

Evernight Publishing

RAVEN MCALLAN

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DEDICATION

To Jane whose brilliant edits and suggestions were just what this story needed. Thank you

SEDUCING THE REGENCY DOM

Raven McAllan

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Chapter One

London, England 1818

"'Tis all well and good for you, Stephen." Anthony Provost, The Earl of Sentern grumbled to his longtime friend and confidant, as they sat side-by-side in Whites. "You have a wife who adores you."

Stephen Brasher nodded. "And I adore Jane," Stephen said. His eyes took on a glazed look. Tony sighed.

The only other occupant of the room apart from them—an elderly baron—snoozed under a copy of *The Times*, and his snores ruffled the sheets. Tony raised one eyebrow and grimaced. He could see himself ending up like Stallinborough if he didn't get his life

sorted out.

"Stop interrupting," Tony said in a mock severe tone to Stephen. "And take the sappy look from your face. It's a disgrace. You two lovebirds are an anomaly. Now, to continue: You have your wife, your heir and your spare. What do I have? Nothing, except a need to wed and do whatever necessary to keep Sentern Court out of the hands of my ignoramus of a cousin. Mama is parading a series of insipid so-called beauties in front of me at every opportunity. Lord, Steve, if they saw a man without his waistcoat, they'd run and hide. A cock? Doesn't bear thinking about. My playroom? Well." He shrugged. "Not a cat in Hell's chance, I'd

say. Or a deb in chains."

Stephen patted him on the shoulder and stood up. "Sadly, I think I must agree. Jane and I grew up together, and explored what we like together. It's not something you can bring up in polite conversation easily, is it? 'By the way, my dear, I have a penchant for bondage and wax play. Don't worry—I use Spermaceti oil candles, which don't burn you as easily. Oh, and do you know just how creative I can be with a flogger?'"

That was the problem, Tony thought glumly, as Stephen departed to return to his wife and left Tony to listen to the snores and snorts of Stallinborough by himself. If—when—he married, he wanted to be faithful. It

didn't matter that a mistress was *de rigueur* and expected of men of the Ton. He intended to be like Stephen and buck the trend. Even if, God forbid, he had to temper his dominant tendencies... provided he could.

With a sigh loud enough to wake the devil—but apparently not Stallinborough, who slumbered on—Tony left the club and walked briskly along Piccadilly. His mind was busy, as he thought of the numerous young ladies his Mama had found necessary to introduce him to over the past few weeks. It seemed she thought that at three and thirty years of age he needed to curb his excesses and settle down. Even though she had delicately mentioned that

she understood the needs of gentlemen lay outside of the marital bed, and any good wife would understand the same.

I don't want a good wife, or a compliant one. I want a bad wife, and a submissive one. The thought made him grin. Not a likely scenario. Ever since he returned from his travels to the newly opened Far East—where he discovered, what up until then had been missing from his life—Tony had existed on a scratch-when-needed diet. A few demi monde would be prepared to submit for a hefty fee and a promise he left no marks. But it wasn't enough. Mai Li, his mistress for several years, had embraced all he did with sensuous enjoyment, and it had spoiled him for anyone else.

He'd been called home on his father's death to take up the reins of the Earldom. Much to his Mama's alleged annoyance, but he suspected, private delight, he chose not to move into the Earl's town house. He left her and his younger sisters in residence, set up a bachelor establishment in town, and purchased a secluded manor within a few hours' ride.

Why he furnished a room in each as a playroom, complete with the toys he'd brought back from the Far East, he had no idea. A whim, certainly, as his chances of using them were slim to nonexistent. But it gave him hope that his jades and candles might one day be used, as he desired. He smiled as he

thought of his candles. Even though it was illegal to make your own, and indeed one of his peers had recently been prosecuted, Tony had no such qualms. If ever he had the chance to decorate a willing partner again, the candles would be made and tested by him, no one else. He had no intention of submitting the tender skin of a sub to something he couldn't say, with all honesty, was safe and any marks would be short lived. It was one thing to mark the skin in a sensual way, another to scar for life.

He took the steps to his town house two at a time, and grinned as the door opened before he reached it. Ashton, his doorman had that knack.

"My Lord, there is a young lady waiting to see you. She declined to give her name. She isn't a," he coughed, "a ladybird, or someone inferior, my lord. Definitely a lady of quality. However, she is unaccompanied. I've left her in the blue salon. With a dish of tea." Ashton's nose wrinkled. Whether because of unaccompanied young ladies or the tea, Tony wasn't sure.

"Then bring me some ale, please, and I'll see who it is." He removed his cloak and hat and checked his cravat and ruffles were as they should be. Satisfied, he turned toward the door of the blue salon. He searched his mind as to who could possibly be so prepared for a scandal as to visit him alone in his

home. Unless it was a ruse, to put him in a compromising position...? Tony was under no illusions about how good a catch he was. The months since he'd returned to England had shown him that.

"Ashton?"

The doorman stopped walking and looked at Tony enquiringly. "Sir?"

"Do not let anyone in. In case." He waved toward the room he was about to enter.

"Ah." Ashton nodded. "I have taken the liberty of securing all doors and putting the potboy into the garden with order to shout if anyone approaches. You won't be coerced into the parson's mousetrap whilst we're around."

"Good. Did you recognize the lady?"

Ashton shook his head. "She has a loo mask on. And her hood tight around her face."

That figures. Now I'm intrigued. Perhaps that is my Mystery Lady's intention? Tony put his hand on the door handle and paused.

"But I'd bet my last groat she is a redhead. Has the skin," Ashton said before he disappeared along the corridor toward the butler's pantry and the ale.

Tony listened intently. He couldn't hear any noise from inside the blue salon. Slowly, he pushed the door open and walked inside the room.

The lady sitting on the edge of the

velvet chaise looked up and swallowed. Behind the mask, green eyes glittered, before she dropped her eyelids and folded her hands in her lap. Between it and her hood, tendrils of deep red hair showed.

Submissive or embarrassed?

As much as I would hope for the former, no doubt 'tis the latter.

"My lady?" Tony bowed and she did a shuffle-bob without getting up. It amused him. Did she think he would discover her identity through a curtsy? "I fear you have the advantage. You know me, and why you are here. I neither know you nor the purpose of your visit. Perhaps you could change that?"

"Yes, if *you* promise not to

divulge to anyone of my visit." The voice was melodic but too low for Tony to place it. The accent was definitely of a lady of quality, and what little inflection he heard showed it was a youngish girl speaking. Definitely not a dowager. She shifted on the seat, and he glimpsed a well-turned ankle as her gown flowed around her. *No, definitely no dowager.* Tony was a connoisseur of well-turned ankles. Preferably shackled.

"As long as it's legal, I see no reason why our business is anyone else's," Tony said, and waited as she wriggled around again. This time it annoyed him.

"Sit still." He snapped the words out. "Look at me. And take that damned

mask off. The only mask I'll allow is one where you see nothing and I see it all." He could have hit himself. Annoyed or not, it was a stupid thing to say.

Guaranteed to make his guest run off screaming *pervert* and *debauchery*.

"And lower your hood. I can see your hair, be it natural or not. Do you have a temper to match?"

With a loud gasp, his guest ceased all movement and put her hands to her mask. "The hood stays, the temper is renowned. You give me your word for our continued privacy?"

Tony wasn't used to being questioned thus, especially by a female. However if he wanted to find out what was going on, and be ready to act as host

at his Mama's ball, he'd better get things moving.

"My word as a Sentern, or a gentleman or whatever you choose. This encounter stays between us." There was a knock on the door. What little of her face he could see paled and she gasped once more. *What is it with young women and gasps? Stupid noise.* "And Ashton, my doorman. Who let you in, and who is now waiting to bring me a jug of ale."

"Ah." His Lady of Mystery bit her lip. "Then that is fine."

Thank the lord, or I might die of thirst before she tells me her errand.

Tony waited until Ashton had left the room.

"So, my lady. Mask off, cards on the table. Unless you wish me to do it for you? But be assured I won't stop at the mask." Why was he goading her like that? It was unfair, as well he knew. Anything he did or said, she could do nothing about, as it would mean admitting she'd behaved in such a scandalous manner.

"Really?" She sounded interested, not apprehensive. "What else?"

He raised one eyebrow, in a manner designed to intimidate. "Do you really want to find out?"

"Hmm..." She put one finger to her lips, and nibbled the nail.

At the sight of such an unconsciously erotic gesture, Tony's skin

tightened, and his heart sped up.

"Is it worth it, I wonder?"

It seemed the intimidation didn't work.

Chapter Two

Susanna Campion hid a grin. Little did Anthony know that she was under no illusion: if he, Lord Sentern, knew the full reason for her visit she'd not be able to sit comfortably for a week. Sadly not for the reasons she'd read about, either.

"I wonder? Perhaps not now," she said in a dulcet tone. She decided to go one step further than she'd told him. With one hand—still steady, she was pleased to note—she slid her hood back to spread over her shoulders, and pushed an errant red curl from her forehead. Then she undid the ties of the loo mask to let it dangle from one finger, before

allowing it to drop to the floor. Really, playing a simpering miss was exhausting. "Lady Susanna Campion, my lord." She stood up, walked toward him, and looked him in the eyes. Why had no one ever mentioned how his dark grey irises were shot with silver streaks? They glittered in the pale spring sunshine filtering through the windows, and she shivered under his intense gaze. "I have come to ask you a favor." Susanna, eyes downcast, clasped her hands behind her back. Why did she feel the urge to kneel? Probably because Jane had told her it was the way to greet your Master. Tony might not be he, but he had such an air about him, Susanna needed to force herself to stay as she was. So much

depended on this interview.

In such close proximity to him, she could smell his citrus cologne and a hint of tobacco mixed with what she privately called 'the essence of all-man'... earthy, musky and powerful. How many women would admit to being aroused by a sense of power in a man? It made her skin tingle and her pulse race in readiness for whatever should happen. So few men seemed to possess it to the degree she scented on Tony, which was a shame for womankind. The wonderment of what it might intimate was the perfect aphrodisiac. But then, how many women admitted their sexuality? Not enough, if one listened to the gossip at soirees.

Her stomach muscles clenched as she waited for his answer. Behind her the tick of the long case clock sounded over-loud, and the hiss of a coal as it slipped in the grate set her nerves one notch higher. Susanna dug her fingernails into her palms. The pain served to remind her why she was there. Eventually, just as she thought she'd give in and blurt her request out, he lifted her chin. The skin on his finger pads was roughened, she noted. *No lazy lord, then?* It gave her heart.

"Subservient?" The grip tightened slightly, so she had no option but to look at him.

Susanna chose to misunderstand him. "My lord, I'm no servant." The

amused look on his face gave her no idea if he believed she understood him or not. "But I have a service to beg of you."

"Oh I like begging," he said, and Susanna bit her lip to stop the laugh that wanted to escape.

So she had heard. It had been one of the images that helped her through many a self-given orgasm.

"When someone else does it to me, of course," Tony continued. "Therefore, beg away."

Whilst she knew there was nothing for it but to speak to him before they met formally, Susanna had no idea it could be so much fun. Was this what they called verbal sparring? If so, she was

engaged with an expert. "Then I beg of you, my lord. This evening, don't be coerced into dancing with me. And on no account, at any time, offer for me."

The look of incredulity on his face was enough to make her giggle. The way his fingers tightened on her chin was not.

"My lord, bruises," she managed to say. To speak clearly with one's chin held so, was not easy. "That hurts."

Tony blanched, and removed his hand. "My apologies, my lady. It wasn't my intention to mark you, or cause you pain."

Did she really hear him speak? She was certain she had.

"Not yet, like this." His voice was low but...No, surely not. She must be

hearing things. Marking in such a manner wasn't something she'd heard associated with him. Marking in a sensual, erotic way was a different matter. However, to admit to it? It seemed the stories were true. Would she ever experience such delights with him? Susanna could only hope and dream that one day she might.

He studied her chin intently, and ran his finger over the spot he'd held. "No marks, though you were right to reprimand me. Your skin will color easily, I think?" Susanna surmised his statement was intended to soothe. It did the opposite, and made Susanna hard-pressed not to lean into him and demand he show her how. *One day.*

"Somewhat, my lord. It is the

curse of a redhead. Fiery temper and easily bruised. And a stubborn streak. One that begs you to heed me."

"What makes you think I'm going to offer for you?" Tony sounded genuinely interested. "I am my own man. I can't be coerced or forced into something I do not desire."

"Your mama, my mama, your need for a wife, my need to be one—or so I'm told. I'm three and twenty, and about to be so far back on the shelf, I'll be missed when they dust. I don't wish to marry, but do they understand? Of course not...they only see me as slipping into the lonely life of an old maid."

"Do you see it differently?"

"Oh yes. Give me one good reason

why I should wed someone who neither cares for me out of the ordinary, nor wants me as anything other than a brood mare?"

He tilted her head up to face him once more. This time his touch was gentle, and his fingers stroked her skin. The caress set her nerve ends tingling.

Stupid girl. That is no more than he would give to a sister.

"You think I'd be like that?" Tony ran his finger from her throat to her mouth and circled her pursed lips, as if beckoning her to nip. Book reading was all well and good, but she wanted to know what would really happen if she did. Reading or hearing about sex secondhand wasn't enough. Not yet,

though. Not if her plan worked.

"I don't know, my lord. But according to our respective Mamas that is what I should expect. They seem to think I'd be pleased."

"And you're not?"

"No. If that is what's in store as a wife, then I wish to remain single, remove to the country and, and have cats."

Tony burst out laughing, and his finger slid between her lips. It was no good. She gave into temptation and sucked the end.

"I think you are altogether too much a woman for that fate. Unless you are a follower of Sappho?" He caressed the back of her neck with his other hand.

"Then you may find the only way to achieve your idyll is to do as you say."

Susanna shook her head, which under the circumstances was no mean feat. His touch gave her all sorts of shivers and her skin prickled with something indefinable.

"Are you? I need you to vocalize, Susanna." Her name sounded romantic, erotic and all things she shouldn't know about. Her channel, that place she discovered along with the little nub above it—her clitoris, Jane told her—which loved to be touched, spasmed and a gush of liquid began to gather. This was the first time anything other than her own hand had brought about that reaction. Susanna tightened her muscles

to stop the quiver increasing.

"No...no. Not Sappho. Just not interested." She crossed her fingers behind her back. It was, according to her cousin and best friend Jane, a way of telling an untruth and not really intending to abide by it.

"A pity. I'm sure I could make you interested."

So was she. "Is that a promise or a threat, my lord?"

He shook his head. "Neither. It's a statement of fact. If I had the opportunity and your agreement." He waited for a moment, presumably to see if Susanna answered. She couldn't think of a word to say.

"Ah, well." He smiled. "Then I

promise not to offer for you. Will that do?"

"Or let us be coerced into a compromising position," Susanna added, annoyed she had to miss an opportunity to increase his interest. *Remember, slowly...slowly is best.* "I know my Mama. She'd do anything to stop herself losing face, even throwing me to the shar...oh my lord, that was rude." *Damn. I bet my face is as red as my hair.*

To her relief, Tony laughed. "Or that. Rest assured, I've bested better people than either of our Mamas. We will not be forced into anything we don't wish for."

Was that relief or regret that filled

her? Susanna hardened her resolve: she had a plan, and intended to stick to it. She wanted, no needed, more than a purely 'wedded, bedded, and forgotten' partnership, be it in holy wedlock or not. That was, after all, the reason for her machinations.

"Then I thank you. I will of course act as if I've never met you when we're introduced." Susanna curtsied and then stood up. As she walked back to the chaise, he overtook her and picked up her disguise. He held it between his forefinger and thumb and waved it from one side. "A pretty frippery."

"A necessity," Susanna said in as firm a tone as she could muster. "May I have it back, please?"

To her dismay he put it inside his waistcoat, and shook his head. "No. I told you, the only mask you'll wear in my presence is one to un-sight you. If we are together for any length of time, you'll realize I never say things I don't mean."

Excitement and dismay played games in her tummy, warring to see who rose to the top. She couldn't decide. It seemed what she had read was true, and she wished she could experience it herself. *One day.*

"Then how do I get home unnoticed? I may not live far away, but this is a fashionable crescent, and I often think the occupants have nothing better to do than report on the movements of others," she said in a bitter tone.

He grinned. It transformed his face, and made him appear years younger, and carefree. The way the corners of his eyes creased gave the twinkle in them a wicked gleam. "True, but then they have mundane lives and nothing better to do." He pulled her hood around her face and held the sides together. "Are you certain we wouldn't suit? You seem to have more spine than anyone else I've met. Or do you have a secret tendre you hope will be reciprocated one day?"

Susanna honed in on his query. "Yes, my lord, that's it exactly. I have someone I want to be with." Unless things worked out as she planned, he'd never know at just whom that tendre was

directed.

"Pity. I feel we would be well matched."

"You promised." She did her best to keep the desperation out of her voice. "You said you never go back on your word."

"Nor do I," he said, his tone regretful. "However, I didn't say I wouldn't touch you. Or on reflection, try to get you to change your mind."

Before Susanna had time to react he pulled her tight against his body. His breath stirred the hairs on her neck as he nibbled the nape. The tiny nips and stings sent a swift bolt of excitement through her body to her clit. She moaned as her juices collected at the apex of her

thighs, and he rightly took the noise as a sign of assent.

"Do you know what I'd like to do with you? To coat you in intricate patterns of wax. To tie you, un-sight you and show you the joys of bondage and spanking. To introduce you to the delights that are more, so much more than most people ever think can be achieved. I feel you would be a willing and eager pupil, and I a most ardent teacher." Tony spoke the words softly in her ear, but there was no mistaking their intensity.

Her arse clasped tightly as he ground his cock into her quim, and Susanna did nothing to stop him. She might as well get one tiny glimpse of his

mastery before she said *enough*. His words had her body tight with arousal. Her clitoris stung with the need to be touched, as her juices gathered and coated her nether curls. With great daring, Susanna bent her head to allow him greater access to the uncovered skin, and ran her hand over the fine wool of his jacket.

"Minx." His voice was slurred. "If you do that, I..." What he was going to say, she didn't find out. With a groan that sounded tortured, Tony lifted his head, and moved back a pace. He ran his hand through his hair, and mussed the once ordered curls. She was pleased to see that his hand trembled. He wasn't as in control as he hoped to portray.

"My lady, I believe I owe you an apology."

Susanna licked her lips. "Really? Such a pity, because I was going to thank you, and ask what came next." As an exit note, Susanna felt it couldn't be bettered. Except she couldn't exit, and had to stand while a grin split his face and he laughed out loud.

"*Xiao Māo*, I wish I hadn't made that promise. Any time you wish me to renege, please tell me. Not necessarily offering for you, but perhaps a little dalliance? My candles are ready and waiting to be used on a willing body, and my cock is primed."

"No, I thank you and no. I," she hesitated, "I am pure now, and at this

moment have no intention of altering that state." *At this moment.* "My husband will want only me, and I him."

"We could of course indulge in dalliances and still leave you for all intents and purposes, pure."

She shook her head. "Sadly, the answer must still be no. And what did you call me?"

"Xiao Māo? It's Chinese for *kitten*. It's what I would call you if you let me be your Master."

He bowed and swept her out of the room, across the back hallway, through the gardens and along the mews to her home.

Chapter Three

"Mama, no more." Tony waved his quizzing glass in the direction of a gaggle of innocents who twitted and blushed every time any eligible gentleman so much as glanced in their direction. His visitor from that afternoon, he noted, was not one of them. Idly he wondered where she was.

"What do you mean?" His mother pulled herself up to her full height of around five foot three, and glared at him. "Explain that remark."

Tony had never understood what 'to bristle' meant until he returned from his travels and refused to fall in with his

mother's wishes. Now he understood full well. She did it magnificently.

As then.

"I mean, Mama, if you persist in parading this procession of idiots who would bore me within five minutes, and shrivel my cock and ballocks into indifferent passivity, I will travel once more." The dowager's outraged hiss made him laugh.

"Mama, I love you dearly, but even you admitted your marriage was an unhappy charade. Knowing my father, I can see why. I give thanks every day I haven't inherited his traits and ideals. Apart from that, do not try to tell me that Spencer Tarporley is merely a beau without benefits, because I wouldn't

believe you."

"Tony, I, you, Spen, oh where are my smelling salts." She fluttered her hands around like a demented hen would flap its wings. Tony pinched her chin and laughed. "Ah, Mama, be honest. Do you really want me to have one of those chits to rule the roost? To be a role model for Emmaline and Charlotte?"

"Well, no, not really," Honoria Sentern confessed. "However, Tony, I thought it best so you could do as you wanted and not upset anyone."

Good grief, I hope that doesn't mean she knows of my proclivities? Or she has enjoyed such things... Wrongly or not, the thought of his mother as a subservient didn't sit well. She was his

mother. As for a Dominant? A less assertive person he had yet to meet. Tony was well aware of the double standard he applied, but some things were best not even thought about. But then, Spencer Tarporley did have somewhat of a reputation when younger. Before Tony had time to assimilate those thoughts, his mother spoke once more.

"I felt it best you marry, get the heir, and go your own way without false promises. I know you better than you think, Tony, and there are few women who would satisfy all you need. Now, no more. I promise not to interfere, and will bring no more debutants to your attention. However, I cannot answer for others."

He noticed she only mentioned debutants, not young ladies almost at the back of the shelf. He let it slide as a matron in a shocking purple and pink turban marched—there was no other word for it—in their direction. She had a determined gleam in her eye and a blushing blonde in tow.

"I'm for the games room." He turned on his heel and walked away, leaving his flustered mother to greet the newcomers. A few games of dice and some brandy would go a long way to restore his equanimity.

He didn't get that far. Pinkerton, his Mama's butler, stopped him as he exited the ballroom.

"Your grace?"

Tony sighed. That title was one he still thought of as his father's, not his. However, his it was, and he had to get used to it. Besides which, Pinkerton was a favorite. He'd dandied Tony on his knee as a babe, patched his scrapes as a youth, and held his head as a drunken graduate. Helped his sisters fend off unwanted admirers and been there for his mother when his father died and Tony himself was trying to get a passage home. In short, Tony would do anything for Pinkerton and vice versa.

"Why the long face, Pink?" Tony used the nickname without thought. "Mama's ball is a success. The girls are dancing their slippers off, and I'm about to go into hiding."

"I think you'd better, your grace, though not here. There's one guest and her horse-faced daughter loitering in the library, the Harrison woman and her giggling twins in the small salon, and Endymion Stanley waiting in the games room, to beg for a loan or ask you to take his daughter off his hands." He spoke in a confident and confiding manner, and Tony appreciated it.

"Damnation. So where shall I go? Home?"

Pinkerton chuckled. "Not if you want your mother to continue to speak to you. May I suggest you let me announce supper? And escort one of your Mama's cronies in? You could leave without shame afterward."

"Pink, you're a genius. Let's do it."

Tony punched the man's shoulder and grinned. Pinkerton lived up to his nickname and a rosy hue spread over his face. He hurried away in a stately manner, something Tony admired. He waited until the gong sounded then retraced his steps. Once back inside the ballroom, he scanned those people who hadn't yet left to join in the unseemly scramble for the best seats in the supper room.

His sisters were both escorted by gentlemen he expected to pay him a call before long, to ask permission to pay their addresses to their chosen lady. It felt peculiar that he, as their brother would need to adopt the role of his

father and ask the gentlemen their prospects. Even though he knew fine well what each man was worth. On the far side of the room, he saw a particular crony of his mother's, one he liked. Lady Hesketh was plump, good-natured and good company. She told a bawdy sally without batting an eyelid, and appreciated a risqué joke.

So far she was alone, and Tony decided to act before his mother did her 'sweeping all before her' act and took Lady Hesketh into the supper room along with the other loiterers. He strode toward her, his eyes fixed on his goal and barely acknowledging anyone except with the briefest of salutes. He wasn't going to be foiled now.

"Ah, Tony." Her ladyship beamed and gave him her hand to kiss. "Why are you over here and not with those young simpering idiots?"

Her words were so similar to his thoughts, he chuckled. "I prefer you, and your non simpering, non idiocy. May I escort you to supper?"

She stared at him, and as ever, Tony thought her eyes twinkled and saw deep into his soul. It never bothered him. He liked the woman, and would never do anything to upset her.

"Well now, how nice. But this time, dear boy, I'm going to have to refuse you. I'm waiting for that old fool Rotherhythe to come out of the card room and escort me. He lost at dice and

this is his fate." She bellowed with laughter and her overlarge bosoms heaved under her gown. "The old fool wanted to dice over our marriage. I ask you, Tony, why on earth would I marry again at my age? I prefer my parties and my pugs." Lady Hesketh had a pack of overindulged lap dogs. "Why don't you take my goddaughter instead? Her Mama is indisposed so I said I'd stand in her stead." She turned her head and waved toward one of the long casement windows that lined the walls of the ballroom. "Susi? Come over here. Sentern is to escort you to supper."

A strange tingle spread through Tony. His skin itched and he turned his head to watch the lady who appeared

from behind the curtain and walked slowly toward them. He'd recognize that hair anywhere.

"Susi?"

"Lady Susanna Campion. My goddaughter. Of course she came out whilst you were gallivanting."

Tony wouldn't call his travels gallivanting, but he let it go. He couldn't take his eyes off the lady who curtsied and gave him a very speaking look.

"It will be my pleasure," he said.

If the look Susanna gave him could kill, his Mama would be hunting out her blacks and choosing funeral meats.

"You promised," she said under her breath as he steered her away from her beaming godmother and toward the

supper room.

"This is neither dancing nor offering for you," Tony pointed out. He ignored her muttered words of, "No. 'Tis much worse than dancing and will be seen as you having intentions." She may be correct, but if he ignored it, so should she.

"And you would prefer I embarrass your godmother, for whom I may say I have the highest regard, and you?" he asked in an undertone as he gave a brief bow to a scowling matron. "Thus making you a laughing stock? I hope I am too much of a gentleman."

"Oh glory, I never thought of it like that," she said in an undertone of her own. "And let's get away before Lady

Memscott foists Penelope on us. I swear if I'm told once more how sad it is that I haven't taken, I'll take *her*. By the neck. Now that would cause a scandal. She may have been married at seventeen, but to an aged lothario who did her a service by dying after only a year of marriage. Do you think she bored him to death? Her only thoughts are gowns and bonnets. Oh, and how sad it is I haven't taken. I should have made it two worms down her back when we were at school together, not just one."

He smothered his laugh, and with a wink, bent to kiss the back of Susanna's hand. "Let's give the miserable old tabby and her catty daughter something else to gossip about." He

ignored the outraged gasp from Lady Memscott, and pondered the way his cock stirred when Susanna giggled.

"She doesn't need ammunition. If she can't find gossip she makes it up. And as I've sunk so low in her estimation it would need a very long rope to pull me up, I don't care."

The thought of rope and Susanna tweaked his prick again. Tony made a mental note to examine his feelings regarding her and his preferences when he was alone. Now would not be the time for a rampant staff and a need for release. His evening breeches were snugly made to lovingly caress every curve of his body. An erection would show. Tony might get impatient with the

niceties of the Ton but polite society was just that: polite. Sporting a long, hard staff didn't conform.

"Why have you blotted your copy book?" he asked as they left the ballroom and walked past his beaming Mama into a long and strangely deserted corridor. Her look of smug satisfaction sent warning bells ringing. "And my Mama looks like the cat who has just licked out the cream jug." That thought, of licking and cream was yet another one to stir him. *I'm going to have to take myself in hand before long if I can't stop reading sex into every blasted word or thought. But her cream on my tongue...* He brought his thoughts under control. He hardly knew the girl, so why

was he reacting to her in such a way?

"Oh, because I never seem to care if I don't dance, or if she tries to put me down. I've never worried when Penelope gets up to her catty tricks, and I'm happy with my lot. Or I am as long as I'm not hustled into a marriage of convenience. Not that she knows that, of course. She just sees me as someone who didn't take and feels sorry for me."

Susanna stopped walking and turned toward him. Her breasts, scarcely covered under her cream silks, brushed his chest. As she made no reference to it and seemed oblivious to her nipples straining the cloth, Tony decided he would ignore the fact. Or try to. It was difficult when her scent surrounded him,

and encouraged his body to misbehave. In his imagination he could see her stretched out on the bed, arms bound, legs spread wide and her denuded cunt bared to his view as he oh so slowly created patterns in wax on her alabaster skin.

"I only want to be me." Susanna shrugged her shoulders. "Lord, I sound like one of those simpering heroines in a circulating novel. I assure you the real me is nothing like that." The glint in her eyes, and the curve of her lips showed that. She ran her tongue around her mouth and let the pink tip linger for a second.

The pictures his mind conjured up, of his mouth on her quim, his tongue

teasing her channel and then, her cunt taking and holding his cock, were enough to cause him him to stifle a moan.

"My lady, if you don't want us to be forced to wed I suggest you take a step back. We might be in a deserted corridor, but if I know one thing, it is that it won't be thus for long. Sadly, for I ache to know what you mean." On cue he heard footsteps.

Susanna gasped and did as he asked.

Behind her, Pinkerton appeared and walked toward them. "Your Grace? If you would be so kind, the harpist would like permission to start playing in the supper room. Oh, and I see more guests appearing behind you."

"Of course." He waited until Pinkerton turned and retraced his steps, presumably to give the agreement to the harpist, and then Tony tucked Susanna's arm in his once more. "Saved by the bell, or rather the harp. I'd bet you a guinea, that's Lady Hemscott."

Chapter Four

He'd been correct in his surmise. As Susanna let her maid brush her hair, she reflected on the strange day she had. Somehow she'd muddled through it, and achieved her aim, but it had been a close run thing at times. Now all she wanted was to go over the events in her mind, and be prepared to report back to Jane the following day. Without Jane, this whole affair, or lack of affair might never have happened. She listened, argued, suggested, and agreed. Thus between the two of them, they had concocted Campaign Come.

Susanna now realized when they'd

conceived the plan, neither had properly thought it through. It was one thing to beg him not to offer for her, another to do her best to engage his interest in her with a greater depth. When she'd turned to him in the corridor, and moved close to him on the pretense of—of what she had no idea— and felt his cock stir against her quim, she'd nearly blurted out her plan. Luckily, the interruption by Pinkerton had stopped her. It was way too soon to admit to any plots or machinations. First she had to intrigue Tony, make him want to discover what she was made of, and feel it was his own idea. It didn't sit easy with her to be so underhanded, but as she said to Jane, needs must. Susanna had no illusions regarding her Mama and

Tony's Mama's plans. Those two ladies were unstoppable when set on a course of action. It wasn't Tony she objected to—indeed, he was the only thing that made their machinations palatable. It was what she was told to expect which was objectionable. That if she were to wed Tony, it would be no more than an ‘heir, spare, and stray’ union. There would be no third person in their marriage. Not even—Susanna coughed. *Do not even think that way.*

"That's fine, Mary... off you go. Tomorrow I'm going to breakfast with Jane Brasher. So an early morning, and then a lazy day. Evidently we're having a day at home, with no evening engagements." She could hardly wait.

"Yes, my lady." Mary helped her into bed and left her.

Anyone would think I was incapable of climbing three feet onto my mattress. Susanna snuggled down, and let her eyes close.

Tony stretched out beside her.

"Ssh, just enjoy it. Let me show you how it should be, and what we both need." With a wicked grin he began to touch her.

Susanna moaned and stirred restlessly. She wanted more.

He laughed softly. "Shall we take it a step further?"

Her eyes were covered and he stretched her hands out high above her head.

"Leave them there, and do not move them."

"Yes, my lord." She gripped the headboard. She would do as he asked. His tone of voice commanded obedience.

"Ah, Xiao Māo, what a good little sub you are..."

Susanna held her breath as he slipped two of his fingers inside her. They moved in and out, stroking and teasing her, and increasing her juices. He used his other hand to pinch and soothe her clitoris. As tingles spread through her, he bent his head to take one hard nipple in his mouth. Then he bit down on the sensitive nub, to just the pleasure side of pain. A wave of

heat engulfed her. Her skin was on fire and her nerves jangled, and her clit stung with something just out of reach. If only...

Susanna woke up with a sob. Her thighs and quim were coated with her essence and she quivered with the need for that exquisite pleasure of total release.

Her hands were clasped tight to the headboard, her nightrail damp with perspiration and her body slicked with the evidence of her arousal. If just a few hours of knowing brought this reaction, Heaven help her if she spent a lot of time in close proximity to him. Her hand and her darning mushroom would be sadly overworked.

With a sigh, and a quiver of anticipation, Susanna reached for the sewing aid she'd left on her bedside cupboard and used her juices to lubricate it. She opened her legs and let the bulbous end tease the lips of her cunt, before she slid it slowly into her channel. Jane had told her it would feel oh so good in her other channel, the so-called forbidden one. The one she had yet to pluck up the courage to use it in. For now, the sensation of fullness where she inserted it inside her cunt was enough. Almost. Susanna rubbed and nipped her nub with her other hand. And flew. Her body splintered into tiny pieces and she shook and sobbed as her climax overwhelmed her.

Thank goodness my room is apart from any others.

Her Mama's apartments were on the other side of the corridor and several doors down. When she had accepted there was no other option except to have yet one more season, Susanna had chosen her suite carefully: At the end of the building, with her sitting room and dressing room between her bedchamber and any other rooms. She'd long decided both here in the capital and in the country she'd like her space. Her mother thought her strange, but she finally accepted it.

On occasions such as this, when she made herself come, she was ever grateful of her relative seclusion. Now

all she had to do was try to sleep, without dreaming of a tall, dark and handsome man with dark grey eyes and a wicked smile, who may be the way to fulfill her...

"So you spoke to him, and he agreed?" Jane licked chocolate from her lips and grinned. "The plan worked?" She picked a pastry from the plate and took a bite.

"Well I'm not certain about that," Susanna said with caution. "He agreed not to dance or offer for me, and then he let Godmama coerce him into escorting me into supper. However, I have to say, once we'd eaten he made his apologies and left. And then this morning, Mama

was full of the fact he must have a partiality for me. She may be my Mama, but she is such a goose at times." She put her finger to her lips and remembered the taste of Tony. "I did make his pego stir." Susanna giggled and her skin heated. "And he did say the only mask I should wear was one he put onto me so I could only feel, not see."

Jane dropped the pastry, narrowly missing her hot chocolate. "He did? My, you must have stirred him up. It took Stephen weeks before he told me any such thing. Even then he said it in such a circuitous way, I had to fathom it out."

"But you had the advantage of growing up with Stephen. He was your first fumble in the hay, your first spank,

and your first climax," Susanna pointed out. "My first fumble was with Arthur Cranswick, in the rose garden, and my first spank by Martin Aitken because I laughed at him. Something I now am ashamed about...but seriously, he had no idea. He thought that if he kissed my ear I would lift my skirts. I said no and laughed, and he gave me a swipe on my arse. It was nothing like you described." She drank her chocolate. The smooth, creamy liquid slid down her throat and spread a warm glow through her. Nothing like the warm glow she felt when she thought of how her closeness stirred Tony's body, but pleasant enough. "And my first climax was by my own hand. Dammit, Jane, even though Tony

had no idea, I know I'll end up as his wife. The Mamas will somehow see to that. However, no way will I be a compliant one. Well, not unless I am compliant to his demands."

"As I am to Stephen," Jane said and leaned in to hug Susanna. "It is called to be a subservient. A sub. Wherein you let your Master take charge."

"If that day ever comes. However, he did call me his *kitten* in Chinese."

"He did?" Jane sounded awed. "Oh my. That is perfect. Stephen calls me 'little one' when we, oh lud, well... we call it playing. When we play. It is my signal to follow his lead."

"Well, he said he would call me

that if he was my Master, but didn't elaborate," Susanna said. "Jane, I have to know if this life you enjoy is for me. After all you've told me, and I thank you for that, I want to experience it for myself. Hearing from you that Tony has the same ideas as Stephen, then being told I am to marry him, and not be part of that? I refuse to accept it. If he wishes to..." She paused. Even though this was Jane, her friend, her confidante and the only person she knew who would understand, it was still hard to express her desires out loud once more. "To tie up, spank, or blindfold anyone, I intend it will be me who experiences those delights. Not some demi monde who accepts such ministrations and

commands for the guineas, not the need. Now how do I achieve that?"

"Do you truly wish to be his wife?" Jane asked her. She picked up her pastry once more, and took a dainty bite. "Mmm, this is good."

Susanna formulated her thoughts. Did she? "Only if he treats me as his, his partner, and not his encumbrance. If our ideas suit. That is something I need to find out. If he is determined to shut me out of what matters most to him, then I will somehow refuse him. Go into a decline or do something so scandalous I will be banished from the Ton, and go to live in the country and become a happy old maid."

"Some would say what you're

proposing is scandal enough to be banished," Jane pointed out. "Seducing a man, asking for all manner of things considered to be wrong, and all before you're betrothed."

"It'll be too late then."

"True. Sometimes I wonder if I did you a disservice telling everything, well almost everything, Stephen and I have enjoyed."

Susanna hugged her friend. "Not at all. Remember I was all for telling your Mama that you had rope marks on your wrists and couldn't sit on a cushion without wincing. And that was before you told me how it was to experience the hardness of a man's cock in your cunt."

Jane colored and sniggered. "True

enough. And I tell you, Susi, it gets better and better. I can only hope if you do persuade Tony 'tis for you, you enjoy it as much as I. Stephen and I talk, as you know. And he tells me Tony excels with wax play. Stephen hopes to learn more, to try it on me."

"Wax play?" That interested Susanna, She'd meant to quiz Jane about it after Tony had mentioned it was something he'd like to do to her.

"Candles? Tony spoke of this to me, but didn't elaborate."

"On his sub's skin. In patterns."

"I want that."

"Might it not be an idea to become proficient at fucking first?"

"Oh I will," Susanna said, and

grinned. "Starting tonight. And you're going to help me."

Chapter Five

"Bloody Dramas. Who in Hades decided we should like some long-winded implausible epic poem made into an interminable play? About some idiot who falls for his half-sister, and then lets her die in the end... Stupid story." Tony grumbled as he stood behind his companion's chair and waited to seat her.

"Do I take from that you're not a fan of Lord Byron?" Susanna asked as she settled herself and shook out her silks. He seated their respective Mamas, who had positioned their chairs several feet away, and sat down next to Susanna

in the box at Drury Lane. As he bent his head toward Susanna, both mothers looked on in complacent glee.

"Only if I don't have to listen to his mad ramblings." Tony smiled at her. As ever, when he let his eyes linger on her milky white skin, his body responded with a rush of heat. "Though, of course the company makes it all worthwhile."

She gave him a glowering look and he grinned. What was it about this lady who made him tease? Apart from the fact if his Mama thought he was interested in her, she'd stop parading all the other hopefuls in front of him.

"Oh stop it, and watch the stage." Susanna turned away from him pointedly, and he laughed.

"Beware of annoying your Mama."

"Oh, I do that anyway. Now,
shh...It's about to begin."

Tony crossed his legs at the ankles
and prepared to be bored.

"I thought Mr. Keane a fine actor,"
Susanna said an hour or so later. "And
The Bride of Abydos is considered to be
one of Lord Byron's greatest epics."

Behind her he heard his Mama
witting on about stage presence, and
commanding performances.

"Admit it," Tony said and glanced
at Susanna from under lowered lids.
"You yawned. And I swear Mama
snored."

She giggled. "Just a bit. It does go
on, I admit. However, now we have a

break before the second half."

He sighed. Sitting next to Susanna, her light floral scent in the air, and her bosoms pert under the low cut of her dress, his cock was half erect and willing to go the whole way. Instead he had to make polite conversation and be aware of their respective Mamas. A knock on the door made him look up. *Saved by the knock.*

"Refreshments," he said as a footman wheeled a covered trolley inside. "I thought we might enjoy them here rather than in the melee outside."

As soon as the footman left, his Mama stood up. "How kind, dear boy, but we are going for some air. You stay and entertain Susanna. It is perfectly

convenable, as you are in full view of the rest of the theatre." The dowagers sailed out and shut the door firmly behind them.

Tony looked at Susanna and went by instinct. He winked. She giggled.

"They are wrong, you know." He stood up and made a point of showing himself over the box wall. "This is one of the few boxes that is mainly out of view of the rest of the audience. Especially where we're seated. Wine?" He asked this last as he lifted the bottle.

She nodded. "Is that why you chose it? This box?"

He shook his head, and handed her a glass of ruby red liquid. "I would have done if I'd thought of it." The wine

glowed deep and rich in the candlelight. Susanna took a sip, and used her tongue to collect a tiny droplet that lingered on her lips.

"I assume it's from France?"

He nodded.

"Nice."

Tony agreed with her, but thought they weren't appreciating the same thing. She spoke of the wine, he thought of her unconsciously erotic gesture. "Duty paid. As to the box, it's been in my family since the inception of the theatre, and wasn't acquired by me. However, I must admit that privacy has its plusses."

"Oh, I agree." Susanna put her glass down carefully on the tiny ledge provided, and moved her chair closer to

his. "Perhaps you could show me how?"

Tony started and his pulse jerked.

"Perhaps you could elaborate?"

She smiled and ran her tongue around her lips, and then bit the bottom lip with three white teeth. "I thought you said earlier there was a lot you could teach me? Maybe you could start now?"

Tony was sure he'd said no such thing. *Minx... will she cry wolf if I touch her? Or is this a ploy?* "You still are in agreement I don't offer for you?"

"Well, of course." She sounded surprised he would ask. "I will never marry a man who only wants a wife for the heir and spare, as I have been assured you do."

He nodded, and wondered why

her statement didn't sit well with him. Was that truly his aim? When he knew once he wed he wouldn't stray?

"Then come here." He pointed to the floor at his feet.

She grinned. "Like a lap dog?"

"I didn't point to my lap," Tony said. "Though if you prefer, lift your skirt and sit here." He patted his thighs. "I leave that choice to you."

Susanna tucked her head to one side. "What happens where?"

His cock was straining the materials of his pantaloons. *Thank the lord for garments with give.* Otherwise it would be poking over his waistband. "You'll have to wait and see. But choose quickly, for who knows how long we

have."

He could almost see her mind whirring. She smiled, long and full of promise. "Then if I have to chose, may I ask for whichever I don't have now, I may experience later?"

His breath quickened. Had he found a lady willing to play? "Your wish is my command."

Did he really hear her mutter she thought it the other way round?

A noise outside the box alerted him to people about to come in and he pushed Susanna's chair back with one foot as the door opened. Tony rolled his eyes. He should know better than to start any dalliance in so public a place. Anyone could enter. Their Mamas,

although no doubt meeting and chatting to their numerous cronies could return at any time.

"My lord, your mother is unwell. Lady Campion is escorting her home." Jane came in and winked. Her deep blue silk gown shimmered as she moved. "As far as anyone is aware Stephen and I are in here with you. In reality we'll stay in the next box and leave the adjoining door unlocked, to preserve the proprieties." She sniggered. "However, we have our own agenda tonight." She shut the door behind her with a decisive click.

"And who arranged what, I wonder, and whose plans were foiled," Tony said rhetorically once he and

Susanna were alone again. Did his companion color a little? In the dim light from the sconce above their box it was difficult to tell. However, it seemed she wasn't perturbed.

Susanna laughed. "So where were we?"

Tony locked the door to the corridor, pleased to see his companion hadn't flinched, and moved back to his chair. Her gaze followed his every move. As he sat, he spread his legs, leaving a gap between them big enough for her to kneel in if she chose. She swallowed and the soft skin on her throat rippled. Such a small thing, but oh so exciting to him. She was aware of him. *And I thought she was indifferent.*

"You were about to decide what happens next."

"I was, wasn't I?" She took a deep breath and Tony wondered if her breasts would pop over the top of her gown. Was that a dusky nipple he could see half revealed?

"Then I will sit here." With only the slightest tremble, Susanna stood, turned and sank to her knees in between his thighs. Her dress caught under her legs and the silk tightened over her contours.

Tony waited without saying a word until she fidgeted.

"Well?" Susanna asked, as she stared at him. Her lips were parted and her breath came out in tiny pants. In the

low light he saw how her skin shone with the soft sheen of arousal. "What now?"

"Now if you were really interested in what we could be, I'd get you to put your hands behind your back, bow your head and stay silent, and not fidget. Instead I think I'll ask you to suck my cock."

Had he gone too far? She was a young unmarried lady of the Ton, not some demi monde who knew the score.

"Oh, my." She lifted her hand in the air in a fluttering motion and let it drop to her side. Then she lifted both hands to the band of his pantaloons and drew it lower until the tip of his cock, slick with his juices, was revealed. Her

gasp was one of what? Tony hoped not disgust, but to tell the truth, he had no idea. All he knew was that as her hands scraped his skin, his pre-cum increased. Slowly, almost reverently, she released his prick from its confines and stroked the length with a trembling finger.

"Well, hello." Her voice was husky. "I'm so pleased to make your acquaintance." As he opened his mouth to speak, Susanna bent her head.

Tony lost any idea of what he intended to say.

Chapter Six

Susanna had no idea she could be so bold. The butterflies in her stomach would vie any lepidopterist's collection, and the muscles in her channel jumped around so much it was a wonder she wasn't dancing along with them. It was one thing asking Jane for the details of what she might be asked to do, another to actually do it. Where did her nose go? Should she use her hands to get his prick into a position she could manage? Did she just take the tip into her mouth and suck? What if, he came in her mouth? Should she swallow or spit? So many questions. Why did she think she could

do this? Just because she needed to make him understand she wished to experience all he had to offer.

She lifted her head. "Maybe I should just lift my skirts and sit on your lap instead?"

"Reneging, Susanna? I thought you had more backbone than that," Tony said in an undertone. Outside in the auditorium the cheers and applause indicated the drama was about to continue. Inside the box, Susanna decided it was about to start.

"Oh, tarnation." She sat back on her heels and looked up at him. "I don't know what to do." She waited to see what his response would be. He didn't give one.

"I don't know how I do it."

"However you want to. This is your show and let me tell you, damnable hard it is for me to let it be so," Tony said. "It's rare for me to sit back and not direct the proceedings. Enjoy it whilst you can."

She smiled. "I intend to."

"I wish I knew what game you were playing, Susanna."

"The game of life, my lord. Our lives."

He raised one well-sculpted eyebrow.

Susana saw red. Her hair color was apt. "Oh, well, you said so." With a temerity she hadn't know she possessed she took hold of his cock in both hands,

held it still and wrapped her lips around it as far down the length as she could. And sucked for all she was worth.

His skin was soft and slid over a rock hard core. As her mouth tightened, and the head of his prick ticked the very back of her mouth, his juices coated her tongue, salty and warm. Going on instinct she hadn't known she possessed, Susanna let her teeth graze the skin, as she tasted him. It rippled under her ministrations.

"Good Lord, Xiao Māo, you have the knack. If you don't wish me to fill your mouth, you stop now." The warning was clear. "This once I'll give you the choice."

Why should she stop? Susanna

perceived she had the upper hand. This time was for him. She hoped another time would be for her. With one hand she tugged his pantaloons down a further inch or so to expose the two tight balls of flesh either side of his cock. As an experiment she rolled one between her thumb and forefinger and she swirled her tongue over the tip of his cock. Then she pulled him hard into her mouth once more. His prick hardened as she nipped and soothed and he held her head in place. That tight clasp, so she couldn't move back was an inkling of how life could be. She loved it. Her legs were damp as her juices trickled over them.

"That's it, my perfect lady. I am, argh, sweet Xiao Māo, tis no...now." He

groaned the words as his cock swelled and filled her mouth with the results of her ministrations. Susanna didn't even have time to think. She swallowed each and every drop of the thick salty cum, until his cock grew limp. Only then did he release his grip on her hair and allow her to lift her head.

"Ah..." He stopped and Susanna watched as he moistened his lips with his tongue. "Perfect."

Applause echoed around the theatre once more, and Susanna stifled a giggle.

"Do you think that's for me?"

"We'd better hope not, but it should be. That was exquisite. You are a perfect pupil. Shall I return the favor?"

Oh I think so." He didn't give Susanna time to answer. "Lift your skirts to your waist, sit on the chair and hold onto the arms. Tuck your ankles around the legs. No one can see you there except me. This is for us alone. Do you think you'll need a gag?"

Susanna blinked. "Why would I, oh..." She felt her body heat, and knew once more color must stain her skin. "Er, perhaps." She knew only too often how she frequently stuffed the coverlet in her mouth to stop her sighs and gasps alerting the household to her activities. "In fact, yes. But what?"

"Sit."

I'm not a dog. However, in spite of her inclination to say *wuff-wuff*,

Susanna sat as Tony had directed.

He tucked her gown tightly around her waist and smiled at her. "I think this time you should watch." He stroked her from her waist downward, slowly ruffling the curls of her quim, before letting one finger touch her nub and caress the opening to her channel.

"These should go. I have a desire to see your pretty cunt in all its naked glory. If we continue, I will be delighted to be your barber."

She moaned. Those words along with that slight touch, had created so much cream, and when he put his fingers to his mouth and sucked, a fresh gush dripped onto her leg.

"Definitely a gag. I wonder how

loud I can make you scream?" He paused. "Later."

She stared as he lifted the serviette from the trolley the waiter had left, and rolled it into a ball.

"Open." She opened her mouth and he carefully put the soft linen inside. "All right?" he asked softly. "Nod if you are happy."

Susanna nodded. Happy was perhaps not the right word. Excited, apprehensive, quivering, all fitted the bill. Her skin tingled with the thoughts of what he may be about to do. Susanna was book wise but experience poor, and eager to learn first hand how different a climax was by someone else's ministrations. She clasped her hands

onto the arms of her chair, and tucked her legs carefully round the bottom of the chair. The wood was warm over her silk stockings, and the contrast between that and her bare quim was more erotic than Susanna thought possible. She remembered his words. He would like her cunt truly bare and he would be her barber? Oh, my. *Yes, please...*

Tony stared at her for a long minute. Then he opened her right hand to place his snuffbox in it. "If at anytime you're not happy, drop my snuff box. As you can't speak, we have to have a way of communication. Nod if you understand." Susanna nodded. *I wish he'd hurry up. What if the play ends and I still haven't come by his hand? I*

will be bereft. To say nothing of angry.

Tony's eyes glittered. He took up another serviette and set it beside him, as he knelt on the floor much as she had earlier. His prick still hung free from his pantaloons and to Susana's amazement it was once again standing up out of its nest of curls. He stroked it from base to tip and collected the tiny drops of pre-cum onto his fingertip.

With his other hand Tony took the serviette out of her mouth. Susanna was dismayed by the disappointment she experienced. Was that it?

He held his hand to her lips.
"Taste. This is what you do to me."

Susanna let him coat her tongue. His essence tasted warm and salty. She

licked her lips to get the tiny drops he'd stroked on them.

"Well?"

"Very well. May I have more?"

Her voice was husky. Was that her pleading? Later she might feel embarrassed at her temerity, but not now. Now she needed to be open about her desires.

"Perhaps. Later. If you are good. Wickedly good." He returned the wad of cloth to her mouth, and bent his head to her cunt.

At the first touch of his tongue on her clitoris Susanna knew why she needed the gag. He stroked her from cunt to asshole with long, delicate licks. Each one increased the tension in her

body. Her skin was too tight for her body, the hairs on her head ached with tension and every nerve end was on high alert. It seemed as if she was watching from a great height. In one part of her mind, she registered the catcalls and applause from the auditorium, but nothing mattered except his touch. Tony pushed her legs apart, and ran the tip of his tongue inside her channel. Her juices gushed.

Thank goodness for the gag. Even in her aroused state Susanna had enough of her wits about her to know she would scream without it. Her own ministrations had taught her how close to *the little death* she was. She began the first exciting shake. The one where she knew

oh so soon she'd fall over the edge, and into the abyss of ecstasy and satiation. She closed her eyes to deepen her sensations. Tony's grip on her legs tightened, and then he moved up and over her.

Susanna glanced at him from under her lowered eyelids. He held his cock in one hand and guided it toward her cunt.

"Now, Xiao Māo, this is for you. Relax, and let me show you what we can be." Slowly he slid the head of his prick over her cunt lips and then used her cream to aid his access. Inch by inch he eased in, and waited until she relaxed. Then it began again. Each time he moved further, Tony nipped her nub, or kissed her ear.

"Now, it's now." He surged the last inch and Susanna blinked as tears of pleasure cared her lashes. "And come now." He pinched her nub once, bent to bite the soft skin of her rounded bosom, and surged in and out of her twice. She shook as she tumbled into oblivion, and then to her distress he pulled out, to spill over the spare serviette.

The roars increased. Shouts of bravo echoed around them, along with 'more' and 'encore'.

It seems we all came to completion at the same time.

Chapter Seven

Was it possible to see stars as you spilled your all? Tony determined it was. More than once. How he summoned up the willpower to withdraw and spill over the linen he'd remembered to put handy he couldn't imagine. All he wanted was to thrust ever deeper and ever harder into Susanna. Watch her fall apart around him, and to splinter into tiny pieces as his seed filled her, and mixed with her cream. Instead he grit his teeth and pulled out at the last minute.

He gave himself the luxury of slumping forward for one brief moment,

before he knelt back and mopped up the sticky remnants of his seed from his cock. He pulled up his pantaloons and winced as the material scraped his tender skin. His cock, half erect, didn't sit quite as it should and he readjusted it, conscious of Susanna's gaze on his movements.

"One minute, sweet Xiao Māo, and I will make you presentable to the world. This perfect sight is for me alone." Her skin was still flushed and little trembles of tiny climax still rippled through her.

Tony took the saliva-dampened cloth from Susanna's mouth, and kissed her hard. "That, my love, is a prequel if you want. But now we need to make

haste." He dipped the cloth into her half full glass of wine, and stroked it over her quim. "You may smell as if you've drunk the bottle, but better than smelling of sex."

She went white. "Oh sweet lord, yes." Her voice was husky, and he passed his wine to her. "Drink this. Your mouth will be dry now. I have better gags but this was a case of make do and use." As she sipped the liquid, Tony accepted he would never drink wine again without remembering this moment. The way her virginal channel enclosed his prick, the resistance her maidenhead put up and then the acceptance of his mastery. He had to have more, and soon.

Tony pulled her dress down and

the top of her bodice up. Even though he hadn't given in to temptation and taken her nipple into his mouth, his love mark was clearly visible over the neck of her gown. "Damn, I seem to have left my mark." He traced the red stain with his finger.

Susanna looked down to where his hand rested.

"Ah, I will wrap my shawl around me." She giggled somewhat shakily. "I wondered why so many ladies felt a need for one on a warm summer evening. No wonder the modistes are hard pressed to keep up with the demand for lightweight opaque silks."

Tony nodded. He'd been the welcome customer of several such

modistes in the past. "Then, love, perhaps you better. I think Mr. Keane has taken his final bow, and I dare say we're about to be disturbed." He took her hand and squeezed it. She returned the gesture.

"Will you be able to converse sensibly about this drama we've allegedly seen?" Tony asked her as he unlocked the door to the box, and poured himself a fresh glass of wine. "And if so, perhaps you should fill me in on the salient parts."

"She dies, he's distraught. Mr. Keane excelled himself," Susanna said. "I'll tell Mama I was overwhelmed by your presence and couldn't concentrate. That will silence her."

"Or make her more vocal in her insistence you encourage me to pay you attention?"

Susanna shrugged. "Maybe that's the way to play it. Let her think I'm not averse to your attentions and play along?"

"And make me out the cad when I don't offer?" Tony shook his head. "That does not sit comfortably with me. Think again."

If looks could kill, his Mama would be choosing hymns. "Well then, my lord, you decide our fate. I'm stymied."

Tony found that hard to believe. His love, and—he accepted—the person he wanted to learn more about, looked at

him with no more than polite interest. He wanted so much more than that.

"So, do I say I made you come? So hot and hard I had to gag you? And you want me deep inside you, but that is all?"

She paled and shook her head.

"No, I thought not. Therefore, let's work together and be honest. Perhaps it is time for you to tell me why you begged me not to offer for you, and then gave yourself to me in such a perfect way? Why I want to fuck you over and over and make you truly mine?"

She was quiet for so long he wondered if she would answer. Then she took such a deep breath he was amazed her breasts didn't pop out of her

gown. "Can we take time to talk properly?"

"I'll pick you up for a ride in the park tomorrow. At eleven. Be dressed for the phaeton...after, I will take you to Sentern House and we will talk."

Susanna bit her lip and then, just as he debated whether to shake her for an answer, she nodded. "I'll be ready."

By the time Tony dismissed his valet and stripped and changed into his banyan before bed his head whirled, and it wasn't the fault of inferior brandy. Almost immediately after they had firmed their plans to meet, there had been a rap on the door that connected their box to the one adjacent. He called a

discrete "come in", and Jane and Stephen interrupted him and Susanna. He ignored the look that passed between the ladies: knowing, intimate and satisfied. It set alarm bells ringing inside his head.

It also made him wonder just who was seducing whom, and why.

He knew what he was doing. He rather thought he'd succumb before too long and offer for Susanna. The evening's activities had interested him enough to know any coupling in the future would be with her and no one else. If only she agreed and was happy with his desires. To judge by the last few hours, she might well be. He took Susanna's arm.

"Chin up and be haughty. Emulate

Lady Danvers."

Susanna grinned. "I do feel somewhat disheveled, but I also want to put on a most superior grin and tell those poor misguided fools who never experience what I just have, how sad and pitiful and empty their lives must be."

Tony burst out laughing. "I so agree."

Stephen winked at him. It seemed Jane and Stephen had also passed their time agreeably. Probably not giving their full attention to the play. However, as a married couple, they could at least be left alone without scandal. He had to protect Susanna's reputation.

The four of them proceeded to

make a great show of leaving, from the same box. Tony ignored the knowing looks and nudges from their peers as he escorted Susanna out of the theatre and into his coach.

Once inside the chat became general, and it was obvious none of them had seen much of the performance after the interval. He'd have to hunt the darned poem out and make sure he could make an educated comment about it. *Damn Byron and his verses.*

He delivered Susanna to her door and bowed punctiliously over her hand in front of a benign Major Domo. Once Stephen and Jane left him, he dismissed the coachman and walked to clear his head. He'd missed something regarding

his dealings with Susanna, and he didn't know what. Even now as he climbed into bed he still had no idea what elusive thought he should have. Why would she be insistent he didn't offer for her and then give herself to him without any terms and conditions? Something was wrong with that scenario.

Several hours later he accepted he wasn't going to sleep the sleep of the just and righteous, and lit his candle, to allow him to descend the stairs to the library. A glass of very superior brandy, a perusal of the newspaper and a think were in order.

The embers of the library fire were glowing enough for him to rekindle them. Soon the coals were blazing, and

he was able to sit out in his old leather chair, stretch his legs out in front of him, and swirl the liquor around the bulbous glass.

Tony always prided himself on his methodical mind, but that seemed to have gone to the wind over the last few days. Instead he was bemused and bewitched by a pair of fine green eyes and a redhead who he suspected lived up to the temper said to go with the color of her hair. He would never have said red hair appealed to him, especially a red haired muff, but after their evening together it could become a firm favorite. Well, not the muff, but the rest. He laughed under his breath. The seduction scenario was appealing more and more.

Tony began to plot.

Chapter Eight

An hour before Tony was due to collect her, Susanna's nerves were shot. Not that she would let anyone know that. She smoothed her riding habit, twitched her hard won curls—straight hair was the spawn of the devil—and strove not to bite her nails. Why did it take so long for the clock to reach eleven?

When, right on time, her mother's Major Domo announced Tony had arrived Susanna was a nervous wreck.

Did her rear look overlarge? Was her bosom smooth under her gown? Was her lacy fichu still covering the red mark he'd left on her? Should she wear the

bonnet with the pale yellow rosebuds or the one with the green ribbons? Should she have eaten more than one slice of bread, and made sure her tummy didn't rumble? How mortifying that would be. Had Tony changed his mind? The questions jumped around in her mind, all shouting to be answered.

She'd railed at her mother's interference and insistence she should be subservient to Tony during their dealings, and defer to his every utterance. Somehow she didn't think her mother and she thought of subservience in the same manner.

"I will treat him as I think fit,"
Susanna said finally.

The dowager had narrowed her

eyes. "Have you been reading that abominable book by that wretched Wollstonecraft woman again?" she asked Susanna. Suspicion laced her voice, which rose alarmingly. "She is abnormal. Trying to put all sorts of silly ideas into young women's minds."

Susanna sighed. She admired Mary Wollstonecraft, and thought her ideas that women were not inferior to men, just less well educated were sound. However, it would do no good postulating that to Mama.

"Mama, Mary Wollstonecraft has been dead these twenty years," Susana said. "And all I have ever done is read the copy of her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* I found in the library."

Our library, where you told me I should go to improve my mind."

Her mother snorted, and Susanna choked back a snigger. Truly, when her mother got irate she looked like a gobbling turkey. The snort brought to mind a horse in full flight.

Was it polite to compare your mother with an animal? The remembrance of those few minutes, and how her Mama had added that Susanna must be all that was amiable, was enough to set her mood to contrary.

Tony entered the room as she picked up her gloves and reticule. He looked her up and down and smiled. She mistrusted it.

"That's it. I knew this wretched hat

made me look like the hothouses at Kew." Susanna rolled her eyes. "I blame my Mama... she insisted I look ladylike. Pah, a ridiculous idea. It is not possible."

Tony laughed and kissed her wrist. "Eminently possible, my dear. You look ravishing and outshine any hothouse anywhere. Though I'd prefer you without that apology for a cover-up." He flicked the lace at her neck. "I assume it's necessary due to my, shall we say, attentions?"

She nodded, and her skin heated under his amused glance. "I thought I'd better, and according to Mama this darned fichu is the height of fashion. I say it's the height of itchiness."

He ran his finger under the edge, and stroked her skin. His fingers left a trail of arousal across the softness of her bosom. Susanna shivered. Of course he noticed. "Not cold, are you?"

She shook her head. Coherent words were beyond her.

"Good. And I will take it upon myself to find a fichu less likely to mark your softness, my dear. The only marks I wish to see there are mine. Shall we go?" Before Susanna could think of an appropriate retort, he took her hand—something he did often—and with a slight pinch on her arm, tucked it in his. "Midwood is walking my horses, but I don't like to leave them idle for too long."

"Indeed not." Susanna found her voice, and matched her tread to his. "Prime cattle have to take first thoughts. Mere women are far down the list." He stumbled and she realized how terrible her pronouncement sounded.

"Argh, my lord, that sounds old catty, and I didn't mean it like that."

Tony stopped walking and stared at her. "Did you not?" he stroked her cheek. Then under the watchful eye of two footmen and a maid, he pinched her earlobe, before he sent the tiny pearl on a gold thread that hung from it spinning.

Susanna bit her lip, as the pearl danced near her skin. It seemed such a personal thing to do. *Damn him. Now half the household will have us bedded*

by midnight, and the other half betrothed. It will not happen like this.

"Stop that...the servants are taking bets on what we're about to do." How could she sound so sharp-tongued? "No, my lord, I didn't mean to be so spiteful. I have had a session with my Mama earlier. It's enough to make anyone sound shrewish."

He nodded to the doorman, and ushered her down the steps toward the road.

"Ah. Along the lines of the lecture I had from my own Mama, I surmise. Be nice, be positive, and try oh so hard to be gentle. I ask you. I am me... Is gentle in my make up?"

Susanna smiled at him. Did he

really understand? "Only you can answer that, my lord." She waited until he handed her into his phaeton, and let her settle her skirts under her. "For myself, I accept I do not only want the mundane, and my Mama cannot understand me. I need to learn not to react to her absurdities. Maybe this problem is nil by mouth."

Tony stared and to her amazement his lips twitched. "From your Mama? Oh yes. For myself, you can give me anything with your mouth. Whenever you wish." He took up the reins of the horses as his groom jumped up behind them. "Parents have a very narrow idea of what suits, don't you think?"

Susanna held onto the rim of the

carriage as, at a signal from Tony, the horses set up a spanking pace, and the cobbles sent it rocking. "Ah, probably."

He flashed her a grin she could only describe as wicked. "I myself have very different ideas. Are you game to ride with me, if I let Midwood return to the stables? We can tool the horses out to the Heath."

The thought of a long drive over the Heath, and fresh air to breathe was too much. "I need that."

Tony signaled to the groom. "Midwood, if you turn here you may get down. It is a mere few minutes to the mews. Do not grimace. If I let you go now you will have time to visit the young nursery nurse from number fifty-

four. I know today is her morning off." The groom grinned and touched his forelock. Tony laughed: theirs was much too close a relationship for that to be necessary. "Tell her there is a cottage waiting for you on the estate, and the position of head groom is yours if you want it." He brushed off his groom's stammered thanks. "Mind you, you'd best be wed. Enough scandal surrounds me without it being said I condone my staff living in sin. Tell Emma, there might not be a position for a nanny as yet, but the school in the village needs another hand. It pays well. Come and speak to me on the morrow." He waited until the red-faced man jumped down, and then Tony took up the reins.

"What?" He glanced at Susanna as he once more set the horses to trot.

"You really are a nice man."

"I am?" He sounded astonished. "I wonder if you will say that later."

She looked up at him as best she could from under her bonnet. The brim obscured her vision, and Susanna vowed to consign it to the nearest tweeny. "Why on earth wouldn't I?"

He blinked. "Ah, perchance what I demand of you?" he suggested.

Much to her amazement, Susanna sniggered. "As in? Be subservient? Oh, my lord, do you not realize that is me? I am in charge of my life, my existence. And I wish to defer to my Sir." She paused. "If I have one." She ran her

finger around the contours of her mouth.
"In matters of the flesh."

Chapter Nine

Now what exactly did she mean by that? Tony tooled his horses along the road, one eye on the traffic and the other on his companion. She sat, outwardly composed, unknowing what her statement portrayed. Or did she? Tony distrusted the gleam in her eyes and the secret smile that played over her full lips. Lips he decided would fit around his cock perfectly.

Did she really understand what he demanded? Did she feel the same? There was only one way to find out. As he left the last few houses behind, and began to drive along the less travelled road

toward his destination, Tony slowed the horses to a walk. The road was deserted, the only signs of life three Jersey cows in a field and a whitewashed farmhouse in the distance.

He swiveled on the bench to look at Susanna. She'd untied her bonnet and let it hang from her neck to rest on her back. Her red curls gleamed in the sun as they fell loosely around her face. "Do you trust me?" Tony asked.

"I must do, or I wouldn't be in the middle of nowhere without a chaperone." Susanna giggled. "Though I must hope Mama never hears of it, or we'll be in the chapel at your country seat before we can say '*I don't*'."

"And you know what you mean by

subservient?"

The silence was broken only by the sound of several sparrows twittering above them, and the jangle of the horse's bit as it tossed its head, impatient at their slow progress.

"I know what I mean by it, my lord. To do as my Sir tells me, to let him push me further than I thought possible, and to show him all the respect I think he deserves." The last was accompanied by a grin full of mischief.

"So, are we going to progress in this?" he asked her. "If so, lift your skirts." Crude, to the point and one step too far maybe, but Tony decided he would be brutal and forthright from the beginning. If she did as he said, and they

developed a good Dom/sub relationship then he had an inkling their Mamas would both be happy with the outcome, and he'd have his new countess.

He watched Susanna take a quick look around. The cows showed their disinterest, and didn't stop chewing the cud, and the sparrows had disappeared. They really were alone. She bit her lip.

"Xiao Māo?"

"Sir?" Her reply came without hesitation.

"If we are to explore this side of you, perhaps this is the time to start? And stop reddening your lips. As I said before the only coloring of your body will be by my touch, not any other way. So either lift your skirts and show me

your subservience, or tell me enough and we'll continue our drive."

"That's a new name for it."

Susanna gave a nervous sounding laugh. "To call my quim my subservience." She began to gather the soft material of her gown in her hands and lift it up. Inch by inch her ankles, and then her legs, clad in the finest silk, were revealed.

"Minx." Tony loved her feistiness. "Spread your legs for easier access."

She responded immediately. It held such promise for the future, and implied so many things, that Tony's cock was straining against his knit pantaloons. He wondered how long it would be before the pale oatmeal color of them changed to a darker grey with the

evidence of his arousal. Or if the material would ever regain its proper shape. Pantaloon might be designed to have some give in them, however his seemed about to split.

"Hold your skirts in one hand and touch your *subservience* with the other, whilst I urge the horses forward. It's not that far to our destination." He shifted in his seat to give his cock a little more leeway to sit snug against his torso. "Show me now, Susanna, or tell me to turn around and drive back to town."

"Do we have pause and desist words?" Susanna ignored him and posed a question of her own instead.

Tony clicked at the horses and they moved into a smooth trot. Once he

was sure the horses were settled, he risked a swift glance at her. To his utmost delight, her skirt was bunched around her waist, and she was tucking the material tightly to each side, thus exposing her cunt to his view. Her nether lips showed between the bright red curls, to tease and entice him. Soon, he promised himself, if all went well, it would be her bare skin on view.

It was lucky he and his horses knew the lane and its ridges and potholes like the back of his hand. There was no way he could concentrate on the road, not with such a perfect view beside him. He brought his mind back to her question.

"Safe words. Of course. If we

need to pause you say *deng*. If we have to stop, then it's *ting*. Simple. Are you happy with that?"

"Yes, Sir, deng and ting. So if I'm happy, can I just say so?"

He put the reins in one hand and used the other to lean over and pinch the soft skin at the top of her leg, just above the silky ribbon garter she wore. "Of course. Now where are we?"

"Happy." Susanna licked her fingers one by one and then moved her hand to her quim. "Do I show you how I come, Sir?"

Tony worked out how long it would take to get to their destination. Less than five minutes. She could restrain herself until then.

"Oh no, Xiao Māo, that is something you will *not* do. Not until I give you leave. But you will bring yourself to the edge. And tell me how you feel."

"What?" Her voice came out as a squeal. "Tell you what I feel as I touch myself?"

"Was that not what I said?" Was he coming over too harshly? Tony decided he might as well go for what he wanted. One way or another their future would be decided in the next few hours. "Either do it or cry 'ting'. The choice is yours. If, as you say you really wish to be mine in this manner you know that. As you know I'll push you ever further. Now, we have but a few minutes to our

destination. I wish to see your fingers inside you, and to see the evidence of your arousal on them when I ask to be shown. Do we continue?"

He held his breath. Out of the corner of his eye, he wanted Susanna to move her hand away from her cunt. His heart thudded. It seemed his demand was one step too far.

The touch of her finger on his lips was a surprise. "There is the evidence, Sir." She moved her hand to slip one finger inside his lips. Her sweet creamy juices tantalized his taste buds. Tony sucked on the digit, and then let her remove it slowly. His lips held on until with a soft pop, she took her hand away and moved it back to stroke her cunt.

"Thank you, Xiao Māo. Now take care, this bend is tight, and the drive rutted. I must get it seen to." He maneuvered the carriage around the dense bushes and up a narrow track. "Tell me what you're doing. I can't look, so I need to hear you vocalize your actions."

"Ah." Her voice was breathy. "Well I have one finger inside myself. And it... it sets up tingles I want to let grow. I want to begin to fall into that delicious state where I shudder and shout and, and I need..."

Tony pulled the horse to a halt outside a well-kept garden, which surrounded a neat house, and looked toward her. "If you come, I'll spank your

arse until it resembles the color of the rose bush in this garden."

Susanna moaned and he saw her fingers move deeper inside her channel. "Open your eyes, and tell me what you want?"

"To obey you, but if spanking is the punishment, I may well decide to disobey instead."

Tony took hold of her hand, and pulled it away from her quim. "Do you want to be spanked? Tell me honestly. No, wait one moment." He jumped down from the carriage.

"Let me tether the horses. Someone will be along soon to take them to the stable. No," Susanna began to cover herself. "I said soon, not yet. Will

you come inside?" He tied the horses in front of a water trough, and walked to her side of the carriage.

"Well?"

"Well, if I don't I'll come outside," Susanna said and burst out laughing.

"How can you make me giggle when I'm so churned up? What are we doing?"

Tony put his hands round her waist and lifted her down. Her dress brushed his pantaloons as it fell down and hid her delights from view. Her breath feathered over his cheek as he held her close to him.

"Sparring with words?" He slid her down the length of his body, and heard her gasp as his cock stroked her cunt. As her feet touched the ground,

Tony took her arm. "Will you enter my hunting lodge?"

"I feel I'm the one hunted, but I will do so gladly. If then I may come."

He took hold of her hair and tugged so her head came up, and she looked him in the eyes. They sparkled with glints of silver in their depths. She looked, he decided, rather happy.

"I will let you come—when I say so. Now, tell me honestly. If I say to you, Xiao Māo, I wish to tie you to a special bench, cover your eyes and use my riding crop on your delectable arse, and fuck you in both of your welcoming channels. Tell you I wish to decorate your beautiful skin in wax, and watch you struggle not to come as each drop

caresses your skin. Send tiny stings of red-hot awareness, with the tip of my sword, and create patterns that are for us alone. And add this is me, I need this, what would you say?" He knew his tone was somber. This was more important than anything else he'd asked of her.

Tony was under no illusions many would see him as perverted and sadistic. He hoped Susanna could see past that and into the world they could inhabit together. He loosened his grip on her hair, and she took two steps away from him, to stand by the door of the lodge.

"In here?"

Tony nodded and leaned past her to lift the latch and usher her through the doorway and into the wide hall beyond.

“And when would you expect this, my lord?”

"Today, starting now. For unbeknownst to you, our respective parents will not expect us back until late in the day. They think we have the perfect chaperones in Stephen and Jane. Who I am pleased to tell you, are nowhere near here, but enjoying some quality time together, alone."

He closed the door behind them, and stood waiting in the middle of the room. It was bare except for an exquisite Chinese rug, and two large Chinese urns that flanked the marble fireplace. A fire blazed in the hearth. Even though it was mild outside the thick walls of the building encouraged the need for a fire.

Apart from which, it was welcoming. Tony had hoped they might end up here and had arranged for the fire and for refreshments to be ready. He had the keys to his playroom in his pocket, and knew the bed would be made up. All he needed now was Susanna's agreement.

Susanna turned in a circle and looked at him.

"Do you have everything set up? Here?"

"Of course. All I need is for you to agree to play."

"Ah, so it's mere playing?"

He shook his head and took a deep breath. "No,' tis more than that. It would be our life together. We're going to wed it seems, but it should be on our terms,

don't you think?"

Susanna reddened, and bit her nail. "Is that an offer? Because I think I'll accept before you hear what I have to say. I best come clean. I thought to entice you. To catch your interest by asking you not to offer for me. You see, I knew I'd need more than plain, 'here it is, that is it, and sleep well'. I know what Jane and Stephen enjoy. Jane and I have few secrets. And I know that it is for me."

"All of it? If I tell you to strip and walk into that room," he pointed to his left, "you'll go without question."

She looked surprised and he saw curiosity, and interest in her face. "Well I trust you, I know my safe words, and I need to come. So do I strip here? This

minute? Can we do it now? Oh I mean, yes, please, Sir." Her hands went to her spencer, undid it and dropped it on the floor. "Will you unbutton my dress?"

He stopped her talking by holding her chin with one hand and covering her mouth with the other.

"In our playroom. Xiao Māo, shall we begin our life together? With a spanking? Continue with wax?"

She wriggled her arse at him. "I'm so happy, Sir. I thought you'd never ask."

"I'm not asking, love, I'm telling."

"Yes, Sir."

"Therefore." Tony kissed her nose before he released the complicated knot in her hair. He turned her around and slowly undid the tiny buttons that

outlined the elegant length of her spine. Underneath she wore no chemise, and to his delight, no new fangled drawers that some women had taken to wearing.

"No drawers, that's good. Never wear them. I accept at times a chemise may be necessary, but drawers are not."

"My mama says they are vulgar," Susanna said. "I myself can't see their point, for they cover nothing important and I've been told they bunch up around your waist. The drawstring gets knotted, and they are scratchy and uncomfortable. No, you have no needs for that diktat, my lord."

"Good." He released her hair from the net that held it close to her scalp, and ran his fingers through the tresses.

"That's better. Whenever we are alone, I expect your hair loose and caressing your skin. Whenever possible you will be naked. That will happen often here. My servants are well trained and will never disturb us. So, if you're happy, go in there. Strip and wait for me. Do you remember how I said I would like to see you? On your knees, head bent?"

"With my hands behind my back? I remember."

"Then do it."

Chapter Ten

It's going to happen. It really is going to happen. Susanna dipped her head, inordinately pleased at his murmured, "Good girl, Xiao Māo." She turned her back on him, and he chuckled huskily.

"Soon you'll leave by facing me. No turning your back on me unless at my command. Unless of course it is an invitation to test my riding crop on your arse."

She spun round and pressed her legs together. Her dress, no longer held together began to slip down her arms and back. "R...riding crop?" She wasn't

sure how she felt about that.

"Don't worry, we'll work up to it gradually, perhaps on our honeymoon."

Susanna blinked and gulped. She would never understand how the thought of pain could bring such pleasure. Would the reality live up to her imagination? "Yes, Sir, perhaps." She sounded unsure.

Tony chuckled. "It will be good," he said. "If not you have your safe word. However, for now we'll do something I feel you are well ready for. Move. You have three minutes or my hand will tan your arse, for punishment not pleasure, and I assure you they are two very different things in my world."

She moved. Some imp encouraged

her to step backward, and hope she made it though the doorway without banging her elbow on the doorjamb, or stubbing her toe on the wooden skirting board.

To her relief she succeeded without any mishaps, and found herself in a most unusual room. As much as she wanted to take her time to stare, Susanna was mindful of Tony's words. A pleasure spanking interested her. A punishment one did not. She well remembered the way her father punished her brother. Susanna spared a brief thought for Simon, her sweet and gentle brother who perished at Waterloo. He hadn't deserved his punishments or his early demise.

Now though, she couldn't allow herself to remember such sad things. She had other things to concentrate on. What was it Tony had demanded of her? Ah yes, stripped and on her knees.

It took Susanna scant seconds to shrug out of her dress and let it slide down her body to pool in a heap on the floor. She looked at it doubtfully, but her governess's diktat rang in her head.

"Pick it up, shake it out, hang it carefully. Good materials cost good money." With an inward grimace she did so, using a rail along one wall to hold the garment. Susanna glanced around. She let her eyes skip over some contraptions, which were alien to her. Goodness knows what they were used

for, but hopefully she'd get the chance to find out at some point.

A soft cushion in front of a large, and somewhat unusual chair took her attention. The chair had thick material wads pointing away from it in various places and long padded arms. The cushion however curled up at each side, and was long and rectangular. It looked as if it would allow her lower limbs to be pillowed.

Should she face the chair or away? Was it indeed where she needed to be? *Stop second-guessing yourself. Tony will make allowances for your ignorance this time.* Mind made up, she knelt on the cushion facing the chair and let her head, and her hair, fall forward.

Once she was settled as best she could, Susanna clasped her arms behind her over the base of her spine, and took a deep breath to try and calm her nerves, and slow her racing pulse.

The loud sonorous tick of a clock somewhere nearby, seemed to match the beat of her heart. A faint smell of beeswax tickled her nostrils and Susanna froze. Tony had mentioned wax on her skin. Surely not? The last time she'd inadvertently dripped her candle over her arm it had hurt like Hades, and left a scar. Absently she scratched the spot, just above her wrist where a faint red mark still remained.

"Don't do that." Tony had entered the room unheard and unnoticed by her.

His voice was harsh. "I reiterate: the only person to mark you is me. And I will do it in such a way you will beg for more."

Susanna jumped and let go of her arm. She moved her head and his next command stopped her.

"Don't move. Stay as you are. Good girl." The praise flowed over her like honey. "Oh yes, Xiao Māo, you are perfect. Now, what shall we do to make you fly?" He moved her hair to one side of her back, slid it across her shoulder and grazed his teeth across the soft skin on the nape of her neck. Susanna shivered. The tiny stings teased and it was all she could do not to ask for more. More of what, she couldn't determine.

However, she knew that enticement wasn't enough.

Something soft and long stroked her skin. She sighed as whatever it was curled over her back and shoulders. It teased like warm chocolate poured from a jug, and the fine hairs on her back stood on end as they were touched.

"Bend and hold onto the arms of the chair."

His tone had changed. Neither harsh nor intimidating, it invited instant compliance. Susanna risked a glance to determine just where the arms she needed to hold were and saw his booted feet a short distance in front of her. As she did as he asked, they moved and she was left wondering where he was, and

what would happen next. The pose stretched her back and spine and she struggled to keep her arse resting on her calves.

"Xiao Māo, what's your word?

We go no further until you tell me."

Susanna gulped. Her word? Ah...

"Happy, my lord." *Oh so very happy.* Was she at last going to discover more of Tony's needs? For a brief second she worried what would happen if it didn't appeal to her. She mentally shrugged, deciding to address that problem if she had to.

"Then relax and let your mind absorb this." The strands of whatever he held slid from her nape to the hollow just above the indentation that signaled

the way into entrance of her rear. She squirmed, for it tickled rather than anything else.

He laughed. It was deep and rolled into her like an autumn mist rolled over the hills behind her home. "First I will bind your hands, and I think your ankles. It will make it easier for you to absorb the vibrations. To immerse yourself in your senses and forget everything else."

Tony pulled Susanna's hair and she lifted her head. He walked around her without letting go, and hunkered down in front of her. The sight of him wearing only his pantaloons and boots made her mouth go dry and her quim become damp.

He laughed and used his free hand to stroke her cheek. "If I touched your cunt I vow my finger would be coated in your cream. However, I will abstain."

Susanna moaned her dismay and his hand tightened in her hair. "Patience is something you need to cultivate, my dear. Lift up onto your knees. Good, now let me put this stool under you for you to rest on." He slid a long padded stool under her and pressed on her back to make her sink onto it. Susanna realized she now knew one use for it. She wondered what the others could be, and hoped she'd find out before long. It took him scant seconds to fasten her ankles so her legs were spread out.

"Grip hard." He bit the lobe of her

ear, none too gently and Susanna's moan became a hiss. The pain was short lived but ran through her like water poured over someone from a jug or pail.

Before she had time to analyze why something so painful made her body tremble with pleasure and her scalp tingle with anticipation of more, Tony tied her hands to the chair with long silky strips of material. The ends he left loose to dangle downward.

"Now, I think the eyes. I want all your concentration on yourself. How you feel, what you anticipate, what you want, or if necessary, what you hate. The only things you will hear are my voice and your heartbeat."

Her vision was obscured by a

thick strip of velvet. Behind it she was alone, and could do nothing except strain to hear his words over the loud beat of her heart.

"Xiao Mǎo." His voice touched her soul and made her shiver. It hinted of unknown things to come. "You look perfect like this. There is only one more thing. This."

The flick of leather on her arse made her jump. It stung.

"Word?"

"H...happy, Sir. Oh lud..." The leather switched her again, harder this time and the sting morphed into pain. A long dull pain that flowed over her skin and across her mind.

"To see you like this is more than I

ever hoped. To see you accept my blows and absorb the pain so sweetly is perfection. A few more?"

He is asking me? Surely he tells me? However, even in her floating state, Susanna understood what Tony was doing. He would give her no chance to say she was coerced into anything. What was it Jane had said? "To be flogged or spanked and have to count the strokes adds so much to the intensity of it all. And to count in sets of five adds even more."

Susanna took a deep breath. "Five, my lord?"

She fancied she could feel his relief in the air. His hand stroked over her back and arse in small caressing

circles. "Xiao Māo, you are truly for me. Now breathe through the pain and let it become pleasure. Remember you may cry deng or ting if need be. You have my word, I will heed them."

"I never thought any different."

Susanna hurried to reassure him. "There will be no need. I trust you with every fiber of my being. I have so longed for this moment. When you accept I am what you need."

The gentle touch of his lips on her back was so brief she might have missed it if she hadn't been so focused.

"Then count." She heard the swish of the leather before it touched the soft skin of her arse.

"One," The sting grew in intensity.

Swish. "Two." All she could here was her heart, and the sound of the leather moving through the air.

"Three." She began to float, as the pain changed, and made her blood stir and her heartbeat switch up.

The next blow was harder, across her upper arse, and she absorbed it gladly. So good. She was flying as she sobbed the numbers. "Four and five."

Her skin stung with a beautiful heat, and over the thump of her heart, she heard his welcome words. "Now, Xiao Māo, come now." His fingers slipped inside her channel and moved swiftly to increase her juices. He withdrew and nipped her nub.

Susanna screamed and slid noisily

over the edge of the abyss. When she came to, she was wrapped in a blanket, and curled up on Tony's lap. He kissed her and buried his face in her neck.

"So, do we put the parents out of their misery and plan a wedding?"

Susanna giggled. "I like the idea of the wedding, but must we put our Mamas' minds to rest?"

"Minx. We must. However, I will press for an early wedding. They will of course agree for all the wrong reasons, but that is no concern of ours."

"Wrong...? Oh." Susanna blushed. Tony roared with laughter.

"Who knows, it may be valid. If my ministrations have not made you too sore?" He raised one eyebrow.

Susannah blushed and cursed her propensity to color up at the drop of a hat. "No, my lord."

"Ah, I must be losing my touch. Next time perhaps?" He flicked her cheek. "Then perhaps I can assuage my aching cock in your pretty cunt and enjoy my release within you? Or shall I be a gentleman and withdraw?"

"In me, now." Susanna threw the blanket to one side and slid off Tony's lap. "I believe this was something you requested at the theater?" She put her legs on either side of him and lifted his cock out of his pantaloons. Once released it sprung upward: the tip was wet, and the sides, slick.

Susanna bit her lip and took

Tony's prick in one hand. She concentrated on guiding it toward her quim, and slowly drew him inside her. As he filled her tight channel she was once more astounded how something so large fitted into somewhere so small. Indeed the workings of the body were wondrous.

"Now." Tony gripped her waist and forced her downward. He filled her to the hilt and began to move. His powerful thighs moved her up and down on him, and sweat beaded his brow.

"Oh lud, please." The familiar tingles that signaled her climax were increasing in speed and density. She shook with the effort of holding back until Tony joined her.

"Now." He roared the word as he filled her channel and Susanna echoed his shout and one more flew.

Chapter Eleven

"Give me one good reason why we agreed to this?" Tony stood at the front of the chapel on his country estate and moved his cravat an eighth of an inch. "I should have let you entice me to elope. Withholding your favors would have done it." He muttered the words out of the side of his mouth as the vicar beamed at him and Susanna.

Susanna made a noise halfway between a giggle and a cough. "Now you tell me. Mind you, that would be easier said than done." Her voice was as low as his.

The vicar cleared his throat and

looked at them with disapproval. "May we begin?" he asked, in a frosty tone.

Tony looked at him steadily until the man shifted on his feet. Then Tony inclined his head.

"Of course, vicar. I was merely telling my bride how beautiful she looks."

Susanna shot him a mischievous look and shifted one leg to show him a split in her bridal gown, which, as she moved showed more than a decorous amount of thigh. He did his best to frown. It wasn't easy, when all he wanted to do was get the ceremony and wedding breakfast over. He had great plans for the honeymoon.

"Ah yes. Radiant," the poor vicar

agreed. "Now." He raised his voice. "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today..."

Tony listened with half an ear as the Reverend Porter intoned the words of the marriage service. He spoke when prompted, and held his breath when the congregation was asked if they had any just cause or impediment as to why the marriage shouldn't go ahead. When he slipped the ring onto Susanna's finger he knew his hand trembled as much as hers. Finally they were pronounced husband and wife, and Tony was told he could kiss his bride. He heaved a great sigh of relief, and proceeded to do so with much gusto, all to the irreverent cheers of his peers.

The waves of disapproval he expected from the elders in the congregation didn't materialize. As he reluctantly drew back from Susanna he looked at his mother. The cat in the cream was an understatement for her expression.

"Our Mamas think their plan worked," he said once they'd signed the register and were walking down the aisle and out into the sunshine. "Little do they know..."

Susanna laughed as she waved to friends, cronies and hangers-on who were clustered in the pews. "My Mama gave me the talk last night. All I could think was thank goodness I know now what I know. Her euphemisms, warnings

and ramblings would either have me a gibbering idiot, a runaway or a very reluctant bride who refused to open her legs. I swear I will not let any child of ours, male or female, go to the altar as ill informed as I would have been. Of course our sons will look to you for guidance."

"Of course. How many are you anticipating?" Tony grinned at the way Susana narrowed her eyes and licked her lips. Such a contradiction of expressions, designed he knew to tease him, and beg for his own unique form of punishment. His cock stirred at the memories of Susanna spread over their bench or impaled on one of the protuberances on their chair. She

admitted she loved all they did, and teased him to get the reaction she preferred. Tony now knew the way to curb those actions—by withholding what she wanted, be it the flogger or a climax.

"At the moment?" Susanna asked.

"None, and in truth I hope to have you to myself for a while. However it will be as life, or your cock wills."

It seemed the tricks he'd shown her to stop his seed sewing, had worked. Really, living in the Far East had so many benefits. Tony thought of his plans for that evening, and his skin tingled.

"How soon can we get this breakfast over and retire?" he asked.

Not soon enough. The hours he smiled, chatted, cut the cake, and shook

hands were interminable. Why they called it a breakfast when they ate at three in the afternoon he had no idea. By the time he was able to take Susanna by the arm and lead her out of the long dining room, Tony had heard enough innuendos for a lifetime.

Susannah sighed, and let her breath out in one long gust. "That is something I'm glad I'll never have to live through again. Where do our parents get all these old relatives from...out of an attic somewhere? I've never had so many whiskery kisses, from *both* sexes I hasten to add." She shuddered. "And the smell of camphor and sherry. Never ever make me drink sherry."

"A new punishment, my dear?"

Tony changed directions and whisked her into a side corridor. "And where did you get that dress? For a traditional virgin's marriage gown, it is not."

"I'm not a traditional virgin bride, thankfully," Susanna said as they got to a narrow oak door. "Where are we going?"

"Wait and see." Tony opened the door and escorted her through it. "Should I blindfold you?"

"Well, oh my, maybe not." Two horses were tethered nearby. "If we are to ride, I think I'd best be able to see?"

Tony took her ankle and threw her into the saddle. "No ladies' seat, but you ride astride as well as any man. And I will be able to see your legs, and

imagine it's me they are clinging to, not Flossie here."

Susanna shot him a gamine grin, put her feet into the stirrups and hitched her wedding dress high up over her thighs. "It's to be hoped no guests see us. What little reputation I have will be shot to pieces." She shivered. Tony realized she wore very little other than silk and satin.

"I forgot, how remiss of me. One moment." He went to the saddlebag of his horse and took out a fur-lined cloak. "Here, this will warm you until I can. We have an hour or so's ride ahead. Will you be all right?"

She looked surprised. "Of course. And I will hold back my questions as to

our destination, even though it goes against the grain."

"Good." Tony mounted his horse and clicked his tongue to set it in motion. Soon they were cantering down a little used lane. He knew his land like the back of his hand, and was certain they'd have an easy ride.

He was right. In a little over an hour, he slowed and waited until Susanna drew up beside him. Her cheeks were glowing with the exertion of the exercise, her hair had come adrift from its complicated design, and the diamond pins were nowhere to be seen. She grinned.

"My hair fell down. I have the pins in my hem. I'm so glad I chose to

dispense with a silk cloak. One more step on my road to harlot-dom no doubt, but it's all for the good. Can you imagine what I'd look like galloping across the fields, with that streaming behind me? Oh, that gallop was so welcome. I needed it. To be outside in glorious countryside, with you, is perfect. Are we here?"

"Once we round the corner. Now I do wish to blindfold you. Will you let me?" Tony wanted Susanna to be surprised when they reached their destination, and not come upon it gradually. "We will double up on Jester here." He patted his horse.

"For a chance to be close to you on a horse, you can shackle me as well,"

Susannah said. "Do I sit in front?" She lifted one leg over her horse's saddle and sat sideways. "Will you catch me?"

Tony dismounted, and wrapped his horse's reins around a branch. He walked to Susannah and held his hands out. She slipped into his arms and slowly let her body slide down his until her quim rubbed the length of his cock. It responded as ever by lengthening and hardening to the point of perfect pain. Susannah licked her lips and chuckled. The melodic sound and the hint of her perfume teased him into even more hardness.

"Xiao Māo, you are a minx." The use of her pet name, the one they used for play, made her eyes widen.

As he put her onto the ground, and turned toward his horse, Susanna slipped into her subservient self. She knelt and bent her head.

"My Lord?"

Tony wanted to cry, to laugh, to salute with a cheer. Although they played, and played hard, he'd never attempted to get either of them into their Master/sub mode outside their comfort zone. Here, where in theory anyone could come upon them, was very much uncharted territory. *She trusts me to know what is best.*

"I like your minx," he said as he used her hair to lift her head upward. "It pleases me. Now let me lift you onto Jester, and blindfold you."

Within a few seconds he had Susanna settled in front of him, with her eyes covered. If he were a painter he'd paint her like that. Rosy skinned, bridal gown bunched up, long white shapely legs covered in silk stockings, and her eyes covered with a thick band of velvet. If they weren't riding he'd have tied her hands and feet with the same material. The black gleamed dark and enticing against her pale skin and red hair.

Tony held Susanna tight to him with one hand and urged the horse forward at a brisk walk. His cock rubbed up against the base of her spine.

"One day I'll take you like this. On a solid patient horse, with you in front

and my cock buried deep in you."

"Now?"

"No," He leaned forward and pinched the soft skin at the apex of her thighs. "We're only minutes away from our destination. And then who knows what will happen?"

Perverse maybe, but Tony wanted now to keep Susanna mentally off balance. It would heighten what was to come. Something he knew was a deep-seated need within him. It would be the zenith of all they did, and if it appealed to her as much as it did him, he knew he could ask no more.

She leaned back into him and sighed. "I'm so glad today, or the 'busy with other people' part of today, is over.

Now I can be yours as and how you wish me to."

He kissed her neck and nipped the soft skin. An action Tony knew would increase Susanna's arousal. In the short weeks of their engagement, he'd become adept at arousing her, whenever possible. With the eagle eyes of their family and the Ton on them, time alone had been at a premium. However, a few nights at Stephen and Jane's had been fun, and Tony knew every secluded nook and cranny in every great house they visited.

Now though, they had no need for subterfuge.

He sucked the soft skin just below Susanna's hairline and was more than

satisfied when she moaned and wriggled.

"If you spook Jester, and fall off, your arse will be sore for all the wrong reasons," Tony said. "Remember 'tis our honeymoon. The time I promised to introduce you to new delights."

She stopped wriggling.

He laughed.

Chapter Twelve

Her world spun, as Tony lifted her from the horse. Susanna loved the way she used all her senses except sight to discover what was happening. The sweet smell of hay, and the musky dusty smell of a stable assailed her. She wrinkled her nose. Dust and hay made her want to sneeze. *So un-romantic. I hope Tony is not anticipating a romp in the hay. A sneezing fit would not add to the atmosphere.* She bit her lip as she remembered the last time she sneezed around him. Her sneeze had surprised them both. They had been coupled and as she sneezed and jumped, Tony was

about to lunge deep into her. He slipped out instead and his seed shot over them both. She chuckled to herself as she remembered just how much fun cleaning each other had been.

"Why are you laughing?"

"I'm remembering the last time I sneezed around you."

Tony pulled her hair in a gentle tug. "Oh yes, one inch further inside you and it could have been very sore. Your channel muscles are more than powerful, and might well have squeezed the life out of my cock. We'll steer clear of dust."

"And hay?"

"And hay."

He took her arm and propelled her

forward. The ground under her feet was firm, and the air had taken on a slight chill. She surmised that either the sun had gone down, or they were in the shade. Tiny stones scrunched under her feet and dug into her skin through the soft soles of her slippers. She winced.

"Ouch, damned shoes are too flimsy for anything."

"Poor Xiao Māo. Never mind, I will minister to you in such a way you won't remember the pain. Through here and let me help you. Now there are twenty-seven steps. Count."

She counted. At each count Tony gave her arse a squeeze or a gentle flick of his hand. By number twenty-seven, the flicks were no longer over her gown,

which somehow Tony had bunched up around her waist, and were harder. Her heartbeat quickened, her skin tingled and she wanted so much more. However, she knew better than to ask. With as much patience as she could muster, Susanna waited for his next directive.

"I'm going to take your blindfold off now, love. Count to three before you open your eyes."

He spun her round, and pressed on her head. Susanna obeyed the unspoken order and sank to her knees. The material that covered her eyes was lifted and she mentally counted before she looked around. Her gasp was loud and long and followed by Tony's satisfied chuckle.

"Ah, I think it's to your liking?"

Susanna took in the low padded bench with its bindings, the X-shaped cross to one side of the room, and the long waist-high bed with ropes and shackles above and beside it. "Ours?"

"Ours," Tony confirmed. "For our eyes only. No one else will use this. If we play here with Stephen and Jane we'll use a bigger room along the corridor. This is ours. Are you ready to start our honeymoon?"

Susanna felt the trickle of her juices edge down her legs. Her tummy was full of butterflies for all the right reasons, and her body was on fire. "Oh yes, My Lord." She infused the words with capitals to show she meant them in

the way they had decided was correct for their play.

"Then you know what to do." He wriggled out of his jacket and flung it over the coat hook, before he turned his back on her, walked toward a chair next to the bed and sat down. His long legs stretched out in front of him. The pose accentuated his lean body, and his breeches were taught over his cock and ballocks.

To Susanna's dismay it seemed to be just an ordinary padded chair with no protuberances in it. Then she noticed a few knobs and levers concealed in the folds of the material. Susanna grinned. She should have realized Tony wouldn't go for the mundane. She licked her lips

and began to untie the row of tiny bows that started at her chest and ended just above the hem of her gown.

Tony groaned. "Minx."

Susanna stood, curtsied and sank to her knees once more. She was glad she hadn't given in to protocol, her modiste, or her mama when they said it should close down her back, "for your husband to undo." She knew Tony, and he had often mentioned how arousing it was to see her expose herself to him.

As the silky material slid over her breasts, Susanna reached up and removed the straps from her shoulders and arms. With the bows open to her waist, there was now nothing to stop the top of her gown from sliding downward

to bunch on top of the skirts.

"Stand up, let it fall and stretch out face down on the bed." The words were clipped. She surmised Tony held onto his mounting libido with difficulty. His cock stretched the material of his breeches to bursting point, and his nipples seemed to challenge hers to see which stood out more.

With more haste than elegance Susanna scrambled to do his bidding. What was going to happen? Tony had promised her a very special play session for their honeymoon but had refused to say what it entailed. If she was on the bed, it sounded tame.

"Now, grip the headboard and spread your legs. Turn your head to the

left.”

She complied immediately. Even without the 'I am your Master' tone, those words made her channel muscles contract and her juices flow. With that tone ringing in her ears, they nigh on gushed.

To her surprise, Tony didn't tie her hands or legs. Spread out as she was, with her head to one side, all she could see was the wall—the *blank* wall, with no toys near. Tony knew how inquisitive she was. Susanna knew this was all part of their play: The wondering, and the heightened awareness of every touch and movement. The anticipation of what came next.

She could hear something rustling,

and then a slight thud followed by another, before a metallic *chink* sounded in the distance. Clothes? Boots? Maybe...but what else? Her cunt clenched and she concentrated on regulating her breathing. It was hard when her body was on fire, and the hairs on her arms stood on end. A state she knew more often that not when she was near Tony.

"Now, wife, shall we celebrate our marriage? In our soon to be special way?"

"Yes please, My Lord."

The bed dipped slightly and out of the corner of her eye she saw Tony's bare knee as he knelt over her. One of his thighs brushed the side of her arse,

and then the touch was repeated on the other side, before he moved and his legs slid down the outside of hers.

He put no weight on her, and Susanna held her breath. What next?

Something dropped onto her between the shoulder blades and she flinched. Then a white-hot pain spread over her skin. More stings and shards of heat hit her back, and she gasped.

"It hurts." She tried to move away from the pain but Tony held her down and stroked her head.

"Good girl. Remember you have a safe word and can use it. My beautiful Xiao Māo. So good, so perfect." The pain changed to exquisite stings, which fell onto her like a welcome shower in

spring. Fast and random, she could only imagine what was happening. It had to be wax, but how he used it, she had no idea.

"You take the pain and embrace it. Do you know how beautiful you look? With my design on your soft skin, and the bloom it creates you make my cock hard and needy, slick and wet with need for you. Taste." He put his finger to her mouth, and Susanna sucked his juices from it. The sweet and salty taste made her moan with pleasure.

Tony massaged her shoulders and she sank into the pain of the wax, the pleasure of receiving it and the sensation of being his. Susanna floated, comforted and cocooned in his attention and

pleasure.

Her breathing slowed and Susanna let her eyelids fluttered closed. A short nap wouldn't come amiss. She didn't know how long it was before a kiss to her neck made her mutter and ignore the glass of water he held to her lips. She kept her eyes closed. A sudden smack to her arse made her eyes open once more in a hurry.

"You need to drink now, or we play no more. I know how deep you've been and there's a lot more for you to absorb. Am I right?"

She giggled. Tony knew her so well. She was nowhere near that subliminal state she reached when they often played. The one where she floated

in bliss and absorbed everything deep inside herself.

"Yes, My Lord." She struggled to sit up a little, and let him tilt the glass to her lips once more. She drank deeply.

"Thank you. As ever, you know my needs more than I do."

"Of course, it's my job to do so. Are you happy for me to peel the wax off your back now? And let me then decorate your breasts? I know 'tis not very Dom-like to ask, but it will be intense. I think you are ready."

She gulped and looked toward the glass. Tony understood the look and handed it to her. Susanna dampened her dry mouth, and handed it back. "If you think so, then I agree. And yes, I have

remembered my safe words, My Lord."

He kissed her and Susanna drew his tongue into her mouth to suck and nip at the sensitive surface. Tony let her play for scant seconds before he pulled back.

"The wax removal can wait. It will work well later. Lie on your back and stretch your arms out." Susanna did as he demanded and within seconds the soft silk and supple leather shackles scraped over the pale skin of her wrists, and fastened her arms at right angles to her body.

"Hmm, your feet. Open your legs. Not too wide. A little more, yes, perfect. Now do not move." Tony used his index finger to scrape over her body from her breastbone to her pubic bone. The edge

of his nail scratched her sensitive skin and increased her arousal. The hint of pain not realized and the anticipation of things to come created a frisson of excitement. Already Susanna could feel her climax building and she writhed on the bed.

"No." Tony slapped her quim. "You know that. And, Xiao Māo, now you need to be still or I might injure you." He walked toward a side cupboard, picked something up and approached her once more.

"Why? I thought 'twas wax you were decor...T-Tony?" She stuttered when she saw what he carried. Her heart was in her mouth, and she was sure it thumped loud enough to vie with any

church bells in the vicinity. "What are you going to do with that?"

He grinned. "My cutthroat? Why, use it on you, my dear."

The roaring in her ears got louder, like a river in spate or an angry animal at the Royal Exchange.

"Breathe, Xiao Māo...what word do you use? Think carefully...think about where you are and what we are. Do you trust me, Xiao Māo? Do you?" His voice was level but behind the words his angst filtered through. "Say your word now, Susanna, say one of those three or I untie you and we stop. Never to start again."

"What?" She blinked, and shook her head. The roaring subsided to the

mere noise of an autumn wind. "What did you say?"

"Trust, my dear," Tony said evenly. "Trust. It all boils down to that one admittedly important thing. Do you trust me?"

Susanna knew fine well her jaw dropped. There was no question. Of course she trusted him. "Why would you think otherwise, My Lord?"

"You showed no trust in me then. Why would I harm you? I love you, for heaven's sake." Tony shouted the words. "I crave you, need you as much as life. I am desolate when we're apart. You *are* my life. Without you I no longer have a reason to exist. This," he waved the razor, "this is because I gave you my

word I would denude your quim. You made me promise that as soon as you were mine I would perform that sweet task. How on earth did you think I could do so without my razor?" The disappointment in his voice made her cringe and she couldn't help tears welling in her eyes. Susanna sniffed. Bound as she was, she couldn't even wipe her eyes.

Tony didn't seem inclined to come to her aid. He stood next to her, the cutthroat still held loosely between one thumb and forefinger.

"Please, My Lord. I do trust you."

He said nothing.

How could she convince him?

Words were easy, and bound as she

was, actions impossible.

"Tony. My Lord, you are my Master. I do as you ask. I'm new and inexperienced. All I know I've learned from you. It has been a somewhat overwhelming day. I was expecting you to hold a candle to show me how you would decorate me. I had not thought of my shaving."

He stared at her, unmoving and unblinking. Susanna forced herself to stay still and hold his gaze. After several minutes he nodded.

She let out her breath in a whoosh.

"Thank you, My Lord."

"You may thank me after your punishment," Tony said at last. "I will decide what it is to be later. First I'm

going to shave you. Then wax you and then..." He paused. "You will need to wait to discover what then will be."

His stern tone didn't faze her. Tony would not harm her, and she knew that. Oh she might not be able to sit comfortably for a week, but the attention and creams he would administer would, according to Jane, far outweigh any fleeting pain.

"Yes, My Lord."

He smiled then, and to Susanna it was as if the sun had reappeared after a long absence.

"Let's hope you still say that... after."

She hoped so as well. Tony moved the steel to rest across the top of

her quim and next to the first of the springy red hair that covered it.

"Ready?"

Susanna nodded. "Yes, My Lord."

With a wicked grin Tony turned the razor so the sharp side dug into her skin, just enough to remind her how sharp it truly was. It was an effort, but Susanna forced herself to breathe steadily and without fear.

"Good girl, Xiao Māo. You are brave and I love you." Tony turned the blade once more and with one hand held the hairs up from her body and let his razor slice through them like a scythe through straw. The touch of the cold metal, the way her hair fell away, and the intent look on Tony's face excited

her. The erotic sight made her stomach quiver and her nipples tighten to the point of pain. In the way he often did, Tony must have sensed her arousal. "Almost done." He made one last cut, put the razor down carefully onto a nearby table and ran his hand over her bare and smooth quim. Susanna lifted her head and looked down at her body. The smooth mound was perfection.

"I love it," she said. "Oh, Tony, it is amazing. Ohh ah, so is that." She clenched her channel muscles as he put three fingers inside and started to fill her in a steady thrusting motion. "I will come."

"You won't...you will wait until I have decorated you. Are you ready for

this, Susanna? My wedding gift to you?"

"Oh, *yes*."

He smiled. The smile of a satisfied Dom. Tony withdrew his fingers and pressed a kiss to her cunt lips. "Then let me show you how beautiful you look dressed in wax." He lit a tall candle and waited until the flame burned steadily without flickering. "Spermaceti oil. It burns at a lower heat and won't scar. Breathe evenly and embrace the pain, my love. This is for you."

He held the candle high above her and gradually tilted it.

Susanna wanted to hold her breath, but mindful of Tony's words, she concentrated on keeping her breathing

and pulse steady. The first drop of wax let go of its hold on the candle and danced through the air, to land on her breast. This time the heat flew from her breast to her cunt and back again. She gaped, and moaned. "*Yeeessss*."

The next drop teased her nipple, and the one after her quim. Tony let the drops fall faster and what seemed like a random pattern became a choreographed dance. When Tony finally put the candle down, Susanna was sobbing with pleasure.

"So good, so, so good. Oh, My Lo...ord."

Tony pinched her nub. "Fly, Xiao Māo, and come for me."

That was one command she

followed with pleasure. She screamed and flew.

"And now, I need to de-wax you. It may pull some hairs, but I will soothe you better."

It was sometime later, when Tony moved away from her and retucked the blanket tightly around her.

"Is this my punishment?" Susanna injected amused hope onto her voice. She knew it wouldn't be.

"Should I say yes?" Tony picked up the razor again.

"Well, you *could*. You said it might hurt. Punishments hurt."

He laughed. "This time, I'll say yes. Now hold still. The easiest way to

remove the wax is by slicing under it."

Susanna watched, fascinated, as he carefully lifted each piece of wax and set it aside. The two sections he had surrounded her nipples with he scraped away carefully. "These I will frame, to remind us of our commitment. For your trust is to me what cements us together, not the ceremony in the church."

The simple words made Susanna's throat close and she swallowed. "I agree," she said huskily. "Each drop said *I love you* to me. Each drop reaffirmed my trust for you. I never lost it, just mislaid it for a moment earlier."

"Thank goodness. Now roll over and let me clean your back."

Susanna did as he asked and the razor touched her skin. The hairs below her shoulder pulled out as the wax lifted and she jumped and giggled. "It stings, but oh, My Lord. I have an idea."

"Yes?"

"If this wax lifts hairs so easily, we could set a new trend. Sadly, it is not one that we might repeat in polite society. You could use it on my quim instead of the razor. Waxing could become the new way to shave a lady."

He chuckled, and kissed her softly. Life looked as if it would be anything but tame. His Lady Mystery was perhaps not so mysterious after all.

On the other hand...

The End

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