

Gigue

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A work of fiction, meant for adults. Read something else if you are not an adult, or are offended by stories with sexual content. Then again, if all you're looking for is in-out, in-out, in-out, you should probably read something else. I welcome constructive comments. Enjoy.

Conclusion of Allemande and Courante-- read those first!

Fanfare

Transitions -- quit my job, sold the house, sold or gave away most everything else. “But you can’t do that!” Wrong, I did. But where are you ... what are you ... but what about ... but you have to ...

Irrelevant. Not my problem. Wrong question.

I’ll give you a clue: the *only* things that can’t be replaced? They bleed when cut; they’re attached. Anything else? Doesn’t matter.

But where will you live? A female yoga instructor (lithe and lovely) in Palo Alto invited me to move in with her. Welcomed me with open arms, and more.

Another example: I didn’t stop working. I worked, just at different things, different goals, different scales. I worked, harder than I’d worked in the past, and I learned.

Oh, how I learned... I learned about myself, and my gift. I refined it, incorporating and extending what others had learned and developed. In some situations, my abilities border on the godlike. In others, useless at best. Quite a range...

Consider money: everyone does. I could sit at a card game and “see” what my opponents held. At entry-level poker games, that was enough of an edge. Still, poker combines skill *and* luck.

Luck cost me my seat in a tournament. In retrospect, it was *good* luck; I got to observe elite-level players up close. They worked at an instinctive level, their actions at times contradicting what (my) logic suggested. Similar thing with other games, luck and instinct coming to the fore, my “talents” not useful.

Not useful *at best*... In some situations, using those talents would have brought me to the attention of people who are skilled in ... let’s say, alternate methods of dispute resolution... The House has an edge, and they intend to keep it.

So I took to approaches to multiplying capital which involved less physical risk. Eventually you

get to the point where money makes more money, and you just need to keep things on track.

I knew I was ready for another transition. Even if my path, my destination, wasn't clear, the next few steps were. Another thing I was learning, is to trust my gut and go with those feelings. My gut told me to go with it. I did.

On my way to Estes Park, Colorado; Vanessa "suggested" I be there on a certain date. I flew from Boston to Denver (not alone), a few days early to acclimate to the altitude, and to make the drive to Estes Park. After three nights in Estes Park, I'd return to Denver and fly to Tucson from there.

Still in transition; I'd spent the last eight weeks in Western Mass at a very nice place, a cross between a resort and a monastery. I'd been practicing yoga, teaching yoga, working to yoga instructor certification. I spent time with their resident therapists. I spent my days practicing, meditating, interacting with others.

Interacting -- hah. In a weekly session, I reminded a senior therapist that when I arrived, I voluntarily and openly took the Five Precepts. Had I acted in any way against those vows? The gentleman backpedaled, no, they were concerned, that's all. I moved to the next pose in my sequence, probing him gently. Oh, what is your concern, I asked, knowing it full well; I could read them like fucking billboards at high noon.

One group frequenting the place were those suffering from existential angst brought on by financial depths exceeding their personalities -- more money than sense. They'd spend the time practicing yoga, working with therapists, at the very least living in a focused and constrained environment. Some got instructor certifications. A few even learned.

Hell, that's part of what I was seeking, part of the reason I was there. That and the simple fact that the retreats I'd been on before, on the West Coast, were austere and extreme in comparison. This place had superb food, massage, comfortable rooms, a pool. And no vow of silence, even though I spoke little during an average day. I spoke with therapists, did yoga as a student and as a teacher, sat in meditation, walked in meditation, ate, swam, the occasional massage.

I also practiced one-on-one with some students (and some instructors), always in the open (in spite of requests and suggestions for more intimate settings). Unstated but understood, one period in the morning and one in the afternoon were open, more on the weekends. Oh, others did the same thing, it wasn't something I started. It was understood that you asked politely if you could join, or wait to be invited, and if that invitation didn't come after a few minutes, well...

I didn't turn *up* whatever it is I radiate at times, but I didn't turn it *down* either. Some of them were drawn to me, male, female, undecided. At a gathering of those working to instructor certification, a senior instructor told me I had a gift and would never lack for students. Another instructor, a young woman, added that I'd never need to sleep alone, either...

I learned so much! Not only yoga... I learned to skim instructors, therapists, students (as the guests were called). I learned so much in early morning meditation, those attending sitting in silence, eyes closed, minds wandering... I learned, and I worked to integrate what I learned.

Working one-on-one with students, leading them, assisting them with challenging poses, and looking inside, seeing their troubles (real and imaginary), it was so easy to reshape, to refocus, often with a suggestion, a question -- as with all such therapy, change has to come from within, but I could mediate those changes, bring them about with such seeming ease. And since I could “see” those points of leverage, I could, as one student said, “really hit the nail on the head.”

So it was with Diane, a delicious but troubled young woman. Many of her troubles stemmed from inheriting way too much money -- more money than self-control. Working with her in yoga, taking her to places where she was challenged yet comfortable, relaxing into the intensity of a pose, I made remarks, posed questions, usually in a humorous double-entendre style, that brought her such insights, mediated such change. The change has to start from within...

And pissed off her “official” therapist no end, evidently, as the senior staffer speaking with me obliquely let me know that her therapist thought I was interfering!

I knew the staffer thought that was a load of crap, but felt obliged to bring it up. I reminded him that some students were more talkative than others, I had enough issues of my own, and felt no need to stick my nose into others’ problems. I respected the sanctity of the patient-therapist relationship. I actually said that! I finished up with some roundabout remarks that settled his view that the complaint was based on jealousy, both professional and sexual. He wished me well, and sent a problem my way!

Oh but that one, that young man, the best I could do was help bring into clearer focus the rock and the hard place he was between. But walking the grounds with his therapist, talking about it, even that had been a very big step, and one for which both therapist and client thanked me.

So part way through my stay I’d developed a reputation for insight, as well as for charisma, strength, and flexibility. Unlike *some*, I also had a reputation for celibacy. Oh I looked, but I didn’t touch (or otherwise sample).

And just as I saw students who had stiff hips, or were scared of trying certain poses as challenges, so some saw me and my reputation as a challenge...

A few days after my conversation with the senior staffer, Diane asked me to walk with her. We hadn’t worked together for a week.

New England fall air, crisp and cold; trees bare under gray skies.

“My therapist doesn’t want me talking with you,” Diane started out.

I took her hand in mine. “Why?” I asked as we walked.

She sighed, and after a bit, said, “He thinks it isn’t good for me.”

“Why?” I repeated, moving my arm around her waist, pulling her closer as we walked.

She sighed.

After walking more, she started in. "He's jealous! He's such a petty little..."

I stopped and pulled her head to my shoulder. "Shhh..." I whispered, holding her close, rocking her gently. She sighed and put her arms around me. I held her, protecting her. Taller than Betty or Jen, between Jen and Betty in abundance, and in better physical condition than either of them.

After a while, we started walking back.

"What do I do?" she asked as we got close to the door, standing toe to toe.

"Decide," I whispered. I held her close once more and kissed her forehead, marking her.

The next day she resumed doing yoga with me during my morning free period, announcing impishly, "I'm not going to talk to you." I smiled and nodded. That's fine.

I worked with Diane. I worked with a number of students, occasionally two or three at a time. The area was used for large classes, talks, and such. When not so used, individuals and smaller groups used it. There were usually a few working along the walls, individuals and clumps on the floor. Commonly there would be an instructor, maybe even one or more of the staff, or therapists, observing.

I knew damn well when they were observing me. One morning I was working with Diane and Angela. Another young woman, Gina, who was also going for yoga instructor certification, approached. As she approached, I could hear her replaying the conversation she'd had with the folks sitting in the corner observing -- "Flirt with him! Really turn it on! You can do it! You can get him, he's a man!" they taunted and encouraged her. She was attracted to me, and having it sanctioned, well...

She did everything short of pulling off her clothes (or mine), or jumping me. That only made Angela bolder, and Diane more focused on yoga, bless her.

I had them in Cobra, extended, focus on length... I cleaned up Diane's form and whispered to her, "I'm proud of you."

I moved in front of Gina; her eyes met mine, smoldering, and her nipples practically popped through her leotard. I moved to her side, touching her, positioning, sending a thrill through her. She thought she was winning.

I put a hand on her shoulder and leaned closer, whispering, "You disappoint me, Gina."

Her nipples deflated and her posture went to shit! I sighed and repositioned her, touching gently, warmly. I let my sadness, my disappointment show. "How will *you* respond to this kind of challenge from *your* students?" I whispered in her ear.

It took a while, but I got her focused on the practice again, got all of them focused. Then in meditation at the end, I spoke to them, and to the voyeurs in the corner. Desire and attachment, I

reminded them, are the seeds of suffering. I had them on the edge of laughter, my message either deep Buddhist thought, or rampant sexuality depending on how you interpreted it. And I saw smiles and nods out of the corner of my eye from the watchers. Fucking voyeurs.

After lunch, Gina approached me. "Walk?" she asked.

Once outside, walking side by side, arms going around waists, she said, "I want to apologize for this morning. I ..."

"Thank you for this morning," I interrupted, pausing to hold her to me.

She chortled and asked, "What?" as she nestled in my embrace.

"Thank you for the challenge. How will we handle such challenges from students, hmmm?" It's a topic discussed in some of our classes.

She sighed, snuggling in.

I held her closer. "Do you find me attractive?"

She looked at me like I'd asked if I had long floppy ears. "You are *not* that thick! But in case you haven't noticed, women not only get hot and wet around you, some start ovulating!"

I chuckled and shook my head.

"Do you find me attractive?" she asked quietly.

"Of course! You're beautiful," I told her.

She sighed, exasperated. "Then why ..."

I put my arms around her and kissed her. I melted her into me.

I held her again. "A different time, a different place, it would be so nice to be lost in you," I whispered, holding her close. She sighed in my arms.

I stepped back a bit. We looked at each other. "But not here, and not now, right?" I asked.

She smiled and nodded. "Right."

We walked back in, holding hands.

Diane took me for a walk after dinner. "You kissed her," she accused, looking in my eyes.

I nodded.

“Spend the night with me,” she offered, demanded.

“Not while we’re here,” I replied.

She frowned, but that frown turned into a wry smile; she was learning. “Then come to Boston with me for the weekend,” she offered.

I shook my head again. “Not while we’re here.”

More of a smile. “Come home with me when we leave, then.”

I nodded once, slowly, smiling.

She hugged me, giggling.

I held her close. “But until then, behave,” I whispered, kissing her on the head.

She squeezed me.

“This afternoon, when you found out I kissed her, were you upset?” I queried.

She held me, nodding her head as she rested it on my shoulder.

“But that feeling was temporary; it went away,” I taught, or tried to. “Impermanence.”

She looked at me, smiling.

“And when you figured it out, just now, you were happy,” I told her.

She nodded, smiling.

“That too is temporary,” I whispered. “Impermanence.”

“Wait until I get you in bed,” she growled.

I laughed out loud! “That’s *really* temporary!”

She nodded and chuckled with me, her look a bit more wistful. “Yes, teacher -- but I’ll take what I can get.”

We held each other again. So would I...

Two and a half weeks more, then we departed, going to Boston for two days, hardly making it out of the hotel room. She was insatiable! So was I. We flew to Denver, three days there, “acclimating” to the altitude. I don’t think I consciously clued her in on it, but Diane learned what a perfumed breast did to me. That and her weight on top of me, or squeezing my head between her thighs.

I took her back to the airport so she could fly home to Tucson. I'd see her in a few days, after my "meeting" in Estes Park.

A nice drive, an opportunity for me to think, to muse.

Checking in at the hotel, a nice place, a room was ready for me. Reaching out, I could feel the others already. I could also feel a group of captured thralls, that characteristic fuzzy mind.

I spent a while cleaning up after the drive, even sat in meditation for a bit, unwinding, clearing my mind, clearing the path in front of me. No expectations, no desires -- don't react, respond. There's a difference, a big one.

Walking from my room, following one of my new senses, I came around a corner and saw the catch pen, suffused with the UV glow from a field generator on the table in the center of the crowd. Eight people there, more women than men. Short ones, tall ones, different shades and shapes. I smiled; in Massachusetts I learned that some guys as well as a lot of gals had the hots for me.

One woman, side view, nice side view, about five foot six, Mediterranean coloring. Her clothing didn't do her justice. Hmmm, she'd be taller if her posture was better. I could definitely help there. She turned a bit.

Ah, made sense; the puzzle pieces fit together, even without skimming her. She had a skin problem, minor from what I'd seen recently. A girl at the center -- from Minnesota -- had a much worse skin problem which affected the rest of her, her posture, her attitude and outlook. Ten minutes was all it took, ten minutes doing yoga with her, positioning, straightening, as I dealt with her endocrine balance and her skin. A week later, some more minor adjustments, she was a new woman, inside and out.

And this one would be easier. I moved into the pen, touching her arm, pulling her to the edge of the field. She looked into my eyes, smiling, that blissed-out smile, her mind fogged. I put one hand on her shoulder, the other behind her head as I drew her closer. I kissed her forehead, marking her. Teresa.

I didn't skim her; I drank her in.

I held her to me, silently promising: Teresa, I will not harm you or allow you to be harmed.

As I stepped away a bit, she looked up, smiling.

"Come with me?" I asked.

"Of course," she whispered, her nipples tightening visibly.

But rather than lead her to the meeting room down the hall, we detoured down a quiet corridor, sitting on a padded bench. I cleared her mind a little, focusing her as I straightened her posture, one hand on her back and the other on her chest. I taught her body what it needed to do to maintain better posture, and then let my mind wander to her face. I knew she had similar skin problems on her upper

back and chest. I let the glow spread through her, working from the inside out, clearing her skin, correcting the imbalances. I pulled some paper napkins from a pocket, leftovers from a fast-food snack on the way here. I wiped her face gently. We should go to my room so she could wash properly. No, go there and we wouldn't leave until morning, at least...

I settled the glow into her skin again, letting it suffuse through, rearranging, correcting. I adjusted her posture a bit more.

"Smile, Teresa darling," I whispered to her, "You are a beautiful and very sexy woman." I slid my hands over her breasts gently. She looked at me, lust starting to push away the bliss in her eyes.

"Will you suckle me to sleep in your arms tonight?" I whispered, stroking the sides of her breasts. I didn't raise the feelings in her; I didn't have to.

She held my hands in place as she whispered, "Yessss..."

I wiped her face once more. We stood and hugged, then headed back along the hallway.

Passing restrooms, I told her, "Go wash your face -- warm water and a little soap. We'll get you better things later. I'll wait -- scoot!" I gave her a bottom a pat as she went in.

I reached out with my mind. Some still in the holding pen, a few. The room down the hall, a number of the so-called children of Jarl, male and female both. The majority of them had an attitude, an edge... A smaller room well away from there, a few, also of Jarl, but calmer, more mature? Interesting... Vanessa was here! In a hotel room, with her chosen thrall, cleaning up, getting dressed.

When Teresa came back out, she looked much better. She was smiling, and standing up straight.

I pulled her close and kissed her, holding her close with one hand and feeling a full breast with the other.

"I need you -- *now*," she whispered hotly in my ear, holding my hands at her breasts.

"We have an engagement first," I told her, and kissed her forehead again. She sighed.

We took a few steps down the hall when I paused.

"Reconsidering?" she growled, one of her hands slipping inside my sport coat, short nails on my side through my shirt.

I held her close again, kissing her forehead, letting my lips linger, knowingly blissing her out. Closing my eyes I imagined spinning widdershins three times around, weaving that protective web again, protecting us, and giving me the ability to protect us even more in the blink of an eye. Done.

I took her arm and led us down the hall.

The sign on the door read PRIVATE FUNCTION, so I let us in.

Three smaller rooms joined together, tables set up for dining along the outside wall by the windows overlooking a nice courtyard. We'd entered in the middle. Two open bars set up along the inside wall. Gathering at one end of the room, that's where most of them were. Four others towards the other corner. The large group felt as friendly as a pack of jackals. I headed to the smaller group.

As I did, a pair of thralls, big guys, football players, left the large group to intercept us. I wasn't going to put up with this shit for very long -- they were supposed to harass us. I identified the individual who instructed them, who held and pulled their strings -- a young woman, Barbara.

As they approached, menacing, I took them over. They never broke stride, just softened visibly.

They walked up to us, the pack at the end observing. The smaller group observed as well.

"I'll have a whiskey sour," I told them, and turned to Teresa. "What would you like?"

She sighed and smiled, holding my arm. "White wine?"

I skimmed the bartender, then told one of the bouncers, "The Riesling, please."

They nodded and walked to the bar. I steered us to the smaller group.

Four of them, three women and a man. The man, Floyd, and the older woman, Gina, were children of Jarl. The two young ladies were their thralls for the evening. I felt Floyd and Gina reaching out to skim us, and allowed it to happen.

"Doctor Harris!" Floyd said, extending his hand. "We've heard much about you."

"Please call me Paul. I'd say it's a pleasure, but I'm not quite sure yet," I told them, glancing to the jackals.

They chuckled. Gina said, "You've impressed us so far."

Floyd nodded, sipping his drink. "Yes, Barbara will be cautious, but Jeremy doesn't know when he's outclassed. Don't let your guard down."

"Not to worry," I told them, nodding.

Our drinks arrived. "Thank you," I said, handing Teresa her wine and taking my drink. "Wait," I said as the two started to leave. I took the paper napkin they'd handed me with my drink and wiped the marks off their foreheads, my physical action a small symbolic part of what I actually did. I left the major compulsions in place; they wouldn't remember any of this tomorrow, just that they'd been hired to be bouncers for a private party. But I gave them the flexibility to throw off commands or suggestions given to them, and to use their own judgment. "Thanks again for your help," I told them, nodding. They turned and walked back to the pack at the other end of the room. They were good kids.

“What did you do?” Gina asked, surprise in her voice. “I couldn’t tell!”

“Stirred the pot a bit,” I replied, tasting my drink. Not too bad. “We’ll see how it goes. What’s the agenda here?”

Floyd and Gina traded glances, Floyd raising his eyebrows a bit. “Oh, senseless acts of ego and public degradation, dinner, more of the same.”

I moved Teresa closer. “You’ll excuse us if we don’t stay.”

Floyd nodded. “We’ll be leaving soon as ...”

The volume picked up on the other side of the room. I turned to look. Barbara was yelling at the two bouncers. She was trying to use her talent on them as well, but surprise, surprise, it wasn’t working. And I clearly heard one of them tell her that’s not what they’d been hired to do. She responded by pointing at the door and yelling, “Then you’re fired! Get out!” They shrugged and walked to the door. They’d been paid already.

Barbara turned and started talking to one of the men -- Jeremy. They both stared, glared at me.

I smiled. As I felt Jeremy raising the first wave of nastiness to attack me, I completed the shield around Teresa and me.

Jeremy’s expression changed to one of puzzlement.

Gina whispered, “That’s wonderful! It’s as if you disappeared!” Floyd chuckled.

Jeremy and Barbara were seething now.

I turned to Teresa. “Stay here; I’ll be right back, then we’ll get a nice dinner.” I kissed her on the forehead again, and handed her to Floyd.

To Floyd and Gina I added, “Be right back.”

Gina cautioned, “Be careful, please.”

I stepped to the middle of the room. Jeremy was trying to reach out and attack me mentally, attack either of us, but he couldn’t find us! And that incensed him all the more!

Swearing under his breath, he stepped away from the pack. They made encouraging pack noises.

I shook my head, frowning. His mental defenses were up, but he didn’t know to protect his body. I skimmed him, then went in deeper. Another fucking sewer.

I raised my right index finger above my head, misdirection and showmanship. I reached out to

Jeremy, initiating a cascade in his circulatory system. Suddenly all his blood vessels dilated. He took another step as his face went pale, all the blood falling from his head and what little was in it. Another wobbly step, and as I pointed my finger at the floor with a flourish, that's where he went, unconscious.

None of the pack moved. They were quiet, though.

"He'll be fine in a few minutes," I told them. "Enjoy your evening."

I turned my back on them and walked calmly to Teresa. I took her arm. "Dinner?"

The six of us walked out. Even as we exited the door, none of the pack moved to help dear Jeremy. "That's what friends are for," I remarked as we left.

Floyd started to speak as we walked down the hallway. I held up a hand. We stopped. I closed my eyes and cast protection around all of us. "Okay," I told them.

Floyd and Gina looked at each other, frowning a bit, then smiling. "Amazing! Doctor Harris, please, would you and your young lady join us for dinner? I expect it to be far more civilized."

"Thank you," I told them. "Please, lead on, and call me Paul..."

Gina asked, "What did you do to him? His defenses were up, he was trying so hard to find a way to attack! What did you do?"

I smiled. "I used something he doesn't have, something he doesn't value."

"And that is?" Floyd asked.

"Knowledge," I replied.

A little laughter.

"Do we need to worry?" I asked.

Gina spoke up. "Vanessa cautioned them, knowing full well that would just egg them on. But I don't think we'll be bothered."

"Not tonight. They have their own games to play. He'll recover?" Floyd added.

"Oh yes, in a few minutes," I assured them. "Well, save for the embarrassment."

"That's going to sting for *quite* a while," Gina mused.

We walked to the other group I'd sensed, on the other side of the hotel, a private room off the restaurant. Two tables for eight, one full, the other with Vanessa and her chosen thrall.

She stood and beamed as we came in. We hugged. "I'm so glad you could make it," she told me, kissing me on the cheek.

"We'll see," I told her honestly.

Brief introductions. The rest of the children of Jarl were the older, more mature individuals.

They were puzzled when they couldn't skim me, or Teresa. Or Floyd, Gina, and their thralls, either.

"I had the pleasure of meeting Jeremy," I half-explained.

David said, "Yes, we were watching, but we don't know what happened! You disappeared! Jeremy was quite upset, and Barbara was quite upset as well. Of course they're carrying on as if nothing happened."

I shrugged. "Not much."

Vanessa laughed and put an arm in mine. "And what *did* happen? We all felt Jeremy drop."

I shook my head and stepped away. "Defend yourself!" I menaced, pointing at her.

She raised her mental defenses, taking a step back, contemplating the mace in her purse. Others raised their mental shields as well, save for David, who became more intent.

"Defend yourself," I menaced, "I'm going to attack you like you've never been attacked before!"

She stood, heart racing, prepared... And after a moment, reached up and scratched her nose.

I relaxed and smiled. "It's over. You lost."

Vanessa looked shocked, puzzled. "What? What did you do?"

I looked to David, raising an eyebrow.

"She scratched her nose?" he queried.

I nodded. "That's it. You defend your minds, but not your bodies." I gave Vanessa a brief hug. "I caused an itch on the side of her nose. With Jeremy, I triggered a circulatory cascade -- causing all his blood vessels to dilate, his blood pressure plummeting, and within seconds, so did he."

They nodded.

"And you can protect from these attacks?" David asked.

I smiled. "Wine list?"

David shuddered. He understood.

We ordered dinner. Teresa and I had very nice cuts of beef, superbly prepared and presented, accompanied by a nice merlot shared with the table. The conversation around the table was interesting. I told them I'd been in the area a few days, to acclimate to the altitude. Gina and Floyd smiled and chuckled; they'd done the same. They played woodwinds in a chamber ensemble, and when they played in this area, they liked a few days to acclimate. David played oboe, and Gina the bassoon.

I enjoyed the conversation, and the people I was with. We gathered together for desserts and talking, our thralls off on the other side of the room. I told Vanessa (and the others) of my time back East, and that I was going off after this to stay with a young lady for a while. Others spoke of their plans, their schedules.

I don't know when I realized it, but the thought gelled in my head.

"I've seen that look -- what is it?" Vanessa asked. Others quieted down.

"I think I understand," I told her, smiling, nodding.

"Understand what?" one of the women asked.

"What differentiates us from them, from Jeremy and his ilk."

David sat back and in a very professorial tone, he taught literature at a junior college, asked, "And that is?"

"It fits the syndrome, the talent so well! It usually blossoms during puberty, right, and an early, accelerated puberty at that, right?" I queried.

"Yes, most often," said another of the women.

"So during puberty the talent emerges, and you find that you have ... the powers of a minor god..." I gestured with my hands.

Nods and smiles from around the room.

I smiled more. "Incredible abilities -- arising at a time of personal turmoil -- do those abilities give *any* incentive *whatsoever* to mature, to do anything that requires effort, let alone *extended* effort, for say, mastering the oboe or bassoon, or literature, or sculpture, or a legitimate college degree?"

Shaking of heads, some wry smiles starting to appear.

"Yet each of *us* took that longer, harder path. Oh, we used our talent to aid us along the way, for sure. But remember the talent as it arises... So much power, getting what you want, when you want it... A problem comes up? Why waste all that fucking time when you can skim someone and," I snapped my

fingers, “just like that you’ve got it, right?” Nods from the crowd. “And if things don’t work out the way you wanted, then you picked the wrong person to skim, right?” That’s what I’d seen in the mental sewers I’d gone through. Wry smiles, nodding of heads, some chuckling.

“Teenagers -- so impatient! And the blossoming talent makes instant gratification possible, such self-reinforcing behavior. And with failures so easily attributable to skimming the wrong person -- a tight, closed, self-reinforcing loop.” I made a tight fist for emphasis. I saw smiles and nods.

“But *we* know -- *we*’ve learned... You can’t skim a concert pianist and play Chopin, or skim an elite runner and run a marathon. I’ve skimmed yoga instructors -- and spent months practicing, and will continue for years! I had a double-p undergrad major; physics and psychology. Even with that background, skimming psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists -- in an instant, what they know, I know -- except all that knowledge is *useless* unless and until I take the time and effort to put it into practice, to integrate it and make it mine, yes?”

More smiles and nods of agreement. “Years of practice, and years to go!” one said.

“That’s right! And the pack in there, they’re frozen -- intellectually and emotionally -- minor gods frozen in shells hardly more mature than teenagers. They don’t act like adults because they are *not adults*! They never *had* to mature as adults. Oh, they’ve had to learn *some* things, just to stay off a dissection table in North Dakota...” Yes, I knew about that place.

“And we can generalize the hypothesis to other situations, not just these talents. Money, power in social spheres, those kinds of things -- boy have I seen that in spades! Anything that supports instant gratification, particularly at an early age, is a significant inhibition to maturity. It’s a trap! And it’s one we managed to escape.”

“Damn,” one of the women said, “It makes sense! It fits so well!”

“One way or the other,” David said, shaking his head. “It took me years to wake up...”

I smiled, almost laughing. “Congratulations -- congratulations to you all!”

One of the women asked, “What can we do ... to help them?”

Murmurs of acknowledgment...

“It’s that old light bulb deal,” I said. To the questioning looks I added, “How many shrinks does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, but the light bulb has to want to change...”

“How can we *trick* them into it?” another woman asked with a wry smile.

I chuckled, as did others. “That may be easier -- get them hooked on something that takes practice? Music, juggling, yoga -- those things that yoke mind and body together, that take time and effort to show results. So many things will do -- another parable -- pick one and dig deep, dig deep.”

David nodded, smiling, raising his wineglass to Vanessa. “Vanessa, you were right -- you said we’d be impressed.”

I shook my head. “Still learning.” I sighed. “That’s another thing that’s so weird, so frustrating. They ... they have so many clues, so many hints, yet they haven’t followed them, studied them. They copy, but so seldom seem to refine or learn.”

One of the other men, Robert, nodded. “I was going to ask how you did Jeremy -- I’ll ask again in a few months.” He saluted me with his wineglass.

“If you need to...” I smiled, “But you should be able to figure it out. And when you do, let’s talk, because you’ll undoubtedly uncover aspects I’m unaware of.”

We retired to our rooms shortly after that. I gave Teresa the choice, and she chose to stay. I brought out the hunger in her, and did my best to satisfy her. In the morning, I let her fill the empty spaces in me.

We showered together. After drying off, I worked with her again, posture and movement. I could see great improvement already. It would take a week or so for her musculature to adapt, but the hard work was done. The beauty I saw on the inside would show on the outside as well, and as she saw that, it would reinforce, and she would blossom.

We made it to the breakfast buffet before it closed.

I was back at the fruit table when I felt Jeremy coming up behind me. I glanced up at him and said, “Good morning, Jeremy.”

He seethed at me. Pathetic.

I smiled and shook my head. He tried to get a server carrying pitchers of water to bump into me, but I blocked that.

“You can’t protect the whole world,” he snarled with a malevolent grin.

I smiled again; in mathematics and physics, there’s a transform we use, for example, to map $1 < x < \text{infinity}$ to $0 < x < 1$. With almost literally a blink of my eye, I applied that idea to the shield I usually cast, casting it around Jeremy, protecting the world (locally) from him. It would only last while he was here, and it wouldn’t protect anyone he actually touched, but it would help.

As he tried to figure out what had changed around him, I told him, “Jeremy, if you want, I’ll teach you everything I know.”

He’s not a complete idiot. He shot back, “What’s the catch?”

“In six months, you need to be able to play any piece I choose from the Anna Magdalena Bach book on the piano. Do that, and I’ll teach you everything I know.”

He looked at me, frowning, mouth and face forming shapes but not making any sound. “What the fuck does that have to do with...” he started out, then shook his head and concluded, “You’re nuts!” and stormed away.

I got my fruit and returned to the table, and Teresa. She was glowing, still.

We were walking outside after our afternoon nap when we saw Vanessa again.

“What did you do to dear Jeremy?” she asked, chuckling.

I described our exchange at breakfast, the offer I’d made, his seeming refusal, and protecting the immediate area from him.

She shook her head. “You tried, more civilly than I would have, I’m afraid. He, Barbara, and their clique left the area a few hours ago.”

“May they be at peace,” I suggested.

Vanessa smirked. “More than one way to achieve that outcome, dear, as you full well know!” Turning to Teresa, she gave her a brief hug. “You are looking more beautiful each time I see you!”

“Keep well - and be careful,” she whispered to me, parting with a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

The remainder of our time? Did I use her? Yes. Did I change her? Oh, yes. And I used her to use me; I gave myself to her, and reshaped her from the inside out.

When we left, we were the same, but different.

Turning in my rental car at the Denver airport, I’d parked and was about to step off the curb when another vehicle coming in accelerated sharply, then screeched on the brakes. If I’d stepped out, I would have been hit... I skimmed the driver, confirming my suspicions.

Riding to the terminal in the rental car shuttle, I reached out... Jeremy’s rental car was found in the spring, but they never did find dear Jeremy.

Diane met me at the Tucson airport. We hugged and kissed. Standing there, holding her, looking in her eyes, I felt something different in her. “You’ve decided something?” I asked. While it was instinct anymore for me to skim people, I’d also learned that some times I shouldn’t -- this was one of those times.

She smirked. “You’ll find out. Come on -- let’s get your bag and get out of here.”

She took me to her home, a gracious, comfortable home. Her bedroom, our bedroom, was spacious and comfortable. I took a quick shower.

When I was dry, and returned to the bedroom, she was sitting on the side of the bed, wearing a very soft looking plush robe. I caught the scent of her perfume, and of her.

She stood and approached, her hips swaying seductively, her bountiful charms moving in counterpoint, a look of determination I hadn't seen before on her face. She put her hands on my shoulders, and her eyes burning into mine, she whispered, "When I get through with you, you'll never want to leave me."

"I don't want to leave you now, darling," I whispered back.

She turned and pushed me on to the bed, moving sensuously atop me. She let that soft, seductive robe fall open...

Oh, she was right -- and I didn't stand a chance. She suckled my brains to mush, then teased me, rode us to ecstasy, and suckled me again. Over the days, we did many things together -- practice yoga, go on walks, go shopping, but I'd turn around and she'd pull me to a perfumed breast and suckle me into submission, into passion, into peace. Oh, that triumphant look on her face as she slides a hand behind my head and pulls me to the mind-blanking bliss I want and need so much... I go to sleep at night held to a nipple. I wake holding her to my shoulder, protecting and comforting her, but soon I'm back again in her embrace, her arms holding me where I want to be.

And when her period arrived, her friend Joan had already joined us, nominally to practice yoga, but also to help subjugate me.

What a soft, delicious trap! I took over one room as a nominal office. We decided to add on, building a more functional practice space, and another more functional space, the passion pit.

I could be practicing music, working on financials, or writing, it doesn't matter. One of them, or both of them come up to me, some times seductively sliding a hand behind my head, making me cry and tremble in anticipation, or grabbing the hair at the back of my head, pulling me to where I long to be...

Into a trap, a delicious one.

CAT AND MOUSE

Another gathering, this time at a resort outside San Diego. Tens of thousands of acres ravaged by fire, then by rain and mudslides, once again bursting with signs of life.

What delicious irony... The cycle of life repeating on the once-ravaged hillsides...

Diane had been upset, and hadn't wanted to tell me why; she'd been trying to hide it. She'd been trying, trying so hard...

To get pregnant... That's what I learned when I skimmed her, and confirmed by skimming Joan.

I saw a specialist. I provided him with a sample. I skimmed him when I went back for the results. We talked, but I already knew the results; answers to questions were still in quite short supply.

I was sterile as a fencepost. Oh, I produced sperm in copious quantities, but they were all deformed. How? Why? Disease or chemical poisoning was the most likely answer. Was I seriously ill as a child? No recollection, and no family members to check with. Chemical exposure, drugs, that kind of thing? No idea -- I didn't take anything other than a vitamin and a low-dose aspirin every day. He shook his head. There was always adoption...

Oh, the irony! A child of Jarl, or Rig, a minor god, and unable to father children of my own!

I explained it to Diane and Joan as best I could. I know I couldn't share their disappointment, but I would do what I could. I dug into what I'd taken from those therapists, pondering it, even calling one of them on the phone. I helped Diane and Joan find their way.

Finding the way... At the resort outside San Diego, finding my way from my room, a small suite as they all were, to our reception and dinner. I'd dine with the "other" group, but at least put in an appearance at the larger reception. With Jeremy out of the picture, I didn't expect too much trouble. Didn't expect trouble, but was prepared for anything, and willing to tolerate very little -- that's what I'd told Vanessa when she'd invited me, and she told me she didn't expect trouble. Fine with her!

California girls -- I expected the catch pen to be quite something.

I wasn't disappointed. I saw her as I approached down the hallway, seeing the thralls milling in the catchfield. She looked like a wet dream from one of R Crumb's comix -- so ripe, luscious, and juicy. When she saw me, the expression on her face, her nipples popping to attention, the shift in her hips. Pamela -- I drank her in, cutting through the pen and taking her, kissing her, marking her, contemplating taking her back to my room right now and to hell with the others!

But decorum and promises to those others... And I had to meddle, anyway... Going deeper into her, correcting her posture, a hand in her mid-back as I pushed a shoulder back but down, sliding my fingers over a ripe and full breast, hearing her sigh and watching her eyes close halfway. Turning her, having her move, touching, reshaping, reinforcing. The top she wore was simple and pretty; I recalled a cashmere top at one of the resort shops that would be devastatingly, breathtakingly beautiful on her.

That's where we headed, and I had her put it on standing in front of the mirrors, not even bothering with the changing room. Seeing all that pale pink skin, her breasts overflowing her simple bra, and her nipples demanding attention -- so tempting! And that cashmere top was so luscious on her! I even sensed arousal in the shop attendant!

Pamela was 23 years old, a local, originally not quite sure why she'd come here, but quite sure now! She had her purse, and that was all. Well, we'd do more shopping tomorrow afternoon, if we got out of bed that long...

The shop attendant didn't miss a beat -- did we need anything else to go with the top? Sandals perhaps?

“Fragrance?” I suggested; one of my weaknesses. “Shalimar?” I put an arm around Pamela’s waist and hugged her to me gently.

The attendant was sorry; she didn’t have anything. There were very good shops in the shopping center a few miles away, and the concierge desk could undoubtedly make a trip for me if I had something specific in mind.

“We’ll manage,” I told her, paying cash for the top.

Scanning Pamela, a habit, she was thrilled -- so lucky she had her special bottle of perfume with her. She’d cover her breasts, and her mound, and smother me in it! It tasted so good, so she could get it right on her nipples... Remember to shake it really good first...

I led us to an unused function room, pushing her up against the inside wall, kissing her, pressing our bodies together, blissing her out...

...As I dug into those memories... Be sure and shake it good first, twist the top to break the seal, put it on just before taking me, tasted so good...

Implanted memories -- who, and why?

I blissed her out more, dropping her into trance and seating her in a chair. Dug into her purse and carefully removed the bottle.

A small, fairly generic looking bottle, holding maybe five to eight cc’s of straw-colored fluid. No identification or branding. Clear plastic seal holding the top in place, and looked like something else under the plastic film at the top. Held the bottle itself up to the light for closer inspection of the contents. A transparent sphere in the bottom, glass? I inverted the bottle carefully, watching the sphere, and it stopped about halfway through the bottle! There was some kind of membrane in there, separating the bottle into two compartments!

What’s the first thing that comes to mind with “binary chemical?” I sighed and gently put the bottle into my inside sport coat pocket.

I pulled up a chair and sat next to her. I held her head lightly, closed my eyes, and went in deep.

Whoever did it, they were careful. I couldn’t tell if it had been a man or a woman. Both? It had been done yesterday, though, as other memories overlaid it. Yes, yesterday, sensitizing her to me, flooding her with pleasure and desire. Pictures of me. Two of them? Different touches. Anything else? I took the medical knowledge I’d accumulated and went over her head to toe, digging deep. One of the tricks I’d picked up on was sending someone a disease-laden gift, contagious but not yet seriously symptomatic. Should I turn Pamela out right now, not take the fucking chance, the chance fucking?

No, let’s play this out. Someone was after me, and they’d gone to some effort, and either been told, or correctly guessed at my likes.

Hmmm... Checked out the other shops in the complex. The sundries shop had an overpriced bottle of cheap cologne that was about the same size. I bought it, and peeled off the stick-on labels. From ten feet away, that should do the trick! I'd left Pamela sitting outside the shop. I pulled her to standing and kissed her again, enjoying her. Leaving her momentarily dazed, I slipped the bottle into her purse, making sure I had the pretty damn obviously tainted one. I cast protection around us both.

On to the reception -- this should be fun! Sweeping the area, Vanessa was still in the shower with a thrall. I gave him a little more understanding of female physiology, and through his ears heard Vanessa moan. Thank me later, dear...

I scanned the reception area for anything unusual, particularly with respect to me.

Hah! Hadn't realized my confrontation with Jeremy had made such an impact! Well that and the fact that I was here, and Jeremy wasn't. A number of them were apprehensive, not willing to take me on directly -- but more than willing to pile on if the odds looked good. Jackals! And on the bright side, there were quite a few that didn't give a rat's ass if I, or anyone else, lived or died.

Pamela and I went to the smaller group, things less polarized than in Estes Park. Two I hadn't met before. I got drinks for us.

Surprise, Barbara and her thrall (a short but nicely stacked Oriental woman) came over!

"Doctor Harris," Barbara said, nodding a bit, "it's good to see you here." She offered her hand.

I took her hand, not probing or skimming. I didn't need to -- I'd already done that. "Thank you. It's good to be here."

"I'd like to introduce you to some of my friends, if you have a moment?"

I nodded, accepting the olive branch -- so far. "Of course." I put an arm around Pamela and brought her along.

A fascinating process -- with many of them, they got a lot more interested when we approached and they couldn't skim us. Yet if we shook hands, or otherwise touched, they could sense me -- and many were shocked. Caught a clear thought from one woman indicating she knew something was afoot against me, and she was glad she wasn't in on it! I'd get back to her...

Barbara was looking for two of her associates; someone mentioned seeing them and their thralls headed for a more private setting. A feral grin and shaking of the head, "Couldn't wait..."

Barbara's thrall was also having problems waiting, it seemed. She'd been giving me the eye as Barbara introduced me around, and now she moved in front of me. She was a cute thing, maybe five foot four, very curvy, long dark hair, burning brown eyes.

Cute but not my preference. Pamela was much more to my liking -- much more of everything.

Barbara wasn't helping; she was urging her thrall on, and I could feel Barbara's arousal as well, her desire for both Pamela and me.

Her thrall gave me a smoldering look and pivoted on one foot, turning and pressing her back and her bottom into me, pulling one of my hands across her lithe body. I put my hands on her hips, which she moved with skill against me. She raised my hands to her breasts, squeezing gently.

I leaned my head forward, kissing her hair, inhaling her scent, exhaling orgasm through her as I fondled her breasts.

I sensed growing jealousy in Pamela, and cast a thought at her; she reached into her purse for her "special" bottle of perfume, holding it up and getting ready to shake it.

I let go of Barbara's thrall and stepped into Pamela's arms, kissing her and melting her into me.

As I did, I scanned the room for reactions. Nothing unusual. Surprise and admiration at what I'd done to Barbara's thrall, hope and desire I'd do the same to others, thoughts about Pamela, how good she looked now.

But nothing on the perfume bottle. Oh well.

When Pamela and I separated, Barbara was holding her thrall, kissing her. Or was Barbara's thrall holding and kissing Barbara?

Barbara introduced me to some others; she mentioned in passing that a few of them were meeting tomorrow afternoon and would like me to join them.

I thanked her and told her I'd consider it.

Pamela and I went back to the "older" crowd. They were surprised, amused, and generally pleased; remarks about "divisive forces" no longer present.

Yeah, right.

Floyd was astonished, so much of the animosity of the past seemed gone. "Weeding," Martin suggested.

We made our way to the smaller dining room. Scanning ahead, a few were already there, including Vanessa.

Vanessa, Alan, some others I'd met before. Several remarks at how much less polarized this gathering was than Estes Park. Mild laughter.

I glanced to Floyd, who was shaking his head.

“What is it?” I asked him.

He smiled, glancing to his thrall, a tall, pretty black woman, and then to Pamela. “How in the world did I pass up such beauty?” Floyd’s tastes seemed to match my own. Alan had a young Chinese woman, very pretty, almost display-case quality.

I stood up, leaning over to kiss Pamela on the forehead. “Presentation,” I told them. Then turning to Floyd and gesturing to his thrall, “If I may?”

Floyd stood and helped the dear young woman to her feet. “By all means,” he said.

Her mind was still clouded, not surprising. Still, a nice package. “Posture, first,” I suggested. I put one hand in her mid-back and used the other hand to reposition her shoulders, then chin and head. “You are a beautiful woman,” I told her, sliding my hands down, repositioning her spine, teaching her core muscles a new balance, reinforcing that new balance and posture with pleasure, ending with one hand on her sacrum and one on her mound as I repositioned her hips. I ran my hands up her again, sending a blush and a sigh through her as well, her nipples tightening as she gave Floyd a look of lust. I took her hand and had her take a few steps, adjusting posture and balance as she moved, her eyes never leaving Floyd. I saw images in his mind, and cast feelings deep into her, deep enough so I didn’t think the others would be able to read them, images of her riding Floyd, smothering him to a breast, telling him what to do, making him suck on her, smothering him to her and commanding him to come for her... She growled at Floyd and her nostrils flared. Laughter and some applause from the crowd.

I took Pamela’s hand and pulled her to standing. Leaning close, I whispered, “Suckle me to sleep in your arms tonight, please...” She smiled, a lusty smile that spread through her. I adjusted her posture a bit, leading both ladies by the hand as we walked around the room. “Two beautiful, sexy women -- just need a little help.” The cashmere top Pamela wore was so alluring... “Clothing helps; we’ll do some shopping tomorrow,” I told them.

And caught the clear thought from Alan, “Like hell,” He mused on the good job Ken and Linda had done picking and training Pamela in such a short time. He touched his thrall on the back of her neck -- a mercenary chemical warfare specialist?

I turned the ladies one more time, managing to touch each of them sensuously. I looked to Floyd and asked, “Want to trade?”

Alan kept very cool on the outside, but freaked out inside. Vanessa, the others, no response save amusement. A few of the men (and at least one of the women) would switch for either of the ladies in an instant. One would switch *with* the ladies...

Floyd stood up and took his thrall’s hands. “I promised her,” he said, pulling her closer. I gave her a nudge, and she took the offensive, grabbing Floyd and kissing him passionately.

Alan was greatly relieved, still playing with the hair at the back of his thrall’s neck, keeping her blissed out. Holding the door open for me.

I gave myself to Pamela, who grabbed and kissed me.

As I dove deep into Alan's thrall... Chemical weapons specialist, equivalent of a neurologist M.D. with organic chemistry expertise, trained by the Soviets for the Chinese, gone "open market" with others after an internal party struggle, operating out of Singapore and Malaysia. Binary agent, yes, metabolized by the liver after ingestion and/or adsorption, metabolites causing intense psychosis resulting in death within hours, actual mechanism unknown. Autopsy usually showed stroke or heart attack with endocrine markers of intense stress, LD50 in the milligram range. I moved her mind to memories of intensely pleasurable sex, and yes, surprising Alan with one of the other things in her kit...

Pamela and I sat at a table with Vanessa and her thrall, Robert and thrall, and Jennifer and thrall.

Vanessa and I chatted about how things had been; I was doing well, focusing on improving finances, practicing, enjoying being left the hell alone. She chuckled and agreed. That's the way it tended to work; we each had our little regions, our fiefdoms where nobody else intruded.

Our dinner was planned; as we were waiting for salads, Robert said he had something to show me. Okay.

He was still looking at me when his thrall, a young Hispanic woman, sneezed. Robert smiled.

I gestured surreptitiously to Jennifer's thrall, a surfer dude. Robert raised an eyebrow and nodded. The surfer dude sneezed.

I held out a hand to Robert. "Congratulations," I told him.

He smiled and shook my hand. "It's been a lot of fun. Thank you for the challenge."

Vanessa asked, "Can you teach it?" Jennifer chimed in, "Yes, please!"

Robert mused for a moment, swirling and tasting his wine, glancing to his thrall. "I think the best I can do is give you some hints, directions and starting points. It's like music, or juggling -- you have to figure it out for yourself."

"Tomorrow morning?" Jennifer asked.

Robert looked once again at his thrall, taking a deep breath. She returned his gaze, her nostrils flaring. "Not early..." he offered.

We all murmured acknowledgement.

Oh hell, what am I going to do? That was my question as we were served dessert. I wanted to throw myself into Pamela's arms. I don't want to have to deal with this shit.

But if I don't, he'll only try again. And the next time, I might not be so lucky.

“Vanessa, I have a real estate question, if you have the time this evening,” I offered, knowing full damn well Alan was sitting with his back to us and listening to everything I said.

They haven’t learned, at least most of them. I couldn’t read his mind, not without him noticing, but I could read his body. When he heard what I said, he relaxed. Vanessa was renowned in the group as a real estate specialist.

“Certainly,” she agreed. “What about?”

I shrugged. “The usual, using like-kind exchanges to launder money.”

She nodded. It was a common problem we had; most of us evolved mechanisms that brought in large amounts of untraceable cash; the issue was how to make that cash more fungible. In many areas of the country, such as the South West, it could be as simple as having a drugs courier “forget” where they left a satchel full of cash, or to drop it at a different point and forget about it. Good way to keep in spending money, and even have an indirectly beneficial effect on society by disrupting illicit commerce. Had to be done quite carefully, though.

Vanessa accompanied Pamela and me back to our suite. I poured armagnac for the two of us and sent Pamela in to change in the bedroom and wait for me.

“How much are you dealing with?” Vanessa asked as we sat on the couch and tasted our armagnac, which was very good.

“Alan is trying to kill me. Pamela is a setup -- selected and conditioned -- his thrall is a chemical warfare mercenary; they supplied Pamela with a neurotoxin to use tonight. Two of the other crowd are also involved; they chose and programmed Pamela.”

Vanessa put her glass down. “Oh my,” she sighed and frowned. She started to ask a question, but closed her mouth, then sighed, nodding slightly. Alan was sitting on the can; his thrall was on the bed fingering herself. She’d skimmed the thrall, and verified everything.

She shook her head, glancing up at the ceiling. She was still in Alan’s thrall.

I wasn’t going to interfere.

She smiled again, picking up her glass. It was a hard smile, not a pleasant one. “I’ll take care of this. Thank you for telling me.”

I shook my head. I could stop his heart; he’d fall off the can and that would be that. “Why the fuck won’t they leave me alone?”

She snorted and shook her head. “Not the way it works, darling -- you should know.” Fiefdoms, once again, and long memories.

I sighed. “I know. Still, we can dream.”

She sighed as well. "Oh, how I wish... I'm sorry darling -- I've given that bastard too many chances. He keeps saying he's sorry, it won't happen again. Well, it's *not* going to happen again."

"I can handle it," I told her. "I found this mess. He'll just fall off the can -- coronary."

She shook her head. "Nope, it's my fault for not taking care of him a long time ago."

"You're sure?"

She finished her armagnac, and closed her eyes for a moment, hopefully savoring the experience.

"You owe me another glass of that tomorrow, though, when we can enjoy it," she told me.

"My pleasure," I replied.

She stood, and I stood as well. We hugged.

Vanessa kissed me on the neck and whispered, "Late breakfast tomorrow?"

"Yes," I acknowledged.

I showed her out, and stripped after securing the door.

I gave myself to Pamela. I gave myself to her, and drove her to drown out the voices in my head. I think we both succeeded.

It was easier in the morning. I was grateful to wake up, and even more grateful to wake up to her. She used us both, her instincts so strong, so right.

We made it to brunch, joining Vanessa and thrall; the place was abuzz, and we found out why when immigration and naturalization agents (INS, *la migra*) accompanied by the local police wanted to talk to us. They interviewed Vanessa and I separately, at the same time. Fools. Did we know Alan? Vanessa had known him for years; I'd only met him once before. Did we know the woman with him? No, don't think she spoke five words, and they weren't sitting with us for dinner. Where were they sitting? I don't know! Not at my table! Did I have identification? Certainly, do you? We traded information, except they weren't willing to tell me (us) what this was about.

But we'd skimmed them already, before they got close to us, quickly, easily, efficiently. Vanessa and I continued to correlate what we got from our questioning. It seems Alan and thrall were stopped at the San Ysidro immigration checkpoint North of San Diego late last night; his thrall set off all sorts of alarms when they ran her. Alan and thrall took off at high speed, thrall driving, with INS and California Highway Patrol in pursuit. They lost control of their car, flipping it and perishing instantly.

Gee, authorities rifling their room at the resort didn't turn up much (thanks to Vanessa, who always carried multiple pairs of nitrile gloves), other than indications of an intense tryst and hurried exit.

They interviewed our thralls, who produced even less information. Vanessa and I coordinated with others, insuring they left with uniform conclusions, and that all of us were in the clear.

I took Pamela shopping, outfitting her from her lovely skin out. I indulged both of us in a good perfume -- Shalimar, a weakness of mine.

She wanted to swing by her flat to drop off some things and pick up others.

No good deed goes unpunished, right? She rented the mother-in-law room in back of a larger house. When we drove up in my rental car, INS and the local police were there, harassing the owners and tossing the place! I called our locals -- Jennifer, who brought in Ken and Linda, who were receiving similar treatment. It only took a little while to get supervisors out on the scene and for them to admit they didn't have a reason for harassing us, and to clear out.

But by that time the damage was done. INS is as welcome as crabs at a Catholic girl's school. The room Pamela had been renting was not quite legal, having been added without benefit of permits. The owners, who lived in the front, were now in hot water with the city, and pissed -- they wanted Pamela out, immediately if not sooner, blaming her for all their troubles.

Oh my. I "spoke" to them privately. They'd leave us alone, but the city and the local police were leaning on them. Not much I could do about that.

Back at the resort, I had Pamela take a long, hot bath. What a mess. Pamela was so sweet -- and currently so confused. She'd recently graduated from Cal State with a degree in economics. She was working as a bookkeeper, wanting to do the CPA thing but currently unable to afford it. Now all this.

When I met Diane at the resort back East, she had been in worse shape. But while I was in Estes Park, she got a goal, and the determination to achieve that goal -- I was her goal.

I talked to Diane and Joan. I felt I owed it to Pamela, and thought she'd get along well in our nest. I thought I'd have a hard time convincing them, only to have them interrupt and tell me to bring her home!

I broke it to Pamela before dinner. I wanted her to come home with me. I'd pay for her CPA, no strings, no questions asked. I was sorry she'd gotten dragged into this, and wanted to make it right.

We had dinner with Vanessa, Jennifer, and their thralls. Jennifer told us Ken and Linda were handling cleanup. I let them know it was too late for Pamela; she was being thrown out, but I was taking her in. Pamela was happy, excited about the move, but dreading the steps involved.

Jennifer offered to arrange help; we'd rendezvous in the morning.

As we parted with a hug, Vanessa whispered, "We should have done it your way; I'm sorry." I held her close for a moment. "Thank you for your help."

I took Pamela's arm and went back to our room.

Occasionally my talents are useful; this was one of those times. I inflamed Pamela and let her do the rest, for both of us.

The next morning, after a brief but passionate awakening and a light breakfast, we met at the house.

For me, the decisions were easy. Pamela had a beat-up old Camry that wouldn't make it to the edge of the desert, let alone to Tucson. She didn't have that much in the way of furniture or other belongings. Jennifer and I conferred. I put a hand on the back of Pamela's neck and calmed her. Jennifer would get a moving crew here pronto to pack things up. We were donating the car to the local NPR organization. I'd get her a new car when we got to Tucson. Let's figure what we need/can take on the plane, and how much of what's left needs to be shipped.

Standing in her little bedroom, a beat-up suitcase open on her bed... I turned her, holding her head in my hands, looking into her eyes. "Pamela, this is your chance to start over. Wardrobe? Whatever you want. Darling, the really important things, the things you can't replace, they're attached to you." I kissed her fingertips. "They bleed when cut. Everything else can be replaced. Understand?"

We held each other for a long time. She looked at me with tears in her eyes, but with a smile. I held her more. I'd been through this before. But it hadn't been forced on me -- big difference.

A packing crew arrived. We ended up packing nine boxes. That was it. Oh, we filled the two suitcases, much of that the new stuff we'd just purchased. The boxes were packed and labeled. They'd be taken to UPS and shipped to Tucson. Pamela signed the donation papers for the car. Jennifer told her that she'd take care of the rest of the flat. She told me she'd take care of the owners.

Hugs and kisses, back to the resort for one last night. I didn't have to prompt her -- she grabbed me and took me.

We drove Vanessa to the airport with us; she was flying to Dallas and then the East Coast. From what she knew, the Alan deal was closed, at least as far as the authorities were concerned. As to his thrall's employers? That was our concern. The information the resort had for us wasn't quite accurate; it would be a bitch to track us from that, and we'd know about it.

Oh, one other development -- Barbara had been eager to meet with me, but I'd been quite occupied. She met with Vanessa, taking her to a room with a piano, sitting down and playing from the Anna Magdalena Bach book. She played nervously, but well.

I laughed out loud!

Vanessa laughed with me and squeezed my shoulder. Barbara would be coming to visit her in a week or so, planning to stay for a while. Wonderful news!

I think I was more nervous than Pamela when we got off the plane in Tucson. Shouldn't have

been. Diane and Joan met us and accepted Pamela as a lost sister.

Lost sister -- hah.

Pamela understood there was something special between Diane and I. Diane and I slept together that night; I got some sleep. The next morning, Pamela was ready to start yoga with us. She was untrained, eager, and cautious, which is a good combination. We were all protective of her.

I spent part of the morning catching up on financial matters, which as usual mostly involved trading stocks based on nonpublic insider information. I'd picked some tidbits out of the head of a character two ahead of us in the check-in line at the San Diego airport, a mergers and acquisitions attorney for a high-powered New York law firm who had been musing about current deals. Now I had to decide how to play those musings, and decide which, if any, could be played into gain.

When I came up for air around lunch, I learned Diane had taken Pamela out for clothes! They'd be back by dinner, or we'd meet them somewhere for dinner. That's what I'd bet on.

What I didn't bet on was how much Joan missed me, assaulting me after lunch. What a glorious assault! I missed her, too!

We met the ladies for dinner. Pamela was very upbeat; they'd gone by the University of Arizona campus as well. Had they looked at cars? No, that was my job. I laughed; thanks a lot!

Once again, skimming people is a habit, an unconscious and self-protective one. But sitting down to dinner with them, I caught scheming -- and deliberately stopped skimming when I found that it involved Pamela and me.

Bless them or damn them, I'm not sure. They'd decided I needed "convincing." They did it Diane's way, with additions by Pamela, and starting with her. I was deliberately staying out of their minds, but I could sense her arousal as she approached that evening. I could sense her arousal, then see the determination in her eyes as she pulled me to a perfumed breast.

Pamela had me to herself that night; the next morning Diane and Joan joined in. So good, so intense.

Oh, we ate, we practiced yoga, we walked, we slept -- together. They were determined.

I didn't help. Oh, it was so good, the way they held me, suckled me, inflamed and made love with me.

So why did I wake up in Pamela's arms, crying?

I don't know how to explain it to me -- how could I explain it to them? So many ghosts, the memories of so many ghosts. Particularly Betty -- the taste of her milk, the way she held me, particularly when she was full, squeezing me, urging me on. Her laughter, her cries, the way she murmured as she held me close. I'd grown so much in her arms... And Wendy before her...

Dead. And how many more? Is that what this talent brought, violent and painful death?

Each tear increased their resolve.

They did it. Diane was holding me to a breast, Pamela teasing me, and Joan inflaming us all when something in me gave way. I cried more than I'd ever cried before. But they were tears of release. And when the tears were gone, so was something else. I felt open, unrestrained -- and I let them know it!

So all's right with the world? Nothing but clear skies and chirping birds?

We settled in to a delightful rut, any and all puns intended. We got Pamela started on her path to a grad degree and a CPA. I even ventured out, filling in at a local yoga studio. I was even contemplating teaching, either math/physics at the local junior college, which I could do without any further certification, or at the high school level, which would mean going back for a teaching certificate, which amounted to a handful of useful classes and large, really large doses of politically correct bullshit.

The bastards tried again.

They were a little more clever about it, a little more discreet, for all the good it did them. They started out using captive freemen, cat's paws.

Did I uncover their plot through skill, through talent, through preparation? Of course not -- luck and random chance. I'd taken one of our cars in for scheduled maintenance, and was driving a dealer courtesy car, swinging by the University to pick up Pamela.

If you'd asked those idiots they would have said they were watching for me, all the time, but in reality they were watching for my car, which was in the shop. I pulled into the parking lot a little bit early to pick up Pamela. I pulled into the lot in a different car. Being early, I did what I normally did, started skimming people nearby.

One bastard, two bastards, three... Well, two bastards and a bitch, watching Pamela, tracking her, tracking Joan, tracking Diane, and of course, tracking me. Tracking, building up patterns, relaying those back to their masters -- two of them, safely out-of-state still. The so-called freemen had their marching orders, but they didn't have enough of the puzzle for me to figure out what the overall scheme was. But what I could see, I didn't like. I did my own hopefully subtle manipulations of them.

One guy had a weakness for Asian girls. He was surprised when *two* stopped to chat him up.

He happened to be looking the wrong way when Pamela came out of the building and got into the car with me; we drove off unnoticed.

A few days later, I had more of the puzzle. I had to smile a bit; someone was thinking. I wasn't sure just what the gambit was going to be, but they were playing on my weaknesses -- in particular, my fondness for breasts. The push from some folks with the high school and junior college for me to try

some substitute teaching, just to see if I liked it, and I fit in, was motivated to get me in front of kids. Okay, so the plot involves setting me up with underage girls. Yeah, that could make a mess. Of course, my reputation in the yoga studio was that I didn't succumb to temptation; how were they going to overcome that? Unclear.

I let them build their pattern, using normal enough seeming variations to elicit more of their methods and network. What paranoia! Two teams, with one team, the smaller one, watching the first team to see if they did anything weird!

More luck -- one bastard was picked up by local cops; someone noticed him paying too much attention to high school girls... That set off a flurry of activity (and inactivity), their overlords trying to figure out if I had been involved. They concluded, correctly, that it had just been dumb luck. They rotated new people in, and had women doing the screening. And yes, they were screening for good looking girls with large breasts.

The three that had me now wore me out! What would I do with a fourth?

I found the ringleaders, Randy and Nora, vacationing in Sedona, and skimmed them while they mused about their plot. The team would identify candidates. They would snatch one, implant loads of nasty memories in her, dump her on me, and call the cops. By nudging one or two cops, and one or two medical personnel, they could put together an iron-clad statutory rape case against me. I'd have to either flee the country, or face the music. The same scheme had worked before, a number of times.

Dammit, I wasn't going to let another kid get hurt because of me!

After an evening of snuggling, I got out of bed in the middle of the night. I dressed, got into my car, and left around three in the morning for Sedona, a few hours drive to the North.

Driving, I still wasn't sure how I was going to handle it. Oh, I could handle it from where I was, from where I'd been in bed -- room service would have found their bodies in a few days. But while that would nip the current plot in the bud, it wouldn't send very much of a message to others that this isn't a good thing to try. Stopping this stunt was easy; sending the message was hard.

I arrived at the resort early. I told the staff I was there to have breakfast with Randy and Nora, the guests in cottage 3, and I'd be happy to wait in the breakfast area with a cup of coffee.

Damn, the looks on their faces as they turned the corner to their favorite table and saw me sitting there... To their credit, they did come and sit down. Maybe it was the surprise, maybe it was figuring out what was likely to happen if they made a run for it...

"Good morning, Randy, Nora," I greeted them as they sat down. "Orange," I said to the waiter pointing to Nora, and "Tomato," pointing to Randy, "and I'll have another glass of orange juice, please."

The waiter nodded and took off.

"I don't know what's good about it," Randy muttered.

I chuckled. "Look on the bright side! You woke up this morning! That's a pretty good start..."

Randy gave me a cross look, and Nora turned a little on the pale side -- she was the smarter one.

Both of them were frightened, and mad. How had they screwed up? How had *the other one* screwed up, *those damn thralls* screwed up?

"Don't worry about who to blame," I told them quietly, "Worry instead about seeing the sun come up tomorrow morning."

Our juice arrived. Cold, fresh squeezed. I ordered the huevos rancheros with corn tortillas. Nora ordered eggs on corned beef hash, and Randy, the putz, ordered waffles.

"Beautiful sunrise this morning, and the sky was so clear, the stars so bright with no moon," I mused as our hostess led another couple by us.

Then softer, "Try and move your left hands -- that's it, try, really try." Panic covering their faces as they found they couldn't move their left hands, or left arms, for that matter. "I can paralyze any muscle in your bodies. *Any* muscle -- think about what that means..."

I enjoyed my juice for a bit.

I gave them control of their left hands and arms again. Randy rubbed his hands together. Nora made small gestures with her left hand and nodded slightly as she looked at me.

"I've got a very simple question for you two -- how are you going to convince me, in the next hour, that I should let you live? Oh, taken for granted dismantling your little project, including the watchers and the separate watchers each of you have who are watching the others."

They looked at each other briefly -- that last tidbit had been a surprise... Realizing neither of them really trusted the other...

"What do you want us to do?" Nora asked.

"Help me figure out how to convince people, people like yourselves, that I just want to be left the hell alone! I mean, the fact that people who come after me suddenly turn up dead, or suddenly just don't turn up anymore, doesn't seem to be much of a hint. What do I have to do to get the point across? Hmmm? Oh good, breakfast! I'm starving!"

The corn tortillas were home-made, small and irregular. So good steaming hot, rolled up with a little butter and salt. Nora ate heartily; Randy picked at his breakfast.

"Look, I don't know how to make it any simpler. Leave me alone. Did I come to Atlanta looking for trouble? Did I come to Atlanta at all? No! You sent those busybodies, and came out here to me! Oh, the one who got picked up by the cops, in the park? You were right -- I had nothing to do with

that. But I learned a lot watching you scramble afterwards.” I fixed myself another tortilla.

“I promise, I won’t bother you again,” Randy told me.

I pointed at him with my tortilla. “Not good enough, in addition to the fact that none of us, yourself included, particularly believes what you just said. I can read you like a fucking billboard.”

He frowned and sat back.

Nora sighed and shook her head. She put her hand on mine, dropping all her defenses. I could see, and feel, how disgusted she was with the whole thing, oh it had started out as an interesting challenge, and it would have been quite a coup, but Randy was such a putz. “I’m sorry I had anything to do with it. Not only will I promise not to bother you again, but if I hear of anybody planning to, I’ll tell them flat out to grow up and find something useful to do instead -- they’ll live longer.”

I looked to Randy; we both looked to Randy. He sat there.

Nora pulled out a cell phone. She punched a number. “It’s over -- go home. No, you’ve done well; you’ve all done well. We’re pulling the plug. It’s over. Go home.”

She made two more similar calls, then folded up her phone and put it back in her purse. She looked to Randy.

With a frown, he took out his phone and made two calls. “Happy now?” he asked.

I sighed and shook my head, fixing another tortilla, mopping up the remains of an egg yolk. “You don’t get it.” I looked to Nora, skimming her briefly. I touched her hand and said, “Thank you.” I returned to Randy. “Look, this is probably the first time in your life where you had to work, and work over some extended period of time. It didn’t work out. But hey, you just might learn something from it! Don’t waste time placing blame -- accept responsibility and move on, for Christ’s sake! Look, if you spent half as much time and effort disrupting dangerous drugs in Ratlanta, or tripping up graft and corruption, you’d have a lot more fun, and you just might make a difference! Yeah, I know, ‘sheeple,’ right? I’ve got a really disgusting thought for you -- if they’re sheeple, you know what that makes us? It makes us shepherds -- whaddya think of that?”

Randy frowned, threw down his napkin in disgust, and walked away from the table. I let him go.

I shook my head and had another bite of tortilla. I looked to Nora.

She was shaking her head, pained. She looked at me, put her hand on mine again, and said, “I never thought of it that way... We are...” She sat back, still shaking her head. I’d hit a nerve...

I sat back as well, relaxing a bit -- and checking on Randy, who was busy packing in their room, intent on leaving as soon as he could, with or without Nora.

Nora had a pained look, her world shaken. “What do I do now?”

“Finish your breakfast?” I suggested.

She smiled and nodded.

A few minutes later, she sat up, and started to bolt from the table -- I put my hand on hers. “Let him go,” I told her. “I’ll give you a lift to Phoenix.”

“What are you going to do about him?” she asked a bit later.

I shrugged. “Depends on what he does. If he leaves me alone, I’ll leave him alone.”

She frowned and shook her head.

“His choice. And I’ll watch him like a hawk.” My dilemma -- should I order more tortillas?

I went with her back to her room. As expected, he’d made a mess of things in his rush to leave.

“What a little pain in the ass!” she exclaimed, hands on her hips. “Worse than my little brother!”

I smiled. “I’ll help pick up. Does your brother have it?”

She shook her head. “No, thank God. I’m the only one in the family.”

While packing up, she handed me a small box. It contained some of the instant-lust perfume, and some other mind-altering drugs they’d brought.

“I’ll get rid of these,” I told her.

We cleaned up the room; she packed her things. She called and had her flights changed, deciding to fly to San Francisco for a few days, just to play tourist. Good for you! I called the ladies, letting them know I was fine, and would be back that afternoon. They missed and needed me -- I missed them, and needed them, too.

Of course he bolted without paying for the room, which they were leaving a day early, but he’d left a credit card imprint, so he got billed for it anyway.

She let out a big sigh on the drive to Phoenix; I put a hand on her thigh. “What?” I asked.

“What do I do now? Where to start?”

“Yoga is a good place to start -- take it slow and easy. So many things will do -- pick one and dig deep, dig deep.”

“Piano?” she suggested, smiling again, putting a hand on my leg.

“That, too,” I agreed.

She looked at me again, eyebrows knitting together. “They miss you.”

I sighed. “Yes, and I miss them. Dammit, that’s what makes me so mad! Go after *me*, try to kill *me*, fine -- but you were going to hurt another person, an *innocent* person.” I went from a whisper, to yelling, back to almost a whisper. I focused on the road, on driving.

A hand on my leg, then on my shoulder. “I’m sorry,” she said, emotion in her voice. “I mean it -- I think I understand better now.”

We parted with hugs at the airport.

She had the strangest look on her face.

“What is it?” I asked.

She gave me a brief hug once more, dropping her defenses. “Thank you; thank you for everything.”

“You’re welcome. I’m glad something good came out of it.”

She sighed. “I may call, visit in a few months?”

I nodded. “You’ll be welcome; you know that.”

She called about a month later. “He’s at it again,” she said flatly over the phone.

“I know,” I replied. I’d been checking in on him regularly, and spotted it a few days earlier.

“Are you going to do something?”

I sighed. “He doesn’t leave me much choice. You might leave town for a few days.”

She managed a chuckle. “I’m calling from Dulles; my flight to London leaves in an hour.”

“Give the Queen my best, then.”

“I will.”

“Have I been hearing stories about politicians in Atlanta caught in compromising situations?”

She chuckled. “You just might have. It’s been fun, and a challenge.”

“Good for you. Call me when you get back, or swing by.”

“I just might do that.”

I put down the phone and walked out on to the deck. I reached out... It didn't take very long, twenty minutes or so. And I didn't even care if he figured it out at the end. He wouldn't bug me again.

Back in the house, Pamela held me. “You're cold! Let me help you warm up!”

I gave her a squeeze. “I need to shower first, then I'll need you to hold me, please.”

She looked confused. “Didn't you shower after yoga this afternoon?”

I nodded. “Yes, but I feel dirty -- I need a shower. Alone -- I'll be quick.”

She frowned and pushed her lower lip out in a pout.

I kissed her on the nose and headed for the bathroom.

CODA

Samantha and I completed our yoga practice; we sat together in meditation, as we usually did, my legs in double pigeon with her in my lap. Eyes closed, the deep natural breath, grounding after a slow but intense practice, feeling her warmth, the warmth of the sun on my back and right side.

I felt a presence in the doorway; my Diane.

I moved my arms around Samantha's waist, breathing her in, kissing her deeply, feeling her nipples press against me. “Thank you, dear,” I whispered, kissing her neck.

“Thank you, Master,” she whispered in reply.

I turned my head and nodded to Diane. Samantha started to move, but I held her where she was. I liked her where she was. Diane was sitting in thunderbolt just inside the doorway to the sun room where we do morning practice. I held out a hand to her.

She moved closer, hugging us both. She brought her ever-present clipboard.

“And?” I asked.

She smiled more. “We have a conference call in just over an hour,” she started out.

I nodded. Must be something else for such an early reminder. “Are there things we need to review beforehand?”

“That will only take a few minutes,” she replied.

I raised an eyebrow. So why are you letting me know now?

She tilted her head slightly. "You really need to decide on Paris, so we can let Vanessa know," she chided.

"Two days in Paris, and five in the countryside?" I recalled.

She smiled. "A private chateau. Vanessa is sweetening the pot -- she's arranged for us to fly to Paris on a positioning flight, an airline accepting delivery of a new aircraft."

I nodded. Travel could be such a bother. "We'll go, but that means you and I, and who else?" I kissed the neck of the lithe and lively young woman still sitting in my lap.

Diane sighed. "Master, Bunny *really* needs you..."

I raised an eyebrow again. She seldom called me "Master." "Now, or on the trip?"

"I can take care of her," Samantha growled, kissing my neck and writhing slowly in my lap.

Diane chuckled a bit. "Both, please. Paul, she really needs you. Gloria agrees."

I held Samantha, feeling her press against me, rocking her hips. "I know you can, darling, and you have. You've helped her greatly, and you help me, so much," I whispered.

I turned to Diane. "Okay... You, Bunny, and I to Paris, unless Vanessa has more specific suggestions."

Diane took a note. "I'll check and advise. Vanessa will be pleased."

"It will be good to see her again," I agreed.

Samantha ground against me and growled, "See?" in my ear, nibbling my neck.

I laughed and squeezed her. "Are you jealous?" I asked, looking her in the eye. She was my current practice partner.

She met my gaze. "Of course I am..." She held my eyes in hers as she rocked her hips.

I turned once more to Diane. "Have Bunny wait for me in the passion pit? I'll join her there in a few minutes? You can wake me in time to prep for the call."

Diane bowed in front of me, another thing she seldom does. She left the room.

"Oh, thank you," I whispered to Samantha.

She gave me such a wondrous, complex look. "Thank *you*, Master," she whispered. Then she added, almost pleaded, "Please?"

I nodded. She closed her eyes. They don't know, I mused, they don't understand... As much as they need me, I need them even more... I took a slow breath, gathering energy, raising my hands.

I held the sides of her head lightly, and kissed her forehead as I breathed energy into her. As I kissed her forehead, I had to hold her more as she moaned and shook as she gave herself to orgasm, holding me as best she could.

She collapsed against me; I eased her down and covered her with a blanket. As I left the room, I glanced back to see her so peaceful there on our practice mats, my mark glowing on her forehead.

I paused briefly at the downstairs washroom to freshen up before going to Bunny. I sighed as I dried my face. Bunny, the latest in a long succession, starting with ... Wendy, over two decades ago. Young women, with so much to give, and needing so much, needing to be healed, needing to give.

Looking at myself in the mirror, I guess I haven't aged that much. Some times it's so hard, the energy to heal them, but what I get back from them is so great. Yet the hardest and the best part is at the end when they're whole, healed, stronger and better than before, and ready to leave the nest.

I smiled and almost laughed; and some of them *do* leave the nest, and some of them stay...

All of them stay at least a little while longer... Gloria, our now-resident therapist, explained it to me. She explained it as it was happening between us. We reach that critical point in therapy when we know it's at an end, but we don't *want* it to end, don't want to part, don't want to lose that comfortable bond... For some, it takes more time to realize they need more, and they need to look outside.

But some stay. Gloria stayed, "to help me, and others." Yes, and to be held, and to snuggle in the mornings, or the afternoons. And Diane, and Samantha, and Kerry. But others left -- Joan, Andi, Beth, Cathryn, Elsie, Barbara, our sweet Pamela, years ago... And Bunny? Too soon to tell. So young, still so damaged, with such strong needs...

Down the hall to the passion pit, our downstairs room outfitted with cushions and soft lighting. So many fond memories... Of course, I'd been about to take Samantha on the mats in the sun room, or let her take me... Last week she took me down here, where we could snuggle better afterwards...

Stepping into the room, still naked from yoga practice, the room dimly lit. I caught a whiff of Bunny's perfume. I could feel her need.

"Master..." she whispered from a nest of cushions, opening her arms. "*I need you...*"

She was wearing a plush robe, laying on top of plush cushions and spreads. Oh, she knows my weaknesses... They all do...

As I got down and moved closer, she opened her robe. Her perfume, warmth, and need were stronger. I closed my eyes, sliding my left arm under her, breathing in her perfume and her arousal, feeling her hand touch my head and draw me closer.

We both moaned as lips and breast connected. I melted into her as she squeezed me, smothering me in her perfume, and filling me with her milk. She held me, squeezing me, moving more on top of me. I let go. I drifted in her fog and barely remembered being switched to the other side.

Hands on me, and evidently on her by the way she moved and sounded. Whispers that must be meant for her, she moaned and moved my head around, her nipple tightening in my mouth, other hands on the insides of my thighs and my belly. Gloria's voice, speaking to Bunny; I thought I recognized her trance trigger phrase. I let go and enjoyed, enjoyed teasing hands that helped slide us together. More hands on us as Bunny rode me, moaning. So nice, wrapped up in her, holding on, being held.

A hand behind my head, cradling me, I gave myself to the whisper in my ear, letting it build, needing her so much. Bunny came atop me, moaning and shaking.

Smothered to her suddenly, strongly, her hips swirling me around as the voice in my ear drove me, drove me, drove me ... and commanded ... "*come!*"

I pumped into Bunny, held her, floated and rocked in her embrace.

Waking to that whisper again, Bunny and I wound together, sucking on her, listening to Gloria's voice, helping suck Bunny deeper and deeper, more and more relaxed. Comforted, safe, and loved.

I came up slowly, gently, detaching from her and rolling away. I didn't want to -- I wanted to stay wrapped up in her.

But I opened my eyes to Gloria and Diane next to me. Gloria was whispering to Bunny. Diane helped me sit up, then stand. I held her and hugged her, moving her to another pile of cushions.

"No you don't!" she whispered. "Gloria wants to work with Bunny, and you have a phone call!"

I kissed her neck. "Oh, all right..."

She held me. "We can come back here after," she offered.

"Hope it's a short call," I whispered, kissing and nibbling.

"Long enough for you to recover," she suggested, squeezing me.

I squeezed her and led us out of the room. She had a terry robe for me. I put it on and we went to my private office.

When we stepped in the door, she pulled up her clipboard.

Instead of sitting in my chair, I sat on the futon and pulled her to my lap.

She frowned.

Gigue

“I’m listening,” I told her with a smirk.

She gave me such a complex look, then wrapped her arms around my head, nestling me between her breasts. “But I need you too! Oh, I need to hold you and suckle you!”

We got back on track, reviewed what I needed for the call, and joined the others on time.

More dichotomies -- acting as a participant, as an advisor to the group. Still such petty differences. We could get together and work them out so easily, I kept telling the others. Hah -- get us together, and I could smooth out those differences very easily... But it was the differences that gave our group its strength, looking at each investment decision from our different perspectives.

Just like the dichotomies in my house. They call me “Master,” almost worshipping me, some have, and yet I give myself to them, I let go to them, I *need* them...

Such a delicious trap. So soft, so warm.

And it’s all so fucking hollow inside, so empty.

FIN

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Gigue

By silli_artie@hotmail.com

<http://www.asstr.org/~artie>