

NOTICE: This story contains explicit descriptions of sexual activity between consenting adults. If you are not of legal age to read such material, or if you find it offensive, then stop reading now.

This story is (c) Copyright 2001 by Wiseguy and may not be reposted on any for-profit system. Posting on a noncommercial site is normally okay, but check with me first and do not alter the story in any way.

The full text of this and all Wiseguy stories is available for download (text or PDF) or for on-line viewing (HTTP) at my web site, <http://www.asstr.org/~Wiseguy>.

I welcome all comments from readers (wiseguy35@hotmail.com).

Business Class

(c) Copyright 2001 by Wiseguy

Inspired by the real-life erotic hypnosis book [Look Into My Eyes](#) by Peter Masters.

It was her smile that first drew his attention -- a subtle, secret smile that showed more in her eyes than on her lips. When the smile was followed immediately by a furtive glance in his direction, he pretended not to notice.

But he was hooked. He had to know what she was reading.

He shifted his laptop slightly on the table in front of him, the better to covertly observe the woman across the aisle. She seemed to be of medium height and slender -- one might even say slight -- build. Her hair was dark brown, long and curvy but carefully arranged to frame an attractive, woman-next-door face.

She was reading what looked like a soft cover textbook. It was fairly thin, maybe 150 pages. A paper jacket, of the kind school children make from grocery bags, concealed the cover. She studied it intently, every now and again letting that hint of a smile creep across her face and then catching herself.

A door opened and closed behind him. She looked up at the sound; his eyes darted back to his laptop screen, hoping she hadn't caught him

studying her. In his peripheral vision he saw her close the book, marking her place with the inside flap of the homemade book jacket, and lay it on the seat beside her.

"Your ticket, please?"

She gave a genuine smile to the conductor, who punched her ticket and returned the stub. "The café car is the next one up," the conductor explained. "Non-alcoholic beverages are complimentary for business class passengers; just show him your ticket stub."

"Thank you," she said sweetly. Her voice was a little rough -- she'd be taking advantage of that offer soon, her observer guessed.

Sure enough, a few moments later she stood up and headed toward the café car. Her eyes met his for just a moment as she passed, then moved on innocently. The conductor followed, having finished his job for the time being.

His curiosity would permit no further delays; with a quick peek at the other passengers, he casually stood up and eased across the aisle. He leaned over the woman's seat, gently opened the book to the spot she'd marked, and read the title from the top margin of the page:

EROTIC HYPNOSIS: A Beginner's Guide
by Eric Milton.

His book.

His head dropped with a sigh that was half amusement, half disbelief. *Fate laughs at probabilities*, he thought to himself. He put the book down carefully, making sure to leave it exactly as he'd found it, and returned to his seat.

He was back in his seat, staring into his laptop screen, when she passed him again in a whish of navy blue cloth. He noted the Diet Sprite in her hand, already open and sweating. She settled back into her seat with her book, and he made a serious effort to apply himself to his work.

It had been almost a year since he'd finished the first draft of the book his traveling companion was now reading, an entry-level guide to sexual hypnosis. Sales had exceeded expectations enough that his New York publishing house had just agreed to pay him an advance for the sequel. *Which means*, he scolded himself as he forced his gaze back from the

reader's legs to the unfinished chapter of that sequel on his computer screen, *that you'd better get your mind back on business!*

His hands hovered over the keyboard for a moment, waiting. His brain responded, and the words began to flow.

Fantasy #4: Sex at Sea

This fantasy may be particularly effective during a summer holiday at the beach, or by the pool, especially if your partner is already in a bathing suit or less. Place your partner in trance and deepen as much as you can -- the deeper the trance, the more vivid the fantasy will be for her.

(Spoken to the subject)

We're on vacation in the Caribbean, just the two of us. We've rented a boat for the afternoon, and are cruising in a secluded cove. You feel the sun warming you as you lie out on the deck in your skimpiest swimsuit. You have plenty of sunscreen on, so you don't have to worry about burning, and your favorite sunglasses are protecting your eyes from the glare.

The gentle thrumming of the boat's engine is soothing to you as you lie there on the deck. The sun's rays are warm, so warm that even in your skimpiest swimsuit you can feel tiny beads of sweat starting to form underneath your suit. *(Pause for a few moments to let the feelings sink in.)*

Still you lie there, enjoying the feel of the sun on your bare skin, but getting warmer and warmer. You decide to take off your swimsuit because it's just too warm to be wearing it. Slowly, easily, using the least amount of energy necessary, you take off your swimsuit and leave it lying on the floor next to you. Your skin can breathe now, and it feels so much better now that it's all exposed to the sea air and sunshine. *(Again, pause a few moments to let her enjoy the sensation.)*

His eyes stole another glance across the aisle: the woman sat upright, legs crossed, holding the book close to her face. Her eyes scanned the pages in front of them slowly and methodically while her lower lip seemed to recede into her mouth. Between pages, her left hand toyed idly with the top button on her blouse. Her visage merged with his thought stream until the mental picture in his mind was of her lying naked on the bow of a sailboat. His cock tingled and stiffened as the fantasy formed in his mind and energized his fingers.

As you lie there in the nude, so comfortable, you realize that there are parts of your body that don't have sun block on them -- the parts that were covered by your swimsuit. You certainly don't want sunburn on those sensitive parts; you pick up your bottle of sun block and squeeze a generous amount of it onto your hand. It feels cool against the palm of your hand. Now, using your hand, you wipe the lotion onto your breasts, working it in

to make sure every exposed part of your breasts is protected. As you rub the lotion in, you find yourself enjoying the sensation of your hand caressing yourself, sliding so smoothly over your soft skin. Your nipples become erect, and you play with them as you rub the lotion into them, enjoying the arousing feelings you get when your fingers touch them. You are feeling very sexy and aroused now, and it feels very good to indulge yourself. *(Another pause. Depending on her trance depth, your partner may begin caressing herself as the fantasy plays out in her mind.)*

Now you remember that your crotch is also exposed to the sun. You apply some more lotion to your fingers, and with a smooth, easy motion you begin spreading that lotion over your bikini area. You start with your mound, letting your fingers run easily through your pubic hair as you spread the lotion over the skin beneath. You open your legs slightly and slide your fingers between your thighs. As you rub the lotion up and down over your slit, your finger accidentally brushes your clit and a sudden wave of pleasure rushes over you. You caress yourself more, and soon you feel much more wetness in your center than just the lotion. You slip a finger inside your vagina and fantasize that you are having sex with me, letting your finger stand in for my penis. It slides in and out, and you feel a growing sexual arousal, an urgent need that must be satisfied.

You hear a sound and sense a shadow falling over you. Your eyes open and you see me standing over you, watching you fondle yourself. You can see by the bulge in my swim trunks that I am very aroused. I push my trunks down, and seeing the size of my erection gets you even more aroused than you already are because you know that I want you.

You don't resist as I spread your legs apart and settle down between them. You take my penis in your hand and guide it into your vagina. It feels so good as I penetrate you, filling you up and pressing against all the sensitive spots inside you. You feel your hips moving up and down on their own, working my length in and out, and bringing you closer and closer to orgasm.

"Oh, shit!"

She hadn't said it loudly, but the sudden outburst was enough to break his concentration. He looked up to see her kneeling on her seat, leaning over the one beside her, a grimace on her face. She fumbled with something unseen for a moment, then hustled up the aisle toward the café car again. The dripping wet napkin and empty can in her hands told the story.

She returned with the conductor, who carried an oversized sponge. "It's not a problem," he assured her as he dabbed at the seat and floor. "All the fabrics are treated. In half an hour you won't be able to tell anything happened."

"I'm really sorry," the lady replied. "I didn't realize it was that close to the edge."

The conductor's friendly smile didn't waver. "Not to worry, ma'am. It happens a lot." He continued dabbing at the spill while the lady passenger fretted over the mess.

The writer watched from his seat, then on an impulse slid out and walked through to the café car. A simple snack bar took up most of the space; the rest was dotted with round tables and stools, all of which were bolted to the floor. The snack bar attendant greeted his new customer with a friendly, professional smile. "How can I help you, sir?"

"Root beer and a Diet Sprite." The writer held up his Business Class ticket stub.

The attendant nodded and placed two ice-filled plastic cups and two cans of soda on the counter. "Anything else?"

"This'll do for now." With an answering smile of his own, the writer gathered his drinks and returned to the business class car. He set the drinks down on the table by his laptop and, with a tentative clearing of his throat, addressed the lady in the aisle. "Excuse me." When she didn't respond, he reached out a forefinger and touched her elbow. "Excuse me," he repeated.

Her head turned at his touch, her eyes darting first to the intruding finger, then to his face.

"There's plenty of space over here," he offered, pointing to the table where his laptop sat. "The table is level, too. Why don't you join me?"

He could see the doubt passing over her face. He put on his best innocuous smile and lifted the new Diet Sprite he'd bought. "See? I've even got a new drink for you -- you wouldn't want that to go to waste, would you?"

The smile worked -- she broke into one of her own, chuckling slightly. "I suppose not," she agreed. "But I hope that laptop is insured against moisture damage."

"I'm willing to risk it. My name is Eric, by the way." He put down the soda can and extended his hand.

Her handshake was well-practiced: firm and businesslike, but not so much so that an insecure man might feel challenged. "I'm Patty," she replied.

"Welcome to the big table, Patty." He winked at her and then slid back into his seat, moving the laptop closer to give her as much room as possible.

Patty took the seat diagonally across the conference table from him, opened her soda and poured some into the plastic cup. "This is much nicer than the fold-up tray," she said, running a hand over the mini conference table between them.

Eric nodded. "Most business class cars have one of these tables at each end; I try to sit at one whenever I can. The extra elbow room is always nice, and my drink doesn't slide off the edge."

"That's exactly what happened to me," Patty said. "I set the cup down in the middle of the tray, and the next thing I knew it was face down on the seat."

"Is this your first train trip?"

"Yes," she answered, her eyebrows rising. "How'd you guess?"

He shrugged innocently. "Just a hunch."

"I usually fly to DC on the shuttle," she offered, "but with all the papers talking about a possible strike this week, I didn't want to get stranded."

"A smart move. I take the train for economy -- a business class train ticket costs a lot less than flying coach, but look at the service and the amenities. I can eat or drink what I want to, when I want to; I can get up and walk around without being in anyone's way; I can plug my laptop into the AC outlet right here and write for the whole trip if I want to. What airline can match that?"

"So you're a writer?"

He paused a moment to admire the smooth movement of her throat as she swallowed some more Sprite. "Yes," he confirmed, feeling the small rush of pride that usually came from answering that question. *Go ahead*, a little voice inside of him urged. *Tell her*. He thought about how to say it, how she might react -- after all, she clearly didn't want people to see that she was reading an erotic hypnosis book. He needed to be careful.

The moment passed. "That's nice," she said politely. "I'm a technical trainer; I teach people to use my company's software."

"That must be interesting," he replied, feeling his chance slipping away.

She smiled and opened her book. "It has its moments," she remarked, and then turned her attention to the book.

Eric watched her for as long as courtesy would allow, then took the hint and addressed his laptop again. The image of Patty, naked and writhing on the deck of the boat, came again to the front of his mind and he resumed his writing.

You don't resist as I spread your legs apart and settle down between them. You take my penis in your hand and guide it into your vagina. It feels so good as I penetrate you, filling you up and pressing against all the sensitive spots inside you. You feel your hips moving up and down on their own, working my length in and out, and bringing you closer and closer to orgasm.

You sense my penis quivering slightly and you squeeze down with your pelvic muscles, doubling the erotic sensations for both of us. The pleasure pulses through your entire body; you are only seconds away from a wonderful orgasm. You look up into my face and see my eyes roll upwards, and you know that I am coming right now inside you. It pleases you to know you've made me come, and that knowledge triggers your orgasm.

(Watch for the physical signs of orgasm before continuing.) The pleasure sweeps over you as you come, so that you feel it in every part of your body all at the same time. The orgasm lasts as long as you want it to last; it is completely satisfying and leaves you with a wonderful, happy feeling all over. *(Repeat the last line every few seconds until her climax appears to be over.)*

And now, you are no longer on the deck of a rented boat. You are back *(state your real location)* with me, where we have just shared a nice hypnotic fantasy. When I count to three you will awaken, feeling contented and peaceful. *(Conclude with a three count and make sure she is fully awake.)*

Eric stopped and saved his work. The erotic charge hung over him like static electricity; he could feel it everywhere from his tingling scalp to his throbbing cock. His toes curled and straightened nervously inside his shoes. It was normal for him to get worked up writing these fantasies, but doing it with a specific person in mind -- a person who was sitting not three feet away, totally oblivious to it -- had added a whole new dimension.

Patty, meanwhile, seemed to be enjoying her book. Her skin was flushed, her nostrils flared, and every few moments her hips would shift slightly on their own in a subtle, unconscious rhythm.

Above their heads the PA system clicked. "We will be arriving in Philadelphia in about 3 minutes," a nondescript voice announced. "Passengers leaving the train in Philadelphia, please check around your seats now and gather your personal belongings. Also, please use caution when exiting as there will be a slight gap between the doorway of the train and the platform."

Patty glanced briefly up the aisle at the announcement, then continued with her reading. Eric watched out of the corner of his eye, wondering. What fantasy was she reading? What lover was she picturing in her mind?

The train lurched slightly on the way into the Philadelphia station. Patty felt the movement, snapped the book shut and hid it in her lap under the table. She sat upright as a few passengers filed out past her. There was only a short delay before the train moved on, starting out slowly and picking up speed once clear of the station.

Eric looked at Patty and smiled. "I think the coast is clear now," he remarked.

She blushed a little. "Was I that obvious?"

"It's okay," he joked. "Lots of professional women read romance novels."

"Not this one," she replied, shaking her head slowly. "Not today, anyway."

Eric played along, looking more closely at the paper-covered book. "It's too small to be hiding a nudie magazine," he mused. "It must be some kind of perverted sex manual."

"No." Patty tensed up immediately and withdrew into her seat. The sparkle faded from her eyes and was replaced by a tense wariness.

For a moment, Eric feared she would get up and leave. "I'm sorry," he said quickly. "I was way out of line. I get a little too flippant for my own good sometimes." He watched Patty's eyes anxiously, and was relieved to see her relax a little bit. "Let me make it up to you," he suggested. "How would you like to see the book I'm working on right now?"

Patty blinked. "You mean, the one you're still writing?"

"The very one. Usually I'd rather have root canal than show someone a rough draft. But I owe you something for that last crack, and I have a feeling you might like this. Are you interested?"

Patty searched his eyes for a moment, considering. "Okay. But you really don't have to."

Eric smiled, and was pleased to see her smile back. "Maybe not, but I'd like to anyway. Here you go." He pulled up the file with the book's title page, turned the machine around to face his companion, and scooted back to get a good look at her face.

Patty tilted the screen to improve her viewing angle and saw the title page:

EROTIC HYPNOSIS: Tips, Tricks, and Fantasies
by Eric Milton

He was not disappointed. Patty's jaw dropped and her eyes opened wide. The book slipped out of her hand and hit the floor near her feet, but Patty didn't move -- she simply stared at the title on the screen.

"It's a sequel, sort of," Eric explained haltingly. "For people who've finished the first book. It'll have some new inductions, suggestions for cool posthypnotic suggestions that lovers can use, and ideas on how to create more vivid fantasies. I'm also going to include a companion CD with some recorded goodies."

Patty looked at the laptop without reading while Eric mentally crossed his fingers and waited for her reaction. "You knew," she finally said, in the voice of a child caught in a lie. "How did you know?"

Now it was his turn to blush a bit. "Curiosity," he explained. "It's one of my vices. When I first saw you sitting over there, you were clearly absorbed in what you were reading; I had to know what it was. So when you went to the café car for a drink, I peeked. And boy, was I surprised."

"Is that why you invited me over here?" she asked skeptically. "So you could play 'I Know Your Secret' with me?"

"No no no no no," he protested. "Well, okay, maybe. But not just for that. Sure, I wanted to tell you that I wrote the book you're reading, and maybe even find out how you like it. I mean, I've never met anyone who's read it before -- anyone outside the publishing staff, anyway, and

the couple of friends who looked at the proofs. You look like an interesting person, and I just thought it would be cool to meet you even before I saw what you were reading."

Patty saw the anxiety in his face and smiled, relaxing a little. "How do I know you're really Eric Milton?" she teased. "You could have made up that cover page while I was reading."

Eric saw the smile and the slight twinkle in her eye, and a wave of relief swept through him. "You're playing with me now. Okay, fine -- ask me a question about the book."

Patty bent over and retrieved the fallen book. "All right. What's on page 83?"

"You're kidding me -- how am I supposed to remember one page, by number? At least tell me what chapter it's in."

She let him sweat for a second before agreeing. "Fair enough. It's in Chapter 5, and it's the third page in the chapter."

Eric frowned. "You're determined to make this difficult, aren't you?"

Her smile grew broader. "You started this, and you admitted peeking."

He chuckled and shook his head. "So be it. Let's see, the fifth chapter would be ..." He ticked off the chapters in his memory. "Posthypnotic Suggestions. It starts out talking about what a posthypnotic suggestion is and what kinds of things are possible. There are a couple of anecdotes about suggestions that will and won't work. By the third page, you should be into the Do and Don't list for effective suggestions."

"So far, so good," Patty confirmed, looking into the book. "What are some of the items on the Do list?"

"Do be specific: use precise language, and don't leave out any detail, like opening the eyes. Do repeat the suggestion several times, and make sure it is okay with the person. Do make sure the suggestion has definite limits and parameters to avoid unintended results. And do cancel every suggestion that isn't meant to be permanent. Convinced?"

"Convinced." She snapped the book shut and laid it on the table. Her eyes met his and paused there for a long moment. "Now what do we do?"

Eric made an exaggerated gulp. "Well, I suppose you could tell me what you think of the book."

"I haven't finished it yet." A faint smile hovered over her lips.

"But you must have some impression."

Seeing his anxious look, she sighed and let the smile show through. "I've read my share of hypnosis books -- at least six or seven, ranging from Jung to *Hypnosis for Dummies*. Some of them are so simple and generalized that all they really seem intended to do is send people to a professional with a few less questions to ask. Others are so full of jargon that you have to be a shrink to understand them. Yours is the first one that's struck me as something normal people can use."

"Thank you," he said. "I write from experience. Everything in that book is something I've done in real life -- most of them several times." He winked and added, "Research is important, you know."

She laughed lightly. "I'm sure it must be."

"Have you tried anything from the book yet?"

"Oh, no," she said, shaking her head gently. "I don't even know if I can be hypnotized."

Eric's eyebrows rose in surprise. "All that reading, and you've never actually tried it?"

"Nope," she confirmed. "I did try self-hypnosis, just to see what it was like. I put a little red dot on the ceiling above my bed and stared at it while I told myself to relax."

"And?"

She shrugged. "I relaxed, all right -- right to sleep."

Eric looked around the car: there were about eight other passengers, most of them toward the back end of the car, all of them either engrossed in a book, staring into a laptop, or sleeping. "Would you like to try again?"

She thought about it for a moment. "You mean here? Now? Can you do that?"

Eric nodded reassuringly. "Yes, here and now. I've worked with people under worse conditions than a moving train; if you really want to experience a trance, I can get you there."

Her eyes focused on a point in space while she contemplated. "Do we have time? First sessions usually take a while, don't they?"

Eric kept his head very still, his voice even. "What's your final station?"

Patty checked the ticket stub in her blazer pocket. "Alexandria."

"That's the stop after mine. We have a good two hours to work with; plenty of time, if you want it." Holding Patty's gaze, Eric could see desire sparring with hesitation. He waited quietly while the duel played itself out in the arena behind her eyes.

Desire won. "I want it," she said quietly.

"Okay. Why don't you go to the lavatory now so we don't have to interrupt the session later, and I'll get things ready here?"

While Patty was away Eric saved his work, closed the laptop and set it aside. He pulled the curtain over the window and cleared the table of excess debris from their drinks. His root beer was gone, so he refilled the can with fresh water from a dispenser near the end of the car. His mouth felt dry; half the water was gone before he realized it. *Steady, Eric*, he told himself, taking a deep breath and letting it out slowly. *Calm and confident*.

He was standing in the aisle waiting when she returned from the lav. "Right here," he said, motioning toward the seat she had already been in before getting up; an unnecessary instruction, he knew, but one that helped to establish their new roles in both of their minds. "Go ahead and get comfortable," he told her before she could do so on her own. "Find a position that feels right, and that you can maintain for a while."

"Can I recline?"

"A little bit, if you need to. Not more than a few degrees." He waited until she had settled in before sitting down himself. He slid over to the window

seat so that he could observe his subject without being directly in front of her.

"Now what?"

Eric smiled. She was already ceding control of the situation to him -- an excellent sign. And was that an extra touch of pink in her cheeks? "We're just about ready to begin," he explained. "Since there are a lot of visible distractions, I'll take you into hypnosis by having you close your eyes and imagine an hourglass filled with different colors of sand. As you envision the sand slowly draining from the top of the hourglass to the bottom, you'll find yourself relaxing and falling just as easily into trance. Once you've achieved a workable depth, we'll do a few tests to show you that you really are under hypnosis, and then see how much deeper you can go. I don't like to get too ambitious with a first session, but if things go very well we'll do a couple of simple, G-rated posthypnotic suggestions. You'll feel yourself responding to them without thinking, and that will prove how good a hypnotic subject you are." He paused a moment to let his predictions sink in. "Are you ready?"

She licked her lips and met his gaze directly. "Ready."

"Then close your eyes," he instructed, letting his voice drop into a low, soothing tone. "Close them now, and imagine that you are staring at an old-fashioned hourglass. See the wooden frame, the shiny glass, and millions of tiny grains of sand inside it. The upper half of the hourglass is completely full, the bottom empty; but as you watch, you can see that the sand has already begun streaming out of the upper half of the hourglass into the lower half. See the sand, Patty. Concentrate on the sand so that you see every grain of sand in that hourglass; nothing else that comes to your mind matters. Let any other thoughts and idea just fall away; they're not important right now. Focus your mind until the only things you are aware of are the sand in the hourglass and the sound of my voice.

"Focus on the hourglass, and you'll find that as the sand flows smoothly, easily, and inevitably from the upper half to the lower, your body and your mind will relax just as smoothly, easily, and inevitably. You'll feel all of the tension in your muscles fading away with the flow of the sand, leaving you nice and relaxed and comfortable. Each breath you take, each slow and easy breath, will help the sand flow and help your mind and body relax."

Eric continued his monologue in a smooth, even, well-practiced voice, watching Patty for the first signs of physical relaxation. When her face went slack and her head began to sag several minutes earlier than expected, he felt the familiar, delicious thrill rush through his body. *It's been way too long*, he thought to himself.

Seeing Patty's body respond, he shifted into the present tense. "Your head is feeling heavy," he said, carefully masking the growing excitement within himself. "It's okay to let your head fall gently forward, letting it rest, letting those tired neck muscles relax. Your arms and legs feel limp and heavy, as if your whole body was turning into a big rag doll. And with every breath, you feel yourself relaxing more and more, watching the sand flow through the hourglass, taking you into hypnosis.

"Keep watching the hourglass, Patty, and listening to my voice. As more and more sand flows into the bottom half, you feel yourself floating deeper and deeper into a nice, relaxing trance. My voice is here to guide you; listening to my voice takes you deeper and deeper into trance, gently and easily going deeper and deeper into trance. You listen to my voice, and you find yourself responding to everything I say.

"The hourglass top is almost empty now, Patty. Empty, like your mind is becoming empty of all unnecessary thoughts. My words help to clear your mind, and my voice takes the place of your thoughts. You are now in a deep, relaxing trance and you will respond totally to everything I say."

And she was deep, he observed, noting the change in skin tone and the tiny movements of her eyes below the closed eyelids. Plenty deep enough for the few simple tests he'd promised her.

"In a moment, Patty, I'm going to lift your arm to see how relaxed you are. I want you to keep watching the last bits of sand drain out of the top of the hourglass, and pay no attention at all to my touch. When I let go of your arm you will let it fall back to your lap, and when it does you'll relax even more and go deeper into your trance." Moving carefully so as not to jostle her or brush against her relaxed, extended legs, he got up and walked around the table to her side. Her right arm was totally limp and felt heavy in his grasp as he lifted it gently and hefted it. "This is excellent, Patty," he commended his subject. "Feel how very relaxed your arm is. You've gone into a very deep, satisfying trance. Now I'm going to put your arm down so that you can go even deeper." He lowered the arm until it was just above her lap, then let go and let it drop. She seemed to sink just a little deeper into the seat.

"I'm going to touch you in a few more places now, Patty," he said. "On your neck, and on your face. Each touch will send you deeper into trance." Slipping off his wristwatch, he placed an index finger against the side of her throat and counted the pulse beats in 15 seconds. Her heart rate was very slow but steady. The skin of her face had a slightly clammy feel, evidence of reduced circulation.

"Patty, in a moment I am going to count to three. On the count of three, I want you to lift your head and open your eyes. I do not want you to wake up; just lift your head and open your eyes. I don't want you look at anything in particular or try to focus your eyes on anything, either. Just let them open and look straight ahead. One, two, three."

Eric watched with satisfaction as Patty's head rose slowly from her chest. When she was facing straight forward, her eyes slowly opened. The still, unfocused stare he saw in them sent another rush of excitement through Eric's body. *A first-class subject*, he thought to himself. *Even better than Kelly was.* For a second or two he pictured Kelly's face with that same blank stare. How long had it been since they'd ended it -- six months? Eight months? Too long, certainly.

Stop it, he scolded himself. *This is not a sexual encounter.* His cock seemed unconvinced, standing at half-mast. *For all I know, she's married.* One look at her left hand suggested not. *She's probably got someone back home*, he tried.

Ask her out, an inner voice suggested. *If she's attached, she'll say so.*

"Close your eyes now, Patty, but leave your head upright." He watched as her eyes closed, then slid back into his seat opposite her. "Now, Patty, I want you to imagine a thermometer. This one is different from most thermometers, though, because it is your trance thermometer. Its numbers run from zero to 100; zero means you are not in a trance at all, and 100 means that you are in the deepest trance you think you can reach. I want you to imagine your trance thermometer now, and on the count of three I want you to tell me what number it is showing. You can speak clearly and distinctly to answer me, and it will not disturb your trance state. One, two, three."

Patty's lips parted slowly. "Sixty two," she said in a sleepy monotone.

His eyebrows rose -- Patty was turning out to be a surprisingly good subject. If only they were in a quiet, private place ...

No, Eric thought, mentally tying a tourniquet around his swelling cock. This is not a seduction.

But you wish it was, the inner voice taunted. You know you want her.

Yes, I do, he argued back. But I can't break trust again. That's how I lost Kelly.

The voice had no answer for that one.

Eric jerked his mind back to the present. Patty had passed her tests easily, and was clearly deep enough to accept a posthypnotic suggestion or two. Time to get back to the plan.

"Patty," he said, "you have done very well with the tests. You know now that you are a very good hypnotic subject; you have no difficulty at all following my suggestions while in trance. Because you are such a good subject, we are going to do some posthypnotic suggestions now. You will listen to my suggestions, and you will follow them to the best of your ability; you are such a good subject that you will always obey my suggestions. Let your head relax again now, sinking back to your chest, and listen to my suggestions."

He waited for her head to settle back onto her chest before continuing. "Your first suggestion is your trance trigger. Whenever we are together, if I hold one of your hands and snap my fingers you will go immediately back into trance. You won't think about it; you'll forget about whatever you might be saying, doing, or thinking at the time and just let go into a nice, deep trance, deeper even than the one you are in now. You will go into trance only if I snap my fingers while holding one of your hands, Patty; if I just snap my fingers, or just grab your hand, it will mean nothing special. If, when I hold your hand and snap my fingers, you strongly do not want to go into trance, you will say 'No' and tell me why you do not want to. Otherwise, you will always respond by going immediately into trance whenever I hold your hand and snap my fingers.

"Your second suggestion is a test, to show you how powerful my suggestions are to you. Sometime after you awaken, I am going to say the words 'animal magnetism' to you. When I say 'animal magnetism', your hands will feel a powerful magnetic force pulling them upward towards the roof of the train. The force will be irresistible; the harder you try to keep your hands down, the stronger will be the force pulling them up. Your hands will rise until your arms are pointing straight up at the ceiling, and they will remain that way despite any efforts you make to

bring them down again. The force will not be strong enough to lift you out of your seat, or make you uncomfortable in any way, but your arms will continue pointing straight up until I clap my hands once. When I clap my hands once, the magnetic force will go away; you will once again have full control of your arms, and this suggestion will be completely cancelled."

Eric repeated his suggestions, reinforcing them in Patty's subconscious mind, until he judged she had absorbed them fully. "In a few moments, it will be time to wake up. I'm going to count from one to ten, and with each number I count you will find yourself slowly rising out of your trance. When I reach the number ten, you will be fully awake, alert, and feeling refreshed." He counted up slowly, giving Patty plenty of time to rouse herself in response to his commands. When he reached ten, her eyes fluttered open.

"How do you feel?" he asked.

She considered for a long moment before answering. "Wow," she finally said. "I feel good. Refreshed, like you said I would. It was weird, though. I remember everything, but it's like I wasn't really paying attention. Does that make sense?"

"Sure it does. A lot of people get that disconnected feeling when they're in a trance. For me, it's like my body responds to the hypnotist on its own while my mind just sits back and watches."

"Was I really that deep?"

"It looked that way. You could have gone a lot deeper, too, according to the depth test we did."

"Sixty two," she said with wonder on her face. "Sixty two out of a hundred. I wonder what a hundred feels like."

"Practice, and you'll find out."

"Speaking of finding things out," she countered. "Aren't you supposed to say something pretty soon?"

He grinned. "You mean, some kind of remark about animal magnetism?"

Patty let out a soft gasp as her hands rose quickly above the table. "Wow!" she exclaimed. Her face flushed red; Eric could see the

concentration in her eyes as she fought the imaginary force. Her arms quivered with the effort, but succeeded only in slowing their ascent. "I ... can't ... stop it ... arghhh!" She growled and gave up; her hands, already at eye level, shot up the rest of the way and remained aloft, pointing to the ceiling of the train car.

"Surprised?" Eric asked, seeing the tiny beads of sweat that had formed during her effort.

"I shouldn't be, I guess," she replied. "You told me it would be like this. I thought I'd be able to fight it for a few minutes, though. Jesus! It's a good thing you didn't tell me to strip."

I could, the inner voice piped up. He choked it off. "That might have worked," he said instead, "but probably not the same way. Unless you're accustomed to being nude in public, your mind would have found a way around the suggestion. You might have gone into the lavatory and stripped there in private, then put your clothes back on to come back here and tell me off. Or your mind might have just postponed following the suggestion until you found yourself in a place where you felt comfortable taking them off. Either way, you'd have good reason not to let me hypnotize you again."

"Can I help you, Miss?" Neither of them had noticed the conductor entering the car.

"No, thanks," she replied, thinking quickly, looking at her arms. "Just stretching a bit."

"Okay, Miss."

Eric clapped his hands lightly as the conductor walked by. Patty made a point of visibly stretching, then brought her arms to her sides and rested them on the table. She and Eric shared a conspiratorial giggle. Overhead, the PA system announced their imminent arrival in Wilmington, Delaware.

"Nice thinking," Eric remarked as the train pulled out of the Wilmington station. He held out his hand across the table.

"Thanks," she said, unconsciously taking his offered hand. "It seemed like a--" The rest of her sentence vanished unspoken from her mind as Eric snapped the fingers of his free hand. Her eyes glazed over and lost focus, then closed down as her body slumped back in the seat.

"Very good," Eric said, watching her settle into the seat. "Your subconscious remembers and responds to your trigger. Every time I hold your hand and snap my fingers, you will fall more easily and quickly into trance, and go deeper than the time before. Let yourself go now, and sink deeper and deeper. Imagine your trance thermometer, Patty; as you sink deeper and deeper into trance, you will see the indicator on the thermometer go to higher and higher numbers. When the indicator reaches 75, I want you to squeeze my hand once."

He didn't have to wait more than a minute for the squeeze. "Very good," he told her. "You are now at 75 on your trance thermometer. I'm going to count to 10 again, and as I'm counting you will wake up. When I reach ten, you will be completely awake but unable to let go of my hand. Nothing you do will enable you to let go of my hand until I tell you that you can." He counted to ten again, enjoying the sight of her eyes fluttering open.

As soon as her eyes focused again, Eric saw her left shoulder begin to flex. "It's working," she confirmed, her eyebrows crinkling up in concentration. "I'm trying to pull my hand away, but the muscles won't work. I can't do it."

Eric grinned. "Of course not. I told you, you're a very good subject." Before she could reply, he snapped his fingers again and she slumped back into the chair. "That's good," he said. "Deeper and deeper, deeper than before. See your trance thermometer, and when you reach 80 you will squeeze my hand."

It took only a few seconds, then he felt the pressure around his hand. "Excellent, Patty. Now, on the count of three, I want you to open your eyes and act as though you are completely awake. I don't want you to wake up; you will remain in a deep trance, but you will sit up and move around and talk to me as though you were awake, all the while obeying my every instruction. One, two, three."

Her eyes snapped open and she sat up in the seat. "I still can't pull my hand away," she observed.

"True -- I haven't cancelled that suggestion yet. How do you feel?"

"Fine," she said. "A little spacey, maybe, from all the passing out and waking up."

"Not dizzy at all?"

She looked puzzled. "No."

"Yes, you are," Eric said, watching her face. "You are becoming very dizzy, as if you were very drunk. The entire train feels as though it is spinning around."

The puzzled look quickly faded into a slack-jawed, disoriented expression. "Holy shit," she said. "I *am* dizzy. What the hell is going on? Why is everything spinning around?"

"It's not," he replied. "Even now, the dizziness is passing. Everything looks normal again, and you feel fine."

Patty looked around her and nodded wonderingly. "Yes, I do. I'm fine again. This is amazing."

"This is hypnosis," Eric told her. "You are in what's called a waking trance; able to act as if awake, but your subconscious is still in control -- and I control your subconscious."

"Wow ... how long are you going to keep me like this?"

"Not much longer. It's an advanced trick, especially for a first session. I wouldn't even have tried it if you hadn't responded so well to the other suggestions."

"You are very good at this, aren't you?"

He smiled. "Pretty good. But it's you doing most of the work. Do you have any requests before we end the session?"

She looked thoughtful. "Requests. Do you mean, suggestions to try?"

"Sure."

She flushed a little bit. "I'd like to try something a little more ... risqué. Something from the book."

"Really?" Eric was surprised, and aroused. "You mean, like one of the fantasies?"

"God, no," she said quickly. "I'm pretty loud when I'm ... you know. The whole train would know what I was doing. I was thinking about the switch trick from Chapter Five; you know, 'Switch On' and 'Switch Off'?"

Eric worked hard to contain his excitement; meanwhile, his cock sprang to full attention. "We can do that, certainly. On the count of three, you will close your eyes and return to your deep, relaxed trance state. One, two, three." On command, she slumped back in her seat again. "Patty, I want you to let yourself drift deeper and deeper into trance. Watch your trance thermometer, and squeeze my hand when you get to 85."

He waited, repeating his mantra of "deeper and deeper," until he felt the squeeze. "Patty, you've read the chapter in my book on posthypnotic suggestions. From now on, whenever I say the words 'Switch On' to you, you will become extremely aroused, sexy and horny. The foremost thought in your mind will be having sex at the first available opportunity, and the longer you have to wait for that opportunity the stronger that sexual desire will become. Your sexual need will continue to grow until you actually have sex, or until I say the words 'Switch Off'. When I say 'Switch Off', any sexual feelings that have been caused by a 'Switch On' command will be negated, and you will have complete control over your sexual thoughts and feelings again."

After reinforcing the suggestion several times, he woke Patty one more time. "How do you feel now?"

"Good," she answered. "A little anxious; I can't wait to find out what being switched on feels like."

"Switch on, then," Eric replied with a smile.

Patty shuddered, and her eyes opened wide. "Oh, God," she gulped, her free hand pulling instinctively to her gut. She stared at Eric as if seeing him for the first time, studying every aspect of his face. "Do you have any idea what this feels like?"

"A little bit," he said, grinning openly. "I know what it feels like when I'm the one being switched on."

"This is such a rush," she said. "I've never been so out-and-out horny in my life as I am right this minute." As she spoke, her free hand crept upward and cupped a breast.

Overhead, the PA system crackled to life again. "Ladies and gentlemen, we are approaching Baltimore station. Baltimore station in about two minutes."

"Had enough?" Eric asked.

She squirmed in the seat and grunted softly. "Yes," she said, nodding vigorously.

"Switch off."

She blinked, took a deep breath and let it out with a long sigh. "Whew," she said, fanning herself with her free hand. "Somebody turn up the air conditioning for a few minutes, please."

"Okay." Eric snapped his fingers one more time and Patty dropped back into the seat. He coached her back down to 85 on her depth meter, then gave Patty her final commands. "On the count of ten, you will wake up and be completely alert and refreshed. Your body will feel completely comfortable, neither too warm nor too cold, and all of my hypnotic suggestions to you will be cancelled--" an idea struck him and he changed his mind. "Except for your trance trigger. You will still go immediately into a deep trance whenever I snap my fingers while holding your hand, but none of the other suggestions I've given you today will affect you after you wake up this time."

The train was stopping -- they had reached Baltimore. He counted her up much more quickly than usual; Patty struggled a bit to open her eyes. "Wow," she said, slowly pulling her hand out of his. "That was a trip."

"I know," Eric replied, willing his cock to settle down again. "You'd like to do that again sometime, wouldn't you?" It was a suggestion disguised as a question.

"Absolutely," Patty replied automatically.

"Good. Did you have any plans for this evening?"

"Nothing -- just check into the hotel, have dinner somewhere, read some more, and go to sleep. My work doesn't start until tomorrow morning."

"Let me take you to dinner," he suggested, suppressing a wince as his conscience flogged him.

"Sure," she agreed, seemingly a little surprised at the speed of her own answer.

They sat together making pleasant small talk while the train wound through Baltimore. It stopped at BWI airport, and again in New Carrollton, Maryland.

"That's my cue," Eric said as the train pulled out of New Carrollton. "Next stop, Union Station. Alexandria comes after that."

"Where are we going for dinner?" she asked. "I didn't bring anything very dressy."

"I know a nice place in Springfield," he said. "Good service, a nice, casual atmosphere, and succulent prime rib."

"Sold," she said with a smile.

Pulling a notepad from his laptop case, he jotted down her hotel name and phone number. "I'll pick you up at seven, okay?"

"That's fine."

He gathered his things together as the PA system announced their imminent arrival at Union Station. "By the way," he said with nonchalance. "Do you have a CD player with you? Something you can listen to while in your hotel room?"

"Not with me," she replied. "Why?"

"Just an idea," he told her. "I've done some audio recordings for the new book, and if you had a player I thought it might be fun to have you try them out. I haven't had a chance to test them yet."

She shrugged. "Sorry. I'd love to, but I don't have anything to play them on here."

The train slowed and stopped. "It's okay. I'll see you again soon."

"Seven," she repeated. "I'll be in the lobby."

They exchanged smiles. Eric watched the train pull away from the platform and sighed, feeling excited and guilty at the same time.

Patty was waiting in the hotel lobby when Eric arrived at 6:55. She had changed into a lightweight blue dress and heels. She took his offered hand without thinking, then suddenly tensed; her eyes met his and she paused for a breathless second, part of her wanting him to snap his fingers and part wanting to pull the hand away before he could.

Eric saw all of this flash across her face and smiled reassuringly. "Ready to go?" he asked, releasing her hand.

She nodded and followed him to his car. They headed west on the Capital Beltway toward Springfield and stopped at Kilroy's, a cozy restaurant/pub tucked into a shopping center off Braddock Road. A pretty hostess led them to a corner booth with high walls.

"Nice place," Patty remarked, looking at the wartime memorabilia covering the walls of the booth.

"I like it," Eric replied. "It's comfortable, there's a lot of privacy, and the food really is splendid. Wait till you taste the honey-buttered biscuits they serve here." He reached toward her for a menu and was amused to see that flash of conflict cross her face again.

"When you took my hand in the lobby, Eric, it felt like ... I mean, I thought you were going to ..."

"I know," he said, keeping his voice light. "Occupational hazard. When I'm with someone I've hypnotized several times, I have to be careful to keep my voice from slipping too low -- if it gets too close to my hypnotist's tone, they tend to fade out on me."

Their waitress brought them tall glasses of iced tea. "Ready to order?"

Eric looked at Patty, who squirmed a little in her seat. "Can you give us a few more minutes?" she asked the waitress.

"Sure," she said, and retreated with a smile.

Patty became clearly uncomfortable. "Eric," she began, looking at anything and everything in the booth except Eric. "Before you get the wrong idea, I really need to tell you something."

Eric waited, a lump growing in the pit of his stomach.

Patty drew a deep breath and let it out. "I'm sort of engaged."

He let it hang there for a few moments. *Calm and confident*, he reminded himself. When she gathered the courage to meet his eye, he was ready. "Sort of engaged? Is that anything like 'sort of' pregnant?"

"Sort of," she replied, flashing a weak smile at her feeble joke. "Craig is a great guy. We've been together for about three years. We live together, in my apartment on Staten Island, and we're going to get married eventually. Right now we're just waiting for his next promotion, and then we'll make it official."

Eric kept his voice light and casual. "Are you happy with him?"

"Of course," she answered quickly. "We have our off days, but so does every other couple in the world. We have a lot invested in this relationship. I haven't even thought about anyone else since I met Craig. I'm not even sure why I'm here with you now, Eric. I really shouldn't be, it's not fair to either of us."

"It's all right," Eric lied. "I wasn't looking for a life partner on that train. I asked you out because I like you, because I knew you'd probably be free, being away from home and all, and because I'd like to ask you a favor. As for why you accepted ..." Eric cleared his throat. "I have a good idea, and I feel pretty guilty about it."

"What did you do?" she asked, surprise and suspicion creeping into her voice. "Did you use a hypnotic suggestion to get me to go out with you?"

"No, no, no," he said. "Nothing that underhanded. What I did do was take advantage of a side effect of deep hypnosis. When you come out of a good trance, it takes a while before the critical thinking facility comes fully back into play. During that time, which varies with the subject, you're still very susceptible to suggestions -- especially from the person who helped put you into the hypnotic state to begin with. Therapists take advantage of that phenomenon to help reinforce their suggestions even after the patient is awake; they call it 'waking suggestion'. I took advantage of it to ask you out at a time when I knew you'd be strongly

predisposed to agree." He let his head drop. "I shouldn't have done that, and I'm sorry."

Patty waited for him to look up again before answering. "I'm sorry, too," she replied, meeting his eyes. "Sorry that I didn't tell you on the train that I'm not available. I think it would have been fun and exciting to date you, Eric. But as it is, I should probably go."

"Don't," he insisted, reaching across the table for a hand. "You don't have to go. You still need to eat, and this is a good place to do it. So we're not on a date; that doesn't mean we can't have a good time and just be friends." Inwardly he winced at the cliché.

"I suppose not," she mused. "As long as there are no false expectations, I guess it wouldn't hurt."

"I think we've both put our cards on the table. That is, unless you're secretly a man or something."

The joke was just funny enough to break the tension. "Not the last time I checked," she replied in kind.

Some time later, Patty slid into the passenger seat of Eric's car and let out a contented sigh. "That was delicious," she said. "Thank you, Eric."

Eric smiled and looked into her eyes, wondering.

Patty picked up on the look. "What?"

"We've been sitting together talking and eating for over an hour," he observed. "In that time, you haven't said a word about your fiancée."

Patty flushed a bit and became very interested in the handle of her purse. "I didn't think you'd want to hear about him."

"But I do," he said. "I'm interested. In writing my book and doing erotic hypnosis seminars, I've met a lot of couples; I enjoy hearing about successful relationships."

His earnest look overcame her initial suspicion. "Craig's a great guy," she told him. "Confident, outgoing, just a bit of a tease. Fun to be around."

"Does he know about the book?"

Patty shook her head. "I haven't shown it to him yet; I wanted to read it first, see if it was really something I thought we could do. He won't have a problem with it, though -- as a rule, he'll go for any activity that ends with us in bed."

They shared a soft chuckle, which subsided quickly. Patty stared out the window at the Beltway traffic while Eric contemplated his next move.

She gave him his opening. "You said at the restaurant that you wanted to ask me a favor," she said. "Do you still?"

Eric wanted to grin; he limited himself to a friendly smile instead. "Yes, if you're willing."

"What did you have in mind?"

He popped open the armrest storage bin, removed a small cardboard box, and handed it to Patty. She opened the top flap to find a Rio Volt, a pair of good-quality headphones with a long cord, and a CDR disk. Eric cleared his throat and explained. "My publisher thought it would be helpful if the second book included a CD with some sample sessions on it, so people can hear what an experienced hypnotist sounds like. She thinks it will boost sales; I don't know, maybe it will. So I recorded a long induction, a short induction, a couple of deepeners, and a few of the fantasy sessions. The problem is, there's too much material there for a regular CD -- I had to convert the tracks to MP3 format to fit them all on one disk. I need someone to listen to what's there and tell me which ones work the best, so we can put the best stuff on an audio CD."

"And you want me to help you with that?"

Eric nodded. "You're such a good subject that it isn't really a fair test; things that work well for you might not work at all for someone less skilled at going into trance. But I need someone other than myself to bounce these off of, and I hoped you'd give it a try."

Patty examined the Volt with interest. "I will have a lot of free time this week," she remarked. "This would certainly be a relaxing way to spend some of it."

"You'll do it?"

"Sure. How do I work this thing?"

Eric let himself sigh. "The instruction book for the Volt is in the box. It's pretty simple, really; I put a paper list of the tracks in there for you. You can program the Volt to play an induction, a deepener, and then one or more of the other tracks for you. There's a wake-up track to finish off with. All I ask is that you try each track at least once and rate them for me with how well they worked for you."

She nodded. "And how do I get this back to you at the end of the week?"

"My phone number is on the sheet. Give me a call and I'll come pick up the Volt. Keep the disc if you want -- you can use it on your home computer. I'll even give you a ride to the train station if you want."

Patty eyed him appraisingly. "You're making it very easy to say yes to you."

Eric gave her an innocent shrug. "It would help me a lot," he explained. "I'm not seeing anybody right now, so I have nobody to test this stuff on. In fact, if Craig is interested, I'd love to have you and him try some of the material from the new book. I go up to New York every month or so to meet with the publisher anyway; we could get together and exchange notes."

"One step at a time," Patty said, giggling softly. "He doesn't even know about this particular kink of mine yet. But I'll be happy to be your guinea pig while I'm in town, at least."

The car came to a stop in front of Patty's hotel. Eric held his hand out. "That's good enough for me," he said. "Thank you."

Patty took his hand and shook it. Then, on impulse, she leaned over and kissed his cheek. "I'll call you on Friday."

Eric watched Patty until she was inside the lobby and out of site, then sighed and pulled away. On the way home, he found himself singing along with the Black Crowes.

*Action speaks louder than words
And I'm a man of great experience.
I know you've got another man,
But I can love you better than him ...*

Patty sat in the armchair in her hotel room. The Rio Volt lay on the table beside her, the headphones in her hand. For the fifth or sixth time, she raised them to eye level and then put them back down. Her stomach felt queasy, her knees weak and shaky. *Why am I so nervous?* she asked herself.

Because this is powerful stuff, her conscience answered. *You got a taste of how powerful it is on the train.*

Yes, she argued with herself. *But it's still just hypnosis -- it can't make me do anything I don't want to do.*

Oh, really? Are you saying you wouldn't have willingly jumped Eric right there on the train if he hadn't given you the switch off command?

She paused, the memory of the experience flooding through her, bringing a tingle to her erogenous zones. He'd said, "Switch on," and in that moment every nerve and fiber in her being had only one desire -- sex, hot and wet and reckless and right away. If, instead of "switch off," he'd said "Fuck me," would she have done it?

In a heartbeat, she realized. Craig or no Craig, privacy or no privacy, she'd have given him anything he asked at that moment, done anything to satisfy the sexual need brought on by the hypnotic trigger. That was scary.

And titillating.

Patty stared into space, daydreaming. In her imagination, Craig was sitting on the bed nearby, smiling. "Switch on," he said to her. She saw herself moaning, ripping off her clothes, bowling Craig over onto the bed. A raw, animal lust drove her as she forced down his pants and took his thick, rigid cock into her mouth ...

She shivered at the image. *Powerful,* she thought.

This time she actually put the headphones on. She'd skimmed the Volt instruction manual; it wasn't too hard to use, for all the features it had. She worked the buttons to program a sequence of tracks. *Just an introduction,* she told herself, and hit the Play button.

Eric's voice filled her mind almost immediately. The quality surprised Patty; there was none of the usual hiss or background noise she was accustomed to hearing, just Eric, speaking as if from within her own mind, telling her to get comfortable and relax. He told her to find something to focus her eyes on, either a spot on the wall or a favorite object, something she would enjoy looking at intently. Patty's eye settled on her own reflection in the dressing mirror across the room. She looked deeply into her own eyes and, on Eric's cue, took a series of long, deep, slow breaths. As Eric's voice droned on, Patty became increasingly aware of every detail of her face as reflected by the mirror: how her eyes had those tiny flecks of gray in them, how her nose seemed to flare out as she exhaled, and how very sleepy and relaxed she looked. Her eyes wanted to close; it wasn't time yet, she knew -- Eric had only just said that her eyes would begin to feel heavy and tired soon -- but holding them open was just too much effort. The lids dropped, and her head sank down onto her chest.

Eric sat in the makeshift study of his Dupont Circle home. The laptop was open on the desk, but his fingers couldn't find the will to type. His mind kept returning to the image of Patty, deep in trance; Patty, eyes open, staring blankly ahead; Patty, in switched-on mode, radiating sexual desire with her every move and look.

Patty, at the restaurant, saying, "I'm sort of engaged."

He let out a deep, unhappy sigh. *The good ones always are*, he thought to himself.

Why are you so stuck on this woman? a voice inside him asked. Just because she's so hypnotizable?

Of course not, he answered. *Because she's pretty and smart and shares my interests. She's classy but still approachable, easy to talk to, with a really nice smile.*

In other words, the voice remarked sarcastically, *she's just like Kelly.*

He had no comeback for that one. It didn't matter anyway, he reasoned, since Patty was engaged. He'd see her one more time, to retrieve the Volt and get her feedback on the recordings, and that would be it.

In his mind, he pictured himself knocking on a hotel room door. Patty answered, in a silky bathrobe and slippers, looking surprised to see him. "Switch on," he said to her, and watched the wariness in her face turn to unfettered desire. In seconds the robe came off, revealing Patty's trim body adorned in a lacy, see-through bra and panties. He stood still, watching with interest while she stripped off her underwear and posed for him, trying her best to be sexy for him. He smiled as he pictured himself going down on her, driving her to the edge of incoherence before finally sinking his cock inside her...

No way, the inner voice proclaimed, breaking his daydream. *Not gonna happen.*

Frustrated, and sporting a half hard-on, Eric grabbed his spare headphones from the desk drawer and plugged them into his laptop. He pulled up Winamp, pointed it to a saved play list of old WAV recordings, and hit Play.

A rich, smooth female voice came through the headphones. "Relax for me, Eric," it said, and even though it had been months since he'd heard Kelly's voice it melted him instantly. Eric let go and allowed himself to slide out of consciousness, floating along in the silky smoothness of Kelly's voice as it guided him into fantasy.

"We're at a party," she told him, "a semi-formal affair full of people we don't know, arranged by the publisher. You didn't really want to go, but felt obligated. To make things a little more pleasant for you, I'm wearing my pink dress -- the one with the spaghetti straps and the scooped back, the one that always seems to grab your eyes and pull them directly to my cleavage, the one that you love seeing me in almost as much as you love getting me out of it.

"You've already suggested once that we leave, but we've been there less than an hour so I tell you we have to stay and mingle a while longer. You sigh and we drift apart, working the room. You find yourself talking to one of the senior editors, saying all the right things, with half your mind idle and wanting to take me home and get me out of that dress. You spot me across the room talking with your editor and his wife; our eyes make contact, and a playful, impish thought comes into your mind.

"The next time you see me looking at you, you touch your left earlobe. It's my trigger, the one that makes me so incredibly horny I can barely concentrate on anything except how much I want your hard cock inside me. You watch with satisfaction when you see me react to my trigger:

my eyes get wide, and my breath catches. You see me trying to dissemble, to explain away the sudden change to you publisher and his wife, all the while being unable to keep my eyes from searching you out and staring at your crotch.

"You tease me for a while, working the room, letting the various VIP's draw you into short conversations, knowing that I'm getting hornier and more distracted with every passing minute. Finally you come up to me alone, and ask if I'm ready to go yet.

"You can smell my arousal just standing next to me, and knowing how desperately I want you arouses you as well. Taking my hand, you lead me to a nearby office and shut the door. I wrap my arms around your neck and kiss you with all the built-up passion in my body. You lift my dress up and stick a finger inside my panties; they're soaking wet, and the feel of your finger against my slit makes me latch onto you even harder. You pull my panties down, lift me up, and sit me on the edge of the desk.

"I wave my arms back, pushing desk accessories and paperwork out of the way, and lie back on the desk for you. You pull the spaghetti straps off my shoulders and roll my dress down. My nipples are stiff and hard, and when you caress them with your hand I can't help but moan loudly. You can see that I'm ready to come, and knowing what you've done to me makes you so hard and ready that you don't want to wait any longer. You drop your pants and underwear and thrust your cock deep inside me. I'm so wet that it slides in easily, all the way, until you can feel yourself pressing against the end.

"The pleasure is too much for me. I start squealing and moaning, getting very loud. You know how loud I can get when I'm excited, so you give me something soft to bite down on -- a little cloth beanbag, the kind people squeeze to help relieve stress. I put that in my mouth and bite down hard on it, muffling my screams of ecstasy. You thrust your cock in and out, getting us both so aroused, so ready, so needing to come.

"Finally, you feel my muscles clamp down on you as I scream into the stress ball. I'm coming, and knowing that you've made me come like this feels so good that you can't hold back any longer. You come, pumping inside me while I squeal and pant. It is the longest, best orgasm you can remember having.

"Some time later, our breathing returns to normal. You withdraw yourself from me and pull your pants back up. I'm too exhausted to move right

away, so you kiss my thighs and wipe me off with a cloth napkin you pocketed from the party earlier.”

A few minutes later, Kelly’s voice counted up and Eric opened his eyes. He was dazed and a little disoriented. A wet, sticky stain was spreading across the front of his pants and a vivid memory of something that had never actually happened was haunting his heart.

You had Kelly, the inner voice taunted him, and you blew it.

I know.

Patty opened her eyes at the count of ten. She shifted in the chair, stretched and yawned. A good ride, she judged. She’d set the Volt to play back the long induction, followed by a deepener, then another deepener, and then the wake-up track. Her watch told her that she’d been under for slightly under an hour, which agreed with the play times on the tracks. She felt refreshed, calm, content, and a little excited.

See, she scolded herself lightly. No adverse effects. I’m not suddenly, uncontrollably lusting for Eric.

The voice quieted, she undressed and went to bed.

ii

Patty's smile lit up the lobby of the stuffy Alexandria law firm. Eric noticed it immediately. "You look relaxed," he remarked, taking her small suitcase and leading her out to his car.

Patty waited until they were out of the lobby before responding. "I've been getting plenty of rest," she told him. "A lot more than your CD player has. I should probably buy you some fresh batteries."

"Not to worry," he replied, unlocking the door for her. "They're rechargeable."

The car eased out into traffic. "So," Eric opened, "it sounds as though you tried out a few of the tracks on the CD." *And looks it*, he thought to himself, remembering the relaxed, well-laid smile she'd flashed him in the lobby. A fantasy image came into his mind of Patty lying on a hotel bed with her eyes closed and headphones on, pulling at her clothing and writhing in ecstasy to his words. It was a vivid image that had been haunting the edges of his imagination the entire week; it took an effort of will to dismiss it.

"I think I've heard them all at least once," she replied. "A couple, more than once."

"Well?"

Patty felt the color rising in her cheeks as she recalled her night sessions with the hypnotic CD. "The inductions worked. The long one was too slow for me, though; I kept having this feeling that I was waiting for you to catch up. The short induction actually worked better for me."

Eric nodded. "Not a huge surprise, considering how good a subject you are. Most people will need the longer one to get into a useable light trance state. After a few sessions, they can start using the short one to save some time."

"The deepeners were nice. A couple of times I strung two or three of them together and totally zoned out -- I think a bomb could have gone off in the room next door and I wouldn't have noticed or cared."

Eric nodded, making mental notes. "And the fantasies?"

"Effective," Patty snapped, feeling the heat building up under her collar. *Holy shit, were they effective, she thought. I've had more orgasms this week than I had last month!*

"I'm sorry," Eric said in a low voice. "I didn't mean to embarrass you. I just need to know if they ... if you ... you know."

"I know," she replied. "And they did. You could probably sell the CD alone under the title *Who Needs a Man?*"

"Enough said," Eric agreed, smiling to himself. The fantasy image floated through his mind again, and he imagined what Patty might look like in the throes of an orgasm.

"We're here," Patty pointed out, breaking Eric's pleasant meditation. He pulled up to the curb in front of the train station and stopped. "Your player," she said, handing him the Volt and headphones.

Eric checked the Volt. "You remembered to keep the CD," he noted. "Enjoy it." He held out his hand.

"Thanks." Without thinking, she took his hand and shook it. When Eric snapped his fingers, her face had a split second to register surprise before her eyes fell shut and her body slumped against the seat.

Eric watched her face as she slipped into trance. "It's okay, Patty," he reassured her. "I'm not trying to take advantage of you. You can trust me and relax. Just relax and let yourself sink down into a nice, deep trance, just like you did on the train, just like you do when you listen to my voice on your CD. Squeeze my hand when your trance meter reads 70." He waited for the squeeze, which came after a minute or so.

"Among other things, hypnosis can be used to improve memory," he told her. "I'm going to tell you my phone number in a moment, and when I do your subconscious will record it carefully so that you will always be able to remember it. I want you to know that you can call me any time you want, for any reason, and I will always be happy to talk to you." He recited his phone number twice, then woke Patty from her trance.

Her eyes fluttered open, and she shook her head to clear it. "You didn't have to do that," she said, smiling. "I've already programmed your number into my cell phone."

"Oops." Eric managed a sheepish shrug. "Would you like me to remove the trance trigger before you go?"

She thought about it for a second. "No, don't. It might come in handy some day."

Eric watched while Patty wheeled her travel bag into the train station, then he headed home. He drove mechanically, most of his mind still occupied with fantasies about Patty. *She kept the trance trigger*, he thought to himself. It was an encouraging thought.

There were two conference tables in the business class car, as there had been on the ride down, but they were both occupied by serious-looking men who, by the way their things were spread across the table, did not want company. Patty took the hint and settled into a window seat a few rows deep.

She opened the discreetly-covered copy of Eric's book, hardly touched since the ride down, and began to read. She read with renewed interest, having experienced for herself some of the scenarios described in the book. At times she could almost hear Eric's voice in the back of her mind, reading the book to her; other times it was her own voice she heard, imagining herself giving suggestions to Craig. It would be so nice to feel his hands on her body again. More than once she drifted off into a half daydream, scarcely noticing when the train stopped along the way.

She was almost to the end of the book and the ride when her cell phone chirped. Patty struggled back to reality, digging the phone out of her handbag just in time to answer. "Hello?"

The voice was deep and slightly strained, working hard to be heard over loud, chaotic background noises. "Hi, honey."

Patty's face brightened. "Craig! Are you at Penn Station already?"

The slight hesitation telegraphed his answer. "Uh, no. That's what I'm calling about. I forgot I was supposed to play racquetball with the guys tonight. I'm still at the gym. Do you still need a ride home?"

Patty took a deep breath and let it out before answering. "Yes," she said, being careful to keep her voice from showing annoyance. "I was counting on you to get me home."

"I might be a little late. I have to shower and change, and we left my car back at the office. Where should I look for you?"

The hand holding the phone dropped to Patty's lap as her eyes turned skyward, silently pleading her case. She brought the phone back up to her face. "Never mind, I'll just get a cab. You finish your game and I'll see you at home."

"That's cool," he replied. "Hey, listen -- the other guys were talking about going out for a beer afterwards. I could be kinda late getting home."

Patty sighed again. "Have a good time, then," she said, resigned.

"Thanks, hon. Bye!"

Patty glared at the phone in her hand. *Gone almost a week*, she argued silently. *Would it have killed you to meet me at the station?* She was still fuming inside when, during the cab ride home, she spotted an electronics store. On an impulse, she knocked on the safety partition to get the driver's attention. "Can we stop there for a few minutes, please?"

The driver shrugged. "Meter stays on."

"That's fine," she agreed.

The cab driver executed a deft maneuver, crossing three lanes of traffic and zipping into an alley near the store. Patty jumped out and hurried into the store. She found what she wanted quickly: a Rio Volt. She grabbed one and a package of batteries off the shelf, found the shortest checkout line, and was back in her cab quickly enough to draw an approving look from the driver.

A dark, disheveled apartment greeted Patty when she opened the door. She tried her best not to look at the kitchen as she dragged her suitcase

into the bedroom. She straightened up the bed enough to be usable and sat on it with a heavy sigh. There would be a lot of cleaning up to do in the morning.

The Volt sat in its plastic bag beside her. She removed it, inserted a battery, and plugged in the headphones. *Who needs a man?* she thought, looking around at the unkempt room. *Not me, I guess.*

Setting the Volt aside, she retrieved Eric's CD from her bag and loaded it into the player. The CD whirred and spun for a few seconds, then the Volt's navigation menu appeared. Patty programmed a short playlist and set the unit down on the night stand. Her mind replayed the first time she'd listened to one of the hypnotic fantasies on the CD. She'd sat down in the easy chair, just like the first night, and programmed the tracks she'd wanted to hear: the short induction, two deepeners, and the first fantasy. She remembered her eyes closing, recalled imagining herself descending down a winding staircase, and then a vivid experience of making love with a masked man in the cloakroom at a costume ball. She'd awakened suddenly to find herself almost out of the chair, with her clothing twisted around, half undone, and sopping wet near the crotch. That experience had taught her to prepare a little before indulging.

She stripped naked, putting her clothes in the hamper, and grabbed an extra towel from the bathroom. She stretched out on the bed, placing the towel underneath her bottom to catch the juices she knew would flow soon, and then put on the headphones and got comfortable. There was a chance, she realized, that Craig would come home and find her laid out like this, having dream sex. *So let him,* she decided. *Serves him right for not being here.* She fingered the Volt's wired remote and pushed Play.

Eric's recorded voice filled her ears and her mind. Soon she was drifting off into a blissful trance, following Eric's voice down the spiral staircase deeper and deeper into herself. She'd programmed three deepeners into this sequence, but reached an almost coma-like state during the first one. Patty's body lay on the bed totally passive, completely unmoving, until the fantasy sequence began.

Patty saw herself entering a photography studio. She was going on a dare, she explained to the girl at the front desk; she wanted to have some very sexy pictures of herself taken to give to her lover. The receptionist smiled and led her back to one of the studio rooms.

There she found herself changing into a provocative, sexy lingerie that revealed more than it hid. An expert did her hair and makeup in record

time, leaving her looking and feeling like the sexiest woman alive. As she approached the photographer, she could feel his eyes wandering all over her body, trying not to stare while still peeking through the layers of sheer fabric and lace. He led her to a huge bed made up with satin sheets and pillowcases, sinfully smooth to the touch, and explained to Patty that she should pretend the camera was her lover and do her best to seduce it.

The session began. Patty focused herself on the camera, pretending her lover was looking through it. Each pose was a little more intimate than the one before; each made her feel bolder and sexier. The photographer encouraged her, his smooth, mellow voice urging her to feel her own sexual power, to show her lover how incredibly desirable she really was. Pose after pose, camera flash after camera flash, Patty felt herself growing more and more aroused, more and more in touch with her sexual side. Soon it wasn't enough to turn and bend and allow the lingerie to reveal a glimpse here and there; she found herself doing a strip tease, slowly, sensually removing layer after layer and flinging the unneeded garments aside.

The photographer moved in closer as Patty bared more and more skin, and she noticed that he had a raging hard-on. She let her hands glide over herself, feeling herself, letting herself become wet and warm all over. The photographer had stopped talking to her so she began talking to him, telling him how sexy she felt, how much she wanted his rock-hard cock inside of her, how she longed to feel him come. Patty didn't know the man, but she had become so aroused by the posing that she no longer cared -- she would have him.

Totally nude, she continued posing, drawing the photographer closer. He was practically standing over now, the camera recording every rise and fall of her breast. "You know you want me," she told him, letting her hand reach out and stroke the bulge in the front of his jeans. "You're getting so hard, so horny, it must be almost impossible to concentrate."

The photographer stopped moving at her touch. She could sense him struggling with himself, wanting her so badly but being constrained by professional rules. Patty didn't care about his rules; before he could pull away, she undid his pants and freed his cock. It sprang out at her, fully erect and ready, as she jerked his pants down. She pumped the shaft with one hand, kissing the head, and enjoyed hearing the photographer groan in sweet agony. In seconds the camera fell to the bed beside her and the photographer's finger was inside her dripping center, probing for the spot that would send her into ecstasy. He found it and stroked the

sides of her button, sending shockwaves of pleasure through Patty and leaving her panting on the bed.

But he wasn't done. While Patty recovered, the photographer stripped off his remaining clothes and climbed on top of her. His thick cock found the sweet spot and plunged inside, filling her easily. His rhythmic stroking in and out brought Patty back to the edge and when he grunted and came she came with him, crying out with the pleasure of it.

Patty's eyes opened to the sound of Eric's voice finishing its ten count. A thin coating of sweat covered most of her body; the towel was sticky and damp in the middle, as expected. *I really should take a shower*, she thought to herself, but it seemed like too much exertion. She took the headphones off, closed her eyes, and went to sleep.

A low whistle broke the silence of the night. "All right," Craig murmured appreciatively.

Patty heard the quiet clinking sounds of her man undressing and started to wake up. She had rolled over in her sleep and was comfortably settled onto a nest of extra pillows; not awake enough to move yet, she just wrenched her eyes open and stared into space.

A heavy, rough-skinned hand touched her bottom and squeezed a little bit, then headed quickly north. Her body responded out of habit, lifting a shoulder and turning her face to accept the kiss that she knew was coming. Their lips met as his hand slid around and cupped her breast, then his lips parted and the taste of beer and smoked sausage crept into her mouth.

Craig lowered himself onto the bed, letting his already-stiff cock rub against her rear end. His hand played with her breast like a resin bag, squeezing and releasing quickly, then moved swiftly down to find the furry patch at her center. When he found moisture there, he broke off the kissing and whispered into Patty's ear. "Feels like you're as ready for this as I am," he observed. "Just relax and let me do the work."

Patty felt the weight shifting on the mattress as Craig got up on all fours and then to his knees, pushing her legs apart to kneel between them. His hands grabbed her hips and lifted. She rose to her hands and knees and pushed back to meet him, reaching back with a hand to guide his rod into position. She ran the tip up and down her slit a few times, taking

advantage of the residual moisture from her CD session, and then took him inside her.

Craig's member was on the short side of average length-wise, but made up for it in girth; Patty felt inner walls straining a little as he pushed his way inside firmly. Craig heard her groan softly and took that as a signal to begin working himself in and out like a piston, hard and fast. Patty winced a little and tried to relax, feeling for her own clit with a fingertip to get some more lubrication flowing. Soon her body responded and the sensations became much more pleasant.

Then Craig grunted and pushed hard against her. Patty felt his cock quiver and spit as he came, his hands clenching her hips with all of his strength. The pulsing slowed and then stopped, and Craig's rapidly dwindling cock slipped out. "Wow," he said softly, patting her gently on the butt.

Before Patty could respond, he flopped over onto the bed beside her. "Welcome home, honey," he said contentedly, looking adoringly into her eyes.

She kissed him once, then settled back down into her pillow nest. Within minutes he was blissfully asleep. Patty watched him for a while, then rolled over and went back to sleep herself.

The tantalizing scent of bacon and eggs drifted into Patty's nose, waking her and inducing a pleasant feeling of being home. She dropped the towel, now dry and stiff in a few places, in the hamper and slipped on a short silky robe, belting it loosely around her waist.

She found Craig in the kitchen, busily stirring the eggs with one hand and keeping the bacon moving around in the skillet with the other. He wore a pair of gray running shorts and a tank shirt that, in better days, had been white. He looked so adorable, standing there cooking her favorite breakfast, that Patty forgave him for the night before. Walking up behind him, she put her arms around him and rested her chin lightly on his muscular shoulder. "Good morning."

He turned his head enough for a quick peck. "Morning, babe."

"What can I do?"

He nodded toward the side counter, where a fresh bag of English muffins sat ready. "Man the toaster?"

"Aye aye," she replied, squeezing his solid stomach one more time.

They ate hungrily, without talking. Craig's eye alternated between the kitchen clock, the Sports section of the newspaper, and the opening in the center of Patty's robe. Sensing an opportunity, Patty surreptitiously loosened the belt a bit. The newspaper's share of Craig's attention dwindled as the gap increased.

When they were finished eating, Patty stood up slowly, pushing up from the table in a way that flashed plenty of nipple. "So," she asked, giving Craig another generous eyeful as she gathered up the dishes, "how shall we spend our day?"

"You're probably tired from your trip," he began. Patty liked the sound of that; she turned and leaned back against the counter, trying to strike an enticing pose. "So why don't you rest up today? The Red Sox are in town for a day/night doubleheader with the Yankees, and Joe got box seats to both games."

Patty's jaw dropped, and she found herself fighting to suppress a frustrated growl. Instead, she put on her best come-hither look and dropped the robe completely, letting it fall away as she approached Craig and buried his face between her breasts. "Wouldn't you rather do something together?" she purred. "I was gone soooo loooooong."

Craig's hands wandered over her naked body for a few seconds. He stood up and kissed her, and Patty thought for a second that she'd won.

But only for a second. "Love to, hon," he replied, "but I'm supposed to be at Joe's in half an hour and I need a shower. I'll take a rain check, okay?"

Eric stood over Patty's inert form, his rich voice coaxing her deeper and deeper into trance. As he talked, his fingers methodically opened the buttons that ran down the front of her dress.

"Your lover is here with you," he told her. "Even now, as you let yourself drift more deeply into hypnosis, he is unbuttoning your dress. The sight of your body arouses him, and knowing that he is looking at you, undressing

you, planning to make love to you while you sleep, arouses you more than anything you've ever experienced before. You feel your body responding, becoming so warm, so ready to make love, so willing to give yourself to your lover in every way."

The final button on the dress gave way to his fingers. He laid the dress open, exposing Patty's body in just bra and panties, and let his hand hover just above her stomach for a moment. "Your entire body is now an erogenous zone, Patty. Any touch anywhere on your body will feel as arousing, as pleasurable, as the most erotic touch of your clitoris. No matter where your lover touches you, you will respond with increasing pleasure and desire for him." Very slowly, very gently, he let his hand come to rest on Patty's belly. Her sudden moan and gasp at the moment of contact brought a smile to Eric's face and a surge to his groin. He rubbed her belly in a circular motion, maintaining gentle but firm contact, and enjoyed listening to her moan with pleasure at his touch. "That's it," he coached her. "Every square inch of skin a pleasure point, responding to my touch. The places on your body that are normally pleasure zones are now ten times more sensitive, ten times more arousing when they are touched and stroked, ten times more pleasurable when I touch them or kiss them or lick them or suck them."

Moving deliberately, he opened the front clasp on her bra and lifted the cups out of the way, exposing erect nipples. Patty's chest rose as she took in a deep breath, perhaps anticipating his touch. He waited, imagined he saw her breast straining to reach the hand that hovered just above it. Then he laid his hand on her breast, squeezing gently and fondling the nipple with his thumb. Patty's back arched with the electricity of his touch and a long, hungry moan escaped her lips. Pleased with his results, Eric leaned over and kissed the other breast, letting the nipple poke between his lips for a quick nibble.

Patty cried out in gasps as an orgasm rocked through her body. Eric prolonged it by sucking on her breast and running his hand over her body, relishing the sounds and sights and feelings of a woman in near-continuous orgasm.

Finally, he'd had enough -- or, more accurately, he judged Patty had had enough and was ready for the main event. Spreading her legs slightly, he slid the soaking wet panties down her legs and dropped them on the floor. He admired the view of her glistening center for a moment, then peeled off his own clothes.

His cock felt like tempered steel in his hand as he climbed up between Patti's heavy legs. She moaned anew at his touch as he kissed his way up her thigh, the scent of her inflaming him even more as he drew closer.

Suddenly a hand grasped the back of his head and jerked it sharply upward. He found himself face-to-face with Kelly -- a sad, disappointed-looking Kelly. "You're not Craig," she said, shaking her head slowly. "Haven't you learned anything?"

Eric cried out. His body jumped out of bed and landed on the floor next to it, the sheets tangled up in his legs. Sunlight streamed in through the bedroom windows.

He was alone.

It took a few minutes for his pulse to quit racing and his breathing to return to normal. *Holy shit*, he thought to himself.

Craig crept quietly through the door to the dark apartment. The second game of his doubleheader had gone five and a half hours, so it was very late at night. *Or very early in the morning*, he corrected himself, looking at the clock. *Patty's gonna be pissed*.

Even at this late hour, though, Craig wasn't sleepy. He took a look around for the rest of the newspaper he hadn't finished reading, but couldn't find it.

He looked in on Patty. She was asleep, wearing what he thought of as her chastity gown: a very unsexy cotton nightgown with a cloth-covered button every half inch from throat to ankle. *Don't even think about it*, he told himself, and went back to looking silently for the paper.

He searched the bedroom as best he could in the dark, then turned to the bathroom. A second sweep of the living/dining room and kitchen area turned up nothing, not even an old magazine. He took one more look around the bedroom and was about to give up when he spotted a paperback book in a grocery-bag cover sitting on the nightstand next to Patty's side of the bed. Something about the anonymous, plain-brown-wrapper look of the book grabbed his eye even in the dim light from the hallway, which was the most he dared have on. He picked up the book and peeked inside at the title:

EROTIC HYPNOSIS: A Beginner's Guide
by Eric Milton.

Intrigued, he took the book back to the living room and started to read.

Eric sat in his home office, typing away on the ThinkPad. As usual, he wrote in a light trance state, his concentration focused on his own thoughts rather than on his fingers. And also as usual, at least of late, his thoughts were dominated by images of himself and Patty acting out the material as he wrote it.

Thanks to the chance encounter on the train, Eric was well ahead of schedule on the new book. His agent, a pugnacious Brooklyn-born lady named Eleanor who normally had to prod him at least twice a week to stay focused, had called to express amazement at his sudden burst of productivity. "There's something about a train that's magic," he'd explained cryptically, grinning to himself as he imagined the puzzled look on her face.

His concentration was broken by the ringing of the telephone. Giving himself a quick three-count, he picked up the handset. "Hello?"

"Eric?"

He recognized the voice immediately -- the voice that had been starring in his fantasies for over a month now. *Be cool*, he warned himself. *Calm and confident*. "Speaking."

"It's Patty. From the train, remember?"

"Of course I do," he said warmly, flushing a little at the gross understatement. "How are you?"

"I'm good, very good. How's the book coming?"

"Great! I've been on a tear lately. If I keep up this pace, I'll finish it a good month ahead of my deadline."

"Wow! Your publisher must be happy."

"Not sure on that front yet. I'm coming up to New York next week to meet with them; I'll find out then how happy they are."

There was a slight pause before Patty replied. "Oh ... so you'll be in New York next week?"

Something in her voice caused Eric's eyebrows to rise. "Yes, that's right. I'm taking the train up Monday morning and staying overnight." He weighed his options and decided to go for broke. "Did you want to get together while I'm in town?"

Another pause. "Actually, that's not a bad idea," she said. "I'd like to pick your brain a little bit, and it might be easier in person than over the phone."

"I'm intrigued. Pick my brain about what?"

"About hypnosis," she replied. "You see, Craig found my copy of your book after I got home, and he read through it."

Eric's mouth went dry. *Could it be this easy?* he wondered. "What happened?"

"He was a little freaked out at first," she explained. "But when he got to the section on fantasies and suggestions, he got interested. When I told him about what you and I did on the train, he thought it was the hottest thing he'd ever heard. I let him put me under a few times, and ... well, he's had a good time with it."

"That's great," Eric said, carefully masking his disappointment. "What can I do?"

"Well, things so far have been one-sided. I've tried to hypnotize Craig a few times, and I can't seem to get it to work. I was hoping you could give me some pointers, or maybe recommend a class."

"I know a few good people in New York," Eric replied. "But I owe you a favor anyway for helping me test the CD. I could come over Monday evening and give you a lesson, if you and Craig are free."

"You'd do that?"

"Sure," he said. "It's the least I can do."

Eric took a taxi from his Manhattan hotel to the address Patty had given him on Staten Island. *This is a teaching situation*, he kept reminding himself. *I am not doing this just to size up the fiancé*. By the time the cab stopped in front of Patty's building, he almost believed it himself.

Almost.

He pulled out his wallet to pay the driver, but the heavysset man behind the wheel shook his head. "It's already covered, Doc," he said. "Phone charge, through the dispatcher."

"Oh. Thanks," Eric replied. He tipped the driver in cash and watched him pull away.

There was a standard-issue security system on the building door; he punched in Patty's apartment number, and after a short delay something approximating her voice crackled through the cheap speaker. "Yes?"

"It's Eric."

"Great! Come on up." There was a loud buzz and the door clicked, allowing Eric to open it and come through. He took the elevator to the fourth floor and found Patty waiting for him in the hallway. She was wearing a cream-colored wrap-style dress and pumps, and looked genuinely pleased to see him.

"Thanks for coming," she told him, flashing that smile and meeting his eye as he took her offered hand. "It's right around the corner." She led him down the hall, took a sharp right, and gestured toward an open doorway.

The living area was nicely furnished in blonde woods, with lots of glass and light-colored accessories complemented by a rich honey-colored carpet. A maple bar occupied the corner opposite the door. Standing by the bar was Craig. "Hey there," he said, crossing the room with purposeful strides to shake Eric's hand.

Eric took Craig's hand and tried not to wince visibly at the powerful grip while he sized up the competition. Craig stood a little below average in height, but had the broad chest and shoulders of a fullback. He wore a plain white polo shirt and khakis. The face that examined Eric felt sincerely friendly.

"Good to meet you," Eric said, willing himself to mean it. *Calm and confident*, he reminded himself. *Especially confident*.

Craig was heading back toward the bar already. "Wanna beer?"

"Sure," Eric replied with a broad smile, automatically starting to establish rapport with his subject.

Craig reached behind the bar and pulled out three bottles of generic domestic beer. "This do?"

"Long as it's cold." Eric saw a flash of approval in Craig's eyes; he'd guessed right, apparently.

Patty stood by on one end of the sofa, sipping her beer and watching the men interact. After a few minutes, she felt the knot in her stomach easing. She'd had qualms about putting these two together -- Craig's competitive streak tended to come out in the presence of other men -- but Eric had done a masterful job of establishing himself as someone Craig could accept.

Craig surprised Patty by being the first to mention the real reason for the visit. "I read through your book," he said to Eric. "Did you do all of that stuff?"

Eric nodded, grinning. "Had to test it all thoroughly."

"I can't believe it. You must have this harem full of women at home."

"No, just one," Eric replied. "But she was very adventurous. Like Patty, in a lot of ways -- she went under very easily and deeply, and could do just about anything without disturbing her trance state."

"Patty really zones out," he agreed. "It's kind of fun doing it to her, too." An idea seemed to strike Craig; he looked over at Patty. "Hey honey, you wanna show him one of the tricks we can do?"

"I don't know if --" As she spoke, Craig clapped his hands twice quickly and Patty came to a sudden stop. Her body simply froze in position, mouth partially open, eyes staring forward.

Craig bounded out of his seat and over to his frozen fiancée. "Isn't this cool?"

"Chapter 6," Eric cited. "The time stop trick."

"You got it -- only I changed the trigger to a double clap, like that thing they sell on TV. You know, clap on, clap off?"

Eric nodded, admiring the way Patty managed to remain perfectly still, even as her body continued to make the usual minute adjustments needed to maintain balance. Then he saw Craig get down on his knees and reach up underneath Patty's dress. "What are you doing?"

Craig looked over and grinned. "Having a little fun," he said with impish glee. In a few seconds his hands reappeared, along with Patty's panties and hose.

"Bad idea," Eric warned.

"Nah, this is fun. Watch." Craig rolled the hose down to her ankles, then carefully off each foot, removing and replacing the shoes as he went.

Eric watched in silence. *You'll regret this, Craig*, he predicted silently. *I know -- I've been there.*

Craig finished replacing Patty's shoes, crept back to his chair and dropped the panty hose on the floor behind him. He clapped his hands again twice and Patty came back to life.

"... that's really necessary," she finished.

"Okay, hon," Craig said, twirling her panties on his finger. "Whatever you say."

Seeing the underwear in Craig's hands made Patty suddenly aware of where it had come from. She blushed deeply, unconsciously gathering the skirt around herself for a moment before marching across the room and taking the panties back. "Excuse me a moment, please," she said to Eric, and retreated to the bedroom.

She slipped her panties back on and sat down in front of her vanity for a few minutes to collect herself. *It was fun the first time*, she mused, remembering the night Craig had clapped his hands just as they got home from a dinner date and all of her clothing had vanished, as if by magic. It was amusing a few days later, when she had been sitting at the kitchen table fully clothed going over a new product guide, only to hear

a noise and suddenly find herself stark naked and holding a Chippendale's calendar. But when she'd started to open the door for his friend Joe in a T-shirt and jeans and finished opening it in just her underwear, she thought she'd made it clear that he was not to do that again without her permission. *He's got a lot of payback coming when I finally get him under*, she vowed.

She took a few deep breaths and tried to relax. *No point making a scene in front of Eric*, she told herself. She wondered for a moment how much he'd seen, and whether he'd tried to stop Craig. Then she consigned the whole incident to the back of her mind and rejoined the men in the living room.

Eric saw her return and noted the firmness in her jaw, the forced nonchalance in her face. *She's got a right to be angry*, he thought. *I'll bet that's not the first time he's pulled something like that*. Then he became aware that Craig was asking him a question. "I'm sorry?"

"I said, have you ever had someone you just couldn't put under?"

"Oh, sure," Eric answered. "Going into hypnosis is a talent, like playing football. Some people are just naturally good at it, like Patty; most people can learn to do it reasonably well with practice. A few just can't get the hang of it no matter how hard they try." He noted the faint glimmer of satisfaction in Craig's eyes, as if he had just seen an out, so he continued. "Normally, though, I've found that anybody who really wants to go into hypnosis can get there."

"It's probably my technique," Patty volunteered. "I have a hard time telling when things are working and when they aren't."

"It's hard to say without seeing you in action," he replied. "Which leads us to the first step -- observing your technique."

Craig sat a little more upright. "Are you going to watch her try to put me under?"

Eric paused a moment and smiled. "No," he countered. "You're going to watch while Patty hypnotizes me." Both of his companions looked at him in surprise. "Trust me," he assured them. "I know what I'm doing."

"But do I?" Patty questioned.

"We'll know soon."

In a few minutes, they had the environment arranged to Eric's liking. He settled himself into Craig's favorite chair, a padded lounge chair with leg support, almost like a very comfortable dentist's chair, that reclined by rocking forward or back on a fixed base. He kept it mostly upright so that Patty would be able to watch his face easily, and see when his head began to tip forward. They dimmed the lights slightly, and Eric pronounced himself ready.

Craig observed from the couch, a good distance away. Patty sat on an ottoman near Eric's side so she could watch him without being directly in front of him. "Which induction do you like best?" she asked.

"Remember the hourglass induction I used with you on the train?"

Patty nodded. "Close your eyes, then," she said, letting her voice drop to a low, soothing tone, "and picture in your mind a large, ornate hourglass..."

Eric pictured the hourglass in his mind, the sand slowly falling from top to bottom. *She has such a nice voice*, he thought to himself. *Smooth, flowing, easy to listen to*. He listened intently while she told him, using the future tense, how he would soon find his body relaxing as the sand ran out of the top of the hourglass. He continued listening, and noticed after a while that she was now using the present tense. "You feel your jaw beginning to loosen up, your head beginning to tip forward ever so slightly ..." *She's right*, he realized. *She caught the transition before I did*. He felt his body sinking deeper into the chair, and let go to the sensation.

" ... Eight, feeling the alertness creeping back into your limbs ... Nine, eyes opening, taking a deep breath ... And ten, fully awake and alert."

The first thing Eric noticed when his eyes focused again was that the room was much darker than it had been just a moment or two ago, when he'd first sat down. The second thing he noticed was Patty's face, looking intently into his. Her eyes gleamed at him, her nostrils were flared, and she was licking her lips slowly as she watched. He knew exactly what she must be feeling -- he'd felt it himself, countless times. The feeling of power, the erotic rush of seeing someone surrender totally, could be more seductive than sex itself.

"How did I do?" she was asking, looking deeply into his eyes for the answer.

Eric smiled. "You did fabulously," he assured her. "I should get you to record a few tracks for the new book's companion CD."

"How much do you remember?" Eric was slightly startled by Craig's voice; he'd half forgotten about him.

"Nothing after the induction started," he said. "That happens a lot with me, though. It'll come back as I need it -- unless Patty told me otherwise, anyway." He looked the question at her, and was intrigued at her coy look back.

"Let's try a test," she said, standing up and walking over to the bar area. "A simple matter of animal magnetism."

Eric felt the pull immediately, but the direction surprised him. Instead of lifting toward the ceiling, his arms went to the armrests of the chair. His body rose of its own volition from the chair and approached Patty at the bar. Before Eric could think of what to say, his arms were wrapped around her in a tight embrace.

Craig let it go on for a few seconds, chuckling at the look of consternation on Eric's face. "Hey!" he called out, "that's my woman you're groping, pal. Break it up."

Eric tried to take his arms off Patty and failed miserably. The harder he tried to pry himself loose, the more powerfully he seemed to stick to her.

"Enough already," Craig said, his voice becoming a little edgy.

Eric struggled one more time to escape, unsuccessfully. "I think you've made your point," he said.

Patty laughed and snapped her fingers. As soon as he heard the sound, Eric felt the magnetic pull of Patty's body subside; he quickly broke the embrace and stepped back several feet. Recovering his wits, he plopped down on a chair and looked at both of them. "I think we can safely say that Patty's technique is not the problem," he announced.

"So what happens next?" Craig asked.

"We switch places," Eric replied. "You take the comfy chair, while I sit back and observe."

A look of reluctance came over Craig's face, then vanished. "Okay, I'll try."

Eric nodded. "Let's get you as comfortable as possible. Why don't you use the bathroom, take off your shoes, that sort of thing?"

"Sure."

As Craig left the room, Eric turned to Patty. "What inductions have you tried with him so far?"

"The hourglass, mostly," Patty replied. "Also the sunset at the beach one. Neither one worked. Craig's a very concrete guy; I think he has a hard time getting detailed mental pictures."

"That's a possibility. Have you tried a fixation induction?"

"You mean eye contact? I thought you said that was a bad one to use for beginners."

"It usually is," Eric agreed. "It requires supreme confidence on your part, and the ability to keep staring into his eyes for as long as it takes. I was thinking more of a fixation object, like a pendant or a shiny paperweight."

Patty thought for a minute. "I think I know just the thing." She slipped down the hallway to the back of the apartment and returned with a desk toy. It featured a pair of parallel bars made of plastic, between which were suspended five metal balls. The balls were secured to each bar with a piece of nylon line, and spaced so that they just touched one another.

Eric recognized the toy immediately. "Yes," he agreed, "that should do very nicely. I've used something similar myself once or twice."

They set the toy on an end table next to the lounge chair, pulling the table out a bit to give Craig a better viewing angle. Patty steadied the balls, angling the toy so that the shiny metal spheres caught the ambient room light and reflected it back in multiple directions. As she finished arranging the toy Craig returned, looking a little apprehensive.

"We're ready for you," Patty said, waving him to the chair.

Craig nodded and took his position in the lounge chair. "Okay," Eric said, dropping partially into his induction voice. "You saw how easily Patty was able to guide me into a deep hypnotic state. If you concentrate just on

her voice and do exactly as she tells you, nothing can prevent you from entering a deep hypnotic trance just as I did. Since this will be your first time, we won't try any posthypnotic suggestions; Patty will just take you into trance, let you feel what it's like for a few minutes, and then wake you up again. Ready?"

Craig looked at them both. "I guess."

Eric's and Patty's eyes met. *You can do this*, he said inwardly, willing his gaze to telegraph his conviction to her.

Patty felt his confidence. Bolstered by that, and by her success in hypnotizing Eric earlier, she felt relaxed and ready. *This is going to work*, she thought to herself. *I can really do this*. She lifted a hand and caught Craig's eye with it. "I want you to watch very closely right here," she said, using her hand to guide Craig's gaze to the desk toy. She pulled back on the rightmost silver ball, lifting it high and wide of the parallel bars, and let it go. As designed, the ball came back and struck the next one squarely; the force of the blow was transmitted through the three middle balls to the opposite side and sent the end ball swinging widely to the left. That ball swung out, then came back in and struck its neighbor, sending the rightmost ball swinging away again. A rhythm was established, the middle balls appearing to sit still while the outer two took turns flying outward and then slamming back into the middle.

Craig watched the toy with interest while Patty began speaking. "I want you to focus all of your attention on the balls in the middle," she told him. "Just relax and watch those middle balls. See how the light shines off them. Notice how still they seem to be, even while the outer balls are swinging and bouncing against them. Study those middle balls, becoming aware of every detail, every reflection, every hint of movement. Let your mind and body become as still as those middle balls, resting comfortably and quietly while around you the world keeps moving and clicking. And while you're watching the balls, notice how smooth and steady and rhythmic the clicking sound is as the outer balls swing back and forth, each in turn. Let that rhythm take you, let the clicking happen inside your mind as well as outside, so that you become one with the rhythm."

Eric watched and listened, fascinated. *She's ad-libbing*, he realized. *Using the properties of the object to enhance the script-- very impressive.*

"And as you listen," Patty continued, "you may notice that the rhythm of the balls becomes just a hair slower. The energy that moves those outer

balls is slowly depleting itself, causing the whole system to slow down little by little. And as you observe this, you'll notice that your own system will also slowing little by little, relaxing more and more, slowing down as the balls slow down."

As Eric watched, Craig's eyes appeared to glass over, the lids tending to blink more often. Patty caught the same signs and adjusted accordingly. "Slowing down now, your mind and body relaxing and slowing down, your eyes growing tired and heavy, wanting to close, wanting to rest. Don't let it happen yet, Craig; keep your eyes focused on those middle balls, letting yourself experience every detail. Your eyes will remain open until the outer balls come to a complete stop; you will not close your eyes and slip into a deep, satisfying, safe sleep until the balls come to rest."

Patty's words, along with the steady pattern of motion and sound from the toy, were having their desired effect. Craig's eyes fluttered, struggling to stay open, as his body seemed to sink deeper and deeper into the chair. Patty continued in the same vein, talking him deeper as the toy slowed, watching with growing excitement as he succumbed. Soon the toy's momentum was spent, the steady clicking sound deteriorating into a soft buzz. "Sleep now," Patty said with authority, and Craig's eyes dropped shut. His head dipped forward, and Patty felt that rush of raw erotic power once again.

Then, in an instant, it was gone. Craig's head bobbed up and his eyes popped open. "Did it work?"

Patty felt the air rushing out of her, like a balloon with a fast leak. She looked to Eric, who had a grim expression on his face. "Almost," he answered for her. "How do you feel?"

"Fine," he said. "A little spacey, maybe."

"You're awake now," Patty said, following Eric's instructions from the book. "Wide awake."

"I know, hon," Craig replied. "It was a nice try, though."

Eric cleared his throat. "What was the last thing that went through your mind? Right then, just before you opened your eyes?"

Craig looked into space. "I don't know," he said. "I just kinda perked up, I guess."

They tried several more times, both with Patty as the hypnotist and with Eric, but had no better results. Each time Craig appeared to be slipping into trance, he would

suddenly cough or laugh or otherwise jolt back to wakefulness. Eric could see the growing frustration in Patty's face. Craig, on the other hand, seemed more at ease as the evening wore on.

Finally Eric saw no alternative but to give up. "I'm sorry," he said, addressing himself to Craig. "You must be one of the rare people who just can't reach the hypnotic state."

Craig's face took on a look of hopelessness. "That really sucks. Are you sure, Doc?"

"That's how it looks," Eric responded flatly.

Craig accepted his sentence with a sigh. "Sorry, honey," he said to Patty. *I'll just bet*, Eric remarked to himself.

Patty sighed back. "It's okay," she said. Then, to Eric, she added, "It's late; instead of waiting for a cab, why don't you let me drive you back to your hotel?"

There was a clear message in her eyes as well. Eric responded to that as much as the stated offer. "Either way is fine with me. Are you sure you don't mind driving back alone this late?"

"We're in a pretty good neighborhood," she replied. "After all you've done here, it's the least I can do."

Eric endured Craig's hearty handshake one more time. "Don't blame yourself, Doc," he said. "Like you said, some people just don't go under."

"Thanks," Eric replied, not feeling at all thankful.

Patty was quiet as she led Eric through the well-lit parking garage below her building to her gray Saturn. She remained silent and thoughtful for most of the trip. Eric let her be, not sure exactly how much to say. The silence grew thick and electric before Patty finally broke it.

"What do you really think, Eric?"

Be damned careful, Eric, his inner voice warned. "About what?"

Patty shot him a sideways you-know-exactly-what-I-mean look. "About Craig. Do you really think he's not hypnotizable, or were you just being diplomatic?"

Eric weighed his quickly. *I could tell her, he thought, and risk looking like a jealous suitor trying to sabotage the relationship. Or I could bullshit her and risk getting caught at it.* He took a deep breath before answering.

"It's a possibility," he said cautiously. "I couldn't rule it out offhand."

"You're talking like a lawyer," she admonished him. "I don't need that. I need someone to tell me what I'm doing wrong."

"It's not you," he replied with certainty. "Your technique is fine. You showed great instincts in that first induction, and you nearly had him. You definitely had me."

"Why did you do that, anyway? Be my subject, I mean. And don't say to observe my technique -- you could have done that better by watching."

Eric smiled. "A large part of being a hypnotist is confidence. You have to believe that you can get people into trance, and so does your subject. I knew you'd have no problem with me -- I was prepared to self-induce if I had to, but I didn't have to -- so what better way to help build that confidence? And it worked. You seemed positive that you could get Craig into trance after that."

"I was positive," she agreed. "I'd swear he was under at least once, maybe two or three times, but then he just suddenly shook it off at the critical moment. What happened?"

Feeling the eggshells beneath his feet, Eric tried again. "Some people are mentally capable of hypnosis, but have a hard time letting go. Maybe they have control issues, maybe there's a certain fear factor, or not quite enough trust. I've seen people before who would start to enter a trance, realize it, and unconsciously snap themselves back to alertness without fully understanding why themselves."

Patty nodded, her mouth turning into a grim line. "That's what I'm thinking. Either he doesn't trust me, or he's afraid to give up control, which is really the same thing. But what can I do about it?"

His inner voice screamed at him not to say it, but Eric did anyway. "Often times, the answer to this kind of issue lies in the relationship itself. How are you and Craig getting along?"

Her brow wrinkled. "Fine," she said. "Perfectly fine."

Eric was not about to challenge that assertion, so an uncomfortable silence settled on them again. Soon Patty pulled up into the service lane in front of Eric's hotel. There was a short-term parking space near the entrance, so she pulled into it and put the transmission in Park.

"Thanks for coming," she said. "I'm sorry for being so sullen on the way over here."

"It's okay," he replied, offering his hand. "Good luck."

As soon as she took his offered hand, Eric snapped his fingers. Patty's body went limp and sunk into the seat; Eric caught her head and gently set it against the headrest. "That's good, Patty," he said. "Slide way down, deep into trance, relaxing and letting go of all the tension in your body. When your trance thermometer gets to 90, I want you to squeeze my hand." He continued to relax and deepen her for about a minute and a half before he felt the squeeze. "Very good. Now Patty, I want you to listen carefully. You do not have to respond to any posthypnotic trigger that would cause you to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed, whether that trigger comes from Craig or from me or from anyone. Any time he tries to place you into trance, or use a trigger, that trigger will only be effective if you are in a safe, private environment and you feel completely safe and comfortable allowing it to work. You know this, but I want you to be extra aware from now on. You can always refuse a suggestion if you don't want to comply. Do you understand?"

"Yes," she replied hazily.

"Good. Now, on three, you'll be completely awake and alert again. One ... two ... three."

Her eyes opened and focused on his face. "Thanks," she said sincerely, with her first true smile of the evening. "I needed that."

"You're welcome," he said, smiling back.

Patty leaned toward and kissed him softly on the cheek, then whispered into his ear: "Sleep for me now, Eric." His conscious mind barely

registered the words before the blackness enveloped him and his body slumped into Patty's waiting arms. "That's it, deeper and deeper, letting go, trusting me completely. Count yourself down from twenty now, Eric, and when you've reached your deepest trance I want you to squeeze my hand." She waited, letting the erotic thrill wash over her one more time, until she felt the slow, easy squeeze on her hand. "Now, Eric," she continued, "Here is what is going to happen when you get to your room..."

Eric waved as Patty pulled away, the memory of that quick kiss tingling on his cheek. With a melancholy sigh, he turned and trudged into the hotel.

He closed the door to his room and leaned against it for a moment, eyes closed, wondering what might have been. Then he flipped on the light and stopped dead in his tracks.

Before him, sitting on the easy chair across from the door, was a woman. She was dressed in a silk robe and wore a veil over most of her face. Only a pair of powerful, mesmerizing eyes showed above the veil, and those eyes captured him instantly, leaving him transfixed. "Hello, Eric," she said softly, in a voice both familiar and strange. "I've been waiting for you."

Eric stood still, not thinking, not speaking, unable to break free of those captivating eyes.

"You feel my power already," she remarked. "That's good, very good. Look deeply into my eyes, Eric, and let me take you into that sweet, blissful sleep you so love. Surrender your will to me, and I will bring you ecstasy. Sleep, Eric. Sleep..."

Eric's world narrowed until he found himself lost in those eyes, floating away on soft, gentle waves of the woman's voice. The next thing he knew, he was naked and lying on his bed while a sweet voice whispered things into his ear -- things he didn't quite hear, but which set his every nerve on overload and made his cock stand up like a rocket on the launch pad. Warm, loving hands caressed his body, and a pair of velvety lips brushed against his face, his chest, his cock. With great effort, he wrenched his eyes open in time to see the mysterious woman, naked now except for her veil, straddling him. The sight of her nakedness enticed him and aroused him even more, and when she slid on top of his throbbing cock and enveloped him he felt the electricity throughout his body. Still she whispered to him, her words taking him higher into bliss, until the smooth rhythm of them began to break down as she approached her

climax. Eric felt the tension around his cock as she gasped and came, and the knowledge pushed him over the edge as well. A valve turned in his mind and his cock gushed, every nerve and muscle in his body participating in the orgasm. The woman rode him, her words now prolonging his climax, until he no longer had the energy to move. Only then, as he struggled to keep his eyes open another few seconds, did she move the veil and reveal her face.

"Sleep now, Eric," Patty said. "And thank you."

The apartment was dark when Patty returned. She flipped on the living room light and spotted Craig sitting in the lounge chair, naked.

"Hi, honey," he said. "Surprise!"

"You shouldn't have," she replied, meaning it.

"But look, honey," he insisted with a wink. "The one-eyed viper is calling your name."

Patty blinked twice as the posthypnotic suggestion took hold. In a flash she had a visceral, irresistible need to kneel down and suck Craig's cock until it flooded her mouth. Then, just as quickly, the desire vanished. "No thanks, Craig," she said. "I'm too tired for games."

Craig's jaw dropped. "But *the one-eyed viper is calling your name*," he repeated.

This time Patty only felt a quick twinge of desire, which passed before she even fully acknowledged it. "The one-eyed viper has called my name three times this week," she told him. "At this point, I don't care if it stands up and serenades. I didn't buy that book so you could get blowjobs at will, Craig."

Craig sighed and crossed his arms. "Then why did you buy it?"

Patty felt her patience fading away. "I bought it because it looked like something we could do together," she explained. "Something that might add a little life and interest that's been lacking around here for a while. But obviously I was wrong."

"That's not my fault," he began, then gave up as Patty stomped out of the room and slammed the bedroom door behind her. "Fuck," he said, looking down at his semi-erect penis. "Looks like you're outta luck tonight, pal."

Patty took a long shower, more for the quiet and privacy than any real need to wash. While the water ran over her body, she thought about her going-away present for Eric. *I wonder what woman his imagination conjured up for him*, she thought idly. She pictured him lying naked on his bed, giving in to the imaginary ministrations of a dream lover. She imagined herself as that lover, caressing him, kissing him, getting him so aroused and so ready for her, taking him inside of her. As she pictured the scene, her fingers wandered over her own body's sensitive places. The stroking became more insistent, more urgent, and when in her mind Eric came, she came with him, biting on a washcloth to keep herself from crying out loud.

Craig was either asleep or pretending to be when she came to bed. She didn't care which, as long as he kept doing it.

Eric sat in the business class car at his favorite conference table seat. His Thinkpad was open in front of him and his fingers danced on the keys.

Fantasy #11 -- Hypnotized and Seduced

(Written for a male subject and a female hypnotist, but can be easily modified for any combination. Highly effective for partners with a submissive streak, or who find the hypnosis itself to be erotic.)

You are out of town on business, and have been for several days. You are unlocking the door of your hotel room, tired and bored and missing your lover's touch, resigned to spending another evening alone. As the door closes behind you, however, you become aware of a presence in the room. Across from the door, sitting and watching, is a mysterious stranger -- a woman, dressed in a silk gown and a heavy veil that hides almost all of her face.

You find yourself approaching the woman, not speaking, wondering who she is and how she got into your room. "I've been waiting for you," she says, her voice silky smooth and compelling.

It's then that you notice her eyes. They are deep and shining, and seem to look right through you. You feel yourself being captured by her eyes, fascinated, unable to look away. She stands up and comes closer. You think about backing up, running away, doing anything, but all you can do is stand still and lose yourself in those mesmerizing, powerful eyes. You are falling into a trance, you know it, and you also know that there is nothing you can do to prevent it. Your whole body becomes heavy and sleepy. You take one more deep breath and the scent of her perfume wraps itself around your mind, taking you into a deep, blissful hypnotic trance. Down you go, deeper and deeper, unable to resist the woman's power, not really wanting to. *(Look for signs of deepening hypnosis as your subject imagines the trance within the trance, and reinforce these if possible.)*

The mysterious woman whispers to you. Your mind cannot hold on to the words long enough to decipher them, but your subconscious feels their effects and responds for you. Your body begins to feel warm, itchy, constricted. Your skin begs to breathe, to feel the air, to be free. It has its wish -- you feel hands, your

own plus another's, gently easing the clothing off your body until you are naked. It feels so much better this way, so much more relaxing, so comfortable.

So arousing. Yes, as the woman continues whispering, you feel yourself becoming more and more aroused by her words, by her presence, by her complete control over your body and mind. You feel soft fingers caressing your most intimate places, gentle kisses igniting your body's need for passion. *(Ad lib here, mentioning your partner's favorite specific places to be touched or kissed or stroked. You should see physical signs of arousal; keep it up until your partner appears ready to orgasm.)*

Your eyes open, and you find yourself lying on the bed with the mysterious woman above you. She is naked now except for her veil, and the sight of her body hovering above yours, ready to take you inside her, increases your arousal tenfold. Your body screams its desire to come, but you know that you can't until she does. She teases you, rubbing her body against yours until you want to beg her to just take you, just do it, but your mouth won't open and your limbs won't move. Finally she rises up and guides your iron-hard cock into her, settling down on you. You penetrate her fully, feeling yourself pressing against her cervix. She speaks, and your hips start moving with her, up and down. You feel the pressure building inside you, and you can tell she is almost ready.

She moans, then straightens up and looks straight into your eyes. You feel her body shudder as her orgasm starts, and you see her throw her head back as she gives in to the pleasure. Your eyes close and the pressure releases: you come, harder and longer and stronger than you've ever come before. *(Allow some time for your partner to experience and enjoy the orgasm.)*

As your body collapses, exhausted from the effort, the mysterious woman speaks two more words: "Sleep now." You relax and slide into sleep, happy to have served her so well.

(Conclude with standard wake-up procedure.)

He paused, remembering with a slight shiver the sensations he'd experienced the night before. The details were hazy, but he'd awakened naked on his bed with half-dried semen all over him and the image of a mysterious, hypnotic woman in the back of his mind. He'd taken himself back into a light trance, probing to remember Patty's instructions, and was so impressed by their effectiveness that he'd decided to add one more example to the chapter of fantasies.

His mind wandered to Patty, and to Craig. *What a piece of work, he thought. She gives him the key to her mind, and he uses it to play childish pranks. What a prick.*

That's right, his inner voice mocked him. You'd never break trust with someone you loved, would you, old buddy? Oh, wait a minute -- you did!

The image of Kelly rose unbidden to his mind. Kelly, coming home late again, the stress and frustration showing in every line of her face. Kelly's voice on the phone: "Sorry, honey, but I've got to stay until I can get this paperwork done." Kelly's face, blank and staring ahead, while he poured suggestions into her ear: "It's okay to leave some things for the next day," he'd told her. "Time at home is just as important as time in the office." Kelly, hurt and frustrated, telling him how she'd been passed over for promotion because she'd let key, time-critical details slip and become perceived as unwilling to put in the extra effort when needed.

Kelly, wounded and furious, slapping him in the face when he explained why and tried to apologize.

Yes, I did, he admitted, rubbing his cheek as if he could still feel the sting. And I paid the price, and I've learned from it. Now fuck off.

Craig and Patty sat in the kitchen, mugs of tepid coffee sitting ignored on the table between them.

"I said I was sorry," Craig whined. "What more do you want?"

"I don't know," Patty confessed. "I just know that 'I'm sorry' isn't enough anymore."

"I don't get it. All this hypno crap was your idea to start with, and you're blaming me for it."

"It's not just the triggers," she insisted. "What you did was just an extension of how you are in general. You're a little boy, Craig: sweet and loving when you want to be, crude and insensitive and juvenile the rest of the time. It was charming for a long time, but it's getting old. I need a grown-up."

"You've already got one," he barked back. "That's not what you want. You want some pussy-whipped houseboy who'll do what you want, when you want, all the fucking time. I'm sorry if it's inconvenient for you that I

have a life and friends outside this goddamn apartment, but I'm not giving that up to sit here and worship your cunt."

Patty sighed, clenching the table. "You aren't listening to me. I didn't say a goddamned thing about your friends or your hobbies, although I damned well could if I wanted to."

Craig grunted and got up from the table. "I don't need this shit. Fuck you."

Patty looked daggers at his retreating back. "Not any time soon, asshole."

"There you are!"

Patty opened her eyes and looked toward the unexpected voice, using the minimum possible effort. Through the steam in the sauna she made out a familiar face. "Hi, Regina," she said in a dull voice, closing her eyes again.

Regina adjusted her towel and sat down by Patty's resting head. "You know," she noted, "Most people go home when they decide to take an afternoon off."

Patty moved nothing but her mouth. "This is much better than home. This is my sanctuary."

Her friend clicked her tongue sympathetically. "I'm catching a vibe here that the visit from your hypnotist friend didn't go well."

That got Patty's attention. She lifted her head and made another visual sweep of the sauna room. Satisfied that she and Regina were alone, she sighed and laid her head back again. "Craig pulled another one of his adolescent tricks -- made my undies disappear, right in front of Eric. And when I got back from taking Eric to his hotel, Craig used the 'one-eyed viper' line on me again."

Regina let out a heavy sigh. "Unbelievable. Tell me you made him earn it later."

"Better -- I felt the trigger hit, but then I just shook it off and told him I wasn't interested. You should've seen the look on his face."

"I didn't know you could do that. Ignore a hypnotic command, I mean."

"You can, if you want to. I have a tendency to respond first and think second, but Eric helped me there -- he put me under and reminded me that I don't have to follow a suggestion, from him or anybody else, if I don't want to."

"I like this guy," Regina remarked. "Did he help you get Craig under your power?"

"He tried," Patty sighed, "but nothing happened. Every time I thought we had him, Craig would giggle or hiccup or something and snap right out of it. Eric stopped short of saying so, but I think it was deliberate -- Craig just doesn't want it."

"I could've told you that," her friend remarked. "He likes his macho image too much. No way is Craig going to let you into his head, even if it means getting laid. Men are like that."

"Eric isn't like that," Patty said. "He had me put him under last night, in front of Craig, just to boost my confidence."

Her friend perked up instantly. "Really? What was it like?"

Patty hugged herself through the towel, remembering the sensation. "It was a tremendous rush. Arousing, exhilarating ... almost primal. It would be very easy to get addicted to that feeling." She shook her head and sighed again. "But, there's no danger of that. Not with Craig, anyway."

"So dump him," Regina advised. "You're long overdue for an upgrade anyway. Why not have a wild, passionate fling with your hypnotist friend?"

Patty chuckled. "You never did like Craig."

"Honey, nobody likes Craig except you and that little band of gym rats that he hangs out with. I sit up nights wondering why you put up with his crap."

Staring into the distance, Patty answered slowly. "So do I, sometimes. It wasn't always like this. For the first year and some, things were good."

Lately it just seems as though I've grown up and Craig hasn't. But I have three years invested in this relationship, Gina. It would be stupid to toss that away just because we're not getting along that well right now."

Regina shook her head vigorously. "What's stupid is prolonging a relationship that's obviously in decline just because you're afraid to admit the guy is a jerk."

"He's not a jerk," Patty protested. "He's just --"

"Stop it! Don't even defend the guy. If my AI pulled that 'one-eyed viper' crap on me, he'd wake up in the morning with his balls in a bear trap."

Patty laughed. "Come on, Gina, don't hold back. What do you really think?"

"I told you what I think. The question is, what will you do about it?"

Eric was taking a mental break, sitting back in his rec room, watching *Unbreakable* on DVD. When the phone rang, he paused his DVD to answer it.

"Eric? It's Patty."

The hypnotist straightened up in his chair. "Hi," he said cheerily. "What's up?"

"I'm going to be back in Alexandria next week," she replied, "doing some follow-up with the law firm. I thought it would be nice to have dinner together one night -- my treat this time."

Don't ask questions, his inner voice urged, just say Yes.

"That would be great," he agreed. "Do you need me to make the reservations?"

"No, I've got it. Would you mind meeting me at the hotel? Say, Monday at seven? Same hotel as before."

"I'll be there."

Patty's smile was warm when she greeted Eric in the lobby of her hotel. She wore a gray business suit similar to the blue one she'd worn on that first train ride. When Eric offered his hand, she took it but pulled in closer and kissed his cheek.

"Thanks for coming," she said sincerely.

Something's changed, Eric said to himself. "How's Craig?"

"Oh, he's fine. And you?"

"I'm good," he said, feeling encouraged. "Hungry, too. Where are we going?"

"Actually, I thought the restaurant right here might be nice. Is that okay with you?"

Eric shrugged. "Sure." He followed her into the hotel's attached restaurant. It was a more upscale environment than Kilroy's but still very comfortable and friendly. As Patty took her seat in the booth, the top piece of her suit gaped open obligingly, showing Eric a healthy dose of cleavage and a glimpse of off-white lace.

The dinner conversation stayed light and friendly, keeping clear of sensitive topics by tacit agreement. It wasn't until the dishes were cleared and they were sipping the last of their wine that Eric moved into the danger zone. "The new book's been going splendidly," he said. "The editor is loving it, and the cover art they've picked is very nice. I only have a little bit more to write and the CD to finalize."

"That's great."

Eric nodded. "If you don't mind, I'd like to name you on the dedication page. You've had a lot to do with how well this book is turning out-- more than you know."

Patty blushed and smiled. "I don't mind. In fact, I have an idea for something that might be interesting to add to your book."

Eric felt the heat rising in his cheeks. "Another fantasy? The one you planted in my head that night in New York is already in the new book. It, uh, really made an impression."

"No, something different. A joint activity. It's hard to describe, but I thought we might try it and see how it works."

Do it! the inner voice shouted, but Eric paused. "I'd love to; but what about Craig?"

There was an extra sparkle in her eye when Patty responded. "He's in no position to object. Shall we?"

Eric saw the sparkle. *I may regret this later*, he thought, *but probably not much*. "After you."

He followed Patty to her room on the ninth floor. She waved him toward the corner, where two arm chairs were arranged facing each other. "Why don't you get comfortable?" she suggested. "Loosen your tie, take off your shoes."

Eric smiled and took the advice. He slipped off his sport coat and draped it over the back of a chair, then took off his tie and undid the top two buttons on his dress shirt. His shoes were comfortable black loafers, but he slipped them off anyway and tucked them under the same chair.

Patty left her shoes on the floor of the closet and sat down in the chair facing him. She had her copy of his first book in hand. "You asked about Craig earlier," she said. "I found the answer to our problem right here, in your first book." She opened the book to an early page and held it out to him. "The last paragraph on the page." Eric took the book from her and saw that it was turned to the Forward page. He reread the last paragraph:

And finally, I cannot stress enough that to use erotic hypnosis effectively requires trust, openness, and a willingness to share your innermost thoughts and feelings with each other. If you and your partner don't have that kind of relationship already, the ideas and techniques in this book will not help you to create that. In fact, couples who turn to hypnosis to salvage a failing relationship often find that it makes things worse instead of better. If that's why you're reading this, please do everyone concerned a favor and return this book for a refund.

Eric finished reading, looked over at Patty and the understanding passed between them. "I didn't want to admit it," she told him, "but you were

right -- things between me and Craig really haven't been that good for a while. But instead of returning the book, I decided to keep it."

"And Craig?"

"I go back home Wednesday afternoon," she explained. "I gave him until then to move out. The lease is in my name. I told the management and the security office that Craig is now *persona non grata*, they'll keep an eye out to make sure he doesn't do anything childish to the apartment, then change the locks and cancel his door code Wednesday morning for me."

Her words sank in slowly. "You're sure?" Eric finally asked.

"Positive."

Eric saw the finality in her eyes and nodded. "There's no way I can say this without it sounding self-serving, but I think you made the right choice. He clearly doesn't respect your feelings. I'd be surprised if he cared enough to get overly upset."

"We'll see. He hates to lose at anything."

They looked at each other for a moment, letting the subject die a silent death. Eric cleared his throat. "Okay, my curiosity is now thoroughly aroused. What's your idea?"

"Have you read Tart?"

"Tart," he said, thinking. "You mean, Charles Tart? *Altered States of Consciousness*?"

She nodded.

"It's been a while, but I do remember reading it." He paused for a moment, trying to remember the book. His mind registered the positions they were sitting in, and he had a flash of insight. "Mutual hypnosis," he said, looking up and seeing the recognition in her face. "Two subjects hypnotize each other, leading to enhanced rapport and increased depth of trance. Is that your idea?"

Grinning, Patty nodded again. "I'd first read about it a while ago. After that night at the apartment, I dug out the book and read the chapter

again. As well as we seem to work together, I thought it would be interesting to see if we could get similar results."

Eric let the idea roll around in his mind. "I've never tried that," he mused. "As I recall, Tart's subjects had some pretty vivid experiences. Bordering on the paranormal, in some cases."

"We don't need to take it that far," she assured him. "Are you game?"

"Sure."

"All right, then." Patty lowered her voice, made direct eye contact with Eric, and began. "Sleep for me now, Eric."

Eric felt a pleasant fading sensation as he let his eyes close and his body relax. His mind floated down the stream of Patty's voice, deeper and deeper, willing to go wherever she might take him. Patty watched him sink into the chair and gave herself a moment to enjoy the sensation of power. This time it was tinged with an extra thrill, knowing he would be doing the same to her. She took him as deep as she could. "And now, Eric," she said, "I'm going to count to three. When I reach three, I want you to open your eyes and lift your head. I don't want you to wake up, only to open your eyes and lift your head. You will then hypnotize me and take me as deep as you can. When you have me at 100 on my trance thermometer, I want you to have me open my eyes and look into yours; we will both look into each other's eyes then and go even deeper still, until we are ready to wake up together. One ... two ... three."

A shiver of anticipation walked down her spine as Eric opened his eyes and looked at her. His arm came up and reached toward her; Patty took his hand in hers, met his gaze, and heard a snap.

She felt herself falling into a comfortable, familiar blackness. Eric was with her, his voice guiding her deeper into trance. She pictured herself with Eric, riding downward in an old-fashioned elevator, watching the floors roll past as they went deeper together. A thermometer materialized in the air in front of Patty and she watched as the red stripe climbed its glassy surface past 80, past 90, to the very top markings.

"One hundred," she heard herself say.

"Good," Eric's voice replied, sounding distant and sleepy. "Now, on the count of three, I want you to open your eyes and look at me. I don't want you to wake up; I just want you to open your eyes and look at me. Our

eyes will meet, and when they do we will both sink even deeper into hypnosis than we are now. One ... two ... three."

Patty's eyes opened. Her head lifted, as if in slow motion, and turned slightly as it sought Eric. Their eyes met and locked together and the rest of the world disappeared as each focused all attention exclusively on the other's eyes. Patty felt an odd quivering, almost like a mild electric shock, followed by the sensation of sinking. "Yes," she heard herself saying, "that's it. Deeper and deeper we go."

"Deeper and deeper," Eric echoed. "Our minds joining together ..."

"Blending ..."

"Becoming one ..."

"Going deeper ..."

"And deeper ..."

"And deeper ..."

"Finding that special place ..."

"Where we can explore together ..."

"Our dream place ..."

A dark gray shadow passed over them. They blinked, and as their eyes opened again a flood of brilliant, shimmering color poured into them. It was too much to take in right away, like walking out into the daylight from a darkened movie theatre. They blinked again, looked around, and became aware of their surroundings.

It looked like a train car -- their train car, the business class car. Patty and Eric sat across from each other, the small conference table between them, just as they had at their first encounter. The car was moving smoothly, so smoothly it felt as if they were flying rather than riding on tracks. Everything in the car seemed cleaner and brighter than the real thing.

Their eyes met again, and they shared a contented smile. Yes, Eric thought, *this is our place. It all started here.*

Patty reached across the table and took his hand. He squeezed hers and they leaned over the table for a kiss. Their lips met and a soothing, warm sensation spread through them both. They stood up, pulling each other closer, arms embracing one another atop the table, until they could tolerate the interference no longer.

They slid out into the aisle and embraced again, sharing another long, hungry kiss. Eric felt the hunger growing inside him and he pulled Patty closer, the energy in her kisses telling him that she felt the same. They broke off and looked around: their fellow passengers seemed completely oblivious to their public display. Eric looked at the conference table, and considered picking Patty up and laying her down on it so he could pull off her skirt and taste her. "Wait," Patty urged him. "Let's try the café car."

She led him by the hand to the door at the end of the car. It slid open for them automatically and they stepped into a dark room on the other side. As soon as the door closed the lights came on, and they found themselves in a luxurious bedroom. A giant four-poster bed dominated the room, its white satin sheets gleaming invitingly. The carpet was thick and soft, the furniture exquisitely carved and finished. Only the sight of trees and utility poles rushing past the windows conveyed the idea that they were still on the train.

Still holding Eric's hand, Patty pulled him gently over to the side of the bed. Their eyes met again, and the electricity flowed between them. "I'm ready," she said, removing the top to her suit. "Are you?"

Eric was already pulling his shirt off. "I've been ready since the day I first saw you."

They stripped each other, moving together in the timeless presentation of self. She rubbed her hands across his bare chest; he kissed her breasts as he removed her bra. She closed a loving hand on his already-hard shaft as the other worked his pants down to the floor; as he removed her panties he buried his face in her mound and inhaled deeply, filling himself with her scent. He placed his hands on her hips and guided her to the bed, gently pushing her down on it with her legs hanging off the side. The satin sheets felt cool and decadently smooth against her skin. Eric lovingly pushed her legs apart and began kissing his way up her thighs, one side at a time.

Patty gasped sharply when she felt the first kisses at her knees. His lips as they brushed her skin acted like pebbles in a still pond, sending ripples of warmth and arousal throughout her body with each touch. She came so

quickly that it took her by surprise, an intense flash of light, joy, and energy exploding from her center, sending shockwaves through her mind and soul. Relishing Patty's taste on his lips and tongue, Eric didn't pause or even slow down -- no sooner had Patty recovered her wits than a second climax scrambled them again, sending her reeling. Somewhere in the very back of her head, an impassioned voice pleaded: *Whatever you do, Patty, don't wake up now.*

"Inside me, Eric," she panted, her mind barely processing after the second orgasm. "I want you inside me right now."

Eric stopped long enough to climb the rest of the way up the bed. He kissed her mound, her stomach, her ribs, her breasts. She grabbed him under the arms and twisted, pulling him up and then dropping him down onto the bed beside her. She climbed up on top of him immediately, returning his kisses with some of her own as she teased him with her body, rubbing up and down against him like a stretching cat. His rigid shaft teased against her, brushing against her outer lips, bringing her that much closer. Soon she rose up, reached behind and guided him inside her.

He filled her nicely, his tip pressing against her cervix while his shaft rubbed the magic button on her upper wall. Patty felt the electricity building again. She took his arms and pulled him upward to a sitting position.

Their faces barely an inch apart, Patty and Eric looked into each others' eyes one more time and felt the strength of their bond growing. Their arms pulled one another closer, until their upper bodies touched everywhere possible: chest, stomach, groin, even their foreheads made contact. They felt the power with themselves joining, becoming one mass of warmth and desire and need. And still their eyes remained locked together.

"We are one," Eric said.

"One," Patty agreed. "Joined in spirit."

"Giving completely."

"Coming together."

"One ..."

"Two ..."

"Three!"

There was a blinding flash of light as the power exploded around them, bathing them in the heat of their own emotions. Eric felt his orgasm rushing through him, an enormous flow of energy running through his entire body, flowing outward and into Patty. At the same time, Patty felt the rush of energy flowing into Eric from herself. *We're exchanging souls*, she thought deliriously, and felt Eric agreeing with her. Time and place became meaningless as their senses overloaded and their minds let go.

A loud buzzing sound rudely broke the silence. Patty swatted blindly, her eyes closed and not wanting to open, trying to make the intruder go away. A firm, gentle hand caught hers and kissed it, and the sound stopped.

Patty slowly opened her eyes and peered at the fuzzy figure standing over her. "Morning," Eric said gently.

Her senses slowly came back online, and Patty became aware of the environment. She was lying on the bed in her hotel room, nude. She felt relaxed, well-exercised, and completely satiated. "Wow," she thought out loud. "No wonder it felt so real."

"It was real," Eric concurred, "parts of it, at least. Other parts I'm not so sure about. I remember being on the train with you, kissing, getting up, heading for the café car."

"And the café car turned into a luxurious bedroom," she finished for him. "And we made love on a four-poster bed with satin sheets, and counted ourselves up to the climax."

"We really did connect," Eric concluded. "A shared fantasy setting, acting as a backdrop to real physical activity. I could do a whole other book on this."

"We'll need to do more research," Patty said with a sexy wink. "Lots and lots of research."

"True." He glanced at the clock on the bedside table. "It's 6:52. How much time do we have?"

"Plenty," she answered with a contented sigh. "I don't have to be at the client's until nine." She yawned and stretched lazily, presenting her body again for his -- for their -- pleasure.

"Plenty of time for that," Eric countered, his cock already rising in anticipation. "But we have a lot to talk about besides."

"I guess we do," she agreed. "Distance relationships are tough."

"Is that where we are now?" he questioned, his hopes rising up in his chest. "In a relationship?"

"We can be," she answered, looking deeply into his eyes. "If you want it."

His eyes took in the picture as Patty lay there, naked, watching him, waiting for his response. He felt a familiar turmoil within himself, the one he'd been living with since meeting Patty on the train: desire sparring with hesitation. The final round of the duel was intense, but short.

"I want it," he said quietly, and joined her on the bed.

-wg
9/9/01

*Many thanks to **Lucky** and **Lynda** for their input on this final chapter.*