

The Secret
of
Harmony Reed

Volume III:
Same Struggles

by Isaac Byrne



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Chapter One

“That’s... wow. That’s one hell of a secret, Miss Reed,” Jordan said, eyes wide.

“I didn’t tell you I was a sex slave to impress you,” I snapped. It was difficult being so feisty in the nude, but Jordan was intimidated by not only my age and position of authority in school, but by the situation in which she found herself. As for her cohort...

“Good, because it sounds to me like you’re nothing but a slut with an alibi,” said Matt with a bemused grin. He wasn’t intimidated by me at all. With good reason. He’d triggered me, after all.

“You should know I’m not some mere garden variety skank like your friend here,” I said, indicating my target by tugging her firmly by the neckline of her t-shirt, spirit wear for the school volleyball team, and pulling her face right down into my tits. It was a dominance marker, which was what this trigger was largely about.

The part of me that was an idle passenger in my automaton body rebelled at the way she immediately began sucking on my tits. After all, this cabin was absolutely sweltering, and the hot, wet mouth of this girl only exacerbated the discomfort. I had only the faintest notion where we were, as I’d been triggered on the drive over and been much more focused on splitting my attention between driving and sassing my teenage master and mistress. (Splitting attention was important, since I couldn’t bring them pleasure if I got us in a collision and killed them.) We were a good thirty-some miles east of town, deep in the woods and a good way up in the hills.

In short, we were somewhere nobody would ever find us.

That would matter to me later, when I was a person. Right now, however, I was a slave, and my only concern was how to make the walls of this crappy old cabin quake with the orgasms of my owners-of-the-day.

Maybe I should explain. My name is Harmony Reed, and I was a sex slave. That’s a secret, though, so keep it to yourself. It looks like I am one again, at least for the evening. Right out of high school, while my classmates were landing their first jobs, getting knocked up, preparing for college, all that jazz, I spent my summer in the custody of Master, who abducted me right off the street. Literally – right out of the cab of my dad’s Corolla. I was brainwashed. I don’t remember how, so whether it was science or sorcery, I wouldn’t be surprised either way. Master was incomparably brilliant, an intellect matched only by Master’s sophistication and sex appeal. (At least, that’s what my brain told me once Master was finished with it.) Master used me whenever Master liked, however Master liked, and rented me out for money and favors.

In a sense, Master – whose name my brain can’t even try to think or say, nor reduce to mere pronouns like some ordinary man – didn’t rent *me* out. Master rented a

fantasy version of me out. With his brainwashing techniques, he had installed dozens of different personalities inside me, to suit the tastes of any man or woman who could afford me. Slutty secretary, bratty stepdaughter, arrogant superheroine, girl who pretends she doesn't want to be raped, girl who *actually* doesn't want to be raped... You want it, you got it. The only consistencies between them were my body, and my desire to fulfill the fantasy.

Then one day, Master died. I alone was there to see it happen. Nothing grandiose, really; Master had simply taken me on a weekend rock-climbing excursion, and fell. I was programmed never to attempt to contact the outside world, and so even though I knew full well Master's phone was in Master's pocket, I didn't even try to see if it had fared better than Master from the fall. I stood there and watched Master die.

Watching, because I had to be sure Master didn't have any final commands.

No more Master meant no more enslavement. I left. I didn't try to go back home; I'd always been paranoid that it had been someone close to me that had sold me out to Master in the first place. (Perhaps Master had instilled that paranoia as one more guard against escape, but I didn't dare risk it.) So I tried to make a life for myself.

I got lucky. I crossed paths with a woman named Hannah – the mother of the young man who'd triggered me today – and she gave me a place to stay, forgave me my vagueness about my past, helped me find work, and become a person again. She saved my life, really. And through her, I met my other best friends, the step-brothers Justin and Miguel, and Vivian, wild child of the group. At least, so long as I kept clear of my old habits. It wasn't easy. Master had remade me to be wet and ready at all times.

Actually, it was that fact that kicked all this off. One day, I decided to visit a hypnotherapist to try to fix my poor, perpetually sex-starved mind once and for all. I reached out to Dr. David Kovacs, and his first attempt at hypnosis unlocked something inside me that in the years since my escape from Master's ranch, I had nearly forgotten. From that day on, I began to get triggered, just as Master had done to me in the past, only at random. A delivery man. A customer at the car wash I worked at. My friend Vivian, embarrassingly enough. And, of course, young Jordan Shu, the young woman presently sucking hungrily at my boobs.

"God you look hot like that, Jordan," Matt said, one hand in his front pocket rubbing at his cock. The reminder that we had an observer snapped her out of her haze, and she drew back.

"Oh my gosh, Matt, don't *look*! That's so... ew, you're touching yourself!"

"Come on, you're not full lezzie. Why don't the three of us head to the bedroom, see exactly where on the spectrum you fall?"

She frowned. "No thank you."

Neither of them consulted me. Naturally. You don't ask the dog what room it wants to hang out in; you go, and it follows. In the hour it had taken to drive here, they

had tested at length to make sure I was truly under their control. My dominance trigger was less obvious than most in that regard, but ultimately, I still wanted to please them. Maybe I had some attitude about my compliance, but as they pinched, poked, prodded and probed at me, I made sure they understood they were entirely welcome to do just that. At their behest, I told them all about my secret life with Master, as a whore and a slave.

There was an irony to all this. I'd spent the past few weeks in a state of perpetual paranoia, certain that someone somewhere was doling out my trigger words to strangers, letting them use my body at their leisure. Even I didn't know the triggers on a conscious level; the only way I knew "sparkle hydrangea vestibule" wasn't a trigger is the fact that I just thought it and nothing happened. They could be numbers, or nonsense words, or mere grunts, for all I knew. The words were deep in my subconscious, waiting to mold me into someone's plaything.

Finally, Dr. Kovacs had realized the truth of it, and called me the moment he realized what was going on. Nobody was giving out my triggers. *I was triggering myself.* Like bubbles seeping to the surface of a tar pit, they were in there, fighting their way to out before popping and making a mess out of everything around them. All this time I'd spent looking over my shoulder, I actually should have been looking in a mirror.

The realization, however, was short-lived, and this is where the irony kicks in. I was still on the phone with Dr. Kovacs when Matt and Jordan triggered me, the first people to do so (other than myself) since Master's passing. It was what I called my Boss Bitch trigger, for snide condescension and derision, coupled with a desire to use and punish my masters/subordinates as I saw fit. Fitting, for a couple of kids from the school I worked at, I supposed.

Jordan, impressively, had both heard and retained whatever it was I'd said to trigger myself that day I'd caught her smoking with her friends in the girl's room. Good girl that she was, she'd initially gone with Dominant Harmony out of simple terror of my status as an adult who worked at her school. Soon, she realized something more was at play, and I treated her to one hell of a spectacle in an empty classroom. Matt had overheard some of it, and I'd had to explain myself to keep him quiet. Only then he'd apparently gone to Jordan, and together, the two of them had hatched a plan that ended with the two of them in the back of my car, magic words at the ready.

So here I was. Alone with these two horny, conniving high school seniors, and completely at their mercy.

"Are you two going to stand around bickering all day?" I interjected as they were doing precisely that. "You triggered me. Now does either of you have the sack to even try to use me?"

Matt looked to Jordan, still hoping for a threesome, or at least to be allowed to watch. Jordan looked to me. "Can... can we do, err, be, alone?"

I shook my head in disgust. “I don’t know. C-c-can we?” I actually didn’t know; dual triggers were always tricky, trying to please two people whose interests might conflict.

“Eh, go for it,” Matt said at last. “I’m gonna head down to the dock, see if I can catch us some dinner. When I get back, she’s mine.”

“If you think you can handle me, killer,” I retorted, making sure to imply via my inflection that I did not. “Killer” had always been my pet name for my friend’s son; it seemed now that “kidnapper” would have been more appropriate.

“Come on, Jordan. Let’s see if you can’t improve upon your performance from last time.”

She smiled nervously. “OK, Miss Reed.”

I couldn't even count the number of times I've received a spanking in my life. As a kid, my dad was a believer in corporal punishment and I'd earned myself a few swats on occasion. But once I was taken by Master, I learned all about it. You'd be surprised how many guys have a thing for it. I was, at least. In my head, I figured a hot naked woman would be an obvious target for fucking and blowjobs. While those were pretty much a daily occurrence, it was a surprise how often a man took his hand to my backside.

For some, it was a playful swat or two in the midst of other activities, and for others, it was the whole purpose of their visit. Master had always demanded a premium to be allowed to do anything that might bruise, leave welts, or otherwise damage the merchandise, and part of me is still proud that Master frequently declined to allow the guests to thoroughly work me over in that regard.

(Not of out concern for my well-being, obviously. No, Master always kept Master's own self-gratification at the top of all other priorities, and exercised foresight in preventing damage to a girl Master might want to use for Master's own pleasure.)

Here and there, I got a good deal more experience in doling out spankings than I ever would have absent Master's intervention in my life. In time, I began to see some of the attraction. The simple sight of a rounded bottom quivering after a slap. The percussive noise, followed by the recipient's own unique response. Some panted, some whimpered, some cried out, some held their breath and made no sound at all. There was the power of it all, too. While I'd developed a pretty deep submissive streak in my years at the ranch, I could still see the attraction of being allowed to handle someone so roughly, to treat a full-grown adult like a bratty child.

As a true submissive though, I preferred receiving to distributing. That was the mark of the genuine article. Plenty of girls dabbled at submission, pretended to it, but for most of them, what they were after was the freedom not to make decisions on the minutiae of sex. They still wanted to come, to have their buttons pushed. Some just played at it to drudge up the weird shit their partners were into. We real deal submissives, though, get off from raw obedience, regardless of the external pleasure. From having their power and agency taken from them. From submitting.

Jordan Shu, I was learning, was one such.

So as I spanked the holy hell out of Jordan Shu's pale white ass, it was win-win in the game of submissive on submissive. For her, it was another opportunity to have a stronger, sexier, more experienced woman take the reins and put her through her paces. For me, I was triggered. Whatever my behavior, I was in complete submission to the needs of the one who'd triggered me. Even if that meant submitting to their desire to be dominated.

Her ass was already bright red, and I knew from experience that if I kept going much longer, at that intensity, I was going to actually hurt her. Jordan was a sensitive girl; I doubted she'd enjoy that. At least, not tomorrow when she couldn't sit down.

She was bending over the nightstand next to the room's shabby bed, her back arched and butt thrust out to offer herself up more abuse. The furniture was caked in dust, cobwebs hanging from the lamp and the look of those once-white sheets promised little better care. Jordan didn't care, and if she didn't, I didn't. I gave her a respite, teasing at her sopping wet pussy with a finger, making sure to engage in some incidental contact with her asshole just to keep her wondering what was coming next.

"Jordan, Jordan, Jordan," I said reprovably. "I thought we'd talked about being a good girl. You promised me I wouldn't have to punish you like this again."

A hiss issued from between her lips as I grazed her clit with one manicured fingernail. Not to hurt her, but to revoke the ongoing pleasure. "I did! I mean, I am. I've been good. No more smoking, I promise. I obeyed what you told me to do."

"You did, did you? Then how exactly do you explain where we are now?"

She turned to look at me over her shoulder. "Um, what do you mean?"

"You snuck into my car. You abducted me. You took me to this disgusting little shack in the middle of nowhere. Does that sound like a good girl to you?"

There was a hesitation, but then she ventured a tiny but confident smile. "Well you can't threaten to call my mom this time, can you?"

That was true. Matt had taken my phone from me while we were still in the car. Not that I had this girl's parents on speed dial or anything. "You wipe that smug little grin off your face, Jordan. You take my phone, and think I have nothing over you any more?"

The girl shrugged. "Well... kinda, yeah."

"Oh? Well, I guess I'd better be a good hostess then, shouldn't I." With that, two fingers went right up inside her, and my pinky right into her ass. I was thoroughly practiced at this, easily able to target the clit without any significant disruption to my thrusts. Jordan shrieked at the sudden double penetration, adjusting her hands to grip the sides of the nightstand for dear life.

She was a pretty little thing, in her own way. The Asian girl was too skinny for my taste, petite little breasts and an ass so tight it did nothing to fill out her pants. Still, she had gorgeous almond eyes, a pair of pouty lips that seemed to be trying to make up for the lack of plumpness elsewhere on her body. Two little brown raspberry-sized nipples that were made to be sucked on. In the sultry atmosphere of the cabin, sweat was beading all over her naked body, convulsing and tensing in preparation to come.

Then, as suddenly as I started, I pulled out of her altogether, wiped my hand on the filthy bedsheets and flopped down on its surface. It was lumpy, and didn't smell altogether great, but no matter. I knew exactly how good I looked lying on my side, head propped up on one hand. I'd literally practiced it and gotten feedback from my sister slaves at the ranch. Once Jordan's body realized it was no longer receiving the pleasure that it had, she turned to look at me accusingly.

“But... but...!” She stamped her foot pitifully. “I was so close! You can’t stop!”

“Can’t I? I thought I had nothing over you. Now you’re saying you need me to get your little slut cunt off?”

She nodded. “But we, you know... triggered you, or whatever. Doesn’t that mean you have to...?”

I snorted a laugh. “Obviously not.” It actually did, but this trigger was all about asserting supremacy over her. She wouldn’t feel that if I followed orders.

“Please, Miss Reed? Come on, I’ve been good – you know, other than triggering you.”

“I tell you what. You’re a student, and I’m your teacher, at least when it comes to teaching you how to quit being such a stupid little slut. Do you remember the lessons I taught you last time?”

She frowned at being called stupid, but she was on her heels now. She may have kidnapped me, controlled my mind, but she hadn’t figured out how to make me do what she really wanted. “Yeah. Like I said before, good girls obey. I obeyed you.”

“That’s all you remember?” I shook my head and rolled to face away from her. My seeming lack of interest seemed to rattle her, and she dashed to the far side of the bed to be back in front of me.

“No! Um, what else. Good girls obey, they do what they’re told...” Her lips moved soundlessly as she tried to give voice to what she was missing. “Oh! Um, good girls are slutty, and, um, they think with their cunts! And I guess I definitely did that when I, um, took you here.” She looked down. Why did she have to be embarrassed about kidnapping me? She must not appreciate that this is what I existed for. To be used. To give pleasure.

“Maybe you’re not a lost cause after all,” I said, patting the empty space on the bed beside me. The girl practically leapt in next to me, pressing her lithe body against my own.

“Thank you, Miss Reed.” Her hands fidgeted at her hips; I could see she was nervous about touching me unasked.

“Do you like my body, Jordan?”

She nodded vigorously. “You’re so pretty. I’ve never met anyone as, like, hot as you. Like, seriously, you should hear the way kids at school talk about you behind your back.”

I had, actually, though I could imagine there was plenty more I hadn’t. “Do you want to touch me?”

Her lower lip sucked in anxiously. “Uh huh.” She reached out to touch my breast. I permitted it for a few seconds of wide-eyed exploration – I had no doubt she’d never done anything of the sort with a woman before – before slapping her hand harshly.

“I didn’t give you permission, you greedy little slut. I thought your generation was the one constantly raving about consent.”

She pulled her hand back, eyeing me resentfully. “I didn’t think I needed to ask, since you’re... you know.”

“Well now you know, and I’ll try to speak slower in the future so you can keep up.” I sighed irritably. “Ever since we’ve come here, you’ve been presumptuous, Jordan. I think if you really want to try to be a good girl again—”

“I do!”

“—then you owe me an apology.”

I waited for her to predictably misunderstand. She didn’t disappoint. “I’m sorry, Miss Reed. It’s just, I’m kinda new at—”

“Apologies are meaningless if you qualify them,” I interrupted. “And verbal apologies barely have meaning to begin with.”

“Verbal... but... if I can’t touch you, then...?” She frowned, unable to keep her eyes off my tits, my thighs.

“Looks like you have something else to learn,” I grumbled. “Hands and knees, Jordan.”

Still close to coming from before, she scurried to obey, quickly assuming the specified pose. With the sun near to setting, a soft golden light shined in through the window on her body. She really was quite lovely. Nowhere near Master’s standards, but for a regular person. Her tight little ass had so little cushion to it, it was like it was made to frame that sweet little pussy of hers. Inwardly, I longed to satisfy it, but that wasn’t what I’d been triggered to do. She could come when she had earned it. That was why she’d made me this way.

I crawled around behind her, giving her pussy a little rub. She cooed, nuzzling backward into me. Then I bent down close, letting her feel my breath hot and warm on her backside before giving her a slow, teasing lick down the length of her slit, ending with a little swirl around the clit. She shuddered in delight. “Oh, Miss Reed...”

“Have you ever had anyone go down on you, Jordan?” I asked, directing the question to the cunt two inches from my face.

“Um, yeah. My ex-boyfriend did a few times.”

“Was he any good at it?” I asked, adding dryly, “Not that it seems to take much to make your cunt drool.”

“Y-yes, Miss Reed. At least, I liked it. It felt, um, good.”

“Good.” With a little firm direction and some agile maneuvering on my part, I lifted her leg and slipped myself underneath her, shimmying down into the proper alignment. “Then maybe you learned something, and your apology won’t be entirely disappointing.”

My breasts were blocking my view of her face, but from the feel of her silky black hair against my thighs, I could tell she was looking down at my well-groomed pussy with trepidation. “I... but, um, I don’t know if I... know how to– EEP!”

I took hold of that hair and pulled her pretty face right down between my thighs, which I quickly used to keep her in place. It didn’t take more than a few seconds for her to realize this wasn’t something she wanted to struggle out of. As she nuzzled her cheeks against smooth thighs, I spread hers wide, lowering her pussy down to right over my mouth.

“Now I want you to show me you’re a good girl and not a selfish skank, like you’ve been acting.”

“Yes, Miss Reed,” she said. Or at least that’s what I think she said, since she was speaking into my pussy.

“And Jordan, make sure you do a good job. I’m known to get generous when someone is good to my pussy. You want me to be generous, don’t you?”

There was no answer. At least, not in words; her enthusiasm was immediately evident as her tongue darted out to find my clit, swirling around it with the firm gentleness of an eager tongue. I let the girl work. For a novice, she was pretty decent. Whoever her ex was, he seemed to have instructed her adequately. Still, as pleasant as her attention was, what really set my nerves ablaze was knowing that I was creating this girl’s fantasy. I was the living, breathing, fuck doll instructional aid she’d never known she craved.

At intervals, I used a hard slap or two to her bare ass to help her switch up her technique or give it more energy. Worked up as I was, it was easy to give myself permission to come. (Master hated fake orgasms, so all of us slaves were trained to pace and elicit our own climaxes. Not that I could come on command, without Master’s explicit order. But close.) I let her thrill at seeing the fruits of her labor, my sweaty thighs clenching around the Asian student’s smooth cheeks as the pleasure flowed through my erotic centers.

Then I let her have it.

I’m a good deal more practiced at sucking cock than I am at eating pussy, and with good reason. I only entertained a female guest once or twice a week at the ranch, and the nature of Master’s own sexual anatomy cemented my own preference. (And I’d been solidly hetero before being enslaved.) Still, I was a good deal more practiced than most people, trained under Master’s watchful eye and reinforced with punishments any time I failed to serve up to standards.

Of course, even for a woman as talented and motivated as me, and even for a girl as horny as I’d made Jordan, ninety seconds was an impressive pace.

“Damn, you two look hot like that,” came Matt’s voice from the doorway. “Oh hey, don’t stop on my account.”

I wouldn't have, but Jordan was already leaping off me and wrapping a sheet around herself. "Matt! Jesus, you didn't even knock!"

"Well with the cabin a'rockin', I figured..."

"Get the heck out for a few more minutes!" she snapped. "We were almost done."

"Aw, our wind-up slut didn't take care of you yet?"

"I am *not* talking about this with you. Now would you please just go?!"

He shrugged. "Eh. I'd rather stay."

She gritted her teeth in frustration. "I was so freaking close!"

I sat up. "Jordan... ignore him. You want to come, let me make you come. You've been an obedient little slut, and I hate to let you think that being a good girl goes unrewarded."

"But... with him watching..."

"Jordan, lay down."

"Miss Reed, I..."

I suddenly jerked the sheets out of her hands, took one of her nipples in each hand and squeezed down just hard enough to daze her without quite hurting. "Lay. Down."

My hands remained in place as she obeyed, though it was clear she didn't like the audience. No matter. I had two people to please now; I made sure I was a literal profile in fuckability as I bent down between her legs, twin nipples twisting between my fingers as I went back to work on her cunt.

"You've been a good girl," I murmured a short while later as the trembles in her body told me she was on the cusp.

"Th-thank you, Miss Reed," she panted.

"And do you know what good girls do?"

"Obey. Act slutty. Think with their cunts," she said automatically, desperate for me to finish. Matt chuckled.

"That's right. And good girls... come." Two in the pink, one in the stink, as my sister slave Sasha used to say. Her little rosebud of a slit was sucked between red lips and lashed with my tongue.

She came. And came, and came, and came.

"Fuck. You two should charge admission for that," Matt commented as she still lay twitching in aftershocks of her pleasure.

"Screw you, Matt," she said. This time, I let her get out of bed; she took the sheets with her, snatching up her clothes and storming past him out of the room. She slammed the door behind her, leaving me alone with my friend's son. A boy who I'd noticed noticing me since the day we met. A boy about to realize a fantasy he'd probably been beating off to for years.

"So, you ready to beg for your turn, killer?" I asked, striking a casually sexy pose.

“Suppose I don’t feel much like begging,” he said, undoing his belt and lowering his pants as he made his way to the bed.

“Jordan didn’t either, at first. I know you’ve been squirting in your shorts over me for a while now, but don’t think familiarity means ease of access.”

“Harmony, you told me yourself how this works. Maybe right now, you think you’re supposed to play hard-to-get, but that doesn’t change what you are.” His shirt and underwear followed his pants, and he stood over the bed completely naked, surprisingly ample cock at full mast.

“Oh? And what am I, Matty-Cakes?” I asked, using his mother’s nickname from when he was a child. Hannah still used it sometimes when he was acting up. He was right about the way I was acting, but I was already seeing that I would need to adapt if I were going to satisfy his craving.

“You’re a sex slave. Now why don’t you crawl on over here and show me you know what that means.

He was a good deal more challenging than Jordan. She took direction so well, played the game, and was basically a portrait in using my trigger as it was meant to be used. This young man, however, was not of a mind to be lectured, condescended to, or withheld from. Every time I tried, a fistful of my hair brought my mouth back to his cock; a hard shove rolled me onto my back, where he fucked my easily accessible pussy like he had a perfect right to. Which, as far as my triggered self was concerned, he did.

All the while, I went through the slow battle of acting like I didn't like it, pretending my moans, my wetness, weren't his doing. Pretending I didn't care if he gave me just a few more thrusts – "I mean, I'm so close, it's the least you could do, you pig" – but ultimately being made to ask. To beg. Matt wanted to take what he saw as the haughty, inaccessible Harmony Reed, and break her.

Would that Jordan had made me come half so hard.

Still, my pleasure wasn't what it was about, and by the time he made it clear he was done with me for the time being, I could feel proud that I had served faithfully. Before he got dressed, he demanded I hold out my arm so he could handcuff me to the bed. I said something in character – snide, unimpressed, tolerating his display of dominance over a woman who was clearly his sexual superior – but nonetheless obliged him.

"Come on, Matt, it's getting late," called Jordan from the other room. "My mom is gonna freak out as it is."

"Keep your pants on," he called back. "Or don't – you look damn fine without 'em."

I heard an irritated noise followed by the slamming of the screen door; she had stormed off to wait outside. "Nothing compared to you, though, Harm," he reassured me.

"Gee thanks, killer. My self-esteem would wither away without you here."

He grinned, settling down next to where I was fastened to the bed. "Is that too tight? Too loose? Do you think you could escape if you had to?"

I gave the end fastened to the bed a little adjustment, tightening it, then experimented. "Nope. Looks like you got me." He certainly did. I wouldn't have said so if I thought I had a chance of wrecking his fantasy by getting free.

"Good. Now, Jordan and I are going to leave. Got school tomorrow and all. You know how it is. But we'll be back tomorrow."

Rationally, I should have panicked. Should have screamed, pleaded, begged him not to do this. Instead... "No rush on my account. You want to pass up on the best cunt you'll ever lay eyes on, your loss."

He laughed. "I'm gonna leave a water bottle for you, and a bucket and some TP in case you need to... you know. Won't be elegant, but we can't have you making this shithole stink worse than it does."

“Oh, and here I was giving you credit for bringing me to such nice places.”

He bent down and kissed me; I did a lackluster job returning it, just so I could smirk at him when he pulled back. I was in charge, doing him a favor by meekly complying with my captivity. I was the dominant one here. That’s what my kiss said.

He seemed to find it enjoyable, which was good enough for me. If he didn’t want to use me, I could at least make myself amusing. Then he gathered the supplies like he’d said.

“Matt, come on!” whined Jordan from outside.

“Looks like I gotta go,” he said. “You’re gonna be OK like this, right?”

“I already pine for your return,” I said, laying on the sarcasm good and thick, but rubbing my thighs together to remind him I was such a fucking slut that I couldn’t hide the nugget of truth behind my words.

“Good girl,” he said. I watched him leave, heard the car start, saw the headlights flood the room, heard the tires grinding the gravel beneath them as they drove off down the hill. I waited a few minutes in case this was some game, but heard nothing but the sounds of owls hooting, crickets chirping, leaves softly rustling in the night’s scant breeze. They weren’t coming back.

The trigger ended, and I was myself again.

I didn't know whether to be furious at their betrayal, horrified to be chained up alone in the middle of nowhere, or...

Immeasurably grateful to have found someone to own me, at last.

Chapter Two

So I waited.

Don't get me wrong, I did all the obvious things. Nobody responded to my screaming; the drawers of the nightstand held nothing but some expired condoms; the handcuffs were too tight to slip off; I was too weak to break the bed post. I could drag the bed with some effort, but it wouldn't fit through the door, even if I had the stamina to try to pull it naked and barefoot a dozen or more miles to civilization. I only even tried the dragging because I heard my phone ringing (and ringing, and ringing) in the next room. Probably Principal Headley calling to see why I wasn't in the office. The way I'd been behaving around the school lately, no doubt he missed me for more than my skills at answering phones and filing paperwork.

It was maddening to know that if I could only get my phone security to deactivate, my voice alone would let me call for help. But without my finger to swipe the security code, there was nothing doing, and I couldn't get close. So I waited. What else was there to do?

I'd thought I'd inured myself to boredom from those days back on the ranch. We didn't have radio, TV, internet, or any other means of interacting with the outside world aside from entertaining guests. Master didn't exactly stock up on board games and magazines, so when we ran out of chores, the other slaves and I had to find ways to amuse ourselves. Oftentimes we'd pair up (or triple up, or quadruple up) and hone our craft a bit together. When that got old – or more often the case, when Master put a stop to it because we had to save ourselves for a busy week ahead – we had to find other things to do by our lonesome.

What I wouldn't give to have Sasha handcuffed to the other bedpost with me now. She'd caught Master's attention working in local theater; she'd been abducted from the parking lot after a rehearsal one night. The girl was a treasure trove of stories. Sasha had been studying literature at a university before she'd been captured; the acting was simply a hobby. With her life's dream shattered – or rather, revised so that her dream was to be the perfect slave for Master – Sasha had settled for using her skills to entertain her sister slaves. I used to joke that her acting background gave her an unfair advantage in being perfectly malleable for Master.

(The joke is that we were *all* perfectly malleable. Get it? Maybe you had to be there.)

Here in this cabin, there was nothing and no one but me. The place was filthy, littered with cigarette butts casually flicked aside with mold visibly growing on some of the walls. The screen was so filthy I could barely see anything through the window, but at least the tree canopy overhead and the filmy windows kept it from getting much over

eighty degrees in there. I went through Matt's water in the first hour, and it was already warm by then. Having to use a bucket to relieve myself was bad enough, though the heat and the necessity of leaving it at the bedside made it especially vile. I was able to pull the drawer out of the nightstand for a makeshift lid, but it was less effective than I'd have liked.

I have to say, as much time as I'd spent reminiscing about my days as a slave lately, the conditions were such that I gave only a few minutes thought the whole day to meekly submitting to my fate.

This time, Harmony Reed wasn't going to vanish into some dungeon, lost to the world.

I've said before that Master took fear away from us slaves, and never before had I been so grateful for it. Objectively, I knew my circumstances were terrifying. The immediate facts of it – being handcuffed to a bed in a cabin in the middle of the woods – were only the beginning. I had plenty of time to contemplate the rest. Vivian and Dr. Kovacs, the only other people who knew about my recent troubles, may notice my disappearance, but would be more likely to assume I was off fucking some stranger than anything like this. It could be days before they even started to worry. Principal Headley and Mr. Testaverde, my boss at the car wash, might be pissed, but who knows how long might pass before they took significant action.

Only two people knew I was here. Jordan would never tell anyone out of fear of consequences; Matt would never tell anyone out of unwillingness to share me more than he had to. By now, they had to have realized that they had committed a serious crime and that the victim could ID them, which only made it less likely they would ever willingly release me. Hell, they may panic and decide not to come back at all and leave me here to die of thirst. There were a number of ways this could go, but unlocking the cuffs and giving me back my car keys seemed the least likely of all.

So I waited.

I was alone for almost twenty hours before I heard their car pulling up the gravel lane to the cabin. By then, I was so thirsty and hungry that it overrode all other concerns.

Matt triggered me before I got a full sentence out of my mouth.

It took me – boss bitch me, that is – several seconds to process how best to please them. My own discomfort ceased to matter instantly; now I had only to ponder how I could turn the tables, make Jordan my spankable fuck puppet, and teach Matt how to show a woman her respect – then reward him handsomely.

How could I have spent the whole day dreading this? Untriggered Harmony must be insane.

“Ugh, it smells terrible in here,” said Jordan, eyeing me with pity.

“And believe me, I have spent most of the last day pondering how best to punish you for it, Jordan,” I replied, embarrassed slightly at the way my voice croaked.

“I’ll take care of the bucket. You feed and water our little pet – and I’m coming right back, so if you don’t want an audience this time, keep it under control.”

I made a few more threats and taunts, all laced with innuendo, as my captors saw to their division of labor. I was hungry enough that I’d have wolfed down the fast food they’d brought me, except presently, I wasn’t going to lower myself to showing desperation. Not wanting to seem sullen, I settled for projecting an air that I was merely biding my time, taking care of my needs while the little brats leered at my naked body like I’d kept it in this condition purely for their satisfaction.

Which was precisely how it felt right then. I was quietly a little grateful to them for starving me a little; I’d kept my body in excellent shape, but I’d be lying if I said I wouldn’t look a tiny bit sexier if I shed a couple pounds.

“Do we need to keep you cuffed, Harmony, or are you gonna play nice?”

“Why don’t you loosen it. You might like what I do with my hands, killer.”

Matt grinned as he removed the handcuffs. After a moment to rub feeling back into my sore wrist, they let me get right to work. Jordan got first crack at me again, though today, Matt made it plain he was only going into the cabin’s other room and didn’t mean to wait long.

I could see there was a touch of concern in her eyes as she looked at me; that wouldn’t do at all. How could she properly enjoy me if she was afraid for me? Making a show of gratitude for dinner, I dove between her slender thighs and ate that pretty teenage twat of hers until she screamed almost as loud as I had all morning.

“I thought you were going to, you know, punish me, or whatever,” she said once she was curled up on top of me. Leave it to Jordan Shu to still be bashful while my face was still coated in her pussy juices.

“When you’re a good girl, I treat you like a good girl.” I almost teased her, asking if she’d done something bad, but didn’t want her to suffer any guilt over the whole

abduction thing. Instead, I treated her to a taste of her own cunt by way of my tongue in her mouth, fingering her gently to another, quieter orgasm.

Domineering? No, but it was important not to be predictable. Master *hated* when his slaves developed into routines. Once, Dawn had received a complaint from a guest that she'd repeated the same dialogue in consecutive visits. Master hadn't let the poor, dim-witted bitch come for a month after. By the end, she was so overwrought with unfocused lust that she'd literally wept with gratitude when she was allowed to resume servicing guests.

"You ladies done in there?" called Matt.

"Almost," Jordan yelled back, then lowered her voice for my ears only. "You're so amazing, Miss Reed. Thanks for... well, you know."

I surprised her with a sudden sharp crack to her bare bottom. "Don't think flattery is going to get you anywhere. You just keep doing as you're told, and maybe once in a while, I'll throw you a few crumbs."

"Are... are you OK in there?" she asked softly. "I don't know if you can tell me or not when you're like this."

I gave her a hard look. "Jordan, if you pay very close attention and do exactly as I tell you, perhaps someday you'll be half as good as I am now."

She nodded. "OK. Just making sure. I guess."

Her lithe body was only half-dressed when Matt's patience exhausted and the door simply opened. After a whiny rebuke, she hurried back out of the room, leaving me alone with my friend Hannah's son. He slipped into bed next to me, and I shifted to lay on my side. Unintimidated, not over-eager.

"Well, if it isn't the conquering hero. Need the handcuffs back? Or maybe call your lezzie skank girlfriend back in here to help cover for you." He didn't seem afraid of me in the least, so since I couldn't push him around, I could at least give him the satisfaction of overwhelming me after I bullied him.

To my surprise, Matt grabbed the bedsheets and pulled them over me. He didn't even enclose us together. Suddenly it was like a same-sex overnighter between middle school boys afraid of touching one another in their sleep. "Can we maybe lay off all the sex slave stuff for a bit? I know this maybe sounds lame, and I know I'm going to the wrong person on this, but... this has been a pretty weird couple days for me."

I frowned. What was he doing? Commiserating? Couldn't he see how fucking hot I looked? Didn't he know I was here to provide him pleasure? Using a sex worker as a therapist was for common street whores, not a top-end sex object like myself. I tried to coax him back in the right direction.

"Weird? You think last night was weird, you have no idea how weird I'm about to get on you. Jordan's fun and all, but you and I both know only you have what I really need. And I mean to take it." I started working on his fly.

He pushed my hand back. What the hell! “Seriously. I only triggered you because you looked like you were about to scream. Reflex, I guess. Is there any way to... de-trigger you? I kinda miss my friend Harmony.”

“Harmony’s a whole fucking lot friendlier like this, trust me. Now get those pants off before I rip them off. I need a cock like you wouldn’t believe, and yours is the only one in yelling distance, so it’s going to have to do.” Maybe if he didn’t want to use me, he’d settle for being used? Maybe that was it. He didn’t want as much hard-to-get. He’d picked a stupid trigger, if so. Not that he had others, but still, this was stupid if that was what he wanted. Why hadn’t Master told him what to expect, given him all his options? Besides the obvious reason, that is. He was like a kid with an expensive new toy who only wanted to play with the box.

Matt just sighed. “You know, nevermind. I guess we’re done for the night. I’ll get you your water.”

“Oh no you don’t!” I demanded, leaping to straddle him. The scant time I’d had my chest covered had seemingly been enough for the boy to forget what perfect tits looked like, and his attention was immediately riveted. “I’ll let you know when we’re done.”

Yes! He was crazy hard. I could feel it. I was doing something right! However aberrant his behavior, I was still turning him on. I wasn’t a complete failure. I could still make Master proud. His hands rose up to take one heaving, sweaty breast in each hand...

... and gently shove me off of him and back onto the bed. “Good night, Harmony.”

I stared after him as he walked towards the door. “You’re sure?” Master would punish me so badly for this! If Master were alive, that is.

“Yeah. Maybe some other time.”

His hand touched the doorknob... and I was myself again.

My mind raced. I was loose. I could rush up behind him and... I don’t know what. Knock him out, or something. Grab his car keys. Make a run for it. This may be my best chance...

I stopped myself before I even made it to my feet. No it wasn’t. Here was a guy who had at least fifty pounds on me and had actually been in several fights; then there was me, dehydrated, stomach growling from hunger, still a bit light-headed from the day I’d had. The closest I’d ever come to hitting someone was when this jealous bitch who had a thing for my boyfriend spread a rumor that I had herpes freshman year of high school and in return, I’d given her a really mean look.

Besides, even if I somehow took him down, Jordan was in the next room, and I’d have her to deal with too. It was a lesser consideration, but if this had to get violent, I didn’t know how I’d feel about it. If I somehow achieved a miracle and won, it could potentially do irreparable harm (or worse) to one of my best friend’s son. Heck, with the

ten plus years she had on me and my friends – and her tendency to nag us on our flaws – we all called Hannah ‘Mom.’ Which sort of made Matt my brother. (Not that he seemed to mind.)

Plus, I realized at last, he was acting very differently tonight from how he’d been yesterday. Maybe he was realizing what he’d done? Time to play to my strengths.

“Wait, Matt. I’m normal again. You can come back, if you want.”

He looked over his shoulder. “Really? It’s kind of hard to tell.”

“My trigger wouldn’t lie to you. That lady is a serious bitch, emphasis on the serious. And on the bitch.” He still looked skeptical. “Look, if you wanna talk, let’s talk. If I start trying to boss you around, then just ditch me.”

It looked like he was trying to make up his mind, but when I used the sheet to cover myself, he turned back to me. I wasn’t shy about nudity, and heaven knows the past couple days he’d seen all there was to see. Still, I thought it might make him feel more at ease.

He sat back down beside me. “Hey. Um, I wondered how you were, you know... holding up.”

“How do you think?” I didn’t state it bitterly. A simple rhetorical question.

Matt frowned. “I wondered if you might get loose or something. I guess you probably tried.”

If I wanted to set him at ease... maybe... “Honestly? Last night was some of the best fun I’ve had in years. You guys, you were so...” I trailed off, licking my lips and glancing down to his crotch so quickly that I hoped it would look like I couldn’t help myself. “Don’t get me wrong, my wrist hurt, but... I guess I haven’t made up my mind yet if I want to leave.” There. Total bullshit, but maybe by now he was thinking I was crazy enough that blind hope might sell him on it.

He arched an eyebrow, and I could see I’d overplayed my hand. Back-pedal, but don’t retreat. All my sex slave training told me that as soon as you started contradicting yourself, they’d never be into the fantasy again. “OK, so today was pretty rough, and it was a dick move to not leave more water or some food. But the sex *was* fucking incredible, though, and you can’t make me say otherwise. Is that better?”

Matt grinned. “I had fun, too.”

I choked down my anger at his smugness. “What is this place, anyway? Where the heck are we, even?”

“Pretty badass, right? My uncle owns the place. Or he did, until he died. And he didn’t have a will or anything, and nobody wanted to fix up the shithole, so it’s just kinda sat here for years. Me and my friends come up here sometimes to get high, drink, party, swim in the pond, whatever. I know it’s kinda grungy, but... we’re not exactly the fixer-up type.”

“Aren’t you worried one of them might come by?”

“Nah. This place is *way* off the beaten road – there’s a dozen or more paths off the main road through the woods, and you have to follow it for miles after, with forks and stuff, too. We have to carpool when we come up here or folks get lost.”

I remembered the route we’d taken, vaguely. Having been triggered at the time, directions had not been worth paying attention to. It was quiet for a moment, then I finally spoke. “Can I ask what happens next? If you guys have a plan, that is.”

“I guess we kinda dove into the deep end, didn’t we,” he said, flopping on his back. “Maybe we should’ve had a plan. I don’t suppose you have any suggestions?”

“There’s the obvious one,” I said gently, placing a hand on his forearm. “Take me home, let me go, and we all move on with our lives.”

He frowned up at the ceiling. “And we’re supposed to trust you won’t rat us out?”

“Matt, your mother is one of my closest friends. I’m not going to ruin her son’s life over one crazy random whim. Hell, I might have done the same thing in your shoes.” Patently untrue, though I wished Master had left me capable of feeling more appropriately outraged over being kidnapped for sex slavery.

“I... I don’t know if I can do that,” he said after a long pause. “But... let me think about it.”

“How long do you need to think about it?”

“I don’t know! Maybe... maybe just overnight? That’d probably be enough. Probably.”

It didn’t take an experienced sex slave to read the doubt in his voice, to hear the consideration he was giving to continuing to have his fun with me. That hesitation meant good odds he’d delay, and the longer he delayed, the riskier it would be to end things peaceably. Still, he didn’t seem like he was in a mindset to be pushed.

“Overnight sounds great,” I agreed.

He nodded. “Sure. I mean, it could be longer, but I promise I’ll try. It’s finals and all, ya know.” I knew full well Matt’s exams were as high of a priority for him right now as remembering if I’d left my TV on at home was for me. “I guess we’re gonna head out then. We’ll get you some more water, so tomorrow night you won’t sound like a chain smoker when you’re bossing us around.”

Shit. He was joking, sure, but that joke definitely implied he was still giving thought to another triggered evening. Shit shit shit. Think fast, Harm. Quicker than I’d have believed myself capable, I had an idea.

“I’ll do my best. I don’t suppose you could leave, like a book or something? I got really bored today. I don’t care what it is – the car’s owner manual, even. Something to fill the time.”

He nodded. “Sure, I can do that. I’ll grab something from the car. Anything else?”

“Maybe some kind of cover for the...?” I nodded to the bucket.

“Done.”

“And... it got kind of buggy in here. I don’t suppose you’d mind if I got dressed before you cuff me?”

He stroked his chin. “I guess so. C’mon, your clothes are still in the main room. Just... don’t make me regret it, all right?”

“I think you’re overly worried about my odds of out-running your car barefoot on a gravel road in the middle of the woods in the dark,” I answered dryly, but gave his shoulder an affectionate punch before letting him lead me into the living room. Jordan looked surprised, but Matt explained the situation. She eyed me nervously, but didn’t see a reason to contradict me. I slipped into my clothes with Jordan watching – staring – while Matt filled the water bottle and brought in his American lit textbook.

“Perfect, thanks,” I said, following him back into the bedroom, arms at my sides. I pulled the sheets over me again and let him affix the handcuffs to the same wrist and same bedpost.

“So you’re gonna be good?”

“Let’s call it OK. Good is pushing it.” I gave a weak smile, though.

He nodded. “All right. We gotta head out, but we’ll be back tomorrow. Right, Jordan?”

“Right. Uh, sleep tight, Miss Reed.”

“Good night, Jordan.”

They closed the bedroom door behind them, and in an instant, I had my phone in my hand and was bringing up Miguel’s number. He practically lived with his phone; he’d answer it if he was mid-coitus.

Normally I kept my phone in my purse, like most women. When they’d triggered me in the car, however, I’d been on the phone with Dr. Kovacs. My purse had slid to the floor as I’d zoned out after they said the magic words and had had to tap the brakes. So I’d put it in my pocket, and those idiots never looked below the neckline after I’d gotten dressed.

I hit the call button and waited expectantly for the ring, but it wasn’t coming. I was pretty sure we were close enough to town to have some kind of coverage, but evidently my phone was struggling to make it. *Connecting... Connecting...* Come on you stupid fucking phone!

Finally! It rang. Come on, pick up pick up pick up...

The ringing stopped as Miguel answered it.

The bedroom door opened.

“Heya, Babycakes. What’s up?” said Miguel’s voice over the phone.

Matt said something too, only I couldn’t consciously understand him.

I hung up the phone.

“That ought to be the end of that,” I said later that evening as Matt re-fastened the handcuffs. What an unusual evening it had been. Part of me felt like I’d cheated the boy out of a chance to benefit from my honed sex slave skill set, but he seemed satisfied nevertheless. While the only real satisfaction came from giving pleasure when and how I was told, it was good to know that I’d put a solid end to any chance I was going to have to escape.

Matt and Jordan had watched me, smirking and leering respectively, as I took care of any method I could think of that would get me away from this new (albeit lesser) ranch, with my new (albeit far, far lesser) masters. I was relieved to know my new owners weren’t actually the pussies they’d pretended to be. As if an eighteen-year-old boy’s hormones could possibly let him refuse my body! He’d tricked me but good, thank god. *I miss my friend Harmony*, he’d said. As if! Who could miss her when they could have me.

I got a fire going in the pit out back. In went the clothes I’d worn, my purse, and of course, that stupid phone. The car was trickier. Matt thought to make a few bucks selling it to a chop shop, but I persuaded him that it wasn’t worth leaving any potential trail. (Plus, we didn’t know where to find a chop shop, so there was that.)

It would be far less conspicuous to simply drive the car into the pond, so that’s exactly what I did. (I have to say, emerging from the water in the fading daylight, dripping wet and totally naked, I couldn’t blame them for staring. I bet I looked so fucking hot for them.) Jordan had fretted at first about what would happen if it didn’t fully submerge, but sure enough, Harmony’s best chance at fleeing disappeared like Leo DiCaprio being discarded into the Atlantic. I knew that I – not *me*, but that other, obnoxiously *free* person, Harmony – would be furious, but I figured it would serve her right. See how far your vaunted free will gets you now, you ungrateful, undersexed bitch.

I could hardly believe it had come to this, having to chaperone my own untriggered behavior. I let normal Harmony take the wheel and the first thing she does is try to escape! Matt isn’t Master, so I didn’t feel too much need to punish myself. But still. She was getting altogether out of hand. I figured that if I could cow my own captors, I could certainly manage the affairs of this “former” sex slave. Her brain – no, her whole life – was open season for anyone with the will to take control.

We made sure to do a solid inspection of the cabin, making certain there was no clever MacGyvering to be done given time and energy. It was mostly a show, and quite literally. I’d already spent an entire day probing the possibilities and come up with nothing. Nonetheless, it was a good opportunity to show off to my masters how fucking sexy I look on my hands and knees, gazing at the nothing under the bed. Matt gave me a good swat on the butt, and I laughed and told him I’d make him pay for it later.

I did. (If by “pay for it” I’d meant “throw him to the bed and ride him like a cowgirl until he filled me with so much cum it nearly leaked out my ears,” and by “later” I’d meant “right that second.”)

Then it was time for them to really leave. Matt smirked so arrogantly it almost reminded me of Master as he vented that he wished he could be there to see the look on my face when I went back to normal. I assured him we’d fucked over that dumb bitch good and hard, and now he’d have all the time he wanted to lord it over her.

Moments later the sounds of tires on the gravel road faded into the distance, and I was me again.

Matt was right; he probably would’ve loved the face I’d made. Or the pitiful whimper that followed, or the whisper in the dark room after that. “What did I just do?”

Chapter Three

Arm candy had always been a better descriptor for me than lap candy, but if Master wanted me on Master's lap, there was nowhere else in the universe I'd rather be. I was only an inch shy of an even six feet, and even if I was in excellent shape, height meant weight, as did my abundance of curves. My boobs alone were probably a solid twenty-five pounds. I nestled in and made myself as small as I could. Slouched posture, head reclining on Master's shoulder. Neither of us could ever for a moment feel that I was in any way superior (Master was a little shorter than me, but that only underscored that my height was cumbersome), yet still it was good to remind both of us that I wouldn't dare try to loom, even incidentally.

I stroked my slender fingers up and down Master's bare chest, simultaneously striving to be both obsequious and unobtrusive. A delicate balancing act. It was important to show that I was always desperately eager to touch Master and be touched in return; still, Master was reading. Whatever value I might possess as a slave was trivial compared to this book, for the simple reason that it was what Master wished to engage with right now and I was not.

For hours, I sat there. As still and silent as possible but for featherlight touches intended merely to relax. I was watching someone read, yes, but boredom wasn't any part of it. How could a girl be bored with her body snuggled into the lap of such an Adonis as this? The paradox of being so close – that I was beside myself with anxiousness to be acknowledged, touched, caressed, kissed, fondled, sucked on, groped, and of course fucked; yet at the same time, my most fervent desire was that Master have what Master wanted. And if that meant none of those things, I would be delighted to know I hadn't burdened Master with the desires of my own greedy cunt.

Periodically I scanned the pages, not because I was curious or in need of entertainment, but to keep mindful of the tone of the passage. (This was a skill Sasha had taught me, one of the happy by-products of her graduate level education in literature. In exchange, I'd done her chores for a month.)

It was one of those spy thrillers, like my dad had always liked so much. When I saw it arrived at an action scene, I tried to subtly enhance the excitement by breathing a little faster, letting my nails graze Master's skin with a bit more intensity. As Master skimmed through a few pages of exposition, I allowed myself to squirm a little so as to supplement Master's level of enjoyment. When the hero was flirting with the female lead, I tensed, ready at a mere glance to become her, to fulfill the hero's every erotic desire for her.

I had learned to read Master's glances very well.

The phone rang. I was in the way of answering it, so I scurried off Master's lap and knelt at Master's feet. Master glanced at the caller ID and groaned. A snap of the fingers was my cue, and I crawled forward and coaxed Master's cock through a hole in Master's briefs, and from there into my mouth. I made a mental note to request punishment afterwards for the whimper of ecstasy as I tasted it; much as I dreaded Master's displeasure, it was always better to show contrition without being prompted.

Once, Nell had gotten an ink stain on one of the kitchen chairs. (It was understandable; she had been entertaining a guest who had wanted to write all over her with markers, and she had been summoned directly from there to attend to dinner.) She had scrubbed it for hours until you could only read where it had said "WHORE" backwards on the seat if you really strained your eyes. Of course, she had forgotten who she lived with, and the next time Master seemed to be playing favorites with her, someone had ratted her out, calling Master's attention to the blemish.

For staining Master's furniture, she had been assigned to forty spankings. (From one of us, not Master, so she wouldn't enjoy it.) For failing to self-report, Master had ordered her to shave her head. It had been almost two months before either Master or a guest had taken her to bed, and then only because Master had grown tired of her mooching and allowed her to wear a wig. Her room had been next door to mine; I'd fallen asleep night after night to the sound of her sobbing into her pillow.

None of that mattered now, though. Now, I was giving Master a blowjob. It was hard not to over-produce drool, but I did my best to keep it from interfering. Sucking Master's cock was – by Master's own design – one of my favorite things in the world. If I were starving and I had to choose between a holiday feast and a single mouthful of Master's cum, I wouldn't hesitate to choose the latter. Every blowjob was an opportunity to hone my craft, the sex slave equivalent of a live fire exercise.

Different circumstances called for different techniques. It was sort of a sliding scale. 1 was a long, slow makeout with the cock, drawing out the climax for as long as possible to prolong the enjoyment of having a hot, willing woman on the end of one's cock. (My personal record was three hours and twenty-four minutes, but I was far from the best at this. Melissa was helping to teach me, though, in exchange for doing some of her chores.) At the other end of the scale, a 100 meant producing every possible bit of slippery friction and focusing it on the pleasure centers. When Master wanted a quick cum before heading out, we all learned to run the suck-off sprint. I'd literally gotten muscle cramps in my lips and tongue from it before – but it was always worth it for a taste of Master's cum.

Phone call blowjobs, naturally, were best at the low end of the spectrum. It was psychological as much as anything, bolstering Master's confidence with the constant reminder of what Master owned. (Namely, me.) Today, I kicked it up a few points, watching for signs of irritation and boredom to adjust my intensity. I was rewarded

with a smile and pat on the head for my observational skills; my pussy gushed at such praise.

It seemed like a tedious phone call. I wasn't eavesdropping – Master would make sure I knew if there was something I needed to hear – but I couldn't help but catch some of it. It was some relation, I soon learned, as Master reminded the man on the other end, "You may be family, but I'm not your fucking piggy bank." Poor Master, surrounded by such ingratitude and envy.

What was my family doing right now?

I missed a beat at the sudden and bizarre thought. Master didn't seem to notice, which was probably an indicator that I needed to be better if my failures didn't even draw attention. For the rest of the phone call, I tried not to overhear anything else. I mentally sang my favorite pop songs – at least, pop songs from two years ago when I'd been taken, which was as current as I could manage. I purred around Master's cock as Katy Perry roared in my head.

It wasn't until that night, lying in bed, when I could try to make sense of that aberrant question. It had been a busy evening, taking care of clean-up after dinner, then taking a repeat guest who'd practically become addicted to fucking my tits. The man had even persuaded Master to install a special trigger just for him, in which my tits grew as sensitive as my clit and I became overwhelmed by the need to stimulate them. Any number of triggers could have found me begging a man to titty-fuck me, but I guess he had a particular fantasy and the money to pursue it.

He was gone now, and my tits were washed clean of all his seed. (It was crucial to always be ready to have every part of me primed for Master's use.) Now I had time to think, and there was only one thought.

Where had that question come from?

I'd heard Master talk on the phone with family members before, if not often. My sense was that they were not a close knit clan, but that Master in a bout of generosity had not cast them aside. Still, I almost never thought about my life as a free girl except to draw upon it to enhance my performances. It was useful to have eighteen years experience among bratty daughters, vapid bimbos, meek girls who'd do anything for someone who complimented them, and a hundred templates for miscellaneous fetishes. Mrs. Durnst, my middle school librarian who'd loved her pencil skirts and always worn her glasses perched on the tip of her nose, had come in handy countless times as inspiration.

But not my family. It wasn't that it was easier not to think about them; it was that I simply didn't. I didn't miss them. I didn't wonder about them. I didn't ponder how they'd feel if they found out what had happened to me. Heck, I'd long suspected that one of them had sold me out, landing me in this situation. I never judged Master for taking me; he'd shown me a more purposeful, pleasurable life, my true purpose.

But the thought that those people, who had an obligation to love and care for me, might have betrayed me to god knows what end... If Master opened the door and granted me my freedom – a chilling thought! – I still wouldn't have returned to them.

Had Master put that fear there? Maybe. It didn't matter. Master had the right to put any thought in my head that Master liked. I put the question away. They were out of my life now, and no reason to dwell on it. Still, while my mind was wandering, I let it drift away to that strange hypothetical notion of what was going on in the outside world, and casually played with myself while I giggled at silly questions. Masturbation was always the perfect complement to giggling.

I tried to imagine my life if I'd never been enslaved. Would I still be waitressing? Would I have my own place? Was my dog Pogo still alive? What would my twenty-first birthday have been like? Had they come out with a new iPhone? Had my friend Dan joined the Air Force like he'd planned? If so, were we at war? Crap, who was even president?

I wondered and wondered, long into the night. So long, I overslept the next morning. Master hadn't noticed, but naturally, I self-reported.

"Overslept? Why?"

"I was up late daydreaming, Master. Only, you know, at night." I lowered my eyes to the floor, sincerely contrite. I was fully prepared for a punishment, hoping it would only be drudgery, or maybe pain. Oh, please don't let me be restricted from pleasuring Master!

But instead, after a laugh, Master's response was in song. It came in the tune of that Monkees ditty. "Cheer up Harmonyyyyyy! Oh what could it mean, to a... daydream believer, and a... hoooomme-coming queeeeen!"

We laughed together. "I was prom queen, not homecoming, technically." When Master was in a good mood, we were permitted playful banter. Master wanted to be liked as well as worshipped.

"You mean all this time, I've been nailing a girl who couldn't even make homecoming queen? How the mighty have fallen."

"I know, I know. To think your cock had to settle the lesser royalty of my cunt, Master."

To my delight, Master surprised me then by commanding me to ride his cock right there in the study. Spontaneous fuckings like this were a rare treat; Master ordinarily preferred to carefully select a pussy, and seldom got swept up in the moment. The honor triggered a low-grade orgasm that I held throughout the session. I was even allowed to do almost all of the work! It was an awesome responsibility to be entrusted with.

Master came inside me, and that orgasm shot up the scale from a four to about a hundred million. Master was quite varied in where Master liked to come; faces, tits,

asses, mouths, cunts, even on our backs or our hair. Sometimes on the floor, if only to watch us lap it up. There had even been a brief phase where he'd had us experiment with footjobs, and I'd been treated to Master's spunk coating my dainty little toes. While I would never give voice to my preference – as if a man as generous as Master deserved to be prejudiced by my desires! – I liked it in my pussy the best. It felt more romantic somehow. It felt like the pleasure my pussy gave in those times ran deeper than the flesh.

Master took my hips in hand, a signal to remain atop that glorious member, and so I wriggled softly in place. Sometimes it was mere savoring, but on rare and marvelous occasions Master wanted to be worked up to a second go. That day, however, Master simply seemed to want to talk.

“So, sleepy Harmony, tell me about your daydreams.”

I ripped my mind away from its current reverie regarding my pussy and the precious gift presently inside it. “Oh, just about the outside world. Not that I'm unhappy here – and not that my happiness matters,” I added quickly. “But I was thinking about what my life might be like if you hadn't chosen me.”

“Probably squeezing out your second litter with the night manager at the local gas station, I bet.” Master enjoyed reminding us of how little we'd have amounted to even with our freedom. Besides, in my case, something like that may well have been the case. I hadn't exactly been going places. The tone of Master's voice softened then, and it seemed Master wished to show interest. “But that's probably not what it was like in your daydream.”

“No, Master.”

He pinched my nipple, and my eyes clenched shut with the bliss of it. “Don't leave me in suspense, girl. What were you in this sad alternate history without the benefit of my ownership?”

I grinned. (That characterization was completely true as far as I was concerned, but I could tell Master was trying to be funny.) “It was nothing special, Master. I had a few friends, worked two jobs, tried to have some fun.”

“Two jobs? Even in your own daydream, you couldn't swing it with one?”

“I guess not.”

“What were they? Prostitute and spank model at the sperm bank?”

I giggled. “No, Master. I was a secretary at a school, and I worked at nights at a car wash.”

“My Harmony, getting her hands dirty – and with her clothes on, to boot. Sounds like a dreadful squandering of tits and ass.”

“It wasn't always fun, and hardly ever glamorous. But it had its upsides.”

“Really? Like what.”

“Little things. Like TV, and going to restaurants, and getting drunk, and picking my own clothes. Plus, I had my friends. Real friends. We cared about each other, took care of each other. My jobs weren’t always so bad either. Sometimes I even had fun with them. And I got to decide things for myself. Who, when, how. Whether. I was... free, Master.”

Master frowned. “And that was better to you than life here? This is only freedom of a different sort, my pet. Endless pleasure, freedom from worries and responsibilities and obligations... You know your purpose, here. You have the chance to be exactly what you were born to be.”

“That’s what makes it so hard, Master,” I said softly. The light was filtering in now, and I was beginning to know the world I was in. “Being Harmony the pleasure slave... it feels good.”

“You’re welcome.” Master patted my bottom softly, though I could feel a hand on my shoulder, too.

“But being out there, being Harmony Reed, feels right.”

“Well then, it looks like – and you know I don’t say this often – you have a choice to make.” My face was wet, suddenly, for some reason, and the light was getting brighter. Someone was yelling. I squinted my eyes shut.

“But Master... I don’t know if I know how to be happy without you.”

It was my own voice that answered. “Then decide if happiness is all you aspire to. And Harmony?”

“What...”

“WAKE UP.”

Matt had to dump a glass of water on me this time. My health was in significant decline, and sometimes I simply didn't want to open my eyes and confront it. Increasingly I'd been dreaming about those days on Master's ranch; it was hard to want to come back to real life. Sometimes the dreams were memories, sometimes fantasies. Often a mix of both. Honestly, given the nature of my life there, sometimes I couldn't even tell fantasy and reality apart anyway.

I'd lost track of how many days I'd been here. Weeks, certainly. Months? Hard to say. With the advent of Matt and Jordan's summer vacation, they'd been much more free to come and go at their leisure. Often, I didn't know whether they were returning later that same day or the next. Besides, the date didn't really matter. Every day was a variation of the same two components. First, the crushing loneliness, helplessness, and pain. That was most of the day. I slept as much as I could, but my dreams made quality rest impossible.

The second component of my time there was when Matt and Jordan arrived. Sometimes they bothered to talk to me for a few minutes, maybe just a sentence or two, but it was never long before they spoke the trigger. Then I was used. Fucking and being fucked, amusing my masters according to the nature of my trigger. Then they left, and back to myself. Alone.

Physically, I was hanging in there. I often didn't get enough fluids, and they were feeding me fast food (and in scant quantities that left me perpetually hungry). Neither of the two had any desire to fuck a miserable, dessicated husk, however shapely her boobs were, but since I was nearly always triggered in their company, I wasn't complaining about my treatment. To keep up my looks, Jordan had happily taken to taking me down to the pond for the purpose of bathing, grooming, and shaving me.

Not *me* me. But rather the version of me that, per Matt's suggestion, we now called Melody.

Melody, it turns out, was *loving* this. No more responsibilities. No more wasting time and energy on having a job, or being distracted by friends, or making choices. Freedom was pure burden to her. Just sitting around this smaller, dirtier ranch and being a good little slave. If it wasn't as good as being owned by Master, at least she had a master, one good enough not to trouble himself over her needs, wants, and well-being. She got to make people come exactly as she was reborn to do, and that made for an endless well of pleasure to draw from.

If Melody grew frustrated over any of it, that was only due to the fact that she was denied variety, grumpy that nobody knew how to trigger her diverse cast of slaves. Jordan didn't seem to mind; Matt, however, made no secret about the fact that what he really wanted was a more conventional sex slave. Someone to lower her eyes, speak in a plaintive tone, beg. It was perverse to her that they would keep triggering a woman who did none of that but who was then judged for her failure to do so. Not that she minded

being overpowered. Sometimes Matt simply manhandled her – which was fine – but if that was what he wanted, she wished he'd use one of her rape-game trigger and have her do it properly. It was clearly upsetting to him to have her refuse to submit even when she was submitting.

Harmony, on the other hand, was not doing well at all. She was kept chained to the bedpost any time she was in control, but that was only a security precaution – one that had very nearly failed them, in fact. Her captors didn't often interact with her at the same time; they'd settled on taking turns, with Jordan grumpily tolerating Matt's occasional peeping. Harmony had hatched a plan to try to trick one of them into thinking the other had triggered her, then play-acting as Melody until she had a window of escape. Of course, she'd forgotten that if she knew the plan, Melody did too, and so the next time she was triggered, the dutiful slave chastised her masters for not thinking of that particular escape tactic.

It was not the only plan she'd ruined. Melody was nothing if not committed to her own bondage. Nothing would please her more than for Harmony to join her in submission.

Which was the worst of it, really, that it was working. Being Harmony was *lonely*. Matt liked to taunt her, give her opportunities to share another trigger in exchange for what she knew were empty promises of release. Beyond that, as Harmony I was in total isolation. I hadn't quite gone crazy yet, but as someone who was a hair's breadth from a multiple personality disorder already, it wouldn't take much to get there. When I was myself – if Harmony was the real me, which I was ever less sure of – I was dirty, bored, pained, malnourished, and unhappy.

It was only a matter of time before she gave in.

"Took you long enough," Matt said as I used my free hand to rub the sleep from my eyes. Jordan was audible in the other room laying out my meal; Melody insisted on things being just so, and the girl was delighted to have an opportunity to show her pretend mistress what a good girl she could be. (Or to reap the delicious rewards for being bad.)

"Was dreaming," I muttered, holding out a hand. It wasn't a conscious movement; I'd simply been conditioned that waking up meant being triggered and being handed the keys to her cuffs. At this realization, I scowled inwardly at the part of my brain from which I could hear Melody's smug laughter at having stolen control of my arm, if only for a moment.

"Anything good?" he asked, helping himself to a honk on my boob.

I shoved his hand aside. "Don't act like you care."

"Come on, don't get bratty on me. If I wanted attitude, I'd say the trigger. Unless you got another one for me?"

“You know I wouldn’t give it to you if I did, and Melody would spill the beans anyway just to spite me,” I said in my scratchy voice. It had been many hours since I’d run out of water in the sweltering cabin. The heat was oppressive in there, even through the night. Sometimes I envied my slave self for nothing more than that she got to go outside and feel a breeze, the breathe fresh air. I wondered sometimes if all the mold growing on the walls in here was part of why I felt so shitty all the time.

He laughed. “Factions at war in there, eh? Well good on her. That bitch is ten times the fun you are anyway.”

“Then what are you waiting for?”

He frowned. “Eh, not eager to have that cunt run her mouth at me while I fuck her. Tell you what. You play nice, show me Harmony’s got something fun for me too, and I can make it worth your while.”

I glared. Or tried to. My capacity to have feelings had taken a drubbing. “No thanks. You kidnapped me, killer. I’m not going to smile and cheer you on for raping me, too.”

The capacity of people who have done terrible things to be affronted by the suggestion that they do more terrible things never ceased to bewilder me. Matt looked so angry at my reminder that I was his unwilling captive that I wondered for a moment if he might actually rape me. Or simply take out his indignation in the other traditional violent way.

But then there was a familiar sound, yet bizarre nevertheless. The sound of tires on gravel – someone was driving up the road to the cabin. The only people who’d made that noise before were right here in the house.

Matt sprang to the window, peering out. “Oh fuck!” he cried. “Fuck fuck fuck! Jordan – someone’s here!”

I rolled on my side, following his gaze. A few moments later, a vehicle came into view, and my heart leapt in my chest. That was Miguel’s SUV!

“What do we do?!” shrieked Jordan in the next room. “Oh god oh god oh god...”

“Fuck! It’s my mom’s friend – we gotta hide her!”

“Where are we gonna hide her! She’s not exactly a plastic frickin’ egg, Matt!”

“I don’t know – but if he finds her here, we’re... SHIT!”

“Oh god, oh god...”

The two were panicking. Meanwhile, I was working up every bit of moisture I could, swallowing it slowly to give my throat one single chance.

“*MIGUEL!*”

I screamed at the top of my lungs. My voice broke after only a couple seconds, but while my parched throat had held out, it had been loud. Had my friend heard me?

A voice spoke.

I sure hoped he hadn’t.

“You have to release me,” I insisted. Harmony had let her emotions get the better of her – she’d released that idiot scream when he was still too far off. I hoped. I was going to do better. I *had* to do better. My enslavement depended on it.

Jordan, now well-conditioned to obey, did her part admirably. Without waiting for her to say a word, I took her narrow wrist and snapped the now-vacant ring of the cuffs around it. “Miss Reed! What...?!”

Matt turned from the window and saw what I’d done. “What the fuck?! Did it not work...?” He looked ready to tackle me.

“Easy, killer. You need to get on top of your *girlfriend* here and make it look good and convincing.”

“What?” they both asked.

I scowled at my poor, stupid masters. “In about thirty seconds, Miguel’s going to come in here. I don’t know why he’s coming, but from the way you two reacted, I’m assuming he wasn’t in line to ride the ride. So he can either come in here and find a bucket of filth and a kidnapping plot, or he can find two kids sneaking off to get their freak on.”

“Oh. Wow, that’s... Good work, Mel.”

“Get her pants off. Make it look good,” I coached. With that, I seized the stinky bucket and ran. I only had a narrow window of time to pull this off. I peaked around the side of the door, watching him approach. I saw Miguel at the wheel, but there didn’t look to be anyone else in the vehicle. Good.

After a moment, his SUV went behind a dense thicket a short ways down the road, and I bolted out the cabin’s only door, bucket in hand. I didn’t have time to run all the way around back – my legs were too cramped from my confinement to go full speed – so I darted behind a broad oak tree and froze, holding my breath.

I had only my ears to go by. The crunching of gravel stopped, and the thrum of his engine followed right after. He was hurrying; the car door opened and closed rapidly followed by heavy footfalls on the path up to the cabin. Once I heard the front door close, I peered back to make sure he had indeed gone inside. It seemed he had.

It was a good thing, because if he found me, I didn’t know if Jordan and Matt would be sufficient to help me ambush him. Hopefully it wouldn’t come to that, though. Not that I was wary of hurting my good friend, if that was what it took to protect my new master and mistress. But I knew trying to take him on was risky, as would be a second disappearance.

Still, I needed to be ready and to keep clear of being seen through the windows, so I moved over to the front door. Naked as I was, it was easy to move silently. As it turned out, I needn’t have worried. Right as I reached the front steps, I heard a girlish shriek of alarm, and the sounds of two men yelling in two very different sorts of surprise.

“What the hell are you doing, Matt?!” yelled Miguel. His question came right on top of an equally imperious “What the fuck are you doing here?!” from Matt.

The boy answered first. “What does it look like I’m doing? Jordan, meet my mom’s friend Miguel. Miguel, Jordan.”

“My pants!” squeaked Jordan. I smiled at the thought of her squirming in discomfort. She was always hornier after she’d been embarrassed.

“Harmony!” yelled Miguel. “Harmony, are you in here?!”

Naturally, I did not reply. One sound, and I’d be in serious danger of being rescued.

“What? Harmony? What’re you talking about, man?” Matt demanded. His acting wasn’t top-notch, but I hoped his anxiety translated for Miguel into nervousness about being found with some girl.

Miguel ignored him, though, and kept calling my name. I could hear him rummaging around, and I almost snickered. Did he think I was hiding in a cupboard? Glued to the underside of the card table? Still, I kept myself ready to move.

“Satisfied?” Matt asked after he’d stopped. He sounded like he’d calmed down. More in control of his fear. Good. Maybe there was a little bit of Master in him after all. God that was hot. “Mind telling me what the fuck, now?”

“Watch your tone, Matthew,” Miguel retorted. “I heard a scream while I was pulling up.” Dammit! “I saw... I don’t know what you’re up to, but I know Harmony’s here.”

“What I’m up to?” Matt repeated incredulously. “What, you think I’m some kind of fucking kidnapper or something? Jesus. I don’t know what you thought you saw, but I know what you heard.”

“Oh yeah?”

I could barely hear his smug tone through the glass of the door. “Bitch is a real shrieker, man. Why do you think we come all the way out here? Don’t wanna bug the neighbors at Mom’s house.”

“Save it.” He yelled again. “Harmony!”

Matt was smart enough to give me a warning. “What are you going out there for? You think she’s hiding in the bushes?”

I ran. There was no time to grab the bucket; this was life and death. No, more than that. Enslavement and freedom. I could see Miguel’s back through the side window as I ran by; he was going out the front door, where he resumed yelling my name. Harmony’s name, anyway.

I ran as far as I dared without risking he’d see me fleeing, this time crouching in a patch of tall weeds. Matt had assured me there was no poison ivy or the like around here, but as I watched Miguel roaming around the house yelling for me, the bugs came out in plenty. It took all my restraint to hold still.

He found the bucket soon enough. I was too far away to clearly make out Matt's excuses, but whatever they were, they did nothing to keep the man from continuing to look. Soon enough, Jordan came outside. Though Matt was preoccupied with distracting Miguel, she was looking around for me. As my would-be rescuer rounded a corner, I raised my hand up and waved to her until she saw me.

Time crawled by. Miguel circled the cabin, and again. On the third arc, I realized he was fanning out. If he kept this up, it wouldn't be long before he spotted me. Finally, as he rounded behind the cabin again, an exasperated Matt in tow, Jordan waved her hands to shoo me away, and I ran once more. This time, I raced right down to the rickety little fishing dock and slipped into the water as quietly as I could. From there, I maneuvered myself beneath the end of the dock, my face left with barely enough room to breathe beneath the rotting wood.

Footsteps. The creaking of old timbers. "HARMONY!" The cry was the closest it had been. I could snake a finger between the warped boards over my head and touch his boot if I wanted. How could he not hear me breathing? How could he not see the outline of my sunken car in the murky water? How could he have come so close, and yet...

"Ya done?" Matt said at last. Miguel hadn't moved. I didn't dare so much as wriggle my toes in the muck.

There was a sudden thud right over my head as Miguel dropped to his knees in despair. I think I gasped in surprise, but he was crying too loudly to have noticed. Matt and Jordan gave him time to do so.

"I'm sorry, you guys," he said finally. "I just... I don't know what came over me."

"Me either," said Matt peevishly. Inwardly, I applauded his ability to feel annoyed at being accused of a crime he had actually committed. To think that only a short while ago, Harmony had been judging him for that very thing. Bitch.

"So you're friends with Miss Reed?" Jordan's voice asked gently.

"More than friends," he said.

"You were in love?" she asked. Lord, the girl had perfected the art of sounding – and perhaps being – clueless.

"I have a girlfriend," he said. He did? That was new. Ah well. I wasn't here for gossip. "But Harmony's practically family. And we... I..." He trailed off. I could hear a few more snuffles. I rolled my eyes at him through the wooden dock separating us. How could anyone calling themselves man have such feelings for a woman (and such a sexy woman) and not even try to fuck her?

(He had, of course, when we'd first met, but then that dumb cunt Harmony had been too wrapped up boo-hooing her enslavement to give any guy a chance.)

"What the hell made you think she was here? How did you even know about this place?" Matt asked.

“You’d been acting funny,” Miguel said a bit defensively. “Remember, I asked you the other day what you’d been up to, and... I don’t know. I got a funny vibe.

“Funny? How was I acting funny?”

“Oh come on. You and Harm were always tight. Then she disappears, and you barely even try to help look for her. Plus the way you’ve been disappearing all the time, and...”

“And you figured me not wanting to sit around the house all summer meant I was a goddamn kidnapper?”

“Well for one, you were the last one seen with her. You and...”

“Jordan,” Jordan said. “Miss Reed was just giving us a ride home from school.”

“Yeah, I remember him saying. But then... We didn’t tell you, but when we were checking her apartment, you know, for clues or whatever... well, we found one.” He had? What possible clue could he have found of a spontaneous kidnapping?

I heard a rustle of paper. “What’s it say?” asked Jordan.

Matt read aloud. “To whom it may concern. If you find this note and I have gone missing, then I Harmony Reed have been kidnapped. I have been subjected to brainwashing techniques the likes of which I don’t fully understand, and due to their nature cannot fully...”

“Divulge,” Miguel supplied. “Means ‘share.’”

“Fine, then you read it,” Matt snapped.

It was Jordan’s voice that went on. “‘They have made me susceptible to control, and as of this time someone has taken my freedom from me.’ Oh gosh. ‘I have purchased a GPS tracking device that I will keep on my person. If you are able to find me, please know that anything I say to convince you that I am acting of my own free will is not true.’”

Was *she* sniffing now? Good god, was being a pussy about my enslavement contagious or something?

She finished in a quiet voice. “‘Wherever I am, take me away from there... by force if necessary. And get me to somewhere safe. Not here. Sincerely, Harmony.’”

“Holy fuck.” Matt’s voice. “That’s... nuts. And the GPS lead you here?”

“No. This was just a hunch. The GPS never turned up anything. My guess is by the time we tried running the app, she was...” He couldn’t finish the thought, but mentally I did. *Curling her toes in orgasmic bliss?* “Anyway, I knew you’d been acting weird, so I put the tracker on your car, followed you out here. Which, where the hell is here, anyway?”

“This was my uncle’s fishing cabin. I come out to here to chill and...” I could picture him gesturing to the pretty young Asian girl beside him, and could picture her concealing her dislike of pretending to be his slam piece.

“Your mom know about this?”

“Hell no. But if you don’t tell her about that, I won’t tell her about you accusing me of being a kidnapper.”

Miguel gave a single chuckle. “Fair enough, I guess.”

The trio went back up to the cabin then. I stayed right where I was, keeping myself mindful that I was obeying an unspoken order, that this was all still part of the trigger. Couldn't have that back-stabber Harmony taking the reins and ruining everything. Not the most glamorous servitude, but servitude nonetheless. It was hours yet before I heard Matt calling for me. Confident he wouldn't do so if the coast weren't clear, I emerged from hiding. I flopped down on the shore cold, wet, naked, caked in bug bites and pond muck, but he kissed me anyway. Jordan hung back.

"Good work today, Melody. If you hadn't been thinking so fast... I think that cover was the only thing that got his guard down."

"You shouldn't have let him find the bucket," I rebuked, though my heart wasn't in it.

"No shit. Pun intended." He made a face. "Anyway. Harmony gave us a hell of a scare today. The scream, and that fucking letter. I mean, a GPS tracker, seriously?"

"It didn't transmit records, only current location. Besides, we burned it with the rest of my purse, and I don't burden little boys with things they don't need to know."

"Well it sure would've been nice to *know* you got people all fucking paranoid. I could've been more careful."

"You think he'll come back?"

"Naw. We got him pretty shit-faced. Probably too much to drive, honestly, but he'll probably be all right. Anyway, if he was still suspicious, he wouldn't have been that laid back about it. Miguel's too hot headed to act that good."

I nodded. "Good. Then there's only two things left to do."

"What's that?" asked Jordan. She sounded concerned. Considering this was the same girl who recently let a school secretary drag her into a room and spank her bare bottom rather than let her mom find out she'd been smoking, I supposed it made sense that today's events had shaken the girl up.

"The first is to reward you two for keeping me secure. We were this close to losing me for a minute there, and you did wonderfully."

"More resentful, grumbling bitch sex, yay," muttered Matt. He often complained about my domineering attitude, but he'd never turned me down.

"You were an extra good boy today, so if you'd rather we mix it up a little..." Like hitting a switch, everything in my voice, posture, and demeanor changed. I rolled up to my knees, my gaze sinking from his eyes to his feet, hands clasped behind my back, legs spread, tits thrust out. "Your humble slut slave would like to show you how grateful she is, master, if you will kindly tell her how best she may pleasure you."

I could practically hear his erection slam into his zipper.

"What's the second thing?" Jordan asked before he could dive in.

I looked up to her, and while my body held its slave girl position, my face was unmistakably Melody. "The second is that we have to kill Harmony Reed."

Chapter Four

As the days after Miguel's near-rescue passed, it gradually became clear to me that I was going to lose. At this point, I suppose I should clarify that by "I," I mean me, Harmony. I went back and forth so much, and so much about being me was so confusing, that such distinctions became ever more important. Even if nobody was listening to them but me. Harmony, that is.

Melody was growing stronger by the day. I wondered if I had by now developed a full blown multiple personality disorder, or if this was only a stronger manifestation of whatever Master had done to me. Or if there was a difference. All I know is, it's damn hard to resist someone from fucking around in your head when they know exactly how you think.

"Any day now, slave. A matter of time until you're mine. Crawling to my feet, dripping with need, begging me to fuck you," Matt said, admiring the sight of me splayed out on the bed. The handcuffs weren't in use when master and mistress – Matt and Jordan, I mean – were present. Why bother? I couldn't escape. I didn't even want to. Melody had reassured them that I wasn't up to physically overpowering them, and we all knew running wasn't an option. Barefoot, in the middle of the woods, I wasn't going to make it far; plus, they could say a few words and I'd be Melody again, their eager prisoner.

"That's never going to happen," I muttered back. Did I sound as petulant to him as I did to myself? Increasingly I found that my resistance sounded less like the defiant warrior I was trying to channel, and more like a six-year-old who's still pretending she won't have to eat her vegetables.

"Oh, come on, Harm, all you gotta do is let go. We both know you want it. To be my little plaything. Look at you. You were *born* for this. Every fucking inch of you was designed by evolution to get men hard, then help get them soft again."

My thighs clenched together. In this skimpy pink lingerie, there was no hiding the clear evidence of my arousal, and I didn't bother any more. Who was I fooling? My body was as much a traitor as Melody. "Shut up. You can't talk like that. You're..."

I stopped myself before reminding him of his mother, how she would feel to know her son was doing this to me. Not because of the pain I felt every time I thought of my friends, who by now must surely think I was dead, nor even because such reminders had proven futile to nudge his conscience. No. My mouth snapped shut because it was one of the rules. *Don't mention Hannah*. The punishment for disobeying the rules was simple. I would be triggered, and Melody would tell them another one of my secrets, another nugget they could use to help break me.

She was changing, too, in a way, but only out of necessity. Bossing them around and telephoning sass wasn't going to give them what they wanted. In order to satisfy master and mistress, she had altered her behavior to perform for them like a living sex toy. Rather than push them around and condescend to them, once she'd taken care of their appetites, the assertive, dominant bitch in her turned on *me*. Yesterday (I think?), I had broken rule #1 after being splashed awake out of a stone slumber – *Matt and Jordan are "master" and "mistress."* After an immensely enthusiastic course of cunnilingus for Jordan, Melody told them how slutty lingerie turned me on. It reminded me of a time when my body's entire purpose had been to display itself for Master. The most delicious time of my life.

Now, here I was, a big-titted drippy-cunted toy doll, dressed up to suit my owner's tastes. I could almost come just thinking about it. Except that, of course, would break rule #2.

"It would almost be worth it."

"What would?" master asked. Had I said that out loud? I talked to myself in their absence so much I was doing that more and more. Or maybe Melody was doing it to me, pushing the words out from her nook in the corner of my brain.

"Nothing."

"Oh come on," he said, settling in beside me. His hand rested right on my hip, stroking my bare skin. (Melody had told them how much casual physical affection got to me.) "What naughty little thing were you thinking of doing?"

"Nothing." I hoped he couldn't feel me trembling.

"Tell me, Harmony. Do as you're told, and I can promise you we'll give you that release you're craving."

It would be so easy. Why not tell him? It was painfully obvious how horny I was. I could simply be a good girl and obey. Master would want me to. This lesser, lowercase master certainly did. Maybe he'd let me come. Maybe if I asked him to fuck me – the real me – just once, it would clear my head and I could regain the strength to resist.

My fists suddenly clenched as I remembered how dangerous that reasoning was. That was exactly what I'd told myself the other day (or week, or whatever) when Jordan was having me give her a fashion show, trying on sexy outfits for her. (I don't remember why I'd agreed to it, but I don't really know why I'm doing most of the things I do any more.) Anyway, she'd started teasing my pussy, rubbing it through my panties, and told me that if I asked her nicely, she'd let me come. Matt wouldn't have to know, she'd promised.

Please? Please let me come, I'd started.

You can ask nicer than that, um, slut, she'd answered. Melody had spanked the "Miss Reed" right out of her. Now she only called me demeaning terms to help me remember my once and future place.

Please... mistress? Just once. I'll be so fast, so quiet. Please!

That's closer... I think I like hearing you beg for it...

I wish I could say I'd seen through the ploy, but her hand between my legs was the only thing in my universe. I don't know how long I pleaded before remembering I – Harmony Reed – was no longer a sex slave, and didn't want to be one again. But it wasn't brief.

“Say it, skank. Say, ‘I was thinking naughty thoughts but I want to be a good girl.’ You'll feel better once you admit it.”

Would I ever. From years past, the echoes of Master's voice calling me his “good girl” still reverberated around my soul. I *loved* when Master told me that. As Melody had told them. “Feeling good isn't the problem,” I replied, forcing myself to roll away from him.

Of course, I knew full well the view from behind was just as good, and he still had a flank to caress. Which he did. I didn't dare squirm away. Next time I misbehaved, Melody would probably tell them how much I loved being kissed on my chest. I'd been craving that a lot recently. God, to have mistress's delicate lips trailing down my breasts...

“Is that so? I bet you could use a little recreation time, huh, slave. We have a swimsuit for you. It's Jordan's, so you'll be bulging out of it in all your righteous roundness, but I think you don't mind that, do you. Just ask permission to be dressed in a slutty bikini for our enjoyment, and we'll let you go down to the lake for a bit.”

I stiffened. “*To* the lake, or *in* the lake?” I heard myself ask in a small voice.

“I was thinking to, but I bet a good girl could persuade me of the latter.”

My breath quickened. *In* the lake. Where I could be in the actual sunlight. Fresh air. Unable for once to hear their voices, if even for a while. Not that I could escape swimming underwater, – it was a half mile at least to the far side – but a respite from the constant torments and temptations.

I'd have to lay it on thick. They didn't settle for second-rate pleading any more. The voice alone wasn't enough; now it required body language, posturing, the angle of my head, a token of plaintive contact. I had to beg like I was really their slave.

Which I wasn't. Not yet.

But still, for this...

Jordan's bikini fit me like something out of a porno shoot. My hips were so much bigger than the nubile Asian girl that, even stretched to its limit, it covered me only slightly better than a g-string. The top was worse. It was too tight by far, made to house her petite A cup breasts. In trying to contain mine, it made for two triangles that dug in so deep it was like they were trying to demand they be stared at. On the short walk down to the dock, I had tuck it back down beneath my nipples half a dozen times.

I could still taste Matt on my breath. This had been the first time I'd sucked his cock as Harmony. It wasn't my best work, and after all this time enjoying Melody's less distracted blowjobs, he'd noticed. For that, I'd only be allowed to dangle my feet in the water. No more than that. After watching me change into this teenage girl's bikini, he'd told me to enjoy my five minutes in the sun. Then, after informing Jordan of our bargain, he'd slapped me on the ass like he was a cowboy spurring his horse.

It was sunset, not sunrise. I only knew because I'd figured out the compass directions during my captivity; in my head, it could be morning or evening. It made no difference. But for once, I was me, and I was outside breathing free air, the cool water of the pond soothing feet that had seen too little use.

Naturally, there could be no true respite. That came only when master and mistress slipped the handcuffs back on and left me, and was respite only in the sense that they were no longer there to witness my anguish. The arousal never went away any more. But a second pair of handcuffs had seen to it that there would be no scratching that itch. That precaution, controlling every aspect of my pleasure, had been in place since the day Miguel had intruded on us.

Mistress – *Jordan, her name is Jordan* – settled in behind me, her slender legs spread around mine. The girl had shed her clothes already, apparently, from the feel of her bare skin pressed against my back. Delicate fingers kneaded at my tummy, yet another turn-on Melody had revealed to the girl. The crotch of her swimsuit was already as wet as it would've been had I simply dove into the pond.

"I have to say, that swimsuit looks better on you than it did on me," Jordan said, nestling her chin onto my shoulder.

"Thank you, mistress." I immediately regretted the deferential tone, but then, I was still blissed out from what a good girl I'd been sucking Matt off.

Jordan remained silent; she'd struggled with this aspect of enslaving me far more than Matt had. The reason for it was simple, and at the core of all of their arguments over how to handle me. Matt was the martinet, taunting me, tempting me, reminding me. Around him, I never got to stop thinking about what they were doing to me. Jordan, however, was the temptress, giddily keeping me forever on the cusp of an orgasm I would never be permitted to have. Stick and carrot.

I understood it. Jordan was a simple girl who enjoyed simple pleasures. Namely, she was sexually inexperienced and immensely attracted to my body. She liked being made to submit my Melody, but she was happy with pretty much any affection she got. All she really wanted was for me not to fight her any more. After all, I was so accommodating some of the time, and seemed so close to letting myself enjoy it all. Then we could play with each other in every lurid way she desired, with no more guilt-inducing sulkiness.

Matt was also attracted to me, clearly, but that wasn't where his interest stopped. He'd tasted that rarest of all fruits – real power over another person. That was his aphrodisiac. As much as he enjoyed my sexual attention – Melody made certain of that – what he really wanted was to have his own authentic sex slave. A beautiful woman who would obey not because she was made to, but because she desired to.

Which she did. Locked away in this cabin being treated like their sex slave was the closest thing I'd known to being with Master since that day the spark of liberty had been so suddenly forced upon me. Nearly as suddenly, it had been snuffed out.

In the distance, the door to the cabin creaked open and closed. That would be Matt, coming to make sure I wasn't over-indulged. Like Melody had taught him. Promise me little, and deliver less. I wasn't ready to go yet.

"Is it always this beautiful out here in the evening?" I asked. "I haven't been outside in so long." Not as the real me, anyway, and Melody was too busy tending to the pleasure of master and mistress to admire the scenery.

She nodded, her long black hair draped over my breast, tickling lightly. "Yeah. This place is great, isn't it? It's going to be so nice once you're, you know, a slave. Or whatever. Then you can come out here all the time. Don't you want that?"

I sighed. "You don't want to know what I want."

Jordan giggled. "I think I know exactly what you want. Slut." One hand slid down my belly to my nethers and rubbed softly across my mound. I could feel the heat pulsing from it on my thighs. "Come on. Admit you want it."

"You know I do." I leaned my head against hers. "But people can want more than one thing. Sometimes, even if those things are opposites. People are complicated."

"Well the sooner you give up, the sooner you won't have to feel like that. That's what you keep telling us, anyway. The other you, anyway."

"That 'other me' is saying that because someone turned my body and mind into their playground," I said, my voice heating. "Right now, you're tormenting someone with what's essentially a drain damage. This is the moral equivalent of what Janice Wilkes did to Wayne last fall."

Wayne Nedly was a student at school who was a ways out there on the spectrum; the story was that Janice had flirted with him to lure him to a secluded spot behind the tennis courts where her boyfriend was waiting to beat him up. The why of it was anyone's guess, but it had been a pretty horrifying little incident that had cost the school a fortune in PR, legal fees, and anti-bullying training. I overheard Principal Headley say to one of the other secretaries that Wayne's family had transferred him to another school because every time they tried to bring him back to ours, he started panicking. Screaming.

"No it's not," she protested, hands coming to a sudden stop. "No, this is like, um..."

“Like what, Jordan? Like... raping a rape victim?” I pressed. Two rule violations there. Whatever. Brought to the point where three minutes of being groped by the side of a dirty pond was the most relief I’d had in weeks, my self-control was dangerously frayed.

“Miss Reed, no, we’re only...”

“Only... chaining me to a bed, starving me, torturing me?”

“Torture? What? No! No, we’re trying to be *nice* to you, so you’ll—”

“It’s not ‘nice’ to fuck with someone until they go crazy!”

“But... you said... I mean, Melody said...”

“I know what I said! But no, you go right on pretending you’re doing me a favor. Would you like it if the tables were turned, if me and Matt chained you to the bed, teased and humiliated and...”

I heard heavy footsteps thundering down the wooden dock. Close. Mattster – I mean master – Matt! – had heard me, no doubt. He said a few words, and once more, I was Melody.

“It’s about time one of you took charge of the situation,” I said crossly. “Mistress was going to let Harmony trample all over her.”

“I saw that,” Matt said, equally angry. “What the fuck is your problem?”

Jordan hopped up to her feet. “We were just sitting here, and suddenly she flipped out on me! She hasn’t done that in weeks! *You’re* the one who told her she could leave the cabin! She wasn’t like that when you weren’t doing her special favors!”

“Favors? We almost had her, you dumb cunt!” He spat into the murky waters. “She was so worked up, she was pleading to be allowed to blow me just to go outside for a few minutes!”

“Don’t call me names, Matt!”

“I wouldn’t call you a dumb cunt if you wouldn’t act like a dumb cunt.”

“Stop it! I’m serious!”

Before either of them could respond, I put an end to their stupid argument in the simplest of ways. One hand on each crotch. They both turned to look at me, anger fading at the reminder of what I now offered so freely. “Harmony can hear you, you know,” I said. “So if you’re quite finished, perhaps we can move on with your reward, and her punishment?”

“Sure!” agreed Jordan immediately.

“Eh, you have a go. I just had the real thing.”

As much as I was disappointed that my master didn’t have any use for me, I took it as a good sign. Harmony was caving, and he remained committed to helping me break her. I had hope for him. Jordan, left to her own devices, would probably have already fucked this up. Yes, her amateurish fondling kept Harmony’s pilot lit and ready to burn, but she was only after carnal pleasures. Harmony had something to offer in that

department, which gave her a bargaining chip. Matt only wanted her unquestioning submission. If she offered up that, it would be the last offer she made.

“How may I pleasure you, mistress?”

“How about something rough?”

“Gladly, mistress.” This was a common request from her. I had been surprised more than once at the girl’s pain threshold. Welts and bruises had decorated her ass more than once at my hands, and she still hadn’t shied away the next day. The girl didn’t have the temperament for real bdsm, I didn’t think, but my tepid level of date night bondage seemed to suit her kink just fine. I grabbed her by the waistband of her shorts and dragged her stumbling along behind me, then slammed her up against a tree. There I made out with her like a warrior goddess as I parted her with her clothes. I reasoned since we were outdoors, she might like a few scratches from the bark to offset my finger in her ass as I ate her out.

I made sure she had one more orgasm than she expected, ambushing her one last time while she was trying to get dressed to drag her over my lap, rip her shorts back down, and beat her ass with one hand while I finger fucked her with the other. It was important to keep the little bitch addicted. She was clearly the weak link.

“You know, now that my head’s clear... that swimsuit actually looks kind of ridiculous on you,” she said once we were finally done. We were back on the dock, in the reverse of our positions before. She leaned her head back against my shoulder as I held her.

“Would you like to take it off of me, mistress?” I offered. She seemed to prefer me partially clothed to naked, but the reminder that Harmony was close to becoming this, a toy who could be dressed and undressed as she chose, was helpful.

“Nah. Unless you’re uncomfortable? I know it’s kinda tight.”

“It’s fine. I’m grateful to have a mistress who would let me share her clothes.” I was grateful to have a mistress period, even one as milquetoast as Jordan. The clothes I could take or leave. My body was meant to be clad however they desired.

“Earlier, what Harmony was saying, about...” she took a deep breath. It was hard for her to get the word out. “About rape. And torture?”

“Yes, mistress. She said something about that, I think.” And thought about it constantly, I might add, the whiny entitled bitch.

“Is... is she serious? Are we doing that?”

“Mistress, we’ve been over this. You can’t believe a word she says. She *loves* this. Every time you leave, she misses you, and every time you come back, her heart swells with eagerness. She’s just confused, and can’t admit to it yet. Partly because she’s not ready, but mostly because she’d miss all this attention so much.”

“But...”

“But what, mistress?”

“But like, how do I know you’re not just saying that? She said it was like she was, you know, handicapped or whatever, and we were messing with her. Like Janice and Wayne.”

I was glad she couldn’t see me glaring at her back. Not that I could be angry with her – she was my mistress, after all – but it was infuriating how Harmony kept trying to warp the girl’s mind against her own pleasure. “It’s nothing like that. Remember, mistress, you’re trying to *help* her. To make her more like me. A good, happy girl. Don’t I seem happier to you like this than I do as Harmony?”

“Yeah. Sure, I guess.” She didn’t sound convinced. She was well beyond feeling like she needed to convince her slave by now. “I just... I don’t know. If she’d really be happier like this, then why’d she try to escape when her friend ambushed us a few weeks ago?”

Had that been only weeks? I shared Harmony’s sense of timelessness. “Do you have any pets, Jordan?”

“Yeah. A cat. Bristle.” She smiled.

“All right. So when your family first brought Bristle into your home, how was she?”

“I don’t know. We got him when I was like four years old.”

“OK, but... it’s pretty easy to imagine that, at first, he was afraid, right? Strange environment, weird people, a little kid trying to grab and prod her. He was probably really fussy, I bet.”

“Yeah, maybe. Do you wanna see a picture of him? I took this great one the other day where he was trying to hide under the sink when my mom left it open when she was loading the dishwasher.”

I did, because that was what my mistress wanted. Picture after picture of an old gray tomcat. That it remained a useful segue to my point was a handy bonus. “He seems very happy with his life,” I said when she finished.

“Oh yeah. He’s just a big ol’ cuddle bug.”

“But if you’d given him what he wanted at first, to let him go and give his ‘freedom’ – freedom to starve, get sick, to be miserable and alone – then he’d have lost out on this happy life you gave him.”

She mulled it over. “I guess that makes sense.”

“Forgive me, mistress, but you sound unsure.”

“Well yeah, a little, I guess. You’re not exactly a cat, after all. And Matt... I don’t know. He’s so *mean* about it. I just want you to be like you say. Happy. But he always has to get so aggressive and bossy about it.”

“Master is just impatient. Harmony’s misbehaving, and it’s good that she has you to love her and make her feel cared for, but she also needs someone to punish her when she’s bad.”

“I guess that makes sense.” She craned her neck to look back at me, and I quickly adopted an affectionate smile. “I wish I didn’t have to share you.”

“I know, mistress.” I knew Matt wished the same. “I know Harmony would choose you over him, if she could.” Another lie, but hopefully a comforting and productive one.

“What if this doesn’t work, Melody? You keep on giving us all these guidelines, but... she’s still holding out. Why can’t you just tell us everything we need to do now?”

“We have to pace ourselves. You get frog legs by turning up the heat slowly and it never notices it’s being cooked. There has to be ways to keep making her resistance more difficult.”

“OK, well...? What else can we do?”

I kissed her cheek. It had been a couple days since I’d given them another tip. Harmony had actually been behaving pretty well until that last outburst. She was past the point of lashing out, for the most part; now, she *wanted* to give in. The stubborn bitch remember what it was like to be owned again. They’d made her want it.

Now it was time to make like the church and weaponize her guilt. “Tell her what you want from her.”

“What? We’ve been doing that non-stop for weeks!”

“No, not the big picture. She knows you want her to be your slave, mistress. She knows *she* wants it. You’ve made her crave it, taught her to beg and submit and obey. Now, you need to get *specific*. Her heart wants to obey you, so now you need to focus on giving her opportunities to do it.”

“I don’t follow.”

“Be *specific*, mistress. Don’t tell Harmony you want her to be your obedient slave. Tell her you’re wet. Tell her you’re horny. Tell her you need a hot little slut to lick your pussy like a good girl. Tell her exactly what she could do, then and there, to serve you. Not what she’ll be this time next year.”

I expected her to take my advice. Or to ask questions. To act on it now with me rather than wait for Harmony. Instead...

“I just wish we could fast forward through all this. Or rewind out of it.”

I tried not to conceal my reaction. Those were dangerous words. The words of someone who wanted out. Someone who might do something dangerous to our plans. Something stupid. Master had to be warned about this, before mistress ruined everything!

“Mistress, you’re doing the right thing. You just need to—”

“Hush now, Melody. In fact... I’m done with you for tonight.”

But...!

I was me again. Harmony. My name is Harmony. The transitions were more and more confusing. Jordan was watching me, and smiled softly when she saw the shift in my eyes. “Welcome back.”

“Hello. Mistress.” It was dark now, fireflies igniting on and off all around the pond like our own visual symphony. I was still outside. With Jordan between my thighs, my toes just barely touched the water now, but that too was good. She seemed to be enjoying it as well, and the two of us sat there on the dock and drank in the night in companionable silence. I wasn’t even processing the conversation Melody had just had with Jordan. For now, I was outside, and cool, and mistress was nuzzling her head and its mane of soft hair between my breasts. I found myself wondering if she’d like to suck on them. Maybe I should offer? No, if she wanted to, she would tell me so. For now, sit here and wait to be needed.

It was enough, for now.

“You two bitches done rubbing your slizzes yet?” yelled Matt from up by the house some time later. “There’s a party I need to get to tonight, so time to wrap it up!”

Jordan sighed. “I guess it’s time to go. You ready?” I stood up carefully, not desirous to get any splinters in my mostly exposed skin from the old planks that comprised the dock. I helped Jordan to her feet.

“As ready as I’m going to get.”

She didn’t respond. We made our way up the hill to the cabin. Matt was waiting, taking the final swig from a bottle of cheap beer he’d gotten with a fake ID. He didn’t ask permission to brush the shmutz off my butt before guiding me to the bed, throwing gasoline on the brushfire in my loins. Like that, I was right back where I’d been that afternoon, when my firmest resistance had culminated in sucking Matt’s dick for the privilege of being dressed like a skank for Jordan near some water.

“Damn, you look like such a whore in that bikini, Harm. We’ll have to see if we can’t squeeze those big titties of yours into more of Jordan’s clothes.”

“I look forward to trying, master.” Sometimes I played that game, meekly agreeing while leaving it unclear whether or not I was being sarcastic. Leave them guessing. I left *me* guessing tonight. Looking sexy might get them to fuck me, and that might be worth it at this point. God, I needed to come.

“Any good tidbits out of Mel?” Matt asked Jordan. “I’m ready for the next step.”

Jordan watched me as he snapped the handcuff to my left wrist, the other end fastened to the bedpost. “Yeah. She said we need to tell her what we want.” She clarified the meaning, as Melody had clarified it for her.

“Oh, is that right? You looking to hear how you can make yourself useful, slut?” Matt asked, using his free hand to peel the triangles over my nipples up over my breasts. I almost gasped at how much easier it was to breathe, suddenly. And at how good it felt to be seen, to be touched.

“Please,” I whispered. Please keep going? Please stop? I didn’t know.

“Not now, Matt,” Jordan said softly.

He ignored her, sliding on top of me, thrusting the neck of his beer bottle between my tits, the dregs dribbling out in my cleavage. “You like this, slave? Because I can’t tell you how bad I wanna fuck a big fat set of tits like these. You want that, don’t you. You want to be my tit slave.”

“Knock it off, Matt,” Jordan pressed.

For my part, I didn’t have any fight in me. Honestly, I still hadn’t come, and Jordan’s teasing coupled with Matt’s scrumptious tirade of abuse had kept me on edge for weeks now. He wouldn’t tease one out of me titty-fucking me with a beer bottle, but I wasn’t going to stop him. I knew he could see on my face that I was only too eager to submit to the real thing. I *wanted* him to fuck my tits. To actually pleasure a man with my own body, not Melody’s. Why else would I have big fuckable boobs like these?

“MATT,” said Jordan, her voice uncommonly forceful. “I said, NOT. NOW.” She put a hand on his shoulder and pulled back, hard. Harder than I’d have thought she was capable, honestly, as it caused Matt to fall right off of me and slide off the bed to the floor.

“Please don’t stop,” I whined. But it was too late. No one was hearing me any more. Matt launched himself back to his feet, fists cocked. He stopped shy of hitting her, but only just. He settled for a hard shove, planting his hand on the middle of her chest and sending her reeling backwards, stumbling over my empty bucket and falling on her butt. Meanwhile, I had noticed Matt had dropped his bottle beside me. In desperation, I rolled onto my side and thrust it under the small of my back, lying back down on top of it. Maybe I could get it inside me with my feet, once they were gone. I had all night to try. Only...

He was shouting an accusation; she shrieked one of her own. Then everyone was yelling. I barely heard it. I was so close. Oh god, I was close. I looked so fucking hot. Fuck it. Right then I didn’t care if my abductors tried to strangle one another to death so long as the survivor took the time to fuck me after. For the moment, though, they were distracted, and my hand was free. I slipped my fingers inside of the skimpy bikini bottoms Jordan had gifted me and, with a moan, slipped my fingers inside me for the first time in months.

Oh GOD. Oh fucking GOD in HEAVEN. My pussy was a volcano, gushing its magma around my hand. This would take no time at all. A few more thrusts, and...

“No! No, please, god, no! You have to let me... GRRRRAAAGH!” I howled with the effort to get my arm free from Matt’s grip. There was no point. The next moment, my right arm was every bit as secured as the left. My cunt may as well have been on the dark side of the moon for how easily I could access it. I rubbed my thighs together, but there was nothing doing.

“Jesus fuck, Harmony, what’s gotten into you?” he snapped. Jordan was staring in shock.

“Please. Just let me have my arm. I’ll do anything you want. I’ll be a good girl. I’ll give you another blowjob! Both of you! Well, not a blowjob, but you know what I mean. Please! Oh god, please, master, please let your slut touch herself, let her rub her desperate little snatch until she comes like a slut. Please. I’ll behave, I promise. No more misbehaving. All of your rules. Oh god *PLEASE!*”

The more I pleaded, the broader Matt’s smug grin grew. He was loving this. Good. A master should love his slave. Not that I was. Yet. Unless I could come. Then maybe, but goddammit master, let me come!

“I’m going to leave you like this, slave. If, when we get back, you can remember your manners, I may let you know what you could do to please me. All right slave?”

I whimpered. To be left like this all night. Oh god. “Yes, master.”

“Good girl,” he said. Then he kissed my forehead and walked out the cabin’s door. “Let’s go, Jordan. I got places to be.”

He went out to the car. I fixed eyes on mistress that I hoped weren’t too desperate. I *was* desperate, of course, but that shouldn’t be her burden. A slave didn’t put her needs on her owner. Not that I was a slave. But if I wanted to get off, I had to act like one.

And if that proved enjoyable... well, we’d see.

“Oh, Miss Reed,” mistress said softly. “What did we do to you?”

Hope swelled inside me. “You can do anything you want to me, mistress.”

She didn’t look happy at that, for some reason. “I... here,” she said, slipping the handcuff key into the band on my right wrist. “I know it’s still... but... If I leave you like a hand, will you promise to snap it back in when you hear us coming back? I don’t want Matt to freak.”

“Who?”

She grimaced. “Matt? Master.”

I nodded. Right then, I’d have agreed to anything to have my hand free for the night. She looked pensive, as if weighing the risk of Matt discovering her tiny rebellion of mercy. Then there was the sound of his car honking impatiently in the drive. “Oh, fuck it,” she grumbled, glaring in master’s direction. She twisted the key and gave me back my hand.

I didn’t hear her leave. My whole world was the thrusting of the smooth, rippled glass in my pussy. I didn’t care if it was sanitary, that it was cold, that this could well be cementing my status as their slave. I just needed to come. By the time I screeched my relief, they were mercifully out of earshot. I didn’t stop until my arm was too tired to continue, and I fell asleep with a docile grin upon my sweat-soaked face.

Chapter Five

“Harm? You comin’? Everybody’s already out back by the bonfire.”

“In a sec! Have you heard this song?” I turned up the stereo, rocking out in the driver’s seat of Dad’s Corolla.

Karen humored me through the refrain, and we sang along together. “I knew you were trouble when you walked in... So shame on me now. Flew me to places I’d never been, now I’m lying on the cold hard ground. Oh! Oh. Trouble, trouble, trouble...”

She soon bored of it – or at least, was too eager to go mack on Brett – and made her way toward the party. I ignored her beckon and let my T-Swift move me, cranking the volume all the way. (“Up to eleven,” Dad would always say in this weird accent, some old guy joke I never understood.) I couldn’t sing to save my life, but I didn’t care. If the neighbors got to have a couple minutes of culture reverberating their boring suburban lives, they could thank me for it later. In fact, when the track hit the end, I backed it up and started over. The song was still new, and I hadn’t had time to totally memorize it yet.

“Once upon time, a few mistakes ago, I was in your sights, you got me alone,” it began.

Someone tapped on my window suddenly and I about jumped out of my seat. Just some guy, nobody I knew. Must be one of Brett’s neighbors coming to chew me out about the noise. I rolled the window down as I lowered the volume.

“Hey, sorry about that. I didn’t realize anybody could hear me.”

“You’re Harmony Reed, right?”

I frowned. “Uh, yeah. Who’re–!”

I felt the dart hit my neck before I even saw him raise the gun.

It was night time when I woke up. The same night, I was pretty sure. I had my bottle still, thank god – no, thank mistress – and so the loneliness was, for once, bearable. I'd had this dream a lot in the year and a half since Master had died. The day I was taken. This time the dream had been the way I remembered my abduction – the way I was pretty sure it had really happened – but it was common to turn other memories of those last days of my childhood into that day instead. Walking out to my car after work to find a man hiding in the back seat. Getting drunk – or drugged? – at a party and falling asleep with that stranger standing nearby, watching me. Letting Pogo out in the back yard late, but when he didn't scratch to be let in, going out in my pajamas to find him, and...

It all ended the same way. A normal life one moment, and in the next, I'd become a slave.

Was this all my life was destined to be? Ping-ponging back and forth between freedom and subjugation? It was like I spent all my hours rotating between contentment and pleasure, unable to figure out how both of them could be so far away from happiness. There was the childhood part of my life when things had been comparatively simple, easy, boring. Then the ranch, a wild, bliss-fueled, degrading half-life. Then life on the outside, a work-a-day nobody whose only problem was the inability to live outside the past.

Here I was again, back on the downward – upward? – slide to re-enslavement, and all I'd been able to think about was how good life had seemed in those periods when I'd been breathing free air. Mistress had taken me out by the docks. Mistress had left me my hand, forced master to discard this beer bottle. Mistress gave me just enough freedom to want to be her slave. Maybe this was that sweet spot in between?

“Hello!” I yelled again. “Can anyone hear me?! HELLO!” If anyone did, they didn’t answer. I tried the doorknob again, but there was nothing doing. I’d already hurt my shoulder trying to ram it open, but I was pretty sure that thing was solid oak. Resigned to my confinement, I took stock of my surroundings.

It looked like a hotel room, sort of, or a bedroom in a movie. It was wholly impersonal while still making token effort at looking warm and lived in. Paintings of natural vistas hung on the walls. A desk sat against one wall, but there were no books nor paper nor pencils nor anything else to show anyone had ever used it. The bathroom had two bath towels and a hand towel, a luffa hanging from the spigot, and some generic soap and shampoo. The bottles seemed to be full. Minimal perfume to their scents.

The medicine cabinet had an unused hairbrush that still had the price tag on it and nothing else.

The only part of the room that looked the least bit lived in was the bed, and that only because I’d woken up there, draped in the silk sheets and light blanket. I’d been curled up like it was my own bed and it was simply my normal place to fall asleep. I’d woken up fully dressed in my own clothes, at least, which was good because there was nothing else to wear in the closet. With no sounds of life outside the room and no way to get out, I didn’t know what else to do, so I sat on the floor next to the door and hoped to hear someone outside.

It was hours before I heard anyone, but sure enough, those were footsteps, hard soles on hard wood. I leapt to my feet and started banging on the door again. “Hello? Let me out of here! I’m locked in here! You have to–”

The doorknob clicked, and the door opened. On the other side stood a m-. No. Stood Master. Master? Since when did I have a Master? Why did I know to call h- call Master... Master?

“What’s going on here? Where am I? Why was the door locked? What–”

Master held up a hand, and like that, I fell silent. It felt good, weirdly. How could I feel this confused but still this good at the same time? Oh crap, I could even feel myself getting turned on! How on earth could this be happening?

“So you’re finally awake. Good. Time to make sure we have all the kinks worked out. Or worked in, as the case may be.” Master laughed. I smiled without knowing why. “Harmony, in a moment, I’m going to allow a man to come into your room. When he does, I want you to be a good girl and do whatever he wants. Do that, and you’ll please me. Understand?”

Understand? This was lunacy. Yet every protest that attempted the journey from brain to tongue – I don’t want to; you’re insane; I’m not a whore; I don’t care what you want – ran full speed into a wall. A wall on which was written, in bold letters: PLEASE YOUR MASTER.

“O-okay,” I answered in a small voice. I wasn’t really agreeing to it, though. Just pretending to go along with it until the coast was clear. That was it.

Master departed. The door was left open in h–... in hi... In Master’s wake. I peered into the hall, but it was simply a long hallway in what looked like a nice house, with a window at one end overlooking a swimming pool surrounded by thick foliage. I could run. I should run. If I didn’t see a door, I could go out the window, and once I reached the treeline, no way they’d be able to find me. I could find a phone, call my... Hmm. Better not to call my family. They were the ones who put me in here, I bet. (Where did that suspicion come from? It felt right, though.) Still, someone. Only...

If I left, I couldn’t do whatever it would be this stranger would want me to do. That would displease Master.

I sat back down on the bed and waited.

It was only a few minutes before I heard more footsteps in the hall. I sat idly by, watching plenty of time in which to escape pass me by. Sure enough, the source of the noise stopped as it stepped into my doorway. I didn’t know what I’d expected, but this – an awkward-looking thirty-something man with wispy hair who looked like he was several inches taller than me while still weighing less – was not it.

“Oh wow. You’re... holy shit. I mean, I saw the pictures and all, but fuck me, you’re hot.”

I scowled. Why wasn’t I scared? I should be terrified. But instead, I was merely angry that this pig thought he could talk to me like that. “Yeah, well that makes one of us. Look, I don’t know who you are, but–”

“Call me Morris.”

“Right. Cool. Anyway, Morris, I think you better fuck off before you get yourself in real trouble here.”

That only made him grin. Or maybe the grin stemmed from the way his eyes were plainly undressing me. I shuddered in revulsion. “Trouble? I think you’re the one in trouble, miss... Say, he never told me your name.”

“My friends call me Go To Hell, but you can refer to me by my pageant title, Miss Fuck Off and Die.”

He laughed. “Tell me your name.”

For a moment, I almost piled on another insult, but... he’d told me to do something. It was one thing to smart off when I had nothing else to do, but... Master had said... but...

“Harmony.”

“Ah, that’s a pretty name for a pretty girl. Right? Now why don’t you stand up, let me take a proper look at you.” The man strode in, closing the door behind him and seating himself in the vacant desk chair.

Was that an order? Not technically. Only Master... I was sure this man wanted it, and if I did it for him, maybe Master would like that?

I stood up, slowly spinning in place. I didn't look like much. No makeup, plain old t-shirt and bluejeans. All right, I wasn't that humble; I knew I could make even this simple ensemble look pretty good. From the way Morris was licking his lips when I faced front again, it appeared he agreed.

"Had enough? I'm a minor, you know. Keep this up and you're going to wind up the weepiest bitch in the child molester suite in D Block." I folded my arms across my chest.

"A minor? Huh. Really? With those tits?" He looked more curious than put off.

"No, not really. I turned eighteen in March." I hoped Master would be happy; I'd just green-lighted this guy to keep lusting after me.

"Tell ya what, from now on, let's go with a total honesty policy, hmm? I didn't pay twenty grand to break you in just to have some brat bullshit me." Twenty thousand dollars? Holy shit! I was being... prostituted! And for that much, this guy would be expecting an awful lot. Oh shit. I really was the one in trouble here.

Why wasn't that frightening...?

"OK, how's this for some honesty. You're a fucking pig and a creep, and I wouldn't let you touch me for twenty million."

He laughed. "Fair enough. Let's make that a politeness policy instead. Now why don't you apologize to me, Harmony?"

I swallowed my anger, for Master's sake. "I'm sorry, Morris. That was rude of me. Forgive me?"

His leer broadened. "Deference is a good look on you, babe. Ask me again, but this time on your knees."

Almost more than anything, I wanted to slap him right across the face. Or maybe knee him in the crotch. But the exception to that almost was Master, and Master's words that doing what this man wanted would please Master. So as I sunk down to my knees, it felt weirdly good to turn my chin down like a child who'd been scolded and give Morris what he wanted.

"Please, Morris? Please forgive me? I won't do it again, I promise." I clasped my hands together pleadingly.

"Ha! Wow, as advertised. Can't remember the last time a bitch got me hard with just her voice. You're gonna go far here, sweet tits."

"Thank you," I said. That was the polite thing. The thing Master would want me to say. Because it was what this man – this creepy, perverted stranger – would want. I could feel my skin crawling with disgust, but no matter how much it intensified, I still couldn't convince myself that was more important than staying here, like Master had told me to.

“So I’m told you’ve never been with a guy before. That true, slutcakes?”

“Um, no. I’ve gone out with a handful of guys. Jeremy Stills, then I dated Tim Rattner most of sophomore year and the first nine weeks junior year, then—”

He burst into laughter. “Oh my god, you’re new. Or damn good at faking it. I meant professionally, dumb-dumb. You ever get fucked by a paying customer before?”

“Oh. No.” Oh god, he was really going to do it. Yet part of me was already wishing I’d put out easier and more often with those boys I’d started naming. I’d be a better fuck, so I could better serve this prick, so I could better please Master.

He rubbed his hands together. “Dressed like that, I can see why. Didn’t anyone tell you to expect company?” He held up a hand before I could respond. “By which I mean, lose the outfit. Let me see what I’m workin’ with here.”

Wow. Here we go. It was all happening so fast. But if this was what it took... I turned my back to him out of sheer instinct as I slipped my shirt off. That was obvious. But what article to take off next? In what order did one remove one’s clothes in front of a total stranger? I guess it made sense to go outer clothes, then underwear. Socks first, though. I kicked those off, almost falling over in the process. That seemed to make him laugh.

He was amused by this process, breaking me in for whatever bizarre fate I had in store. I could work with that. My brain fixated on his reactions, trying to make educated guesses about what would score me vicarious points with Master. I decided to forego any amateur strip tease efforts and keep it simple and honest. I slid my jeans down my hips and stepped out of them, fighting to peel the tight part around my calves off.

“Damn. You that horny, or did you piss yourself?”

“Um, horny, I guess.” Jesus, what a pig. As it so happened, it was indeed the former, but I was surprised he could tell. I’d never been one to get very damp when I was aroused; sex had usually taken some work to get me ready. But the thought of how happy I could make Master was getting to me. All these opportunities to obey, to be a good girl – “good girl!” – and in spite of everything, I felt... lucky.

The bra went next. Guys had been going nuts over my boobs since shortly after I started growing them. I’d developed an instinct to protect them from leers along the way. Still, it meant that as I finally peeled off my underwear – not even anything all that cute, just basic gray bikini cut with little pink dots – he got a full-on view of my butt.

“I gotta hand it to you, babe, you got one of the nicest asses I’ve ever seen. Like a porno ass, you know? Some girls are all muscle and tone, some girls got those tight skinny-bitch butts, some got that Kardashian style YIKES of a booty. But you got that sweet spot. Big, but not too big, and all the roundness a man could hope for.”

It was one of the more frank analyses my butt had ever received in my hearing. "I'm glad you like it, Morris."

"I sure do. Scoot that puppy over here, lemme see if you feel as good as you look. You don't even have to turn around yet, if you're still so damn shy."

Another command. Good. Time to please Master again. I backed up towards him, and before I knew it, this asshole's hands were cupping my bottom. However shy I was being, he seemed to have no such instinct. I was pinched. Squeezed. Stroked. A few light slaps, even. "It just doesn't want to stop jiggling, I tell ya. Damn, girl." Another couple slaps to the same effect.

"All right, all right," he said at last. "I can't wait any more. Turn that sweet ass around and show me that front side."

I could hardly believe I was obeying, but more than that, I could hardly believe how glad I was for the opportunity. His eyes darted between my chest and my crotch. His hands seemed equally conflicted, and one went to each. The only part of me that acknowledged thoughts of rebellion was the part of me that registered my surprise at their absence. What was a touch, after all, but an unspoken command? Plus, I really was getting insanely horny – not from this asshole's brazen groping, but from thinking of Master. How good it felt to please Master.

So I stood there being fondled and fingered. Soon enough I forgot that I even ought to feel embarrassed, or violated, or afraid. This whole thing felt oddly natural. If anything, I was beginning to question whether everything leading up to this point had been the dream, and now I was finally awake.

It was light out, now. The shaft of light from the window was only three boards from the bottom of the western wall, which meant it had only just come up. This time, my dream had been pure memory. And the experience had been so impactful, I remembered every detail. It was something I'd always marveled at in Master (even aside from my compulsion to find Master marvelous): Master put no sentimentality in breaking us in. We were valued, sure, but it was the way one values an investment. The way a billionaire might derive enjoyment from his newest yacht, but after the first dozen, the wonder of that maiden voyage was long gone.

I wondered sometimes if there had been more attachment to the first (whoever it had been; none of us knew for sure). Still, by the time my sister slaves and I woke up in the ranch, the novelty was past. Master would fetch a premium for whoring out first-timers (which we found ironic, given how comparatively pathetic our performances were), but to my knowledge Master never indulged in the rite. That was a constant.

As to the dream, while it remained about the same every time I had it, my reaction to it did vary a good deal. At times, it was with nostalgia of that brief window when I was still learning my new place, my first exposure to the sheer bliss of pleasing Master. Others, it was with self-revulsion. How *easily* I was broken. I imagined what my friends and family might have thought to see how a few spoken words from Master were enough to make me succumb to and even embrace my utter debasement within mere minutes.

On this particular morning, however, I woke to a fresh sense of delight. I was so obedient. So sexy. Such a useful commodity. Master might be dead, but if Master were alive, how proud I would make him! Here I was, ready and eager to submit all over again, to welcome all the Morrises of the world into my bed, into my body – all to please mistress.

As I fucked myself some more with the neck of that beer bottle, I imagined that rapturous expression I'd put on her face the very first time I made her come. I couldn't wait until she came back, until she gave me the chance to pleasure her again. She'd made me useful again! Unlike master. This boy who called himself master as if he had a right to the title didn't know how to use a woman like me. Throwing tantrums, demanding the world become what he wanted it to be. Mistress, on the other hand, had defied him, giving the slave back her sense of delight in her captivity. A quivering sigh coursed through my naked body at yet another orgasm. I'd lost count of how many mistress had given me with her generous gift. I was still thrusting away when exhaustion took me again.

“Do you ever think about your normal life?”

I gave Sasha a sidelong glance before resuming brushing my hair. “It’s pretty great, right? I love it when someone pays for two of us. We earn even more for Master in bulk. I always wonder whom has that kind of money, ya know?”

“Who,” she corrected. I rolled my eyes. Sasha and her bevy of stories might make for solid boredom relief, but my best efforts to evade grammar policing around her always landed me in the slammer. “And I didn’t mean this life. Your old life. Before you were taken.”

I frowned. “Uh, sometimes? I guess.”

“Me too,” she said, carefully curling her eyelashes. We were going glam tonight. I was willing to let the subject drop, but after she finished, she pressed on. “What do you think you’d be if Master hadn’t brought you here?”

I gave my hair a few more strokes while I considered. “I don’t know. Probably knocked up by some loser from my hometown or something. I remember I’d started working as a waitress to pay for my prom dress, and I was making decent enough money. Might still be doing that.” I giggled at the thought of myself pot-bellied and wearing the frumpy uniform of Everett’s Diner.

“Hey, I used to waitress, too! Can you imagine?”

“Seriously. You can barely remember what setting to use for Master’s morning toast.”

She elbowed me, then reached for her lip gloss with a wry grin. “Not what I meant.”

“I know. Why do you bring it up though? You don’t... miss it, do you?” How anyone privileged to know the joys of serving Master could want anything else in life was unfathomable.

“Oh no, no. No way,” she said quickly.

“Me either.”

“I mean, sometimes... I dunno. I was the first in my family to graduate college. Did I ever tell you that?”

“Yeah.” Only like a hundred times.

“I had scholarships and everything. Not a full ride, but... well anyway, I wonder what I could’ve done is all. I was only about four months away from finishing my masters degree in comparative lit. Maybe someday, if Master decides I’m not fetching a high enough price any more, I could finish.” She giggled. “If I finished my studies, do you think Master would have to call me master?”

I forced myself to smile, then quickly switched to my lip gloss so I’d have an excuse not to respond. I marinated that train thought for a while. Was she saying what I thought she was saying? Why would one of us lucky slave girls want to throw it all away for some boring education? I’d done twelve grueling years in school myself, and

I can assure you, never once did it make me come my brains out. What was she thinking? I made a note to tell Master later; Master deserved to know if one of his slaves was discontent.

(Discontent without it being Master's will, that is.)

In the meantime, I figured I'd help realign her diodes to Master's liking. Poor, confused darling. I set down my eyeliner and took her hands in mine, emptying them as well. Then I pulled her amply rounded self into my lap, our naked bodies pressed together like the sisters we were in purpose.

"Sasha, sweetie... Do you really think Master would want you to think such thoughts?"

"I... I'm not defying Master, I'm only thinking—"

"Thinking of yourself," I said firmly, slipping a hand between her slender legs. "Do you really think you'd be any better of a slave with a PhD? What could you learn there that would bring Master the least bit of pleasure?"

"Well... I mean, probably nothing, but..."

"But you think you know better than Master, then, is that it?"

"No! Never. It's only a daydream, Harmony. A fantasy. That's all."

"Master didn't save you from your boring, stupid little school for you to fantasize about essays and calculus and lectures. He saved you so that you could become the fantasy, Sasha. Like the rest of us. Sexy, obedient, unquestioning vessels for Master's fulfillment. A good girl. That's what you want, right? To be one of Master's perfect fuck toys?" I wasn't fucking around here; straight for the g-spot. She was already starting to pant.

"Um, yeah, I guess. I mean, of course. Of course that's what I w-want."

"Make me believe it, Sasha."

"I want it," she repeated, far more emphatically. "I do. I really really do."

"Want what, exactly?" I teased at one of her nipples with my free hand. Sasha's were so delightfully sensitive, especially remarkable given their immensity. I'd seen her come many a time from breast play alone, and those whoppers got plenty of that.

"I want to be a fantasy. I want to be good. To be here. To be a good girl."

"That's more like it," I said, finally giving it enough pressure to tease out her O face. Master had said once that even if Sasha wasn't his prettiest slave, she knew how to emote like nobody else.

"Say you want to be Master's slave," I said once she'd begun to come down.

"What? I do, of course I do."

I gave her just a graze of my fingernail on her nipple to interrupt the stream of pleasure. "Say it. Say the words, Sasha."

"I want to be Master's slave," she said.

"Now say, 'School is boring. I'd rather be whoring myself out for Master.'"

She frowned for only a moment before her lustful countenance returned. “School is b-boring. I’d rather whore myself out for Master.”

“It doesn’t matter if I’m dumb as a rock,” I prompted.

“It... it doesn’t matter if I’m dumb.” I massaged her clit as a nudge. “As a rock.”

“It only matters that I am obedient and sexy.”

“It only matters that I am obedient and sexy.” I delivered some extra pressure inside her pussy as a reward for finally parroting my words promptly and precisely.

“I am a thing that exists to be fucked for Master’s benefit.”

“Oh fuck, oh god, that’s... I am a th-thing. A thing that exists to be, ngh, fucked for Master’s benefit.”

“I want nothing but what Master has told me to want.”

She nodded, her hands closing over mine desperately. “I want nothing but what Master has told me to want. Oh, Harmony, you’re... I’m...”

“Good girls don’t think; they obey. And I want to be a good girl.”

I was laying it on thick, now; even Master was seldom so blunt and condescending about our role. Sasha didn’t care, though. “Good girls don’t think. I want to be good. I’ll obey. Good girls obey.”

I leaned in and whispered in her ear. “I will be Master’s mindless, obedient slave forever.”

Her voice went up octaves as she repeated those words, culminating in a shriek as she climaxed. She kept on repeating it as I kept on pleasuring her, over and over. It was some minutes before she finally stopped trembling in my lap.

Master’s voice spoke softly from the dressing room doorway. “Good girl, Sasha. You’ll be with Vanessa tonight. Inform her, then go to your room and finish getting ready.”

She leapt up in surprise at having been seen, no doubt wondering, as I was, how much of that Master had seen. “Yes Master,” she murmured, then scurried off.

I swiveled to face Master, inwardly fretting. Why was I being taken off duty? Had I done something wrong? I should have asked permission first – so stupid, Harmony! – but no, I thought I knew what to do on my own without even being told. Master beckoned me to follow him; naturally, I obeyed.

We went to the master bedroom. I wasn’t sure what to think yet; sometimes, Master would handle matters of discipline here, if only to make sure we knew that not every such summons meant we would be allowed to pleasure Master. Here it was. Like an idiot, I went and tried to reprogram one of my sister slaves all by myself. I hoped I’d be punished good and hard, so I’d remember to never displease Master like this again.

Only then...

It was only the third time since my enslavement Master fucked me more than once in a go. The first had been after I'd secured a lucrative ongoing arrangement with a congressman. The second, Ana Maria had interrupted us mid-orgasm, and after doling out her punishment, Master wanted to go back and have a proper one. This time, I didn't know why it was happening, but I was so beside myself with euphoria, I didn't have the brain capacity left to question it.

Happily, Master told me afterward.

"You pleased me very much this evening, Harmony."

"Thank you, Master! I've been working on that new maneuver in my free time, trying to make sure I flip my hair at the right—"

A finger on my lips silenced me in a heartbeat. "No." Master grinned. "Well, that was a nice touch, but that's not it. It's what you did to Sasha."

To, Master had said. Not for.

"The enslavement process is never going to be perfect; there's too much variation between you specimens to use the same approach each time, so I do my best. But you saw right there tonight that despite my best efforts, I haven't yet managed to perfect you girls."

Specimens. A thing someone worked on in an experiment. But from Master's lips, it sounded like an honorific. "Please don't blame yourself, Master. You've done a wonderful job on us."

"When she opened up to you, you could have shown empathy. Could have cultivated her trust, made a closer bond with her. Don't think I don't know about all the petty politicking you sluts do around here. But instead of thinking how you could use her for what you wanted, you thought only of me. Of what I would want. Didn't you, Harmony."

"Of course, Master." Just because Sasha had that ugly, selfish moment didn't mean it was contagious.

"That's what I love about you Harmony. All of you girls learn to accept your life here, and I leave you to find what enjoyment you can derive from it. With the steady endorphin drip I have all of you on, each of you little twits wind up embracing your own enslavement. Foolproof, really. But you..."

I was forcing myself to hold back tears. "Love" was not a word Master used often. "You're the most ruthlessly pro-slavery slave I've ever owned."

For the next three weeks, I was pulled from guest duties to help Master reinforce Sasha's training. What Master did to her behind closed doors, I couldn't say. But by the time we were done with her, I was proud to say there was hardly a thought in her head but how to make her next words, next action, be the one the would please Master best. She still had her stories, yes, but they were now currency to be bartered for tips

and favors that would make her a better slave girl. From then on, we were no longer friends; we were mistress and apprentice.

If she thought any more about the future, she never mentioned it again.

This time, it was noise that awakened me. Mistress! She was back! Finally, I could tell her I was ready to stop misbehaving and serve her properly, like a good girl should. The grinding of gravel up the road, the grinding of that bottle in my pussy. I didn't want her to think I'd been squandering her gift. Let her come in and see her slave making good on what she was given. I was dehydrated, so weak it was hard to keep my eyes open, but my heart throbbed in my chest with excitement.

I could hear the car come to a halt. Master was back, too. Not Master, tragically, but master. The boy mistress wanted me to call master, at least. So be it. It was his voice I heard first as the car doors opened and closed. Should I re-chain myself? Mistress had said to, but then she'd said 'fuck it.' I decided to leave my hand loose. I wanted to show her she could finally trust me, that I was ready to use my body for her pleasure. And master's, if she wanted.

"... I don't know what the fuck's gotten into you, Jordan, but you better get the fuck over it. There's no going back from this? Can you even conceive what would happen if we pulled the plug?"

"I'm not saying... I mean, maybe she's so far gone by now that she wouldn't even be upset," mistress was saying. Was she talking about me? Why would she worry I would be upset? Good girls don't get upset with their owners, and I was a good girl again.

"'Won't be upset.' Do you even hear yourself? We chained her to a bed for two fucking months, Jordan. We made her shit in a bucket and we fucked her mind and body a hundred different ways. But yeah, let her loose, and she'll just be like 'nah, it's cool.'"

"Maybe... maybe you're right. I don't know. I just feel *bad*, Matt. Like she said, we really are kind of picking on the mentally handicapped here, if you think about—"

"Oh my god, are you letting that cunt get inside your head? She's playing you, Jordan. She'd say the earth was flat if she thought you'd let her go. Hell, she'd probably sell her soul just to be allowed to come at this point."

I frowned. Mistress had given me permission to make myself come. This boy should be more respectful of her.

The door to the main room opened; I could now hear their voices without the filter of the window muting them. "Actually, about that... promise you won't be mad..."

Matt entered the room, mistress right on his heels. She looked worried. He looked angry. When he saw me, though – or rather, when he saw I had a hand free, that it was working between my legs beneath the sheets – he shot straight to furious. "How the fuck did you get that hand loose, Harmony! You steal a hairpin, pick the fucking lock?"

"Matt, she—"

He stormed over to the bed; I was too busy enjoying the extra bliss of fucking myself in front of mistress to register he might mean to harm me. But if mistress chose to let him, that was her business. He pounced on top of me, squashing my arm against my stomach. “Answer me, you fucking psycho slut! You don’t think I feel your hand down there? Hell, you’re never gonna get yourself off again after this. You think we were hard on you before, you just wait to see how master punishes bad girls.”

“I’m not a bad girl,” I said simply. Mistress was trying to talk too, though, so I shut up.

“Leave her alone, Matt! It’s not her fault!”

“Why don’t you let me handle the discipline, OK Little Miss Clemency?” He gripped my chin, squeezing down hard on my jaw. “You fucking stop that right now, Harmony, or so help me god...”

“You’re hurting her!” Mistress was so kind to be worried about me. He was, but I only minded because he was upsetting mistress by damaging her property.

“Get that fucking stupid smile off your face!” Then he went from squeezing to simply hitting me. The first was a slap across the face, but the next was a punch. Another one. He was winding up for a fourth when mistress grabbed him by his shirt collar and hauled him backwards off the bed, tumbling backward onto the concrete floor.

“Have you lost your fucking mind, Jordan?! The cunt’s disobeying us! We let her get away with this, and it’s all for nothing!”

“Why can’t you just admit it’s not working! We’ve freaking *tortured* her for two months now, and she’s still not giving in! It’s time to give up, Matt.”

I wanted to insist that it had worked beautifully, but I hadn’t been told to speak yet. Ornaments like me were meant to be seen, not heard.

Matt took his feet with chilling calm. “Give up. Jordan, we’re *this* close. We can have ourselves this perfect fucking goddess as our fuck toy, or we can spend the next twenty years in prison. Those are the options. I’m not going to prison. And so help me god, I will hear this cunt beg me as her master to fuck her juicy little snatch before the day is out.”

He turned to look at me, raw menace in his eyes. I could appreciate how most people would find it terrifying.

“Matt, please,” mistress said. She was crying. How dare this boy make mistress cry? My hand – the free one, the only one with any feeling in it – clenched in anger.

“You don’t got the stomach for it, there’s the door. It’s time this bitch learns that her only pleasure comes from *me*.” He cracked his knuckles, turning back toward me.

“It was me!” mistress cried suddenly.

Matt paused, fists at his sides but quavering like they wanted to be elsewhere. “What do you mean, ‘it was me’?”

“I felt sorry for her, OK? I’m only human! I let her have one of her hands, but only for one—”

“You? YOU?! We’ve been keeping her on edge for weeks! Melody told us it was working, but now we’re back to mother fucking ground zero!” He raised a fist. “YOU RUINED EVERYTHING!”

For the first time since the day I’d arrived here, I tried to break free of my restraints. Like before, it was an exercise in futility. I screamed at him to stop, but my friend’s son laid into mistress with a vengeance. She was no more his physical match than I was. I was forced to watch him hit her, throw her to the ground, kick her over and over. Chained up as I was, I couldn’t even see past the foot of the bed to discern where the blows were landing. All I knew was, by the time he stopped, I could see the lower halves of her legs lying still on the concrete floor.

“Looks like it’s just you and me now, huh, Harm,” said Matt, turning back to me. “Time to pay up.”

“Gladly, master,” I answered.

His eyes narrowed. “Don’t bullshit me, Harm. Ask Jordan what happens when you fuck around with me.”

“I would never, master. I’m sorry you seem so stressed. Can I help you relieve it? I would be grateful for the opportunity to serve.”

He was still clearly suspicious, but I knew full well how long he’d waited to hear those words, in that tone. “Oh yeah? You want to what, come over there and let you go so you can wig out on me, get in a couple scratches before I put you down, too?”

I giggled. “Oh no, master. You don’t need to uncuff me to use my mouth, my tits, my pussy, my ass... whatever you like. I would hate for you to have to feel nervous while I pleasure you, master. Please don’t uncuff me. I want to be taught to be a good girl for you.”

Perhaps months of having me at his mercy had dulled his sense of caution, or perhaps he reasoned that a weakened hundred-and-thirty-five pound woman with only one hand free was no threat to him. Or perhaps he was simply that easily seduced. Whichever it was, he made his way to the bed and swept the sheets aside. There was his prize, the voluptuous naked body of his dream girl. I spread my thighs invitingly.

“Don’t you come without permission now, you hear me, slave?” he said, removing his pants.

“I won’t, master. I’ll be a good girl, and good girls only come when they’re told.” I eagerly helped coax him to fullness with my free hand. It didn’t take long. Like most men I’d known with a proclivity for it, a little violence did much to heighten the libido.

He knelt between my waiting thighs. I could feel his tip throbbing at my entrance. He stopped short, though. “Melody? That’s... that’s not you, is it?”

“No, master. Melody will only come out when you call her. I’m Harmony. I’m your slave, master. I live to serve you and only you.”

His lips locked on mine in the same motion as he thrust inside me. My nethers were an ocean of wetness, offering no more resistance than I had ever offered my true Master. I had finally given him what he wanted. His eyes squinted shut in ecstasy as I rippled my cunt around his shaft with practiced contractions I would never unlearn.

Arching my back, I was able to reach my only chance to save mistress. I took hold of the bottle by its neck, and took a deep breath. I would have exactly one shot at this. If I failed, it would be worse than death. It would be mistress’s death, too.

Swinging as hard as I could, I smashed the bottle across the top of his skull. He yelled in surprise and pain, but I knew the pain wouldn’t be enough to stop him. As he fell off of me, I rolled over and thrust the broken bottle against his neck. I could have pushed harder. One quick jerk and I could have slit his throat and been done with him forever. But inside, in some deep part of me that still remembered being Harmony Reed, saw Hannah standing over her only child’s casket. and that alone gave me restraint.

I pressed the bottle against his neck until I saw a faint trickle of blood, and there I held it.

“Say one word – open your fucking mouth, even – and I will paint the ceiling crimson.” His eyes widened a moment, but sure enough his jaw clicked shut. “Atta boy, killer.”

From a kneeling position, I could see Jordan now. She was breathing, but her face had been worked over good, and from the way she was unconsciously holding her stomach, I doubted it was the only site of damage. I looked back to Matt, who still wasn’t moving. With a little stretch, I was able to reach my foot down to where he’d dropped his clothes and snatched a sock. Before he knew what I was doing, I stuffed that sucker in his mouth and finally let myself exhale.

Only once in the process of dragging his cargo shorts over within reach did he look like he might try something, but a minuscule twist of the bottle was all it took to freeze him in place. With my eyes locked on him, I fumbled around until I finally found his keys.

“Now here’s what’s about to happen. I’m going to put these cuffs on you, and then I’m going to go get help for her. I want to ask you, as somebody who used to be my friend, not to try anything. She’s hurt pretty bad, and I don’t want to let her die. I don’t think you do either. And if you fight me, one or the other of us is going to die, too, and I don’t think you want that, either.”

He didn’t fight. I didn’t give him much of an opening, granted, but swapping those handcuffs around took enough concentration he probably could have tried something if he wanted. I made sure both wrists were good and firmly attached to the

bed, and finally removed the broken bottle from his neck. There was a cut, but nothing serious.

I knew CPR because it had been required for my school job, but it didn't cover the kind of trauma Matt had inflicted on Jordan. Mistress. I needed to go, before he managed to spit out the sock and call Melody back. But I couldn't leave her here, could I? She was a waifish little thing; I could probably lug her to the car.

But... if I did, she might summon Melody, too.

Did mistress have the right? Was Jordan even really my mistress? After the violence I'd just witnessed, the haze of lust that had surrounded my brain was lifting. Somewhat. I looked down at the battered girl on the floor, seeing her as if she were two beings, one super-imposed upon the other. One, a scared, greedy, dippy teenage girl who'd tried to destroy everything I was. The other, a generous, charitable mistress, a woman who could let me have and give all the pleasure that was my destiny. Both might die if I left her here. But so might I if I didn't.

A little light-headed, I stumbled over to the wall and steadied myself with my hand.

That sound. If I were cursed to live forever, I would never forget that sound. A dull thud, several smaller ones that followed in staccato fashion as Master's torso and limbs finished the journey the skull had begun. In the midst of it all, a series of higher-pitched snaps so close together it sounded like a single long creak, like a wicker basket stomped on by an elephant.

Not three feet away from me. If Master had fallen only seconds earlier, the body would have landed right on top of me and I'd be bleeding on the ground beside Master.

My first reaction was to scream. It was as if all the terror I'd been denied these years in servitude came out in a sudden rush. Nothing before had been worthy of fright. Not the whoring, the rapes, the psychological tortures Master was so very inventive with. All of that was what Master wanted for me, which meant that everything was right in the universe, and nothing was to be feared.

But this... Master could not have wanted this.

The blood spread much more quickly than I would have thought. Like Master's body was a faucet that had been left running, and now the sink was clogged and the water was spilling and Noah had been lied to and the world was flooded to oblivion all over again. That stuck with me, too, that sense of betrayal. That whatever pittance the world owed me as one of the fleas living on its back, I had been denied even that.

I screamed again. And again. But there was no one for miles. And if there were, Master would clearly have wanted me to avoid them. I was not to call attention to Master and Master's ranch.

Master's phone had been in his back pocket; miraculously, it had survived the fall. For the first time in years, I dialed a phone number. 911. My finger hovered over the call button for a brief eternity as I tried to make myself disobey Master, to try to save Master's life in spite of Master's own wishes. Master wasn't moving, though. It felt impossible to even think it, but... nobody could have survived that fall. That didn't matter to me, not yet, but what stayed my hand was that my first act as a free woman would not be to disobey my Master.

Free woman.

The words entered my head so unexpectedly that I had to go over it several times before it made sense. Free woman. A woman who had no Master. A woman who wasn't owned by anyone. A woman who made her own choices.

The sun was setting on Master's mangled corpse by the time I made myself leave. Master was gone, and would not be coming back. I could stand beside that broken husk until I died, too, but all it would do is waste what remained of my life. If I could even call it living now that Master had opened wide the gate to paradise only to lock me inside, alone.

Master didn't make mistakes, I reminded myself. If Master fell, if Master died, if Master forced freedom upon me, then it was Master's will that I be free. Master's death

was his final command to me. To live without a Master. Numb and heart-broken, I made my way back to the car.

Five years earlier, I had driven my dad's car to Brett's bonfire, and I hadn't driven since. It soon came back to me, but I didn't recognize any of the songs on the radio.

It was the speeding that saved me. Concerned I might pass out, I raced at breakneck speeds down the winding roads through the forest. I didn't remember the way back any more; I only knew that Jordan needed help, and that help must be out there somewhere.

The officer switched on his lights as I flew by, and I sobbed in relief. I had just enough presence of mind to slam on the brakes before I let my head collapse on the steering wheel. It had wanted to for so long. There was a loud noise, a sudden lurch as the car nearly flipped on its side, then stillness. Except for the police siren, but it too cut out after a moment.

"Miss? Miss, are you... holy shit, Carter, this woman's... are you all right, Miss? Carter, get a blanket from the trunk! No, she's... just get the damn blanket, OK? She's naked! And I think she's hurt! Miss, can you answer me? Are you injured?"

I tried to answer, but there were too many words. Too many dreams. Too many memories. I didn't know what was real any more. They could figure this out.

"Jordan," I croaked through my parched throat.

"What'd you... Carter, get the lead out!"

The other officer yelled something back that I couldn't make out.

"No," yelled the one who'd approached my car. "No, she's alone."

Chapter Six

The doctors told me I'd need to stay in the hospital for observation at least a week. Partially it was for psychological observation. I tried to tell them I was fine, that I'd been through worse, but it's hard to seem convincing in a backless nightgown with tubes running into you every which way. Partially because I was dehydrated and nutrient-deprived, plus some trauma to some of my joints on account of the confinement and a couple of minor contusions on my face from the punches. I had indeed gotten a lung infection from the mold in there, though the antibiotics I was put on should clear it up before any damage became permanent.

Jordan was going to be OK, I was told. A cracked rib plus a few bruised ones, as well as two busted teeth and a whole lot of bruising. She was being kept in a room down the hall until she was well enough to transfer to the local jail. Where Matt already was. The staff here had been real champs, keeping the police away from me so I'd have time to decide what I wanted to tell them, but I knew they'd be back tonight or tomorrow to demand a statement. Even my doctor said I was fine to receive visitors now. Regardless, Matt was already being held for his attack on Jordan, so it didn't look like he'd be going anywhere any time soon.

I told them I already had a therapist I was seeing, but the voicemail message at Dr. Kovacs' office told me he was on vacation and wouldn't be back until next week. Not feeling like spilling my fucked up life story to yet another doctor, I stonewalled the hospital shrink as best I could. Having just been kidnapped by a kid I'd known and liked for years hadn't left much room in me for faith in doctor-patient confidentiality. My well of trust was pretty dry. The shrink was plainly skeptical of the merits of seeing a hypnotherapist, but he and I had been through a lot together in the short time I'd known him. He was one of the good guys.

"Heya, Harm," came a voice from the doorway. Speaking of the good guys. I was smiling even before Miguel slipped through to my side of the curtain. I didn't even know why they left it up; the other bed had been vacant for over a day now.

"Miguel!" I sat up with a little effort, holding my arms out to demand a hug. I was not rebuffed. "For once I'm actually awake while you're here. Vivian told me you and Justin came by last night, but... well, sorry."

"Don't be – the docs say you gotta keep rested. Justin will be by in the morning; he's pulling graveyard shifts the rest of the week."

"I can't wait. Oh my god, you can't imagine how much I wanted to see you guys. I kept trying to get out of bed at first, so they were keeping me a little sedated. Then I kept sleeping through everybody visiting. Viv is the first person I've even seen, and I passed out like mid-sentence trying to talk to her."

He put a hand over mine, smiling his handsome Miguel smile. “Well it’s good to see you awake. The snoring was frankly kind of grating.”

I gave his hand a squeeze, and for a long moment, lost myself in my friend’s eyes. “So... are you guys still mad at me? I know I was being really shitty there for a—”

“Oh, Harmony.” And his firm embrace cut me off before I could even make a proper apology. I was crying in an instant, and I clung to him as hard as my weakened arms could.

“You don’t ever need to apologize, OK? It’s all in the past. I wish I’d been smart enough to see you needed my help, before it was too late. It’s me who should be sorry. Is sorry. Am sorry? Whatever. The point is, no more talking about that. Unless you have things you want to say.”

He eased me back down to the bed like I was made of porcelain. Feeble or no, I still knew how to read men, and I could see that he was trying to hide how much he wanted to ask about what had happened. As of right now, nobody but me, Jordan, and Matt knew much of anything before I drove Matt’s car into a guardrail in front of those police officers. I didn’t even know how they’d found the two of them; lord knows I’d been in no shape to give directions, and the cabin wasn’t exactly on the beaten path.

“I saw you, you know.”

“Saw me? You mean last night?”

I shook my head. “At the cabin. I saw you. How hard you tried to find me.”

“Where were you? I swear, I looked everywhere!” He smashed his fist down on the arm of his chair. “Sorry, Harm. Sorry. Here I am letting you down all over again.”

“You didn’t let me down. Until you showed up, I thought you guys were still mad at me for acting like such a... whatever I was acting like, and that you didn’t even notice I’d disappeared. That you were out there looking for me... it kept me tethered.”

“Tethered?”

“Yeah. Reminded me of home. I don’t know if I would have made it back without them.”

He took my hand again. It felt so nice to be touched by someone who actually cared about me for something other than my body. After another long moment passed, his curiosity got the better of him again. “So where were you?”

“When you came? I...” I paused. What should I say? Had Vivian already told them my secret? No. It didn’t matter. I was tired of keeping that from the people I loved. “I was hiding. First in some bushes, then underneath the dock. You were like four inches from me at one point. I could’ve poked your shoes if I’d wanted to.”

“Why didn’t you? Harmony... I know you went through something before we ever met, but... I’m sorry. I’ve been so worried about you, and, if you, well...”

I could see it in the way he avoided my eyes. “So Vivian told you. About me.”

“We saw that note in your apartment, Harm. Viv didn’t say anything before that. I didn’t know whether to believe it or if she’d just misconstrued some... game, or whatever, that you were playing.”

“Well, it’s true.”

“What’s true? I want to hear it from you.” He held up his palms. “Not because I’m nosy or because I have a right to your business. Because you’re one of my best friends and I don’t want you to have to hold stuff back from me.”

“The truth?” He nodded. “The worst possible version of what she told you. That I was kidnapped when I was eighteen. That I was brainwashed into becoming a sex slave. That with the right trigger words, I’ll turn into a hundred different fantasies on command. That I never even tried to escape, that I was forced into freedom against my will. That lately, before this mess with those kids, I’d been missing it so much that I’d started triggering myself at random. That I’m the world’s most totally fubar psycho slut.”

I tried to read anything in his reaction, but he was as stone faced as he’d been last summer when he cleaned us out in that Texas hold ‘em tournament. How was it I didn’t register fear at the prospect of being chained up and enslaved, but wanting to see this man’s reaction had my heart in my chest?

Finally, he spoke. “So you’re saying... you’ve been holding out on me.”

He grinned, and in spite of everything, I fell into a mix of tears and laughter. “Hey, I thought you had a hot new girlfriend,” I managed through the blubbering. Vivian had mentioned it; I vaguely recalled he’d said something about it at the lake, too. My weak attempt at humor was rewarded with another hug, and this time I didn’t let go until he made me.

“So... you don’t think I’m totally disgusting?”

“No. No, I don’t think you’re disgusting at all. The farthest thing from it.”

A sigh of relief. “So does everyone know now?”

“Just us.” He didn’t need to be more specific. I knew it meant him and his brother, Vivian and Hannah.

Oh, no. Hannah.

“So... how’s Hannah? I’m sure this has been horrible for her.”

“She’s... well, she’s doing her best. I don’t think she knows what to think. I mean... Vivian told us, but none of us really, you know... believed it, I guess. You gotta admit, it’s pretty wild.”

“Has she visited? Me, I mean.” I didn’t know if Matt was even allowed visitors.

“No. I think... well, it’s not the easiest thing in the world to find out one of your best friends dragged your kid off to play sex camp.”

I could tell he meant it with a degree of humor, but my jaw dropped anyway.

“Wait. She thinks... *you* think *I* initiated all this?”

“Look, we all know it’s not your fault. Or we do now, anyway. Shit was done to you, and you weren’t yourself. She’ll get over it.”

“*She’ll...?!*” I sat up so fast I got light-headed and fell back to the pillow. “Miguel, I didn’t seduce Matt and Jordan and hide out in the woods playing sex games. Holy shit!” I took a few deep breaths, my head swimming. “Is that what Matt said? Did he tell you guys that’s what happened?”

“I haven’t talked to him – not since that day at the cabin, anyway. But I guess that’s what Hannah took away from it, yeah. Why, is that not right?”

I locked eyes with him. “Miguel, he – they – learned one of my triggers. They used it to take me into the woods, and they had me handcuffed to a fucking bed every minute they weren’t re-triggering me for more sex. I spent the last, what, two months, almost? Two fucking months going to the bathroom in a bucket and trying not to lose what’s left of my fucking mind! A mind they were trying their darnedest to help me lose!”

His face went dark again. “Wait. So you’re telling me... you weren’t out there screwing around with those kids because somebody fucked with your head. You’re telling me they...” He paused for a deep breath. When Miguel continued his voice was quieter, but no less grim. “They took you prisoner? They... raped you? Is that what you’re saying?”

“It’s... complicated.”

“See, but it’s not.” He stood up suddenly, his face a thundercloud. “I’m gonna kill that fucking kid! I *knew* he was up to something! But he tells me he... that you... I’m gonna kill him!”

There was a long moment of him storming around the hospital room in a fury as my head swam at realizing I’d once more hurt my friends with my secret. I made myself sit up on the edge of my bed then. “Miguel. *Miguel*. I need you to come back to me, OK? Can you do that? Stay with me.”

He paced back and forth a few times, but my soft tone wore him down soon enough. “Thank you. Now let me explain, OK?”

His nostrils flared with each breath. “OK.”

“So... I was having these episodes,” I began, and then I told him the whole long story. How I’d wanted to do something to fix my head, but the hypnosis had unlocked something inside me. How I’d started fucking total strangers at random. How I’d thought someone had learned my triggers. How I had gone after Jordan at school, how Matt had witnessed it, and how that had lead on to the whole abduction. How, as Melody, I’d fought tooth and nail to keep them going, seduced and cajoled and assisted and insisted every step of the way.

“So it’s not like it was all his idea,” I said at last. “Master fucked with me, I fucked with them, they fucked with me... Like I said. It’s complicated.”

By the time I finished, my friend was calmer, though not what I'd call calm. "Have you told the police? Harmony, you were a missing person. We put up posters all over town. You were on the news for like a week. They had hundreds of people out combing the county looking for you. If they find out Matt's full of shit, that you were kidnapped and... complexly raped, or whatever you want to call it..."

For just a moment, I wondered if my disappearance the summer I'd turned eighteen had sparked a similar search. Probably. I wondered how my betrayer had felt, going through the charade of putting up missing person fliers, doing interviews on the local news... I shook away the thought. Fuck them.

He didn't have to finish. That very thought was exactly why I hadn't wanted to talk to them yet. If I confessed what had really happened, he'd go away for years, locked up with *real* killers. Matt would come out the other side a middle-aged sex offender. My friend's son's life would effectively be over.

But if I didn't...

"I don't know. They're going to make me say something next time they come. I just... I don't know if I can do that to Hannah. When I left Master's ranch, I had *nothing*. No one. When I met Hannah at the halfway house and she took me in..." I couldn't speak for a moment, and my friend held me as I cried it out.

"This was *not* your fault, Harmony. She'll see that."

"You're sure? How could she ever look me in the face again and not see me as the woman who took her son from her?"

The police did not come back that evening. Miguel sat with me for most of the night, eventually falling asleep in the chair. I woke him up and told him to get on home, promising I'd see him again soon. My room was still and dim, but the lights and bustle of the hospital never really went away.

It was after three when I stood up. Except for using the bathroom, I'd hardly walked in days now. A tight grip on my IV stand kept me upright as I made my way into the hallway. I passed a nurse, but avoiding any more eye contact except a generic smile seemed to be enough to make him think I knew what I was doing.

Would that I were half so confident of that myself.

The rooms were almost all dark at this hour, either due to vacancy or the recumbent state of the occupant. I was bracing myself to return to my room disappointed when I got lucky, and the soft light of a television illuminated her face for me.

"Hi, Jordan."

The sound of my voice startled her so much she had to stifle a screech. "Miss Reed?!"

I nodded, slipping inside. "Is it OK if I come in?"

"You're... you're not scared I'll trigger you?"

"Should I be?"

"No." She shook her head almost a little too hard. "No, I won't. Never again."

"Then I'll come in."

I took a seat next to her bed, the same sort Miguel had fallen asleep in beside me only a few hours ago. It wasn't very comfortable; that guy was a trooper. Some home improvement show was on TV, just about to go to commercial. The sound was muted, but the closed captioning was on. The soft glow cast a wan light on her face, and in spite of everything, I couldn't help but pity her. The bruising was substantial, and there were numerous bandages in place.

"Are you doing OK?" she asked. "I mean, not like... Ugh. I don't even know what I mean."

"I'm better than I was."

She looked down at her lap. "Couldn't get much worse, I guess, huh."

"No, I guess not."

"So you're getting out soon? You're looking, um, better. More color in your cheeks."

"That's just because it's dark in here, Jordan. Trust me, I look like shit. Though I guess I look better than you, at least." I swept some of her hair off of where her sweat had matted it onto her forehead. Purple and black, with a thin gash that had needed stitches. It would probably leave a scar. "You poor thing. Are you going to be OK? They told me... well, they didn't tell me much."

“I feel worse on the inside than I do on the outside.”

“Yeah, I heard about what he did to your ribs. I had a friend break a couple ribs once in a bad gymnastics accident. Said it hurt like hell to breathe.”

She fixed her eyes on mine. “I don’t mean my ribs.”

I wasn’t sure what to say to that. We sat there in silence, avoiding looking at one another by watching a commercial for an investment bank. Then the show came back on. I’d seen this program before. Some couple around my age was setting their \$700,000 budget for a house near the water, but were having trouble finding something that wouldn’t stretch them too thin. Jordan coughed in the dry air, then groaned in pain.

Things were rough all over, I guessed.

“My mom and I used to watch this together all the time,” Jordan said as it started up. “We used to talk about how cute that one guy is. Have you seen it?”

“Some,” I responded. “Wait, *that* guy?”

She giggled, then winced as she sucked air between her teeth. “No, not him. That’s the guy who runs the construction crew. I mean... hang on... Him. That guy.”

I looked him over. “Yeah, he’s hot.”

“Miss Reed, I’m sorry,” she blurted suddenly. As messy as her face was, her eyes held an intensity I’d never seen. “I’m so, so sorry. What we did was... I’ll never forgive myself. And I’m not asking you to, either, but I have to say it, because I can’t *not* say it or I’d hate myself even more than I already do. I can’t even sleep any more. I just keep thinking what you said, how we...”

She cried ever harder as her rambling apology proceeded, and I let her. If I’d recorded this, we’d have the world’s most ironclad confession, right down to the premeditation. I’d actually considered bringing my phone along – Vivian had brought me a new one – to do just that, but decided to only talk. My head was clear now – by Harmony Reed standards, at least.

Some part of me was still grateful for that free hand she’d given me. Some part of me still wanted to call her mistress.

But not the part in control. Not the part that I let reply. “When the two of you got into my car that day after school, did you mean to take it that far? To kidnap me?”

“No!” She shook her head, a blur of black hair whipping back and forth. “No way. I mean, we meant to... you know, mess around with you, with the Melody part of you. You know? But we couldn’t do it at my place, or at Matt’s place, and we were scared to do it at your home in case you, like, snapped out of it or whatever. So Matt suggested this cabin his dead uncle had left him, and I figured sure. But then when he handcuffed you...”

She fidgeted with her right hand, and I saw it was to rub at her left wrist. I hadn’t noticed before, but she was herself handcuffed to the bed. How anyone could think this broken girl was going to run anywhere was beyond me, but considering I had free reign

and she was shackled to her bed, I guess the cops had a very different idea of what had gone on out there than the lies Matt had told them.

“I guess I didn’t know what to think. You seemed like you liked it, and you always said it was fine – or Melody did, anyway, so... No. I’m not making excuses. Not any more. I let myself believe what I wanted to believe, and there’s no excuse. I’m so sorry, Miss Reed...”

“No more apologies, Jordan,” I said quickly. “You know what you did, and that’s going to be on you to process it. I don’t know if I can forgive you, but, for what it’s worth, I appreciate you at least were able to see it before the end. It’s not easy to admit you’re wrong, especially when you’re that wrong. Especially when the consequence for admitting your wrong is *this*.”

“I was trying to make him let you go,” she said. “I really was. I know it was way too late by then, but I was trying. I couldn’t...”

“I could see you were trying. But that doesn’t change that you could, or that you did. So save it,” I said firmly. If I started letting myself empathize much more, I’d be between her legs again in another minute. “Look, Jordan. I only came down here for one reason, to ask you one question. Other than that, you live your life, do what you have to do.”

She nodded. “OK. What’s your question?”

“I need to know what you told the police about what happened out there.”

“Nothing. Nothing so far, anyway. I mean, I told them it was Matt who beat me up like this, if that’s what you mean. But I had to say something when they came and found us. After I was conscious, anyway. My mom’s lawyer made it so I don’t have to do a full interrogation thingy until they discharge me from the hospital.”

“All right. Then I need you to do something for me. You want to heal your conscience? Here’s your chance.”

“Anything, Miss Reed. You name it.”

“You’re going to tell them that you and Matt and I spent the summer fooling around in his cabin. He got more and more jealous of the time you were with me, and you teased him about it, and he attacked you. I want you to press charges for the attack, but if anything about the handcuffs or whatever comes up, you tell them it was my kinky game that got out of hand.”

“But... but why would I...?”

“You know Matt’s mother is a good friend of mine, right?”

She nodded. “Yeah.”

“However it went down, at this point, he’s dangerous to me. If he’s left to roam free, it’s only a matter of time before he tracks me down and bam, I’m right back there in that cabin again, or wherever he hides me next time. I can’t live like that, constantly looking over my shoulder. But I also can’t lock up Hannah’s only child. So you have to.”

Hannah had been like a mother to me, at a time when my own mother was nothing more than deadweight from old memories. She'd put in a good word for me with what was now my landlady, given me furniture she pretended she'd meant to give away, some old clothes. Her friendship. More than any person I'd known, she had tried her hardest to save my stupid life. She might hate me for getting involved with her son, but better that than lose him for most of the rest of her life.

"But that's not what happened. That's not fair."

"Fair?" I couldn't help but laugh. "You realize I'm going to lose my job over this, right? The school's not going to keep someone on staff who went on a high-profile sexcration with two recent graduates. To say nothing of the fact that, I dunno, *you kidnapped me and tried to brainwash me and-*" I stopped myself. "No, you're right. I guess I'll have to try to wrap my head around the notion that my life isn't going to be fair."

"But that's what I meant. Not that it's unfair to me, but that nobody will get what they have coming to them." She gave me a surprisingly firm look. "What we did to you, we deserve to be locked up. If we lie about what happened, I'll... I won't..."

I studied her for a long moment as her protestations faded into agonized sobs. I was a good read of people, and that agony was as much emotional as it was physical. Maybe, someday, Jordan Shu might turn out halfway all right. Maybe.

"No. You won't."

"But I have to be. I... I can't *live* like this," she insisted. "I need to be punished."

I'd heard her say those words so many time this past summer that it was strange to hear them without her pert little rear end thrust out in front of me. Hell, maybe Melody's treatment of her had done a little brainwashing in reverse. "Maybe you do," I said at last. "But that's not what *I* need. I need my friend, which means that I need to be the bad guy."

She was quiet for a long moment. "All right, Miss Reed. If that's what you want."

I patted her hand softly. "Good girl."

I pulled myself back to my feet and started shuffling towards the door. As I got to the hallway, I looked both ways for any staff members nearby. There were none. "And Jordan, I want you to know something."

The cracks in her battered soul were visible in those big almond eyes as she looked toward me. "Yes, Miss Reed?"

"I want you to know..." I could see how badly she hoped my next words would be some balm for her ravaged conscience. I took a breath. "Once I get out of here, I'm going to buy a gun. And if I ever see you coming toward me, I'm going to assume the worst and defend myself. Do you understand?"

I didn't wait for an answer, but as I made my way back down to my room, her wails echoed down the empty halls. But I'd done what I'd gone down there to do. For Hannah.

I managed to make it back to my room before sinking a hand into the inferno between my legs. My threat had been an idle one; I'd known it when I said it. But I had to say something to keep her away from me, so that I wouldn't tell her to say those magic words and give me the relief I'd been craving since the moment I'd woken up.

Chapter Seven

Over the next few days, I started to feel a little more like normal – whatever that meant for someone as abnormal as myself. Vivian brought me some of my personal effects from home, which went a long way toward helping me remember myself. The room wasn't big enough to accommodate more than a couple visitors at a time, but Miguel and Justin and Vivian were in and out so much I was seldom alone when I was awake. They were cool enough not to ask a lot of questions about the great big can of worms that was my past, for which I was even more grateful. It was hard enough remembering those things without my friends knowing about the lurid details.

The detective who took my story, on the other hand, got lurid details galore. Hopefully that would be some small compensation for the fact that I was plainly lying through my teeth – that I'd gotten burned out and horny and that some of my kinky play had gotten out of hand. He pleaded with me to revise it. Despite being personally intrigued by the hottie and her racy stories, the guy wasn't professionally incompetent enough to buy that my sex games had involved the partially full bucket they'd found, starving and dehydrating myself, or being so frantic to escape that I'd driven my naked ass off the road and crashed into a side rail. But it fit with the story from Matt and Jordan, didn't have any witnesses to disprove it, and told a story in which I'd neither broken laws nor been the victim of any crimes.

Hannah wasn't falling for it either, it seemed, but unlike the cop, she wasn't asking me to change my story. It still must have been hard on her, though, knowing what her son had done. She only came by to see me the one time, and she only stayed long enough to give me one of her mama bear hugs and a grateful but pained look. The others must have talked to her, told her the truth of it. So be it. She had enough on her plate without having to coddle me. I asked Justin, Miguel and Vivian to go check on her for me so many times they finally had to insist it was being handled and to stop worrying about it.

After a few days, Vivian quietly passed on that Matt was taking a guilty plea in exchange for reducing the charge from attempted murder to aggravated assault and battery. His lawyer had pushed for two years, since he was only eighteen and it was a first offense. The judge said the presence of a woman in my physical condition, regardless of her willingness to participate, showed a pattern of disregard for women's lives. Four years. When his friends were finishing college, he'd be getting out of prison. That was the end of it.

Though not the end of my troubles, as it were.

I was climbing the walls in search of cock. I've told you before, I always maintain a low-grade arousal. My pilot light never really goes out. But since the cabin, it had

gotten manifestly worse. Whenever I was alone in the room, there were good odds I was masturbating. Just being once more able to diddle myself whenever I felt like it was exciting. More than once a nurse walked in on me and I had to pretend I was just scratching, but I could tell they knew.

As if that weren't bad enough, I had yet to figure out what to do about the revelation Dr. Kovacs had shared with me immediately prior to my capture. I had somehow been triggering myself. Now that I was free to act on it again, I found my imagination constantly wandering to what it might be like to be triggered by my doctor, or by the custodian, or by the husband of the woman they'd moved into my room. Or by Miguel.

God, how I hoped it wouldn't be Miguel. I'd made a mess of our friendship already by triggering myself with that guy Curly at the country bar. Months ago, for Miguel, but with the cabin acting as a black hole in my own timeline, it felt like only days for me. Then, that redneck had told me to get rid of my friends, and I'd spared no insult to do so. Now, if I threw myself at him (and heaven only knew what weird fetishized seduction I might employ), I could really wreck things. As well as I knew him, I'd be primed to corrode his resistance. If he even offered any. I was yet to meet this girlfriend of his (and got a vague sense that Viv and Justin didn't much care for her from the way they avoided discussing her). Nonetheless, even if such a person weren't in the picture, playing sex-slave-for-a-night with my guy friends would clearly change our dynamic, and I needed my friends. Now more than ever.

But I also needed to get fucked.

Luckily, out here in the free world, that wasn't really so hard. I might have lost a few pounds and a wee bit of the curves that went with them, but I still was hardly the sort of woman whom men turned away. Besides, I was on the mend, and my boobs were regaining more of their elasticity with each passing day, and pretty soon my ass would be ready to bounce quarters off of once again. All I needed was a hard, willing cock. Which was to say, a cock. Making it hard and willing was my specialty.

My first thought was to make a move on the intern who'd been by to check on me occasionally. He was cute enough, nice dimples and a good body. Except then I realized that the staff was going to be a bad option. There were surely prohibitions against fucking patients, and if I threw myself at them hard enough to make them consider breaking that protocol, it was the kind of thing that might make my doctor transfer me to psychiatric care. It could even cost some poor guy his job. Worst of all, it might not work. I was no stranger to seduction, obviously, but some people have lines they won't cross.

So if employees were out, that left patients. Which meant I'd need an angle.

It was surprisingly easy to get the requisite supplies. I casually asked a nurse how they changed scrubs if they got bled or puked on, at which point I learned there was a

vending machine that dispenses scrubs two floors up. A minor duplicitous request was all it took to get my hands on the rest.

Down the hall and around the corner, I found my guy. I slipped into his room, smiling a friendly, professional smile at the man lying in the room's single bed. He was a little older, maybe late forties early fifties, a white guy with a good head of salt and pepper hair and little wire-frame glasses. More importantly, no ring on his finger. He was wearing the a hospital gown, though his reason for being here was clear from the large cast on his left leg. His eyes widened a moment at the sight of his new nurse. If his old one had been the same sweet but conspicuously hirsute woman who'd been attending me, I could appreciate why.

"Good evening, Mr. Melton," I said, lifting his name from a dry erase board on the wall. "How are we doing this evening?"

"Um, fine. Pain's down a little bit," he responded.

"Great, great. That's what we like to hear!" I chirped back. "So my name's Melody. I'm here to help get you cleaned up a little bit, if that's OK with you." I figured using a pseudonym would be safer, just in case.

"Cleaned up? I'm... I'm not sure what you mean. Do you mean the leg? I think the doctor said it wouldn't be able to be cleaned until the cast was removed."

I smiled. "Oh yeah, sorry, inside the cast is going to have to wait, but I'm here for the rest of you."

"The rest?"

How clueless was this guy? "Sure. Is this your first sponge bath since you've been here?"

His eyes widened, then roved down to my waist and back up to my face (with a brief pause in between). The scrubs were bulky by design, but I'd done some creative tucking to keep mine as form-fitting as possible. Bust and hips like mine were hard to conceal. "Sponge bath?"

I hit him with my most disarming giggle. "Sure! It's nothing too invasive – I'll wipe you down right there in your bed, until you're good and satisfied. Standard procedure, and your insurance already approved it so there's no charge. That sound OK?"

"Oh. Well... sure, I guess that'd be all right." The gleam in his eye said it would be "all right" in the way a six-year-old girl would be "all right" with a pink unicorn pony. I'd gotten the sponge and bucket when I'd requested them for myself; much as I expected a nurse or two would be happy to use them on me if the hospital allowed it, this was the twenty-first century, after all. This sort of thing had long gone the way of the tamagotchi.

"Great. I'll shut the door so we can have our privacy," I said, glibly ignoring the curtain as I did so. Mr. Melton looked anxious, so as I began, I kept everything light and

superficial with the small talk. Hot enough for ya, what do you do for a living, did you see that out in the sixth this afternoon kind of stuff. Soon enough, between a little extra kneading of his muscles while I worked and the light-heartedness of our conversation, he was back at ease.

I had triggers for precisely this kind of thing, of course. I'd played naughty nurse dozens of times at the ranch. It tended to be a more popular request from the older guests than the younger, with some memories of candy stripers still bouncing around up there. Myself, I'd always associated hospitals with sickness, pain and death, but I'd learned some people simply got off on being pampered. Like any trigger, I'd watched, learned, and improved. Unfortunately, without actually being triggered, all I had to go on was memories of past triggers. I couldn't count on becoming the perfect medical instrument of TLC provision. I would have to play the part, not truly become it. Still, as I dragged my breasts across his chest to get at his right arm and felt his erection stiffen against my left, it was clear even my baseline talents were sufficient.

"Um, oh gosh, I'm so sorry. It just..." he stammered, cheeks coloring.

Rather than react, I kept on going exactly as I had been, his ever-swelling cock rising to meet my forearm. "Don't mention it. It's a perfectly natural reaction, and it happens all the time," I reassured him, patting his chest. "Honestly, from a handsome young guy like yourself, it's kind of flattering."

He chuckled, obviously flattered but aware of it. "I'll bet you say that to all your patients."

Time for a little suggestive talk. "Oh no, I'm serious. Being a young woman in this place, there's all kinds of pervballs I have to deal with. This very morning, while I was taking his temperature, this eighty-some-year-old guy just reached out and grabbed both of my breasts! Can you believe it?"

"Oh gosh, the nerve!" His eyes darted down my neckline. I knew he couldn't see much, but he could try, and I kept my eyes on my sponging so he didn't have to feel self-conscious about being noticed.

"Seriously. And I don't mean a little pat, either. I'm talking a full-on booby-honking. I was so surprised, I wound up standing there for what felt like forever letting him!" I pantomimed with my hands said honking.

"Wow. I'm so... they don't pay you gals enough for that kind of thing, I'm sure."

"Oh, aren't you sweet. Mind rolling over for me? Anyway, that was my morning. And what's worse... Oh, never mind. Sorry, almost got a little too personal there." Another giggle as I untied his robe. He had underwear on, actual tighty whities. Yet to neither the experienced professional I was pretending to be, nor to the actual experienced slave I actually was, a mostly naked stranger sporting wood was nothing to fret over.

"Oh, go ahead. I don't mind," he said predictably.

“Well...” I leaned down, letting the weight of my breasts rest on his bare back and speaking in a lower volume. “This is probably major TMI, but I have *really* sensitive nipples, and now I’ve been just... ERGH all day!” I laughed. “Sorry, but I had to vent it to someone and you’re the first cool patient I’ve had all day.”

He laughed nervously, squirming a little. “Oh, I understand. My ex-girlfriend, she had the same issue. Every time we... she’d... well, I’m sure I don’t need to tell you.”

“Hey, maybe one of these days you’ll *show* me,” I said, laughing right back. Then, I gave his butt a soft pinch to test the waters. I had a sixth sense for sex stuff, and the flirtation was right on schedule. Plus, the not-so-casual reference to an ex clearly signaled his availability.

He stiffened, but when he craned his neck back to look at me, there was the grin I’d been hoping for. “Maybe one of these days I will – once I get this darned cast off, anyways.”

I worked the sponge with one hand up his hip and the other massaged his inner thigh, working steadily upwards. By now, the sponge bath was growing more playful. Not full-blown erotic, but more than merely washing. “Come on, you can’t leave a girl waiting like that. Nobody likes a tease, Mr. Melton.”

He moaned as I worked a little tension out. “Says the pretty young nurse who came to give me a sponge bath, then makes me lay on my...!” The man couldn’t even say the word. This seduction was proving too easy. My sexual appetites in men went straight to the domineering sort, and Mr. Melton was at the opposite end of the spectrum.

“You don’t *have* to lay on it, if you don’t want to,” I said, more softly.

He was quiet a moment, trying to puzzle out the implications. “You mean... you want me to...”

“We’re not really supposed to sponge off our patients’ genital areas,” I said, then leaned right down next to his ear, close enough to let him feel my breath, “but I won’t tell if you won’t.”

Rather than reply, he hastily rolled over. Eagerness. Good. There it was, my hard willing cock jutting out beneath that gown. I reached down and tugged down his underwear with a little effort, assuring him I simply didn’t want to get them wet while I was cleaning the area they were covering. His leg made it difficult, but we were both pretty motivated to make this work. I sneaked a peek at his cock in the process; it was nothing to write home about, but it didn’t have to be. All it had to do was go inside me and get me off so I could finally get my head clear.

I continued this charade in what little veil of professionalism was left to me, dabbing along Mr. Melton’s upper thighs, his hips, moving inexorably toward his groin but circling the sweet spot. His eyes were squinted shut, and if I were a real nurse, I might have been worried about his elevated breathing and heart rate. By now the gown

was lifted entirely out of the way, rendering his cock as ready as it would ever be. Finally, it was time to up my game.

With one last check to make sure he wasn't peeking, I bent down, extended my tongue, and started licking his cock. Not a full-on gobble or anything; in fact, I was aiming to keep my touch so feather-light that it would take him a moment to distinguish between me and the sponge with its bucket of sudsy warm water. It didn't take long, though, before the part of his brain that still had blood running to it realized something was different.

"Miss...! What are you... oh, god..."

Though he was clearly quite content to let me continue, I had a strategy, and I was sticking to it. Let him accept the blowjob, and as he lay there basking in my supremacy of the skill, he might realize how off this all was and decide anything more would be too much. Continuing would allow him to process. I needed him wanting more.

"Oh! Oh my, I am so sorry! You were just so *big*! And I'm so... I couldn't help myself!" I exclaimed, hands flying to my chest in mortification, water soaking into my clinging scrub top. It was laying it on a little thick, but I'd rarely seen men who seemed to object to having their dicks flattered. In the end, everybody thought they were a half inch shy of a porn star. "Please don't tell my boss! I could get in so much trouble for this, and I really need this job!"

"Oh, um, it's fine, I wouldn't—" he began. I didn't intend to let him mollify me.

"No, I can tell you're upset. God, Melody, why do you have to be such a little *slut* all the time? This guy's trying to recuperate and you go throwing yourself at him like you were free sample at the grocery store," I whined. Never hurted to remind a man you were a piece of meat, I'd found.

"It's really OK," he pressed, but I was already talking over him.

"Wait. If I... if I... you know, will you promise not to tell my boss? I promise I'll make it good, hand to god. Please, Mr. Melton – please, just let me try!"

"Oh. Oh wow. I... I guess you could..." he stammered. I was hitting him faster than he knew how to handle.

"Oh thank you thank you *thank you!*" I exclaimed. And in the next instant, I was taking off my top. Totally unnecessary for what I had in mind, or even what he probably thought I had in mind. I wasn't wearing a bra, so I made sure he got a good look at my boobs while I started on my pants. I turned around to get the panties off, giving him a prime seat to the bare ass show. There would be no difficulty in seeing how incredibly wet I was, either.

My patient whimpered some generic compliment as I turned back to face him. Yet rather than put my mouth back to work, I lifted one knee up on the bed beside him. Careful not to bother his bad leg, I swung my other leg over him, setting my pussy down

right across his cock. I tried to stay in character – a horny nurse desperate to keep her job, not Harmony the mind-fucked slut desperate to get her fix – but it was harder when I wasn't triggered. I had to be *thinking* all the time. The triggers handled a lot of that for me.

“Oh my god, you're going to...!” Mr. Melton's eyes widened. “I thought you meant you were going to... with your mouth.”

Stop being shy and tell me to fuck you already! I screamed in my head.

Squirming front to back a few times, my character channeling my own out-of-control libido. Not that I'd lost control; I was priming his pump. “Oh. I mean, I can, if that's what you want. Do you not want to have sex with me?” I flashed puppy dog eyes at him, ashamed that I was unworthy of his interest.

“No no no! I mean, yes! Yes, I do. This is fine. Sex. Sex is fine,” he rushed.

His eyes rolled back in his head as I slid him inside me. I spared a glance at the clock. 2:20. Not bad. Nine minutes from door to dick, even allowing for chit-chat and foreplay. At least my time in the cabin hadn't dulled my edge much. I'd never deliberately rushed things at the ranch; I was a committed servant, not some lazy hooker. Still, sometimes a guest was in a hurry.

I was being fucked. Finally. It was a little strange having sex without a trigger. The last time I'd done that – not counting that incident where I'd broken that bottle over Matt's head – had been with the night before Master died. The last time I'd had sex with someone other than Master untriggered... hell, that had probably been my senior prom night. I could barely remember my date's name any more, lost in a sea of guests who'd be pleased to be remembered. I wondered how long before I forgot Mr. Melton's.

He wasn't the most energetic or talented partner, but I forgave him that on account of his injured leg. At one point, I was riding him so hard he winced as I put a little pressure on it, so I made myself slow down. Fine with me. I was happy to take my time. My sprint slowed to a canter, then I put his hands on my tits to make up for it. He didn't know what to do with them – even awkwardly told me “my ex-girlfriend's were much smaller, not big, not like you, not this big” – but I was happy to let him do some clumsy groping. It was cute, kind of. Like trying to walk a puppy that didn't know how a leash worked yet. Except this puppy had a cock, and that cock was in my pussy and I couldn't have been more relieved.

Even if he was making me run this whole show, dammit. Mr. Melton was timid, thoroughly overwhelmed by suddenly finding himself buried to the hilt in a fantasy made flesh. So timid that I had to keep guiding him, coaxing him, eking each little increment out of him by force of will. My instincts, however, were at total odds with my verbalizations.

I wanted him to use his hands. To touch me. What I said, however, was, “You can play with my boobs, if you want.”

I wanted him to squeeze them. Pinch. Twist. Hell, slap them, if my swaying titties amused him. But what I said was, “Go on, touch my nipples. It’s OK.”

I wanted him to show me I was more than a set of tits. That my whole body was a gift and he wanted to play with every part of it. “Slap my ass, Mr. Melton. Come on, do it. *Harder*,” I said.

I wanted him to take charge, tell me how he wanted to be fucked. To use me like I’d come here to be used. To stop worrying about permission and propriety and noise levels and just *fuck* me already. “Please?” I whimpered.

Even doing my best to keep him on the edge – and my best is pretty damn good, by any standard – it didn’t take long before he came in me. I couldn’t help myself; I bent down and gave him a nice deep kiss as his orgasm set off my own. (OK, so it set off *another* one of my own.) His hands slipped down to cup my ass as if afraid he wouldn’t get to touch it again before I left. I made sure he got a nice thorough exploration, taking to my feet only when he let go.

“So did I do good? You’re not going to tell anybody?” I asked nervously. Not that I much cared if he did.

“You were incredible,” he reassured me, and I beamed my brightest smile. “I promise, this is just between us.”

“Oh good,” I said, then started to dress myself. “That was... I can’t believe you let me do that. I knew you were gonna be a handful when I walked in!” I chided with a little giggle, wagging my finger at him reprovngly before slipping my scrubs back on.

He told me I was welcome to come back and give him another sponge bath any time, failing to conceal the desperation in his voice. I told him I was off the next three days, but if he hung around for me, I promised to be back. By then, I figured, I’d be out of here anyway. All I needed to be released was to meet with Dr. Kovacs so my stupid health insurance company would approve payments. I guess they were worried I’d been traumatized or something, and didn’t want an otherwise young, healthy patient offing herself when there were still premiums to be collecting. Parasites.

After blowing a parting kiss to Mr. Melton, I slipped back out of the room. None too soon, as it turned out; a nurse – a real nurse – with a food tray went into his room before I even made it around the corner. I made it back to my room, where I quickly changed back into my gown, tossing the scrubs in the wastebasket. After a quick touch-up in the bathroom, slid into bed and closed my eyes, sighing in relaxation at finally having gotten my fix. At long last, I could relax, concentrate, think about anything but sex. I was back to my old self.

Only... why was my old self already masturbating?

My smile faded. How could that not have been enough? I’d had sex five freaking minutes ago! How could I already be horny again?! Damn, but I already needed it again. Needed someone to take me in hand, tell me exactly how to pleasure them, to let me do

what I was put on this earth to do and be a good girl, submit to them, obey, oh fuck tell me what to do, use me, fuck me, fuck any hole you want, I'll do anything, just please please tell me what to do, tell me what I'm doing wrong so I can do everything right for you, please Master—

“Harmony!”

Dr. Kovacs was standing beside my bed, eyes wide in shock. I'd shocked him more than once since we'd met. This time, it was presumably because I'd removed my gown and was knuckle-deep in my cunt with one hand while the other savagely mauled my tits. He was still wearing his same pale blue sweater, old-fashioned wire frame glasses perched on his nose. “Oh. Um... hi, David.”

“Harmony, you're... you were... what was that you were saying...?”

“Oh crap, was that out loud?” I grimaced.

“Not very loud, thank goodness,” he said, hastily shutting the door to my room. “Harmony, stop that!”

I realized then that I was still playing with myself. Reluctantly, I made myself stop. His averted eyes reminded me I should still probably cover myself, I guess. “Sorry. I thought I had the room to myself. I didn't expect you for a while yet.”

“Harmony, it's 5:15. I'm running late, actually. I texted you, but you didn't respond.”

I looked at the clock. Sure enough, 5:15. That couldn't be right. Had I really lost almost three hours playing with myself? That was insane. Sure enough, I was even a little sore down there. It seemed I'd been vigorous. “Oh. I guess I...”

I was still horny. Not my usual ready-to-be-triggered arousal, but clawing-at-the-walls, dick-desperate cock-starved horny. It hadn't been cock I'd needed after all. That whole time, I'd been fantasizing about being a slave again. If Jordan had walked in here, I'd have been on my knees in a heartbeat, ready to serve her. Hell, I'd fuck Dr. Kovacs right now if he told me to.

Please, please tell me to!

“What?”

I blinked. “What?” Please don't let me have said that out loud.

“You said, ‘I guess I’ and then you trailed off. You guess you what?”

I took a deep breath, squeezing my eyes shut. Painted there on the backs of my eyelids was Master's stern, demanding, perfect face. What I wouldn't give...

“I guess I'm pretty fucked up, huh.”

Chapter Eight

“Harmony, given my profession, I assure you I don’t say this lightly. maybe hypnosis isn’t the answer,” Dr. Kovacs said softly, adjusting his glasses.

I rolled over on his office’s leather couch, my face pointed at the back of it. “It’s helping. It really is. We just gotta keep going. One of these days, it’ll jog something loose, I’m sure of it.”

“Or maybe one of these days you’ll actually have a meltdown that I won’t be able to help you back out of,” he answered.

This was a fair point. This was my fourth session since leaving the hospital, and each time he’d put me under. Each time, my mind drifted in and out of old memories from the ranch. Men who’d fucked me, those glorious nights in Master’s bed, games and quarrels and competitions with my sister slaves. But each time, my relaxed mind reached into that black hole in my subconscious where my triggers lie and seized one – without even the courtesy to show either of us how to repeat it.

The first time had been the most embarrassing, certainly. The baby trigger. I hadn’t ever even used it at the ranch except to help my sisters practice it, which wasn’t the same at all. Honestly, the sort of person who looks for whatever was to be found in that sort thing probably didn’t want an almost six-foot-tall woman. They wanted 5’4” Sasha, cherubic and busty. That day, I came out of David’s trance curled up in his lap sucking my thumb and gurgling incoherently. When he refused to give me his “pacifier,” I threw a full-on tantrum in his office.

The others hadn’t been much better. The second time he’d gotten to see Lt. Reed, ball-busting bitch who can only be talked down from making an arrest with an eight-inch bribe. The third was one I hadn’t even known I had; I’d simply kicked off my pants, bent over and shook my butt, all the while insisting I had no idea what was going on. For close to an hour, I’d twerked my ass off, mystified by how I could be held prisoner of an ass with a mind of its own and pleading for it to stop. What even possessed Master to put that in there, I don’t know. Must’ve been a special order that nobody ever got around to using.

The fourth time had been my most common and basic trigger, a combination of blind obedience and desire to please. The other triggers let poor Dr. Kovacs at least show sufficient disinterest that eventually my programming was satisfied that there was no more means of pleasing him. This one, however, fed on every command to knock it off, back away, stop doing that. They were all music to her ears, delicious imperatives she could slurp down and savor at the same time. He’d finally had to lock me in his office and have his lunch in the waiting room until I snapped out of it.

Still, I felt like it was getting me closer. Surely somewhere in those memories, my brain would slip up and give me those magic words, show me how I'd been activating myself. Let me pilot the S.S. Harmony Reed for a change, and set a course for Slave Island. God I was tired of being this turned on. Nothing helped. Not masturbating, not shoving ice cubes in my panties, not even my neighbor Gus I'd started fucking on the side. He was kind of a jerk, but he was cute and interested and the sex was pretty good. He at least took charge and did what he liked, which took the edge off enough that I could at least get some sleep after.

The only time I felt right were those times waking up, triggered, in David's office. Somewhere in my brain was the key that would unlock all the wonderful secrets to that pleasure. I just needed him to keep going until we found them.

"I know I can be a handful," I said, turning back to face him. It was easier to get him to do what I wanted if I made eye contact. "But I feel like we're getting closer and closer every session."

"Closer to *what*, though?"

I frowned. "What do you mean?"

"Harmony, you've been in here every day this week, and you've hardly said a word to me about what it is you're looking to do. You come in, lay down, demand to be hypnotized, then..." He made a face. "When I try to talk to you, you close off. When I ask you how you're doing, I get one-word answers. If I probe into what you've been through – a horrifying ordeal that would leave *anyone* traumatized, especially someone who's lived a life like yours – you threaten to leave. What are you so afraid of?"

"I told you, I don't get afraid. Master took that from me. Made me brave enough for what I needed to endure, so I could be a better slave."

"And I believe you. But that doesn't mean your mind is impermeable! If anything, it probably makes all this *worse*."

"Worse? How would I be better off if I'd had to be afraid? Just because I'm fucked up doesn't mean I'm stupid. I know that being chained up in a cabin and all that is bad. I know it would scare the shit out of most people. You're saying if I'd been shrieking in terror the whole time, I'd be better off?"

"Fear plays dual roles in our psyche, Harmony. You're right that it can be harmful, and if you were anyone else, I'd be working to address the damage all the fear you would have experienced has done. But that's not *all* fear does to us, Harmony. Fear, pain... these are also teachers."

"Oh yeah?" I said dryly. "What would that have taught me, do you think? Don't be a mind-fucked slave girl?"

The balding hypnotherapist folded his hands in his lap, unfazed by my tone. "I don't know what it would have taught you. But for those of us who *do* feel fear, it often teaches us about consequence avoidance. Fear of the dark stopped primitive man from

trying to blunder around at night and get eaten by predators. Fear of being burned teaches kids after they put their hand on a hot stove. Fear of—”

“How does any of this apply to me, though?” I cut in testily.

David wheeled his chair a couple feet closer. I could smell his cologne. He’d had to start wearing it to disguise the scent of me from his wife on the days when I got a little too into rubbing myself on him. “It’s not anyone’s place, least of all mine, to tell you how to feel,” he began softly. “But I can say this. If I had any other patient in here having gone through an ordeal like yours, the last thing they would be doing is trying to push themselves right back into it. Yet you’ve been coming to my office every day, leaping off a cliff and ending up right back where those people tried to bring you in that cabin. And when I ask you why you’re doing it, all you’ll tell me is ‘I’m getting closer.’”

He leaned over me, concern etched into the soft wrinkles of his round, middle-aged face. “So I’ll ask you again, Harmony. Closer to what?”

“I didn’t come here to be lectured. If I wanted to be psychoanalyzed, I’d have gone to a psychoanalysis. If you won’t help me, say you won’t help me so I can quit wasting my time.” I stood up, snatching my purse from the coffee table. “You know what? Fuck this. I’m done here.”

“Please, Harmony, don’t—”

“I said I’m leaving! Or are you going to handcuff me to the couch until I tell you I’m scared?” I stepped around him, marching for the door.

“I’ll be here whenever you want to talk,” he called after me. I wasn’t listening.

Both of my bosses had told me to take all the time I needed before coming back in, and so far, I had taken them up on it. My savings, which were never very substantial, were running low, but the fact that my landlord had told me not to worry about this month's rent had allowed me to extend my hiatus. I gave some thought to fucking him for an extension, but I didn't really want to be a prostitute. Prostitutes bartered their sex for money; I wanted to give it away in servitude.

It was weird to think of going back to the car wash, scrubbing SUVs like nothing had happened. Pretty soon, though, there would be no choice but to get back to it. School would be even weirder. It was a gossip factory among the adults every bit as much as among the students, and no doubt everybody there knew what had happened, or at least the version we'd agreed upon. Hell, even if not for that, it had been in the local news. I was keeping my end of things under wraps, sure, and Matt was insisting everything but the assault was consensual. (No getting around that one.) Still, Jordan had committed that most shocking act of all and told the actual truth.

It was the kind of weird little story that I guess people like to re-share on social media. *School Secretary Made Sex Slave By Senior Students*, some alliterative prick had written. The paper had tried to get a quote from me, but I'd ignored it in the hopes the whole thing would go away. I read the article, and it seemed fairly accurate. They didn't get my whole background, but the suggestion that they weren't the first to tamper with my mind was closer to the surface than I'd have liked.

The events of this summer were all there in black and white. It was smart of her to wait to give the interview until after Matt's sentencing; we'd all said I was a consensual participant, but the article here made it clear that consent was given in what the writer called "a compromised mental state." It basically painted me as a victim of two kids trying to use techniques they didn't understand to coerce me into sexual servitude. The paper was vague on their method, and really gave more the impression of teen twits who believed too strongly in some science fiction story than anything else. It even used a picture I didn't even know existed to highlight what nice cleavage the victim had.

Great, first I was a sex slave, now I was clickbait. As if the title were insufficient. The comment section was a cesspool. It was split between those complaining about millennials having no respect for their elders (despite my being a millennial and the apparent perpetrators falling squarely in Gen Z); people who insisted I was some crazy slut who'd dragged these kids out to the woods to brainwash *them*; and people who wished I'd drag them into the woods, with some fairly explicit descriptions of what they'd have let me get away with. I got myself off a good many times fantasizing over some of those.

Yessir, going back to work there was going to be awkward. Nonetheless, as I stormed out of Dr. Kovacs' office in a huff, I decided that if I couldn't work on my sex

slave issues, I could at least put a dent in my boring secretary issues. Maybe some tedium would help calm me down.

I headed out to the school straight away. It was barely 10 AM; I'd be only two hours late to work. Since school was out, I was able to snag a primo parking spot. Only a handful of employees even came in during the summer. Principal Headley, one of the vice principals, myself and a couple other women on office staff, and some of the people from the district office in the east wing. Summer school was already out. Pretty soon, the faculty would be buzzing around setting up classrooms for the fall semester, but for now, it was the quietest time of the year.

Gina and Frieda, the receptionist and the principal's assistant respectively, both rushed over and gave me warm hugs. Both were on the older side, and they'd always treated me like I was their daughter. Not an especially bright daughter, or one they trusted all that much, or one worthy of having her own key to the main office door... but the hugs were nice.

They didn't bombard me with questions, even though I could tell they wanted to. That was nice, too. Instead, I made my way to my desk and started by clearing my inbox, which was presently stuffed to overflowing. (Merely thinking that phrase was enough to turn me on.) Nearly everything was so old by this point that there was no point even reading it, and what I did need to read, I skimmed. Congrats to graduates, summer office hours, how to submit school supply lists to the website... delete, delete, delete.

A few of these dated emails were even about me. One informing people I'd gone missing, along with my horridly pale-faced ID photo. Another letting people know about the police tip-line, if they heard anything about my whereabouts. Mr. Richardson, the health teacher in whose classroom I'd first introduced Melody to Jordan, had even sent out a mass email asking if we could do some kind of fundraiser or something for me, but Mr. Headley replied that while that was a kind sentiment, there was nothing to raise funds for, so drop it. There was even a posting from two weeks ago with my job on it, followed by one a few days later informing everyone that the position was no longer available.

There was, however, an email from Madelyn Foley, the district's HR director, from last week, asking me to come meet with her when I had the time. After spending all morning poring through the tedium of emails, I figured this might make for a good break. I slipped my heels back on (I often worked barefoot under my desk) and made my way down to the district office suite.

Madelyn was in. We'd met a few times before – when I went through new employee orientation, a few benefits meetings here and there – but never one on one. She had a reputation for being a stick in the mud, and merely entering her office, shaking her hand and exchanging a greeting was enough to show anyone why.

“We’re overjoyed you’re back with us,” she said in a tone that conveyed not the least bit of joy. “Everyone was so concerned for you all summer long. It was such a relief when we heard you’d been located.”

“Happy to provide everyone a little relief,” I said a bit dryly. I smiled, at least.

“Still have your sense of humor? That’s good to hear,” she said. She did not smile. “Please have a seat, Ms. Reed. We just wanted to get a little clarification on a few matters. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?”

I settled onto the chair across from her. It was an unpadded wooden chair. Where did she even find such a thing? “Harmony, please. And that’s fine. Ask away.”

“Understand, some of these questions may be of a personal nature. Would you like to have someone else present?”

“I’ll be fine, really.” I ignored the disapproving look she gave my legs. Anticipating another trigger at Dr. Kovacs, I’d dressed simply in shorts and a tank top. The shorts, like most in my wardrobe, were pretty brief, and I hadn’t even bothered with a bra. A fact that the HR director was noticing with pursed lips.

“Great. To get the ball rolling, I wondered if you could help us by telling me about the nature of your absence the past eight weeks.” She adjusted her keyboard so that she could type up her notes while listening to me without breaking eye contact.

“Really diving right in, huh.”

“It’s important we get this information as soon after the fact as possible, Ms. Reed. You must understand, the version of events in circulation has some staff as well as some parents and students concerned about the appropriateness of your remaining here.”

Oh yeah, uptight parents were going to love having someone like me around. “Right. Well OK, let’s work backwards. This past week, I’ve been at home, recovering. I’ve been working on getting my life put back together, going to therapy, that kind of thing.”

“You’re seeing a therapist? I see,” she said, tapping away at her keyboard.

“You’re not?” I asked, then flashed a smile to pretend I was teasing. Bitch. “Anyway, the week before that I was in the hospital, getting patched up.”

“Patched up?” she prompted, then quickly followed up. “Of course, your medical information is strictly confidential. But if you’ve endured any issues that might require the district to provide accommodations, I wanted to make sure we met your needs completely.”

“Oh, nothing you need to worry about. Just dehydration, various vitamin deficiencies, a respiratory infection, anemia, being monitored for signs of a concussion from the car accident during my escape – oh, and from where I was hit repeatedly in the face – some joint and muscle problems from being handcuffed to a bed for... what, you

said eight weeks? So with a week at home and one in the hospital, I guess that makes six weeks' captivity, give or take." I casually swiped my hair out of my face.

She looked increasingly uncomfortable as I proceeded. It wasn't fair of me, but I guess right then I wasn't feeling like accepting the burden of being the fair one. "I... I see. That's... you're certain there's no accommodations you require?"

"Nope, doing A-OK." I shrugged. "Good therapist. I can get you his number, if you want."

"Quite all right, Ms. Reed. Well then, would you mind..." She struggled to find the words,

Madelyn was having a hard time finding the words, so I helped her. "Talking to you about being taken prisoner?"

"Um, yes. If you feel you're able to talk about it." Nothing in her tone told me she actually empathized. Only that having to deal with me was making her uncomfortable.

I stopped myself from asking her about which kidnapping she'd like to hear about. Barely. "Why don't you tell me what you already know, and I can correct and expand where needed."

"We'd really rather hear it from you," Madelyn said firmly.

I folded my arms across my chest. "Did you already talk to Matt and Jordan?"

She hesitated. "Ms. Shu, yes. Matthew was... unavailable."

"What with the assault and battery charges and all, you mean."

"Can you tell us anything about that?"

I took a deep breath. What was it in this bitch's tone that made me so irritable? "The two of them snuck into my car and... well, kidnapped me. They took me to a cabin in the woods east of town, handcuffed me to a bed, and kept me there as their prisoner. When Jordan finally tried to convince him to let me go, Matt beat her unconscious. While he was still reeling from that, I managed to subdue him and escape." I shrugged. "Then hospital, then home, then here. For the record, and for the concerned parents of the community, I didn't plan any of it, and I didn't break any laws. They let me slide on the public nudity thing, seeing as how I'd been forced to burn my own clothes and flee for my life without them."

She was stone-faced through it all, and continued typing well after I finished speaking. "Will there be anything else?" I asked after a moment.

"My apologies, Ms. Reed. I'm—"

"Harmony."

"—simply making sure we have as accurate of a report as possible. An incident like this between a school's students and employees can be... complex."

I frowned. When people paused like that before saying something was complex, what they really meant was that they thought the person listening was too simple to understand it. "Are you saying you're worried I'm going to sue?"

Her typing paused for only a moment, then resumed as she answered me. “I’m only making sure we have an accurate account of events, in case anyone decides that they were wronged and that the school district plays some role in that.”

I rolled my eyes. “Trust me, I’m not blaming the district for what happened.” Some lawyer from the city prosecutor had spoken with me in the hospital before I gave my account to the police, encouraging me to go after Matt. I’d told him to take a hike. Even if I wanted to attempt some bullshit get-rich-quick lawsuit against the school, there was no way I could do that without getting a lot more specific about the nitty gritty, which would mean testifying to all kinds of things I’d worked hard to keep secret.

“That’s good, though I assure you, I represent you, not the district. I’m on your side, Harmony.” She flashed the deadest smile I’d seen in some time. “Are there any other details you’d like to include in your statement?”

I shook my head. “Nope.”

Madelyn glanced at her screen, then back to me. “Pardon my persistence, but I have to ask, for the official record. Was there any form of sexual activity that occurred between yourself and a student, former or current?”

I arched an eyebrow. “You mean, aside from every single day at the cabin? Like, are you asking if I gave some kid a handjob behind my desk?”

Her face lost a little color at my blunt response. “So you’re saying Jordan and Matthew raped you? Is that what you’re alleging Ms. Reed?”

I banished the memories, which only threatened to make me wish they’d do it all over again. “I’m not ‘alleging’ anything, but that’s what happened, basically, yeah.”

“I’m sorry, could you clarify – what does ‘basically’ mean?”

“They didn’t chain me to a bed because they wanted to try their stand-up comedy routines on me. Look, are we done here? I really don’t want to talk about this.”

Especially not with you, I almost added.

“I’m sorry, I can see I’ve upset you. My apologies, truly. One more unfortunately necessary question, and then I’m all done.”

“Go on, then.”

She tapped a few buttons on her keyboard. “Our understanding is that you’ve elected not to press any charges. Is that correct?”

“That’s right.”

“Yet you’ve said you were abducted, raped, and abused.”

“I did and I was, yeah.”

“May I ask *why* you’re not pressing charges?” She held out her hands palms up. “You have to understand, it might look to some people like matters were less... involuntary.”

I didn’t miss the way she looked over my outfit before that word choice. I stood up, suppressing my instinct to tug my shorts down into place. “The last time my whole

life got ripped apart, there was only one person who decided to throw me a bone. See, everybody else just looked at me and saw some pretty young thing with no job, no education, no family, no money, and decided I was trash. This woman was kind to me, and I'm not going to help lock up her kid, even if it makes some people think I'm a liar or a slut."

I opened her office door. "Harmony, wait. One last thing, please."

I paused, looking over my shoulder. She stood up and walked around her desk to stand right in front of me. I was half a head taller than her, but something in her demeanor made her seem like she was looming. "What."

"I only wanted to say..." She took a breath. "We have a relaxed dress code in the summer, but please remember this is a professional office."

My jaw dropped. I felt my hand tightening into a fist, but forced myself to let it go. "Thanks, Madelyn."

She nodded curtly. "Welcome back, Ms. Reed."

I spent my lunch break thinking of all the things I wish I'd thought to say to that cunt. I even went home and changed – perhaps the first time I let someone make me feel uncomfortable about my appearance since before my enslavement. I went all out on the professional secretary look. White silk blouse with white undershirt and white bra, black stockings and a wine red pencil skirt, black heels with a single strap around the ankle. I'd only ever worn this to the staff Christmas party and for yearbook pictures, but presently, I wanted to spruce up. I even snagged my reading glasses, hanging them by their cord around my neck. A little makeup, some lipstick to match the skirt, and I was ready to leave that prude Foley wishing she could look half as “professional” as me.

Just to be a bitch, I even went back in via the east entrance so I'd have to pass through the main office. I ignored the long stares from the district staff, save for Madelyn herself. She was picking at a salad in the break room, and I wasn't sparing with the over-the-shoulder smirk as her eyes widened at my hips swaying on past her.

My return to the office felt a good deal better than my entrance that morning. There was some fire in my belly, and my grumpiness was transmuting to a little sass. Gina gave a wolf whistle as I moved through; Frieda treated me to a “daaayum, girl”. I'd looked pretty cute this morning, but this was definitely more effort put into it for the afternoon. I grinned and made my way to my desk, but before I could take a seat, I saw there was a post-it waiting for me.

Come see me – H

Principal Headley. Great. I smoothed my skirt down on my hips and took a deep breath. After Dr. Kovacs stunt this morning, then that HR meeting, a one-on-one with the world's most officious school principal was the last thing I needed. A man so formal I only knew his first name because I'd had to copy his signature to complete paperwork, Douglas Headley was not the easiest man to work for. Headley was overbearing, distant, condescending, and... kinda cute, in a Daddy Issues kind of way. After the morning I'd had, though, I was feeling feisty enough that I was not especially eager to see him. Hopefully he only wanted to welcome me back.

I was relieved to see his office door was closed as I made my way down, so hopefully he wasn't in. But when I knocked on the door, I became aware of two things. The first was that the door had only been mostly closed, and my knock was enough to swing it ajar and show that Headley was indeed at his desk, clacking away.

The second was that he was the most amazing boss a girl could have, and I'd do anything to ingratiate myself to him.

“You wanted to see me, Mr. Headley?” My voice was up half an octave, and I smiled it more than said it.

“Ms. Reed!” He said my name as warmly as I'd ever heard. Lukewarm, still, but better than the usual “do you have those reports completed yet, Ms. Reed?” He rose to greet me. “It's so nice to see you back with us. I heard you already met with Mrs. Foley

in HR this morning. I'm sorry you had to go through that, but rest assured that with that out of the way, we're back to business as usual."

"I'm so happy to be back. You wouldn't believe how much I missed you while I was away." I blushed – not something I could normally control, but triggered, all sorts of autonomic systems availed themselves to me. "I mean, you know, you all. Here. In the office."

He smiled thinly, which is to say there was a barely discernible upward twist to the edges of his mustache. "I must say, you're looking well. We've all read about the details in the Herald, and I was worried for you, especially with how long you were kept in the hospital. Did you get the flowers?"

I batted my eyelashes. "I did – the ones from the faculty, and from you boys in the office. They were beautiful. Every day it warmed my heart to look at them. Thank you so much." Actually I'd asked Justin to take them out when they showed up; after more than a month in that sweltering cabin, having pure, unadulterated air conditioned air to breathe was a godsend. One luxury I'd never had to forego at Master's ranch. Master had liked things cool.

"I'm glad. Are you acclimating all right? I know coming back from any long absence can be discombobulating." He gestured for me to have a seat on his couch as he returned to his chair. The couch was usually reserved for wayward students who needed a time-out, but today I was happy to be here, so near to the man who employed me, who made every good thing in my life possible. I perched on the edge, crossing my legs and resting my hands on my knee.

"Oh yeah, I'm doing great. I powered through a lot of my emails this morning, but I was hoping this afternoon to get back to more urgent stuff. Anything you need help with? I mean it, anything. Maybe this sounds weird, but... I've actually really missed assisting you."

He chuckled. Men like this were more susceptible to flattery than most. They already had a high opinion of themselves, so it sounded more natural coming from a subordinate. "Then you'll be delighted to know we've got nearly two months of back-up filing to do, if you're up for it."

"I was hoping you saved a little something for me, sir," I said with a little wink I wasn't sure he caught. I pointed to a stack of boxes overflowing with file folders and loose paper. "Is that it over there?"

"That's right. If you're in the middle of something, it doesn't need to happen right away. I simply wanted to say I'm glad you're back. And to let you know about the files, when you get a chance."

Normally, a comment like that – essentially, that informing me of busy work and expressing his relief I hadn't been raped to death by his students were part of the same

message – would have pissed me off. Today, though, with the devoted subordinate trigger in effect, I was elated to hear he had a use for me.

“If it’s OK, can I do that filing now? I don’t have anything else pressing, and I’d really like some good company while I ease back into things.” He still showed no sign of noticing how high and breathy my voice had become. Was this how he remembered me sounding? No matter. It was sexy, and being sexy was an important part of being a good follower.

“I’m afraid I’ve got work of my own to do, so no time for chit-chat, but as to your request, of course you may, Ms. Reed.” I didn’t miss the subtle inflection that I’d used the wrong helping verb. I’d almost forgotten that Mr. Headley had once been the English department chair. That was good, though. Correcting me made him feel smarter. Superior.

“Oh that’s right, *may*. I always forget which one is correct. Thank you for that. You’re so smart, Mr. Headley.” Even as I gushed praise, he was already returning to his paperwork. His only response was an inscrutable “mmm” as he went on as if I’d never come in.

I got to work. We had an entire room at the ranch made up to look like an office for just such occasions, one of the few settings so common to our guests that Master provided them their own stage. Slutty secretaries like today, bitch bosses like Melody, custodians and colleagues setting upon unsuspecting cubicle drones working late... I was well-practiced at these scenarios, probably second only to Daddy’s Girl among my role play triggers. (Straight up harem-like obedience was still the most common for any of us.) Honestly, it’s one of the reasons I’d applied for this job. I could still remember fielding the question in my interview.

“Oh, I have experience working under a lot of different men. The variety kept things interesting, and I think I handled things well. I’m a pretty flexible woman, all things considered. But if I think I functioned best when I was given specific expectations, then given the freedom to carry them out. Which isn’t to say I mind oversight. Honestly, I like performing under observation. But as long as my superiors told me what they wanted from me, I moved heaven and earth to do it for them.”

All technically true, though I can admit my resumé lied about the two years experience.

It was strange how familiar this all felt. Vivian had always teased me about having a hate-crush on Mr. Headley; it was true I’d always found him attractive, and the more he irritated me the more intense it got. I think his brusque way of dealing with subordinates reminded me of the guests at Master’s ranch.

Really, aside from some extra sway in my hips, bending at the waist instead of the knees, and the ever-present smile on my face, it might have been any other day. For most men I’d done this for in the past, watching their sexy subordinate jiggle around the

room for them was part of the appeal. These were men who were afraid to be caught ogling their actual secretaries, so part of the fantasy was a real live slutty secretary who didn't mind if you patted her on the butt when she brought you your coffee.

(I offered; Mr. Headley said he was cutting back on caffeine, and was perfectly happy with his bottled water.)

As I finished the first box, it began to bother me that I was failing to help him realize how much power he had over me. I couldn't just be a sexy secretary; he'd already seen me occupy that role for two years now. I needed to step it up. Imitating the real thing wasn't going to cut it. I needed to be more, to be a walking, curvy, fuckable parody of his secretary.

He didn't seem to notice when I undid the top two buttons on my blouse. I waited until he seemed to be finishing up a task – after all, even if I was presently a slutty secretary, he was still a real principal, and I didn't want to be in the way of that. “Mr. Headley, sir... is it hot in here? Hotter than normal, I mean.”

He glanced up; if he noticed the extra cleavage on display, it was solely with his peripheral vision. Impressive. “We set the thermostat to seventy-eight in the summer. It's a substantial energy savings,” he said dryly. “I was surprised to see you so dressed up, but perhaps you'd forgotten about the relaxed summer dress code.”

This from the man wearing a full business suit, jacket and all. “Would it be all right if I took my top off?” I asked in the most innocent voice I could muster.

Finally, a reaction. “Buh... Ms. Reed!” His eyes widened.

I slapped myself in the forehead, giggling at my silly “mistake.” “Oops! I mean, take my blouse off. I have an undershirt on, of course.”

“Aha. Well in that case... I suppose that would be fine.” He tugged softly at the collar of his shirt. To my surprise, as I slowly unbuttoned and then shed my blouse, he didn't look away. My heart swelled to think I had his attention. That all I had to do was something as small as take my shirt off to get the boss to notice me! Sure, I still had my undershirt on, but it was basically a white tank top, two spaghetti straps and cut low enough that my bra was thrusting my tits out to the nines. I gave him a smile and, after folding my discarded top across the arm of his couch, resumed filing.

It was a game of inches, that afternoon. I couldn't simply tell him I'd be honored to suck my boss's cock, that I'd gladly forego a raise in exchange for a facial. Nor could I go all-in offering up my body – the man was someone very important, after all, and he may well have better things to do than fuck little old me. So I had to go little by little.

I swung by his desk to get his signature on a form that was missing it; while I was at it, I made sure to place my palms on his desktop and bend as low as possible without seeming unnatural. Twenty minutes later, I kicked my shoes off and sashayed around his office in my bare – well, stockinged – feet. I waited until he paused to answer a phone call, then I raised the bottom hem of my shirt to get at a nonexistent itch, and if it

never slipped back into place and left my midriff exposed, so be it. At 2:15, I figured I'd been doing physical work enough to have earned a nice thorough stretch, letting the afternoon sun silhouette my body against his office window.

"Would you mind closing the blinds, Ms. Reed? The sun's really coming in hard today."

"Of course, Mr. Headley. Planning to take your top off, too?" I giggled as I obeyed, giving him a friendly wink over my shoulder. If it was mistaken for a slutty wink, that would be fine.

"Actually, that might not be such a bad idea." He smiled thinly beneath his thick mustache. "Taken in the same meaning as your prior suggestion, of course."

I hustled around behind him and helped him ease off his jacket. "There, isn't that better? You don't have to stop there, if you want to get more comfortable. Getting that smothering shirt off definitely did me some good."

I could tell he had an undershirt of his own beneath his crisply ironed blue button-up shirt, so I knew the offer, while ripe with suggestive language, wasn't ludicrous. For most men, anyway. Principal Headley seldom even took his jacket off around the office, and I'd certainly never seen him without his tie on.

Today, however, was apparently the exception. "Perhaps you're right." As he began undoing buttons, I moved around in front of him and joined in. Perching on the edge of his desk, I calmly untucked his shirt and started in on the bottom buttons.

"What do you think you're doing?" He was eyeing me askance, but he didn't stop me, and his tone was more inquisitive than harsh.

I glanced up to meet his eyes while I continued. "I'm sorry, I was only trying to be helpful. Should I not have done that?"

"You're still doing it, technically," he pointed out. "I can handle my own buttons, Ms. Reed."

Chastened, I pulled my hands away (after finishing the button I'd been working on), but remained right beside him. "I'm sorry, sir. It won't happen again. Unless you tell me otherwise." There, a friendly yet professional reminder that I was perfectly happy to help him take his clothes off.

Mr. Headley managed this particular article on his own, loosening his tie and slipping it off with the knot intact. He hung tie, shirt and jacket on the hook by his desk. "That does feel better. Thank you for that suggestion, Ms. Reed. Now, may I...?" He gestured to his desk, where I was presently sitting.

I hopped up like the desktop was scalding my bottom. "Sorry sir!" I squeaked, scurrying aside. He settled back in, and there was nothing to do but return to my filing.

The game resumed. Incrementally my neckline was adjusted downward, making sure the fringes of lace on my bra were visible. When he excused himself to his office's private bathroom, I reached in and gave both nipples a good twist, and when he stepped

back out, for the first time I saw his eyes actually drop down to my boobs. Progress. I'd actually managed to do something – be something – pleasing to my boss. The best boss in the whole world.

It was another fifteen minutes, while I was crawling on my hands and knees trying to locate the paperclip I'd "accidentally" dropped, when Mr. Headley finally acknowledged my efforts to seduce him.

"Ms. Reed, I know what you're doing."

I spun to face him, staying on all fours long enough to be sure he had ample opportunity to look down my shirt before rising to my knees. "Sir?"

"Please. You may dispense with the routine."

Triggered as I was, I absolutely could not dispense with the routine. I giggled. "Routine, sir?"

"Yes. Your attire, your comportment, the general... oh, let's call it handsiness. Surely you didn't think I wouldn't see through it."

I frowned. Of course he had. Mr. Headley was so smart. A natural leader. To think that someone like me could have pulled one over on him! Still, since he had no way of knowing what I was actually up to. What did he *think* my routine was? "I'm sorry, Mr. Headley. I didn't mean to cause offense. I was only trying to—"

"Ms. Reed, please. I didn't climb to where I am today by allowing myself to be lead astray by a shapely young woman. If I had a nickel for every time a female student tried to barter her sexuality for clemency, I'd have... well, fifteen cents may not sound like a lot, but suffice to say the sum adequately expresses how cheap and tawdry I find such things."

I folded my hands in my lap, incidentally squeezing my boobs together. They weren't far from popping out altogether considering how hard I'd been pushing them to defy gravity. "I'm very sorry, sir. I should have known a man like yourself wouldn't be attracted to someone like me."

He frowned, shaking his head. "You misunderstand me, Ms. Reed. It isn't at all that I find you unattractive. Empirically, you are an incredibly beautiful young woman. But I'm not about to allow my subordinate to lure me into a trap to set up a lawsuit that will pay down her medical bills."

I blinked. He thought... *what?!* "Lawsuit? What do you mean, sir?" I should feel insulted that he'd even think such a thing of me. Presently, however, I was blinded by my admiration for the man; pride was no part of the servitude equation. He was examining all angles, while still taking time to appreciate how cheap and easy I was making myself.

"I know how these things work, so you may spare me the indignation. You've been through an ordeal, and rather than get back on that horse and set your life aright, you've decided it will be easier to appear to seduce your boss. You get my DNA in or on

your person by whatever method, then rush down to the hospital and cry molestation in the hopes the district will settle the matter. Sans your preceding circumstance, it's not a unique stratagem."

Yeesh, he had a low opinion of me. Probably of women in general. Rather than stand, I crawled around the side of his desk to look up at him more directly. He inched away, but only inched. "Mr. Headley, I apologize if I gave you the impression that I'm that kind of woman. I have tremendous respect for you, and I would never knowingly do anything that would reflect badly on your reputation."

All right, so there was the time I addressed a dictated letter "Dear Parnets" then noticed after I'd printed three thousand copies and still sent it out anyway, but still. But I'd never do anything like that while I was triggered.

I continued. "And I can admit that yes, I've been flirting with you today. Trying to get you to notice me. But it's only because I've always been so attracted to you, and I've been realizing that life is too short not to do the things that would bring you happiness. You know?"

He mulled my words over, though I didn't fail to notice the feeling of his eyes lingering on my neckline. I was glad I had such big, sexy tits. A man liked this deserved a hot, easy, devoted personal assistant like me. "Trite sentiment, but perhaps not entirely without merit. Still, as tempting as it may be—"

"You think I'm tempting?" I bit my lower lip, clasping my hands to my heart with the overwhelming level of flattery from this man.

"Tempting at it may be," he repeated, only mildly annoyed to have been interrupted, "it's a risk I cannot afford to take. I can hardly stake my reputation and career on fulfilling a momentary urge."

A hundred different ways to proceed under a hundred different triggers. Obedient Harmony might have deferentially murmured, "Of course, sir. I apologize for having distracted you with the temptations of my flesh." Bratty teenager Harmony probably would have taunted, "Good, I don't want your gross old hands all over my tits anyway!" Airhead Harmony would have gone with, "Oh yeah, I totally like steaks, too, but maybe that's just 'cause everyone always says I'm a piece of meat! *giggle* What does that mean, do you think?" Android trying to understand human nature Harmony (yes, that's a thing) might have tilted her head to the side and asked, "You say you do not intend to engage in sexual activity with me. But your pupil dilation, breathing rate, and subconscious physiological signal coding suggest that you are still pondering doing exactly that. Can you explain?"

But today, I was a follower. And a follower supported her boss's decisions, period. "Of course, sir. Would you like me to excuse myself, or would you prefer I strip down to my underwear and continue filing?"

Once more, I got a rise out of him. "Excuse me?!"

“I understand if you won’t have sex with me. But I want to earn your trust back, and I want you to know I’m not some tease. So if you want me to take my clothes off, all you have to do is say so and I’ll strip them right off, sir. And that way it’s nothing you have to worry about incriminating yourself if you were right. Isn’t that right?” That last was inflected sincerely, to allow the smart boss man to check his silly secretary girl’s thinking.

“I... someone could walk in.”

I grinned. He was considering it! “You could let Gina and Frieda go early. And the school doors are already locked to the public by this hour, right?”

He stroke his stubbly chin. “It would seem suspicious, dismissing the two senior administrative assistants to be left alone with the attractive young junior.” But I could tell he was trying to think a way around it.

“It’s already after three... we could simply be patient, wait for them to clock out, and then... work late.” I looked up at him hopefully.

He was leering at me now, no more disguising it. Mr. Headley wanted to look at me, and I was only too happy to afford my boss some stress relief by letting him. “Get back to your filing, Ms. Reed,” was all he said.

So I did. On a hunch, I eschewed all the posturing and posing and simply did my job. There was plenty to be done; evidently Gina and Frieda had been saving all the filing from the past two months for my return. Or my replacement, had things gone that way. I didn’t so much as look in Mr. Headley’s direction – which in a way was its own sort of posing. I was the portrait of a hot young secretary flitting around his office doing his bidding, at his beck and call.

At 4:30 on the dot, the door swung open after a brief knock. Gina smiled at him, then at me, then looked between the two of us again for just a moment. “We’re heading out, Mr. Headley. And remember you have that 9 AM tomorrow with Superintendent Wilkins.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Panetta. Have a good evening.”

“You too.” She looked to me. “Nice to have you back, Harmony.”

“So nice to be back, Gina.” This time, I meant it.

She left the door open behind her. There was that motherly instinct that closed doors for daughters were a recipe for impropriety. The principal and I each continued in our labors; I was waiting for his direction. The main office was dark now, and silent. He was thinking about it, obviously. I looked too fucking hot not to. But I wanted him to know he could tell me to do things, sexual things, and have me do them unquestioningly.

Then he closed the door. It was a casual gesture, as if he were having a meeting with a parent and needed his privacy. He sat back down at his computer, and still, I filed.

“Well?” he said after a couple more minutes.

I turned. “Well, sir?”

“You said you weren’t a tease, Ms. Reed.” He folded his arms.

I nodded. “I’m not sir. Only... I know I made you worry I was up to no good, so I didn’t want to worry you by acting without your direction.”

“My...” He smiled his thin smile. “Very well. You may remove your skirt, if you so wish.”

“Of course, sir.” I turned my back to him, giving him a direct view of me casually sliding down the zipper. It was a tight skirt; I had to manually peel it the rest of the way down my hips and thighs. My panties matched my bra, relatively simple but tasteful white with some lace trim. They contrasted perfectly with the thin strip of creamy white skin visible above my black stockings. (Ordinarily I tried to maintain a golden tan, but two months shut up in a cabin had taken its toll in more ways than one.) The panties were riding up my crack and slit a bit on account of the physical activity, and I could tell by feel alone that the left side was bunched up much more than the right. Good. It was natural. Men liked those little affects, unscripted and authentic to the occasion.

“Will there be anything else, Mr. Headley, sir?” I asked, turning once more to face him, hands at my sides.

It was a long moment before he could pry his eyes away from my crotch, but I was in no rush. “Not right now. As you were.” He gestured to the stack of file boxes.

I smiled – not seductively, but rather the smile of a woman who enjoyed her job and was glad to be doing it. “Yes sir. If there’s anything else you need, let me know.”

I got back to work. I aimed for a mix of squatting and bending at the waist to get at my files. When I walked, it wasn’t quite a strut, but I made sure my hips went to a little less va, little more voom. Mr. Headley was still tapping at his keyboard, but whenever he was in my peripheral, he was definitely much more fixated on me than his monitor.

“You know, my energy is starting to flag a bit. Would you mind fetching me a coffee? Put on a new pot, if you need to.”

“Of course, sir. Hazelnut, two sugars, right?” He nodded, and I grinned with pleasure at knowing so well what my boss liked. One foot in front of the other, I rolled my hips out of his office like they were liquid, right out into the main office and across to the break room. Normally it would have been strange to be walking around the office in my underwear, but this was how the boss wanted the office run, so as far as I was concerned, it was the new normal.

I returned a few minutes later to find him reading some scanned forms on his computer. I set his coffee down, along with an extra creamer just in case. “Your coffee, sir.”

He was right next to me. Close enough to touch me. Close enough I could feel his warmth on my skin. “If this is entrapment, I must say, you’ve really committed to your gambit. I can’t say any girl who’s entered this office has ever been so earnest in her attempts to seduce me.”

“I promise you it’s not entrapment, sir. If I were trying to entrap you, I would’ve worn cuter underwear.” I giggled. Actually this underwear was perfectly cute for my purposes, but it was probably easy for him to imagine me in something sexier. I gave him a moment to do so.

“But seriously, there has to be some way I could convince you I’m sincerely attracted to you, sir. Without doing anything that would make you feel uncomfortable.” I stamped my foot petulantly. “You have the most important job in the whole school, and I hate that I can’t show you how much I appreciate you letting me work under you!”

Mr. Headley laughed. “I’m genuinely impressed, Ms. Reed. Honestly, I can’t even tell if you’re being sincere, or whorish, or devious, but whichever it is, you’re to be commended on your devotion.”

“Sincere *and* whorish,” I said with a little giggle. “But to be fair, I only took my skirt off because you told me to.”

“Be grateful I left you your shirt.” He drummed his fingers on his desk pensively. Before I could ask if he’d like me to take that off as well, he continued. “I tell you what. Thanks to you flitting around like a Jezebel in my office this afternoon, I actually am lagging behind in my duties. Why don’t you rub my shoulders while I work and try not to put me further behind, hmm?”

“Yes sir,” I agreed giddily. I invited him to switch out his executive swivel chair for one of the high back ones at the conference table. He followed my meaning and spun it backward before sitting down, giving me his whole backside to work with. I pressed my fingers into his shoulders, and it was immediately clear he was indeed tense. Not for long, though. Master had enslaved Ana Maria precisely because she was a certified massage therapist. (And a crazy hot Latina fox, but the massage therapy certification had sealed the deal.) She’d taught the rest of us; I’d put in dozens of hours of practice under her watchful gaze. I smiled at the memory of her howls of pleasure as Master slammed her reward into her. Ana Maria had had to refine her technique after her enslavement; there was a difference, after all, between a therapeutic massage and an erotic one, but she taught us both skills.

Today, I was riding the line between them. I paid no attention to Mr. Headley’s monitor as I worked. Honestly, my task took all of my attention. I was delicate, careful not to interrupt his typing while I worked out a kink with my elbow. Before long, he invited me to remove his undershirt. I failed to resist the need to caress his smooth back and shoulder muscles before resuming work, and once he had to rebuke me when my hands began to roam down across his chest. I apologized, and to show I was forgiven he

allowed me to work on first one arm, then the other, as his free one worked the mouse and keyboard.

“All right, all right,” he said at last. “You really do know how to distract a man, don’t you.”

I frowned. “I’m sorry, sir. You said to... and I was trying...”

“Come around here. Let me look at you.”

I obeyed, and when he patted the desk, I hopped up on it in front of him. He roughly shoved the conference chair aside, standing before me close enough that I had to spread my legs to accommodate him. “Like this, sir?”

“You really would remove your shirt if I asked, wouldn’t you?”

“Of course, sir. Shall I...?” I crossed my arms, taking hold of the bottom of my undershirt.

Mr. Headley ignored my question again. “And that... well, you can’t fake that, can you,” he said, looking pointedly at my pussy.

“No, sir.” It was ironic. For days – weeks – I’d been like a dripping faucet 24/7. Yet this afternoon, triggered, my body had self-regulated according to the circumstance at hand. I hadn’t even gotten wet until he’d escalated things to the point of having me strip off my skirt. Even then, “wet” was probably overstating things. Still, I was decidedly damp, and in these sheer white panties, it was showing.

“You’d like me to do something about it, would you?”

“Only if you want to, sir.”

“I’m not asking what I want. I’m asking what *you* want.”

“Sorry, sir. Yes, I want it, sir.”

“Want what? Be precise, Ms. Reed.”

“I want your cock, sir. I’ve wanted it for so long.” I blushed to be wasting this man’s time discussing my own desires. Bless him for taking this time to boost his subordinate’s morale!

His face was as hard as the cock tenting out his pants. “Bend over my desk.”

I leapt to obey. It was almost sweet how he asked what I wanted, as if my purpose were anything more than to help him get what he wanted out of me. I arched my back, thrust my butt up as high as I could for him. I’d long ago developed a sixth sense for how to align my pussy with the height of a man’s cock. I folded my arms under my chin near the far edge of the desk, patiently awaiting—

CRACK!

I yelped at the sound as much as the sensation of something thin and hard connecting with my ass. Two more followed in quick succession. “Ow! Sir, wh— Ow!”

He gave me one last smack with his ruler. Clever man, I hadn’t even noticed him picking it up. “We don’t use that kind of language in this office, Ms. Reed. No matter how much you want to be fucked. Do you understand?”

“Yes sir,” I said meekly. Outwardly, I was contrite, even a little fearful. Inwardly, I was rejoicing. He was finally asserting himself, taking his role as my complete and total boss.

“Now, since we can’t trust you, we certainly aren’t going to give you what you’re so silently pleading for,” he said, rubbing one edge of the ruler against my ever-moistening slit. “However, if you were to offer up a more discrete method of service, I might allow you to manually stimulate yourself while you exercised it.”

It took me a moment to process what that even meant, and I realized he was still paranoid about coming in my pussy. Still, that didn’t leave us with no options. “Thank you, sir. What about my mouth? Would that be better? I promise, if you come in my mouth, I’ll swallow every last drop.”

He walked around to the other side of the desk, stopping right in front of me. When had he taken off his pants? Mr. Headley was a lot more subtle than I’d have given him credit for. His red, angry-looking cock was barely visible through the slit in his boxers, though its outline was clear. “Very well. But no hands. Except on yourself, if you wish.”

I opened my mouth as I reached down to starting rubbing my pussy through my panties. My tongue hung out, awaiting having his cock shoved in at last. My boss deserved this, deserved to have his hot, half-naked secretary panting for him, bent over his desk with every hole available.

It was then that Mr. Headley started jacking off. I barely had time to be surprised by his denial of my waiting mouth as he pumped furiously, a grip that looked so firm I was surprised it didn’t hurt. Even with his cock, the man was in iron-fisted control. I kept my mouth open, bracing myself for it, and it was mere moments before his hot seed splashed across my face. And again, and again. Trained for this precise sort of event, I came right as he did, body trembling while I did my best to hold still so I could present a stationary target. Clearly he didn’t want a mess in his office.

Spent, he wiped the last dribbles on my cheek before walking back around the desk to begin getting dressed again. The man was efficiency itself – no wonder he was in total charge of me. He hadn’t told me to move, so for now, I held my place on the off chance he’d changed his mind about using my cunt.

“I have to say, Ms. Reed, when I read that article in the paper today, I was exceedingly dubious as to the merit of the claim regarding your propensity for sexual servitude. But I must say, if your comportment this afternoon is any gauge, perhaps there is some merit to the boy’s claims after all.”

I turned my head to look back at him. “What claims, sir?”

He hit a quick couple of buttons on his keyboard, then spun his monitor so I could see it. It was an online newspaper article. With Mr. Headley’s cum covering my

right eye, I could barely tell that the small picture beside the text was Matt, and could read little more than the headline.

Teen In Missing Secretary Case: "She offered to be my sex slave" I squinted, and it appeared to be the same journalist who interviewed Jordan, and there was that same clickbaity picture of me in a v-neck.

"I took the liberty of reviewing your original employment application while you were filing this afternoon, and a little investigation shows it seemed to be at best highly dubious. Your references seem to be fabricated, as did at least two of your past employers. Shame on Mrs. Foley for not having more thoroughly checked up on you, I suppose."

He replaced the monitor in its default position, then resumed fastening his belt. "What do you have to say for yourself, Ms. Reed? If you weren't... what was it, accounts liaison for Northwest Auto Rentals, a company that does not seem to have ever existed, then what *were* you doing during that time?"

"I... I'm not sure what to say, sir." I really wasn't. I was his loyal, obedient assistant. I couldn't tell him the truth, that I was a liar and a whore. He'd fire me. Plus, it wasn't the fantasy. I had triggers that involved revealing misdeeds to set up punishments, but right now, I was here to be pleasing, period. This was bizarre. My head actually hurt a bit from the strain of trying to maintain the fantasy as he tried to unravel it.

"No doubt. Well see to it you maintain your discretion if you intend to keep working here. Here's a handkerchief. You've convinced me that this is no ruse, but still, I'd prefer you not walk out of the office with a stray bit of my ejaculate on your forehead."

"Thank you, sir." I accepted the rag and started wiping up my face. I checked with him when I was finished, and he directed me to a remaining blob on my left nostril. I'd known it was there, but having observed that he enjoyed correcting my shortcomings, it was a service. I grinned sincerely, relieved I wouldn't do anything that would reflect poorly on him.

His monitor went dark as he powered it down. "It's getting late and my wife will be expecting me. Are you all right to close up here?"

"I don't have a key, sir." I lowered my head, embarrassed at having to acknowledge how far down the chain I was. I folded my hands demurely in front of my panties to conceal how wet they'd gotten when he'd made me come.

"Ah. Here, take mine." He unfastened a small key ring from his desk and tucked it in my neckline. They caught inside one of my bra cups. "You can return them in the morning."

"Thank you, sir!" I clasped my hands over my heart, thrilled by being entrusted with such a responsibility.

He patted my butt as he walked past. “Good work today, Ms. Reed. Nice to have you back.” I watched him leave, waited to hear the outer office door close.

The trigger ended.

I didn’t waste time getting dressed; I rushed right over to my desk and brought up the local paper’s website. There it was, the third link down. I read the article in a rush. The paper had printed the whole tale. To their very slight credit, they printed his salacious account of our summer together with all the credulity it deserved, stopping just short of calling him a liar.

Still, Matt’s statement had revealed a lot, even more than Jordan’s. That I’d been abducted as a teenager, brainwashed, been pimped out, escaped, then reestablished myself as a car wash attendant and school secretary. That I had relapses – “like acid flashbacks for sex,” Matt put it – and in that state, had actually been the one to seduce him and Jordan. The article concluded with a skeptical note, recounting some of the public details of my condition when I’d been found by the police.

I slammed my fist down on my desk and screamed. I didn’t give a shit if there was anyone else in the building to hear it. My lungs emptied themselves as loudly as I could make them, then refilled for another volley.

It was done. Soon, everyone I knew, and everyone who knew me, and plenty of people whom I’d never met, would know my secret. The article bore today’s date, and the time stamp indicated it had come out right around the time I’d first taken my blouse off in Headley’s office. Had my friends seen it yet? My neighbors? What about my other boss, the rest of my co-workers?

Tomorrow, I’d be pumping gas, shopping for groceries, getting my mail, and someone was going to recognize me from that article. “Hey, you’re that girl, from that thing, right? The sex slave girl. Is it true? Are you really, you know, a...?”

Let me show you.

I was already worried that was what I might say.

I wrote an email to Principal Headley tendering my resignation. A text to Mr. Testaverde at the car wash followed, saying the same. Finally, I dialed Dr. Kovacs' cell.

"Harmony!" he exclaimed as he answered. "Are you all right? The way you left this morning... and perhaps I should ask if you're sitting down first, but have you seen the news today yet?"

"I just did," I answered. "Can we meet again tomorrow?"

Dr. Kovacs was quiet a moment. "Look, I don't know if I'm the best option for you. I can't in good conscience continue to—"

"I only want to talk. You don't have to try again."

"You're sure?"

"You were right," I said. "We need to figure out what I want."

Chapter Nine

Dr. Kovacs couldn't meet with me until Monday, so I had a three-day weekend ahead of me before we could try to talk through this. If you can call it a weekend. (Did the unemployed have weekends? I guess so. Sex slaves did, after all; weekends were our busiest times on the ranch.) I told David I'd quit, and he said that I should be careful not to make more big decisions on impulse. In fact, he'd urged me to try to spend some time around friends, remind myself of the good in my life.

With that in mind, I was set to crash Miguel and Justin's party. It was the brothers' annual end-of-summer bash, and the guest list included friends, coworkers, clients, neighbors, and happily, yours truly. This very party two summers ago was where I'd first met them, dragged along by Hannah and Vivian. The boys had this year's extravaganza set up before I'd even escaped, and invited me with an up-front qualification that they'd understand if I didn't feel up to it. I'd taken them up on the refusal, though not because of the so-called trauma. Honestly, I'd been worried I'd trigger myself and make a scene.

After my stint with Mr. Headley this afternoon, I felt a lot better, actually. Even if he'd never so much as touched my pussy, it was clear to me now that all my anxious pining had not been for sex, but rather to be controlled. Seducing that guy in the hospital (whose name I'd already forgotten) had done nothing for me; filing in my underwear had been positively divine. Of course, it had cost me what dignity I'd once had in his eyes. Who knows, maybe he'd still give me a good recommendation. Punctual, friendly, willing to complete menial tasks in a state of undress for only fourteen bucks an hour.

Whatever. Tonight, I was going to laugh with my friends, get drunk, swim in the pool, dance, and do my best not to think or talk about ever being abducted. If people recognized me from my disappearance and tried to chat me up about it, I'd tell them to fuck off and get back to partying.

I took my time getting ready; if I was making a return to the scene, I wanted to look cute. My outfit was simplicity itself, a floral bikini with a teal sarong that came down to mid-thigh, some strappy sandals, and a pair of dangly earrings I'd borrowed from Vivian six months ago that I'd never gotten around to wearing. My hair, which I still hadn't gotten around to cutting since returning to the world, covered the earrings, but it made me feel better to have them there. A little something from a friend.

By the time I got cleaned up and did what I could with my water-resistant makeup collection, I felt pretty darn good. Sometimes, even such a small self makeover was the medicine that turned holy-shit-I-have-no-income into my-whole-life-is-my-own. My neighbor Gus was pulling into the parking lot as I pulled

out; I pretended not to see him. Now that I knew it wasn't the sex I was needing to feel right, there was no more use for him. Lucky him to get in on the action before I got wise to my own game, I guess.

The party was already in full swing by the time I got there, so much so that I wound up parking almost a block away. Actually, I realized after a moment, that was almost exactly where I'd parked that night I'd come here to try to apologize for being a bitch to them while I was triggered by that redneck I'd met at the country bar. They hadn't understood then. Instead, I'd wound up triggering myself again and wound up getting tag-teamed by the cops who'd come to tell me to piss off. That had been a high point in an otherwise low night.

The front door was open, and I walked right on in. My friends were nowhere to be seen, so I grabbed a bottle of beer – trying hard not to think about the last bottle of beer I'd handled – and made my way out back. The song blasting on a pair of rented speakers was changing right as I stepped out, and it was evidently a crowd-pleaser from the cheers that went up. It opened with a good beat. I shimmied around a bit as I took stock of the scene. The pool already had a dozen or so people splashing around. Christmas lights were strung up along the fence to provide dim illumination, along with a few tiki torches and a bug zapper hanging at one corner of the deck. Their bar, usually used as a place to deposit clothes and towels while swimming, was serving its intended function for once. A thin haze of cigarette smoke hung in the air, and I hadn't realized until that moment that I'd missed it.

It looked like a pleasant little party. I took stock of the party-goers. A few guys from Justin's work I recognized from other gatherings, their cousin Marco I'd let them set me up with once last year, the lady next door who always let me pet her puppy Nay-Nay if she was out, and–

“SASHA?!”

She swiveled in her bar stool to face me. “Harmony!”

I fainted.

A high school science teacher had once told me that matter is neither created nor destroyed. If I'd been paying more attention, it might have been less jarring to realize that somewhere out there, the clothes I'd been wearing when Master had abducted me still existed. My purse even, maybe, if I'd had that with me. I couldn't remember any more. But when Sasha asked me if we still had her belongings, I have to say, it threw me for a loop.

"I don't know, babe. Do you want me to ask Master?"

"Do... do you think I should?" She scrunched her eyebrows, frowning.

This look was something I'd seen a good deal of in our weeks of retraining. It was the frown that said she no longer trusted her own judgment and was looking for my input. It was strange, in a way. Even when I'd been free, I hadn't exactly been the sort of girl people turned to for advice. I flew by the seat of my pants most times, not weighing myself down with life's ponderous issues or the people who worried over them. Now, however, I finally had a reason to take someone else's problems seriously.

Master had told me to.

Sasha's moment of weakness had exposed what Master feared would be a fatal flaw in his new acquisition. The rest of us seldom spoke (or to the best of my knowledge, even thought) about our lives outside the ranch unless it was somehow useful for serving or pleasuring. This girl, however, had spoken of her education. Her hope that it might be waiting for her. Her curiosity about life after slavery, and what she might expect from it.

This, Master had told me, would not do. As one of her better friends here (to the extent that any of us were truly friends, competing for the prize of prizes as we were), and the one who'd first confronted her flaw, Master had tasked me with helping to correct her. She was being taken aside for more programming (or wizardry, or whatever Master used to enslave us), but at Master's urging, I took her under my wing. I found excuses to steer conversation in ways that would show me if she'd abandoned those vile, selfish thoughts about having a life of her own.

Sure enough, they persisted. I reported back to Master, expecting that Master would solve the problem with a wave of a commanding hand, but instead, Master told me to stick to her like white on rice and do whatever I could do to bring this wayward sheep back into the fold.

The bother of it would have been comical, had it not been Master's order. Sasha obeyed without question, studied and practiced as dutifully as any of us, possessed no qualms and in fact a good deal of enthusiasm when it came to pleasing our guests and our Master. Any man would be elated to have a woman so thoroughly devoted. Yet for Master, it was not enough. She had pledged her service, but not her soul. (Those were Master's words for it.)

When Master put it that way, I finally understood the affront. Withholding her soul meant giving Master less than Master deserved.

So I shadowed her. Master instructed her to follow my commands, even gave me control over her orgasms – a power previously only Master himself had ever demonstrated. Every time I saw her giving servitude her all, I rewarded her with hands and mouth and tongue, expertly honed. Yet still when I asked her what she'd been studying in college, a broad smile lit up her face as she blathered on about it. It was a dream that still brought her pleasure. Pleasure that should come only from Master.

So I pressed harder. I followed her day and night, doggedly inserting myself into every interaction. I abandoned subtlety and forced her to challenge her self image.

“How many degrees would a girl need to be allowed to fuck Master?” I'd asked.

“Um... none? I don't know. Master never asked about them.”

“Why is that, do you think?”

“Because Master doesn't care about what's in our brains?” She made that face, questioning if she'd said the thing I would have said.

“I don't know; Master sure seems to like what's in my brain. Just last week, Master fucked me twice in the same day. Do you know why?”

Her hand reached between her legs, unable to avoid touching herself at such a delicious thought. “No,” Sasha said in a small voice.

“Because in my brain, there's no books or teachers or ethics or any of that bullshit. There's only one thing. Tell me what that thing is, Sasha.”

“I... I don't know!” she whined.

“My absolute, unquestioning obedience and devotion to Master.”

“But... but I have that, too! Don't I?”

I pulled her soft little body into my lap, stroked her dark, silky hair. I let a couple minutes pass stroking her pussy, bringing her to the edge. She whimpered with need; I hadn't given her the go-ahead for days at that point. “Mm. Do you know what I'd do if Master told me I were free? The very first thing I'd do?”

She nuzzled her cheek against my bare breast. “What's that?”

I withdrew my fingers from her. “I don't know, because thoughts like that won't help me obey and please Master.”

A hundred little lessons like that followed. I'd lead her into a trap, then show her how she was thinking wrong – which was to say, thinking at all. Lesson after merciless lesson poured out of me, and from time to time I thanked Master for the opportunity to enhance my own servitude in the process.

“I think Master likes me better when I don't try to think. Thinking pinches my face around my eyes. It makes me look ugly, and ugly girls don't get fucked by Master.”

“Wrong, Sasha. The right outfit is the one that Master chooses for you.”

“If Master thought knowing things was important for us slaves, don’t you think we’d be given books or the internet?”

“Ugh, if Master saw you walking like that, no sway in your hips at all... what could have distracted you from looking your best for him? What were you *thinking* about that was more important than looking sexy for Master?”

“Stupid looks good on you, Sasha. Don’t you want to look silly and sexy and not smart and ugly?”

It didn’t even have to make sense. I used orgasms to reinforce my points, as well as a copious amount of teasing. Ridicule, even, but she hadn’t been fucked by Master in weeks, and by now she was gobbling up any suggestion that promised even a hint of being—

“Harmony?”

I blinked. I’d forgotten she was there. “I’m sorry, I was remembering how good Master’s cock tasted last night. It had just fucked Marissa, so it already tasted cummy.” I licked my lips. “What were we talking about again?”

She closed her eyes, plainly envious. “I was asking if you would ask Master if I could have my old stuff. I... I think I had my backpack on me when I was taken. A bunch of my textbooks.”

I frowned. “Oh, Sasha. How are you going to concentrate on being the perfect sex object if you’re distracted by all those books?”

“You’re right. I’m sorry. I just thought...”

“Thinking?” I tsked my tongue. “It’s like you’re trying to be disowned.”

That evening, I reported on her request. I was nervous; Master had charged me with such an important task, helping turn a human being into a fuck toy, and after almost two weeks, I was clearly failing. Still, there was no choice but to tell on her, and tell it truthfully. Master might occasionally punish the messenger, but it was nothing compared to what awaited those who tried to be deceitful.

Instead of rebuking me, however, Master chuckled and smiled softly. “I’ll have her things brought to your room. Give them to her. Tell me what she does.”

“Gladly, Master.” With that, I was permitted to resume my blowjob.

There was a parcel wrapped in a string waiting for me outside my room. I unwrapped it to find what I’d been promised. There was a pair of athletic shorts that would clearly be too big to show off even Sasha’s generously rounded booty, a baggy tie-dyed t-shirt and a green sports bra. It looked like she’d been taken at the gym, or maybe right outside it. The latter, I guessed, noting the purse and backpack. They were complete with all its original contents. Wallet, mints, feminine supplies, hair ties, paper, pens and pencils, and of course, textbooks. Everything but her cell phone.

I didn't understand what Master hoped to achieve by letting her have these things. Then again, true to my own lessons, I didn't need to understand unless Master wanted me to. I had only to obey.

I found Sasha in the dining room, finishing off a strawberry yogurt. She always ate with her spoon upside down. It was weirdly endearing, even if I was trying hard to see her as less than human to help with my task. She smiled as I approached, a smile which threatened to consume her entire face once she saw what I was carrying.

"You found it for me! Oh thank you, Harmony! Thank you thank you thank you!"

I frowned. "Master said to give it to you, so you should send that gratitude where it belongs. Remember, everything you have that's of any value came from Master."

"Oh I know! I know." She stood up suddenly, scooping up her things and sauntering – she didn't walk any more, always making sure to swing her hips like she was being filmed in slow-mo – out of the room. Curious, I followed, if only to find some way to deprive her of the joy of these things. She went straight downstairs, through the back hallway, past the slave quarters, and out the back door.

Sasha burned it. All of it. There was a bon fire pit, gas-powered, and my girl walked right up to it, twisted the valve and lit the pilot. It ignited in moments. Item by item, she tossed them unceremoniously on the flames, that same broad smile on her face. The naked slave girl threw her old clothes into the fire, then the items from her purse one by one. Then she unzipped the backpack. Sasha didn't even look at the titles as she incinerated them. There was no hesitation, no reminiscing. Only the crackles and hisses of the immolation of her past.

I put a hand on her wrist as she pulled the last book out. Expressive Typography In New Media, the cover read. 4th Edition. "Are you sure you don't want to save one? A little something to remember your old life by. Maybe even get a leg up on your retirement."

Sasha giggled. "I'm never going to retire, Harmony."

"Maybe Master wanted you to have those things."

She instantly released the book back into the backpack. "Oh, OK. Whatever you say."

"Do you think that's what Master wants, then?" I prompted.

"I don't know," she said, smiling vapidly. "I'm a good girl. Good girls don't think. Good girls obey. Right, Harmony?"

I smiled back, pulling the shorter girl's forehead to my lips and pressing a kiss upon it. "Right, Sasha. Go on and burn the rest of your things, and then we'll go tell Master you're his good girl again."

“If you say so. I obey.” She chucked the backpack into the fire as she walked away, and never so much as glanced back.

“Harmony? Harmony! Harmony, can you hear me? Her eyes are opening. Hey, I said *back off*, OK? Give her some air, for Christ’s sake!”

Justin’s voice. My vision began to refocus, and I saw his face as well. All blackness behind it. Oh. I was on the ground. That was the sky. I got it now. Why was I on the ground? I...

Oh GOD. I sat up too suddenly, and it took my friend’s hand on my back to keep me from falling back down. “Easy, Harm, easy. Don’t try to move too fast.”

There was a crowd of people looking at me. My friends. Acquaintances. Lots of strangers. And... there. There she was. Sasha, crouching nearby between Vivian and Miguel, smiling broadly at me. Was I hallucinating? Could anyone else see her? Was I crazier than I’d thought?

“Can you talk, hon?”

I nodded slowly. “Yeah. Yeah, I can talk.”

“Darn, so much for that,” he said, then squeezed my arm. “Just playin’.”

“Wh-what happened?” I asked.

“You fainted on us, girl,” Justin said. “Only for a few seconds, and luckily Sasha was there to catch you.”

My neck snapped back to her so fast the world swam a bit for a moment. Hannah’s firm hands gripped my shoulders, holding me in place. “Slow down, tiger. You’re going to be all right, but—” Someone ran up with a glass of water and a sugar cookie. “Ah, here. Eat, drink. Your blood sugar’s probably still a little wonky.”

I took her advice, but I couldn’t stop staring at my sister slave. What in the hell was going on? Before I could finish chewing and attempt to ask, Justin and Miguel were helping me to my feet, one brother under each arm. I didn’t think I needed the support, but I didn’t have any choice in the matter regardless. They hauled me inside, shouting stragglers out of the way, and planted me on the couch. In a flash, Viv and Hannah were on either side of me.

Sasha, I saw, had followed, and was still smiling like before. She was so beautiful. She had been in my memories, naturally, but seeing another woman in the flesh, a woman of the calibre meant for Master’s service... it was not something one saw often.

“Sasha? What... how...”

Miguel cut in. “You two already met? No need for introductions, then.”

“Of course we met, but *what is she doing here?*” In the background, the music started up again, followed quickly by the resuming of background chatter.

My friends looked between them. “Are... are you OK, sweetie? Maybe she hit her head after all, you guys,” said Vivian.

“I’m *fine*, but... she... This makes no sense!”

Miguel seated himself across from me on his coffee table. He took on a patient tone. “Sasha’s my girlfriend, Harm. I told you she was going to be here... remember?”

“You’re his *what?!?*” The question went directly to Sasha.

“I’m his girlfriend, Harmony. Miguel and I started dating while you were being held prisoner in the woods.”

There was an uncomfortable silence at her blunt statement. “But... you’re...” I took a deep breath. I was flustered, and I wasn’t going to get anywhere with flustered. I was already tired of being surrounded. “OK. I guess I was... Sorry. I tell you what, somebody bring me another glass of water, give me a minute to gather myself, and let’s get back to party mode, OK? Sorry for all the drama. I was actually hoping *not* to be the center of attention for once.”

“Good luck, wearing that outfit, Harm,” said Vivian with a giggle and a squeeze on the shoulder as she headed back outside. Justin hustled to get me my drink, and Miguel pulled Sasha away with a promise to make a better introduction in a bit. She didn’t resist, but her gaze lingered on me over her shoulder as she was lead to the back yard.

Hannah kissed my forehead. “You see the article yet, baby bear?”

I winced at the reminder. “Yeah. My principal showed it to me.”

“Ouch. Look, for what it’s worth, I told him not to, but he...” She pinched the bridge of her nose. “He’s not doing well. He’s angry at the world, and this was his way of hurting someone. And we’ve got all these legal bills piling up, and the girl’s parents are suing for her medical care...” She looked up at me. “Sorry. I know I’m venting to the wrong person.”

True. Pity for Matt was a long ways out of my reach right now. “I’m sorry, M... Hannah.” It felt weird calling her Mom with the situation her family was in. “I wish I could help. I did the best I could.”

“You did good.” She kissed my forehead and backed away with a faint smile. I knew she was fighting battles of her own, and that I was part of that. I nodded to her, a solitary gesture that forgave her for needing her distance from me. She nodded back.

It didn’t take long for Justin to feel assured that I was well enough to be allowed to walk around again. I quickly deflected a few guys who thought to use my fainting spell as a pretext to chat me up and made my way to the back yard. By the time I located Sasha, dancing with Miguel in a small crowd of people, her eyes were already locked on me. She wanted to talk to me every bit as much as I wanted to talk to her.

I casually undid the knot on the side of my sarong and let it drop to the pavement. Inwardly I drank in the attention of dozens of male gazes as I ambled in my bikini over to the diving board. Satisfying the male gaze simply never stopped feeling good.

I dove in. It was a warm summer night, but the pool water was still cool. I swam underwater to the shallow end, surfacing and sweeping my hair back. I hopped up on one of the floaties, closing my eyes and letting myself drift along. I could feel eyes on me,

but that was nothing new. Let them look. I'd come here to party but now I was only interested in talk. And with only one person.

Time passed. Music played. My closed eyes kept guys from approaching me, except one guy who gave up after I ignored his first three attempts to talk to me. Finally, Sasha came. I felt her before I saw her, an inelegant splash as her tiny curvy body entered the water beside me. She'd come in a cute little red dress, but that was now a small pile beside the pool. She was wearing some damn sexy black underwear as a swimsuit, clinging to a set of curves I'd envy if I were willing to lop six inches off my height to own them.

None of my other friends were wearing swimsuits (and were unlikely to try Sasha's approach); for now, I had her all to myself. She grabbed my floatie and steered me to the side of the pool without saying a word. I had to reassure myself it was really her. My hand stroked down her round grinning cheeks; she turned and kissed my fingers as they passed.

Our voices would be muted by the edge of the pool; I decided it was safe to talk. "Sasha. It's really you."

"It's me."

"I've thought about you so much the past few months. You and all the rest. When I was trapped in that cabin, all I had were dreams and memories most of the time for company, and—"

"Do you know where Master is?" she interjected softly.

My eyes widened. "Master?" I repeated. "Did you ask me where Master is?"

She nodded. "Yes. The two of you left one afternoon, and then you never came back. But you're alone. Do you know where Master is?"

I slipped off the floaty, steering it behind us to serve as an impediment to being approached and observed. "Sasha, darling... I wish I knew how to say this to you, but... Master is dead. We went rock-climbing, and Master wasn't wearing a harness, and... Master fell, and died right at my feet."

Her eyes welled up with tears; I had only a fraction of a second to clamp a hand over her mouth before she screamed. "No no no! Shhhh, Master would have wanted you to be quiet, Sasha. Quiet."

She suppressed the wail of despair she'd been a split second from releasing, but couldn't stop herself from collapsing against me and sobbing. I held her, stroking her hair gently. How could she not have known? Hadn't someone told her?

"I needed you so much, and you weren't there," she whimpered into my ear. I didn't know if she meant me or Master.

"I'm sorry, Sash. I'm so sorry," I murmured. "When Master died, I didn't know what to do. I just ran. Ran almost two thousand miles, as a matter of fact. Speaking of,

how did you find me? I don't believe for a second that your dating Miguel is a coincidence."

Slowly, she let go of me. "I had my phone set to alerts for your name. When I saw you'd gone missing, I flew out here straight away. I figured it'd be weird if some total stranger got involved in the search efforts, and I couldn't risk drawing attention to Master." She paused for a moment, and I could tell it was to stop herself from once more breaking into tears. "So I found the people who were spearheading the search efforts, and attached myself to one of them. Did... did I do good?"

I patted her hip. I hadn't realized until that moment that there was some part of me that missed having such heavenly, available flesh at my fingertips. "That's my good girl."

Her thighs clenched together beneath the water, and she sucked in a ragged breath. "Thank you."

"What about you? What about everyone else? What happened to you when we didn't come back?"

She wrinkled her nose. "It got pretty bad there, for a while. We didn't know what happened, but we knew we couldn't defy Master's orders by leaving, so we stayed and took care of guests. They didn't know how to trigger us, so we had to fake it. That sucked, too. But Gina took care of processing payments so we could keep earning for Master, and when we ran out of food, we got some guests to bring more.

"Only we didn't know how to pay the bills or anything, so after a while, the heat and the electricity got shut off. We were making do, but when they shut off the water, we sort of started to run out of options. Pretty soon, most of the guests stopped coming since we didn't have any water but the pool to bathe in, and that got really gross since the filter stopped working."

"Blech. I can imagine."

She splashed the water, as if to spite that other pool. "Finally, I guess somebody told the police or whatever, because some cops showed up to see what was going on. Even after we fucked them, they still made everybody leave! I fought as hard as I could to stop them, but then one of them used a taser on me and I woke up in a hospital."

I kissed her forehead. Bizarre as it was, I could imagine that instinct, fighting to cling to her enslavement. Fuck, I'd helped create that instinct in her. "You poor dear."

"From there, things got messy. Some of us disappeared. Vanessa fucked some of the hospital interns until one told us what happened to them. Mental hospitals, mostly, and Ana Maria who managed to escape. They found her before long, trying to hitchhike back to the ranch. But the smart slaves told me I had to pretend to be OK so that they'd let us go, so I did what they said."

There was heavy disdain in her voice at the term "smart slaves." Also my fault. "So what'd you do once you got out?"

“I followed the others. We stayed near the ranch, in case Master came back, but they boarded it up. We didn’t have any money or anything, so we got jobs stripping at this local club.” She giggled. “They fired all the old staff once they saw how lazy and selfish they were compared to us. Not as fuckable, either – not one of them worthy of enslavement.”

“We set a high bar, don’t we.” I offered a thin smile. “So is that where everybody is? Stripping out east?”

She shook her head. “We sort of drifted apart after the club got shut down for prostitution. We couldn’t help ourselves. It seemed so selfish not to offer to fuck these men when we could be saving up more money for when Master came back. Some of us hit the streets and kept at it, some of us moved away and I don’t know what happened. Went to look for Master somewhere else, I guess. We exchanged numbers, but that was at least a year ago. I know Nell was found dead in an alley. Probably killed by a guest, or whatever we’re supposed to call them now. Master really lost an asset there. She was one of our biggest earners, remember?”

Nell, with her curly red hair and a smile that lit up the room. Sasha said the news like it was an annoying happenstance. Nothing more troubling than a stubbed toe. “I remember.”

“What do we do now, Harmony? What do we do without Master?”

I sighed. “You got me, Sash. I guess now we can do whatever we want.” Once we figure out what that is.

“But Master said to do whatever you say. So I’ll do that. You know, in case you’re trying to trick me, or test my loyalty or something.”

I frowned. “Babe, I promise you, Master is dead. I can still *hear* it, that crunch, splat. Do you think Master would have let the entire harem wander off? You think Master would’ve had me working as a secretary and a car wash attendant?”

She giggled. “You’re too tall to be a good secretary. Subordinates should be in the shadows of their superiors. I bet you look sexy as hell bent over the hoods of those cars though, soaping them up, wringing out wash rags on yourself...”

It was strange to hear some of my own thoughts out of someone else’s mouth. “What I’m saying, Sasha, is you’re free now. Free to do whatever you want.”

The girl nodded. “OK. I want to keep serving Master.”

“Hon, no. You’re not comprehending me here. There is no Master. Not any more. You have to figure out what *you* want. For *you*. You used to talk about going back to school someday – you could do that. I mean, you could probably find a scholarship or something.” Or a sugar daddy.

“Master said to do what you say, so... if there’s really no more Master, then that’s what I’m supposed to do.” She bounced on the balls of her feet giddily. “Oh my *god*, you

have no idea how good it feels not to have to try to figure things out for myself any more! Thinking is so *stupid*.”

OK, so I know I should feel pretty disgusted. With the sentiment itself, with myself for helping hammer it into her, maybe even with a world that was so ready to embrace women who felt it. (I mean, if I want to pretend to be a feminist or something.) But mostly? I empathized. Hell, only a few hours ago I’d quit both of my jobs because I’d realized that being someone’s slave sounded immeasurably better than being someone’s employee.

I did not, however, have any interest in acquiring a sex slave of my own. “Sasha, I’m happy to help you get back on your feet if you want to stay out here. God knows I owe you that much, at least, for what I did to you.”

“To me? You mean for me. Remember how selfish I used to be?”

My dear Sasha, the girl whose seven years of studying literature had culminated in her being the most entertaining bunk mate in a harem. She’d never shared what she meant to do with her studies – teaching or writing books of her own or what – but I’d sure drilled that notion out of her head. Great, exactly what I was trying to escape. More responsibility. “What are your feelings towards Miguel?”

She shrugged. “He has a nice cock. Good body. Decent lay. Seven out of ten, maybe. I’ve gotten most of his surface sexual preferences down cold, but since I was pretending to be a normal girl, I haven’t had a chance to go in deep for the juicy stuff.”

I scowled. “No, I mean as a *person*. Do you like him? Care about him?”

She made that face again, the one that said she didn’t know and wouldn’t guess and needed me to decide for her. “Um, should I? I will if you want me to.”

Miguel was talking to a few friends at the bar. He saw me looking, and smiled over at us, though with a little quirk of his eyebrow as if to ask what I was doing talking alone with his girlfriend, someone he assumed I’d only met half an hour ago, and she in her underwear, the two of us practically tit to tit. (Tit to face, anyway. She was short.) I made myself smile back.

“Is he into you, would you say? I mean, maybe he hasn’t told you, but–”

“He’s not in love with me, but he’s happy with the physical aspects of our relationship. I’ve let him think I’m a wild child who’s becoming smitten with a solid, decent guy, maybe thinking of settling down herself. That appeals to his sensibilities as a nurturer and to his male ego, so I think he’s beginning to grow pretty fond of me. His affection level is definitely growing.”

It was purely a clinical analysis – exactly the way we were trained to evaluate our relationships with repeat guests. I laughed in spite of myself. “You sound pretty sure of yourself.”

“His kisses are romantic, and he’s very preoccupied with my enjoyment of our time together, which suggest he’s interested in me more than just physically. I have to use some regressive techniques to maintain the character, though.”

Old instincts translated that last bit for me. “Nothing wrong with some old-fashioned vanilla fucking, Sash.”

She shrugged. “Men can fuck me however they want.”

I sunk down to my knees. Sasha copied me, the water up to her chin. Down below, my hand slipped between her legs. So help me, I missed touching her. “Only men?”

“Mm. You too, of course, Harmony.” She smiled, perfectly content to sit and be fondled by me. I enjoyed myself doing just that, no more concealment than the nearby pool floatie to hide our play. Her whole body was trembling, like it always had when she got really excited. Our lips were inches apart; we could taste one another’s breath. Distantly some small part of me remembered this was my friend’s girlfriend – sort of – and that I was in his pool, and anyone opening their eyes underwater would have an easy time seeing what the two hotties in the corner of the shallow end were up to.

I went right at the clit. I knew Sasha’s ticks as well as she knew mine. A slow but firm pressure on the clit, stimulate clockwise, and...

Huh. “That always used to make you come so hard – that, or I’m rustier than I thought.”

“You didn’t give me permission. Master said only with permission.”

I blinked. Master had said that, but only for that brief window of training several years ago. “Master said you could come like normal again, Sasha. Don’t you remember that?”

She shook her head. “Normal is obedience. I only come with permission now.”

“Whose permission?”

“Master’s. Or yours.”

I frowned. “Sweetie, you haven’t seen either of us in years. Are you saying...” I swallowed. When I spoke, my voice was a whisper-volumed shriek. “*Have you not been able to get off since we left the ranch?*”

Sasha shrunk down, her face partially submerged. “I’m sorry, Harmony. I have. But only once. I was weak. A man was using me, and he was calling me all sorts of names, and being very demanding, and... I came, but only that once. But not since. I promised myself I’d be a good girl, so Master would take me back. Oh *please* don’t tell on me, Harmony! I’ll do anything – I’ll do your chores for a month. I’ll eat you out five times every day for the rest of the year! Anything, but don’t make me look worse in front of Master than I already do!”

She submerged herself again. A bizarre, tortured wail faintly resonated from underwater.

Holy shit. Sasha was still living her life like she was a sex slave. Looking for men to please, to ravage her body and relieve her of the responsibility of control. Here she was on what looked to be the verge of a full-on psychotic episode. The girl was fucking *nuts*. She—

She was *me*.

Sasha resurfaced at last with a gasp. “Come for me, Sasha,” I murmured. She gasped again, limbs flailing, eyes bulging, as sweet relief flooded through her. She collapsed against me, moaning in a way that was sure to start drawing attention, if her underwater antics hadn’t already. If the two of us, hand-selected fuck toys in bikinis and underwear hadn’t to begin with. I submerged myself, concealing her noises from the world.

“We’re going to fix you, sweetie,” I told her once we’d surfaced.

“Fix me? Harmony, we’re finally back together! This is the best I’ve felt in *years!*”

Chapter Ten

I played it cool for the rest of the party. Danced to some good songs, joined in some chicken fighting in the pool, did a few body shots. I only got three questions if I was that woman who'd disappeared, and only one gave me a vibe like he might have read that day's press. Not too bad. It would've been a solid party if I hadn't had that knot in my stomach over what was to follow.

All right, I admit it, I considered not telling him. Sasha could certainly go on playing the part of Miguel's girlfriend; heaven knows she had plenty of experience at seeming to be what men wanted her to be. Still, he was my friend, and he didn't deserve to be strung along like that. Especially not by me. Maybe he hadn't quite saved me, but he'd reminded me I had people who cared about me. That thought was probably all that had kept me from giving in to Jordan and Matt weeks earlier. From winding up right back where Sasha and the others had wound up, trying to recapture what it had been like to feel *right* again. Even if right was so clearly wrong.

It was going on one in the morning before the crowd had cleared out. (They would've gone sooner, but Justin took over Hannah's usual role of making sure people were sober enough to drive. She had bigger things on her own mind.) Finally it was down to me, Miguel, Justin, Vivian, Hannah, and Sasha. Over the course of the evening, my surreptitious surveillance of her social interactions suggested she'd developed a decent rapport with my friends. I supposed she'd had all summer to ingratiate herself, and if there was one thing my sister slaves – *former* sister slaves – and I were good at, it was that.

That, and sex. We were really good at sex.

The six of us all pitched in with the cleanup, tossing empty cups and dirty napkins in the trash, stowing the outdoor stuff in the garage, a little spot cleaning for the things that shouldn't wait until morning. Vivian let out a yawn and was the first to say she was ready to call it quits, but I raised my voice to reach everyone in the house.

"Um, could I talk to you all? I kind of have something to say. Or something to talk about. Or... I dunno, I'm a little tipsy and I'm not using words right, but can we pow-wow?"

One by one, everybody made their way to the living room. I sat down in the arm chair. The boys took the couch with Sasha on the end beside Miguel, and Vivian and Hannah sat on the brick fireplace. Everyone was looking at me with concern.

"Feeling OK, sweetie?" Vivian asked solicitously.

"Yeah, you're sure you're all right to drive yourself home? I don't mind," offered Justin.

“Yeah, I’m fine. Well, no, I’m not fine.” I took a long breath. “I know I don’t do a lot of big announcements and stuff, you guys, but I needed to get some things off my chest. Believe it or not, I actually try to *avoid* drama. Not doing so well at that lately, I guess.”

There was a small chuckle. “There’s the understatement of the year,” said Miguel.

“Yeah, probably. So I first wanted to thank you for all being so awesome with me about... well, everything. I know I’ve always been kind of a closed book, and now you all know why. I wish to god I’d told you all before things got to where they wound up, and I’ll never forgive myself for the pain I’ve caused by keeping my secrets to myself.” I looked to Hannah, but her eyes were on the floor. “Especially you, mama bear.”

Her jaw twisted back and forth for a moment, but all she did was briefly look up and nod. Miguel pulled us out of the awkward silence. “You don’t need to apologize to us. The things you’ve been through... we can’t even imagine. You’re apologizing to us for having to hear about it, but you had to actually live through it, baby bear.”

“It wasn’t always so bad,” I said softly.

Justin leaned over and squeezed my hand. “Harm, you don’t have to put on a brave face about this. Part of getting through this is being able to admit you were hurt.”

“No, you’re right. Parts of it were bad. Part of the bad part is that it doesn’t usually *feel* bad, even though I know it was. Is. Like, I know I should be mad at the man who took me away from my family and my home and turned me into *this*. I know it’s bad that I’m so fucked in the head I can’t be trusted around people. But instead, the voice inside that should be screaming in outrage is purring like a kitten.” Nobody seemed to know what to say to that. “I quit both my jobs today.”

“You did *what?*” snapped Vivian, jaw dropping.

I forced myself not to look at Hannah as I explained. “I guess Matt told a reporter about me. About the brainwashing stuff and everything. The article came out this morning, but principal at school already read it, then went right on ahead and tested the waters.”

“Wait,” said Miguel, “your boss forced you to have sex with him? Is that what you’re saying?”

I shook my head. “We didn’t have sex. Quite. May as well have, I guess. And he didn’t force me, either. Something in me decided before I even went into the room, before I even knew that he knew, that I was going to be his pet secretary today.”

I could see Sasha’s nipples hardening through her top. She’d actually graduated from that same school a ways back, where she’d had Headley as an English teacher and still nursed a small crush. Aside from Hannah, who still wasn’t looking back at me, everyone else looked worried to flabbergasted. “You don’t have to do that any more, Harm,” Justin insisted. “Whatever he said to pressure you, you don’t have to let men treat you that way.”

“No.” My voice was firm, and it silenced the others as they started chiming in. “I’m trying to help you guys understand. I didn’t perform for him because he wanted me to, or anything he did or said. I did it because there’s something inside my head that *needs* that. I did it. And when I trigger myself like I did today, there’s no stopping it. Viv, you saw it. Remember?”

“Yeah, I remember all right.” She looked like she wanted to push back; no doubt the idea that someone’s free will could be subverted, turned into a force that suppressed its own self was uncomfortable. But she’d seen me in Dr. Kovacs office that day, and at her apartment after.

She looked to the group. “I went with her to her shrink, that hypnotherapist guy she told us about at the hospital? The guy swung a cheesy little crystal, did his little shtick, and next thing I know, Harmony’s... not Harmony any more. She started literally begging us to let her do stuff for us. Or to us, or whatever. Nothing we said made her back down.”

Sasha rubbed her thighs together slowly. Miguel fidgeted in his seat. Justin was still gay, so he was safe from my unintentional wiles.

“See what I’m saying? It’s not anything anyone is doing to me any more. I’m doing it to myself. I let my boss treat me like a piece of raw meat this afternoon, and it felt *amazing*. It’s the best I’ve felt in weeks. Maybe months.”

“Oh wow,” said Sasha. I knew she was wowed by being treated like meat, but to them it no doubt sounded like she was wowed by how weird my whole story was.

“But like I was saying, that’s only part of me. There’s also parts of me that doesn’t want to be the office mattress, and that don’t want to hook up with gross assholes like that guy at the country bar. Parts that know it’s dangerous to go around playing sex-toy-for-a-day with total strangers. Look at what happened to me this summer, for crying out loud.”

Hannah looked up at the allusion to her son, a haunted quality in her eyes. I moved across the room and sat next to her, putting my arm around her shoulders. “Those were *not* bad kids. They did a bad thing, yeah, but they did it because I got triggered, and when I was like that, all I wanted to do was stay that way. I was the one who talked them into it. Not *me* I, but that piece of me in my head that’s still living on Master’s ranch, waiting for the next big spender to come turn me into their fantasy. Matt and Jordan were only trying to have some fun doing what they thought that I, deep down, wanted to do. And the person responsible for all this has been dead for over two years, so there’s nobody to blame for this fucking shitstorm of hurt.”

Hannah started to cry somewhere during all that. Justin rushed over some tissues, and soon everyone but Sasha was huddled around her trying to hug her at once, and pretty soon most of the rest of us were crying, too. For some time, we held one another and were a blubbing mess of telling each other we loved each other, that we

were there for each other no matter what. Lord only knew how I'd found these people, or what I'd done to deserve them. Maybe I didn't.

The clock struck two, and somehow it was that sound that finally jarred us out of all this. Everybody moved back to their own seat, though Vivian was still rubbing Hannah's back as she sniffled what I hoped would be the last of her tears.

"So... I have something else I need to tell everyone, and... this is going to be hard for some of you to hear, but I can't not say it."

"Oh god, he got you pregnant," whispered Hannah. Her face went ashen.

"No! I have an IUD, mama bear. No no no, it's not about Matt." OK, one last hug. "No, actually, this is mostly about you, Miguel."

He put a hand to his chest. "Me?" Clearly he hadn't expected to be singled out in all this.

"So, I told you guys how Master had a whole ranch of girls like me. More than two dozen of us, by the end. Master enjoyed variety, at least to the extent that variety was profitable. Now, when Master died, we were out on a little mini-vacation, just me and Master."

I'd never thought of myself as a favorite – I don't think Master truly had favorites – but I knew I'd been beside myself to have been chosen to take a long weekend alone with Master. Some girls never got to leave, or better yet, spend that kind of time alone with Master. Still, I could see Sasha's face contort with envy. Everyone else looked more to be in a state of containing their ill ease at my repeated use of the term "master."

"So like I told you before, Master went rock-climbing without a safety harness. Or maybe it just didn't work. Either way, Master fell right in front of me and died. There was still enough of my old self inside to realize that I wasn't anyone's slave any more. So I hitch-hiked to the opposite coast, found a spot in a halfway house, started trying to put my life back together."

"Thankfully you met some awesome people," said Vivian, grinning softly.

"Damn straight," I said seriously.

Miguel cut in. "We knew all that already. I mean, maybe not the rock climbing part, but the basics. What's this have to do with me?"

I nodded. "I'm getting to it. So you know my story, or at least the PG-13 version."

Justin muttered to his brother, "That was the PG-13 version?"

I laughed. "But I only just found out that the rest of the girls – what I called my sister slaves – they weren't so lucky. They didn't know what happened to me and Master, so they stayed there at the ranch, waiting for us. It got pretty ugly pretty soon. We weren't allowed to use the phone, try to get help, et cetera, so little by little everything went to hell. No one to order groceries, power and water shut off, stuff like that. Someone finally realized these women's situation – or at least that something awful was happening – and forced help on them."

“Forced? Why forced? You’d think they’d be stoked to have somebody throw them a bone,” said Hannah.

“Well you have to see things from their perspective.” I paused. “Which is crazy, so maybe we could try a metaphor. OK, so like, imagine you’re on a road trip to see your beloved grandmother. You know your exact destination, easy trip, guaranteed to have fresh-baked cookies waiting when you get there.”

(My own grandmother had been a total bitch who’d once seen me in shorts and a tank top and told me I dressed like I was auditioning for the part of hooker #2 in community theater, and when I’d asked why #2, she’d said because I’d never be #1 at anything. But she’d never liked the woman her son had married, either, and yes, that’s how she referred to my mother.)

I went on. “Only while you’re making your happy little trip, somebody drops a bomb on grandma’s house. In the blink of an eye, you have no destination. You’re just out in the world with nowhere to go and a bunch of gifts you were bringing her that you don’t even know who to give them to any more and all you want is to see your grandma and taste those cookies. But there’s no more grandma, no more cookies, and no more destination.”

Sasha was smiling at me approvingly, though I couldn’t say whether it was because I’d encapsulated her experience well, or because she was proud of my efforts to channel her skills as a storyteller. That half of a masters degree in lit of hers had been one of my favorite traits of Sasha. I wondered what was left of it now that her Master had disappeared on her and deprivation had fried what was left of her brain.

“OK, so grandma’s gone,” said Vivian. “How do you even know all this, by the way? Are you still in touch with them? Do you guys have like your own support group or something?”

“Um, well...” I barely kept myself from glancing at Sasha. “As it so happens, when I went missing this summer, you guys raised such a big ruckus that one of them who’d still been wondering what ever happened to me heard about it. And she came out here to try to find me, hoping to find Master.”

I didn’t miss Justin’s perceptive eyes dart to Sasha, to his brother, then back to me. “And... I wanted to introduce her to you guys, if that’s OK. You have to remember, once you meet her, that she’s been through as much as I have, and in some ways more. It’s not her fault if she’s... a little different.”

“If you’re trying to set me up with her, you’re a little late,” said Miguel, still remembering this story was about him but failing to guess at how. “I’m spoken for.”

The room wasn’t hard to read; everybody else had deduced it already but him. My face projected all the love and empathy I could to Miguel. “It... may not be as late as you think it is.”

His head tilted slightly. “What? What do you mean, it...” He suddenly jerked his head to the side to look at the woman he’d been calling his girlfriend. “No. No way. Tell me she’s messing with me.”

Sasha took his hands gently. “Of course she’s messing with you, babe.” She giggled with so much innocence that surely no one who was actually a secret brainwashed sex slave in search of someone to control her could muster. “The closest I’ve ever come to calling a guy master was my boss at this shoe store I worked at in college who made us all call him Chief.” Another giggle, somehow even more innocent.

Miguel heaved a sigh of relief. “Jesus, Harmony, don’t do that. Fucking freaked me out there for a second.”

A man had told Sasha what to do, and she’d done it. And convincingly. Two could play that game. “Sasha, honey, stand up.”

Everyone fell silently as she instantly did so, still smiling disarmingly.

“There’s a tiny scar on her left butt cheek,” I said, walking over to her and, with a gentle pressure on her back, bent her over. Her dress wasn’t quite short enough to flash her panties, but only just. “She got it when she was triggered for Insolent Schoolgirl, and someone had paid Master enough to be allowed to use a yardstick. For the punishments, you see. He got a little carried away; he had to pay double next time, and he didn’t get use the stick on me.”

“What are you doing?!” sputtered Justin as I reached under her dress and pulled down her underwear. Naturally, Sasha didn’t react in the least.

“You didn’t believe me, so I’m showing you.” I pulled up the back of her dress, taking some minor care not to flash her whole crotch to the room, only exposing the scar on the left cheek of her tanned backside. It was thin and only about half an inch long, but it was easy for the boys to see. For only a moment, I pitied Justin for being gay. Her ass was too incredible not to want to fuck it.

“You... you could’ve seen that when she got in the pool earlier,” Miguel said weakly. Obviously no one was buying that, though. Not even him.

“Sasha, on the count of three, let’s both say the name of the man who gave you your scar. One, two, three. Graham Spencer.”

“Vice Principal Spankasaurus,” she said simultaneously, then giggled at her misstep. “Sorry, I meant Graham Spencer. That’s what he told me to call him for the visit.”

“Uh... I guess that counts,” Vivian said awkwardly.

I patted Sasha’s butt as a reward. “Good girl, Sasha.”

“Can... can I come?” she asked in a small voice.

Jaws dropped further. “Not right now, hon. Put your underwear back on and sit down, OK?”

“OK.”

“Sasha, you– she– I–” Miguel trailed off, gaping at the woman next to him as she sat back down and crossed her legs, smiling pleasantly as if nothing had happened.

“You forgot we,” Vivian quipped dryly. “How long have you known about this, Harm?”

I glanced at the clock. “About... four hours?”

“The fainting,” said Justin. I nodded at him.

“How could you fucking *lie* to someone like that, Sasha? I thought you cared about me!”

I answered for her; it would probably sound slightly less cold coming from someone who wasn't so firmly in Master's thrall. “It's not her fault, Miguel. I know it's a sucky thing. I know. That's why I had to tell you as soon as I could. But remember, a bad...” I faltered. “Someone you'd call a bad man did a real number on her. Master made me help – that's why she responds to me like that, so I could help train her. She's a normal person who went through something that made her do this. That could be me, if things had gone slightly differently.”

“Miguel likes 'em little and spicy,” Vivian pointed out, still trying to add levity. “Not sure you'd have cracked that nut.”

“There but for the grace of God go I,” said Sasha at the same time. We all looked at her. “John Bradford. Sixteenth century reformer and advocate for religious liberty. Burned at the stake for his troubles.”

I smiled at the glimpse of my old friend, spouting quotes like we were dummies for not knowing them. Maybe she was still in there under all those traumas and abuses somewhere. “Uh, right. Miguel, I don't know what happens from here, and I can't tell anyone what to do–”

“Except me!” she chirped.

“–but try to go easy on her. If she has any hope of getting back to something resembling her old life, she'll need a lot of love and help. Just like I did.” I paused. “Do.”

Sasha frowned. “You can't make me go back to what I was. Master said so. Master said that was bad to want that. I'm a good girl.”

I sighed. “You're fine for tonight, sweetie.”

That seemed to mollify her. In the looming silence, it was plain that everyone else was a mix of shock, fatigue, and overwrought emotions. “So where do we go from here?” said Hannah finally. “Do we just sit back and watch you two – pardon my French – whore yourselves out? Do we let it happen and ignore it? I don't know if I can handle that.”

“I don't know. Tonight I just wanted to talk things through with you guys. To tell you about Sasha, yeah, but to get things out in the open. I've had too many secrets for too long.”

Vivian snorted. “Secrets? Babe, when was the last time you met somebody who *didn’t* know you’re a whacked out ho?”

“All right, so maybe I suck at keeping secrets,” I laughed. “Look, I’m not deciding anything tonight, but... don’t give up on me, you guys. Please.”

Vivian and Hannah headed out; Justin excused himself and went to bed. Miguel, Sasha and I were left in the living room, though right as I was standing up to excuse myself, she stopped me. “Do I stay here then, Harmony?”

I turned back, though looked to Miguel. “I... I don’t know if you’re going to want to talk things through with her. With everything that was done to her, she’s not... well, normal. She was my and large a real sweetheart at the ranch, but I think all the confusion and pain of the abandonment hollowed her out a bit.”

“Yeah, I guess... I don’t know. God, I don’t understand any of this. Like, I hear the words, but it’s a lot to process.”

I nodded. “Do you want me to take her with me? I can keep her out of your hair while you wrap your mind around things.” If Sasha minded being talked about like she wasn’t standing right there, it’d be the first time all night. “Or... I mean, if you’d rather she stay, I’m sure she’d be happy to try to make it up to you. If you follow me.”

He frowned, though his eyes did linger on her for a moment. “I can’t take advantage of someone like that. I’d be no better than that Hannah’s asshole kid.”

“It’s not taking advantage of her if she wants to do it.” I shrugged.

“It is if someone else made her want to do it.”

“If I have sex with him, can I come, Harmony?” Sasha asked in an eager voice, heedless of his hesitation. She clutched at his arm with both hands, caressing his muscles. He scooted away. After a moment. “I’ll be so good to him, I promise. No more holding back.”

“Holding back?” he repeated incredulously. “Sasha, you’re the most insatiable woman I’ve ever been with.”

“I meant holding back skill-wise. I was playing dumb so you wouldn’t realize I’m a sex toy.” She giggled. “Well... *some* holding back appetite-wise. Master helped make us be good and horny *all* the time. Right, Harm?”

Miguel looked back at me, and I didn’t miss a moment’s glance at my crotch, as if it might glow when aroused or something. “That’s right, Sash.”

Miguel folded his arms. “You can’t be turned on *all* the time. That’s impossible.”

“Oh yeah?” I gave him a challenging look. “Sasha, take your panties back off and spread your legs.”

He was still stammering by the time she’d finished complying. There it was, Sasha’s glistening cunt, right there between a pair of smooth copper-toned thighs. I honestly didn’t know her ethnicity, if she was one of those Italian white girls with the dark complexion or if she was Latina or multiracial or what. Growing up in the white bread suburbs had kept me pretty weak about recognizing such things. Either way, that pussy was as pretty and pink as I’d remembered it.

“See? Totally wet! Wanna feel?” She offered. When he declined, she ran a manicured finger along her slit, then held it out to him. “Here, smell.”

I guess that was tempting enough to make him check. “That’s... yeah.” He remembered suddenly I was watching, and leaned away from the extended digit. “So really, *all* the time...?”

I smiled on one side of my mouth. “You want to smell me too?” I took a few steps back toward him.

“Uh, I’ll take your word for it.”

The two of them sat there, Sasha with a wide grin and wider thighs, Miguel with a lowering jaw and rising cock. I allowed him a long stare before I quietly reminded him I was there. “So... I’ll take that to mean you’d like me to leave her here.”

“Huh?” He looked back to me. “Oh. Uh, yeah. I mean, no, you can, you know. Take her.”

“Mmmm, I don’t care which one of you, just *somebody* take me!” Her eyes closed as she started playing with herself right in front of us.

“I should really leave her,” I said. Poor guy got caught in the crossfire of all this mess, the least he deserved was a full-on night with a sex slave. Hell, if he wanted to keep dating her, it wouldn’t be the worst thing for her. If I’d had a boyfriend, one who understood my needs, maybe I wouldn’t have gone around throwing myself at strangers. Maybe. It was impossible to imagine a boyfriend being able to satisfy me like Master had.

“I... it’s not... right,” he managed at length, distracted by the sight of Sasha fondling one of those massive tits of hers through her dress.

“Well it’s not exactly wrong, either,” I said. I sat back down in the arm chair. “Sasha, sweetie, come here.”

Without even being invited, she plopped right down in my lap, one leg draped over the armrest and the other on the floor so she could keep right on diddling herself. Damn, she felt good in my arms. Time to prove to Miguel that there was no reason to hold back. Sasha and I were making out the next moment, and in the one after, my hand joined hers between her legs.

“I missed you,” she managed between kisses in a half moan, half whisper. “Sooooo much.”

I showed her that I missed her too by popping one of her heaving boobs out of her neckline and taking the nipple into my mouth. Sasha’s always had crazy sensitive nipples. I’ve seen her come while giving a man a tit fuck from the friction of her nipples against his skin. And I knew just how to work on her, every little trick of the tongue to make her squirm. But then her hand was slipping inside one cup of my bikini top and showing me she knew her way around my body with equal intimacy.

It had been so long since I’d been able to play with another exquisitely trained sex slave like myself that I was surprised and impressed with Sasha’s dexterity. She hadn’t lost her edge, even a little. In one artfully executed flurry of maneuvers, she spun a leg

over my head and rose to her knees, balanced on the arms of the chair; she simultaneously unclasped my bikini with one hand while removing the neck strap of her dress with the other. The whole thing happened in less than a second, and then we were face to face, mouth to mouth, tit to tit. Looked like Sasha had learned some new tricks of her own.

“Harmony?”

I flipped up the back of her dress, bringing it from barely concealing her ass to not even trying. My slender fingers sunk deep into the soft flesh of her buttocks, pulling her tighter against me as I scooted forward. Sasha’s body knew what that meant, and her curvy little legs wrapped themselves around my waist.

“Harmony.”

Her whole body rocked against mine as she ground her hips against me, purring at the soft pressure of her engorged clit as it raked itself across the smooth expanse of my belly. My face was smothered between the twin titans on her chest as she raised herself up to remove the chopsticks in my hair to let it flow down around my shoulders. Master had often told me how much he enjoyed the sight of me letting my hair down; consequently, the act had become its own strange little thrill for me. The sort of gesture only someone who’d been there with me in the trenches would remember.

“*Harmony!*”

Miguel’s voice finally got my attention. A single word was all it took to stop Sasha in her tracks. I tried to look bashful as I re-fastened my top and bade my sister slave to return to the couch. I didn’t bother having her cover herself. Nothing there he hadn’t seen before. Knowing Sasha, it was nothing he hadn’t seen by the mid-point of their first date.

“Sorry – got a little carried away, I guess. Old habits.”

“You two are... fuck, it’s like you’re your own walking talking soft core porno,” my friend said with a shake of his head, as if trying to snap out of the moment.

I snorted. “It was only soft core because you interrupted us before we could get going.”

“Stupid me, huh.”

I stepped over and bent down to kiss his cheek. “I’m going to leave her here. Sasha, if he tells you you can come, you can.” I’d have told her she could come whenever she wanted, but I figured that even if I could reverse that programming so easily, we might only wind up turning her into a masturbation factory. Like I’d been in the hospital.

“Thank you, Harmony!”

As I turned to leave, Miguel gently took one hand. “You’re, um... you’re sure you don’t want to stay too?”

For one tantalizing moment, I considered it. Miguel was a good-looking guy, and he also happened to be one of the people I cared for most in the world. After his attempted gallant rescue this summer, maybe even most of all. He'd flirted with me pretty hard when we'd first met, but I'd known I was too fucked in the head to have a boyfriend like a normal girl and had gently told him I was committed to staying single. Gentleman that he was, he didn't try to pursue me as a booty call. I'd thought about making that push more than a few times myself, but my friendships were basically the one thing in my life I was ironclad committed to not fuck up. But tonight, with Sasha, maybe just this once...?

Like I said, for a moment.

"If you really want to make her happy, tell her what you want and let her do it. She's a people pleaser – we all are. And if it were me, I'd want to be squeeze every drop of pleasure out of you that I could before I let you go." I permitted myself a little extra unnecessary sway of the hips on my way out, and I was driving one-handed the whole way home.

Chapter Eleven

It was a long weekend. With a little nudging from me, Miguel agreed not to break up with Sasha for the time being. There were some mumbled comments and significant looks from the rest of the crew, but they accepted that even if she'd been through an ordeal, Sasha was a person as much as they were, and a little love and understanding might go a long way to helping her have a normal life again. Miguel blushed at the teasing – “If this relationship works out, do you get her an engagement ring or a leather collar?” Vivian asked – but I knew full well that Sasha would make up for any momentary discomfort later. Justin even agreed that she already seemed more at ease around them than she'd been all summer now that the truth was out.

I got some alone time with my old sister slave. She provided me more depth to the account she'd given me in the pool the night before, what had become of everyone. So far as she knew, anyway. When I'd gained my freedom, I'd never given much thought to the fate of the rest. Not that I considered myself an especially thoughtless person, but I'd been afraid that if I'd gone back, I'd never escape again. After what my family had done to me, I wasn't inclined to be especially trusting. Besides, it had been obvious to me that they'd never believe me that Master was truly dead. There had been safeguards in place to keep us from being freed; all of us had had guests try to entice us into coming home with them countless times. If being able to leave and resume normal life was as simple as someone claiming we no longer had a master, we'd have left long since.

And yes, we fucked. That came first, actually. We barely managed to close the door to my apartment before we were on one another, ripping off clothes and unleashing hands and mouths on erogenous zones in a frenzy. How I'd missed her! Any of my sister slaves, really. She reminded me of moves I'd nearly forgotten – playing against a real professional did wonders to up my game. It wasn't as exciting as being triggered, but even if she couldn't match that psychological peak, my bits are as susceptible to skillful stimulation as anyone's. Probably more so.

Then we talked, then fucked some more, and so on through the evening. I didn't even bother trying to make a dent in her inclination to submit to me; my own psyche needed fixing before I could spare the energy to salvage someone else's. Eventually I ordered her to go home. Not that she had a home. She'd been staying in a hotel on the east side of town since arriving here to help look for me. I simply couldn't get to sleep knowing I had someone so enjoyable to play with right there breathing the same air as me.

Sunday, I had no choice to stock up on groceries, during which I tried my hardest to trigger myself with any of the men meandering through the aisles. No such luck. Then I was back home, and could finally do some soul-searching. No more daydreaming, no

more reminiscing, no more lazy four-hour masturbation sessions or games of What If. Time to take Dr. Kovacs' advice seriously and decide what it was I wanted to become.

“I want to be a slave,” I announced firmly in his office the next day. “I’ve thought about it a lot, and it’s the only thing that’s brought me any happiness or relief. I think I’ve known since before I ever came into your office all those months ago. Freedom is making me miserable. I want to be a slave again.”

My hypnotherapist did a passing job of keeping his disappointment off of his face, but I was well-trained at looking for the signs of it. “You’re sure?” he asked softly. “Harmony, you’ve been abducted and had your freedom stripped from you – and not once, but twice. After all that, are you certain you want to go back and let your master win?”

“Win? It’s not a game, David. It’s not about someone winning or losing. It’s about me trying to be happy, or fulfilled, or whatever it is we’re supposed to feel in life. I haven’t felt that as a free woman, and that hole inside me has to be what’s responsible for all these subconscious outbursts. Maybe I didn’t choose to become a living sex toy, but it’s what I am now. And I’m tired of fighting it.”

“Harmony, you are so much more than that. Not that you have to be that at all! We’ve only been trying for a few weeks to undo all that was done to you. It may well be we’re only a few more attempts from a break-through.”

“I don’t want to break through this.” To say nothing of the fact that only last week he’d been insisting that this could take years to reverse.

He pushed his glasses up his nose. “You said just now that you’re tired of fighting this. That means that you are indeed fighting back. The mere fact that you’re now capable of attempting resistance... well, from what you’ve shown me, I find that tremendously encouraging that there can be a future for you where you live an independent life. Are you really going to give that up because it’s hard? Anything in life worth doing always is.”

“Come on, don’t feed me that motivational poster crap.” I grinned, leaning forward to give him a playful poke in the chest. His sweater was amazingly soft. “Besides, I think becoming a slave again isn’t going to be any easier, if I’m being honest.”

Dr. Kovacs stroked his chin. “How do you mean?”

“Think about it. What is the one thing that all slaves have?”

“Frustrated therapists?”

I laughed. “Masters, David. We have masters. To be a slave again, I’ll need to find someone to control me. I can’t keep denying myself that so that I wind up running all over town giving myself to strangers. Otherwise it won’t be long before I wind up with another situation like with Matt and Jordan, some bright fellow with a keen ear who remembers the trigger word and decides he can’t get enough.”

The office was quiet for a long moment save for the soft sound of a summer rain pattering on the windows. I loved the rain. Before Master, it had always been something that had brought me calm. During my enslavement, I’d learned I looked really sexy wet

and naked in the outdoors. After, now... I suppose I'd learned to enjoy it for both reasons.

"Did you have someone in mind?" he asked at last. His voice was distant, tired.

I shook my head. "No. I wasn't sure how to go about it. In the past, masters have done more of the finding me than the other way around. I thought about some of the men I know. But Miguel's a friend, and the rest would never let him do it even if he wanted to. Even if I could get him to become the kind of person who owns someone. I thought quite a lot about you, actually." I ventured a little smile.

His eyes widened. "Me?! Harmony, I..."

"But you can't either." I flashed an affectionate smile. "You're married, for one, and you obviously don't have any interest in taking advantage of me. To which I can only say your wife must be one hell of a woman."

"It takes all kinds," he said dryly, twisting at his wedding ring.

"Anyway, I haven't been able to come up with anything. I thought about Principal Headley, or maybe one of the other men who was the recipient of one of my triggers, but I don't think I'd like being owned by any of them. None of them feel right."

"Have you considered that it doesn't feel right because somewhere deep inside, you don't want to be a sex slave again?"

“Uh, you want me to what?” Gus asked. We were in bed at my place; I’d texted him and he’d come right over. If I was going to tell Dr. Kovacs my feelings tomorrow, I wanted to be certain about them.

“Come on, a little role play. Indulge me.” I rolled over on my side, keenly aware of the way every curve down the length of my body was displayed for him. My neighbor had not proven even a little hard to seduce, but I was asking more of him now than I had before. That I was wearing a pair of men’s boxers and a form-fitting tank top was not incidental; I was showing him a regular girl. Not some freak. Simply a normal girl who, just this once, had kind of a weird ask.

“You really don’t have to try to spice things up for me, you know. I’m totally cool just, you know, hookin’ up.”

“I know you are, but I wanna spice it up for me.” It was a meta-honest statement; I wanted to spice it up for me so I could spice it up for him, which would spice things up for me.

“I dunno... I’ve never done that kind of kinky shit before. Not sure I’d know how to be what you want.”

“The point, Gus, is for me to be what you want.”

“You already are what I want, baby.” Gus leaned in to kiss me, but this once I put my hand on his chest after a moment and withdrew.

“Come on, just try it for me? Pleeese? I promise I’ll make it fun for you.”

He frowned for a moment at being rebuffed. Gus was a pretty good-looking guy, and was actually nicer than I’d thought he was at first. Probably a long-engrained instinct that men who fucked me were pigs. (Master excluded, of course.) Maybe he wasn’t nice nice, but nicer than a lot of guys were to their booty calls. I doubted he often got to the point of being in a girl’s bed only to be turned away.

“All right,” he said at last. “How does this work? What do I do – just tell you to go down on me or something?”

“If you want,” I said. It needed, having to explain to a man how to use me. It was too much like being in charge. “I’ll do whatever you want. But, if you want to make this fun for me, don’t jump right into things. Just, I dunno, treat me like a brand new toy you got for your birthday. Play with me.”

“If you were my toy, I’d start by unwrapping you,” Gus said. He really did have a nice smile. At the moment I wanted to be leered at rather than flirted with, but I reminded myself that wasn’t his fault.

“Are you saying you’d like me to take off my clothes, sir?” I’d considered calling him master instead, but I thought that might be too much for his first time. He was already proving more hesitant than I’d hoped.

“Sir?” He chuckled. “You’re a hoot. You know that?”

“Thank you, sir.” I pushed myself up into a kneeling position, my weighty breasts looming over his head. I looked at him expectantly. It took him a long moment before he realized that was all I was going to do without prompting.

“Oh, OK. So yeah, go ahead and take your clothes off, baby.”

“Yes sir.” I didn’t rush, didn’t dawdle. I obeyed. Off went my top. I stood beside the bed, and there, off went the boxers. “My underwear too, sir?”

He looked me over, taking in my simple black bra and panties. “You can keep the panties. For now.”

“Understood, sir.” When I removed my bra, it was nothing showy; the simplest motions that would part my breasts from their covering. Standing before my neighbor in nothing but my panties, I stood with my arms at my side and waited.

He admired me for a bit, and seemed to feel a bit more blatant than usual in his ogling. He’d seen me naked several times since we’d started fooling around after I got home from the hospital, but I’d never stood around posing for him like this before. I kept my face neutral, calmly submitting to his inspection and awaiting the opportunity to fulfill his next desire, whatever it would be.

As it turned out, he didn’t know what it was either. “Sorry, baby,” he said at last. “I don’t know how to go about this. I feel kinda weird telling you what to do.”

I gave him a plaintive smile. “There’s no wrong answer, Gus. Promise. Nothing you ask me to do could possibly offend me, or do anything but make me do it and be happy.”

He winced. “Don’t you think the whole slave girl thing is a little, I dunno, misogynist?”

“Not if I want you to do it, goofball.” I playfully swatted his bicep. “Here, we’ll practice. Say, ‘Harmony, you are one hot slut.’”

He arched an eyebrow, but my playful demeanor sold him that it was safe. “All right. Harmony, you are one seriously hot little slut.”

With practiced vocal cords, the tiniest whimper that could still be recognized unmistakably for what it was rose up from my throat, cut off by a sudden, brief moan of arousal. “Here. Feel how wet that just made me.” I guided his hands between my legs, confirming just that. This exact moment was why I’d worn this pair of panties; they didn’t show my perpetual wetness as readily.

“Wow. You’re not kidding.”

“See? Now tell me to shake my titties for you.”

He barked a single laugh. “Shake your titties? All right, sure. Shake those titties for me, sweet thing!”

When we’d hooked up before, it had been simply that. Hooking up. Two people using one another for less lonely orgasms. I’d never really performed for him. Until that moment, as my shoulders started rolling and sending the two small mountains on

my chest jiggling wildly, he'd probably thought I was merely the hottie he sometimes saw in the parking lot. But with perfect rhythm, tits wobbling mere inches out of his reach, I gave my first demonstration that I might be more practiced in the bedroom than I'd let on.

I could see him growing hard even through his shorts.

"OK, wow. You can stop, Harm. Before you throw your back out with those things."

I didn't laugh at his joke. Time to move him past the light-hearted. "Now tell me to titty-fuck you like the little fucking whore that I am."

He blinked. I was pushing it; if he didn't go for it here, odds are, he wouldn't go for it period. I held my breath in anticipation, until at last...

"Titty-fuck me," he said in his soft, deep voice.

Rather than moving, I eyed him hard. At length he pried his gaze away from my chest and took notice. He knew what he needed to do. After another moment, he summoned the courage.

"Titty-fuck me, like a little fucking whore."

"I'd be delighted to, sir."

The bottle of strawberry-scented lubricant in my nightstand had my boobs ready for their task in seconds, and it was I who wound up having to wait for him as he practically tore off his clothes. He scooted to the edge of my bed, where I promptly wrapped my tits around his cock, allowing myself a smile at the thunder of his pulse reverberating in the canyon of my cleavage.

"Do you prefer it like this?" I asked, striking a slow tandem style, lifting my right breast while lowering my left, pressing in firmly for the greatest friction allowable.

"Oh fuck yes," Gus groaned.

I finished my question. "Or like this?" I put my whole body into it, lifting my torso with legs and keeping my boobs in place. It was a more uniform friction and, most of my sister slaves had agreed, more enjoyable visual. A hot, big-titted slut bouncing her whole body, sweating with exertion to pleasure you in such a non-reciprocal manner. The first was more fluid, constant motion and stimulation, and tended to make men cum a good deal faster, but that wasn't always what men were after.

"Jesus Christ, you know multiple ways to tit-fuck," Gus said, collapsing on his back. I pressed in a little harder to make sure his dick didn't escape my mammary fuck tunnel. "I don't care how you do it, baby, just do it."

In an instant, I stopped, and he was sitting back up in the next. "What the hell?"

"You have to tell me how to pleasure you, sir. I want to do it right."

He glared a moment at having this responsibility thrust on him, but relented at the slightest friction against my tits. If he thought having to tell me to do things was a pain, he could only imagine how I felt having to tell him to tell me to do things. "Show me again."

I repeated the two samples, and even threw in a third. For this one, I climbed up on the bed and straddled him, my pussy pointed at his face almost like we were sixty-nining. This was a tit-fuck, though, so I was beyond his tongue's reach. His cock throbbing in the open air, I lowered my dangling boobs around it. Their sheer weight was enough to keep them close enough together that both sides were touching him, though since I was now using my hands to support myself, touching was all they did. I rocked my body front to back, and they grazed against him over and over, rippling and softly slapping at his shaft. The intensity took a massive hit, but for prolonging the experience, and for giving a man something to do with his hands, it was a big step up.

"This one. Holy shit, this one. That's so fucking hot, Harmony, you have no idea. Do you mind if I...?"

"Of course you can spank me, sir. My ass is yours for anything you want."

Now, I knew he'd only been asking to touch my pussy. Gus had been fairly considerate, for a booty call, and had a solid twenty-first century grasp of seeking consent. Instead, I'd given him free reign to step up his kink game, then immediately followed up with a tacit offer of anal sex. I wanted him drunk on his power over me. I wanted him to feel like he really did own my ass. Because I wanted to feel it myself.

Two male hands seized hold of the waistband of my panties over my hips and peeled them down over my hips. I was pleased to see he didn't hesitate to fondle my cheeks, even if he didn't pounce on either of my offers. That was fine. The simple act of using me without asking was an improvement.

"Why don't you show me how," he said after a moment, withdrawing his hands. I moaned in delight. "As you wish, sir."

There are two primary means of spanking. One is for good girls who've behaved badly; one is for bad girls to show them how good they've been. I gave myself a mixture of both. One brutally hard slap, nearly as hard as I could manage, to leave a red handprint as an after-image. Then a sweet, playful swat that more than anything seemed to make the flesh on my backside ripple tantalizingly. Then another punishment, then another for showmanship. I didn't strictly alternate them; I simply wanted him to see I was fine with any treatment, should he wish to take over my spanking.

He did not. I told myself that was OK. It wasn't about being spanked; it was about having him know he could spank me. Maybe my tit-fuck was being too effective; it was only a few more minutes of my efforts, that gliding of ponderous tit-flesh on eagerly twitching cock, before he came.

“Holy fuck. I can’t believe that... hang on, I think I can get it up again.”

“Tell me how I can help, sir.”

“I can manage. You don’t need to do a thing.”

I sighed. “You know, Gus, why don’t we call it a night.”

“Part of me doesn’t. But being independent isn’t working for me, David. Just because I have the body of a Disney princess doesn’t mean there’s some version of this where I get my fairy tale ending.”

“Hmm.” It was a decidedly unconvinced hmm. “For now, let’s posit that this is the best course of action. Where do you propose to go about finding a master? Post an ad on Craigslist? I don’t doubt there’s plenty of men who would find you attractive, but finding one suited to your interests... that’s another matter altogether.” He didn’t know the half of it.

I held up a hand. “You’re already getting ahead of yourself though, David. That’s one of the hurdles, but it’s not the first one. After all, what I need is to find a man I can fully give myself to, which I can’t do that until I can get all this crap with my triggers under control. As things stand, it’d be like giving someone a feral barn cat. It might look cute, but it’s pretty much guaranteed to wreck your house if you let it in.”

“Harmony... I keep telling you that hypnosis may take months, even years to unlock all that. Maybe it never will.” I tried not to roll my eyes as he reverted to the truth. “I’ve become fairly convinced that whatever this man did to you, it was something far more durable and complex than the talents of any hypnotist I’ve ever seen, or even heard of.”

“Well if you can’t turn it off, and you can’t help me figure out how to turn it on, what the hell are we even doing here?” I snapped, taking to my feet and looming over him. “You don’t want me to be a sex slave, but then you go right on and say you don’t know how to free me. Master was able to reach inside my head and remake me into a perfect slave, but you’re sitting there telling me that you can’t even manage a little tweak! What’s the point of all this if you can’t actually even *try* to move me from 90% slave to a hundred?”

He regarded me with that classic Kovacs patience; the man was used to me acting up in his office, and after a moment, I mumbled an apology and sat back down.

“Analogies are never perfect, but they can sometimes help frame an issue. Imagine that your brain was a machine. A very complex machine, multifunction and autonomous, with all sorts of gears and wires and motors and monitors making it run smoothly.”

“Not *that* smoothly,” I grumbled.

“Precisely my point,” he continued. “It *used to be* smooth. Then a master tinkerer rummaged around in it and reprogrammed it altogether. All sorts of parts aren’t where they’re supposed to be or doing what they’re meant to do. It’s not *broken*, per se, but it’s become a very different sort of machine with a very different function.”

“I’ll say.”

“So then you come into my office and ask me, a simple worker at a corner repair shop, to crack open this elaborate thing, the likes of which I’ve never seen, then ask me

to reprogram it again into something else still, something which I've also never seen, and want me to do it using a convenient little shortcut like cutting the blue wire."

"Cut whatever wire you want if it'll make the thing run right!"

"Don't try to pursue it – I know it's a flawed analogy. But think of it like this. Even this man originally took months to program you, with a regimen in which he presumably knew precisely what to do. He may have even had advanced tools, chemicals, who knows, to aid him."

"Yeah, I suppose."

"But you want me to somehow find something buried so deep in your subconscious that you aren't even aware of its existence, and with nothing more to go on than 'someone else did it, why can't you?'"

"I didn't say I thought it would be easy, but you asked me to think about what I wanted and I did, goddammit! I felt like I was finally having a breakthrough – can a girl get a little credit? Do you know what this decision means to me?"

Dr. Kovacs nodded, but he wasn't agreeing; he was humoring my outburst. "And your loved ones? Have you thought at all what this means for them?"

“You can’t be serious, Harmony!” Miguel exclaimed over the speakerphone. I could hear his brother cursing, could picture him stalking around the room throwing up his hands in dismay. “What was done to you was monstrous! You can’t really be thinking of giving in, can you?”

“It’s not giving in,” I said calmly. “It’s taking what I want. If you want to look at what Master did to me as abuse, then saying that learning to cope with it and adjust my life around it is the same as if I’d been crippled in an accident and ‘given in’ to using a wheelchair.”

“Look at Sasha,” Justin retorted quickly. “Is that what you want for yourself? Everything about her a shell to let her keep embracing this... this Stockholm Syndrome that man inflicted on you.”

“I don’t know what my life will look like, but I can’t keep going through the motions like I have been. I’ve changed, and I need to deal with it before I go and lose my mind all together. You don’t have to support me—”

“I don’t.”

“We don’t.”

“—but I want you to trust me that I’m doing what I think is best for me.”

“How can you think being a slave is best for you?”

“Yeah, we sort of fought a war over that, didn’t we?”

I snorted. “This isn’t the same thing and you both know it. Come on, you guys. This is already basically who I am. I’m just not trying to hide from it any more. And I know it might make things weird, but I hope you’ll keep being there for me as long as you can. And I hope that’s forever.”

A long silence. “Will your new owner allow friend dates?”

“Oh my god, that is so fucking bad-ass!”

I couldn't help but laugh at Vivian's response. “Bad-ass? How is this bad-ass?”

“Are you serious? I'm going to have a friend who's an honest-to-god fuck machine. That's so fucking cool.”

“Wow. Um, thanks, I guess. The guys didn't take the news anywhere near as well.”

“Yeah, what do you expect from the fuckin' patriarchy. Trained that women taking charge of their sexuality can't be good unless it's the vanilla cookie cutter missionary-style-for-procreation bullshit their daddy promised them.”

“Well, I definitely don't have a cookie cutter sexuality. I guess I don't need to tell you that, huh.”

She laughed at the memory of the time I'd been triggered to obey her. “No shit, babe. So what happens next? Are you holding tryouts for ownership, or what?”

“Why, you interested?”

“If I could afford to feed your ass, maybe.” We giggled together. I knew she was kidding, but part of me was still a little disappointed. Vivian as my mistress would have been easier on everyone, I think.

“Hi, Hannah, it’s Harmony. Again. Look, it’s cool that you hung up on me. I know Matt’s going to jail for trying to get me to do this, and I know this is fucked up. But you know he did more than that, too. Please don’t make this all about me. I’m sorry, and I love you, and–”

BEEP

“There’s a new master?! Who?! Can I meet him? Oh PLEASE Harmony, you have to take me to him, introduce me, let me show him I’m worthy of his custody. I’ll do anything for him. You’ll tell him that, won’t you? Here, let me snap a pic of my tits for him. You know how guys lose it over my tits. They’re his if he wants them. Oh god I hope he wants them. Do you think I should do more? I could write him a letter of introduction, explain my experience, my desire to be owned and controlled and to obey without ever judging or thinking or hesitating or... Harmony? Are you still there?”

I sighed. “I gotta go, Sasha.”

“I talked to them,” I assured Dr. Kovacs. “Some were cooler with it than others, you might say.”

“Have you considered that pursuing this course of action might place you in danger?”

“David, for the past four months I’ve been subconsciously enslaving myself one day at a time to a series of strangers at random. You don’t think *that*, trying to resist this, was dangerous? I’m surprised it took as long for someone to try to keep me as it did.”

“There could even be legal ramifications. Putting yourself out there like this, giving away control to someone... it could easily land you in hot water for solicitation, prostitution, indecent exposure. You could even...”

Dr. Kovacs went on trying to talk me out of it. He didn’t say much I hadn’t thought already. Some of it was valid, though his suggestion that I might never be able to self-actualize struck me as rather condescending. As if I couldn’t find happiness submitting to someone simply because it wasn’t an instinct he possessed. I really couldn’t have found a man much more opposite in his outlook than Master. Where Master had seen me as an object for self-gratification, Dr. Kovacs saw me as an innocent to be rescued. Master would never have wasted breath trying to counsel me through my problems, no more than Dr. Kovacs would snidely order me to crawl across the room and suck his dick until he came all over my face. Master took what Master wanted from the world and, well, mastered it. Dr. Kovacs lived a guarded life of please and thank-you’s and looking both ways and double-checking grocery lists.

A sudden, powerful shiver ran through my body.

Lists.

“Wait,” I said. Whatever argument he’d been making died on his lips. He frowned, but right then I didn’t care. “You know stuff about memory, right?”

“I have a PhD in psychiatry, so yes,” he said, a bit stuffier than usual. Men did like to preen. “Why?”

“How many pieces of information, would you say, a person can remember about someone? Like, in detail.”

“That’s a broad question. It would depend on the nature of their relationship – intimate connections will allow for better recall. That is, you could remember more about a parent than you could about someone you chatted with on the bus. Even so, it would vary by individual, the importance and means of introducing the information, whether or not there was an attempt to reinforce it...”

“OK, so, like, you care about your patients, right? I know you’re paid to care, but you’re a good man, David, and I know you actually care. Right?”

“I wouldn’t be entertaining this insanity if I didn’t, Harmony.” Still, being acknowledged seemed to mollify him.

“Right. So say somebody quizzed you on your patients. You had to go down your list of patients and list stuff like hair and eye color, phobias, middle names, inside jokes, things you spoke with them about in their first session, in the previous session, names of the people they’d talked about, what jewelry they had on... could you pass it?”

He frowned. “You’d probably have to curve the quiz quite a bit, or employ a very generous definition of ‘pass.’ Why do you ask? I promise, I’m giving you my full attention.”

“No, but...” I stood up, pacing back and forth. This was nuts. It couldn’t be this simple. Could it? “Earlier, you reminded me that I have dozens of triggers. At least thirty-five – Sasha and I tried to list them all the other day – but it’s totally possible some are so similar I couldn’t tell them apart when they were issued.”

“OK, but...”

“And the triggers, whatever they are, they have to be something unusual, don’t they? So they wouldn’t come up in casual conversation. Like if it was ‘Mary had a little lamb,’ I’d turn into a slut every time I walked by a preschool. So it’s got to be something weird, like... zebra gently understudy, or O-R-V-28 Delta, or... you get me, right?”

“That makes sense, I think. Where are you going with this?”

“And Master owned over twenty slaves in the time I was there, and each of us with our own triggers. I guess so that we didn’t need to be separated from one another to employ distinct ones. So Master could say ‘abracadabra’ and trigger me, but not do it to every other slave in earshot in the process.”

“So you’re thinking Sasha might know some of your trigger phrases? If she was ever present when they were spoken, that is.”

“No, not that.” I stopped in front of the window, looking out into the city, through the buildings to an unseen horizon. “I was blocked from consciously hearing my sister slaves’ triggers, same as I was blocked from hearing my own. I only know that, whatever they were, they didn’t work on me and mine didn’t work on them.”

“Then what are you getting at?”

I pivoted to face him. “My point is, there were literally hundreds of trigger words to remember. How could anyone keep that many gibberish phrases or number sequences or whatever they are straight in their head?”

Dr. Kovacs sat back. “They couldn’t. It would be like trying to memorize a page from the phone book.”

“Exactly!” I strided across the room and put my hands on his shoulders. “Master might be more than a man in my eyes, but Master was still a human being with human limitations. What if... what if there was some kind of, I dunno, a manual? A manual for Master’s harem?”

Chapter Twelve

When I was a kid, every few summers our family would take a trip to visit my Uncle Oliver. Uncle Oliver was kind of a weird dude. He was a hippie born too late and a bit of a recluse, living in the woods in the upper peninsula of Michigan, right near the southern shore of Lake Superior. He had an oil-powered generator for electricity, and his nearest neighbor was, as he put it, well outside screaming distance. (A phrasing that had fueled teenage me's paranoia about strange men, but evidently not enough.)

I probably complained a lot at the time, lacking perspective in the way children too used to getting their way do. No cell service, no TV, no friends. Nothing to do but go fishing and hiking, play board games with the family, listen to my dad and his brother play their guitars while my mom sang along, watch everybody drinking wine by the fire pit. Uncle Oliver even talked them into letting me drink some with them when I was fifteen, the last time I'd been there.

Now, most of a decade later, the road to Uncle Oliver's cabin was so vivid in my memory that I could paint it. The way the dusty road wound down the steep hill, the red and black alternating shingles on his rooftop. The vastness of the great lake in the distance, as if he lived at the very end of the world. I'd only seen it three or four times in my whole life, those handful of times we'd visited, but there was something so unusual, dream-like, about that journey, that it was as if the final leg was through a portal to some other world.

So it was with the path leading up to Master's ranch. Visible from a good distance as a broad three-story red brick building atop a large hill, it managed to simultaneously convey an air of both the civilized and the rustic. When I'd first been allowed to explore the grounds after waking up there, I'd thought that, like Uncle Oliver, it was deep in the woods. It was only a year or so later, when I was first allowed to accompany Master on a weekend in Vegas, that I realized Master had simply planted a great quantity of trees around the property for privacy. In fact, from the outside, the dense thicket of oak trees surrounding the ranch actually called attention to the place rather than conceal it. The rest of the area was open grassland on soft hills, and only minutes from the highway. The foliage had kept that noise from reaching the ranch, too, lending an air of total isolation to its occupants.

I could remember watching *Cast Away* when I was little. I'd been sort of bored by it at the time, too cool to sit around watching movies with my family. Nonetheless I'd paid enough attention to have some memory of it. One scene in particular had stuck with me, the one near the end when his raft sails away from the island and he realizes how small it all was, how his whole world of those years of confinement was actually

insignificant compared to the vastness of the ocean that had hidden it away. My first time leaving the ranch had been almost exactly like that.

No, that's not quite right. It had been in the dark hours of the morning, then. I hadn't been able to see much of anything, and with Master in the driver's seat beside me, I didn't want to appear too curious, lest I give the impression I was interested in the world beyond the home Master had given me. Only on the way back, the afternoon sun sinking behind the tree line, had I glimpsed it fully. My little everywhere, truly, had been nowhere at all.

My heart was pounding in my chest as Miguel's SUV turned into the driveway, a euphemistic name for the meandering, half-mile path that lead up to the ranch. My friend gave me yet another firm squeeze on the shoulder, and from the back seat, Vivian did the same. Sasha, meanwhile, had her face plastered against the window like she expected to see Master's face watching for her out a window. Hannah hadn't come, as her son's first visitation was this weekend. I'd asked Justin to be with her for that, though he'd assured me he'd intended to anyway. It was an odd relief to know I wasn't absorbing all of everyone's capacity for concern.

"Last chance to change your mind," Miguel said. "That goes for you, too, Sash."

"Don't turn back!" Her reflexive outburst startled even her, and a hand moved to cover her mouth as she resumed craning her neck this way and that.

"I'm OK," I reassured him. I only seemed calmer. On the inside, the anxiety of it all was twisting my guts into knots. It was the closest thing to fear I'd felt since the day I'd first been taken here, ripped from my old life into Master's little paradise.

It was a bit surreal, hearing actual pop music on the car's radio. Master had explained to me all about the superior caliber of the vehicle's stereo system, how expensive it had been, how it had taken a favor with some muckety-muck at Sony to have it upgraded and installed just so. I wondered which one of my sister slaves had earned him that favor. Maybe me, for all I knew. Typically we weren't privy to the negotiations with our guests, but Master would often treat us by letting us know what we'd accomplished. As for the investment in improved car audio, I couldn't tell the difference between that and the radio in my dad's old Corolla, but far be it from me to think I knew better than Master.

Part of me felt guilty for listening to the tune playing. I was here to be sucking Master's cock while Master drove us home, after all, and attention spent on absorbing this brief glimpse into modern entertainment was attention that wasn't going to Master's blowjob. We'd actually been pulled over a couple hours ago; I'd been so mortified to have inconvenienced Master that I begged to be allowed to use my body to get us out of the ticket. However, I'd been told that my body was worth far too much to be squandered getting out of a mere ticket. Besides, Master had told me, if it became any sort of serious legal issue, far better to use me to seduce a judge, who might have more potential benefit down the road. Master was so wise, Master knew how to use me better than I knew my own self.

So I had the opportunity to listen to music. Sucking cock had become a reflex action for me, a series of a dozen or so flicks of the tongue and contortions of the lips. Enough steps to the routine that men wouldn't realize I was following one, anyway. Master never received such routine service, but even so, with my head wedged in between the steering wheel and his belly, there was only so much I could do. After all, much as I might have wished otherwise, giving road head wasn't actually that complex. The whole point was to provide pleasure without distracting overmuch from driving.

It seemed Master had similar tastes in stations to my own – that is, in another life, when the internet or my ipod or my phone or my the car radio brought me all the music I could want – and it was easy to try to listen too hard. We sang sometimes at the ranch with a broad range of skill. From girls like me who just liked to belt out lyrics, to a handful who'd been in choir in school, to Vanessa, who'd gotten a major scholarship for her vocals. She mostly sang opera type stuff – not my cup of tea at all – but the absence of any any exposure to the outside world made even that sounded pretty wonderful.

“Here we are, home sweet home,” Master said. “Finish me now.”

The music ceased to exist for me. In a rush, I threw myself at his pleasure centers; I'd long ago learned what made Master come – as useful for avoiding premature eruptions as for causing the mature sort. I swallowed it all down, moaning

at the flavor of the nectar. Early on I'd wondered if Master had found a way to flavor cum, but eventually realized it was one more wonderful part of the way he'd remade my brain to better serve. I loved it for exactly what it was.

We'd thrown out the napkins from a stop for fast food a while back, so I used my hair to dry Master's cock. Master liked that, little affects that highlighted that we were objects, not people, and that our bodies were in every sense vessels for Master's pleasure and convenience. That done, I finally allowed myself to sit up and take in the scenery, the copse on the hill that had been my entire universe until this past weekend. Home. Sweet indeed.

Seeing the outside world had been strange and upsetting. It felt deviant, pretending to be nothing more than lap candy, a doting girlfriend. It was a place I no longer had or wanted any part in. A world without slaves and masters, one with rules that no longer made any sense. Here, in Master's home, I was what I was born to be. Beautiful, dutiful Harmony Reed.

The signs of disuse were evident even before we got close to the house. Many of the posts of the barbed wire fence that lined the drive were tilted at odd angles, some fallen over altogether. Though it was the end of summer, dead leaves from previous autumns littered the pavement. Indeed, as we rounded the next-to-last bend, we had to park a ways down the lane because a fallen tree had blocked our passage.

It took repeated admonitions to Sasha to prohibit her from sprinting ahead. As it was, I was walking faster than was probably dignified, my eagerness too great to fully conceal. Not that there was much use in being dignified, least of all in this place. As I made my way up the hill, the house came into view, and with it, a flood of memories that were anything but dignified.

“I thought you said it was a ranch. This thing has three stories,” Vivian said, hustling to keep up behind us former residents.

“Not that kind of ranch, Viv. The kind for, you know, raising animals and stuff. Except in this case, we were the animals.”

“Oh. Yeesh.” She grimaced.

“It’s seen better days,” Miguel commented.

Indeed it had. The lawn was overgrown, more than knee-high, with more dead leaves matted into the grass all over. The house itself was boarded up, each window covered by a plank, as was the front door. The detached garage was wide open, with only one of Master’s six cars in evidence. Even that had the front windows smashed in and the hood popped with clear signs of parts missing, which complemented the status of the hubcaps. It seemed unlikely the interior had fared any better.

Viv gave a long whistle at the sight of the luxury car. “So much for your inheritance.”

“Pretty sure I was *part* of the inheritance,” I said dryly.

“I remember when Master bought that thing,” commented Sasha. “Master said Master didn’t need something super flashy, so Master just bought a cozy luxury car. It set Master back eighty-five grand.”

“Ah, the good old days. You know, there were times Sasha and I earned that back for Master in a week.”

Viv arched an eyebrow, looking between us. “You two were raking in 40k a *week*?”

Sasha giggled. “No, she meant to say you *or* I. And not every week, either. She’s trying to brag.”

“I’m in the wrong fucking business.”

Miguel caught up with us, sparing only a momentary glance for the scavenged automobile. “Did you guys see this graffiti?”

The three of us followed him to the east side of the house. Sure enough, there on the side was a wide expanse of... numbers. In different colors, some spread over the tops

of others. One had made numbers five feet high that dominated the scene, but it was fairly easy to make out the others beneath it.

“What the...” Vivian frowned.

“Our phone numbers,” said Sasha, as if it were perfectly normal. “If Master ever came back, we wanted to make sure we were locatable so we could be collected. A bunch of us came out here after we got out of the hospital. That’s mine, there.”

Miguel looked where she pointed. “Wow. Yeah, it sure is. You still use that phone?”

She nodded. “I didn’t want to be hard to find. In case.”

“Who did this huge one?”

“Not sure. It wasn’t there when we left. Maybe one of the slaves who got separated from the rest of us came back later on her own.”

My phone clicked as it saved pictures of the display. “Faster than adding them to my contacts,” I explained. I tried not to think about the statuses of the girls on the ends of those numbers. Hopefully the rest were doing better than Sasha. Hopefully. Poor Nell.

“Let’s see if we can find a way in,” Sasha said, tearing our eyes away from the wall.

“All right, but you stay behind me,” said Miguel. “I know we’re a ways off the grid, but that doesn’t mean nobody noticed a huge vacant house and decided to squat.”

My friend had reminded of this half a dozen times on the two-day drive out here; I hadn’t realized how much his near-miss at finding me in the cabin had bruised his protective male sensibilities. Still, he was right. We followed behind him to the back of the ranch, where Sasha and I both halted as soon as we rounded the corner.

“What? What do you see?” demanded Vivian, reaching in her purse for her taser. She’d wanted to bring a gun, but Miguel had insisted that someone with her total lack of training would be more of a danger to us than anyone else. I didn’t blame her, though. Nothing like finding out your friend was twice a victim of kidnapping to make a girl paranoid.

“Chill, Viv – just... memories. OK?” I rubbed her back. “Only memories.”

Shopping for swimsuits as a teenager had mostly been about finding something cute, and then finding ample excuses to wear the thing and make my girl friends crazy jealous. My boobs started growing in way back in fifth grade, but by the dawn of high school it was already apparent I was going to have a lot more going on up there than most of my classmates. I didn't have to worry about locating one that would make me look hot; genetics had done their part in that already, and copious attention to diet, exercise, good grooming and skin care had taken care of the rest. All I really wanted was something fun that wasn't too slutty.

Bikini wear at the ranch bore no resemblance. Function wasn't in it. If our nipples popped out, that was a happy accident, perhaps even a design feature. If the bottoms were so brief that they showed our pubic hair creeping out the top, it was one more handy reminder to be properly trimmed or waxed (according to Master's preference for each individual). Even if any objective observer, a guest who wandered out behind the building for a smoke break, would describe us as a troop of whores who'd clearly wear anything, no matter how skimpy or uncomfortable, if it gained us male attention... well, we'd have thanked him and asked us which of us he wanted to fuck that day. And then done it.

Wardrobe selection was one of the very few freedoms my sister slaves and I had around the ranch. We knew – or at least, we learned – what would look good on us, complement our figures, make our eyes pop, go with our accessories, and so on. We'd periodically be given catalogues, and Master explicitly told us price was no object. Our wardrobes were no doubt expensive, but any one of us pulled in enough in an average week to cover clothing expenses for the year. Plus, it was Master's money we were spending, so we were conservative in our estimations of our needs anyway.

So we pored through the pages, zealously seeking outfits that would play to our repeat guests preferred triggers, and of course to please Master himself. As one of the younger slaves, I'd had a whole closet full of a variety of outfits to look like the perfect slutty schoolgirl, slutty stepdaughter, slutty delivery girl, and so forth. I knew my niche.

For the moment, this particular summer day had thus far shown only a few guests to our doors, and Master was once more occupied in Master's private quarters, the one area of the house where we were explicitly forbidden to go. This usually meant a new slave was being trained, which Master had confirmed was no exception in this case.

New slave girls always brought out the tribalism in us. New girls meant a change in the harem dynamic, and we were all happy with things how they were. More often than not, the new girls turned out fine – nothing more binding than a shared sense of purpose. They would eventually make for new avenues for amusement, but in the early stages, they were a chore. Hell, I remembered my first few weeks here,

when I'd been so stupid that I'd thought strutting around the house naked would be more likely to get me into Master's bed.

Nudity, I would soon learn, was a natural thing. We slaves were anything but natural – whorish, perverse parodies of women. Clothing was one way we could announce this up front, visually remind anyone who saw us.

Today, at the pool, this fact was on full display. More than a dozen women, all agonizingly gorgeous in the most conventional ways, all wearing the sorts of swimsuits normally reserved for pornography or the most risqué of Instagram models, the flimsiest of strings holding on scraps of spandex, lycra, mesh and netting. The sheer quantity of flesh on display was tantalizing even to us girls who'd originally been straight, but its purpose was also to withhold some shred of skin that could not be seen. To inspire the urge to tear away the scant remnants of modesty we clothed ourselves in.

Some of us were splashing around in the pool with me, some tanning, some smearing lotion on those tanning. Trixie was grilling lunch for us, the only one wearing more than a swimsuit – an apron with “Kiss the cook” stitched into the front above a bright red pair of woman's lips. (She wore nothing else, of course.)

The glass door in the back of the house slid open, and one by one our eyes were arrested by the sight of what was clearly the new girl. She looked to be around my age, or maybe a few years older, though there was still a hint of baby fat on her that was 10% cute and 90% curves. The seemingly natural blonde was wearing the most conservative swimsuit of the lot of us, a white bikini covered in little black hearts. The bottoms were tied on at the sides, and so showed her entire hips. The girl's bust was positively enormous, the sort that was more aptly called titties than breasts. They bulged at the constraints of the top, looking to be sized for a DD girl like me rather than the mid-alphabet range she was sporting.

The only other thing she was wearing were a pair of thick black glasses and an expression of profound mortification. Her entire body was blushing beet red.

“Damn, check out the tits on that thing,” Gina said loudly enough for all of us, and the girl, to hear.

“She's gonna give you a run for your money, Callie.”

“Turn around, new girl, let's see what you got left in the trunk.”

“Bet Master gets at least fifty grand from the guest who gets to break her in. Guests love fresh meat.”

“Bah, they just get off tormenting the bimbos who don't know what to do yet. No offense, bimbo.”

The new girls, myself included, always had an initial period of discomfort, the last remnants of their old mind feebly struggling against what they'd become. I'd been hazed pretty bad when I first arrived, though in hindsight I could acknowledge it had served a secondary purpose, to force the transition into understanding and accepting

my new role. Being objectified felt good, after all; the more we did it, the more it became a flattering compliment and the less it was a shameful rebuke.

I was already in the shallow end of the pool, closer to the door, so I decided to be the ambassador. I made my way over to her, trying not to smirk at the judgmental look in her eyes. She was eyeing – but trying not to look like she was eyeing – my metallic sky blue teardrop g-string. I knew how it looked. It looked slutty as hell, the sort of thing normal girls would be asked to leave the beach for wearing. That’s why I loved it so much.

“Hi, blondie,” I said. “You look so fuckable in that. Can we get you something to eat? I know I was so hungry when Master woke me up from my training.”

A range of emotions flickered across her face. “I’m not hungry. I... I don’t even want to be out here. I mean, I do. Because, um, Master?” She frowned at saying it, but there was nothing else to call Master but Master. “Master told me to. But otherwise I wouldn’t. I feel...”

“Like a slut?”

“Yeah. Like that.”

“You’ll get used to it. You’ll get to love it, honestly. What’s your name, new girl?” I cupped her gigantic tits, testing the weight of them. I figured it would help her acclimate, remind her that she no longer had the right to not be touched. To not want to be touched. Better sooner than later.

The girl tried to frown at being so brazenly fondled, but it felt too good. Her jaw trembled as I explored her nipples through the paper-thin fabric. “I’m Sasha. Sasha Moore.”

“Harmony Reed. Welcome to Master’s ranch.”

I wondered if Sasha was reliving that same memory. There were plenty of others that had happened out here, after all. Most guests remained inside the house, so the pool area was a common hangout for off-duty slaves. On the side of the patio was the wooden chess board Billie had whittled during that two-week span she'd been banished from indoors. (Was it for using the wrong cheese on Master's steak sandwich, or had that been someone else? I couldn't remember.) I'd never had much use for chess, but I know some of the nerdier slaves had found it enjoyable. Now, it was a light green from a layer of mildew growing on it, a trait shared by this entire side of the house. There were a few chess pieces still on the ground nearby, but many seemed to have been blown away since their abandonment.

The pool was empty save for an inch or two of rain water; deflated pool toys decorated the murky bottom along with fallen twigs and leaves. It had always been a pain in the ass keeping it clean with so many trees around. The back door was boarded up same as the front, and while Master had designed the building with minimal windows to allow guests their privacy, the few that faced the back side of the house were as well.

"Is this the only other door?" Miguel asked.

"Yeah, just this and the front. Probably violates the fire code, but violating things was kind of Master's style." Sasha giggled at what I'd not really intended as a joke.

"All right, looks like we're doing it the hard way. Stay here. I'll get the pry bar."

I sat down at the chess table across from Vivian. Before her second training, Sasha had been a frequent participant in these games. By the time Master and I were done with her, she'd developed a severe aversion to anything that might make her look the least bit intellectual. I remembered her loudly chastising the "geek bitches" who enjoyed playing – nevermind that "geek bitch" had been one of Sasha's own most effective triggers, given her academic background.

"Hard to picture a bunch of you babes sitting around back here playing chess, like those old guys you see at the park," said Vivian.

"It wasn't our most common diversion." I flicked one of the horsey pieces with my finger. It clattered away across the pavement. "You know, I cannot tell you how overdressed I feel right now."

"Harm, you're wearing shorts and a t-shirt." She peered under the table. "Short shorts. And a really, really tight t-shirt. And pretty obviously no bra. I won't ask about your underwear."

"She's not wearing any," Sasha called from where she seemed to be trying to full the boards off with her bare hands. She wasn't making much progress.

"And why do you know that?" muttered Vivian.

Her words hadn't been meant to be overheard, much less responded to, but Sasha didn't seem to mind. "I noticed when she was walking out of her hotel room this

morning. I wanted to see if I was the only one not wearing any. Master told me to follow Harmony's example."

I made a half-hearted defense, that coming here and wearing all my clothes might have made me simply wig out so bad I stripped them off, but really, I knew I felt ashamed not to look like a sex slave in this place. That dressing like a normal woman felt like a betrayal of everything Master had remade me into. Vivian nodded, but seemed to be admiring the scenery more than paying attention to me.

"It's pretty out here. It's a bit too middle-of-nowhere to want to live here, but it'd be a cool summer place. Maybe you could try to reclaim the place, see if you could set up a time share or something."

"Maybe." I'd never do anything of the sort, of course, but I didn't want to be rude. She was here to support me, after all. It was a little weird to see Vivian, who was a 7 or 8 depending on how one felt about girls with tiny butts, in this lair of perfect 10's. That Miguel was here and he wasn't planning to have Sasha and I pose for him to see which one of us he'd like to fuck, and what trigger he'd like to fuck us in, was weirder still.

Speaking of, he soon returned, pry bar in hand. Sasha, whose efforts had born no fruit, stood aside to let him work. With manly exertion, he made short work of the boards, though having to repeatedly make Sasha back off so she didn't get hit by or step on a nail slowed him a bit. The blinds were drawn inside, so even as the glass door was revealed, we still couldn't see in. Once he could reach the handle, he confirmed that the door was locked. When only the bottom couple boards remained, he ordered everyone to back away. Miguel took a moment to look around and gathered a few fist-sized rocks. The first crashed right through the window, breaking a sizable hole; the next broke away most of the rest of the glass.

"Can we go in now?" Sasha pleaded.

"Hold up, let me clear the rest. This isn't like the movies, hon. Real glass is crazy sharp, and I don't want you getting hurt." In spite of her eagerness, Sasha beamed at him in gratitude. She wasn't a conventional girlfriend, but she certainly responded to his gallantry.

It felt strange to have Miguel be the first to enter, pushing through the blinds and then drawing them to one side. He then used the pry bar to smash away the last bits of glass, only waving us in after a final reminder to watch our step.

I took Sasha's hand. We went inside.

Life, for most people, is all about routine. For the harem girls of Master's ranch this was truer than for most. Wake times varied, depending on how long into the night we'd been put to use, but once we were up, it was right back to the grind. Rise. Bathroom, shower, hair, makeup. Get dressed, according to one's day. Breakfast. One hour morning workout. Chores or skills practice, according to the schedule. Lunch. Leisure time until dinner at 4:00, so we'd be done with our own needs prior to the usual busy period for guests. Then change into something for presentation, for the guests who didn't already know which girl they wanted. Service guests. Evening workout. Sleep. Rise.

My life pre-enslavement hadn't been much different, only that school had subbed for primping and guest prep, and socialization for time with the guests. Strangely, while the repetitive nature was more pronounced at the ranch, it was also far less tedious. Routine isn't drudgery, after all, if you value what you're doing. I remembered a poster in the office of my high school guidance counselor Mrs. Navarro. It had a picture of some rock climber that read "do what you love, and you'll never work a day in your life." I wondered if browbeating apathetic teenagers into filling out college applications so they could live their 20's and 30's in crushing debt was what Mrs. Navarro loved.

I carefully made my bed that morning, something I'd pretty much never done in my old life, but had proven handy as a slave. I often had minimal notice of what trigger I'd be under with a guest, and since I liked to rearrange the room to suit the occasion, it was always easier to quickly mess things up than to quickly tidy. I was bent double, adjusting a fold in the bedsheet, when I heard the door open. It was accompanied by an appreciative whistle, presumably at the way my butt looked in the booty shorts I'd chosen that morning. The sound told me all I needed to know about the person admiring me. It wasn't a sister slave, because we knocked before entering one another's rooms, and it wasn't Master, because Master didn't whistle at us. If Master had thought my ass looked good in these shorts, I'd already have a cock in it.

I surreptitiously gave my nipples a little pinch before I stood up and turned to face our guest. No one I recognized. Some middle-aged man with a haircut and neatly trimmed beard that smacked of money. A little bald spot he was trying to hide, a little paunch he was trying to suck in. Clearly a new-comer. Men who'd been around here before didn't bother to put on airs with us. We'd fuck them no matter what they looked like. Which in his case was good; he wasn't at only-a-mother-could-love levels, but with those beady little eyes and plentiful acne scars, he could see it from there.

"Wow, Hoyte wasn't kidding about you. You really are just about the best-looking girl I've ever seen."

I smiled. Best-looking girl was another tell. The guys who knew us, when they wanted to compliment our looks, were much more specific and much less coy. "Oh, Mr.

Hoyte! He sent you to me? I'll have to tell him thanks next time I see him." I was bad with names, good with faces; I didn't remember any Hoytes, but I'd recognize him – and his kinks – if I saw him.

"He's my old boss. We're on the same level now, VPs. Having a real good year – stock's up ten points already this quarter."

I walked closer to him. Like usual, he was at first a bit intimidated, as much by the fact that I was a few inches taller than him as by the fact that he'd never been alone in a room face to face with an honest-to-god sex slave before. It was amazing how many guests skipped right over prostitutes and up to our level. "I'm glad you're doing well. If you're trying to impress me, though, you don't need to. You can if you want, but I'm just glad you're here to play with me."

He grinned, the strings of his ego thrumming in my hands. "Not as glad as I am. I'm Jason, by the way. Harding."

"Harding already?" I joked, winking to confirm him I wasn't that dumb. I would be if he wanted me to be, but I didn't like to start off by being insincere. These men paid Master well for me; they deserved more than flattering lies. "I'm Harmony."

"That's a pretty name," he said. Like almost all of them said. "So, uh, he tells me you're game for whatever, but I thought I'd meet you first. You know, to, ah, see what kind of stuff you're into, or whatever." By which I knew he meant he wanted to make sure Hoyte hadn't lied about my looks, and that he might not be happier with one of the insanely hot girls he'd seen on the walk down to my room. A fair consideration, but nonetheless I answered him as if he'd been sincere.

"I'm into pleasuring men however they want to be pleased," I answered. I left it at that.

"Wow. You don't beat around the bush, do you." I shrugged, still smiling invitingly. "So, is there anything you're, you know, better at?"

"You mean, compared to the women you've been with before?"

"Uh, sure."

I took another step toward him, close enough that my breasts brushed against the front of his shirt. "I'm better than all of them in every single way, Jason Harding. Whatever you want to do with me, I will make it my mission in life to make sure your every expectation and desire is satisfied, then surpassed."

His eyes widened. "Uh..."

"If you choose me, there's nothing I wouldn't do for you. I'll become any girl you want. I'll touch you any way you like. Every part of my body will be yours to touch, to kiss, to suck, to fondle, to fuck. However you like. Want something weird? I love weird. Take me, and you'll be the god of my universe, for as long as I'm allowed to worship you."

Which was to say, as long as he compensated Master for my use. Generally for the day, but he'd arrived early so he might have to shell out a bit more for the extra hours.

"Well, what do you think of her?" came Master's voice from my bedroom doorway.

"I'll fucking take her, man," the guest said.

"And what would you like to do with her? I can make her anything you want. If you'd like, I can review options with you again."

"No no. I want the, um, slave girl. That's what you called it right? I want that."

"Very well. Come with me to the lounge; I'll have a few of the girls make you feel at home while we give Harmony a few minutes to prepare. She'll make it worth the wait, I promise. You've made a fine choice, Mr. Harding."

“Too fucking surreal,” I said as the door swung open.

My bedroom, bizarrely, was much as I had left it. My clothes were scattered all over the floor, and with the closet door and most of my drawers open, there didn't look to be much left that wasn't already dirty. Remembering Sasha describing life here after the water was shut off, I was only glad if my clothes meant they had to spend fewer days rewearing their own. Poor things.

“Wow. The lair of Harmony Reed, sex slave to the stars,” Vivian said, following me in. Miguel was a few doors down with Sasha, who was checking her own room. (After she'd finished yelling for Master. Hope springs eternal, I guess.)

“Sometimes.” I perused the remaining contents of my drawers, smiling at the sight of some of my old things. I didn't have a lot of sentimental attachments; life here had emphasized function more than emotion. Still, it was strangely comforting to see my old toys, outfits, props. They may be relics of my enslavement, but they were mine. Meaning they were Master's. My smile broadened.

“Whoa now, I was kidding. What do you mean, ‘sometimes’? Did you actually fuck any celebs?”

I picked up one of my big hoop earrings, a common trapping to shave a few years off, or a few points off the IQ. “I can't say anything about it. There were these nondisclosure agreements I had to sign. I'm sorry.”

“Wait, seriously?” I grinned at her over my shoulder. “You bitch.”

“Well, I suppose we didn't exactly have cable or Netflix here. For all I know, some of those guys were famous from after I was taken. Things were still in kind of a Daniel Tosh kind of phase when I left them.”

Vivian knelt down, sifting through some of the clothes on my floor. “Let's see... I think *House of Cards* was firing up around then.”

“Pretty sure I'm not Kevin Spacey's type.”

“Young and unwilling? Sounds like your situation to me. Heyo!”

We shared a laugh. “Not sure I'd call it ‘unwilling,’ though.”

“Not sure I can picture you wearing half this shit,” she answered, holding up a garment. “Harmony Reed, mild-mannered car wash attendant, and her neon yellow tube top with a hole to make sure everybody sees how big her boobs are.”

I grinned. “That's a dress, actually. Not a tube top.”

“Get the fuck outta here.” She held it up to her body. I was almost a head taller than her, and the stretchy fabric hung from the top of her chest to her belly button. “No way anybody could call this a dress.”

“You want me to try it on for you?”

She tilted her eyebrows at me. “Hmm... kinda.”

Ordinarily, I would have laughed it off. But here, in this of all places... someone had suggested an outfit for me. My t-shirt was off before she even realized it. “Harmony, whoa! What the...! I was... kidding...”

The rebuke never really formed in her tone. I wouldn't have stopped anyway. I was at the ranch. I didn't belong wearing normal clothes. Vivian gaped at my naked body, too stunned to stop me from snatching the dress out of her hands. Since I was still wearing my shoes, I had to pull the dress on over my head, sliding and tugging its scant covering into place. I was about five pounds heavier than when I'd lived here, having gone from two hours of exercise a day to only one, but it still fit.

My tits strained at the top, bulging outwards and upwards in desperation to be seen. The window into my cleavage showed them pressed tightly together, a long line of boob meeting boob. Stretched to its intended length, the slit went down past my belly button, tantalizingly close to showing my snatch. The bottom ended not two inches beneath my slit, short enough that the beginning of my thigh gap was just visible. I could feel the hem digging into the bottom of my buttocks; the place where my thighs met my ass was easily visible at the center, the lines of my bottom disappearing into the minimal coverage of the dress.

The whole outfit would have looked ridiculous with my plain white tennis shoes if anyone could have torn their eyes off the rest of it.

“Jesus fucking Christ, Harmony. I know you said you were a sex slave, but I could never really picture you as one until this moment.” My friend spoke in a tone of awe.

“I may have to do some packing before we go, if I'm going to keep looking the part. Especially with no income and all.”

“You can crash with me, but only if you promise to keep dressing like that.” She grinned. “Uh, totally kidding of course.”

Before I could respond, a woman's shriek pierced the stagnant air of the ranch. Vivian immediately turned to run towards it, hands once more reaching into her purse for that taser. I grabbed her wrist. “Don't.”

“Harmony, she's—”

A second cry followed. Then a third. Then, “Oh fuck yes, fuck me master, fuck me, fuck my stupid fucking brains out of my fucking head, fucking fuck me master, fuck me fuck me!”

“She's feeling about like I am, but she's got a cock handy to act on it with.” I sighed. “Little surprised she left the door open, though. We have excellent sound-proofing here, but it doesn't work if you don't bother with basic courtesies. Kind of unprofessional.”

“Yeah, what a newb.” She looked back to me. “God, you're going to turn me gay yet, Harm.”

I planted a quick kiss on her forehead. “Keep me posted on that. Come on, let them have their fun. Let’s check around upstairs.”

“Beg me to come on your face, bitch.”

My chin crept forward all on its own, peering up at Morris shyly as I continued jacking him off with my boobs. So this was a tit fuck. I’d heard my guy friends use the term before, but nobody had ever had the balls to ask me to do it until today. Even if they had, I certainly wouldn’t have done it. Blowjob was one thing – that was at least normal, common – but this was... I mean, this wasn’t why I had boobs.

Only now, it was.

“Morris? Um, I feel bad asking you for another favor, but... would you please, pretty pretty please come on my face? I just love the feeling of a man’s jizz on my face. I know, I’m such a fucking whore, right? But I’d be so grateful. Would you mind? I’ll swallow if I have to, but I’d really love it if you’d–”

There it was. He’d already come in my mouth and in my pussy, and then in my mouth again; this time I guess he’d wanted to do it on my face. My friend Jenna had told me she’d let her boyfriend give her a facial once, and how gross it had been. Objectively, it surely was. Cum was nasty. Except... Master, whoever he was, had told me to do what this man wanted. Doing it felt so inexplicably arousing that the splash of his hot spunk in my eye set off an orgasm of my own. More powerful than anything I’d ever had in my life, except for maybe the six or seven I’d had when he was fucking me.

He laughed at me as I twitched on the floor, little aftershocks of pleasure still coursing through me. “That was fun, slut.” Morris began gathering his clothes. I should probably get mine, too, right? Except he hadn’t said to, and I was sure he’d enjoy looking at me more without them, and Master wanted me to please this man. He’d paid twenty thousand dollars for the right to use me. Not that he’d paid it to me. I already had a strong sense that I’d never see a cent of it.

Morris didn’t say anything more as he got dressed. I didn’t know what to do, so I remained there on my knees, his cum slowly running down my cheeks, dribbling down onto my boobs. Into the permanent marker there, where he’d had me write “WORLD’S DUMBEST CUNT” on my own chest. It was a surprisingly hard task. The handwriting looked like it had been done by a six-year-old, which only added to its effect. Humiliating me had seemed to turn him on almost as much as actually sticking his cock in me. Weirdly, I hadn’t even felt embarrassed. I’d had to pretend to, since it seemed to be what he wanted.

When the door opened, that man was there again. Master. Morris stepped back, startled, but Master quickly spoke. “How did she do, Mr. Tamborski?”

“She tried, once we got past the first few hiccups.” Hiccups – his word for my dignity, my independence, my unwillingness to be raped. Not that we could call it that; after all, I’d been the one who’d begged him to, as I recall, “stuff my needy teen fuck hole.” (He’d said he enjoyed dirty talk.)

“Come now. Those ‘hiccups,’ as you call them, are what you paid a premium for. I know how you enjoy breaking in the new merchandise.”

He grinned. “She’ll make a solid addition. Might be your hottest filly in the stable.”

“She has room for improvement. We’ll see how she shapes up.”

Master exchanged friendly farewells with the man; I wondered if Morris was aware of the way Master’s smile never touched his eyes. Master had no love for this man, not even gratitude for the money. Master’s eyes looked at Morris like he was seeing a cockroach. The moment he disappeared around the corner, escorted by someone with a feminine voice I never got my eyes on, the smile faded from Master’s lips, too.

Master shut the door as he entered my room.

“So, I trust you understand your place now, Harmony?”

“I don’t understand anything about this place! What did you do to me? Why did I do those things with that man? It’s like... it’s like you’re in my head. I can’t even think of you as anything but ‘Master.’”

“But you see, I am in your head. And in your heart. In your soul, if such a thing exists. You belong to me. From now on, you’re going to spend every waking moment doing everything in your power to please me. And in exchange, I’ll give you absolutely nothing. And wipe your face off. I hate having you squint at me like that.”

I looked around for something to obey with, but there were no tissues. Not knowing what else to do, but not able to contemplate disobeying, I used one of the bed sheets. “He made me write this on myself. It’s permanent marker. I don’t know if this is going to come off.”

Master laughed. “It’ll wash off. Too many of our guests amuse themselves as amateur graffiti artists to let them ruin my property on a whim. One of you girls came up with a means of swapping the ink in a permanent marker with a dry erase.”

“One of...” I remembered the girl I’d heard escorting Morris. “You mean you have more women here? As your hostages?”

“The word is slaves, Harmony. And yes. I’ll introduce you to the others shortly. They’ll help acclimate you, inform you of expectations of your new life.” He laughed. “Probably bully the hell out of you, too. They always gang up on the new products.”

“I’m nobody’s slave!” I shot back. “You may have found some way to make me do things for now, but it’s not going to last. And when it does, I’ll... you’ll...” I couldn’t bring myself to threaten him. In fact, the more I tried to, the more disgusted with myself I grew.

Master just laughed. “You’re whatever I tell you to be, and I say you’re a slave. Now tell me you’re my slave, and mean it.”

"I'm your slave." Oh god. It happened in the blink of an eye. There was no resistance, and it had been totally sincere. As if I'd said I'm a girl, or I'm naked, or I don't want to be here. I was a slave. Master's slave.

"Thank me. Thank me for making you my slave."

"Thank you for enslaving me, Master." I smiled for a moment before I realized I was doing it and forcibly removed it from my lips. "That still doesn't mean I'll just do whatever you say. I can fight this. Slaves have been emancipated before." The word came to me easier than I'd have thought. My history teacher would have been proud, if I hadn't said it naked on the floor in front of my new owner after begging a pervert to jizz on my face.

Master grinned darkly. "You're going to do whatever I want, and I don't care if you like it. You obey. Always. That's what I want from you, so that's what you'll do. Now I'm going to ask you a few questions, and I want you to give me the answer you think will most please me. And then I want you to realign your beliefs and feelings so that those answers become true for you. Nothing I haven't done for you already, but it's good for you to consciously realize it. Spares me a lot of your protesting and whining."

"Please, you can't..."

His interruption was sudden, and almost violent. "NEVER tell me what I can and cannot do. Never."

"I... yes, Master."

He glared at me a long moment; I wondered briefly if Master was going to hit me. Or kill me. I wondered if that would be a bad thing, considering it might give Master pleasure. I wanted to throw up, but I was sure that would displease Master. His face finally softened, at least enough that I no longer sensed imminent danger.

"Now, answer and adjust. Why did I bring you here, Harmony?"

"Because I'm hot. Because you can use my good looks to make yourself money." My experience with Morris had made this answer obvious, but saying it made it so much more real. As I said it, I could feel my words cementing something inside me. I was glad to be so sexy. It would help me make Master more money. Favors? I bet I could earn Master those, too.

"And what will you do for me?"

An easier question still. "Anything." I tried to think of something I wouldn't do for him. What was the worst thing I could think of? Kill someone. Someone I cared about. No, worse – enslave them. I thought about my mother. She was a good-looking woman for her age. If Master wanted, though, I had no doubt I would betray her in a heartbeat. It would please Master, and giving birth to me and raising me were nothing compared to Master's happiness.

"What are you now, Harmony?"

The words tumbled from my lips as I thought of all the things this man might want me to be. Even from what little I'd seen, it seemed clear. "A slave. Your slave. Your whore. Your fuck toy. A slut. An obedient slut who will do whatever you want. Who will think of things that you want, and then do them, so you don't have to bother asking."

That made Master smile; this time it reached his eyes, but I found myself wishing it hadn't. It was not a look that made me any less ill at ease. "What is your value to me?"

"Nothing. Only you have value. I have uses, not value."

A laugh, this time. My cunt throbbed at knowing I'd said something to bring Master joy, even if that thing was horrific. "Clever. Your uses, then."

"To pleasure you. To submit to you. To be sold, borrowed, loaned out, pimped out, to help you get whatever you want. To make your life easier and more comfortable and more pleasurable." Oh god. I was so disgusting. Or I would be, if something that was so potentially useful for Master could be called disgusting.

"Well said, Harmony. You know, most girls take a few days to adjust, but you're a surprisingly quick study. Tell me, were you a slut in your old life?"

I shook my head. "No, Master. You made me a slut. Thank you." How could I be grateful for this? But I was. I was what Master wanted me to be, exactly like I'd never known I'd always wanted.

"Well from now on, you are. More than some garden variety slut, though... you're my slave. It's the best thing about you, you know. The only thing worth knowing. The thing that, ten thousand years from now when some archaeologist digs up your bones, they'll find chiseled into your goddamn skull. Harmony Reed. My slave."

“It’s locked,” said Vivian. She tried twisting harder, as if a metal lock was going to fall apart in the short time the house had been vacant. Naturally, it accomplished nothing. “I’ll snag the pry bar. I think Miguel left it by the back door.”

“Thanks, Viv.”

The door to Master’s private quarters. I’d lived in this house for years, yet had never even glimpsed the inside. It was in its own little nook at the end of the upstairs hallway, adjacent to the master bedroom. There was a door that lead between the two that I’d never seen open, and also the door to the private quarters themselves, which opened such that the door blocked sight of the room unless you were standing right in front of it. Which we never were, since we weren’t allowed to go in there. Until today, I’d never even been curious what was in there. Master had told us it was off limits, and so it had never been of interest.

It was quiet in here now. The ranch had excellent sound-proofing, and Vivian had closed Sasha’s door when we walked by. Now there was nothing but my breathing and the diminishing footsteps of my friend tromping back downstairs.

I knew it was a bad idea, but I couldn’t help myself. I stepped into the master bedroom. Master’s bedroom. It was almost overwhelming. I remember all the times I’d been brought in here, allowed to service Master. Nothing ever had, ever would, feel as heavenly as being fucked by Master. I could feel my pussy juicing up so much it started to trickle down my thighs. Master’s perfect body. Master’s perfect cock. Master’s perfect dominance.

I didn’t even hear Vivian return. She had to tap me on the shoulder. “Harm?”

“Oh. Yeah?”

“Uh... you’re kinda...”

I blinked. Only then did I realize I’d pulled my top down to expose my tit, pinching my nipple with one hand while the other had slipped up my dress to start playing with myself. I tugged the dress back into place. “Sorry. I... Sorry.”

“It’s all right. This place is like a haunted house, but for sluts instead of ghosts. Come on. Let’s see if we can’t get this door open.”

Back to the hallway. My head was clearer here, somewhat. I took a few deep breaths.

“You wanna do the honors, babe?” Vivian offered up the pry bar.

I took it from her hands and slipped the curved end into the crack of the door near the lock. It was a snug fit. My legs bent at the knees, adopting a power stance, and...

You’re never to come into this room.

Master’s voice. I dropped the bar like it was red hot.

“Harmony? What’s wrong?”

“I... look, we shouldn’t be doing this. Come on, let’s go get the others. We shouldn’t have come here.”

Vivian bent down and picked up the bar, looking at me askance. “What happened? Ten seconds ago you were gungho, and now you wanna leave without even opening the door? Come on, we’re ninety-nine percent of the way. One percent more.”

“No. No, you can’t.”

“Why not? Is it booby-trapped or something?” She snorted. “In that dress, I feel like saying the word ‘booby’ is going to make it explode off of you.”

“We just can’t. Let’s go, OK?”

“No. We’re not going anywhere unless you give me a solid reason why not.”

“Because Master said not to!” I shouted.

In that moment, it was as if I were three years younger, talking with a new girl who was somehow not comprehending this most basic of rules. Master said no – how could there be any counterargument? But Vivian wasn’t a slave. I didn’t know how to make a normal girl understand.

“We’re getting into this room, and that’s final!”

There was no reasoning with a lunatic. I lunged for the pry bar, and though I caught her off guard with the sudden maneuver, she had a better grip on it. Why wouldn’t she let go? The thing was only good for displeasing Master! This new girl was broken. I had to stop her from ruining everything. If that door opened and I saw what was in there, Master might never forgive me. Might never take me back!

With the most Herculean effort I was capable of, I ripped the pry bar from her hand, holding it high over my head. A clear threat. Try to open this door, and you’re defying Master. Defy Master, and you must be stopped. “We’re not going in there!” I shrieked. “Take one more step, and I’ll–”

Vivian stepped into me and threw her arms around me. And she was holding me. Stroking my hair, squeezing me tight, and after a moment, I could feel warm tears dripping onto my bared shoulders. “What did that monster do to my Harmony,” she whispered.

This wasn’t a new girl. This was Vivian. My friend. A free person. Someone who loved me. Someone I trusted absolutely. Vivian. My Vivian. The solidness of her was my tether to reality, a vibrant reminder that this was now, that then was over and was not coming back.

Without quite knowing what I was doing, I dropped the pry bar so I could hug her back. “I love you, Viv.”

Her body shook with gentle sobs, and her arms squeezed even tighter. “You know I love you back, babe.”

Finally, she let me go, and reluctantly I did the same. My strength was sapped, and I slid down the wall and sat down on the dusty hallway floor. Vivian sat down right next to me. I put an arm around her shoulder, not yet ready to let go of her.

“You know he’s gone, don’t you?” she said after a minute.

“I know.” I didn’t want to know it, but I did.

“You know he never wanted you to be free, right?”

I nodded. “I know.”

“But you did that anyway. He wanted to lock you away from the world and use you and hurt you until you were all used up. But you watched that mother fucker die, and you *know* what he wanted for you stopped mattering. Otherwise how could you have ever left this place? How could you have found me, and Hannah, and the boys?”

“But... Master said...”

“No. Don’t make excuses for him. Your master’s fucking *dead*, babe. The only thing left of him is all the misery and harm he did to you. But you defied him when you returned to the free world. You defied him when you made friends, and got your own place and a job. And then another job because of the place.”

I laughed, an ugly crying laugh, as she went on. “So you can do whatever you want. If you want to be somebody’s sex slave, do that. There’s god knows how many submissives out there doing the same basic shit, and if that’s going to make you happy, awesome. And if you want to go home, we’ll do that. But don’t you run away because you think that’s what he wants. You’re showing him every day that you’re not his bitch any more. So if you want to open that door, see what he was hiding from you... that’s your right. And fucking nobody has more of a right to open that door than you.”

It took the two of us working together to work the pry bar, and not only because my muscles were hesitant to cooperate. With a sharp crack of sundering wood, a piece of the door frame broke away, and the door swung open.

It was an office. Not even very big. A broad desk occupied most of the room, with inset bookshelves dominating the opposite wall. There was the door to the bedroom, and beside that a narrower door that suggested some kind of closet. A plush leather-upholstered arm chair sat in the corner beside a long-dead potted plant. On the small end table beside the chair, a thin book sat folded open to a page. The cover read, *High Heat*.

Vivian was following where I was looking. “Hey... is that one of those Jack Reacher books?” She picked it up, glanced at the back cover. “Oh my god, my dad goes nuts for these things. They’re like Hallmark movies for bros.” She tossed the book irreverently to the floor.

I still hadn’t stepped inside the room. Master said not to... but Vivian said... but did that mean I could... or should I...

“Fuck it.”

I stepped into the room. Without realizing it, I’d braced myself like I might be smote by the Almighty. Nothing happened. Nothing more than the same nagging feeling I shouldn’t be doing this, but as I defiantly stood my ground, I realized the voice held no more power than those voices that had once told me never to stay out past curfew, or

that smoking weed would turn me into a crackhead, or that good girls save themselves for marriage. A powerless voice from the frightened lips of a dead face.

Vivian politely steered herself toward the bookshelves, and as cramped as the office was, it left little else for me to check out but the desk. There was a mouse and keyboard here, but no computer. I remembered that Master had brought a laptop with us when we'd traveled together; evidently touchpads and mini-keyboards weren't Master's preference. Beside it was a thick ledger, open to the most recent entry. Once I seated myself at the desk to look it over, Vivian came up behind me and read along.

"Holy fucking shit. Is that *money*? In fucking *dollars*?" she gasped.

"I think so."

"That can't be... I mean... no way you guys..." she rambled.

"Look, he has the entries marked by name for who earned it." I scanned for the most recent one with my name. "\$7500, Harmony Reed. I think the check mark means it was paid." Almost all of the entries had check marks.

"Harmony, I swear to god, I try not to think of you like that, but one of these days you are going to push me over my limit. A fucking \$7500 pussy. Good fucking lord," she grumbled.

"I think that guy actually fucked my ass, if that helps any."

"I let an ex-boyfriend fuck my ass once, and you know what I got? A hard time shitting for a week."

I giggled. The two of us continued through the records, but really, the ending was what told it all. If this was to be believed, after expenditures, Master had made \$24,966,300 for the usage of his harem girls. Neither Vivian nor I had much experience with finances – I'd once counted the jars for the school's penny wars charity drive – but Master had been explicit enough in the notes that even we could puzzle it out. Some of the expenditures had some techno-jargon that made no sense to either of us; Vivian speculated that it might be for maintenance and improvements to Master's brainwashing gear. There was no information on the bank accounts it was saved in or how to access them, so while the number was jaw-dropping, it was also useless.

I began looking through the desk drawers. All but the center one over the seat were locked, but luckily that one had the key in it. Stale mints, stationery, office supplies, a drawer full of expired junk food that stunk so bad we had to instantly slam it shut again. One drawer held a case full of empty syringes, but nothing more. Had these played some role in the training process? If there was some mind control cocktail Master had discovered, it didn't seem to be brewed here at the ranch.

In the bottom right drawer, we finally found something of interest – a collection of hanging files, each one bearing the name of one of Master's slaves. They were alphabetized by first name, as if Master couldn't be bothered to remember the surnames of mere property. I rifled through them until I found the one labeled with my name,

pulled it out and placed it on the desktop. It was slender, lightweight. Whatever was in there, it was pretty bare bones.

“Hold on,” Vivian said as I went to flip it open. “If this has that slave manual you were talking about, maybe I should be the one to open it. You know? Like, if you open it and find a page full of your trigger words and see them all at once, your head might explode or something.”

The curiosity was so acute it was almost torture, but she was right. “Good thinking. Go ahead.”

Seconds grinded by like years as I watched her flip through the unseen papers. There was a pinched look to her, but whether it was because she’d found something or because she hadn’t was impossible to say. Finally, she closed the folder and set it back down.

“Well?” I asked.

“You can look,” she said softly. A tacit admission that there were no triggers. I took her hand and gave it a squeeze of gratitude, then turned my attention back to the folder.

The first thing I saw was a full-page print of a picture. It was me, wearing my old uniform from Everett’s Diner, where I’d waitressed at back home. Man, it looked dorky. A bunch of my friends (especially my guy friends) had told me I was nuts to work there when I could earn several times the tips if I went to the breastaurant across town, but I liked my supervisor, and I knew my mom and dad would be embarrassed if I took that kind of job. I wasn’t posing, or even looking at the camera, simply leaning over a table to wipe it down, a minimal hint of cleavage visible down my neckline.

There were a few more such pictures, and while there was no time stamp or date, they looked to be from the same day. I was being profiled by someone; there was one that showed me from the side, one from behind, one that did a marginally better job of showing me from the front. In a plain blue shirt that was only a wee bit too tight, it didn’t show anything spectacular. But evidently, it had been enough.

After that was a hand-scribbled note. Not Master’s handwriting; I’d seen enough of that when Master left written instructions for us.

Not my best work but I didn’t want to freak the kid out. Trust me though, she’s grade A. Worth a look next time you’re in the neighborhood. Look me up, and I’ll give you name/address after usual finder’s fee.

- Miles

“Who’s Miles?” asked Vivian once she surmised I was done reading.

I was too emotional to respond. It was simple enough to read between the lines. Master had talent scouts. At least one anyway, though since I knew my sister slaves

came from places all over the U.S. and Canada, I suspected more. I'd never met anyone named Miles. Whoever he was, he'd seen me in the restaurant, thought I was hot, passed word on to Master, and yadda yadda, here I am. Which meant...

It hadn't been my family.

In a rush, all those hateful, terrible thoughts about my mom and dad and my aunts and uncles and cousins... disappeared. I hadn't realized the crushing weight of them, but as the burden thudded to the earth below, I felt like I could fly. They hadn't betrayed me. Nothing but lies put in my head to stop me from trying to reaching out to the people who'd have done the most to rescue me. I didn't know why Master had done that; we were forbidden to use phones, computers, or anything else that might let us contact the outside. A simple command was sufficient to prevent any of us from even trying. But maybe that bond had been deemed so strong that even a man as confident as Master feared it might inspire enough desperate hope to surpass his dominance, if only long enough to make a single call. Maybe he needed us to feel truly alone to have our Master at the center of our universe.

"Harmony? Who's Miles?" Vivian asked again. She was more insistent this time, perturbed by my reaction.

Some random dude named Miles, the real identity of the specter I'd been loathing all these years. My real betrayer, some lowlife who paid his bills as a human trafficker. Not my mom, not my dad, not the people who were supposed to love me. Who *did* love me. The "supposed to" had been in my head so long, it was hard to omit.

"I don't know," I finally answered. "Nobody."

I'd been right not to trust my voice; I was crying as I flipped to the next document. It was another photo, and I recognized immediately where it was located. Brett Cartwright's house. The photo was centered on a familiar vehicle. Dad's Corolla. In the driver's seat with her mouth open, tone-deafly belting out the lyrics to the newest Taylor Swift single, was me. The picture looked to be taken through a car window across the street and slightly behind. Right in my mirror's blind spot, probably.

"That's you, right?" Vivian asked. "I mean, it looks like you, but... I dunno. You've never looked that... happy." She frowned.

"That was me. That was the day that I was taken. I was at this boy's house for a bonfire party. I didn't even like him, but my friend Karen, she had a thing for him. We were singing to this song I'd just fallen in love with, but she wanted to go hit on Brett, so I was there, all by myself."

"Oh, Harm. Fuck." She hugged me awkwardly from behind. "Dr. Kovacs is going to have his hands full with you when we get you back, isn't he."

But I was already flipping to the next page. It was gibberish. Some kind of scientific notation, the kinds of shit you see scientists doing on chalkboards in movies. Numbers and letters and weird little hexagon diagrams, words that might be chemicals

or solar systems or goddamn magic, for all I could tell. I'd gotten D's in biology, and had only passed chemistry because this sweet nerdy boy had a crush on me and let me copy his homework in exchange for a little face time with yours truly.

"Does this mean anything to you?" I asked.

"Not a damn thing. Do you think that's, like, what he did to you? The chemicals and stuff?"

"Maybe? I guess we could ask somebody who knows about this kind of thing."

"Or burn the fucking thing so nobody else figures out how to do this shit."

"You make a good point."

I flipped again, and it was back to the photos from the restaurant. That was it. The whole story of how my entire life got ripped apart, my self destroyed, my essence repurposed into the sex object I was today. I caught some asshole's eye. No conspiracy, no betrayal, nothing but a great body and shitty fucking luck.

Without saying a word, I set the folder aside and dug out Sasha's. It was similar, photos and a page of science notes, though her head-hunter had written an email and identified himself as Malcolm rather than Miles. The pictures of her were at her campus gym, from the looks of it; her leggings and sports bra did a lot more to show off her figure than mine had, but it had ended the same anyway. I often forgot she'd worn glasses. They really did make her look smarter. Besides that, something about her looked focused. Driven. A look-out-world vibe that, thinking of the squealing, grunting bimbo in the basement, made me a little sad.

"We'll take all of these," I said, lifting out the folders and setting them in a stack on the corner of the desk. I resumed looking in drawers. Bottom left held a few reams of paper for a printer that was no longer here. Middle bottom, on the other hand, seemed to be a stash of Master's personal documents. Vivian helped me pile them on the desk. There were plenty of them. A passport, birth certificate, high school and college diplomas. A doctorate in biochemistry – Ivy League, nice. Tax filings, no doubt riddled with fraud – Master would have been in big trouble with the IRS if they ever caught him – and then all sorts of minutiae. Old bills, records of charitable contributions, what looked to be IOU's from some of our guests. Even some of Master's old driver's licenses.

"*This guy?!*" Vivian exclaimed, looking at the photo in Master's passport. "This mother fucker is the legendary 'master' we've heard so much about?"

I nodded. "That's him. Why?"

She held it out for me. "He's just so... ordinary. I expected some kind of cartoon super villain from everything you've said, twirling his mustache and sporting a black top-hat. But this guy looks like the kind of douche canoe who tries to pick up girls with a magic card trick."

I frowned. "Master is the sexiest man I've ever seen or could even imagine. I'm not sure what you mean."

She knelt beside me, pointing to Master's name on the passport. "This guy? This guy was a fucking loser who couldn't get girls with his fuckwad personality or his dorkwad looks, so he kidnapped them and put chemicals in their brains and raped them. He's a piece of shit roofie rapist with a fancier chemical."

"You didn't know Master," I protested. "Master was powerful. Brilliant. A god in the sack. Commanding, confident, so gorgeous he made your panties wet just thinking about him." Words I'd said, out loud and in my own head, a million times.

"Aha!" she exclaimed. "You said 'him'! And 'he'!"

I frowned. "No I didn't. Besides, so what if I did."

"Exactly, babe. Exactly. See, there's still something in you, some of that innocent teenage boner muse that drew this prick to you, that recognizes that you are a radiant fucking goddess and this loser was a toad who's not worthy to eat your toenail clippings."

"Gross, Viv. And you're wrong. Trust me, if you saw him, you'd..."

"I'd spit in his face, then kick him in the balls, then hold his little bitch ass down so you could finish him off like you deserve. Come on, Harmony! Just once, say his name. It's right there, black and white. Quit letting him have all this power over you! You are Harmony mother-fucking Reed, the sexiest, craziest, kick-assiest woman I know! And he's just..."

I looked at the photo.

I had misbehaved. My first three days at the ranch had been like three years. The depravity. The debasement. The pride in my humiliation, the self-hatred at my anger, the pleasure at giving pleasure.

But I had lashed out, and deserved to be punished. Master had said something to me – I couldn't make out what, for some reason – and I had become someone else, a nymphomaniac who got off on servitude and obedience. Only when the man had finished with me had I become myself again. In that moment between my other self and my new slave self, I had become Harmony Reed again. In that moment, I had spit a mouthful of cum the man had told me to savor right in his pudgy face. It had been more reflex than intent, but once I realized it was coming out, I made a split second decision where to aim it.

I'd been sent to my room and told to put a vibrator in my pussy and my ass. Every few hours, one of the other slaves came in with fresh batteries, and twice a day with food and water. I was told I couldn't come until I was given permission. That had been days ago, I thought. Weeks, maybe. My mind was beyond thinking of the world in terms of time. It sought only release, and would do anything to receive it. When Master came to my room, I threw myself to my hands and knees. This was the only being in the universe who could give me the climax I needed, end the torment I'd inflicted on myself by being a bad girl.

"I'm going to ask you a few questions. Answer them right, and I might let you come. Get them wrong, and I'll give you another week to think about it. Understand?"

"Yes, Master. Your slave understands, Master."

"Lose the third person shit. Now tell me. Who are you, Harmony?"

"No one, Master. I am a what, not a who."

"Then what are you?"

"Worthless, except by the worth you have given me."

"And what worth is that?"

"Submission to you, Master. Pleasing you, Master. Giving of myself to your benefit and glory, Master."

"And why do you do that?"

"Because I am your slave."

"Why are you my slave?"

"Because you saved me from myself. You washed away my old, miserable life and gave me new purpose."

"So what's your purpose?"

"To pleasure and obey you."

"That doesn't frighten you?"

"No. Never. I only do as Master wishes, and so long as I obey then I am exactly where I am meant to be. There is nothing to fear."

“Are you ashamed of what you are?”

“I am what you made me. I am proud to have been worthy of Master’s efforts.”

“So if you’re not scared, and you’re not ashamed, how do you feel to be this pathetic, whorish thing?”

“Aroused.”

“Aroused, eh? Why’s that?”

“I am something that can bring men pleasure. What greater thrill can there be?”

“One more time – why is that thrilling, Harmony?”

“Because I am your slave. Nothing else. I am slave. I obey. I do as I am told. I obey. I am a good girl now. I am a slave.”

“All right, all right, I get it, I get it.” A finger on my chin tilted my eyes up to look into his. “So if you’re a slave, then what does that make me?”

“Jeff Konicki.”

Vivian’s face lit up. I said it again. “Jeff Konicki. H-his name is... Jeff Konicki.”

She tackled me in a hug, and I wound up toppling the chair and hugging her back on the floor. Over and over I said his – *his!* – name. He. Him. *He him his only a man just a man a man named Jeff fucking Konicki!* I’d known it, of course. The guests had used it freely. But it had never been in my head. Like when someone called my mom Hope. In my head, she was Mom, and could never be anything else. Except Mom never needed to reach into my head and force the point.

“And who the hell worships a dorky-looking asswipe named fucking *Jeff?*” Vivian said, lifting herself off of me. “Nobody, that’s who.”

“My master is dead. His name was Jeff Konicki. And he’s dead, and I don’t have to obey him any more, ever again!” I shouted.

“Uh, what’s going on, ladies?” asked a male voice from the door.

“Oh, nothing, just shattering mental barriers, freeing her beautiful mind, finding out that this ‘master’ mo-fo was some lowlife prick named Jeff.”

“Jeff Konicki,” I said again. It was easier every time, a dam that was breaking.

“Harmony! Don’t you dare say Master’s name! Master told us Master’s name is Master, and only Master!” Sasha’s voice came from around the corner. She’d apparently not been able to make herself look inside.

I picked myself up, snatching her folder from the desk and advancing on her in the hallway. Both she and Miguel looked more than a little surprised at the shift in my wardrobe, though Sasha had changed as well, having stuffed herself into a pair of booty shorts and a midriff-baring crop top so overstuffed that you could see her underboob without her having to move. Like me, she’d worn tennis shoes here and still had them on. Though I had to admit hers matched her outfit a lot better than mine did.

“He’s dead, Sasha. His commands died with him. You know I couldn’t lie about it. He’s never coming back, and the longer you pretend he is, the longer you’re going to keep being unhappy.”

“You’re... this could be a test. Trying to trick me into being a bad girl again.”

“You think Master would really shut down his ranch, give away his slaves, disappear off the earth and make *me*, one of his slaves, his accomplice? Are we talking about the same man here?”

She frowned. “But... Master...”

I handed her the folder. “Here. This was in Ma–” I caught myself. “In Jeff’s office. Look at these photos, Sasha. That’s you. You living your life, until you caught the wrong prick’s eye and you were stolen away from everything and everyone. You’ve *never* been a ‘bad girl,’ Sasha.”

“But you said I was,” she whimpered back, leafing through the old photos.

“You’re a smart young woman who got caught in the path of the tornado, Sash. Any time I said otherwise, it was because I was forced to. I didn’t mean it. I just said it because he made me. You know more about books and literature and all that stuff than anyone I know. You should be a teacher, or a librarian, or a writer, or a professor. Not... this.”

She stared hard at the pre-kidnapping photo, the apparent counterpart to the one of me in my dad’s car. In Sasha’s folder, it showed her walking across a parking lot in a pair of baggy athletic shorts and a tie-dye shirt big enough to hold two of her. Her hair looked wet, and was up in a tight bun held in place with a pair of chopsticks, and ear buds in either ear. She was oblivious to the entire world, a satisfied little half-smile on her face.

“I... I was...” She took a deep breath. “I was on my way to a study session. I didn’t even need it; I was just doing it because the prof asked me to help some of her other students. I was listening to this stupid cheesy romance novel. Bodice ripper, ya know? There were pirates. I’d never read one with pirates before, but I wanted to be in on all the jokes, be able to officially say I’d lusted after a pirate.”

Miguel took her into his arms, and she melted into him, the file falling from her hands. “Yarr, matey,” he said in a discordantly tender tone. She laughed into his chest, but it was clear she was laughing through tears.

“God, I miss books,” she murmured. “I haven’t read so much as a poem in years.” I smiled. “You can again, you know.”

“Might be tricky getting you a library card until you have a permanent address, but I’ll see what I can do,” said Miguel, rubbing her back softly.

“But... Master said...”

I nodded for Miguel to continue consoling. If he was going to be the sex slave’s boyfriend, he was going to need to do boyfriend stuff between the sexcapades. She might not be ready to make the leap yet, but for the first time since she’d re-entered my life, I began to have hope. Maybe we could find and fix the other girls, too.

I took Vivian’s hand and we returned to the office. There was nothing more to be done at the desk except collect the folders, but there was still the door in the back. We closed the hallway door behind us to give the couple their privacy and wordlessly approached this final nook.

“After you,” said Vivian, gesturing to the doorknob.

I clasped my hand around it, and with a deep breath, I pulled it open.

Inside, there was an empty shoe rack on the floor, and hanging above it a fall jacket, a winter coat, and an umbrella with a hooked handle dangling from the bar. That was it. No manual. Nothing of use at all.

“Maybe there’s something in one of the books?” Vivian suggested, wincing at the nothing burger before us. “You know, in movies they always have hidden passages or

secret documents hidden away in bookshelves. Totally how they hid the bat cave and all.”

She sounded desperate. As the situation merited. Suddenly, the strength in my legs gave out and I collapsed to my knees, bracing myself with my hands in the nick of time. There was nothing. Master – Jeff – had never been keeping a log book of triggers. It wouldn't be hidden in the bookshelves. Everything else was in plain sight – why would he hide this solitary thing? And in a room he knew nobody in the house would ever look in. He wouldn't. Arrogance was his most defining feature, or if not that, brilliance. I'd been a fool to think I might have found a way out. The man owned me, and now, it looked like he always would. My head dropped to the ground, overwhelmed by despair.

THUNK.

I popped back up, looking down at the floor. My head tilted quizzically. Vivian tried to give me another comforting hug, but I brushed her off. I tapped again on the floor of the closet. *Thunk thunk thunk.*

“It's hollow,” I whispered.

“What?”

“It's hollow!”

I dragged the empty shoe rack out of the closet and threw it over my shoulder. With it removed, the small brass ring inset into the floorboard was readily apparent. I grabbed it with one shaking finger and pulled.

There, set into the floor, was a safe. It looked like a pretty big one, very nearly the size of the whole nook. There was a combination dial on the front, as well as a key hole in the center. There were a full hundred numbers on the dial. I'd never be able to guess the combination, and we hadn't seen a key anywhere in here.

Just as despair threatened to return, Vivian knelt down and tugged on the handle. With a faint metallic groan, the door swung open. Inside, there were two things. The first was another folder, hardly thicker than the others in the desk. I seized it immediately.

The second was a pile of cash, more money than I'd ever seen in my entire life. And I'd once fucked a guy rolling around on a bed littered with a hundred thousand dollars. (The man had kept it when we were finished; another perk of sex slaves over prostitutes, not needing to worry about being robbed.)

“That's... that's so much... are you seeing...” stammered Vivian.

“Tell me what's in the folder!” I demanded, thrusting it into her hands. The money could wait. I had to know.

It took my friend a moment to pry her eyes away from the bounty, but right before I was about to grab her by the shoulders and shake her, Vivian finally looked to the object in her hands. She opened it, scanning a page, then flipping to another, than another.

“Well?” I asked breathlessly.

“Harmony Reed,” she said, seeming to read from the page. “Obedience. Code... Let me be careful about this. The first part is...” She said a word. Then a long pause. “Then the second part...” Another pause. “This is the last bit. It’s...”

I was still myself.

I heard the words, and though the trio fled my memory the moment I heard the final word, for a moment, I had known it. It was short and rather simple, and not at all what I would have expected. It would have been a breeze to remember if it was the only one somebody needed to know. And though it had left my conscious mind, it was still sitting right there in Vivian’s hands. “Is that it? Are there more?”

“There are fifty-nine more here. This... this is it, Harmony. You found it. You’re back in control.” She handed the folder back over to me. “Though I guess now you need to find a new master and hand over the playbook, huh.”

Clutching the folder to my chest, I slumped down into the leather reading chair. The passport we’d dropped earlier was near my feet; I bent to pick it up and examine it one more time. Jeff Konicki. The man had controlled every aspect of my life, taken everything and made me his devoted slave. In exchange for my time and sweat and saliva and humiliation and separation and sheer fucking trauma... I’d been given fulfillment, and pleasure on tap. For several years, that had been enough for me. Then Jeff and his stupid fucking god complex had gone and gotten himself killed, leaving a hole in me that nothing quite seemed to be able to fill.

These past months, all I’d been able to think about was how much I missed those feelings of total surrender, becoming a radiant sexual dynamo on command. But at the same time, I loved my people. I loved where I was, and who I was with, and it was destroying me that I couldn’t have both. The words on these pages would give someone the power to make me back into the tool of sexuality, but it was hard to think of someone I could give that power to who would accept it and use it, but who wouldn’t still let me be Harmony Reed.

“It’s me.”

Vivian frowned. “What’s you?”

“It’s me,” I repeated. “I’m going to do it myself.”

“Do what? You’re not making any sense, babe.”

I stood up. The lewd yellow dress had ridden up in the few seconds I’d been sitting, but I didn’t care. I looked amazing. My body, my sex, was power. As a young woman I had squandered that power, and then Jeff had stolen it for his own ends. Given it back, I wasted it again until it overwhelmed me. It had been too much for Jordan, far too much for Matt. Now it was mine again.

From now on, I was going to use it my own damn self.

“I’m my master now.”

Chapter Thirteen

“It’s good to see you again, Harmony,” said Dr. Kovacs as I settled into my usual spot in his patient couch. He followed suit, settling into his rolling chair, brushing a piece of lint off of that same blue sweater he always wore. “I received your message, but I have to say, I was worried at such a break in your therapy schedule from someone at your stage.”

“Oh come on, it’s only been a month, David. I’ve had kind of a lot on my plate since we last met.” I crossed my legs, not especially caring if my outfit was showing off my panties. I’d scavenged a small mountain of clothes from the ranch, and for now, I was amusing myself with a little flaunting. Yesterday, I’d bent to adjust a strap on my sandal while pumping gas, and the guy parked behind me sprayed all over his car. His girlfriend had been pissed, especially when she looked over and figured out why.

“Still. After what you’ve been through, you need to make sure you’re keeping focused on taking care of yourself. I realize you’ve recently left your jobs, and that can be a major stressor. But since I’m seeing you pro bono, I want you to remember that there’s no excuse for neglecting your mental health.”

I couldn’t help but smile at him, my stuffy, awkward, unconventional Mr. Rogers. “I’ll try. But I did want to tell you that I’ve been doing a lot better since we last met.”

“That’s good to hear. Did you wind up undertaking that trip you mentioned? To your... former residence?” He wrinkled his nose.

“I did.”

“How did it go? Did you have any revelations?”

“You could say that.” Then, I walked him through the events of the trip. The memories, the discoveries. Jeff. All of it.

Well, all of it but one thing. I was saving that.

“That’s... that’s amazing, Harmony. I’m so happy for you. Just hearing the man’s name from your mouth, it makes my heart swell. That’s great progress.” His round, bearded face split with a wide grin.

“It feels good to say it. I slip sometimes. Years of habit are hard to break. But just being able to think of him as a person, rather than as ‘Master,’ makes it easier to process. Like, I can see that Jeff Konicki was a man who hurt people for selfish reasons. Even if that’s not always how my heart understands things, I know it’s true, and that the only reason it doesn’t feel that way is because I’m one of the people he hurt.”

“So have you changed your mind about your plans for the future, then?”

“No. I’m still going to go back to being what I want to be. That didn’t change.”

He sighed, the smile fading. “But why, Harmony? When you just acknowledged that these desires of yours stem from this man’s malfeasance? Why let him continue to manipulate you?”

“Because I like some of the ways he changed my life, and I’m going to embrace some of them. Not all of them. I’m done with being forced into positions that will mess up my life, with letting strangers dictate my path for me. But the truth is, I *like* being able to let go. I can be anything I want, and tomorrow night I can be something else.” I shrugged. “I guess I discovered that it’s weirdly liberating to be a slave.”

He was quiet a moment; I knew he didn’t like my decision, but he was recognizing that it was beyond him to change my mind about it. “So you said that Mr. Konicki’s files exonerated your family for having sold you into his custody. Have you given any thought to reconnecting with them?”

“Actually, believe it or not, they contacted me before I contacted them. When I got back from the ranch, I had a letter waiting for me, from them. Apparently a family friend saw one of the articles about me and passed it on to them. I’m not in the white pages or anything, but they contacted the reporter, who’d gotten my contact info from Jordan and Matt. They were able to convince him to deliver the letter.”

“And? What did they say?”

“That they’d read the stories in the paper, even the stuff from Matt. That they prayed it wasn’t true. How devastated they were when I’d disappeared, how much they’d missed me. How much they still love me. It was weird. My mom was always kind of distant with me. I guess I just responded better to being daddy’s princess than mommy’s trophy daughter, or whatever. But the stuff she wrote in that letter...”

Dr. Kovacs rolled his chair to me and offered a box of tissues. There was another within reach of the couch, but the minor thoughtfulness of his gesture was all it took to push me into a full cry. He let me do so for a few minutes, standing by with more tissues at need.

“I called them, and we’ve been talking. I haven’t told them everything, but I don’t think they need to know all of this, you know? My dad thought it was scandalous to have a date go past eleven o’clock, so I can only imagine how he’d react to hearing about me snowballing my master’s cum with a room full of naked sex slaves.”

“I don’t think most fathers would know how to react to that one, Harmony.”

“You’re probably right. Anyway, I’m going to visit them in a couple weeks. Next week now, actually. I’ll see them, the rest of the family.” I sniffled hard. “My dog Pogo is still alive. Kinda gimpy, I guess, but I get to see my dog again. I wonder if he’ll remember me. What do you think?”

“I’m sure he will. That’s wonderful, Harmony. I’m so happy for you.” After a few more loud nose-blowings on my part, he went on. “How about Sasha? How has she been taking matters? Any changes?”

“Some, I think. I figured after what I helped Mas... Jeff do to her, I owed it to her to try at least that hard to get her head right. Seeing those pictures helped, I think. She’s staying with Miguel and his brother, now, and she has the shot of her from right before she was taken framed on her dresser. He says she looks at it a lot.”

“That’s encouraging.”

I nodded. “I even managed to do a little research and found an article about Jeff’s death. I guess by the time they found him, the body was...” I shuddered. “Anyway, it was pretty bad. But he must’ve had his wallet on him or something, because they IDed him by name. It was a little blurb in a local newspaper, but I think seeing it in print is helping it sink in for her. Miguel is trying to get her to enroll in some classes at community college in the fall, but... she’s got ideas of her own.”

“That’s too bad.”

“Actually no. Sasha having ideas of her own is pretty great. She’s thinking about trying to go round up the rest of our sister slaves, whoever she can find, and show them what she’s seen. They all have files, pictures. She says she wants to try to help them start to move on themselves.”

“That sounds like an awfully ambitious undertaking, though very noble. Do you think she’s up to the task? I have to imagine these girls will likely be in serious need of professional counseling, even if they take to the news as well as Sasha. Perhaps even if they take to it as well as you, Harmony.”

“Hey, maybe we could all move out here and you could carve out a niche for yourself as the city’s only sex slave recovery specialist.” His eyes went wide; I knew my behavior had been shocking enough for him. “But I think she’ll be fine. She’s got some funding. I worry she’s going to push herself too hard, or that she’s only doing it because she thinks I want her to, but... I think it’s worth a shot.”

“I hope so. I imagine that would be a big load off of your shoulders, too, wouldn’t it?”

I smiled at him. “Even when I’m bragging on how good other people are doing, you have to find a way to make it about me.”

“You’re my patient. Your well-being is the entire reason we’re here together.”

A wider smile. “On that note, actually... I don’t think I’m going to be continuing here as a patient. That’s part of the reason I wanted to come here today, to let you know I think our working relationship has gone as far as it’s gonna.”

He sat up a little straighter. “Really? Are you shifting to a more conventional form of therapy? I hope you’re not going to give up on it altogether.”

I nodded. “I came to you because I was unhappy, frustrated. I didn’t know who I was any more, or what I wanted to be. I just knew something wasn’t right. Now... that’s not the case any more. You fixed me, David.”

“There is no ‘fixing’ people, Harmony. You’re *better*, now, but that doesn’t mean...”

“You’ve done enough. For crying out loud, I assaulted you. Remember? Right here in your office, I stormed in and accused you of being the one behind my trigger episodes.”

“I remember, all right. Not every day I get duct taped to my chair.”

“Funny, I seem to have people trying to tie me up all the time.” We shared a soft laugh. “But really, the things I’ve done to you, around you... you’ve been a trooper, but I think I’ve put you through enough. I’m going to try being the new me, and if that person still needs some work, I’ll find someone to help me.”

“Please don’t feel as though you need to terminate your status as my patient on my account, Harmony. You’ve given me a few gray hairs, yes, but you’ve also... well, I don’t mean to say ‘paid me back,’ quite, but...” He tugged at the collar of his sweater. “I’d be lying if I said it was *entirely* unpleasant.”

Ah, all the times his hypnosis efforts culminated with me triggering in his office. Like he was a gameshow host, calling out, *Spin the wheel! See what kind of slut you’ll turn into!* I nearly laughed. “Actually, paying you back has a bit to do with my decision.”

“This is pro bono, Harmony. Please, you don’t need to—”

I crossed the room to stand in front of him. Dr. Kovacs was a man of real integrity, and had never once taken advantage of me in spite of a whole lot of effort on my part to convince him to. Still, he was a man, and I was Harmony fucking Reed. Dressing the part, too, which didn’t hurt. His eyes tried to stay on mine, but there was simply too much Harmony to ignore.

“I want to sleep with you. I really, *really* want to sleep with you. And I know you’re married,” I said, holding my hands up to forestall that rebuttal. “And I don’t want that to cause you problems or conflict. So I want to offer you, and if your wife would also be interested, her, too. Name a time, a place, and what you’d like me to be. I think you have some idea by now of your options.”

“What? No, I couldn’t possibly...! And you, y-you can’t even control your triggers yet anyway!”

“Justin knows a guy who knows how to write apps, and we slipped him a few bucks to make me one. I have it on my phone.” I opened it, holding the phone out so he could see it. “See, it brings up a list of all my trigger options, and when I select one, it flashes the words on the screen. The guy didn’t know what the app was for, but he humored us. So now nobody knows my triggers but me, and I haven’t had another random episode since.”

“That’s quite clever, actually. Still—”

“I hope you’ll let me show you exactly how clever.” I squatted down in front of him, and for a moment, I wondered if I was mesmerizing my own hypnotherapist.

“Whatever happens, it’s totally confidential. No questions asked, not a word after. No judgments, even if you’re into something wonderfully freaky. If you and Mrs. Kovacs want to dress up like schoolgirls and have me paddle your asses, I want to do that. Not only to pay you back, but... I think you’re amazing, and I’d love for once in my life to fuck an amazing man.”

He was thunderstruck; evidently he didn’t know how to respond. I bent down and gave him a kiss on the cheek, then dabbed away my lipstick to keep from landing him in any hot water over dinner. I glided over to the door. “I hope I hear from you soon, David. Truly. Bye, for now.”

He snatched a tissue from the box and dabbed at the sweat beading on his forehead. “G-goodbye, Harmony.”

I opened the door, then turned back. “Oh, and I should probably say something, so you don’t freak out. We also found a half a million dollars in cash and the account numbers and pass codes for about twenty-five million more in various tax havens. Sasha and I talked it over, and agreed to some uses for it.”

“Did you say twenty-five *million* dollars...?!”

“I did. Five million we set aside for a charity to help victims of human trafficking. Then a little bit – comparatively, at least – for all of the bills for Jordan’s and Matt’s medical and legal needs. Half a mill each for Justin, Miguel, Vivian and Hannah, since they helped us all out a lot. And most of the rest we’re using the ledger to figure an equitable split for my sister slaves. Take care of them until they’re on their feet, then hand over their share.”

He was still too stupefied by the news, so I said the rest on my way through his reception area. “So when you get a check in the next couple days for five hundred grand, feel free to cash it, and get yourself a nice new sweater. I can’t wait to take it off of you.”

Epilogue

“Slow as hell in here tonight, huh,” I yelled to the bartender, so as to be heard over the pulse of the music.

“Sure is, Xander,” she answered. I was a regular here, enough that this chick remembered my name. That was all she said though. Not much for conversation, that one. Still, she was young, she was hot, and she mixed a good drink.

“Whiskey sour?” I slid a few bills across the bar to her.

“You got it.”

I sat down backwards in one of the bar stools, one of only three people occupying one at the moment. The Eclipse was the place to be on the weekends, but on a Tuesday, it was slim pickings. Those of us who preferred a more old school approach to hooking up than dating apps had to make do with whatever straggled in.

The offerings weren't nonexistent, at least. A small group of halfway decent girls were dancing together on the floor. If I could crack that nut, I might make a go for the brunette. There was an Asian girl who caught my eye for a minute, but before I got halfway over to her, Boyfriend came back from the head. The black girl nursing a White Russian was plenty hot, but was staring a bit too gloomily into her glass to make me think she was ready for a good time. Rebound, maybe? I wasn't looking for drama, though. The only other prospects of note were to settle for another pity fuck with Darcy, the slightly chubby blonde across the way who was already eyeing me hopefully, or to bide my time in the hope of something better coming along. The bartender set down my whiskey sour, and I braced myself for another disappointing venture.

Then she walked in.

Every guy in the place noticed her in an instant, and the next, every girl looked over to see what we were all looking at. I could barely pick up the sound of my own screaming over this music, but I swear, I could hear boners shredding the jockeys of half the guys in here. Mine included.

She was divine. Maybe literally. That someone sold this woman clothes ought to be a crime, but if it had to be done, they'd sold her exactly the right outfit. A pale lavender dress, if you could call it that, with long laces up the side that showed so much of her in profile that, even if almost the entire front weren't missing too, I'd still have been sure she hadn't bothered with bra or panties. Big, perky breasts, trim waist that flowed into a set of hips that heralded an ass I could stare at for a day and not get bored. I expected a navel ring, but there was just an unadorned belly button between two ribbons across the front. It was the only fabric above her waist except for two straps only about four inches wide each across her breasts and joined behind her neck. They showed more of the center of her cleavage than the usual top portion. And then there were the

boots. My god. I wasn't even a shoe guy – I seldom even noticed what a girl had on her feet – but these, black vinyl with silver buckles along the sides, starting at her knees ending in heels that had to be half a foot tall if they were an inch. But she walked on them like she was born to it. No, she *glided*. All that, and the hair of an angel and face of the devil herself.

Everything about her was liquid, flowing sensuality. Just looking at her redeemed something for me about the world.

She somehow arrived at the bar without being mobbed. I think none of us men knew what to do. You couldn't just walk up to a creature like this and try some cheesy line or chat her up. This woman looked like she couldn't walk to the end of her driveway to get the mail without having a dozen guys try to fuck her. She'd need some kind of special finesse. Only, with her so close I could smell her perfume – something else I seldom noticed until this woman made me realize how she'd perfected it – I couldn't think. What would I say?

She settled onto a stool with ease; she was a tall one, all right, with legs taller still. Then she swiveled around and leaned back against the bar. The not-so-chatty bartender was simply gawking at her. Suddenly I realized why she'd never given me the time of day, given how she was drinking in the sight of this new-comer. The woman's eyes calmly surveyed the floor, and if she was aware or put off that everyone was staring at her, she didn't show it. Looking like that, she had to be used to it by now.

Her head cocked to one side; she knew the bartender was there without even looking back. Somehow, her voice – a rich, throaty purr – carried effortlessly. Or maybe my ears were straining that hard to hear her. “Who do I have to fuck to get a drink around here?”

If I were ten years younger she might have made a mess of my pants right then and there. I wasn't the only guy in earshot, though. I was going to have one shot at this woman. As fast as possible, but no faster, I seized my as-yet untouched whiskey sour and almost leapt to her side.

“Hey there,” I said. “You looking for a drink?”

She turned her whole body to look at me, and somehow in spite of the temptation, I managed to keep eye contact. Mostly. God, that body. “Oh yeah?”

“Yeah. Fresh from the bar – was about to dive in, but something told me you needed it more than me.”

She looked amused, but didn't take the drink from me yet. “Was that something the fact that I asked for a drink?”

“Busted.” I laughed awkwardly. “A woman comes in looking like you, I can't help getting nosy.”

She arched a perfectly sculpted eyebrow, smirking. “Women come in here who look like me?”

“One did tonight. Don’t know what I did right in some other life, but one sure as hell did tonight.”

She looked me over. I stood a little straighter, sucked in my (mostly) nonexistent gut. “You strike me as a pretty confident guy. Knows how to take what he wants. Is that true?”

“I’m definitely hoping to take what I want here, baby, but I’d be lying if I said I knew how yet.”

That got a laugh out of her. Even her teeth were perfect. “What would you say if I told you that, if you played your cards right, I’d spend the rest of the night giving you every single thing that you want, in exactly the way that you want it?”

“I’d ask you to deal me in.” What the fuck was happening? Was I dreaming? I sat down on the adjacent stool as much to settle in next to her as because I was getting a bit light-headed.

She eyed me another long moment. “What’s your name, and what’s this you’ve got for me?”

Encouraged, I took the seat next to her. “My name’s Xander Barrera. And let’s see, I’ve got a... whiskey sour? Yeah, that’s right. How about you?”

The mischievous tilt of her mouth as she answered sent thrills up and down my spine. “My name is Harmony Reed,” she answered, raising the glass to her lips and taking a sip. Then, she took the front of my belt in her hand and pulled me close, bending down to whisper into my ear. “And I’ve got a secret.”

“Oh yeah? What’s that?”