



INNOCENT *as Sin*

SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE ...

CASSIDY COLE

INNOCENT AS SIN

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ONE

JENNIFER

“OH MY GOD!” Kendall gasps in surprise, covering her mouth with her hand.

“What is it?” I ask, wondering what kind of job advert in the newspaper could possibly have got someone like *her* so shocked. I mean, almost *nothing* shocks this girl.

“Okay, listen to this one,” she says, as a strangely playful grin spreads across her face. “*Virgin wanted for one week. No experience necessary. Excellent pay and benefit package, to be discussed upon application ...* I mean, come on! Seriously?!”

“That’s so gross,” I laugh, shaking my head and trying to turn away a little in my seat to hide the blush that comes to my face whenever anyone mentions *virgins* in conversation.

I look around the totally deserted lobby of the large office buildings where Kendall and I both work as receptionists – well, for one more month, anyway.

You see, the firm we’re employed by is closing down in twenty-eight days time, when this building is getting turned into luxury apartments, and soon we’ll both be out of a job. There are no more clients to assist, and almost no phone calls to take, which is why we’ve both just been sitting here all morning, openly reading the job section of the local newspaper. And I bet even if our boss *did* catch us, he

wouldn't be able to say anything. In fact, he's probably up there in his office right now, wondering how *he's* gonna make payments on his car and house next month, too.

"Hey, you mind if I go outside for a smoke break?" Kendall asks just then.

"Sure, go for it," I smile back, even though this is her forth smoke break of the morning, and it's not even 11 a.m. "I mean, it's not exactly like we're busy," I add with a shrug.

As she pushes herself to her feet and heads outside for a cigarette, her high heels clicking loudly on the polished floor and echoing around the large deserted lobby, I turn back to my sketchbook.

With no real work to do anymore, I figure at least I can work on some new dress designs. After all, if I'm lucky I'll have some job interviews to go to soon, and at the moment I have nothing particularly suitable in my wardrobe, and no money to buy anything to wear, either. Not for the first time, I thank the Lord that at least I saved up for that second-hand sewing machine while I was able to.

I stare hard at my latest design, trying to focus my attention. But for some reason I just can't concentrate on the simple grey shift dress I've been sketching anymore, because I can hear the words of the advert again, repeating over and over in my head like an echo: *Virgin wanted ...*

I nervously scan the empty lobby again, making double – no *triple* – sure that I'm alone, and then I gingerly slide the newspaper over from Kendall's side of the reception desk and quickly flip through it until I've found the advert again.

It's in the very back, in the 'Personal Services' section, nestled in amongst the more obviously sleazy advertisements –

‘Girls Wanted for Adult Modeling Work’ and ‘Escort Services’ and so forth ...

Virgin Wanted

For one week. No experience necessary. Excellent pay and benefit package, to be discussed upon application. For more information, email: help_wanted@xmail.net. I look forward to hearing from you.

THEN I FLIP to a blank page at the very back of my sketchbook and quickly copy down the email address, feeling my heart hammering hard against my ribs.

What the hell am I even doing? I think as I scrawl down the address.

Only a moment later, I hear the loud click of Kendall’s heels on the lobby floor once again and I look up, startled, quickly flipping the newspaper closed and then turning back in my sketchbook to the dress design.

Kendall sighs and slips back into her chair, picking up the paper and scanning through it for what must be the tenth time this morning, as if she’s hoping that magically an advert for a job she’s suitable for will suddenly appear on one of the pages.

“Virgin wanted,” she mutters under her breath, shaking her head. “As if it wasn’t hard enough to get a damn job these days. Now they want you to be a *virgin* too? Well ... Good luck with that!”

I don't know how to reply. I'm just too embarrassed and worried that whatever I say will somehow give away the fact that I copied the advert down – so instead I just choose to ignore her and hope that she changes the subject soon.

But it seems like there's little chance of that.

"I *said*, virgin, right?" she persists. "Well, I guess that's us on welfare for the rest of our lives if that's what it takes to get a job!"

I still don't know what to say. So I just mumble, "I guess," and start to reshuffle the large stack of papers I already filed once this morning.

I know I'm acting a little off, but the thing is, I just don't know how to act normal right now.

"Hey, what's got into you?" Kendall laughs. "I thought we agreed on the day they gave us notice – if we're soon gonna be unemployed, we might as well have some *fun* for our remaining time here, right?"

And she's totally right of course. However weird I'm feeling right now, I don't want to bring her down, too. She's been really good at keeping our spirits up since things started to go downhill around this place. It's the least I can do.

So I pull the newspaper away from her and flick it open, right back to that Personals section.

"Right," I say. "*What's it gonna be then? Girls Wanted for Foot Modeling or Girls Wanted for Specialist Adult Movie Shoot – must be willing to cover themselves in jello and chocolate?*"

"Decisions, decisions!" laughs Kendall.

But even as I'm joking, I can't help my gaze drifting once again to that strange and curious advert in the middle of the page ...

Virgin wanted ...

THAT EVENING I step into my apartment and kick off my shoes, glad to give my feet a rest from those cheap-ass, fake leather pumps. I look around me and sigh. Even though I've done the very best I can with this tiny shoebox of an apartment, it's *still* pretty crappy looking. I guess there's only so far a girl can go with Goodwill and imagination ...

I flop down onto the beat up couch and turn on the small, second-hand TV. But as I'm flipping through the channels, it's all I can think about again.

Virgin Wanted ...

I turn off the set once more and then pick my purse up off the floor by the couch and slip out my sketchbook. I flip to the back page and then sit there, staring for a while at that mysterious email address - help_wanted@NYmail.net - feeling my heart quickening again, the longer I stare at it.

I'd always considered my virginity as something to be embarrassed about - a secret kept close to my chest.

I don't even know *why* I'm still a virgin. I'm mean, I'm only twenty-one years old, so it's not like I'm not an old maid or anything just yet. I guess I'm still just waiting for the right guy to come along.

But that's just stupid daydream stuff, right?

Right now, I'm totally broke. And if I don't find another job *quick smart*, then I can kiss goodbye to this tiny crappy

shoebox of an apartment, too. And for some reason, seeing that ad kind of feels like ... I don't know.

Fate?

A sign?

Because my virginity is practically the one thing I have *left*, the only thing that sets me apart from every other girl in this city. And here is some advert actually *asking* for a virgin ... Well, these days it feels like there aren't too many of us left.

I sigh again with frustration.

I mean, is this something so completely crazy that I shouldn't even be contemplating it? Is answering this advert the first step towards my body being found in some ditch somewhere, wrapped in tarpaulin? Or is this actually just something totally normal – the kind of thing that a modern girl these days wouldn't think twice about replying to?

Damn. I wish there was someone I could talk to right now; someone who's opinion I could ask.

You see, I don't really have a best friend. I moved away from my home state two years ago for a fresh start here in Philly. But all I managed to get was this dismal apartment and a badly paid job as a receptionist which is about to come to an end.

I keep telling myself to go out more, meet new people, make some real friends. But I just feel too shy. I mean, Kendall is great and all. She's really fun to work with and she's totally kept me sane at the office. But we're just not that close. We're only work colleagues – not BFFs.

And as for family? Let's just say that's kind of complicated.

Which brings me back to my current dilemma.

I sigh in frustration, wishing I knew the answer.

What's a girl to do?

But I guess, as usual, I'm on my own in figuring this one out ...

TWO

MARCUS

“IS THERE anything else I can do for you, Mr Whitelaw?”

I look up from my computer, realizing that Julia, my ditzy secretary, is *still* standing there, looking back hopefully at me with those big blue eyes of hers like she’s hoping I’ll just spin around in my chair, unzip my fly, and nod down at my cock, saying, “Well, there is *one more thing* you could take care of ...”

But instead, I simply shake my head and say, “That will be all, Julia,” feeling a wave of relief when she finally turns and heads out of the office, leaving me alone at my desk.

Even though I know she’d fuck me in a *heartbeat* she’s just not quite my type. She’s scatterbrained – always messing up my appointments, or forgetting to write them into my schedule at all. Some days, I don’t know why I don’t just fire her. But then again, perhaps the reason I keep her on is because, well, I don’t find her too *distracting*.

And the kind of girls I *do* go for?

Let’s just say that they need to be more than just ‘pretty’. They need to be something *special*, too.

I wait for the frosted glass door to swish closed behind her, completely sealing me off from the rest of the large bustling

open plan office, and then I turn once more to my computer screen, feeling a small charge of excitement shoot through me at the thought that someone suitable might finally have answered my ad ...

I log into the totally private and secure email system and as it's booting up, I take a leisurely sip of the gourmet coffee that I demand Julia brings me to start each morning, here at Whitelaw Enterprises.

The inbox loads – displaying the news that I have *seventeen* new applicants to the advertisement, and for a moment my heart does indeed leap with excitement.

But as I begin to open the email messages and actually *read* what these people have written, my hopes begin to sink again just as fast, just like always.

I should have learnt by now not to get my hopes up.

It's just the usual mix: liars and crazies, all so obviously trying to sniff out a way to make an easy buck.

But as I'm reaching the second-to-last email I pause for a moment, reading and then *rereading* the simple, straightforward message on the giant screen of my iMac:

From: Jennifer.Adams1997@mailfire.org

Hi.

I read your advert. I'm not sure what you're after exactly but I think I fit the bill. How do I apply?

Yours,

Jennifer

I FEEL a quick flash of optimism, but at the same time try my hardest to ignore it. How many times have I been disappointed by now? Way too many to count ...

No, I need to remain calm. This girl's probably just like all the rest – lying through her teeth. And anyway, I haven't even *seen* her yet ...

I quickly click open a new tab on my computer screen, then log into the covert profile-searching software that I had to pay an absolute *fortune* to gain access to. I mean, this isn't just some regular search engine. This stuff isn't available to just anyone – this is top secret, Government-level stuff, and probably violating all kinds of privacy laws in the process.

Once I've got the software up and running, I enter as much information as I have on this girl – which is just her name, her email address – and then I hit the 'search' button, taking another sip of my coffee and sitting back for a moment in my chair as I wait for the software to do its stuff.

Within seconds, a high-resolution photograph has flashed up on my screen, along with a number of other personal details: where she works, how old she is, her employment history, her medical and criminal history, too (all squeaky clean), and her current address as well as all known previous addresses ...

But I can hardly draw my eye away from the photograph to pay attention to all this extra information.

It's just a simple picture – probably taken by a friend on a sunny day out in a park. But it's just perfect. *She's* just perfect. Big brown eyes. Smooth skin. Glossy hair. Full sensuous lips.

A cute button nose. And what looks like a *killer* body, too, from what I can see of it.

I lean in further towards the screen, feeling that all too familiar rush of blood – heading straight for my cock, which is already swelling and pressing painfully against the unforgivingly tight tailored suit of my pant leg.

Yes.

I think I've finally found her.

I think I've finally found my *something special* ...

From: help_wanted@xmail.net

Hello Jennifer,

Good to hear from you. I'd like to arrange an appointment. I want you to meet me at Friday at 5pm, at my office in New York. Please email me your cellphone number and I'll have my assistant set it all up.

Marcus Whitelaw

THREE

JENNIFER

I HOPE I haven't made a huge mistake.

Oh well, even if this meeting *doesn't* work out and he turns out to be some sleazy horrible creep, I reassure myself, then at least I've gotten a free holiday out of it, right?

You see, this is the first time I've ever been to New York, and even just from the brief flashes of it I've seen so far, it's everything I imagined it would be and more. It's like being inside a film set: yellow cabs, honking horns, loud Bronx accents, and every type of person under the sun, all hustling and bustling about, as I watch it all from the wound-down window of my very own *private car*.

I know, right?

I still couldn't quite believe it when I stepped off the flight, just a couple of hours ago, and there standing in the Arrival's lounge was an immaculately dressed six foot white guy with a big cardboard sign, with *my name* written on it! It was like something out of a corny romantic comedy film, and that's still how it feels right now, as I sit back and relax, as much as I'm able, on the plush leather seats, as the sleek, jet-black car glides effortlessly through the mid-afternoon traffic of downtown Manhattan.

As we drive, I check the hem of my skirt for any loose stitching. It's not exactly like I had very long to throw this outfit together, and I'm hoping the edgy, modern design I settled on in the end will distract from any rushed sewing. After all, it's not like I could afford to just go out and *buy* something new to wear, so a revamp of one of my tatty old work skirts will just have to do.

"Okay, Miss Adams," the driver says in a soft, refined accent – treating me the same way as if I was some kind of freaking celebrity. "Here we are. If you head into the lobby and tell the receptionist you're here for the appointment with Mr Whitelaw, she'll make sure to do the rest ..."

"Thanks, um ... and what's your name?" I reply, sheepishly.

"Trent," the driver smiles back at me, perhaps a little taken aback – like I'm the first person to ever actually talk to him like a regular human being before.

"Thanks so much, Trent," I grin back at him, before stepping out of the car and heading towards the imposing building, set back from the busy street – the words Whitelaw Enterprises emblazoned on the tinted glass above its huge entrance.

I look up in awe at the crazy building – the daringly modern architecture, the way the tint of the glass lets on nothing about what might be going on inside it, not to mention the ambiguity of the name; because 'Enterprises' could mean almost anything, couldn't it? – and then I think again about the wording of the advert, and in particular this time I think about the third line, the one that says: *You shall be very handsomely rewarded ...*

Could this finally be the lucky break I've been waiting for
all my life?

FOUR

MARCUS

“OH, COME ON!” Greg laughs, punching me on the shoulder. “I mean, when was the last time you let yourself blow off any steam. It’s just a few drinks, man. It’s just work, work, work with you. It’ll be fun. I mean, when was the last time you had any of *that*, right?”

Again, Greg explodes in laughter, and no matter how hard I try, I just can’t quite bring myself to join in. I just wish he’d *leave* my goddamn office.

If he wasn’t the son of one of my biggest investors, I’d fire him in a heartbeat. But no, I’ve got to keep his dad sweet, by employing this total imbecile.

I shoot a glance up at the clock. It’s nearly five o’ clock.

“Listen, Greg,” I say, “I’ve got a meeting at five. I’ll catch you on Monday ...”

“Don’t tell me you’re *still* pursuing Malchovic Finance?” he says incredulously. “Man, you don’t *ever* let anything go, do you?”

I shrug, letting him believe that my five o’ clock is business related.

“Well, old man, I guess I’ll leave you to it,” he adds, slapping me playfully on the back. “But if you change your

mind, we'll be at the Spearmint Lounge until late! Oh, and don't forget – you're *definitely* coming out for my birthday drinks next week. You already promised me that one, and I'm *not* letting you wriggle your way out of it, no matter what you say ...”

I give him the very briefest of nods, and then, finally, he leaves me alone in the sanctity of my office, with only minutes left to prepare before my meeting.

My meeting with *Jennifer*.

I slip the contract I've had my private lawyer draw up out of the desk drawer by my thighs and give it a cursory glance – not that I need to.

By now, I know this contract by heart.

I just hope she lives up to my expectations.

Because I've got real *high hopes* for this girl ...

FIVE

JENNIFER

I TAKE a deep breath then walk as confidently as I can into the large lobby, which is just about as empty as the building I normally work in. I feel a twinge of guilt, as I think again about Kendall, sitting there behind the reception desk today on her own, probably bored out of her mind, believing that I'm currently home sick with food poisoning (which is the excuse I gave her when I called up first thing this morning).

“Can I help you?” the girl on reception says as I step up to the counter. Her long blonde hair is immaculately almost impossibly straight and her icy blue eyes make no attempt whatsoever to hide the fact that she's looking me up and down as if she's never seen anyone like *me* in a high class place like this before, making no attempt whatsoever that she obviously thinks I'm *trash*.

I push my shoulders back, take a deep breath, and say my name as loudly and confidently as I can. “I'm Jennifer Adams,” I explain. “And I'm here for a five o' clock appointment with Mr Whitelaw?”

“Oh, *you're* Miss Adams?” she says, again making no attempt to mask her surprise. “You're not exactly what I was expecting ... Well, anyway, take the elevator in the corner up to floor fifteen. Mr Whitelaw will be waiting for you in his

office. It's at the end of the corridor. I'll call up now to let him know that you're here."

And with that, she turns her icy cold gaze away from me to the phone in front of her, picking it up and dialing through an internal call, her perfectly manicured glossy pink nails tapping and clicking against the plastic buttons of the phone, as I turn, somewhat shaken, make my way towards the elevators.

As I push the button and step inside, summoning floor fifteen, I wonder just what exactly she meant about me being *not what she was expecting* ...

I look myself over in the mirrored wall of the elevator as it rockets me upward toward the fifteenth floor, hoping that I've not got some major wardrobe malfunction going on. But no. To my relief, my homemade outfit seems to be holding up okay.

And I've certainly chosen clothes to best show off my figure too – which, okay, might not be the most *curvy* or voluptuous you've ever seen, and if anything might be regarded as kind of skinny. But I've done the best with what I've got: the way I've re-sown this white silk blouse certainly shows off my small but pert breasts, and the cut of my redesigned skirt draws attention to my best asset, too: my ass.

I turn my focus to my face and hair, hoping to God that my makeup hasn't smudged or my hair hasn't decided to defy the straightening I put it through this morning and spring up at some crazy angle. But no, as far as I can see, everything is still remaining nicely in place – my hair staying straight and glossy, and my big brown eyes shown off pretty nicely with the cat-flick eyeliner technique I diligently followed to the letter this morning on YouTube...

Just then, the elevator pings loudly to announce that it's reached its destination, and the brushed chrome doors glide open with a swish to reveal a long, empty corridor with a set of imposing frosted glass double doors waiting for me at the far end.

That must be Mr Whitelaw's office, I think nervously as I begin to walk slowly towards them. And as I walk, I wonder just what kind of a guy could want to spend a crazy amount of money on flying *virgins* in from all around the country just to interview them for ... *what* exactly?

I feel another sharp stab of worry, as it dawns on me all over again that I don't even know what the hell he wants me for. I need to make sure I don't get my hopes up here. Because he's most likely gonna be some creepy, ugly old guy with more money than sense, who will no doubt will want me to do something really disgusting and gross ...

I've reached the set of doors by now – they're just frosted enough that I can't quite see through them, with a simple nameplate attached that reads: *Marcus Whitelaw, CEO*.

I pause.

Do I knock?

Or do I just push them open and stride inside?

In the end, I decide on the first option, reaching out a shaky fist and knocking timidly, three times, on the cold hard glass.

“Come in,” a voice calls back – a surprisingly deep and sonorous voice, with just a hint of an accent that I can't quite put my finger on.

I gather my nerves, my heart hammering hard in my chest now, as I push open the doors and step inside.

But even with every option I've considered so far, there's one fact that I'm just not *at all* prepared for when I push open those doors ...

SIX

JENNIFER

MARCUS WHITELAW IS *GORGEOUS*, and I'm not one to use that word lightly. I'm talking the heart-stopping, panty-melting, *unable-to-stop-myself-from-immediately-imagining-him-naked* kind of gorgeous.

When I first step inside the office, he's standing with his back to me, gazing out on the sprawling city skyline below us that's shown off impressively through the amazing floor-to-ceiling windows that make up three of the four walls of his office, but the moment he turns around to look at me? Well, let's just say that his beauty hits me with the full force of a steamroller, knocking all the air from my lungs and all sensible thoughts from my head.

He's *tall* – way over six foot – and the immaculately tailored lines of his beautiful navy suit tell me that underneath that sumptuous blue cloth, he's *built* too.

But the absolute jewel in the crown is his face. It's perfect, flawless (and did I mention *gorgeous* already?!). His big grey eyes pin me firmly in place the moment they set upon me and I actually feel myself getting sucked into them – like he's sending out some kind of crazy traction beam. Meanwhile his thick, sensuous lips curl into the faint suggestion of a smile, lighting up his perfectly symmetrical face, which is framed

exquisitely by thick blonde hair and *the* most chiseled, sculpted jawline I've ever seen before on man or woman, not to mention the most beautiful cheekbones, too — cheekbones that would be the envy of any model. Even the dusting of light brown stubble that flecks his tanned, honey-colored skin only adds to the appeal, along with the way his collar is a little ruffled, and his tie is pulled open, giving me a tantalizing glimpse of his thick manly neck.

And you know what's weirdest of all?

I feel my body responding to him – in a way it *never* does. You see, I guess part of the reason I've remained a virgin my whole twenty-one years of existence, is that I've just never found guys *that* attractive – certainly not the way all my girlfriends did back in college seemed to do, gushing and cooing over 'cute' boys and so forth. I just couldn't ever quite see what all the fuss was about.

But right now?

Right this moment, staring into the eyes of this absolutely flawless, gorgeous man?

Well, suddenly it's like all those dormant hormones have kicked in at once.

I can feel my nipples tightening beneath the cups of my bra, and my clit starting to throb in my panties, almost *painfully*.

“Miss Adams?” he says, in that beautifully rich, low voice of his, the maddening trace of an accent making me wonder just *where* in the world he comes from, and I nod, unable to speak, still rooted firmly to the spot by his beautiful eyes. “Please, take a seat.”

He gestures to the sumptuous tan leather chair that faces onto his large mahogany desk, while he casually strides around it and sits down facing me. And when I finally begin to walk again on my now-unsteady legs, sure enough I feel an embarrassing *dampness* in my panties.

“Thank you so much for taking the time to come and see me, Miss Adams,” he continues, leaning forward and resting his elbows on the desk as he threads his long tanned fingers together, the glinting flash of his Rolex watch almost dazzling me for a moment as a beam of sunlight that’s cascading through the glass walls of this office strikes it dead-on. “I hope it hasn’t been too much of an inconvenience for you to travel all the way here from ... Where was it, Philadelphia?”

Damn, I think, trying to ignore the weird ways my body is crying out to him, *even the way he speaks is hot*.

There’s just something so damn sexy about how *formal* he is – how *businesslike* and *polite*.

“I, uh, I’ve never been to New York,” I stutter awkwardly in reply, cursing myself at how clueless and small-town I sound right now. “So it’s been really fun just visiting somewhere new. Thank you for the opportunity ...”

And I know I should just shut up here and let him do all the talking; explain exactly what the ‘job’ he’s advertising for entails. But for some reason I just *keep* on talking, feeling my mouth running on regardless.

“It must have cost you quite a bit of money to do this. I mean, I can’t be the *only* girl you’ve paid to fly out here, right?”

At this he smiles enigmatically and raises one thick, perfect eyebrow, resting his sculpted, stubble-flecked chin on

his interlaced fingers.

“Actually?” he says in that strange, captivating accent. “You’d be surprised, *Jennifer*, by just how few girls there are in your ... *position* ...”

The moment he says my name, I feel a shiver run down my spine. It’s crazy. The way my body’s responding, it’s like he’s hypnotized me.

“So how many other girls *have* applied?” I continue, suddenly desperate to know the answer, even though I still don’t know what exactly it is he even wants me *for*.

“I should admit there have been a few,” he admits. “But none as beautiful, none as *perfect* as you.”

I feel another deep pang of embarrassment, my face flushing with heat as he says this.

Is this guy for real?

I don’t know what to do or say with a flat out compliment like that, and find myself just wishing I could somehow change the subject.

“This is, um, an amazing office you have here ...” I offer meekly.

He laughs, once again pinning me with his smoldering grey-blue eyes.

“I’m guessing that nobody has ever told you how beautiful you are,” he says, slowly, deliberately, that deep voice of his resonating right through me.

I shake my head, shifting uncomfortably in my chair, my clit throbbing even harder despite myself.

“Have you ever had a boyfriend?” he continues.

I feel my heart begin to drum, too. Is this kind of questioning really necessary?

“Uh-uh,” I say quietly, shaking my head again, deciding to tell the truth.

“And why is that, exactly?”

“I don’t know,” I reply, hearing the trembling nerves in my voice now, just wishing to God he’d change the damn subject. “I guess I’ve just never been that into boys ...”

Before now, I think. But Marcus Whitelaw isn’t a ‘boy’ is he? He’s a *man* ... The most beautiful, gorgeous man I’ve ever laid eyes on.

Shit.

I need to keep it together here. I still don’t even know what the hell he wants from me ...

“What about girls?” he says with a playful smile, catching me totally off guard.

The heat increases in my cheeks, sizzling now, as I shake my head again.

“Girls either,” I say in an almost whisper. “So, Mr Whitelaw,” I continue, trying to summon any remaining scraps of confidence, “what exactly do you want from me? I mean, I still don’t know why you’ve even paid for my ticket here. What is it about girls ... like *me* that you like exactly?”

At this, he sits back casually in his chair, obviously thinking the question over, taking his time before he replies.

“That’s a good question,” he says slowly. “Well, Jennifer, I suppose I should be a little more forthcoming about our possible *arrangement*. As you can probably guess, I am a very busy man. I have a lot of responsibilities here at Whitelaw

Enterprises. And I imagine there was perhaps one particular word in my advert that drew your attention to it, was there not?"

"There was," I admit, wishing the ground would just open up and swallow me.

"And what word was that, Jennifer?"

I blush even harder, squirming in my seat. Is he really going to make me *say* it?

"Virgin," I whisper.

"That's right," he says. "Virgins fascinate me, Jennifer. I find myself drawn towards the mix of innocence and curiosity that a girl like you no doubt possesses. After all, aren't you dying to find out what all the fuss is about?"

I turn my burning face away from him, unable to speak. But he continues on regardless ...

"There's nothing more intriguing to me than opening up a young woman to all the sexual possibilities – all the many things that lay before her. However, increasingly, as I'm sure you're aware, a virgin is a hard thing to come across. And so I find myself in the rather frustrating position of having to *advertise* for one ... And even then, there weren't exactly hundreds of suitable applicants if you know what I mean ... But enough about me. I want to know a little more about you, Jennifer. Have you done *anything at all* with a boy?"

I think hard about my limited experience: nothing more than a few fumbled kisses, a few awkward fondles, then shake my head, feeling my heart booming loud in my ears and my cheeks so hot now they feel like they might catch fire.

"Very good," he replies with a smile. "I think that you're *exactly* what I'm looking for. So, I suppose you'd like me to

explain a little more about the arrangement, correct?”

I nod, totally lost for words – totally transfixed and pinned into place by this strange and captivating man.

It all feels so unreal; like something out of a corny novel.

“I would take possession of you for one week. And during that time, Jennifer, you would be *mine* – to do with as I pleased. Do you understand what I mean by this?”

“I, uh, I think so ...” I croak in reply.

“I want to *take* you, Jennifer. I want to teach you. I want to *taste* you. And by the end of the week ... I want to *have* you. Do you understand what I’m getting at?”

I can tell that he’s getting excited as he talks. There’s this devilish, animal glint in his eye, and I feel my palms going clammy and a cold sweat breaking out on my skin. I feel myself shaking my head and moving, too, getting ready to push myself up out of my seat and get the hell out of here. I mean, I guess I *knew* deep down that it was gonna be something sexual – something skeezy and creepy. But even so, I feel totally uncomfortable as he speaks, totally out of my depth, and now all I wanna do is leave.

“I’m sorry,” I begin, pushing myself unsteadily to my feet. “I think there’s been some kind of mistake ...”

“Oh, come off it, Jennifer,” he chides, his voice growing cold all of a sudden and his mouth curling in a venomous sneer. “What the hell did you *think* an advert for a Virgin Wanted would be about? Did you think I was asking you to come here to help pet kittens?”

“I’m really sorry, Mr Whitelaw,” I repeat, backing away from him now, feeling churned up, my head spinning, my

stomach twisted with nausea, not to mention just a little bit *afraid* of him.

And as I move away, he gets up from the desk too, walking out from behind it, striding quickly towards me, towering over me, his eyes so cold and piercing.

“You’re telling me that you’re about to walk out on *one million dollars*?” he hisses.

I stop dead in my tracks, scanning his face. But this is no joke – he’s being totally and utterly serious.

“*One million dollars*?” I repeat in a whisper.

He nods his head, slowly.

“You heard correct, Jennifer. One million dollars. For a single week of your time. For possession of your body. For possession of your virginity.”

“Can I think it over?” I say, my brain reeling and whirling, like I’m suddenly in some kind of crazy dream. *One million dollars*? I mean, that would totally transform my whole entire *life* ...

He shakes his head.

“As I said, Jennifer, I’m a very busy man. Virgins might be *rare* – especially virgins as beautifully exquisite as you. But they’re not fucking unicorns.”

He looks down at his gleaming gold Rolex, then meets my eyes once again.

“You have exactly *sixty seconds* to decide.”

SEVEN

MARCUS

I WATCH the confusion play across her face, as she wrestles with her morals, wondering if she could really go through with something as crazy as this. I hold my breath.

It's utterly impossible to tell what she's thinking.

I feel like there's every chance in the world she'll just tell me to go to hell.

Her exquisite features remain fixed in an unreadable expression, and as I wait for her to decide, I take a moment to drink in her beauty all over again. Good God. She's utterly perfect. Even better in the flesh than in her photograph. Smooth flawless skin, big brown eyes, a cute slightly upturned button nose, and such perfect sensuous lips that I feel a sharp, almost painful rush of blood to my cock, as I imagine them wrapping deliciously around it.

Her body is absolutely perfect, too. The cut of her clothes is both elegant and stylish but also subtly revealing – giving *just* enough of a hint of her perfectly proportioned, youthful figure to let me know that this girl would look absolutely stunning lying naked on the sheets of my bed, legs spread wide, her impossibly tight pussy dripping wet and ready for me.

I feel my cock grow even harder, straining dangerously against the tailored navy blue cloth of my slacks, as I try to force the lustful thoughts from my mind, even though that's the whole reason we're both here in the first place.

But before the fun can begin, I need to know that this girl is on the same page as me ...

I meet her gaze with my own, startled all over again by just how beautiful – beautiful yet utterly *innocent* – she is.

Just the way I like.

“Well,” I say, coldly, making sure keep my voice as businesslike as possible; something I've completely perfected in my daily interactions. “I think that was sixty seconds. What's it to be Jennifer? Are you in or are you out?”

I watch her gulp.

Another long, excruciating pause.

And then, almost imperceptibly, she nods. “Okay,” she says in a half-whisper, her voice cracking a little, her eyes fixed firmly on the floor. “I'll do it.”

“Very good, *Jennifer*,” I reply with a smile, savoring the delicate feel of her name on my tongue, just as delicate and delicious as I'm guessing her clit will taste.

I reach down to the desk drawer in front of it, sliding it open and pulling out the contract. I push the thin sheaf of pages across the desk towards her, watching her eye the document in confusion for a moment before picking it up, her big brown eyes quickly scanning the lines of text, her face slowly changing as the full nature of our little *agreement* sinks in.

I know just what that contract says.

And it leaves absolutely no question as to what our week ahead will hold ...

EIGHT

JENNIFER

AS THE PRIVATE car glides effortlessly through the lush, unfamiliar countryside towards my mystery destination, I wonder again if I've made the right decision. I mean, what would *you* do in my position?

Personally speaking, I just couldn't afford to turn *that* kind of money down.

I'd be totally crazy to.

I guess you could say I've had a pretty tough start in life, and never been anything other than *dirt poor*. I never knew my real dad, but from the tales my mom told me about him as I was growing up, that's probably for the best.

But my mom wasn't much better either. I mean, I don't begrudge her for it. I know she did everything she could to look after me. But she was also fighting a losing battle with drink and drugs, and there were times when it really felt like I had to bring myself up – especially when she was with one of her horrible, violent 'boyfriends', the revolving door of guys who just seemed to like to hang out with her and get wasted, and sometimes worse ...

These days, I hardly ever see her; only a few times a year. You see, she just can't look after me the way a mom should. I mean, if anything, *I'm* the one looking after *her* – making sure

to wire her money every now and again, as much as I can afford from my tiny salary, and call in on her once in a while to make sure she's doing okay.

So I guess you could say that something like this – a *million freaking dollars* – would go quite a long way to helping my mom out as well as me.

Damn, money like that could buy the both of us a totally brand new life. I could get her into a proper rehab program *and* I could afford to finally put myself through college with money left over. A *lot* of money.

And thinking about all that causes me to remember the contract again – that strange, formally-worded document that seemed to cover every single eventuality of our proposed week together.

The undersigned agrees to take a full medical exam to prove that her virginity is in tact ... (This I've already done; the car drove me to a private medical clinic a couple of hours ago, where a very discreet female doctor inspected my private parts, which was kind of weird and embarrassing to tell the truth ...)

The undersigned agrees to give Mr Whitelaw full access to her body and mind for the entirety of the week they are to spend together ...

The undersigned agrees to do everything within her power to satisfy Mr Whitelaw's desires, however they might manifest themselves ...

Just then my thoughts are interrupted, as the car seems to pull off the main road and down a long private drive towards the strangest house I've ever laid eyes on: a startlingly sleek, modern building, an eye-catching mish mash of steel and

concrete and glass and painted white brick, all hard, cold grey lines and sharp edges, but set away from the world in amongst the most amazing, sumptuously lush green countryside.

But there's something kind of lonely about this house too, something *empty* even, and I wonder if that should tell me something about Marcus, too ...

Just then the car pulls to a stop right outside the front door, and Trent steps out to open my car door for me. I'm about to ask him what happens next, when I turn to see the main door to the house bursting open and a striking-looking older white woman, with grey hair scraped tight in a pony tail, dressed in a sharp black suit, come racing straight towards me.

"You must be the new girl? Very good, follow me," she says, in a clipped English accent, her words tumbling out in such a rush I hardly have time to process what she's saying before she's turned and begun racing back towards the door to the house.

I shoot Trent a quick, puzzled *catch you later* smile and then follow her into the building, which is just as oddly masculine and lonely inside as it is outside.

I just about manage to keep up with this odd British woman as we practically race down what feels like a maze of bare white corridors, each more stark than the last, before all of a sudden I almost bump into her back as she stops outside a plain, gloss-black door.

She pushes it open, and gestures for me to step inside.

I look around me in amazement. I mean, this one single bedroom is bigger than my entire freaking *apartment* back in Philly.

“This will be your room for the week,” she explains in that clipped British accent. “I trust it’s to your liking? And if you need anything, Miss Adams, please don’t hesitate to call me – day or night.”

At this, she nods to the telephone set on the table next to the sumptuous double bed that’s just crying out to be jumped up and down on.

“You can reach me by dialing nine.”

Woah, I think. This is like some crazy five-star hotel ...

“I see you haven’t brought much luggage, so if you require any further fresh clothes and laundry,” she continues, stepping over to what looks like a blank white wall, “then you should hopefully be able to find everything you need in here ...”

At this, she pushes lightly on the wall and the whole thing swivels around on itself, opening up the door to what looks like *the* most amazing walk-in wardrobe in existence. I only catch a small, tantalizing glimpse of what looks like an eye-watering array of gorgeous dresses and insane sparkling shoes before the door slides closed again.

“Well, I should leave you alone to prepare. Marcus will be returning home from work at seven o’ clock and he’s requested to see you in the Livingston suite for dinner. Don’t worry, I’ll be here to escort you to it, I know what a maze this place can be. But do make sure to be ready for him, won’t you? Choose something nice to wear. And make sure you are *fully* bathed, if you understand what I’m saying?”

I nod, feeling a sudden rush of heat to my cheeks, as I realize all over again just why I’m here in this situation. And it seems like this strange older woman is just as aware of my function as I am.

“With all that said, I’ll leave you alone now,” she says, smiling at me for the first time, a flash of warmth entering her previously stern features.

“Oh, what’s your name by the way?” I ask as she’s turning to leave, returning her smile with one of my own. “I’m Jennifer.”

I hold out my hand to her, and when she shakes it, her own fingers are surprisingly cold and bony.

“My name’s Helena,” she says, again kind of taken aback, just like Trent was, as if she’s not used to being talked to like a regular human being. “And I’m here to look after you. Anything you could possibly want – just ask and you can be sure I’ll do it for you.”

What could I possibly want? I think. I mean, I’m already in this amazing house. What else could I need?

At this she gives me a look and says softly, “Now forgive me if this is presumptuous, my dear, but I’m guessing you’re not exactly used to being waited on hand and foot?”

“You guessed correct,” I reply with a shrug.

“I thought so. You look like a girl who knows how to take care of herself. Well, my dear, I certainly applaud that. But please – do not feel shy to ask for *anything* you need. And for starters, to show you exactly what I mean, I’m going to bring you a cup of *the most* delicious hot chocolate you’ve ever tasted in your life. Sound okay?”

“That sounds great,” I reply.

She’s right, I’ve never asked for anything. There were some years we were so broke, I didn’t even dare ask for anything on my birthday or Christmas – we were so damn poor, and I didn’t want to stress my Mom out, and there was

no way she could afford anything anyway, so I just pretended like I didn't want anything.

Helena slips out of the room, leaving me alone to explore. I shake my head – still marveling at just how damn *gigantic* this place is. Then I remember the walk-in wardrobe, and I just can't resist taking a peek.

I gingerly approach the same panel of wall that Helena touched and lay my palm on it softly and sure enough, the whole section of wall begins to revolve, revealing the most *amazing* array of designer clothes and shoes.

I can hardly bring myself to touch them as I step timidly into the long room, adorned at one end with a huge mirror, running my fingers along the silken racks of garments – every design and color under the sun.

Never in my life have I been in the presence of so many amazing clothes before. You should know this about me: I *love* clothes. Since I was old enough to thread a needle, I've been making my own outfits, and modifying my own clothes, and reading up everything I can online about the world of high fashion, spending whole days with my nose pressed up to the computer screens in the public library, imagining what it would be like to actually be at a catwalk exhibition, or to try on a twenty thousand dollar Stella McCartney dress.

And now here I am, standing in a room with more designer dresses than the whole of Paris fashion week rolled into one!

I remember what Helena told me: that I need to choose something for *tonight*. For dinner with Marcus. And I'm guessing it's not only *dinner* that's on the menu.

I feel another sudden lurch of nerves, as I realize all over again just what I've got myself into ...

And as I'm still deliberating, I hear a sharp knock at the door. I quickly pad back through and here's Helena, carrying a tray with an elegant silver-handled glass of steaming hot chocolate on it.

"I'll leave you in peace," she says with a brief nod and a smile, setting the tray down on a side table and then slipping out of the room once more.

I gingerly pick up the glass, lifting it to my lips and taking a small sip.

Oh my God.

She's so right! The chocolate is absolutely delicious; sweet and milky and gorgeous – by far the best I've ever tasted.

Okay, so maybe I could start to get used to this kind of lifestyle after all, I think with a smile.

NINE

JENNIFER

A FEW HOURS LATER, there's a soft but stern knock on my door, and when I dash over to answer it, there's Helena once again.

"Mr Whitelaw is ready for you now," she announces. And then, not so subtly, she checks out my outfit from head to toe.

I'm wearing Louboutins: a black strappy sandal with a killer heel and a kind of cutout design so it looks like there are hearts weaving their way up my ankles. And even though they're skyscraper high, to my surprise they're also super comfortable, probably because they're so perfectly designed, so finely balanced that there's no uncomfortable pressure anywhere on your foot. It's amazing. *God damn, that man's a genius*, I think. And I've paired these amazing shoes with that amazing white and black Stella McCartney dress that first caught my eye.

"Not bad," Helena says, begrudgingly impressed at my clothes choices. "Not bad at all."

"Thanks," I smile back, but she's already turned and begun racing down the maze of corridors again at her usual breakneck pace.

I follow her as best I can, trying to keep up with her on these crazy heels, wondering if perhaps I should have chosen

something a little smaller. But it's too late for that, and before I know it, we've come to a halt outside a large ornate mahogany door, somewhere on the ground floor of this strange, sprawling house.

"Don't look so terrified," Helena says with a comforting little smile. "Just enjoy yourself."

And with that she turns, leaving me all alone outside that huge door – behind which, I'm guessing, is Marcus Whitelaw.

I take a final deep breath and then use all my strength to heave open the huge, heavy wood of the door, and sure enough there he is behind it, sitting at a small dining table waiting for me.

The moment he sees me, he stands up, and the whole picture: the small beautifully lit room which looks like some kind of study, lined with thousands of leather-bound books, the deep mahogany of the floorboards, the floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, the meticulously laid dining table, and of course Marcus: dressed in an immaculately tailored black suit, his blue-grey eyes blazing, his thick blonde hair shining in the flickering candlelight, and his full sensuous lips curling into a warm and inviting smile – well, the whole thing just takes my breath away.

And it seems like I'm not the only one.

"Wow," he says the moment he sees me. "Just *wow*. I mean, I *knew* you were beautiful but that outfit? It's just perfect ... I'm guessing Helena helped you choose it?"

I shake my head, feeling a flash of pride. "I picked it out myself," I explain.

"Very good," he says, nodding to himself, obviously impressed. "Very good indeed. It seems like you have a few

hidden talents, Miss Adams.”

I stride towards him, once again trying to ignore the way my body seems to respond so damn powerfully whenever it’s anywhere near this totally gorgeous, devastating man, trying to just focus on remaining upright on my stilettos before I can finally sink down into the surprisingly comfortable dining chair which Marcus has walked around and pulled out for me like a true gentleman.

“Thank you,” I say, suppressing a smile as he heads back around to take his seat at the table opposite me.

“What’s so funny?” he asks, obviously noting my amused expression, despite my best efforts to hide it.

I shrug.

“Just ... *everything*, I guess?” I explain. “This room. You. The whole thing. It’s all just so unreal. It’s like something out of a fairytale.”

“I’m guessing this is all very different from your real life then?” he replies gently.

“Tell me about it,” I laugh.

I’m about to say more when I realize that a man in a dark red suit has appeared in the corner of the room, as if from nowhere. I watch Marcus’s eyes flick across to him and then back to me.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” the man announces, as if he was addressing a room of fifty people or more. “Tonight’s meal is Kobe beef served with mustard gravy and a selection of seasonal vegetables.”

Marcus leans in across the table. “Don’t worry,” he whispers. “I can have the chef make you anything you want if

that doesn't sound good? I mean, just say the word and we can have cheeseburgers and fries ...”

“No,” I reply with a smile. “That sounds absolutely delicious.”

“Very good,” Marcus says, giving the man a quick nod.

And quickly and silently the man slips away again into a back room somewhere, once more leaving us alone together. Marcus plucks the bottle of red wine from its spot in the center of the table and asks, “Wine?”

I nod, and he pours a little into the absolutely huge glass set out in front of me. I take a sip, just enough to swirl it on my tongue. I mean, I don't think I've ever actually *tasted* red wine before, and I don't want to have to do something as unladylike as spit it out if it's gross ...

“Wow, that's amazing!” I blurt out as the delicious liquid totally overwhelms my senses. It's way, *way* better than I was expecting, and I have to hold myself back from just gulping it all back in one.

“It's a Chateau Margaux, 2009,” he explains. “And let's just say it wasn't cheap so I'm glad you can appreciate it's fineries. But anyway, I believe you were about to tell me about yourself ...”

I shake my head. “Honestly?” I offer. “There's really not that much to tell.”

“Oh, I'm sure that's not true,” he smiles back, lifting his wine glass and taking a sip, the ruby liquid sparkling on his full lips, forcing me to imagine what it might feel like to have those amazing lips touch against my own. “Where did you go to school?”

“Oh, just a crappy public high school,” I say with a sigh.

“And what were your hobbies?”

“I don’t know,” I reply, wishing we could change the damn subject. You see, for some reason I’ve always found focus on *me* kind of uncomfortable and awkward; I don’t know why. “The same as anyone I guess? Hanging out with my friends, watching TV, going to the mall. Seriously, I’m really kind of boring.”

He smiles and nods to himself, as if he’s made some amazing discovery. But I can’t for the life of me think what it could be.

“You’re determined not to stand out from the crowd in any way, aren’t you?” he says quietly. “But I *just* know there’s more to you, Jennifer Adams. And by the end of the week, my dear, I *promise* you I’ll find out what it is.”

“Your accent,” I begin. “It’s so strange. Where are *you* from?”

But just then, the silent butler in his dazzling red suit comes back into the room, carrying our plates, bursting the bubble on our conversation just as it was starting to get interesting.

He sets mine down in front of me, then walks around to Marcus’s side of the table and does the same. Marcus gives him the smallest of nods in acknowledgement, and then as before the waiter slips out of the room so quickly and silently you could almost forget he was there.

I look down at my plate; it looks *a-mazing*. I cut of a tentative sliver of the tenderly cooked meat, then lift it to my mouth.

Ohmyfreakinggod!

It's totally and utterly *divine*. By far the best food I've ever tasted.

"You like?" Marcus says.

I nod emphatically, my mouth full.

"Good," he says softly. "Because I want you to understand, Jennifer, that it's *your pleasure* that I'm intent on uncovering this week. You see, *that's* what turns me on – watching you enjoy yourself ..."

The suggestive tone of what he's saying seeps through me, making it a little difficult to swallow my food. And I get the feeling that as soon as this meal is over, he's going to have something *other than food* on his mind ...

TEN

MARCUS

THERE'S something so sweet and innocent about this girl. I mean, sure, I knew she was going to be *innocent* in regards to her sexual experience. But the rest? Well, it's just so damn refreshing to meet someone so pure, someone who isn't so jaded and bored with life as I sometimes feel.

As soon as the meal is over, I fix her in my gaze and say, slowly but confidently, "Well, Jennifer, I think it's time we went somewhere a little more comfortable. What do you say?"

I mean, she can't exactly refuse, can she? After all, we both know that that's why she's here – and now it's time to see just how willing she *really* is.

There's a pause, as if she's processing just what our little arrangement entails.

And then she nods, shyly.

"Sure, okay," she says, the nerves audibly jangling in her voice, but I can tell from the subtle flush that's risen to her face and the way the points of her nipples have emerged just a little from beneath the unforgivingly tight fabric of her dress that she *wants* this, just as much as I do – maybe even more so.

I reach out to take her hand, suddenly aware that this will be the first time we've actually touched. And when we do, in that split second that her skin touches against mine, it's like a flash of fire runs right the way through me, sizzling and crackling in my very nerve endings.

Woah, I think to myself, totally taken aback. *I wasn't expecting that ...*

And it seems like she must feel the same way. Maybe it's the wine, or maybe she's not used to standing on such gigantic heels, but she stumbles ever so slightly, giving me the perfect opportunity to slip my arm around her slender waist, sending *another* almost painful charge of lust-tinged excitement coursing through my body, my cock swelling a little and my balls tightening as if in anticipation of what's to come.

God, her body is just perfect. So slim, so slender, so fragile ...

I turn and lead the way, slowly and confidently, through these long winding corridors that I've come to call home, and up the large set of stairs that take us up towards my bedroom.

We're both silent – the stillness and anticipation pulsing around us as we make our way ever closer to the door to my room.

Once we finally reach it, I push it open, letting her set eyes on my room for the first time, happy with the impression it obviously makes on her. After all, this room was *designed* to impress.

It's lit by soft low lighting, set into the ceiling, and in the center stands my huge four poster bed covered with blue silk sheets, so sumptuous and inviting.

“Don’t worry,” I whisper softly, standing right behind her, letting the warmth of my breath dance against the beautiful skin of her neck, realizing with delight that my words are sending a visible prickle of goose pimples flashing across her perfect flesh. “We’ll take this really slowly ... In fact tonight, you can relax, because I don’t even want to go *all* the way. Tonight, all I want is to see your body, Jennifer. So ... Would you do me the honor of undressing?”

She turns around to face me, those big brown eyes like two liquid pools. So innocent. So trusting. So perfect.

And then she nods, and I feel another powerful rush of blood – this time straight to my cock.

I take a step back, in order to take a seat on the edge of the bed, spreading my legs wide, not caring if she can see how fucking hard she’s already making me.

And now I’m finally ready for this show to begin ...

With shaking fingers, I watch with anticipation as she reaches behind her back and slowly unzips the dress, letting it slip from her slender shoulders and pool to the floor around her ankles, leaving her dressed in just her plain black bra and simple cotton panties, panties which are cut in a basic, conservative style – as if to give away all over again just how *inexperienced* she is at all things sexual.

And I can tell from her awkward movements, and from her body language, that she must be feeling so self conscious right about now. It would certainly make sense.

After all, I’m guessing she’s never been this *undressed* in front of a guy before. But even through her nerves, I can tell that she’s getting turned on, too: her nipples are stiffening of their own accord, pressing visibly beneath the flimsy fabric of

her bra as if they're trying to give away the dark thoughts that seem to have awoken within the very deepest parts of her.

"There's no need to be afraid," I say, fixing my burning eyes on hers, my gaze so intense, so intimate that she has no choice but to turn her face to the floor. "I just want to enjoy your body, Jennifer."

She nods timidly, as I stand again, stepping towards her and pulling her face to my own, my hand beneath her chin, holding her in place, as I lean my face towards hers, kissing her so softly and gently on the lips I've been so desperate to taste.

And as I kiss her, it's as if some dam bursts open inside her; betraying the very depths and power of her own lust. I feel her moan softly as we kiss, her whole body trembling, and I just know that if I were to slip my hand between her legs right now, I'd find her so hot and wet – so fucking *ready for me*.

A part of me just wants to ravage her – right here and now. But I know that there's an even greater, sweeter pleasure in taking this *slow* ...

Letting her desires slowly stir and awaken, one gentle step at a time.

She visibly shivers, standing there before me as I take in her body so hungrily with my eyes, knowing that soon I'll be able to explore it with my hands, too.

God. She's *so* fucking perfect, so beautifully in proportion: the smoothness of her skin, the fragile delicacy of her collar bone, not to mention her small but pert breasts, her nipples pressing so prominently now against the cups of her bra, as if aching for me to kiss and caress them, just begging me to set them free ...

I can't take any more of this.

Slowly but surely, I begin to undress her, teasing first one then the other of the straps of her bra from her shoulders. And as I do, I can feel her yielding to me, giving in to me – knowing that for this week at least, she's *mine* now, for me to use however I please

I hold my breath, my cock so fucking hard, as a moment later I gently ease her out of her panties too, sliding them confidently down her thighs, leaving her finally naked there before me; no doubt the first time she's ever been fully naked around another person before – or at least another *guy*.

I take a deep breath, blown away all over again by this angel standing there before me. Very slowly I let my eyes travel over her slender naked frame, first taking in her breasts, her nipples so swollen by now that they're standing up in two prominent puckered points, and then moving down over her toned stomach to the fuzz of black hair that grows between her legs.

For some reason, I'd imagined she'd be shaved down there, but this is even better – it shows me that she's not even *thought* about things like that, that she's even more innocent than I'd hoped.

I reach out a hand and tenderly stroke my fingertips over her smooth velvet skin, tracing slowly but surely from her shoulder and then over her collarbone towards her right breast. As my fingers gently enclose it, she lets out the softest of sighs, then quickly falls silent again, her whole body shivering at my touch. I watch her bite her lip and close her eyes as my fingers gently cup her breast, savoring its weight in my palm, my thumb now tracing slow and delicate circles around the puckered flesh of her small, rock hard nipple.

She just can't take it any longer; I watch another tremor pass powerfully through her body and then, a moment later, she lets out a soft low moan, which sounds as if it comes right from the very center of her.

"God, your body's absolutely perfect, Jennifer," I murmur, my senses filling with her: the floral innocence of her perfume intermingling with the unmistakable sweet musk of her dampening sex.

I take a deep breath, relishing the pulsing silence that's blooming between us now – because in this moment it feels as if the whole world had frozen stock still around us.

I suck my breath deep into my lungs and hold it there, as I slowly trace my hand even further downwards, over her toned flat belly, and then finally between her legs, palm up, my fingertips brushing the silky fuzz of her pubic hair, then further downwards, registering the sheer heat and wetness that's already seeping out from between her legs. I let my fingers gently part her hot swollen lips, then push a little ways inside her, feeling just how fucking *tight* she is ... And then all of a sudden she reaches out and grips my wrist, stopping me, her pretty eyes flashing open in a look of horror.

"It's okay," I murmur, trying to put her at ease. "I know what I'm doing. I promise I'll be gentle with you."

She nods, slowly letting go of my wrist, and once again I start stroking her, right there between her legs, each brush of my fingertips causing another delicious shiver to run right through her, and of course more of that sweet warm nectar to pulse steadily from between her lips, thoroughly slicking and coating my fingers.

"See how well your body responds?" I whisper, as my fingers move gently back and forth, back and forth, drawing

out even more of that warm wetness that seems to ooze from the very center of her, bringing her slowly but surely towards a state of shivering light-headedness.

I trace upwards now, flicking my fingertips gently over the hard, swollen bean of her clit, and all of a sudden she's coming on my fingers, gasping and shuddering. To retain her balance, she throws her arms around my neck, still moaning softly, her whole body visibly shuddering, the pleasure still sweeping through her.

Afterwards, I watch her blush and squirm with embarrassment, quickly covering her face with her hands.

I laugh and shake my head. "There's nothing at all to be ashamed of, Jennifer," I murmur softly. "Pleasure is something simply to be enjoyed."

"It's just that I've never done *that* ... You know, in front of another man," she explains, her voice still shaky. "I've hardly even done it on my own ..."

"Good," I reply with a smile. "In that case, I expect there to be plenty *more* firsts over the coming week, too."

ELEVEN

JENNIFER

I WAKE up for a moment unsure where I am. And then I remember: the events of last night spilling back into my head in such a crazy jumble, so unreal now that they could all be from a dream. I remember the last words he spoke to me, just before I left, and then how I gathered my clothes, quickly pulling them back on and somehow finding my way on my own through the crazy maze of bare white corridors and back to my room, my legs still so shaky from that pleasure that I wasn't even slightly used to.

I lie there for a while in my bed, enjoying the morning sunshine that's finding its way in through the venetian blinds, unsure what to do, occasionally glancing at that telephone by my bed, and remembering Helena's words – that I could call her for anything I wanted, anything at all ...

I shake my head and push myself up on my elbows.

Nope.

Sorry Helena, but I'm just not that kind of girl.

I've got *this* far by doing things myself, and that's how I intend to continue ...

So I get out of bed and then tiptoe through to the wardrobe to see if it has any slightly more *casual* clothes in it, or

whether it's all just high-end couture.

To my surprise and delight, I find a huge cupboard crammed full of comfy jeans and sweat pants and hoodies, all seemingly just in my size, not to mention all the other essentials I'm gonna need to make it through this week: t-shirts, socks, pantyhose, bras, and of course panties, of all shapes and styles – and again all in exactly my size.

What the hell? I think as I study a bra, unable to believe that he has somehow found out my exact freaking *cup size*.

Once I'm dressed in a simple outfit of jeans, t-shirt and hoodie, I decide to head out to explore this amazing house a little more, and maybe find me some breakfast – or at *least* a cup of coffee – in the process.

As I wander through the winding halls, I start to hear the faint sounds of a radio playing some kind of classical music, and I begin to walk in the direction of the music until it's getting pretty loud, blaring out in fact.

I turn a corner to discover an open doorway, and there in a large and ornate dining room, a different room to the one I ate in with Marcus last night, and which holds a table big enough to seat twenty comfortably, is Helena, polishing all the cutlery, the room flooded with the ear-splittingly-loud classical music that's blasting out from a boom box near her feet on the floor.

But the moment she sees me, she half jumps out of her skin in shock, and the fact that she jumps causes *me* to jump too, both of us leaping backwards and putting our hands to our faces, before she quickly comes back to her senses and switches off the radio.

“Miss Adams!” she says. “You gave me such a fright. I am sorry. I just ... expected you to call. Is everything okay? Why

in the world are you wandering the house? Is something the matter?"

"I just thought I'd explore a little ..." I explain, rather sheepishly.

Helena nods, but a puzzled smirk remains flickering at the corners of her lips, as if my explanation is kind of odd to her. "And how did you sleep?" she adds with a wink. "If you don't mind me saying, you look *radiant* this morning ..."

I feel myself blush.

Does she know what we got up to last night?

"I'm glad to run into you, actually," I say, trying to quickly change the question. "I just have to say, you weren't wrong. That hot chocolate was *the* most delicious drink I think I've ever had in my life. I never thought something as simple as a cup of chocolate and milk could make me so happy."

"You know?" Helena replies. "I've noticed in this house that, with all its finery and expensive antiques, the best pleasures in life really *are* often the simplest ones ..."

As she continues to speak, she gives me a look, as if to communicate that perhaps it isn't *just* hot chocolate that she's talking about here ...

"I think by the end of this week, Miss Adams, you might very well realize that the things that can make us *most* happy are those you can't put any kind of price on ..."

TWELVE

MARCUS

DAMN. I just *can't* stop thinking about this girl. She's fogging up my head. I can still feel it: her skin – so soft against my fingertips – and I can still remember the way she shivered and trembled as I made her come. She must have been so fucking turned on; I only had to stroke her clit a couple of times before she came. And her pussy was so *tight* ... It's going to feel fucking amazing when I drive my cock so deep and hard into her tonight ...

“What're you thinking about, Marcus?” the voice says, startling me out of my thoughts. “You look totally lost in thought?”

I look up from my desk to see Julia, my goddamn secretary, standing there, one eyebrow raised to accompany that inquisitive, meddling smile of hers.

“Nothing that concerns you,” I murmur, feeling a flash of annoyance rising up inside me. “Didn't you ever hear of knocking?”

“I *did*,” she sighs. “Three times. But it seems like somebody's too busy sitting in here *thinking* to hear their door.”

“So?” I snap back, just wishing she would leave me the hell alone so that I can return to my thoughts of Jennifer ...

“What exactly do you want?”

“I’m just here to *remind his Highness*,” she shoots back, totally unfazed by my bad mood, “that you have that dinner meeting with Herbert Malchovic of Malchovic Finance scheduled for eight o’ clock. Remember? That same dinner meeting that you’ve been on at me *all month* to arrange.”

Goddammit, I think, cursing the poor timing. I was dearly hoping to get back to the house at a reasonable hour, in order to have a little more fun with Jennifer, really get my money’s worth ...

And I’m about to tell Julia to just cancel or reschedule the damn meeting, when I remember all over again just how fucking *important* Malchovic is, not to mention how much *work* I put in convincing him to have this dinner meeting with me in the first place.

“Thank you Julia,” I sigh. “Is that everything?”

She nods and turns, heading out of the office and leaving me once more alone with my thoughts – thoughts which immediately flash back to Jennifer.

But I need to be careful here.

I need to make sure I don’t let myself fall any deeper for this girl.

I need to remember to just take what I want from her and then ...

I snatch up the phone on my desk and dial through to the house.

“Hello, Whitelaw residence?” comes Helena’s crisp clear voice.

“Helena, it’s me,” I say. “Listen, I’m not going to be able to make it home for dinner tonight, but I’d like you to pass on a message to Jennifer ...”

“Certainly, Sir,” Helena replies.

I smile to myself.

I know I can trust Helena to relay this message ...

THIRTEEN

JENNIFER

AS I STROLL along the endless rack of dresses, letting my fingers run over them, I wonder *which one* of these amazing garments I'll choose for dinner with Marcus ... Maybe this slinky black number? Or perhaps this beautiful sequined ball gown?

But just then I hear a soft knock on the door. My heart leaps, and I race over to the door.

It's Helena.

"Ah, Madam," she smiles. "I've just come to let you know that Mr Whitelaw shall be working in the city until rather late this evening, and dining there too, and so I'm afraid you shall be eating alone tonight. I could set the table for you in the Livingstone Suite if you want, or if you would prefer I could have something brought up to your room?"

"Sure," I say, trying to force a polite smile, "brought to the room would be great. Thanks, Helena."

But she must be able to tell by the way my face falls slightly that I'm perhaps a little disappointed, because she adds with a cheerful *that-isn't-all* grin, "However, I am *also* to let you know that Mr Whitelaw has requested your company for cocktails in his bedroom as soon as he returns home."

And with that she gives me a little wink, before letting the door fall closed, leaving me there, head spinning, unable to work out whether the sudden new feeling that flashing through me is excitement or nerves ... or maybe both.

FOURTEEN

JENNIFER

I PAUSE for a moment outside the door to Marcus's room, dressed in a long black cocktail dress. Every single hair on my body feels like it's standing on end in anticipation of what's to come – because tonight, I have a feeling we're about to go a little bit further than we did last night, maybe even *all the way* ...

I reach out timidly, then knock gently on the door.

“Come in,” he says, his voice as low and assured as always, sending a rippling charge of excitement roaring through me.

I push open the door and there he is, sitting on the edge of the bed. He stands as I enter the room, then plucks two frosted martini glasses from a little side table and approaches, handing one to me.

I take a sip of the mysterious cloudy liquid.

Wow.

It's strong, but tastes amazing – just like everything else in this place.

“What is it?” I ask, tasting vodka mixed in with citrus fruits and something else too – a gentle sweet note, cutting through the strength and bitterness.

“It’s a balalaika,” he replies with an enigmatic smile. “Equal parts Cointreau, vodka and lemon juice. It’s my favorite. Please, let yourself enjoy it. Really give yourself up to it. Let it activate your senses. Because as I said before, Jennifer, all I want this week is to give you pleasure, to bring you alive, to yourself, and to the possibilities of your body ...”

I can feel myself trembling now, from a heady mixture of nervousness and excitement, as he closes in, bringing his face towards mine and reaching out to take the glass from my hand. He places it behind me on a bureau and then leans in to kiss me, and when he does, I feel myself melt, tasting the sweet sharpness of the cocktail on the velvety softness of lips, as his tongue pushes so deep into my mouth and his hands slide around behind my back, the touch of his fingertips leaving electric crackles in their wake.

“I need you naked Jennifer,” he growls, the moment our lips part again. “If I have to wait one second longer, I’m afraid I’ll have no choice but to tear that fucking dress from your body.”

I take a quick step back, unable to let him tear such a beautiful garment, reaching behind my back with nervous shaky fingers to unzip it, letting it quickly slip to the floor. And this time, as I unclasp my bra and step out of my panties, I feel slightly more confident.

I mean, it still feels kind of weird, to be *naked* like this in front of him, but now that I’ve done it once before, it kind of feels okay, too.

Once again, I feel his eyes roving hungrily over my skin.

“God,” he murmurs, tracing his fingers lightly over my collarbone, then downwards, tantalizingly close to my erect

left nipple, “Your skin is absolutely divine. I’ve never felt skin like it... so soft, so *perfect*.”

All of a sudden, he lifts me easily off the floor and carries me to the bed, placing me gently on the edge of it so that I’m sitting, facing into the room.

And then he begins to undress, too, starting with his tie, then slipping off his blazer, and then unbuttoning his crisp white shirt, uncovering a body beneath that is both lean yet muscular, so broad and strong compared to my own slender frame. It’s like I just can’t tear my eyes away from him, and I can tell that he doesn’t mind me watching him either, as he slowly uncovers even more of himself. I hold my breath clutched tightly in my chest as he undoes the laces of his brogues, slips them off along with his black socks, and then, finally, begins to unbuckle his belt.

As he bends down to slip his slacks and boxer shorts in one quick easy movement over his muscular thighs and then down around his ankles, I’m unable to contain the soft gasp of surprise that escapes my lips when I register just how damn *big* his cock is. I might never have seen one in real life before, but even so, I can still tell that *this one* isn’t a regular size. It’s large and twitching and flushed a deep purple color, so thick and long, jutting upwards between his muscular thighs, as if it wants to leap right off his body and attack me ...

He smiles when he notices my shock, then calmly and confidently nods down towards it, nestled there in its fuzzy crop of dusky brown hair, his balls smoothly shaven, so round and swollen and tight beneath, and says, “I’m guessing you’ve not seen one of these before?”

I know there’s no point in lying, so with an embarrassed blush, I shake my head.

“Dear girl, you’re even more inexperienced than I’d guessed,” he replies gently. “But don’t worry. As I said before, we’ll take this nice and slow ...”

And at this, he sits down next to me on the silk sheets.

“So I take it you’ve never touched a cock before, then?” he murmurs.

I feel my blush increase as I shake my head a second time, and a moment later he takes my hand and guided it between his legs, curling my slender fingers around the hot thick shaft of that *thing* that juts so proudly from between his legs.

I sit there, frozen in heart-pounding shame and embarrassment, my fingers curled around it, feeling a soft pulse throb within it, as if in time to his heartbeat.

“Here, like this,” he murmurs, guiding my hand so that it begins to slide up and down the shaft. He takes his hand away as I continue to stroke him, and with another shiver of surprise I feel him grow even larger and harder in my grip.

And as I masturbate him on my own like that, he moves *his* fingers once more between my legs, too, this time pushing them right up inside me, then withdrawing them again, and I find myself spreading my legs even wider to allow him easier access, the powerful shivery sensation of an orgasm quickly growing in my stomach and flashing out all around my body in tingling waves of heat, as all the while I stroke him, sensing that my fingers are causing him just as much pleasure as his are inside me, hearing him sigh and groan as my fingers slide up and down the thick and throbbing hardness of his shaft, gliding over the smoothness of his skin which is slicked so wet now from the clear beads of liquid that are seeping steadily from the slit at the bulbous head of his dick.

“Now lie back on the bed,” he says, taking his hand from between my legs, and then lifting my hand away from his cock too.

I do just as he asks, my whole body still shivering and trembling with the sensations that are coursing through it, my heart pounding and my nipples so tight and hard upon my chest now that they actually *hurt*, as if some invisible hand is pinching them.

I lie back upon the bed, and a moment later he’s climbed right over me, covering me totally with his broad muscular body, the heat of his skin and the spicy musk of his scent filling my senses so completely, causing my dizzy head to spin and whirl all over again.

“Now this may hurt a little at first,” he say gently, and I notice that at some point he must have opened a package of condoms, because now his cock is encased in a thin translucent sheen of rubber as he starts to guide it right between my legs, touching the throbbing tip of it to my tight wet opening, “but just relax as much as you can, Jennifer, and I promise you that soon, very soon, this will bring you even greater pleasures than you’ve ever experienced ...”

I try to do as he says and let myself relax, but I can’t help but worry about the sheer *size* of that thing between his legs. Did he really expect to try and push something as long and thick as *that* inside me?

But even so, I stay as silent as I can beneath him, biting my lip and parting my legs as wide as they’ll go, bracing myself as, sure enough, I feel him push his thick hotness just a little way inside me, already stretching me so wide with just that first damn inch that I fear I might tear right in two.

I gasp as he pushes himself even *further* inside me, and he pauses for a moment, his mouth moving to my neck, covering it with a flurry of such soft and delicious kisses that I feel myself softening and relaxing, spreading my legs wider, shivering and trembling beneath him, his hand now moving to my left breast, once more thumbing the taught little bud of my nipple, sending fresh sensations of pleasure rippling right through me before he again pushes a little *deeper* inside me, causing me to cry out. But this time, my cry is half from pain and half from pleasure, as if the two sensations have somehow mixed together to create something totally new – a new kind of feeling.

And slowly but surely, he begins to slide that thick hot cock of his in and out of my pussy, each slow thrust he makes with his hips causing the sensation to build and grow inside me, half pleasure, half pain, sending me squirming and shivering beneath him, as I sigh and moan and writhe, my body so small and frail, pinned to the silk sheets beneath his strong hot mass, my senses filled utterly with him now, his heat and musk, my fingers dancing over the rippling muscular broadness of his back as he increases his thrusts, driving himself harder inside me, harder and harder, my moans growing louder, the flashing sensations building in my tummy until they bubble forward in a great rush, my whole body suddenly shuddering and trembling as I come, hard, so much harder than I've ever come before.

And just at that moment, he closes his lips over mine, his tongue pushing deep into my mouth, as deep as his cock seems to drive within me, and with a final shudder, I feel his whole body tense, and then, so fucking deep inside me, he begins to pulse and twitch as he too comes.

In the shimmering silence afterwards, I feel him tenderly slip himself out of me again, and I dart a quick glance between my legs, registering a thin sheen of redness on the rubber that's still wrapped tight around his cock, just before he turns away from me and removes it, then turns back, drawing me into him now with a slow, comforting hug.

We lie there in the dark for a while like that, and the only sound is the soft shiver of our breath and the faint rustle of the trees from the lush countryside surrounding the house.

“Are you okay?” he asks eventually, tenderly stroking my cheek with his finger.

I nod.

“And it didn't hurt too much?”

“It hardly hurt at all,” I reply. “Well, it kind of *did*,” I add, “but in a good way, if that makes sense?”

“Oh that makes *total* sense,” he murmurs. “And I promise you, my girl, that there shall be plenty more pleasures like that for you in the coming nights ...”

At this, he leans forward and places a tender kiss on my forehead, and I'm about to wrap my arms around him and draw him even closer towards me when all of a sudden he pushes himself up onto his elbows.

“And now I think it's time you went back to your room now, don't you?” he says, a strange new coldness entering his voice, an unreadable expression taking control of his face

Wow. It's like he suddenly transforms into another person – so quickly, so *easily*.

I don't know what to say. How to answer. And in the end I don't say anything at all. I just nod silently in agreement, then

quickly collect my clothes and do as he says – leaving him the hell alone.

FIFTEEN

MARCUS

AS THE DOOR softly closes behind her, I lay back in bed, wishing I still smoked. This would be *the* perfect moment to light up a cigarette. I feel utterly content, utterly satiated, utterly at peace.

I mean, sure. Perhaps I was the *teensiest* bit cold with her afterwards – but that’s for the best, now, isn’t it? It would do no good whatsoever to let myself fall any deeper for this girl than I have already. Okay, so her body is totally amazing, and I’ll be sure to enjoy it to my heart’s content over the course of the week.

But then once the week’s over? Well, I just need to make sure I don’t find myself moping around and mooning after her like some kind of love sick schoolboy, now do I?

And what’s more, I don’t want *her* falling for me, either. The last thing in the world I want to do is break that poor kid’s heart.

Because she deserves someone better than me. Some pure, like herself.

No, it’s best in the long run for both of us if this remains exactly what it is – a simple transaction. Nothing more, nothing less.

She's a smart girl.

I'm sure she understands ...

SIXTEEN

JENNIFER

IT'S all I can do not to burst into tears. I've spent the whole of the morning going over what happened last night, replaying it all in my head, again and again and again. It's stupid really; I mean, I guess I knew all along that this was how it was gonna go – that he was going to fuck me and then lose interest in me. And really, I shouldn't feel any better than I do.

But even so.

I just feel so damn *shitty*.

I feel like trash ... Like a whore.

And you know why that is?

It's because he asked me to *leave* afterwards. He didn't even want to spend the rest of the *night* with me. *That's* what gets me, what makes it sting so much.

I mean, the sex itself was ... well, it was *amazing*. Breathtaking, in fact. So much better than I'd ever imagined it would be. And it was tender and romantic too. He was surprisingly careful with me. He really took his time. And honestly, I couldn't imagine my first time being any better.

But then he goes and ruins everything like that afterwards – reminding me that I'm no better than a cheap whore?

Fuck you, Marcus Whitelaw.

For a minute there you had me fooled. But now I can see that you're no better than anyone else. You're just like all those guys that used to come to visit my mom – as soon as you've got what you want, then that's it, isn't it?

I fight back another urge to stuff my face into my pillow and just scream my damn lungs out.

I guess the thing that smarts the most is that it's true, isn't it?

I *am* nothing better than a whore ...

SEVENTEEN

MARCUS

GOD DAMN *WORK*. Why the hell didn't I just take the whole week off? What was I even thinking? First it was the dinner from hell with that boring old crone Malchovic last night, and *now* Greg's reminding me that it's his fucking birthday drinks tonight, too?!

A part of me is considering bailing on him – just telling him I'm feeling unwell and going home ... Home to *her*.

But another part of me knows that I shouldn't let this girl get any deeper under my skin. And I can still take my time. I don't need to go running home – to her or anyone.

I'm the one in control here.

I need to remember that.

And I've still got *plenty* of time to enjoy that perfect body of hers ... That perfect pussy.

God, I just need to taste her – to taste that sweetness on my tongue, to make her come with my mouth, with my cock ... to possess her completely ...

She's like an addiction.

And maybe, just maybe, I'm already hooked ...

EIGHTEEN

JENNIFER

THAT NIGHT, I find myself waiting in my room for him again. I've even picked out my outfit: a figure-hugging dress, chosen specifically to show off my best assets, clinging so tightly to my skin it leaves *nothing* to the imagination, all in the hope of making him *want me* again. I know Helena told me that he was working late again tonight, but even so, I guess I just want to see him, maybe because if I do, in those precious moments when he's focusing on me, then I won't feel so much like a trashy, worthless whore.

I know, I know.

I'm a sucker for punishment, aren't I?

I guess I take after my mom in *that* respect, too ...

I push myself up from the edge of my bed and pace listlessly up and down the room, as if perhaps I can somehow out-walk these weird feelings that are bubbling up inside me.

I shoot a glance at the phone, wondering if I should maybe call Helena – ask her for a strong cocktail or a glass of that delicious red wine; just *something* to try and quiet down these chattering voices in my head.

Because right now I'm worried that he's already got what he wants from me, and that's it. I'm yesterday's news. For all I

know, he's probably out tonight at some bar with his work colleagues, hitting on some leggy waitress ...

And as the hours tick on, and I start to get sleepy, my worst suspicions are confirmed.

Midnight comes and goes, and with a heavy heart, I start to undress again, peeling off these slinky sexy clothes that he never even got to see me in, and then finally slip naked beneath the covers, resting my heavy head sadly against the pillow and letting my eyes droop close, thinking that right now he's probably out in the city somewhere, looking for *another* innocent girl to fuck ...

NINETEEN

MARCUS

“CHEER UP!” Greg laughs, elbowing me in the ribs, before knocking back *another* neat scotch.

I lift my own glass to my lips and take a tentative sip. But it’s no use. I’m just not in the mood to get drunk, *or* to hang around these vacuous assholes for much longer.

It’s at times like this that I realize just how fucking meaningless my life is. All we ever talk about is work – work and women and money. But tonight? Tonight I’m just not in the mood. Tonight I wish I was at home, the home that suddenly feels so *alive*, so *warm*, so *inviting* since she’s been living in it ...

“Oh man,” Greg murmurs, leaning in so close that the whiskey on his breath makes my eyes water. “What I’d give to bang that cocktail waitress. You see her? The brunette on the left with the cute little ass that wiggles when she walks ...”

I nod dismissively, hoping he’ll focus his attention on someone else, but instead his face wrinkles up and the smile drops from his face. “Oh come *on*, man!” he says. “You didn’t even *look at her*. What the fuck’s got into you lately? You turning into some kind of fag or something?”

I meet his gaze with an icy cold look of my own. “As if I need to remind you, Greg,” I growl in a low tone low enough

that only he can hear me, “it might well be your birthday, but even so, I happen to be your fucking *employer* and if you give me any more of that shit then that won’t be for much longer. Got it? I only employed you because your daddy *asked* me to, but there’s only so far that carries you. You understand what I’m saying?”

“Uh, sure, sorry Marcus,” he replies, quickly backing away from me, palms up in surrender, leaving me standing alone at the bar as he joining the rest of the crowd.

But I can tell from the subtle look he gives me before turning away, and the way he’s leaning in to one of the other guys and whispering something, that he’s wondering *what in the hell has got into me lately*.

And the truth is, I guess I’m wondering that myself.

But then, deep down, I guess I already know the answer.

TWENTY

JENNIFER

AT FIRST I don't know what's happening, as I wake up not to bright morning sunlight but instead to the darkness of my bedroom, and then a moment later to the feel of hot rough hands on my body, and then lips pressing urgently against my own, the subtle taste of alcohol on his tongue.

As I begin to realize what's happening, I feel my body respond so powerfully to the touch of this shadowy figure, who seems so intent on taking me, right here and now; and it's with a shiver of excitement and delight that I realize he *has* decided to visit me tonight after all.

I push my lips back excitedly against his, and moan softly as I feel his hand pushing its way between my legs, to that place he knows so well now, his fingers cupping the hot and swelling mound that seems to be crying out to him.

"I thought you wouldn't come," I whisper with delight, confessing my fears between the passion and urgency of our kisses.

"How could I possibly resist?" he replies, the heat of his breath dancing across my skin as he begins to toy with my right breast with his other hand, and then, a moment later, I feel the delicious heat of his mouth as it closes over my nipple, causing another soft sigh to escape from my lips.

“Oh Marcus,” I whisper, my voice trembling as his tongue flickers against the tingling pink bud. “I’m glad you’re here ...”

“I need you, Jennifer,” he whispers, taking his mouth from my skin just long enough to speak before moving his kisses across to my other breast, lavishing just as much attention on that one, too, working me into a shivering state of pleasure beneath him. But then, all of a sudden he gives my nipple a surprisingly hard nip with his teeth – hard enough for me to cry out in surprise. I push myself away from him a little, locking eyes with him.

“That was a demonstration,” he murmurs.

“Whatever do you mean?” I reply.

“There’s something you need to know about me, Jennifer,” he continues, his voice dropping to a purr. “Certain things I’d like to do. Certain things, I’d like to *explore* with you. I want to teach you about the pleasure that can be had from *pain* Jennifer. You see, the human mind is a fascinating thing. Pleasure and pain sit so close together, closer than you’d ever guess, so close in fact that we can have our most delicious moments when the boundary between the two is somewhat blurred. Do you understand what I’m saying?”

I gulp, then nod.

“I think so,” I reply.

“And will you let me show you just what I mean?” he continues.

I look at him, at the darkness flashing in those steely blue eyes of his, and I realize that even though I *am* technically *his* for the week, he’s still not allowing himself to do anything to me without my express permission. And it’s this realization –

that he's respecting my boundaries – that reassures me. And anyway, I have to admit, I *am* a little curious to find out what he means, too ...

“Show me, Marcus,” I reply, surprising myself with the sincerity of what I'm saying, so much so that I can hear my voice shaking from a mixture anticipation and excitement. “I want to know what you mean. I want to *experience* it ...”

A moment later, I gasp in surprise as he swiftly pulls me up from the bed, then throws me roughly across his knee, so that my face is nestled in the sheets and my ass is thrust high in the air, just as if I'm some naughty little girl, being disciplined by her daddy.

It feels as if the whole room is charged suddenly with a heady energy, as I wait for him to do whatever he might do to me.

Surely he's not actually about to spank me like some naughty little kid?! I think to myself, my breath clutched tightly in my throat. I mean, I'd heard of people doing things like that, but really? Marcus? *That's* what he's into?

But even as I'm still thinking this last thought, all of a sudden, sure enough, he brings his hand down hard on the tender flesh of my ass, the loud sharp crack of his palm against my skin reverberating all around the quiet of the bedroom, the only other sound being the soft little cry of surprise that escapes my lips.

“How did you like that?” he asks, the playful tone still there in his voice, mixed in with something else – something primal, animal even. “Want another?”

My skin is still singing in pain from the shockingly powerful way he'd slapped it, but it's the weirdest thing,

because as I think carefully about his question, it turns out that I really *do* want another slap of his hand against my ass.

“Yes,” I say quietly, my voice just a trembling whisper now, yet at the same time utterly sincere. “Yes, Marcus, I do.”

“Very well,” he replies gravely, the room once again seeming to descend into silence for a trembling moment before exploding into life in a sharp chorus of pain and pleasure, as I feel his hand strike my tender flesh for a *second* time, and I hear the crack flash loudly around the room.

And this time, after his hand has struck my ass, I feel his rough fingers slip between my legs from behind, teasing my opening with his hot thick fingertips, causing me once again to moan and shiver, laid across his knee, as he drives his fingers a little further, a little *deeper* inside me. But just as I feel that delicious bubbling sensation begin to build in my stomach, he pulls his fingers away, and then ... *Crack*.

He slaps my ass again a third time, even harder than before, causing me to cry out, my mind flashing white from the sheer force of this strange new sensation. Because it's not just pain, but it's not just pleasure, either. Instead it's a crazy mixture of the two, one that creates a brand new third sensation – just the same as last night when he'd first taken me, and just like he'd suggested.

And while a part of me is crying out for more, soon enough he's pushed me roughly from his knee and onto the silk bed sheets. I move to turn onto my back in order to face him, but at this he stops me in place, holding me there by the nape of the neck as if I were a naughty kitten.

“Stay *exactly* where you are,” he commands, that strange animalistic quality still there in his voice.

And I do just as he says, staying exactly where I am, sprawled upon the silk sheets, my face nestled in the pillows, my bare ass exposed to the room, as behind me I can hear him unzipping his pants with his free hand.

Just then I feel his fingers move again between my legs, roughly grazing the tender folds of my pussy, moving back and forth, even pushing a little ways into me like that, before he pulls away his hand, and then, climbing up onto the bed behind me he begins to press the swollen hotness of his cock right against my opening from behind.

There's a pause, as I hear him groan and strain behind me, and then a moment later, I gasp as I feel myself stretching so damn wide for him, his hot thickness slipping so fucking *deep* inside me.

He shifts position slightly, so that I feel the full broadness of his back covering me now, his hot breath against my neck, my face still buried in the sheets, my whimpers and sighs stifled by the scrap of silk that I've pinched between my teeth, as I feel his hands clamp down on my thighs, spreading me beneath him so that he can ease himself even *further* inside me.

Again, I feel it: that weirdly-good mixture of pleasure and pain as he begins to slide his hot cock slowly in and out of my pussy, causing the most delicious sensations to swirl and churn inside me with each fresh thrust of his hips – pumping his cock ever harder and deeper inside me.

Soon I've lost all shame and embarrassment, writhing and thrashing and crying out beneath him, lost totally in my own pleasure, not caring *who* might hear my cries and moans, cries and moans that must be echoing all around this house as he plunders my pussy with his cock, and in a rush I feel my

whole body bubbling over, and just like that I'm coming, hard, so hard I can't help but let out a cry – a low, animal cry, my mind flashing white from the sheer force of my orgasm, my whole slender body shuddering and trembling beneath him. And just as I'm recovering, I feel him fall forward onto me, pinning me beneath him as he too cries out, his whole body shuddering, and deep inside me, even through the thin rubber that encases his cock, I can feel the heat and pulse of his come.

A moment later, he shifts off me, pushing himself up beside me on the sheets and drawing me towards him, turning me around and feverishly pressing his lips against mine, and I tremble again, though this time from a much more gentle feeling that floods my heart – a feeling of simple happiness and warmth ...

Perhaps even ... *love*?

Is that totally crazy?

That I can feel something so deep, so soon for this man I hardly know?

I feel a smile tug at the corners of my mouth while we're still kissing, and a moment later I have to pull my face away from his to let out the silly little laugh that's been building inside me for the last few seconds.

"What's so funny?" he murmurs.

"It's nothing," I reply in a whisper. "I'm just happy, that's all."

But instead of answering, I watch that coldness suddenly clamping down on him again, just like the other night, encircling him completely – and just like that I know exactly what's going to happen next.

Sure enough, he turns back to me, his eyes cold and blank now, and says quietly, "I should go. I have a lot to do tomorrow."

I stay silent, biting on my lip, too scared to speak in case I embarrass myself with any more of my silly girlish talk.

I fight back the tears as I watch him quickly gather his things and then leave, determined not to show him just how hurt I am.

But as he goes, I feel my heart break just a little.

TWENTY-ONE

MARCUS

THANK GOD. I'm so glad that tonight I can finally finish work at a reasonable hour. And before I leave, I take a moment to double check my schedule for the remainder of the week. Fantastic. Nothing pressing, just a couple of lunch meetings. I'm finally free ...

I race towards the elevator, trying to ignore the weird feeling I have in my stomach. I can't quite explain it, but it's a feeling I haven't known for years and years ... Since I was a kid in fact. A feeling that I almost can't put into words.

Just as I'm pressing the button to summon the elevator, I hear a familiar voice behind me.

"Hey, hold the doors!"

I turn around. It's Greg. Again.

Goddammit.

I fight back the urge to just race off without him and force myself to keep the doors held for him. We both step inside the quiet of the elevator, and he quickly turns to me and lays a hand on my shoulder.

"Hey, sorry about last night," he says, as I'm jabbing at the button for the ground floor.

"Don't mention it," I reply quietly.

“So,” he continues, “you bringing a date to the ball tomorrow night?”

“The what?” I say, turning to look at him.

“The charity ball,” he grins back. “The ball for the charity *you set up*. You can’t possibly have forgotten that! You’re making the big speech.”

I groan inwardly – *the ball. Of course.*

I *had* forgotten, and as usual, Julia had probably been too busy surfing Facebook or whatever the hell it is she does all day at her desk to add it into my weekly schedule. Probably because it was arranged so damn long ago.

Why the hell did I ever agree to give a *speech*, I think to myself with annoyance. But then I think again about the charity and know that it’s only right for me to represent it. If only it was *any other week* ...

Just then the elevator reaches the ground floor, and by the time I step out into the lobby, I can already see my driver, Trent, waiting outside with the Bentley.

“Well, see you tomorrow, Buddy,” Greg says, punching me playfully on the arm before heading off towards the doors.

I hold back, pausing for a moment to look around me at the huge marble lobby, and then back at that gleaming car, waiting for me outside – polished to perfection, engine purring, driver waiting patiently for me to arrive – and marvel again that this is all *mine*, that I built this whole business up from scratch.

But even though it’s pretty damn impressive, it still leaves me feeling kind of ... hollow.

I shake off the feelings, focusing again on that *other* feeling – the one that’s still burbling away, deep down in my

stomach as I think about tonight – how I finally have a whole night with *her* ahead of me.

I guess you could call it excitement. Excitement and happiness.

Damn.

I *really do* need to get my feelings under control, don't I?

TWENTY-TWO

JENNIFER

HERE I AM, having a candlelit meal with Marcus, but for some reason I just can't bring myself to enjoy it. I've spent the whole of today feeling so out of sorts. This morning, for instance, I wandered around this huge house, and explored the grounds too – the private swimming pool, the tennis courts, the acres of bright green sculpted gardens – but I just couldn't relax, no matter what I did, and ended up spending practically the whole afternoon holed up in my room again instead.

It's like there's this brick, sitting there at the pit of my stomach – this horrible heaviness, weighing me down, pinning me in place, as I think all over again just what I've done, and what I've lost – something *no* amount of money can ever bring back ...

My virginity.

“Are you okay, Jennifer?” Marcus asks, looking up at me from across the table.

And I know in that moment that I just can't hide it anymore. I need to say this, even if it costs me everything.

“No, I'm not,” I reply. “I ...”

I pause.

Am I really about to say it?

“I just don’t think I can do this anymore,” I blurt out, feeling the hot sting of tears welling up in the corners of my eyes.

He puts down his fork, then reaches out for my hand across the table, covering it with his own for a moment. But I quickly yank my hand away and into the safety of my lap, feeling my heart begin to hammer as hard as hell as the realization of what I’m about to do well and truly sinks in.

Because with these words, I’m about to kiss goodbye to a whole possible other life: I’m about to kiss goodbye to *one million dollars* ...

“I’m not a whore, Marcus,” I say in an almost whisper. “And if I take your money at the end of this week, then that makes me one, doesn’t it?”

To my surprise, he shakes his head.

“No, you’re *not* a whore, Jennifer,” he says, his voice brimming with tenderness and understanding, so much it kind of knocks me back a little. “You know what you are?”

I shake my head.

“You’re a beautiful and refined young woman. I’m learning things from you, Jennifer. I’m learning about myself ... I’m ...”

At this, he pauses for a moment.

“What?” I push. “What were you about to say?”

And to my surprise I watch a soft blush actually rise to his cheeks! In a million years I never thought I’d see a cold-blooded guy like Marcus Whitelaw look embarrassed, but here he is, suddenly the one squirming in his seat!

“Well,” he says in a low tone, not quite meeting my eye, “I guess I’m feeling things for you that I wasn’t expecting. Things I wasn’t prepared for. At first I ignored them, but now? Well, I guess I’d like to explore those feelings further. I want you to stay here, Jennifer. Forget about the money for now if you have to. But please stay the rest of the week. Please?”

I stay silent, my head still swirling, still so unsure about what I want.

“I know I’ve been cold with you,” he continues, “keeping you at arms length the last few nights. But I was only doing that to protect you. To protect both of us, really. I was scared and somewhat taken aback by how quickly, and how *deeply*, I’ve been falling for you. Listen, tomorrow night, there’s a function – it’s this black tie charity ball that our company throws every year. Well, I’d like you to accompany me to it. I’d like you to meet my colleagues. I’d like to show you off, to everyone. So? What do you say? Will you be my date?”

I take a deep breath.

“Okay,” I reply with a shy smile. “That sounds wonderful. Thank you.”

And when he smiles too, it’s like the sun suddenly comes out, flooding the room with warmth and happiness.

As the meal draws to a close, I feel myself wondering about the rest of the night ahead – what exactly is going to happen next. But before I can even ask, Marcus says, “We don’t need to do anything tonight if you don’t want to. I just want you to be happy, Jennifer. I meant what I said. That’s the most important thing. Screw the contract.”

“But I *do* want something to happen,” I reply quickly, surprising myself with the urgency of my words. Because this

is still all so new to me, so strange – to feel this way about anyone.

I fight back my embarrassment and continue to speak.

“Last night,” I say quietly. “What you told me ... What you *showed* me about pleasure and pain? Well, I guess I enjoyed it, Marcus, I enjoyed it even more than I thought I would.”

“I’m glad,” he says, that now-familiar playful glint appearing in his eye.

“And, well, I guess I want to know more,” I continue, fighting back my embarrassment as I decide to just *say what I want*, for once in my life. “I want you to show me everything, Marcus. Teach me. Push me to my limits. Really. I want that. I want you to do whatever you want to me.”

I’m surprised at what I’ve just said -surprised but turned on too.

“Are you sure?” he replies, tenderly. “Because some of the things I want to do are kind of ... *dark*, Jennifer.”

“The darker the better,” I say excitedly. “Really, Marcus. Show me *everything*.”

“Very well,” he says, pushing himself to his feet and offering his hand to me. “In that case, come with me ...”

I take his hand and he leads us in silence up to his bedroom, closing the door behind us, enveloping us once more in the pulsating quiet of his room.

I turn to face him, leaning in to kiss him, but to my surprise he shakes his head.

“That’s not what I want,” he says. “What I *want* is for you to turn around and bare your ass to me. What I *want* is for you

to do just as I say. Do you understand me?”

I nod, eager to obey his command, throwing myself forward onto the bed, tugging my dress up around my waist and then pushing my panties down around my thighs – baring myself to him, just as he asked.

I find I even enjoy the anticipation, hearing the soft creak of his footsteps on the floor behind me as he approaches, waiting for the first touch of his hand. And sure enough, I feel his touch on my skin, his hand stroking across my ass for a moment, his fingers tracing between my legs, to the very center of me – the part of me that feels as if it’s on fire right now. And as he works his fingers gently over my clit and then back again, teasing me, tracing the hot stickiness that seems to seep from within me back and forth across my tender swollen folds, I push my face hard into the sheets and moan in pleasure, arching my back and gripping the silk tightly between my teeth. Then a moment later, he draws his fingers from me.

I wait, shivering, as behind me I hear the unmistakable sound of him unbuckling the thick leather belt he always wears and slipping it slowly from his slacks.

“Are you *sure* you want this, Jennifer?” he says quietly. “Because if you don’t, now is the time to say something ...”

“I’m sure, Marcus,” I reply, my voice shaking with both fear and anticipation. “I do, I really do.”

I hear the thick leather creaking in his hands as he winds one end of the belt around his knuckles.

“Very well.”

Another long trembling pause and then ... *Swish-CRACK*.

The pain is like nothing I have *ever* experienced before – the white-hot sharpness of the leather so much more focused and intense than the crack of his hand against my buttocks. I don't even cry out. It's too intense. All I'm able to do is suck the air sharply between my lips at the violent intensity of the sting, which seems to bloom now in a tingling heat from deep within my flesh.

“Have you learned your lesson?” he asks quietly but sternly from behind me. “Or would you perhaps like another?”

“Please, sir,” I reply, my voice quavering and trembling from the heady mix of sensations that are coursing through me, “I *would* like another. I still feel kind of ... naughty.”

“Very well.”

Swish-CRACK comes the belt a second time, slapping hard against my bare ass, causing an even greater flash of pain than the first time around.

And then a third: *Swish-CRACK*, and a fourth, *Swish-CRACK*, each fresh sting of pain causing my heart to pound and the moans to escape my lips, stifled a little by the sheets which I've kept gripped tight between my teeth as I writhe around beneath my strict master – never before experiencing such a wonderful mixture of pleasure and pain, satisfying almost all parts of my trembling body simultaneously.

But just then he stops, and I know now what else I need from him.

I turn around to face him, tugging my dress hurriedly over my head, unclasping my bra and quickly yanking my panties down over my ankles, exposing my naked flesh beneath, offering myself to him, begging him with my eyes to take me

now in the same strong and powerful way he's done on all our previous nights together.

He meets my hungry gaze with one that tells me that he's thinking the exact same thing, then starts hurriedly undressing, unbuttoning his shirt, uncovering that broad, muscular chest that never fails to blow me away, then his slacks and boxer shorts, his cock fully thick and hard beneath, jutting out from the cropped fuzz of dusky hair that surrounds it, those two large pink shaven balls nestled tightly beneath. And all of a sudden the overwhelming desire to cover his whole body in kisses sweeps through me, so strong and powerful that I know I'll never be fully satisfied until I've acted out this brand new fantasy of mine.

I fall on him the moment he finally joins me on the bed, both of us naked now. I throw myself on top of him, showering his body with tender, playful little kisses, all the while breathing in the sweaty musk of his body, sending my senses into a delicious tailspin as I taste the sharp saltiness of his sweat, first on his chest, and then further down as I working my loving kisses over his taut, chiseled abs and then even further, wanting to move my face up close to his cock, to really *see* it for the first time in all its glory – this veiny monster that's already brought me so much pleasure.

I hold him tenderly in my slender fingers, admiring the velvety smoothness of his skin as I stroke him up and down, watching him grow and swell in my grip, the purple bulbous head pulsing out glistening droplets of clear fluid as I tenderly place my kisses up and down his shaft, his delicious musk filling my nostrils as I shiver from excitement, my face buried between his legs, his hands now moving to my breasts, teasing my nipples with his fingertips until they stiffen into two rock-hard little buds beneath his touch.

He draws my face upwards, back towards his own, and as I writhe on top of him like that, my sensitive breasts brushing against his chest, I feel him reach down between my legs and then guide himself right into me, causing me to gasp as he once more stretches me wide open – this time with no condom covering him.

A part of me wonders whether I should maybe ask him to stop, but another part is just too damn busy enjoying this even more deliciously intimate contact, as he drives himself deep into me with me, as I ride on top of him, feeling the sheer *heat* of his cock inside me.

“Oh fuck, oh God,” I whisper as he takes me, my voice trembling, my eyes closing as he holds me steady, cupping my buttocks as he drives himself ever harder and deeper inside me, plundering fresh pleasures from my very center, pleasures which swell inside me, until finally they seemed to crest and explode, causing me to gasp and moan as I feel myself clenching tightly around him, my whole body bucking and shuddering as my mind flashes and fractures.

He too lets out a growl, and I feel his shaft pulsing powerfully inside me, flooding me with his warmth.

As he draws me down in a passionate kiss, I savor the feel of the heat of his come, as our bodies mingle, slicked with sweat and fluids, both of us shivering and gasping and lost together in the moment.

A SCREAM. It sounds like Mom's voice.

And then a violent clattering sound coming from ... from the kitchen?

I quickly spring out of bed and go running into the hall to see what all the commotion is, turning the corner, just wanting to make sure she's okay.

"Mom?" I call out. "Mom?"

But it's not Mom that greets me. It's Him. Coming towards me, backing me into a corner.

I turn around and try to make a run for it but it's too late. I feel his big hot hand grabbing me by the arm, his fingers closing all the way around my skinny bicep, and gripping so tight it causes me to squeal. But then he spins me around, to face him once more, pushing his big horrible hand right over my mouth as he slams me back against the wall of the kitchen.

And that smell – the one that seems to cling to him, that horrible nauseating mixture of whiskey and tobacco and sweat and dirt, piercing my nostrils with its sharpness, making my eyes water.

I freeze, trying to stay as still as I can as he presses me hard against the wall, hoping he'll let me go if I just do exactly as he says.

And that's when I see her, lying there sprawled, facedown on the kitchen floor, sobbing, covering her face, dots of blood spattered around her on the faded, dirty linoleum floor.

He lets go of me, but only so that he can unbuckle his belt, slipping it from the loops of his stained dirty jeans and then doubling it up in his hand, holding it by my face to show me – to threaten me.

"Don't you say a word about this, girl," he growls, "or you'll get such a hiding you won't be able to sit down for a week. You got that?"

I look from the belt, then to Mom, and then up at him him, nodding slowly and silently as the hot tears begin to well up in the corners of my eyes and then spill down my cheeks ...

I wake with a start, gasping and clawing at the silk sheets as if they're trying to strangle me. But of course it was just a dream, I remind myself, a dream which is quickly slipping to the back of my consciousness now, fading like a long-forgotten bruise, just a dream of a person that I *never ever* want to think about again ...

“Hey, what’s wrong?” comes the voice from behind me.

I turn around to face him, remembering all over again that tonight he didn’t ask me to leave. Tonight we both fell asleep in his bed and it was *amazing* ...

“It’s nothing,” I murmur, snuggling into him, feeling him slip his arm tenderly around my shoulder, drawing me even closer. “Just a stupid nightmare.”

He brings his lips to mine in a soft, sleepy kiss, and then we both fall asleep again like that – wrapped in each other’s arms, happy and content.

TWENTY-THREE

JENNIFER

I'M STEPPING BACK to assess my outfit in the full length dress mirror – it's looking *okay*, I mean, you can never go too far wrong with a trusty Little Black Dress, can you, but it's still missing something, maybe an accessory of some sort? – when there's a knock at the door. I'm expecting it to be Helena, but when I open it, there's Marcus.

“You look absolutely stunning,” he says.

And I guess I could say the exact same thing about him. I mean, this guy would look amazing in *anything*, but seeing him there like that, dressed in a perfectly tailored jet-black tuxedo and bow tie, his hair slicked back and shining with pomade, his freshly shaven skin glowing with health and vigor – well, he just looks like a real *Prince Charming*.

“Can I come in?” he asks.

“Of course,” I laugh, stepping aside to let him into the room. “I mean, this *is* your house after all. Oh, and sorry about all the mess ...” I add with a shrug, hoping he doesn't mind the hundreds of discarded designer dresses strewn all about the room – on the floor and the bed – which I haven't quite had the time to tidy away again yet. And looking at the sight, I marvel again at just how *different* my current situation is from just a single week ago. I mean, here is thousands upon

thousands of dollars worth of couture, just thrown on the floor like some bargain bin outlet store in a strip mall.

“And what are these?” he asks, lifting my sketch book out from beneath a couple of dresses on the bed and flipping through the pages.

“Oh, that’s nothing,” I say, feeling myself blush and quickly snatching the book out of his hand before he laughs at my crappy designs. “Just some stupid sketches. They’re nothing ...”

“They’re very good,” he says.

“Give me a break,” I laugh, unable as always to receive a compliment with good grace. “They’re just doodles. Anyway, is it time to go?”

“Almost,” he says, reaching into the inside pocket of his jacket and drawing something out of it, something that sparkles for a moment in his long tanned fingers before they quickly close around it, hiding it from view. “Come and stand here, Jennifer. Right here in front of me.”

I move over to where he’s standing and do just as he says, realizing that he’s positioning me once more in front of the mirror I was checking out my outfit in, just a few moments ago.

I watch him in the reflection, standing there behind me, my whole body frozen in anticipation, as he moves his hands towards my throat.

And then, very gently, he places the most beautiful sparkling choker around my neck, clasping it at the back.

It looks like ...

No, it can’t be ...

“Oh my God, Marcus,” I murmur in disbelief. “Tell me those aren’t *real diamonds*?”

He nods, a mischievous grin spreading across his lips.

“I can’t possibly wear this,” I gasp, my mouth falling open as I look at this crazy-ass thing dangling around my neck – it must be studded with *fifty* diamonds at least, if not a hundred, each one probably worth an insane amount of money. “If I lose it ...”

“You can throw it down a drain for I care,” he laughs. “It’s *yours*, Jennifer. I’m giving it to you. To keep. But I’d prefer it if you just *wore it* tonight.”

“Marcus,” I gasp, reaching up to touch this amazing necklace dangling so perfectly from my neck, somehow totally completing my outfit, even though he couldn’t have possibly known just what I was wearing. “I don’t know what to say ...”

“You don’t need to say anything,” he murmurs in reply, leaning in to place the most delicious kiss on my neck. “Come on. Let’s go. Otherwise we’re going to be late ...”

TWENTY-FOUR

MARCUS

I NORMALLY FUCKING HATE these kinds of things. I mean, they're all exactly the same. Glitzy ball rooms, crammed full of the same boring investors and socialites, the same old faces, each and every one of them out to get something for themselves, everyone *networking* – yes, even at a supposed 'Charity' function such as this.

But tonight?

Well, tonight feels kind of different. And that's all down to Jennifer.

I'm so glad to have her here with me, by my side, looking so gorgeous. And I'm excited too – excited to show her off.

She looks simply stunning, and I can tell from the envious looks I'm getting from nearly every single man in the room that I'm not the only one who thinks it.

“Ah, Marcus!” a woman's voice says behind me. “I see you've decided to bring along a *date* for once! And who is this ravishing creature, may I ask?”

I turn around to face Elizabeth Falcroft, heiress to the Falcroft Industries fortune, one of our biggest rivals, who in the last year alone have probably cost us close to a quarter of a *billion* in losses.

“Ah, Elizabeth!” I smile back, utterly polite and gracious even though Falcroft poached one of our biggest clients from right under our noses, less than two months ago. “This is Jennifer Adams. Jennifer, this is Elizabeth Falcroft.”

“Pleased to meet you,” Jennifer says politely, giving Elizabeth a warm and sincere smile, kind of catching this cold and calculating woman off-guard with her sincerity.

“Oh, your dress is just *fabulous*,” Elizabeth gushes, obviously impressed by Jennifer’s outfit. “Where in the world did you *find* it?”

I shoot Jennifer a quick glance. Damn. Why did Elizabeth have to ask that of all questions? And I can see in Jennifer’s eyes that she’s panicking now, trying to work out what she can possibly say, without giving away our little ‘arrangement’

“Yes, Jennifer has excellent taste,” I cut in. “In fact,” I add, “I think she has the makings of a fantastic designer.”

“Oh fabulous! Just fabulous!” Elizabeth laughs, taking a large gulp of her champagne, before her huge cat-like eyes latch onto some other poor unsuspecting guest and she saunters away from us to wave him down.

“*Fashion designer?*” Jennifer whispers incredulously, her lips curling in a puzzled smile. “Where the hell did *that* come from?”

“Let’s just say,” I reply, quick as a flash, “that while *you* may be blind to your own talents, it certainly hasn’t escaped me that you’re very knowledgeable when it comes to clothes. Weren’t you telling me, just the other day, that you made almost all your own outfits for your last job?”

“Well, yes, but that’s just because I was flat out *broke*,” she laughs. “I couldn’t afford to buy clothes so I had to make them

out of necessity ...”

“So what?” I reply. “It doesn’t matter. I saw your sketchbook, Jennifer. You’ve got real talent. And when I look at you, I don’t just see a ‘broke girl’ who’s making her clothes out of necessity. I see an extremely talented young woman who wears her own excellent designs. And if you don’t mind me saying so, your body is also the most excellent advert for your work ...”

TWENTY-FIVE

JENNIFER

DOES HE REALLY MEAN THAT? I'd never even allowed myself to dream that someone like *me* could be a fashion designer. But the way he's talking right now, guess it *doesn't* sound so crazy after all. I really could go to college to study it, couldn't I?! Especially with the money I'll have at the end of this week ... If the arrangement still stands, that is. I mean, we haven't really talked about it again since our last conversation ...

"Come with me," he murmurs just then, leaning in towards me.

"What for?" I ask, confused as to why he'd want to leave the main ballroom, especially when he's about to make his speech, but even as I'm asking the question he's grabbed me by the arm and whisked me away into a small side room, just off the main foyer – a dark little wood-paneled room which seems to be being used as a cloak room, although luckily there's no attendant here right now.

"I don't understand," I say, looking in confusion around the dim little room. Why on Earth does he want me to come in *here*?

As if in answer, he slams the door closed behind him then turns to me, his big blue eyes burning with a strange fire.

“Lift up your dress,” he says quietly but firmly, so firmly in fact that I have little ability to do anything other than obey his command, despite the flash of worry that courses through me at the thought that *anyone* could come into this room at any moment to collect their coat or bag.

With trembling hands I pull my dress up around my waist, uncovering my bare legs and my pale pink thong beneath, feeling my pussy begin to throb in anticipation for whatever’s about to come next.

He takes a few steps closer to me, backing me right up against the wall, his eyes locked intensely on mine. And then I gasp, as I feel his hand move between my legs, stroking the very place that’s throbbing and aching for him through the dampening silk of my panties, massaging my swelling clit slowly yet firmly, working his fingers back and forth over my swelling flesh in just the way that makes me tremble and sigh, my eyes closing in pleasure as I feel that now-familiar excitement building inside me with each new stroke of his fingertips.

There’s a pause, and then I gasp again as I feel him roughly tug my thong down around my thighs, exposing the hot wet center of me to the cool air of this dim little room.

Oh God, I feel so fucking naughty, so damn *slutty* – standing there with my dress held up around my waist and my panties pulled down, exposing my wet and throbbing pussy to him, watching in shameful delight as he begins to unbuckle himself too, tugging open his slacks just enough to free that long, thick cock of his, letting it spring free, gripping its base with his fist as he moves back towards me, then guides it right between my legs, brushing the hot swollen tip back and forth against my wet and tender folds, back and forth, just as he did

with his fingers, causing fresh moans to escape my parted lips as he teases me like this for a long and delicious moment before, with a low grunt, he finally lets himself slip inside me, filling me to the very hilt with him, that long shaft of his actually fitting all the way inside me now, so much more naturally and easily, now that I'm growing a little more used to it ...

But we're only able to enjoy ourselves for a few breathy seconds before the sound of the turning door handle freezes us both in place in that dim little cloak room, crushed against the far wall, his body pushed up against me, his cock driven deep inside me, still pulsing in time to his heartbeat as we remain frozen still, nestled in the shadows, as someone actually *enters the room*.

Oh my god ...

To silence me, he's slipped his hand firmly over my mouth, but even so I feel as if the deafening pounding of my heartbeat will surely give us away. But the elderly gentleman who's come to collect his jacket seems completely unaware of our presence, as I'm guessing he's perhaps he had one too many glasses of the delicious Champagne that's flowing in abundance in the main ballroom to notice that much of his surroundings ...

And soon enough the old man has found his jacket and left us alone in the room once more, and with a mixture of relief and disappointment, I felt Marcus withdraw himself, quickly buckling his pants back up as I too pull up my panties and then tug my dress down around my thighs once more, my heart still hammering, and my pussy still throbbing almost painfully for him.

“Later tonight,” he says quietly with a knowing smile and a wink. “Later tonight.”

And then he takes my arm and leads me once more back into the main ballroom, and as we weave through the many happy crowds, I smile to myself at the thought that nobody knows just what the hell we’ve had been doing a few moments ago.

In fact, the whole thing seems so unreal now – more like a fantasy – if it weren’t for the damn hot slickness I can feel in my panties as I walk, reminding me of what we’ve done – not to mention what I’ve got to look *forward to* once we get back to the house tonight ...

Just then, I hear a champagne flute being tapped with a fork, and the whole room falls silent.

An older man with salt and pepper hair and a kindly face comes up to the podium at the front of the stage.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he says, “I’d just like to welcome you all to this, the fourth annual Whitelaw fundraiser, to support St Mary’s Children’s Hospital. And now, a few words from our main benefactor, Marcus Whitelaw ...”

I shoot a glance at Marcus. “I’ll be right back,” he murmurs, giving my arm a comforting squeeze before striding up towards the podium.

And as he begins to speak, captivating the whole room with his words – words which seem so natural, so effortless, yet so elegant, too, so utterly *confident* – I feel a flush of pride, as I realize all over again that he’s *my date*.

I didn’t think I could fall any further for this man.

But as he’s speaking, I do – falling deeper than I *ever* thought I could ...

TWENTY-SIX

JENNIFER

“TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTHES,” he growls, the very second we’re finally alone in his bedroom after the ball.

With a flurry of delight, I quickly peel the figure-hugging little black dress from my tingling skin, pulling it up over my head, plunging me into darkness for a moment. I’m not wearing a bra, and I feel the cool air on my stiffening nipples as I drop the dress to the floor next to me, my skimpy thong panties and that dazzling diamond choker all that’s remaining on my skin now.

I step out of the panties, then make a motion to unclasp the choker too, but he quickly stops me.

“Leave that on.”

And I shiver again at the image I have of myself then, totally exposed with just that sparkling collar covering my slender neck, while he stands there before me, still fully clothed in his beautifully tailored jet-black suit.

“As soon as I saw it around your neck,” he explained quietly, “I’ve been imagining binding your wrists too.”

And with that he reaches down and plucks my damp silk panties from where they lay by my feet, effortlessly tearing

them in two, until they're nothing but two long pink silken strips, dangling from his hands.

“Give me your wrists,” he says sternly, and I do just as he instructs, offering out my slender wrists, which he slowly but firmly binds together, tying them so tightly that I realize there will be no way I'll be able to pull my hands free again without his help.

“Now turn around.”

Again I do just as he commands, turning my back to him, and after a moment I feel the second cool strip of silk cover my eyes, plunging me once again into darkness, as he ties it just as firmly at the back of my head as he did with the first on my wrists.

I tremble in delight, feeling so helpless all of a sudden, completely at his mercy. I hear the soft click of the soles of his shoes on the floorboards as he encircles me, and even though I can't see him, it's as if I can still feel his eyes, travelling all over my body, my nipples and pussy both tingling in anticipation of his touch.

A moment later, I feel his hands on my shoulders, pushing me downwards. I do as he instructs, until I'm resting on my knees before him.

Then I heard the now-familiar sound of him unzipping his pants and, a moment later, I feel the sheer heat of him coming in a soft wave against my face. I wait there on my knees, knowing what is coming next. Sure enough, a second later I feel him press softly against my lips – warm and moist and velvety smooth. I open my mouth, feeling him slide between my lips, touching against my tongue, the heat and faintly salty taste of him filling my mouth completely.

I moan a little, surprised at just how good this feels. And as I do, he pulls himself a little way back out from between my lips and then thrusts again, driving himself even *deeper* into my mouth.

I feel a powerful shiver of pleasure, as I picture myself there on my knees, taking him in my mouth like that, as he slowly begins sliding himself in and out from between my lips. And in response I start sucking greedily on him as if he were some kind of delicious lollypop, guiding my tongue in gentle circles all around the throbbing head of his cock, sighing softly as another wave of delight flashes through me – as if the sheer sluttiness of what I'm doing is enough to send a charge of pleasure direct to my clit without even being able to touch it.

Still sliding himself in and out of my mouth, I feel one of his hands move from my face to my breast, pinching my nipple so tightly that I gasp, as much as I'm able, sending another delicious flash of pain and pleasure around my body.

Oh fuck, if only there was some way I could touch my clit too, I think to myself in frustration.

But then a new thought occurs to me. Shifting onto my haunches, and spreading my legs wide apart, I find that I can easily rub my bound hands between my legs, using the heels of my hands to rub against the hot and aching place that seems to be crying out to be touched.

And I feel the sheer heat and wetness of myself as I begin to grind my bound hands urgently between my legs, as he continues to fuck my mouth.

It takes me almost by surprise when I feel the intense rush of orgasm building inside me, stimulated both by my hands and also maybe by the damn *idea* of what we're doing.

With a stifled little moan, I begin to shudder as I come, the sensation or orgasm spilling out around my trembling body, as he continues to drive himself between my lips, his cock so fucking hard now that it feels utterly solid, as if carved from heated stone.

With a final grunt, I feel his hands hold my head firmly in place, and then it's as if he swells even further for a moment inside my mouth, before my tongue and throat are flooded with his come – hot and thick. I gulp as much of it back as I can, my mouth opening in a soft moan as I feel even more of it spilling from my lips and over my chin.

A moment later, he slips from my mouth, and I feel his own lips now touch against mine in a tender, loving kiss, before he unties my wrists and then finally my makeshift blindfold, too.

I look up at him happily, my whole body still shuddering with pleasure.

And then, quickly, I push myself to my feet, in order to run through the connecting door to the en-suite bathroom.

“Hey, come back here!” he calls after me. “You okay?”

But I'm too eager to even answer him.

You see, the truth of it is that I've rushed into the bathroom to admire myself in the huge gold-edged mirror that hangs above the faucets, and what I see in it is just like imagined and hoped it might be: because there in the mirror stands a beautiful young girl with a wicked smile dancing upon her lips, brazen and naked, utterly unashamed, totally slutty, her small breasts heaving from pleasure, her chin shining wet with come, her eyes sparkling with delight, and to complete the

picture, the most beautiful diamond collar you've ever seen, shining and glittering on her throat.

TWENTY-SEVEN

JENNIFER

"I THOUGHT I told you to be quiet," he growls, gripping my arm hard, so hard that I wince.

I'm struck dumb, too scared to say a word. All I can do right now is shake my head.

"Stupid kid. I told you what would happen if you opened that mouth of yours."

"Please," I mumble. "Please don't."

But he's already begun to unbuckle that big leather belt, sliding out from his dirty pants and then winding one end of it so tight around his knuckles that they turn white.

"Turn around and lift up your dress."

I know there's no point in disobeying him now. Instead, I do as he says, trembling with fear.

I just want my mom.

But Mom's not here.

Mom's in the emergency room; and she might be dead right now if I hadn't made that phone call ...

There's a pause, a horrible endless pause as I hear the thick leather of the belt creaking in his hand. And then ...

CRACK.

I cry out from the pain, my brain flashing white, as I feel the leather striking hard against the bare skin of the backs of my thighs.

“Please stop,” I sob. “Please ...”

But he does it again.

CRACK.

And again.

CRACK.

And again.

CRACK.

And again ...

I WAKE WITH A START, crying out in the darkness, unsure where I am, throwing off the sheets and sitting up in bed, my skin slicked with a thin sheen of sweat, my whole body shaking.

“Hey, *hey*,” Marcus murmurs, pushing himself up too and stroking my back gently. “What’s up? Another bad dream?”

I nod, the words catching in my throat.

“It’s okay,” he whispers. “Whatever it was, it’s over now ...”

“I’m just going for a ... a glass of water ...” I finally croak, stepping out of bed and quickly pulling on a white silk nightgown.

“Come back here,” he laughs, reaching for the phone. “You don’t need to do that. I’ll just get Helena to fetch it for

you. That woman never sleeps anyway ...”

“No, Marcus,” I say, decisively, turning and giving him a *not-now* look which silences him. “I need some air. Just let me go. Please.”

“Whatever you say,” he sighs, letting himself lie back in bed.

I pad hurriedly out of the room, closing the door behind me, then pacing along those strange, endless white corridors, the half-light of the early morning making everything seem so strange and unreal.

And even though it *was* just a dream, it’s like I can still feel the sharp sting on the backs of my legs – like that horrible scene happened five *minutes* ago, not *fifteen years* ago.

Somehow I manage to find the kitchen, which is huge and spotlessly clean, the moonlight reflecting and sparkling off the many brushed stainless steel counters and refrigerators.

After a quick search, I finally locate a large tumbler and pour myself a glass of water from the faucet, gulping it down.

But the water wasn’t the only reason I needed to get out of that room.

There was just something so *real* about that dream – so horrible. And for some reason, it made me want to get away from Marcus, too.

I can’t quite explain it.

I shake my head, wondering if I’m just too fucked up. I thought I’d buried all those awful memories deep down in my subconscious but now it seems like they’re coming bubbling up to the surface again to haunt me.

As soon as I get the money for this week, the first thing I'm gonna do is pay for a shrink, I decide.

Just as I turn to head back to bed, the ghostly white female figure standing in the doorway makes me jump, so much so that I *almost* lose hold of the glass, but still manage to spill a great deal of water all over myself.

“Oh madam!” says Helena. “I really didn’t mean to make you jump. I just heard a noise and my bedroom is only a little way down the hall. Is everything okay? Why aren’t you in bed?”

“I’m fine,” I offer, but my face must be telling a very different story.

“You certainly don’t *look* okay,” she replies, stepping towards me and rubbing my arm gently.

And all of a sudden, I just can’t hold it in anymore.

I feel my body crumple as I begin to sob, and to my surprise, I quickly feel Helena’s arms wrapping tight around me, pulling me into her in a warm, comforting hug.

“There, there,” she murmurs, stroking my hair as I sob even harder against her shoulder. “It’s okay, it’s okay.”

When I’ve eventually finished crying, she smooths the wet strands of hair from my face and then says with a kindly smile, “Now listen. I’m going to make you another one of those hot chocolates you like so much and then you’re going to tell me just what’s the matter, okay?”

I nod, smiling shyly.

Once she’s made the chocolate, we both sit at one of the counters in the kitchen on a couple of stools, illuminated only by the moonlight, the steaming glass of chocolate cupped in

my hands, and she says, gently but firmly, “Now what’s got you so worked up? Is it Marcus?”

I look up at her, assessing her kindly face, realizing that maybe for the first time in my life I really *can* open up to her.

“I don’t know, Helena,” I sigh. “It’s all kind of complicated. I guess it *is* to do with him, but there’s a lot more stuff too, stuff from my past ...”

“Forgive me if I’m being a little forward here,” she continues, “but I’ve known Marcus for a great number of years – both as a boy and as a man – and it hasn’t escaped my attention in recent times that his, well, more *unusual* tendencies have become rather gossiped about in certain circles. You can’t work in this house for very long, without realizing that Marcus has a few, how can I put it, curious bedroom proclivities. Is *that* what’s causing you distress, my girl?”

I fight back a blush as I shake my head. “No, that’s not quite it,” I sigh. “If you want to know the truth, I’ve actually really *enjoyed* the, um, *things* that Marcus and I have done this week ... No, it’s not quite that.”

At this, she places her hand gently over mine, squeezing my fingers, as if to tell me that whatever I say here will be among friends.

“Okay,” I continue, “if you must know, for some reason this week has stirred up a lot of messed up stuff from my childhood. My dad left when I was young, and my mom ... Well, she did her best to raise me, but she was also into drink ... and drugs. And she had a string of good-for-nothing boyfriends too, one of which in particular ...”

I pause, feeling the tears welling up in my eyes again.

“Oh poor dear,” Helena sighs, putting her arm around my shoulders now. “Take your time ...”

“I don’t even want to say his *name*,” I murmur. “He was horrible. He beat my mom ... and me. He ruined my childhood. I’m just glad he’s dead. He OD-ed when I was seven. But now it feels like he’s *back*. I keep dreaming about him ...”

“My dear,” Helena says gently, “I think that you and Marcus might have more in common than you think. You see, I’ve been a part of this family since he was just a baby, and his parents were rather distant, I suppose you could say I was something of a mother figure to him. But my influence and protection could only go so far. And, well, Marcus’s father? Cruel doesn’t go halfway to describing it ...”

I feel a sudden rush of tenderness for Marcus then, imagining him as a scared little boy.

“I think you need to have a good long talk with our Mr Whitelaw,” Helena adds with a tender smile. “Don’t you?”

“Maybe,” I mumble, sipping my chocolate.

But how can I explain to this kind old woman that our whole relationship is built around a *contract* – and that I still suspect that when this damn week’s over, I’ll be tossed out like last week’s trash ...

TWENTY-EIGHT

MARCUS

THANK God it's finally Saturday, I think, the moment I wake up. No more work, and even better than that – I finally get to spend a whole day with Jennifer.

I turn over in bed, expecting to find her there lying next to me, and then I remember again that strange dream she had, the one that seemed to shake her up so much, and how she left in the night, while I was still half asleep.

I push myself out of bed and quickly grab a shower in the en-suite, before throwing on some comfy casual clothes – just jeans and a t-shirt – and then heading off into the house to find out where she's got to.

First I try her room, but after knocking a couple of times to no reply, I decide to try the lounge, or perhaps the Livingston Suite.

But I can't seem to find her *anywhere*.

"Looking for someone?" Helena says from behind me, catching me by surprise.

I spin around.

"Yeah," I say, "I was just wondering if you'd seen Miss Adams ..."

"She's in the pool," Helena replies.

“Thanks,” I say, about to turn and head towards the pool and sauna complex that joins onto the back of the house.

“Oh Marcus?” she calls out to me, as I’m making to head over there. “Do be careful with that girl, won’t you?”

“Don’t worry, Helena,” I smile back. “I’ve got only the best of intentions ...”

I STAND by the edge of the heated indoor pool, watching her swim – her elegance as she cuts so easily through the water taking my breath away. And I get to enjoy the sight for a couple more laps before she finally notices me, swimming up to the side of the pool and lifting herself up at the side, resting on her elbows, the water droplets glimmering like jewels on her beautiful skin.

“How long have *you* been standing there?” she says with a grin.

“Not long,” I reply. “You’re an amazing swimmer, you know?”

“Thanks,” she replies. “The weekly trips to the local pool were about the only thing I enjoyed about school ...”

“Hey, listen,” I say, feeling a strange pang of nervousness as I wonder how to form my question. Damn. It’s so strange. When I’m around her, it’s like I’m reduced to some shy schoolboy again ... “I was just wondering if you might like to take a drive with me today? I’ve got a collection of vintage cars, and I hardly ever get a chance to enjoy them. It’s a beautiful day out there. But, I mean, if you’d prefer to stay in the house, that’s cool too ...”

“No, I’d love to,” she replies. “Let me just get ready ...”

As she pulls herself out of the pool, I feel that now-familiar tightness of lust and desire as I set eyes on her perfect body again: the faint bumps of her nipples beneath her white one-piece bathing suit that clings to her skin, the curve of her hips and, as she turns to pad back to the changing area, that amazing *ass* ...

I think about tonight.

I can't help it.

I need to enjoy her as much as I can, before this week is through ...

I PUSH the pedal to the floor, feeling the car glide effortlessly through the winding roads that border my estate, feeling the wind in my hair as I push this old Jaguar to its limits, its engine purring, the soft top down to allow us a fantastic view of this beautiful, lush greenery that zooms past, all around us.

This should be just perfect. I mean, here we are, just the two of us, an amazing picnic stowed away in a hamper on the back seat courtesy of Helena, and of course Jennifer sitting next to me. But even though things should be perfect, I still can't help feeling like something's *off*.

She's been quiet ever since we started our drive, and every time I've tried to ask her a question about herself, she's seemed uncomfortable and diverted it right back at me.

I don't know, maybe I'm just imagining things, but I'm worried I've done something to upset her ...

I push a button on the dash, and the roof slides closed, cutting out the roaring sound of the wind, enveloping us in almost-silence, just the soft growl of the engine.

“You enjoying yourself?” I ask.

“Sure,” she says.

I wait for her to say something else, but she doesn't, and again I can't help but wonder if she's mad at me.

“Your accent,” she says, all of a sudden. “It's so strange. Where are you *from* exactly?”

“All over,” I explain. “I grew up in so many different countries, attended so many different schools. My dad's business meant that we kept travelling.”

“That must have been exciting,” she says.

“Kind of,” I say. “But it was pretty lonely too. The only real constant in my life was Helena, I guess ...”

“She's great, isn't she?” Jennifer smiles.

“She sure is,” I agree. “I don't know what I'd have done without her.”

Maybe I'm just imagining it, I think. She seems to be brightening up a little.

But even so, I just can't help but shake the feeling that she's got something else on her mind ...

TWENTY-NINE

JENNIFER

THIS SHOULD BE GREAT. I mean, here I am, having a picnic in this beautiful countryside with a man so handsome he looks *unreal* – like something out of a magazine – not to mention that amazing dark green sports car of his parked at the bottom of the hill, sparkling in the midday sun.

I should be enjoying myself, right?

So why do I still feel so crappy ...

I'm doing my best to hide it, but I can tell he's picked up on my weird mood.

I think part of it is my dream last night. I just can't shake the feeling it's left me with; those horrible things it stirred up in me again – thoughts and feelings I thought I'd long since buried.

But on top of that, this all feels kind of bittersweet, because soon this week is going to come to an end.

Soon we'll have to say goodbye.

And then what?

Just focus on the money, I tell myself.

But whereas before that would have comforted me, now it just kind of feels ... hollow.

You see, I guess one of the things I've learnt from Marcus this week is that money doesn't necessarily buy you happiness

...

Well, I guess the best thing I can do right now is just *enjoy this* – enjoy it while it lasts.

THIRTY

JENNIFER

“I WANT YOU NAKED THIS INSTANT,” he says, his voice stern and deep, stretched taut with desire.

It’s nighttime now, and I *still* don’t know what’s gonna happen after this. I have *so* many questions, so many things I still want to ask him – but I just can’t bring myself.

Maybe it’s because I don’t want to spoil this moment.

I just want to enjoy the remaining time we have together to its fullest.

I shiver as I undress for him, my hard puckered nipples giving away the fact that I’m already more than ready for whatever he has planned for us this evening.

“Give those to me,” he says as I step out of my pretty black panties with their hot pink bows, and by now I think I know exactly what he plans to do with them.

Sure enough, the very moment I’ve handed them to him, he’s torn them into long strips, just like he did that other night, and as if I can read his mind, I offer my wrists to him, pressed together, ready to be bound tightly.

But to my surprise, at this he shakes his head.

“No, Jennifer,” he explains. “Tonight I won’t be binding your wrists *together*, but to the bedposts.”

I dart a glance at the imposing four-poster bedframe that stands in the center of his room, imagining myself bound tightly to it.

“Oh, Marcus,” I whisper in excitement. “*Yes.*”

And before he can even command me, I’ve hurried over to the bed and thrown myself onto its plush silk sheets, spreading my arms and legs wide, offering my trembling body up to him – to my stern and handsome master.

Sure enough, he begins roughly and tightly binding my wrists to the posts of the bed, so that my arms are stretched wide apart. And as he works, I admire his naked body – the glow of his skin, and the taut musculature of his body, not to mention that thick hard cock of his, jutting from the center of him, which brushes tantalizingly against my left breast as he binds my wrist so tightly, the slick pink head dancing against my hard left nipple. And I try to move my head towards it, to plant a soft kiss on it (or perhaps even to take him all the way between my lips), but I find myself bound too tightly in place now, both wrists tied surprisingly firmly to the bedposts, holding me in place.

Next he begins binding my *ankles*, too, so that I’m held utterly tight and firm – with all four of my limbs stretched out in a star shape. But still there’s still one final long glossy strip of black and pink cloth dangling from his grip, and I’m about to ask what it’s for when he climbs over me, so that his knees are either side of my hips, and I think that he must want to blindfold me again – as he did last night.

But instead, this time, he moves the strip of cloth to my *mouth*, tying it so roughly at the nape of my neck that it actually parts my lips, and it’s all I can do but let out a muffled moan, now that I’m no longer able to speak ...

Then, thoroughly bound and gagged, all I can do is watch him from my position on the bed as he steps down from the bed, his eyes travelling hungrily over my body while he strokes the thick shaft of his cock with his fist, sliding his fingers slowly up and down its shiny pink length, wielding it in his hand as if its some kind of weapon as he circles the bed.

He stops at the foot of the bed, his eyes moving between my legs, and then he begins to approach me, climbing up onto the sheets on his hands and knees, so that his head's positioned right between my thighs. I moan a little, just from the feel of his hot breath dancing against my exposed clit, which is throbbing and aching for him. And then I let out as much of a stifled gasp as I'm able, as I feel his tongue touch right against it.

Oh *fuck*, sensation of his mouth, there between my legs, feels utterly different from the touch of his fingers or the animal heat of his cock. No, this is something different, something new, though no less lovely and delicious. And he knows *just* what he's doing, too, the motions of his tongue and lips teasing me right to the very edge of pleasure, but then denying it, and I begin to suspect that he's doing this on purpose – bringing me so close to the edge but never tipping me over it. He seems to know *exactly* which parts of me to tease, flicking his tongue first in slow circles around the swollen nub of my clit, and then a moment later, moving further downwards, even entering me, each fresh motion he makes with his lips and tongue causing me to writhe and moan as much as I can in my bound and gagged position.

And then, when it seems as if I'm right at the very edge of orgasm, he finally tips me over and into it by bringing his fingers to join his tongue, fucking my pussy with his hand while he flicks my clit with his tongue.

With a long low moan, I shudder beneath him, feeling my wrists and ankles pulling painfully against their bindings as my body shudders and trembles, my mind flashing white and the pleasure spilling over inside me, causing me to lose control of myself completely for a few moments.

But it seemed as if he's only just begun in the various 'punishments' he has planned for me this evening. I've hardly come back to my senses before he's started kissing my breasts, taking first one then the other of my hard puckered nipples between his sensuous lips and flicking them with his tongue. At first his kisses are tender, but soon they became kind of rough, and I squeal as he bites down on my left nipple, leaving a bright spot of *blood* next to it ...

What the hell?

Hey, watch it! I want to say, but of course I'm gagged so tightly I can do nothing much except moan. The very same kind of moan I would probably make if I *enjoyed* his biting.

But this is too much.

And this time – as the flashes of pain mix in with those of my pleasure – I'm finding it harder and harder to fully enjoy the sensations.

Just then, his hand moves too roughly between my legs, working his fingers so hard and feverishly inside me, at such a speed that I cry out despite myself.

And when my pleading eyes finally meet with his, I notice that there's a devilish glint in them, almost as if right now it's the act of causing me pain *itself* that he's enjoying the most now.

I try to call out to him to stop, to be a little more gentle with me, but of course he can't hear a word I'm say from

behind my gag.

All of a sudden, all I can think of is *him*.

Of that horrible man from my nightmares.

The man who's name I don't want to speak, even inside my own head ...

I struggle and whimper, struggle and whimper, trying to tell him to *quit*.

But it's only when he pauses for a moment, locking his burning blue eyes with mine again, that he finally notices the hot tears that are spilling down my cheeks.

All of a sudden he stops what he's doing, quickly untying the gag from my mouth, allowing me finally to gasp in the air that's been partly denied me.

"Fuck you," I cry, the words springing out of my mouth before I've even thought them through. "Leave me the fuck alone. Untie me, right now."

"What is it? What's wrong?" he says, but doing as I ask, a pained and confused expression covering his face now as he quickly unties my wrists and then ankles. "What's the matter?"

But I don't want to talk any more. All I want is to be rid of him so that I can try to claw back some sense of dignity – and so the moment he unties me, I run crying for the en suite bathroom, slamming the door loudly behind me and locking it too, for good measure.

"Jennifer, please come back ..." I hear him call after me. "I don't understand ..."

But I'm not in the mood to explain myself, my body still trembling with barely concealed anger and shock.

“Leave me the fuck alone, Marcus,” I call back, loud enough and angry enough to silence him.

And then, before I can say another word, I start to sob.

THIRTY-ONE

MARCUS

WHAT THE HELL JUST *HAPPENED*?

I shake my head, completely puzzled by her reaction. I mean, up until a few minutes ago I really thought that we were on the same page – I really thought that we were both enjoying this. And I'd *never* want to do anything to upset her.

Dammit. I'm such a fucking idiot. I must have pushed things too far, too fast. I must have let myself get carried away.

But how was I to know?

I sigh in frustration, rubbing my face with my hands.

I should have taken things easier with her.

I quickly jump out of bed and head over to the bathroom, gingerly trying the handle, but it's locked.

"Jennifer?" I call through. "Jennifer?"

She doesn't answer me. But I can hear her sobbing from inside the room – sobbing so hard it sounds like I've *really* hurt her – and again I curse myself at going too far.

"Listen, can I speak to you?" I say gently. "Please? I'm sorry I went too far, I realize that now. I meant what I said, Jennifer. I'd *never* do anything to hurt you – not in that way. I guess I just took things too far. Let's talk about this. Please ..."

There's a pause, and I finally hear her crying stop and then the faucet turning on. A moment later, the door mechanism clicks as she pushes open the door, her face streaked with tears.

"I'm sorry," I say again, the moment I can see her. "Please believe me."

"It's okay," she replies with a sad smile, stepping back into the bedroom. "It's not just you. It's me, too. I guess there's a few things I haven't told you."

"What do you mean?" I ask, puzzled, taking her hand and leading her back towards the bed.

Luckily she doesn't push me away, even though I fucking deserve it, and before long we've climbed back under the covers, holding each other in a tender embrace.

I don't push things; I just wait for her to speak – to tell me whatever it is that seems so damn hard for her to say out loud. I watch her sigh, as she struggles for the right words, and I wait, remaining patiently silent. And then, all of a sudden, she starts to speak.

"I'm sorry I ran away like that," she begins. "I guess I just got scared. But I need you to know that it's not *you* I'm scared of. It's more about things from my past. I've been enjoying these things, these new experiences, Marcus, but I guess they've triggered a few uncomfortable memories too ..."

And as she begins to tell me all about her Mom's abusive boyfriend, and how he sometimes took it out on *her* too, even though she was just an innocent little kid, I feel a rising mixture of rage and sadness – rage at this asshole who spoiled the life of a young girl, and sadness that it's obviously affected

her so deeply, and that up until now it seems like she's had nobody to turn to, nobody to talk to about these things.

And I guess it makes me think about *my* dad too – those irrational rages he could fly into at the drop of a hat, always taking it out on whoever was nearest. Yes, I know just what she's feeling – that horrible pain and anger and sadness and fear.

“I'm sorry too, Jennifer,” I say once she's finished speaking. “I really should have asked if what I was doing was okay. I know I went too far. I can see that now. But you need to believe me, the *last* thing in the world I want to do is hurt you. In fact, I don't think you have any idea just how much I've come to feel for you in just this short time we've been together. So much more than I ever expected I could feel for anybody. You've become very dear to me, Jennifer. You do something to me – I can't explain it. But I've found myself having the strangest thoughts, thoughts I've never had before ...”

I tail off, again wondering if I've gone too far – bared too much of myself to her.

I mean, I have no idea if she even feels the same way, and I don't want to scare her off – especially when I've just got her back again.

I wait for her to reply, but instead she just snuggles into me, resting her head on my chest, and like that, holding each other tenderly in the darkness of my bedroom, we slowly fall asleep.

THIRTY-TWO

JENNIFER

STRANGE THOUGHTS?

What did he mean by that?

I curse myself for not being able to flat-out ask him. I couldn't last night, and I can't ask him now, even though tonight is our very *last* night together, and here we are, enjoying one final delicious meal.

Today we just spent a lazy Sunday in the grounds of the house, strolling around, enjoying the sunshine and talking – just sharing stories from our lives. Marcus told me all about how he grew up, always being the new kid at a school, never making many friends, but seeing all those different countries as his family travelled the world for his father's business. And I told him all about my hopes and dreams for the future – how I really *do* want to make something of myself, and how he's taught me that perhaps I should be more ambitious in the future, that maybe I *do* have what it takes to be a fashion designer ...

But I had so many other things I wanted to say, too – so many questions still left unanswered.

What happens after this week?

What exactly is *happening* between us?

Is this all still just part of the contract?

And am I ever going to see him again once this week is over?

But I just couldn't bring myself to do it – to ask those difficult questions. And he didn't bring them up, either.

I know, I know. I should be stronger than this. But there's still something so disarming about him, so confident, so devastating.

As always, *he's* the one in control, and as we finish our deserts, as if to prove this point, he suddenly stands and takes me by the hand and leads me to his bedroom, which is lit just by a single candle, casting flickering shadows over us as we slowly undress each other — silently and lovingly.

I feel my skin flashing in anticipation as we peel away the layers of each others' clothes, our eyes locked and burning with desire, that now-familiar heat building so damn intensely between us, as the shadows flicker all around us, the whole scene breathtaking in its beauty, it's simplicity.

It's him who finally closed the distance between us with a single confident step, and it feels so right, this moment: our shared nakedness, our beating hearts, our shivering silence ...

I tremble as he kissed me, his lips so soft against my own, his tongue slipping into my mouth, and his hands moving through my hair, my own fingertips grazing his body, stroking his broad back, my nails raking against his skin, my body shuddering as his fingers slip between my legs, discovering the heat and wetness of my pussy.

God, I feel as if I'm *melting* beneath his touch; my body's yearning for him so completely.

And tonight, it seems as if all that exists in our hearts is tenderness – for tonight there will be no punishment, just romance — romance and respect.

He lifts me so easily in his arms and lays me gently upon the bed as if I'm the most precious thing in the world, his body covering mine so completely, his lips dancing lightly against my collarbone, his hands cupping my breasts, his hot hardness brushing the inside of my thigh as I part my legs wide for him.

We've still not spoken a single word — our bodies speaking to each other in a much more primal language now — and it takes only a few more seconds before they've joined together as one, his hot thick cock pushing deep inside me, as my hands cup his muscular ass, urging him even deeper inside me.

His mouth moves to my breasts, his tongue gently circling my stiffening nipples, and I feel his pace quicken as he drives us both closer to the very edge of pleasure with each new thrust of his hips.

As my orgasm builds inside me, so too does the urge to speak, to utter the words I've had been holding back for so long.

I hold his head tightly between my hands, searching out his eyes with my own as I speak the words that finally break our silence: “Marcus, I don't want this week to end ...”

A moment later, I cry out as the pleasure overwhelms my body completely, strong enough to shatter me into a thousand tiny pieces, and it seems as if my moans and cries send him tumbling over the edge too, and with a final urgent thrust of his hips, he gasps then throws back his head as he floods me with his warmth.

Afterwards, as we lay on the sheets together, our bodies still joined, he turns and pulls me close in a tender hug, brushing a lock of hair softly from my face as his eyes seek out mine.

“I don’t want it to end either,” he whispers. “You know it doesn’t have to, Jennifer?”

“How do you mean?” I ask, unable to quite believe what he’s saying – needing to hear him *spell it out*.

“A week with you nowhere *near* enough,” he replies. “I can’t live without you. I want to extend the contract.”

But at the mention of that damn contract again I quickly shake my head.

“No, Marcus,” I say, feeling my confidence building, figuring I just need to *say it*, and to hell with the consequences, even if it ruins things completely between us. “I’ve learnt so much from you in this week. And I’ve learnt so much more about *myself* than I ever thought I could. I’ve learnt who I can be and what I’m worth, and I think I’m finally learning that I can ask for what I want and that I deserve to get it, too. And so I’m sorry to say it, but I don’t want a contract. If I could change one thing about us? One thing about this week? I would change it so there was never a damn contract in the first place ...”

There’s a long pause, his face flickering with confusion, even sadness.

“Very well,” he says quietly.

“You don’t understand,” I say, grabbing his face, turning it to mine, holding him with my eyes as I speak.

“I want you the way a woman has always wanted a man: to be hers. No contract. Just like any regular relationship.”

“Jennifer,” he says, his face breaking out in a sudden smile. “That’s more than I could have ever hoped for.”

“Well, that makes two of us,” I reply with a smile.

“And I’ve been thinking,” he continues quietly. “I meant it when I said a week with you was nowhere near enough. The way I feel about you, I don’t even think a *lifetime* would be quite enough ...”

He’s looking at me, as if waiting for me to respond, but this time I really *don’t* know quite what he’s getting at.

“What exactly do you mean?” I say, puzzled.

He takes my hand, and then he says the words, word I *never* expected him to say ...

EPILOGUE

JENNIFER

THE GLEAMING black Bentley looks so out of place: parked by the curb in this run-down neighborhood, no doubt attracting *all* kinds of unwanted attention. I give Trent a sheepish smile, before turning to take Marcus's hand in mine as we both cross the street to approach the tumbledown house my mom currently calls home.

"You know don't have to come if you don't want to," I murmur.

"What the hell are you talking about!" Marcus grins back. "I've been looking forward to meeting your mom for ages. I wouldn't miss this for the world."

"Well, just don't expect too much," I say, hoping to God she's on her best behavior with him. I mean, I can't imagine *what* she's gonna say.

I knock the door and then wait, my heart hammering in my chest before eventually the door opens, just a crack, my mom's face peeking out, before it breaks into a big smile when she sees me.

She throws open the door and steps onto the porch, giving me such a hug that it knocks the air out of me.

"How's my baby girl?" she asks.

“I’m good, Mom,” I say, stepping back to take a good look at her.

Okay. It seems like that money I wired her hasn’t *all* gone on booze. I mean, she’s had a haircut, which is something of a first, and her clothes don’t look too shabby either. But I can still smell it, that familiar cloud of alcohol that seems to follow her around wherever she goes ...

“Mom, this is Marcus,” I say, unable to hide the nerves in my voice. “And Marcus, this is my mom, Wanda.”

“Pleased to meet you, Mrs Adams,” he says, as polite and gracious as if he were talking to some high class society woman.

It takes my mom aback a little, and she obviously doesn’t know quite what to say, as he leans in and kisses her warmly on the cheek.

“Well?” I say. “Aren’t you gonna invite us inside?”

As she turns to lead us in to the gloomy old house – as always, none of the curtains are drawn even though it’s a lovely bright day outside – I hear her muttering under her breath, repeating what he said to herself incredulously, *Pleased to meet you, Mrs Adams.*

“*Mom,*” I chide under my breath, which shuts her up.

My heart sinks when I see the state of the living room, and obviously she did spend a *lot* of the money I wired her on booze after all, which was what I was fearing. I can see empty vodka and scotch bottles all over the place, and a blue cloud of cigarette smoke hangs in the dim dusty air around our heads, making my eyes water.

The first thing I do is throw open the curtains and crack the windows, and then we sit down on the beat up old couch, and

she takes the single chair near the window.

“I’d offer you some coffee or something,” she mumbles, “but I don’t have any ...”

“That’s okay, Mom,” I say.

There’s an awkward pause, and I can tell that Marcus is looking around the room – he’s probably never set foot in somewhere so rundown as this before, and although he’s doing his best to stay calm and relaxed, he must be feeling kind of awkward, too ...

“So Mom,” I say, feeling my heart pound as I decide to just blurt it out – the thing I’ve been rehearsing in my head for so long now, practicing and practicing, “I think we need to talk about something.”

“Oh, do we now?” she shoots back, immediately on the defensive.

“Yeah, we do,” I reply, holding my nerve. “Just hear me out. I’m worried about you. I’ve been worried about you for a long time. And I think it’s finally time you did something to get yourself straight. Do you understand what I’m saying?”

She turns her face away from me, obviously struck dumb by how direct and confident I’m being. I mean, this is *not* how we normally interact.

“You talkin’ ‘bout rehab?” she mumbles, still avoiding my gaze.

“Something like that,” I reply. “I’ve found a place, a really nice private clinic, not far from here. They could help you there ...”

“And who’s gonna *pay* for something like that, some fancy clinic?” she spits back.

“I would ... *We* would,” I say gently.

“You and your fancy new boyfriend?” she hisses.

“Well, that’s another thing, Mom,” I say quietly. “He’s not just my boyfriend anymore. He’s my *fiancé*.”

The word has the desired effect. Her eyes flash wide and lock onto mine. She looks across at Marcus, who smiles and nods at her, as if to prove I’m not lying, and I feel his hand give mine a comforting little squeeze.

“That’s right, Mom,” I smile. “We’re getting married. And I want you to be there when we do ... *Clean*.”

“Oh sweetie,” she murmurs, getting to her feet. “Oh baby ...”

I stand up too, and she gives me another big hug. And it takes me a few moments before I realize that she’s started crying, the sobs juddering up, shaking her thin, almost skeletal frame.

“I’m sorry, babygirl,” she murmurs. “I’ve not been a good momma to you, have I?”

“It’s okay, Mom,” I reply, fighting back tears of my own now. “You did your best. I never doubted that. Not for a second.”

“You did a great job, Mrs Adams,” Marcus cuts in. “Jennifer is a wonderful woman. You should be proud to have such a fantastic daughter.”

Mom breaks the hug and steps back, again looking from me to Marcus, then back again.

“My little girl’s really getting married?” she says, wiping away the tears, a big grin spreading across her face now. “I can’t believe it!”

“Well, that’s not *all*,” I say, taking her frail bony hands in both of mine. “I also need you to get well, Momma, so that you’ll be good and healthy to meet your *grandchild*, too.”

“You don’t mean?” she gasps.

I nod.

“Oh baby!” she cries, utterly overcome with happiness now.

And as I give her a huge hug, I feel Marcus’s strong arms wrap around us both, so that the three of us standing there in her living room.

And you know what?

For once in my life, I really *do* feel like things might turn out okay, after all.