himself inside me, his cock twitching. He'd come already, which meant no orgasm for me. When he released me, I couldn't hide my disappointment.

He leaned forward and planted a soft kiss on my lips. "If you want more pleasure, you need to write. A thousand words, just something to get you started."

I nodded but refused to make eye contact.

"Come on." He slapped my thigh. "Don't be petulant. If you're trying to get a punishment out of me it won't work."

Right. That's what he said now, but I was sure if I pushed him far

enough, he'd have to respond. Wouldn't he?

"Okay," I replied, wrapping my arms around his neck and kissing him.

Searing pain shot across my scalp as he gripped my hair and pulled me off the table. I tumbled to the floor onto my hands and knees, but he yanked me up and pulled me by my hair then forced me to sit at the table.

Fingertips digging into my face,

he squeezed my cheeks. "Don't be a brat. You're better than that. Do what I told you to do and then you'll get your reward."

Embarrassment at the scolding doused the last residue of desire. He'd seen right through my ruse and still refused to punish me for it.

"Write." He stabbed the air with his forefinger then stalked away.

For several minutes, I sat, my arms folded over my chest. My cunt, sticky with his cum, pressed

to the chair seat. Once I'd gotten up and retrieved my pants, I resumed my defiant position.

Then it happened.

I touched my fingertips to the keys and began to write and I wrote about Black...

It was a crisp autumn day like any other, but not like any other because he walked into my life. The cut of his suit, the swagger in his walk, the cocky expression he wore told me all I needed

to know. This was the man who would change my life forever.

An hour later, I had chronicled how we met and detailed our first play session. A satisfied grin on my face, I clicked the Save button and closed the laptop. Stretching, I rose from the chair and went in search of Black.

The door to his study was closed and I hesitated before knocking on it. Worst case scenario he'd punish

me for interrupting him, and wasn't that what I wanted anyway? I tapped softly, bracing myself for his reaction.

“Come in,” he called.

Dammit. Oh well, at least I'd get to see more of his work.

Opening the heavy oak door, I discovered that his study was more than that. It was a full-fledged photography studio, replete with lighting fixtures, tripods, backdrops, etc.

“Wow.” I exhaled the word more than said it.

“You haven’t seen my workspace yet, have you?”

I shook my head.

“Come.” He rose from his chair and took me by the hand.

The studio was outfitted with old-fashioned print developing equipment as well as a serious computer system, presumably for manipulating digital imagery.

“And here,” he motioned to a

large open space, “is where I’ll take pictures of you.”

“Oh no.” I shook my head.

“Oh yes.” He nodded. “I’m going to tie you up so really you’ll have no choice.”

“I could always use the stop word.”

He shrugged. “You could, but you won’t.”

My pulse quickened. Would he bind me in the contorted, explicit poses he’d bound Mika? Ropes

cutting into my breasts and cunt, arms behind me or overhead?

“Look at you. You’re all flushed just thinking about it. Your cheeks are the most beautiful shade of red.” He caressed my face.

I met his gaze, my pulse hammering away between my thighs. “I like the idea.”

He picked up a pile of natural fiber rope. “Then let’s get started.”

Black stripped me naked and had me kneel on a large pillow.

“This can take some time and I don’t want you to get too uncomfortable...at least not before I’m finished binding you.”

Though he’d restrained me in other ways this weekend, nothing prepared me for how tightly he would pull the ropes. He began by securing my wrists behind my back, then he tied a series of complicated knots around my arms, working his way up to my breasts. Crisscrossing the rope, he squeezed my breasts into two mounds of bulging flesh.

Once he put me on my side, tying one knee to my shoulder and attaching my other ankle to my bound wrists, I could no longer tell what he was doing. All I knew was that the ropes cut into my breasts, my ass, my cunt, just as he'd said they would during our first dinner together.

The process was excruciating and took nearly an hour to finish, presumably because of the time and artistry he put into each knot. The finishing touch—he wrapped my

tongue in a silk scarf, tying a slipknot, the ends of which he secured around my head. I had no choice but to open up and say ahh.

Slowly he circled me, muttering his approval of his work. Then he set up the tripod and lighting and snapped several pictures.

“So beautiful. You should see yourself right now.” He looked at the camera’s display screen, knelt and then turned it so I could see.

A jolt of electricity coursed

through me. Whoever this woman was, she wasn't me. Sensual, helpless, auburn hair spread out across the black floor, milky skin tinged pink by the irritation of the ropes, nipples tight nubs, cunt splayed open by the ropes, milky thighs in contrast with the burgundy pillow he'd propped under me.

"You see it now. You are beautiful. Erotic. *Special*." He punctuated the word with a kiss to my thigh. Then his teeth sank into

my flesh. He bit me harder than he had in the dining room. I groaned, unable to stem the tide of pain and pleasure. My throbbing pussy clenched, eager for him to fill me.

He bit his way to my cunt, careful not to bear down too hard. His tongue flicked over my clit, sending ripples of ecstasy through me. I trembled, unable to do anything else. The ropes sliced into my rib cage as I panted. I could hardly draw in enough air.

Black laved at my pussy using

long, languid strokes, tongue dipping in and out of me. I felt myself get wetter and wetter, the cool air in the studio licking at my dripping slit.

Without warning, he stood and I prayed he wouldn't leave. I needed him now, more than ever, to fuck me, bound and motionless like this, completely at his mercy. His plaything. My mound pulsed and I watched helplessly as he walked out of the studio.

I pulled against the restraints,

but there was no way in hell for me to get out of this bondage without him setting me free. My wrists chafed, my breasts and ass were on fire from the taut ropes.

When he returned, he was naked, carrying a small bottle of fluid. I'd never seen this much of his body before and I took a moment to drink him in. Exquisite musculature, tight abdomen, rippling shoulders and that ocean of caramel skin, marked only with a few well-placed tattoos. He was

stunning.

Setting aside the bottle, he knelt in front of me and rolled me onto my back. My legs poised in midair, my arms behind my back, I was immobile, the ropes between my thighs cutting into my vulva even more.

Rubbing the head of his cock along my slit, he slid into me. Immediately my pussy clenched his shaft. Throbbing need coursed through me. Unable to speak or move, I could only take what he

gave me, but I knew he'd give me the pleasure I longed for. I'd been a good sub, I'd withstood the pain of this extreme bondage and now I'd get my reward.

As he pounded my cunt, the ropes rubbed against my skin, the agony only adding to my pleasure. Not only would my pussy be raw, my whole body would be as well. I panted, unable to do much else to manage the overwhelming sensations. Each powerful slap of his pelvis against my ass sent waves

of ecstasy through me.

Brushing his thumb over my clit, he took me to another level of bliss. I floated along on the rush of pleasure and pain. Overcome with arousal, I strained against the bonds. I needed to touch him, I needed to buck wildly, I needed to come, but all I could do was wait for him to give me release.

Beads of sweat dotted my brow, my whole body trembled, my muscles tightened. Tears flooded my eyes and I sucked in gulps of air

as best I could, the rope slicing into my ribs. I caught his gaze, silently pleading with him.

He increased the pressure of his thumb against my clit. More intense pleasure rippled through me. My cunt sucked at his cock, the smacking sound ringing in my ears. I loved how he fucked me, how he gave me sweet pain in return for my submission. He owned every inch of my body.

Finally, the skyrocketing ecstasy reached its pinnacle and I shook,

crying out. Juices wet my thighs, my pussy contracted over and over. Tears leaked down my face, my body simultaneously enraptured and in agony. I sobbed harder as the orgasm increased in intensity.

Before I'd finished climaxing, Black jerked out of my cunt and straddled my face, shoving his cock to the back of my throat. Unable to close my mouth, I pulsed my tongue against his velvety head, my pussy still spasming. I wanted him to climax as I gulped down ropes of

his cum.

He held my cheeks together, fucking my face, the rope tugging harder at my tongue. I struggled to breathe, but when I felt his sac tighten, I knew it wouldn't be long that I'd have to manage his pace. A few thrusts more and he exploded, filling my mouth. I swallowed down his cream, my lungs straining for air.

Chest heaving, Black carefully climbed off. He slid to the floor, hand to forehead. Though I could

hardly make out his expression out of the corner of my eye, I got the sense he was choked up.

As if the world came back to him in one sudden burst, he jolted upright, reached for a pair of scissors and set about cutting me free. Once he'd freed a limb, he would rub it down with the salve from the bottle he'd brought earlier. Immediately it soothed the burning sting left in the wake of the ropes. When he finally freed my mouth, he gathered me in his arms,

smoothing my hair and pressing me to his chest. My body ached from holding such an unnatural pose for so long and I was glad for the comfort and shelter of his embrace.

After several minutes passed, I looked up at him. Tears glittered in his eyes. "Are you okay?"

He shook his head, but offered no explanation.

Finally, he released me. "Let's get you to bed. You must be exhausted."

I nodded.

As he had the night before, he scooped me up and carried me to the bedroom. Glad to have the help, I was unsure I could even walk at this point. And just as he had the past two nights, he brought a warm washcloth and some over-the-counter painkillers. I gulped them down, the cold water icy against my dry, raw throat.

Only when he curled up with me did I have the courage to ask, "Is that what you used to do with

Mika?"

He nodded.

Unsure how I felt about this revelation, I studied his face, his expression. Features tight, lips pressed together, he for once broadcast his emotions clearly.

"You miss her." Not a question, a statement.

"Every day."

Tears welled in my eyes and I wanted to flee the house. Was that all I was? A substitute for a dead

woman? But I didn't run. I curled up in a ball, putting distance between me and Black.

Propping himself up on one elbow, reaching for me, he said, "I've upset you."

"It's fine," I lied.

"It's not fine." Brushing a thumb over my lips, he moved in for a gentle kiss.

I wanted to reject him, I wanted to tell him to fuck off, but somehow —faced with the only real emotion

I'd seen from him — I was powerless to act.

As we parted, I drew in my lips, tucking them between my teeth. If I couldn't reject his kisses outright, I could prevent him from tasting me again.

"Don't be like that." He caressed my face. "We shared something special tonight."

Had *we* shared it? Or had he shared it with the ghost of a dead woman? And there was that word

“special” again. He liked to toss it around, but never put it in any context. Emotion gripped at my throat, but I would not allow myself to cry.

“Little Red, I didn’t mean to upset you. I wanted to share Kinbaku with you because it means something to me. Surely you understand that.”

I didn’t understand. Not yet. Maybe tomorrow in the light of day...

Sighing, I rolled over. "I'm just tired."

"I'm sure you are." He stroked my hair and shoulders, planting little kisses where his hand alighted.

Confused and worn out, I gave over to his tenderness. I couldn't reconcile the man who'd forced me to my knees in a public restroom or the man who'd rammed his cock down my throat, gagging me repeatedly until he came, with the man cuddling with me in bed. If

indeed he was cuddling with me and not the memory of his lost lover.

He kissed my forehead. "Get some rest. You have to write more tomorrow."

Though most of our relationship was predicated on doing as he said, it irked me that he thought he could dictate my actions outside of playtime or my training.

"Tomorrow? I work tomorrow."

"We'll discuss that in the

morning.”

He draped an arm over me. Little by little, his body relaxed, his breathing evened out, but no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't sleep. This was all moving so fast and I wasn't sure how much further I wanted to go.

Sexually we were compatible, no doubt about that, but emotionally... Well, I thought we'd connected, but now too many doubts crept in. Was I a substitute for Mika? Did I even want to stay

here with Black? And that was another thing. I didn't even know his real name. He didn't know mine.

Granted he was the most intoxicating man I'd ever met and I was blossoming under his tutelage. I felt different already—more confident, more desirable than ever. For the first time in years, I considered quitting my job and devoting myself to writing full time. But by the same token, everything in Black's world had

this darkness about it.

Even here in his bedroom, the lights out and curtains drawn, I felt as though the pitch black would swallow me. Question was—did I want it to consume me or did I want to be free of it?

Too tired to come to any conclusion, I gave over to the pull of fitful sleep.

Chapter Nine

Monday morning, I woke early. I had to get ready for work and to be honest I was looking forward to a little normalcy, a little time to sort out how I felt about Black and about, well, everything.

As I dressed, he entered the room, carrying a cup of coffee, which he set on the dresser.

Apparently he'd brought it for me.

"Where are you going?"

"Home. Well, to work, then home."

"We discussed this. You shouldn't be wasting your time at that menial job."

"It's *my* menial job." I tucked my shirt into my skirt. "It pays the bills."

"I can pay your bills."

Narrowing my eyes at him, I struggled to ascertain whether he

was serious. "Black, I have to go."

He grabbed me by the arm and pushed me back onto the bed. "Not if I don't let you go."

A real burst of fear shot through me. He was so much stronger than I was. Rough sex was one thing, but manhandling me in this situation wasn't acceptable.

"Midnight!" I jerked my arm free. "This isn't playtime. I have to go."

He backed off, crossing his arms

over his chest. As he watched me finish dressing, I could feel him smoldering beneath his silent exterior.

Did he really expect me to quit my job and stay with him? And the ghost of his dead lover? Three days did not a commitment make.

Finally he spoke. "When we discussed this arrangement, I told you if we fit together, I'd allow you to stay."

"Yes." I smoothed my skirt. "But

I haven't made up my mind if this is the right fit for me. I need some time to think about it."

"Really?"

"Really." I picked up the cup of coffee and headed into the kitchen.

He followed hot on my heels. "What's there to think about? Haven't I given you everything you've asked for? At this point in our lives, what sense does it make to prolong a courtship if the end result will be the same?"

“Is that what this is? A ‘courtship’?” I put air quotes around the word “courtship”. Who even used the term courtship these days?

“I thought I made myself clear the night we negotiated this arrangement.”

“So now it’s an arrangement?”

He set his jaw, staring at me as though I’d sprouted a second head.

“I can’t just move in with you. We just met. We just started getting

to know each other. I don't even know your real name."

"Are you telling me you don't feel the connection?"

"I do and to be honest, it scares me a little. I don't know that I want to live like this every day. Sexually I find the whole BDSM thing very intriguing, but I don't want you to tell me what to do, day in and day out."

For the first time since we'd met, true anger flashed across his

face and he barked at me, “Who says that’s what I want from you? I’ve told you all along I admire your strength.”

“Yes, that’s what you’ve told me, but what you show me is something different. Hell, that’s what you’re doing now — demanding that I stay, demanding that I quit my job. You can tell me when and how to suck your cock, but outside the playroom, you aren’t going to tell me how to live my life. Period.”

He didn't reply, he didn't move, he didn't even look at me.

Fine. Whatever. It had been a mind-blowing weekend and maybe that was the best I could hope for from someone like him, from a situation like this.

I'd known all along that this type of sexual exploration was outside the norm and there was nothing wrong with that, but I wasn't ready to commit to...to whatever he was asking me to commit to.

Shouldering the laptop bag, I turned to leave then thought better of taking the gift with me. Gently, I placed it on the counter.

“See you when I see you...*sir*.”

He didn't reply so I strode toward the door. Then I heard him murmur something. I hadn't quite caught what he'd said and I froze. My hand on the doorknob, I knew I could leave. I could be free, free of whatever strange codependence was forming between me and Black.

Instead of moving forward, I asked, "What did you say?"

After he cleared his throat, he replied, "I said my name is David. My real name is David Denegro."

Shock rippled through me. It was the only concession he'd made in the past three days. Taking a deep breath, I turned around.

I walked up to him and took his right hand in mine. "I'm Georgia Reilly. Nice to meet you."

Nodding, he fixed his gaze on

the floor. Was it so hard for him to share this vulnerable moment with me? I realized it must be difficult for him to relinquish even a tiny bit of control and yet he'd done it. For me.

In that moment I understood. As much as I longed to please Black —no, not Black, *David*—he longed to please me just as much. I had equal power in this budding relationship. Somehow I'd stumbled on to the one man who completed me. Yes, completed me

—as unpopular a notion as it was these days.

He was the darkness to my light, the night to my day, the Dominant who craved my submission. We'd forged a powerful bond, one that would take some time to comprehend. But if I didn't make my stand now, would he ever really respect me?

"I—I don't know if I can stay here with you," I murmured. "And Mika."

Head shaking almost imperceptibly, he looked at me. "That's not what I'm asking of you."

"Isn't it?"

Again, he fixed his stare on the floor. That was all the answer I needed.

I kissed his cheek. "We'll talk after I'm off from work."

He released my hand, wrapping his arms around himself, and with that David was gone, replaced

again by Black's cold stare.

I nodded and took my leave.

Once out the door, I breathed in the cool, crisp autumn air. The leaves on the trees had turned various shades of magenta, scarlet and buttercup yellow. What the hell was I doing, running away from the most exciting man I'd ever met to hurry off to a shitty job I hated?

But could I do this? Could I give myself to a man who ate, drank and

breathed so foreign a lifestyle?
Would he lose interest in me after
he'd forced my total submission?
Would I allow him to dominate me
completely? Was that what he
wanted?

Maybe it was really what I
wanted. The thought sent a shiver
up my spine.

More questions ricocheted
around my brain, but I ignored
them.

Once in my car, I willed myself

to start the engine, then I willed myself to pull out of the driveway. One step at a time, I found myself finally in my cubicle at work. It seemed grayer and smaller than usual. No matter how hard I tried to banish the memory of Black's hands on my body, the sensation haunted me. My cunt still ached from the pounding he'd given me the night before, my skin still raw from the elaborate bondage. The thought drew my nipples into painfully tight buds.

Blinking away tears, I shook my head. I'd never make it through the day at this rate. Minutes seemed like hours and hours stretched into days, but finally six o'clock rolled around. I collected my purse, clocked out and bid my coworkers goodbye.

As soon as I exited the building and entered the parking area, I saw him— Black stood by my car, bearing a bouquet of flowers.

A grin pulled at my lips—yet another concession from him.

“What are you doing here?”

He shook his head. “Can you honestly say that today was better than your weekend with me?”

“No but—”

“But it’s something you can call yours. I know.” He held up the bouquet. “These are yours as well. I want you to have whatever *you* want. I want you to have a choice. That’s all.”

“Didn’t sound like a choice this morning.” I took the flowers.

“Because I don’t understand why you would choose *this*.” He motioned to the squat gray building, chuckling. “Other than sheer stubbornness.”

My turn to laugh. I put the bouquet to my nose. The fragrance of tuberose, jasmine and violets flooded my nostrils.

“They’re beautiful. Thank you.”

Though I appreciated that he’d met me this far, I still had more questions than answers. He

demanded so much of me and gave so little. If he expected me to take the next step, he had to show me more.

“You’ve spent a good deal of time forcing me to examine my motivations, but I know nothing about why you enjoy dominance and inflicting pain.”

Fixing his stare on some faraway point, he nodded curtly. “It’s something that took a very long time to figure out and it’s not something I tell just anyone.”

I remained quiet. I wasn't just anyone, he had taught me that. The silence stretched on but I would not budge, not until he had given me what I asked for.

Finally he went on. "I haven't always taken artistic photos. I was an embedded journalist for over a decade. Somalia, Kosovo, Iraq. I saw people do terrible things to each other and I had no control, no power to stop them. All I could do was chronicle those atrocities and that made me feel inadequate."

Of all the things I'd expected him to say... Well, I hadn't really expected this much. My heart broke for him. I tightened my grip on the bouquet, a little sorry I'd stripped him so bare. "As a Dom, you feel powerful."

"And in control. The darkness of my youth, it's a permanent part of who I am. I crave it." Shoving his hands in his pockets, he looked at me out of the corner of his eye. "And...and I didn't mean to muddy the waters by sharing with you

what I shared with Mika. I see you for who you are. Surely you know that.”

I did know it. Perhaps my own insecurities had flared, making matters worse. “I just thought... I don’t know what I thought. What we share, what we do—it dredges up a lot of emotions.”

“As it should.” He tucked a curl behind my ear. “We can feel this out together. That’s what we’re supposed to do.”

I nodded. God knew I wanted to. Would I be weak to give in to him or would I be stronger for taking on the exploration of body, mind and soul?

“We don’t have to decide everything today.” He held out a hand, which I took.

“Okay.”

“Where would you like to go now?”

“My choice?”

“Your choice.” He arched one

eyebrow.

“Let’s go to your place.”

Casting his gaze skyward, he shook his head and sighed. “Wouldn’t it have been easier to stay this morning and talk all this out than to go through this whole song and dance?”

“No.” I sniffed the bouquet again. “And I don’t think it would’ve been much of a challenge for you if I had.”

He pursed his lips as if

considering what I'd said then replied, "Agreed."

Black advanced on me, pinning me to my car with his body weight. Kissing me hard, he raked his teeth over my bottom lip.

"Leave your car. I'll have my assistant drop it off later."

"Okay."

"Not 'okay'. Yes or no."

"Yes."

He pushed one knee between my legs, his hands roaming over

my body, his mouth capturing mine again. Other people milled around the parking garage. I didn't care if they saw. I had a feeling I'd worked my last day at this godforsaken place. Black retreated, punctuating the kiss with a few pecks to my chin and neck.

“Let's go.”

“Yes sir,” I replied, pressing my teeth against my stinging bottom lip.

The darkness of David's world

closed in on me again, but this time it was different – enticing instead of strange or menacing. I slipped into the passenger seat of his car, letting his hold over me consume me. I fell into his blackest night, unsure of what the future would bring. But whatever resulted, it would be of our own making. Together.

About Cindy Jacks

Prior to becoming a multi-published writer of romantic and erotic fiction, Cindy went to college at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and graduated with a BFA in Art. After a brief attempt at an art career, she decided the “starving artist” life wasn’t for her. She worked for ten years in the

corporate arena, but now spends her days as a full-time author.

When not chained to her laptop, she enjoys hanging with her family, belly dancing and exploring the culinary arts.

Cindy welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email addresses on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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Blackest Nights

ISBN 9781419944871

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Jacks

Edited by Jillian Bell

Cover design by Perry

Cover photography by guwu-123rf.com

Electronic book publication July 2013

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