

READBEAST

BEASTIALITY STORIES



I wish to thank and dedicate this effort to readers who have been so encouraging of me to create stories. The idea for this story derived from my intention to continue an interest in new ideas, characters, and story lines of substance and to hone the process of writing. The encouragement of readers has stimulated an interest in writing from casual 'let's see what comes out' to a more deliberate process. This effort is another attempt, a story of more complex, perhaps initially troubling characters, while developing into a sexual, and clearly, bestial vent.

The setting for the story in my mind is modern day in south central Colorado. More specifically, an area of land about twenty miles from the New Mexico border and on the eastern slopes of mountains. The region is remote, some might call it desolate if driving past it. The places are still essentially primitive, still wild and raw, somewhat untamed, and in some locations, seemingly inaccessible simply due to geological formations.

This is the story of one man and one woman who find themselves through a series of events being bound to one another after a process of discovering things about each other and themselves, things they hadn't ever expected.

Ike Man

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## **PROLOGUE**

A woman awakens from a existence of brutality and abuse, the only life she had known for many years as a sexual slave. She awakens in a strange place, with a man who was unknown to her, an overwhelming, larger-than-life kind of man. As she slowly adjusts to her surroundings, this place, this situation, even this man, it seems safe, comfortable, and welcome. But such a dramatic shift in life experience can be difficult to navigate, or believe. But, what could be simpler or safer, than a life on a ranch. This man was no ordinary rancher, though, and she would discover just how different he was as she fully awakened and recovered from her life of abuse, subjugation, and control. She would discover just how much her time as an abused slave had changed her. Changed her in a way that only through their joint journey of discovery could they fully appreciate and, in the process, find fulfillment, purpose, joy, wonder, and pleasure as a result of that shared journey.

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CHAPTER ONE

Mitch Conner was sitting in the quiet little café in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. As sometimes happened, his mind took him on a journey back into time. It was okay with him that he spent these quiet moments in the past. He had made the decision a while ago that the past was the past, but forgetting the past was often a serious mistake. Moreover, despite the fact that he had taken very deliberate actions and steps to separate himself from that past, he knew he couldn't afford any lazy mistakes. Not that he regretted any part of his past. He wasn't running from anything, it was more like ignoring. That nearly always brought a smile to face; he liked that way of thinking about it. He had lived, served, and dealt with the world in ways most people would never know. Now, he simply wanted to ignore it. After that time in the world, he felt the world owed him that simple right to now ignore it.

The image of him in the café that day, gave that impression very clearly. As happened occasionally, this large man occupied the corner table as he always did when he stopped in. Not that he was regular by any means; it was just that you didn't miss him when you saw him. He only appeared in Pagosa Springs every three or four weeks. It was as though he was simply passing through on some

regular route except for his truck and manner. There was a comfortable sense to him as if he was near home. He was always dressed as if he just left something he had been working on. And, big he was. But, only in a muscular way. He had to be 6 foot 2 inches tall and 220 pounds, but every bit of it muscle. His hair was longish, over his ears, and jet black. Despite just turning 40 year old, his hair like his body, showed no signs of it. And, when he was dressed like he was today on this warm spring day, women seemed to speculate about it while men seemed to not want to. Worn jeans and work boots, a faded black tee shirt stretched tightly over his chest, shoulders, and arms, this one saying 'Release the Beast'. His pickup was also worn and always dirty and dusty, further evidence to people that he must be from around there somewhere. He never talked to anyone, always sitting by himself, never engaging anyone except for an occasional smile or 'thank you' to a server or after paying his bill. People were curious but he wasn't forthcoming.

He knew what was happening around him, of course. He was very astute, very aware at all times what was happening around him, even if he didn't directly shift his gaze. But, this part of his life was his solitude phase, or as he liked to think of it, ignoring the rest of the world. Oh, sure, he knew he had to interact with people; he just worked at trying to minimize that interaction to as little as possible. His mind was drifting, drifting back over the years, the events that led him to this place that he now called home, a place where he could ignore the world.

He was interrupted by a tentative server, "More coffee, sir?"

Without looking up, he started fishing out his equally worn wallet, "No, thank you. But, could I bother you for a large coffee to go?"

He looked up at her, finally. She was holding a large Styrofoam glass with a lid on it, "I thought you might ask for one." She was smiling shyly at him. A sweet smile, he thought. Sometimes he thought about entering this little corner of the world, engaging some of these people, like her. She was awfully young, though. He thanked her and left the café, but instead of going directly to his pickup, he crossed the blacktop road and made his way to the little, fast moving river that ran along the road at this location. This little town seemed to pull him into the past more than the others. He split his trips for supplies between three towns but never on a routine. He might go to the same one twice in a row or skip one. It was his way of remaining unknown, unpredictable, and avoid routine when he was in the world. He smiled; it wasn't that he was paranoid, just careful. He knew there was a huge difference.

He actually evaluated his action as he sat down along the bank of the river. He seemed to do this frequently after visiting the little café, evidenced by the server anticipating his desire for a large coffee to go. He thought back and knew he hadn't stopped here in a month. He knew he stood out and that was always part of the issue in the past. Maybe he would have to change this routine that he was surprised had become a routine. He hated to, though, the river here was energizing with all this water crashing over rocks, tumbling toward some unknown destination. Maybe he should raft it sometime, find out what was down river ... yeah, maybe ... sometime ...

As he sat on the bank sipping his large, very black coffee, his past came flooding back over him. He had no TV and devoured books once it became dark. But, he found it occasionally interesting to reflect on his life, what brought him to this new, unexpected lifestyle. A life he now relished and protected through all these careful avoidances of routine and entanglements. And just as he had no idea where the water directly in front of him went, what it would encounter beyond his present sight, so too was he unaware of the turn his life was about to take just beyond his present perception.

His life started so simply, at least to him. It was only much later that he understood how hard it had

been for his mother. He barely recalled anything of his father, even at a young age. The man who should have been his role model in the world abandoned them, his mother, sister, little brother, and him. He was only six, at the time. Only six ... If there ever was a saint in the world, though, it was his mother. She worked tirelessly to keep the house and the family together. Despite her long hours and struggle to keep their life on track, all the kids knew was an even existence, a growing up filled with school, homework every night, and activities. She had the opinion that kids kept busy would be too busy to get into trouble. For them, at least, it seemed to work for they all made it through growing up without the troubles and difficulties so many of their friends seemed so drawn to.

As the oldest, he was given the added task of looking after the other two, making sure homework was completed and they stayed out of trouble. As they grew, they went their own way in school and extracurricular activities but they were all busy with something. Mitch was exceptional, though, in almost everything he tried. He had straight A's and helped his siblings achieve good grades, too. But, besides the academics, he was a natural athlete and his body quickly grew to a size that in combination with natural abilities made him a standout in sports year-round. Although he played baseball in season, he tended to basketball and football, especially in High School at their suburban Dallas school. He was a running back in football all four years in High School, the only one to ever start as a freshman. If the line gave him an opening, linebackers were trying to stop a car by the time he got a head of steam, which often only took to reaching the line of scrimmage. The poor defensive backs didn't stand a chance if they met him one-on-one.

His exceptional grades and football skills, rushing records, and scouting appraisals got him a full ride scholarship at the University of Arizona in Tucson. He often assumed he would be playing for the beloved University of Texas, but they thought he should walk-on so a scholarship could be used to attract an additional prospect from out-of-state. He thought they could go to hell. The Pac-10, at the time, was fine with him. He excelled there, too, and learned a lot about nutrition and putting on muscle, something he never forgot or took for granted. He started the first season as a backup running back. Half way through that first season he was the starter and held that status for the following three seasons. Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering degree, he immediately re-enrolled for the Master of Business Administration program. He finished it a semester early and thought he was on his way.

His mother continually reminded him that gifts like his must be shared, given back to others in some way. All through high school, he had done just that, especially for his sister and brother and both had turned out well. His brother it turned out had a knack for repairing anything with a motor and somehow kept bringing life to the family car and later Mitch's junk cars. And, along the way, Mitch learned more than just a little under his little brother's guidance. His sister opened her own little shop and was very successful. She married well and they have a boy and girl of their own. Even now, he smiled; there couldn't possibly be a better 'Nana' to those kids than his mother.

His mother's entreat haunted him constantly, 'use your gifts for others'. While at UA, he spent countless hours helping other players manage the classwork. He was devoted to the team, motivating and leading by his work ethic and commitment. He was shocked and embarrassed when, as a sophomore, the coach came to him early in the practice season to tell him he had been elected by the team to be a Captain.

"I can't, Coach. It isn't right; one of the seniors should be selected."

"This isn't a coaching staff decision, Mitch. The team elected you as one of the captains. It was the only unanimous selection." He took it as a commitment of trust. The coaching staff had never seen such a captain as what they experienced over the next three seasons. It was the best three years of football the school had ever experienced.

That experience and his mother's words hung on him after he received his MBA. Was the business world the life that would satisfy his mother and himself? He realized something after football was over. He had a streak in him that needed scratching, a need for action, excitement. As it happened, he was passing a small strip mall looking for a coffee shop and what he found was an Army recruitment office not far from the campus. He spent nearly two hours with both recruiters, spent the night thinking about it, and then called his mother early in the morning, catching her with enough time to talk before she left for work.

"I am thinking about signing up for the Army, mom."

"You have your degree, those offers from firms ... are you sure, son?"

"You have always told me to help others. Maybe this is it." She was scared, her son in the Army during wartime. But, she was more proud. She gave her blessing and her prayers.

Too soon, he found himself in Afghanistan. He performed well and gained the trust and respect of his squad mates and leaders. Almost before he knew it, he was a heavy gun specialist in a squad assigned to root out a cell in a residential area. They would have the support of a sniper and his spotter to watch over them. Everything went to terrible very soon. They were pinned down and caught in crossfire. Their ten soldiers were trying to survive against maybe five times their number. The lieutenant called for help from the sniper, but all that came back was static. They looked to his location and saw black smoke coming from the rooftop. The lieutenant panicked, gave bad commands, and immediately got two of their number killed. Then he completely broke down.

Mitch took command. It was illegal, command was still in place, and he wasn't even next in command. He let the officer rant and rave and predictably, he stood up to make a point. He was killed before he fully stood. Mitch then distributed the men into a defensive line.

He glared at them with the full effect of his size behind him, "Give me five minutes", he turned for the sniper nest, then stopped, "oh, yeah, NOBODY dies!" In four minutes, there was a distant crack of the sniper rifle, then another and another and another. The forward man peeked over his cover and saw enemy falling from windows, doorways and as they attempted to cross the street. After a firefight for the next two hours, the buildings were cleared and Mitch was rejoining the squad as Humvees' arrived with backup. The squad estimated that he had accounted for 19 kills from his sniper position. A position that was 500 yards away.

That put him into sniper training for the seven-week course at Fort Benning back in the States. Then he was back in Afghanistan for another tour. His proficiency attracted the attention of the Rangers who then recruited him. As always, he excelled in every phase and mission. The mission that again changed his fate was a complete disaster. The chopper taking them to their drop zone was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade from the ground. When he came to, alongside the burnout wreckage, he was the only man alive. The Rangers are trained to be given mission goals and only general instruction for carrying them out. They were expected to adjust to the conditions to accomplish the goal. This was quite an adjustment. He figured the only plan now that might work would have to be bold. When he succeeded to eliminating the senior leaders of a cell hiding in the mountains, the stories travelled to new segments of the government.

His life really changed when the CIA contacted him and brought him to Langley for interviews. He had been in the Army for four years, now the shadowy CIA was recruiting him. Waiting in the secure complex of Langley, a man watching his every move, as if he was going to steal something. He was beginning to think this whole 'giving back' thing of his mother's was getting a little out of hand.

He already knew how to kill on the battlefield. Now he was taught how to kill without being seen doing it. Stealth and subtlety, blending into the surroundings and patient surveillance became new tools for his survival. He was trained in the fine arts of being an assassin, infiltrating targets, and quietly eliminating those individuals of greatest threat to the nation's security. It was a part of our government that was not admitted, not talked about, and publicly was not condoned. It existed nonetheless, and we all knew in our hearts it had to, and deeper in our hearts we all wanted it to exist, an arm of the nation that 'took care of business', the dirty business; we just didn't want to know about it. That is where Mitch found himself, mired in the dirty business of protecting our country, not openly and 'honorably' as on the battlefield, but secretly, in ways nobody wanted to hear about.

Sadly, to him initially, he excelled at this, too. He could spend a month in a strange location, insinuating himself into the fabric of the surrounds, and with agonizing patience identify routines and weaknesses that would eventually lead to the target's end. When it went perfectly, it was quiet and a mystery. When it didn't go perfect, it often led to a mad chase for a known pick-up location and transportation to safety.

He was in the field; rarely back in the States for more than a month. During those times, his cover was a leave from the service. Mail was routed to him when possible. When it wasn't, email exchanges with his handler produced timely responses that most always satisfied family.

During those eight years with the CIA, a new opportunity presented itself. His alias became known in the world of assassins and killing for hire. When his alias received an unsolicited offer from another government, he passed it to his handler who in turn took it further up the chain of command. They saw an opportunity. If other governments wished to take their own action and if it aligned with our government's interests, they saw a way to take action on targets that might not otherwise receive approval. Each such offer was passed back through channels and approved or denied.

A side benefit his handlers ignored by never discussing was the payments for such contracts. He setup confidential and secret accounts in several offshore banks known for their strict privacy policies. In a matter of four years of this extra activity between his government and private assignments, he had amassed in the neighborhood of 40 million dollars. A large chunk of it was the result of breaking up the sale of nuclear material to a terrorist group. All parties involved were eliminated and the nuclear material safely contained for the cleanup team. The payment, however, seemed to evaporate. Yes, it was blood money, but for actions he convinced himself were for the benefit of the country and civilized men and women everywhere. That's at least the story he kept telling himself. It was getting harder, though, as the assignments seemed to get more reckless and bold.

Agents had a life span in that business. Most were established by their death when an assignment went bad. Mitch could see his life span ending soon if he continued. He had used up more than his share of luck. He called his handler to be brought in. He wanted out. And he got out. It took four months of debriefings. It took fabrication of and planting documents around the country, in companies, on the internet, and everywhere else our names and history could be found. He went back to being Mitch Conner. He was given a history, a documented history, of his missing years while in the CIA.

He found himself in a brokerage firm, excellently matched by his new history and a hot line to government financial and economic analysts. He was quite successful for his clients over the next four years. At 37 years of age, he left the world of high finance and never turned back. Between the firm he had hired while still an agent and his own handling of his investments, he turned his wealth

into a 60 million dollar portfolio located in five separate confidential banks. That was when he decided to find a way to 'ignore the world'. He couldn't imagine living in such a way as to use the earnings from his money. A modest return of 5% would annually yield three million dollars. Before disappearing from the world, he met with his family, first taking care of their debts, his brothers business, his sister and mother's homes. He created trust funds for the nephew and niece, funds for each of his siblings and his mother for them to realize in a year's time. With a well-crafted will to distribute his wealth among his family and carefully selected charities, he headed back to Arizona where it really seemed to start for him.

He spent a month there before ending up in south Colorado. He was roaming, looking, experiencing. He just wasn't sure what it was he was looking for; he only hoped that he would recognize it when it knocked him over. But, not many things in his life had managed to knock him over. He had learned patience and subtlety and that was what he practiced on his long drives over highway, side roads, and dirt tracks. It was on a dirt track that he nearly ran over his opportunity, Jerome Abernathy. Mitch had taken a room in Monte Vista, Colorado and was roaming the mountains and side roads of the area. The mountains were inviting and he was considering some hiking, if he found a likely place. Instead, what he found was his future.

Rarely seeing anyone else on his drives on back dirt roads, he was admittedly charging down this one too fast, but he had become complacent. The road, if in fact anyone from a populated center would call it that, was barely more than a single vehicle wide, so when he came over a small rise and saw the stopped, old pickup right in front of him, he was forced to slam on his breaks and ease his way halfway into the ditch on the left to avoid the truck and the old man who jumped up from under the hood at the sound of crunching gravel and dirt. As he brought the vehicle to a stop just beyond the old man, he slumped forward with his forehead on his arms on the steering wheel. He was quietly cursing the old man, but after numerous deep breaths to regain a steady heart rate, he cursed himself for being so careless.

After regaining his composure and thankful that it wasn't worse, he stepped out of the truck and proceeded back to the old man. "I am sorry, sir. I hope I didn't scare you too much. I was driving too fast and I knew it."

"Relax, son. There was no harm done and I broke down this time in a very inconvenient place."

They got into a discussion about his breaking down as the two gazed into the engine. With no tools, there wasn't much they were going to do about it, though. The old man introduced himself as Jerome Abernathy and Mitch returned with his, volunteering that he was just roaming and had no commitments, if he needed a tow. Abernathy quickly accepted, indicating that it was about three miles down this road and a little under two miles in from there. "If you think this road is bad, wait until you see mine." The old man laughed in a way that caused Mitch to wonder what he getting into with this old guy.

The track from the bad road was no more than a two ruts cut into the range land by frequent use. If it had ever been graded as a road, it was at least a generation ago. Mitch worked on the truck engine the rest of the day and into the night, finally coming up with a list of parts needed to complete the task. He spent the night with the old man. He noticed a rickety old distribution line coming into the property to the house and out-building, but the man lived with kerosene lamps at night. His bathroom and kitchen used electricity. The stove was propane fed by a tank positioned safely away from the house. And the house was a common four-square farm house with large porch on the front, two stories with bedrooms upstairs that he learned were never used, any more. The man had settled into a makeshift bedroom in what might have once been a study on the main floor.

He was convinced to spend the night there, took the man into Monte Vista to get the parts. Then the man further convinced Mitch to save some money and stay at his place. Mitch relented, spent much of the rest of the day finishing the repairs on the truck until it ran better than it had in more than a decade. The old man found Mitch repairing some steps to the porch in the morning, but it didn't end there. Mitch pushed to identify the most urgent priorities for repairs and proceeded to knock them off the list, going back into town for supplies and tools he needed for his jobs. They were both surprised when they realized that a month had passed like this.

Mitch woke in the middle of the night sensing a disturbance in the night quiet more than actually hearing anything. He found Abernathy in the kitchen, a kerosene lamp glowing next to him as he poured over papers and letters. Then it all came out of the old man like a gentle river after a dam upstream failed, sending water down like a churning, boiling force. In the old man, though, it transformed this upbeat, positive, and gentle man into a conflicted and tormented rag of emotion and self-doubt. It had been a race for a long time and it now appeared that he was going to lose. A race? Between the bank and his life. He couldn't afford even the taxes on this land. The land had passed from generation to generation to him and his beloved who had passed a decade ago. His eyes softened, again, at the mere sounding of her name, Olivia, a woman he was convinced was one of God's very special angels, an angel He finally decided He wanted with Him. To Mitch it wasn't only the name that reminded him of his mother, it was also the description, the awe she drew from this man, the awe and inspiration he felt for his own mother all his life. Even through all the violence of his adult life, her vision, her words, and her entreating 'to serve' drove him even then to know right and wrong, acting for good from acting for expediency or convenience.

They talked the rest of the night and into the morning. Mitch took a sheet of paper, a letter that wasn't needed and started taking notes of things that needed to be arranged and taken care of in priority. He looked down the list finally after the second pot of coffee and he knew he needed to burn off some of the caffeine, but there were still details to be defined. They talked more.

Mitch went back to something that was started and then diverted by the memories of his Olivia. The race. The race between the bank foreclosure and his life? He had cancer. He was living his life rather than succumbing to the dreadful treatments that even the doctors gave little chance for helping. He had maybe a month left, but it was now looking like the banks would foreclose well before then. They had children, but they were all in large cities from Denver to the Midwest, Chicago and Kansas City. None had any interest in the land, what the land represented in value maybe, but not in taking over the land. How much land was there, what livestock, how much taxes were owed? Mitch had a hundred questions now; his financial background came back in a rush, filling his mind with focus. He had money, more than he could ever use, more than his family could ever use; he could make a difference here.

Jerome Abernathy should be a wealthy man but for bad fortune. He had inherited from the past Abernathy's a huge tract of land measuring 3 miles by 5 miles, including mountain land and half the valley on the other side, a part of the land he and Olivia only investigated a few times. The remainder of the valley was Forest Service land and protected. The land east of the mountains is simply range land for the cattle and horses. He was unsure how many cattle and horses were even out there. His embarrassment took over him; he hadn't bothered with them much since his wife died. Only occasionally retrieving some for butchering or selling for supplies. He lived without any conveniences and didn't need much except for the taxes and he couldn't bring himself to sell everything. His embarrassment was compounded to confess to this man across the table from him, a man who worked so honestly and selflessly even for those he hardly knew.

Mitch leaned across the table and took the old, wrinkled hands into his own. They looked into each other's eyes for many minutes, neither daring to say a word with the emotion hanging in the room.

Finally, Mitch made his decision and stood up, "Sir, I need to go into town for a little while. Is your offer to stay here open for a while longer?"

"As long as you want to stay, son."

"Thank you, sir, you're very kind."

"I think that's backward, but we won't argue the point."

Early afternoon and Mitch was on the road to Alamosa, Colorado. Regionally, it was the hub with a population of about 9,500 and the county seat. It was also the location of Jerome's bank. Inside the bank, Mitch asks for the manager, knowing that the way he was dressed wouldn't get him top consideration in the largest bank in the county. Explaining that he was there to discuss Jerome Abernathy's over-due tax payments, he was further greeted with skepticism. He was getting pissed off and if they had known of his previous line of work, they may not have taken that course of action.

So he got loud, "Listen up! You are ready to foreclose on a man who has been on that land for his entire life, but you are fussing over who is offering to make it good? He is about to die, the doctors say within the month. The month! You couldn't postpone it for a month?!?" He stared the man hard in the eyes, "I'm going to make some phone calls, arrange for the transaction. I'll be back in one hour, be ready with the number that is outstanding." He glared at him for additional effect, "Do NOT disappointment me."

He was fuming as he stepped out of the bank and looked up and down the sidewalk, spotting a coffee shop at the end of block. He took a booth in a corner, ordered a large, dark roast, black coffee, and then was on his prepaid phone. Hard habits to break but he wasn't trying too hard, either. Every so often as his minutes were used up, he tossed the phone, got a new one with a different phone number, and notified the few people besides family what the new number was. Most people thought he was just being difficult, but the people back at Langley understood the caution. Of course, his financial managers were ones that needed his phone number, at least to recognize it when called. Like now.

"Good afternoon, sir, how can we be of service to you, today?" It was the Senior Managing Direction himself. He was the only one at the firm that communicated with him. Mitch had assumed that the number he had been given was this man's direct number at the office and it would roll over to his cell phone, if he was away.

"How is your day going, Clarence?"

"Not too bad, yours?"

"Well ... it will be better after you've helped me. Here's what I need ..." He listed out that he needed access to about \$300,000 and then to be ready to make available another very large amount accessible. "Better figure on \$6 million. Much of the land isn't worth anything for ranching, so it shouldn't be that much but I'll need the money for other things, if this happens."

"You're becoming a rancher, Mitch?"

"Don't know, yet." The firm didn't manage his entire worth, just a portion of it and this would put a big dent in it, but they had made good money on it so far and he would likely move more back in later. They were good, efficient, and very, very discreet. He was going to continue working with them.

He returned to the bank a little early, partly just to pressure them a little bit, if they kept him waiting. He was sure that the manager would see a potential customer of anyone who had enough money to pay off someone else's debts. Mitch gave them no such discussion opportunity, however; he transferred the funds to cancel the debts on the Abernathy account, received a balance sheet from the manager verifying that the account was cleared with just shy of \$20,000 in a positive balance, and then left the bank with only a simple 'thank you'.

Jerome was a proud man, as he deserved to be given what he had managed over his life essentially alone with his wife. He worried about how to present what he had done to the old man and still give him the dignity he deserved. Nearly at the turn into the property, he decided the only fair way to handle it was to be honest and upfront, not letting him find out some other way. As he drove up to the house, he found the old man sitting in his rocker on the front porch.

"What did you do, Mitch?" He got nervous. What had happened since he left? "I got a call from the bank manager asking if I knew a Mitch Conner. When I said that I did, he thanked me and hung up. So, my question to you is, what did you do?"

He handed him the balance sheet, stepped back, lean against the railing of the porch, and waited. The old man glanced at it, looked up at Mitch, then looked down and studied the sheet closer. "How can someone I only just met weeks ago use \$220,000 of his own money to cancel another person's debt and give him a positive balance? Is this some kind of scheme? It's not is it?"

Mitch chuckled, "No, sir. Listen, Jerome, I have been exceedingly fortunate in my life. I am barely 40 and I am looking for a way to do something different, very different, with my life. I've done the military thing, the business thing. Believe me, please, this isn't going to limit my options. You've been good to me and I feel truly blessed to have run into you ... almost literally." They both laughed at the memory of that day and moment. The old man just shook his head as he looked down at the sheet in his hands. Mitch saw a tear running down each cheek. Nothing more was said.

A week later, though, "Mitch ..." He was in the barn organizing things. "Your pickup looks like it is good for off-road. I want you to drive me somewhere." He didn't react except to rise, bush off the dirt and dust, and head for his truck. "See that little river on the side that cuts through the pass in the mountains? That's where we're going. You'll find a barely visible path up the pass along the river. But, be careful; don't go charging up like you usually drive, it gets narrow in spots."

At the top of the pass and just over to the other side, "Okay, stop anywhere here." Mitch stopped, didn't even bother pulling to the side since nobody else would be up here. "This is the valley I talked about." He gave Mitch time to take it in. "The other side of the lake is Forest Service with no access except hiking and there are no trails to this lake. At least there weren't. The property line is practically down the middle. This side is mine." He waited for more minutes before he opened his door and got out. Mitch followed. With a sweep on his arm, the old man with pride and wonder said, "Have you seen anything so beautiful? Olivia and I never did anything about it. This just sat here." He walked to a large rock, climbed onto it, and pointed, "See that clearing on the northeast side of the lake? You see it, right over there?"

Mitch smiled as he studied the area. What was he up to? Just revisiting lost opportunities? That didn't sound like the man he had come to know. "Yes, I see it." The man dug into his shirt pocket and pulled out a folded sheet of 3-hole punched paper. He opened it and turned it to be oriented properly, it was a crude sketch of the north end of the lake, a house, smaller buildings, and a dock into the lake.

"It was our dream that we never realized. Maybe you can ..."

"What ... you want me to buy your place? Is that what this is about?"

"You said you have money and you are looking for something very, very different to do with your life ..."

"I don't know anything about ranching? I could mess everything up."

"Mitch, no worse that I have been doing the past years. Okay ... tell me it doesn't appeal to you and I will leave it alone." Mitch didn't respond, how could he? Everything the man said was true and had already occurred to him, it was the reason he warned his people to get ready to move a much larger amount of money. This certainly fit the classification of "very, very different", but was he up to it? The man saw the hesitation and just smiled broadly at him, not adding anything further.

In two more weeks, Mitch was the proud but very nervous owner of a 15 square mile ranch, all assets included, many of which Mitch had not identified or qualified. There was a large storage pole-barn filled with equipment. The quantity and quality of horse and cattle livestock was a mystery. The cow that was used for consumption needed daily milking but the small milking machine made easy work of that. Mitch found that Jerome had lined up a couple neighboring ranchers to run him through the equipment and basics of ranch. Both quickly recognized that this man would absorb everything and force his way through with sheer muscle and determination.

Five days after the sale went through, Jerome Abernathy quietly passed away in his bed at home. Mitch was on the clock to get one more detail taken care of for his friend and it took calling in some political muscle to get the county to approve timely enough to be effective. The day of Jerome's funeral and burial, a small group of about a dozen people made their way by 4-wheel drive trucks to a small clearing overlooking the valley on the other side of the mountain where Jerome was laid to rest for his eternity next to his beloved Olivia who had to be moved from the grave site near the house. With a rough wood bench set alongside the gravesite, Mitch could envision sitting overlooking the valley and thanking his friend ... or cursing him.

It was now nearly three years later. He had acted quickly, hired an architect and general contractor to build his small single story ranch style home near the lake, a large porch facing the lake. In addition, he had two large pole-barns for the cow that needed regular attention and four horses he stabled nearby. He had discovered a love of riding and used the horses whenever possible and when it made sense. He kept an ATV and 4-wheel drive pickup in the barn at the old house that now stood empty of humans but otherwise remained as it was when Jerome had died. He just never had the heart to go through it. He had installed security at the main gate with a remote for the fence gate and cameras that snapped digital pictures if the gate was touched physically. He started repairing the barbed wire fence around the property the first year and gave up. He wasn't skilled enough to have any skin left on his hands, arms, or body and it was taking far too long. He finally used some more money and hired a ranch contractor to rework all the fencing. He increased the strands and the height of the fencing with the intention of keeping others out. He also had it posted, "Private Property! Absolutely NO Hunting or Trespassing!!" This was the beginning of his 'ignoring the world' phase.

He was going to live simply. No cell coverage. No internet or TV or radio reception at the new house. Although he had a distribution line run to the new house and buildings, he removed circuit breakers to the rest of the house except for the bathroom and kitchen. The pole-barns and pump house also had power. He installed a generator for the barns and another for the pump house and house. The contractor was shocked but it came down to the motivation of money. By the first heavy snows, Mitch was in his new home. The construction traffic had worn in a slightly better path but was treacherous in the heavy snow. He found that the ATV was ideal for getting to the old house and the

pickup stored there.

Nearly two and a half years after the beginning of that first winter, Mitch was climbing into his dirty, but finely tuned pickup. As before, his drive would be along the back mountain roads from Pagosa Springs to his home. It was a drive he had made along this route many times before. He had found that the river coming out of 'his' lake was ripe for trout, but he was always looking for new locations to try and constantly searching for small rivers that might hold or lead to, with a little hiking, knew undiscovered locations. What he would discover on this drive, though, would change his life ... again.

His habit of looking closely at the landscape around him as he took these back roads in search of new fishing and hiking locations had save him, or his truck, a couple times when deer came bounding out from cover along the roadside. What caught his eye today, though, was entirely different. Down a very narrow, two track, side road he spotted what appeared to be men beating down on something the size of a large animal just off the road. It hardly seemed like any of his business but the sight was so unusual that he couldn't resist a second look and stopped. He questioned himself if he really cared enough to go back and decided he was curious enough. Maybe they had hit and severely injured a deer or other animal and were simply trying to put it out of its misery. He innocently put the truck in reverse and backed up the hundred feet to the entrance to the side road and then just beyond to make the turn.

When he made the turn and was able to focus on the scene, he was shocked and slammed on the brakes. That, of course, fully got the attention of the five men just up the road from him. He sat in the truck to take in all the detail and options that he could in the shortest amount of time before he made a decision to act. There was virtually no dependable cell coverage in these mountains so a call to the Sheriff or anyone else for support was out of the question. It was either him or nobody at the moment. He wasn't even remotely aware of the reasons or motivations for what was happening, why all that violence was being so focused, but he did know that he couldn't allow it to continue.

His truck was completely blocking the road at this point. He didn't know where the trail might lead in the other direction, but the car just ahead was not suited for long driving on trails like this. He took a deep breath and calmed himself, focusing his energy on the task at hand, scanning ahead, to the sides, and behind him using the truck's mirrors. Without taking his eyes off the men ahead, he hit the side panel of the driver's door and the panel opened. He unfastened the 9 mm pistol, released the magazine, and noted that it was full. Slammed it back into the handle and cocked the weapon. He watched the men, who were now mostly grouped in the road with only one still over their victim. He looked at her only closely enough to discern that she was probably middle aged and definitely naked, strung over what appeared to be the barbed wire fence. Seeing more detail, his anger increased and he had to spend another moment regaining control. You never go into a fight angry. That was one of his rules, one of his mantras.

He slipped an extra magazine into his back left pocket and the pistol, safety on, into the back of his jeans. He no sooner had the door open and one of the guys was yelling at him.

"Leave now; this is none of your business!"

He continued to walk slowly towards the group; they made several steps toward him, three of them fanning out across the track. "Leave, now!"

Mitch looked from them to the woman. He hadn't seen her move, yet. Was she already dead? Was she passed out? Who was this woman he was risking his life for? "I'll leave, but only with her. You see, I have a problem. My mother would never forgive me if I left a woman like this. So, you see, she has to come with me."

"Are you nuts? There's five of us against just you!"

"Listen, guys, just back off and we all walk away from this." He knew that wasn't going to happen. He scanned the ground around them and the woman. He saw a whiskey bottle, at least a dozen empty beer cans, and a camera on one of the nearby fence posts. Being closer now, he could see the woman tangled in the barbed wire fence at her middle, legs, and arms. Blood was covering her body at those locations, but the worst was the open wounds from the beating from two canes he saw on the ground near her. The backs of her legs, her ass, and lower back were red from the beating and were openly bleeding. He could see that some of the blood was dry, indicating this had been going on for a while. It turned his stomach and he had to fight to regain composure all over again. "Looks like you big, strong guys have been here for quite a while with her. Isn't it time you've had enough?"

"Us? Hell, we only got here maybe fifteen minutes, ago. Other groups did most of this."

Other groups?!? What kind of sick deal was going on here? Then he saw a guy with a digital video camera to the side. He wasn't recording anything, any more, just watching. He seemed to be the only one really nervous. Maybe he was the only one sober. Maybe he had a different role in this. Maybe he was just here to film it ... how sick would that be? He wasn't backing down now, though, not seeing what had happened here. He stood to the side of the track, the video guy on the other side of the barbed wire fence, another next to the woman, and the three spread across the track slightly in front of where the woman was. Nobody was showing a weapon, but they didn't know about Mitch's, either. Anything could happen and he knew it. He rubbed his left thigh, but it was just a diversion, his right hand slipped behind his back and took hold of the pistol. And, he waited. They waited, too, but they were more nervous with each ticking second. Their feet were shifting in place, their eyes flashing to each other, the woman, and to Mitch. Their hands were clenching and flexing. Something was about to happen, Mitch slipped the pistol from the back of his jeans, flipped the safety off, and held it just behind him.

"Do we really have to get bloody over this, guys? Just back away and leave her." He got their attention to turn for just a second in her direction and he pulled his gun and held it at his side. They exchanged looks and all three moved one after the other, two pulling pistols and one a knife. The two with the pistols didn't get any further than showing the weapons and they were down. The one with the knife and the one by the woman hesitated, moved, and fell where they were. If only they had given up ...

"Please, mister, don't. I was just paid to film it; I didn't touch her, promise."

"Shut up!" Mitch had the weapon trained on him and his finger wanted to complete the squeeze, but his mind was telling him not to. He couldn't decide if it was worse to do what they did to this woman or to be idle and video it as it happened. But, he knew what he had to do. "Just shut up!" He took a breath, his weapon, and eyes never leaving the man, except to flip to the woman once. He still hadn't seen any movement. Then he heard a moan from her. "Get her out of there."

When the guy had her out of the wire, he carried her to the back of the truck as direct. Mitch made a makeshift bedding in the back from a couple blankets that had been stuffed behind the cab seat. After she was settled on her front, he covered her with his jacket and put supplies on the edges to hold it over her. He walked the guy back to the scene but stopped at the driver door and took a large phone from the compartment in the door panel. He told the guy to put each body over the barbed wire fence. While that was happening, he pressed a series of buttons, which sent a signal out. Yes, he was well outside of cell coverage but this signal was going to a satellite overhead. When it was connected, there was no voice, no human at all, just a series of clicks, signaling an open channel and Mitch gave his code name and access code. He then closed the connection.

"You look nervous. I can see you are wondering what I am going to do next. Here's the deal. Do you want to live?"

"Yes, please ..."

"Shut up. Just strip ... now!" The phone buzzed and he opened the connection, "Yeah, I have a problem here. Do you have a lock on my location? Good. I have four bodies and one guy who will be hurting. There will be a video camera next to the guy, it should give someone an idea what I stumbled into. I will NOT be here when they come, but they better hurry." He listened for a moment, "Listen, I don't really care one way or another. If they don't get here pretty quick, though, I suspect some of the wildlife around here will start cleaning up the bodies." More listening, "No, not going to happen. I will be leaving. I'll make contact to arrange a meeting, and then you'll know where I am living now." He broke the connection.

He walked the guy to the fence, "Bend over the fence." The guy just looked at him, "Look, I'd just as soon shoot you, too." In the next couple of minutes he had the guy tied into the barbed wire like the woman had been, screaming as the barbs dug into his flesh. He used Duct tape to muffle him. Then he left with the woman and for the first time the rough roads were a problem for him, causing him to verbally cuss, something he wasn't particularly known for. But, he reasoned that she had been through enough to render her unconscious, a little bumping around wouldn't be the worst part of her day.

He made up a bed in the guest bedroom with a thick layer of towels with a sheet over it. He then ran out to retrieve her and place her on the bed on her front, then temporarily covering her with a top sheet. He had to assemble what he needed: cleaning supplies to clean out her many contusions, cuts, and broken skin from the caning; antibacterial ointment; antibiotic injection syringes (leftover from mission field supplies); burn gauze; and bandages. This was simply field-triage, take care of what was needed until medical assistance was available.

While taking care of her many wounds and sores, he made as careful an inspection of her as he could. That was greatly assisted by her already being naked. He had assumed she was drugged which would explain her profound stupor. He searched all the likely places that a person would use to inject drugs and found no marks that might indicate use, much less prolonged use. What he did find was several indications of injection points on her butt, among the skin damage caused by the caning. That by itself was interesting.

He waited until the next day late to make the follow-up phone call. The woman was awake for only moments, just long enough to know she wasn't otherwise damaged. Of course, the light sedatives and pain killers he was mixing with her fluids was helping keep her quiet. For the moment, he was focused on keeping her sores clean and exposed to air for healing. That required that he roll her to her side occasionally and prop her up with pillows to allow her front to air out. When they tied her in the fence, they seemed intent on positioning her so the barbed wire was on her breasts and stomach.

Just prior to making the call on his secure phone, he spent time studying her. He needed a general impression of her, what her situation was, what her situation was now, her general health, and anything else his training may discern. She appeared to be about thirty-five, medium build, about five foot, six or seven inches tall, her hair was 'dirty blonde', and her breasts and hips were full, not small and not large, shapely he guessed. She appeared to be soft in a muscular sense, but not overly so. It wasn't much but he needed what he could discern for the discussion with the authorities, which he assumed would be the regional FBI office in Denver. Field agents are never fully retired and off the government radar. A call for assistance from him was not going to be delegated to a local county or town sheriff. So he wasn't surprised when his call in was redirected and he found himself

talking to the Special Agent in charge of the Denver office, Special Agent David Baxter.

"That was quite a mess you left for us." There was silence on both ends, "No comment?"

"Sorry, that just pretty well described it. So, what have you learned so far?"

"Huh ... I thought maybe I would be able to get some questions answered."

"Humor me for a few moments. I am sure you'll concede that was a bizarre scene to stumble upon. What do you make of it from the video camera and the guy I left alive?"

"Yeah, thanks for leaving one for us to interrogate. He has turned out to be very cooperative. We have a lot more ground to cover with him, but he is pretty much already giving an indication of what the deal was. It's some kind of porn/BDSM/sex-slave ring that gets into prostitution, video making, websites ... hell, you name it. It will take us a while to get through it but I don't think he knows the guy at the top, the one with slaves. That comes back to you ... we need to see the woman."

"She's in and out, partly because I have her on light sedatives and pain killers and partly from the experience. She could use a doctor checking her over and we can talk. I assume you already have my location from this call."

"Yes, we do."

"If you come in by vehicle, you will need good 4 x 4 with good ground clearance. If you come in by helicopter, come in from the west over the National Forest land. Tomorrow will be fine, just give me a call on this phone before you get here."

They did come in by helicopter. Denver was just far enough away and it was faster to go over the mountains than around them. Introductions were made and Mitch showed the Agency doctor and nurse where the woman was, then returned to the two Special Agents waiting on the porch.

"This is beautiful. That's National Forest land across the lake? I thought you said you had a ranch here."

"Yes, it makes it very quiet and private. And, I do but it is on the other side of the mountain."

The two agents exchanged looks that were obvious of what they were thinking and finally uttered, "They don't pay us that way."

"Me, either. That wasn't my government paychecks." But, before they could dig any further into that, and FBI guys would be the type to want to, "What do we know so far? The doctor has final say, but I'm inclined to keep her here. It is much more relaxing and conducive to coming out of withdrawal and trauma, unless there is an over-riding medical concern."

The lead Agent agreed to leave that to the doctor, then went on to discuss what happened in detail that ended with four men being dead. He would have the woman's condition from the doctor. After that, the discussion led to what they were uncovering. They suspected a porn, slavery ring and that was being confirmed by the guy taking video. They suggested that maybe they should have Mitch come in to assist with interrogation and that seemed to motivate the guy to become more forthcoming with information. It did not appear that he knew the top guy's name, but maybe where he lived. He delivered video to three different addresses; they were still working up information.

The doctor and nurse came back out and delivered a summary. She was doing wonderfully; he

agreed to keep her drowsy for another day or so to aid in her recovery. The wounds and open sores were scabbing nicely and should be softened and removed. A warm-to-hot bath would work nicely. Keep everything clean and continue the salve application to anything open. The anti-biotic shots could stop unless something changed. Pain-killers as needed for comfort but not after the day or so she needed to regain strength and movement. At some point, he wanted to do a better examination including x-rays and more lab work. They took some blood for analysis. She was still out but breathing comfortably.

The Agent spoke to the doctor but watched Mitch, "Where should she be, doctor?"

"If it isn't a problem for him, I would suggest she stay here. She is healing well and I am much more concerned about her reaction after coming out of this induced sleep stage. This is much more relaxing, peaceful, and less threatening."

It was decided, then. She would stay put with Mitch, which was his preference. Even that was a confounding thing for him to admit. His intention was to ignore the world and he was willingly getting involved in a stranger's troubles. But, there was something about this that he couldn't let go. When he was completely honest to himself, he was initially just drawn to stop a wrong from continuing and that led to four men being killed by his actions. Now, he realized he was drawn to helping this woman, a woman he didn't know the first thing about, and wasn't really even sure it was for the woman as much as justifying the killing of four men, even if they caused their own death. He, however, had the same option as they did, to withdraw and walk away as opposed to perpetuating and inflaming the confrontation. But he knew that he really never had a real option at all. Although, the thing about his mother was true, it wasn't the overriding reason. His own experience still haunted him sometimes, although he believed he was mostly past it. He knew the truth about those experiences; you never fully get over them.

She would be no different. Whatever her story turned out to be, he knew she would need someone uniquely experienced. There was no way he could just walk away from her now. No more than he could earlier. With the helicopter gone, he looked back at the house and the window of the room where she lay. He came here to ignore the world. He chuckled to himself, so much for that.

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

The first time I awoke with true awareness of my surrounds was two days from the moment of knowing I was in the forest entangled in barbed wire. The first moments of awareness were fearful, anxious, and drenched in terror. What was to come next? I had survived that experience somehow. Maybe a better thought, a more appropriate thought would be, why? Why had I survived? Why would I want to survive? Why would I want to endure any more of this existence? But, the worst why that came to me instantly in the first moments of awareness was why couldn't I have just died? How did it all come to this? That I actively wonder why I couldn't just die.

That was my first reaction, my first impulse and thought after my first moment of awareness, my realization that I was indeed alive and not dreaming. My second and subsequent reactions, impulses, and thoughts were quite different, though. Something was different. Not just different, though, more like wrong. But not wrong in a bad way, wrong in the way that you weren't expecting, that your mind wasn't used to. I awake and was instantly, fully aware of the feeling of pain in my body, anytime and every time I moved on the bed. Everything about those first visions were wrong, at least they were so different from my experience that they seemed to be wrong. Without moving more than I had to, feeling that pain over my lower back, butt, and the back of my legs every single time I



moved. My eyes took in the room I was lying in and my brain tried desperately to remember anything about how I got here. Barring that, because I remembered nothing of coming to this room, I went back to the last thing I did remember ... and my body, heart, and brain seized up in terror.

I remembered being driven in the back of the cargo van that master used to haul us around in. I was naked, of course. The roads after a long drive became very rough and dusty; there were mountains, streams, and trees. Then we stopped and I was taken out of the van and led to a barber wire fence. My very being panicked. I did what I was told to do; I tried to control my fear from showing, avoiding any indication of hesitancy in my response. I had been beaten, abused, and punished for years with different men until I learned that my response had to be immediate and without complaint. After being bought and sold to several men, I learned that my life as a woman and individual no longer existed. I had nothing, absolutely nothing, to call my own, not even my will or body, except for my master, whoever that might be at any time. It wasn't a life worth living; but, if I was to live, it was my life.

I remember being bent over the fence, the barbed wire being wound around my arms, my stomach and breasts pressed into strands and then tied in place. If I moved, even slightly, I could feel the barbs digging into my bare flesh. I could try to remain perfectly still now, but I knew I was about to be used, abused, and they would move me, even if I tried not to, I would not have the stability of my feet and legs to resist and eventually I would become so fatigued that I would be hanging from the wire. They had never done this to me before; they had done many things, but not this. Then, I felt the needle into my butt and the contents pressed into my flesh. This was going to be bad, very bad. The journey of going from physical abuse to sexual slave to sexual abuse to sexual and physical abuse to, now, extreme sexual and physical abuse and torture has been long, my will nearly destroyed. They used this drug on us, the other slaves and me, when they anticipated an extreme amount of pain. Otherwise, many of the men seemed to enjoy hearing the cries and shrieks. I know there were different groups of men, first one group, then a different group, and maybe even a third. I also know at some point my mind gave out, partly with the administering of more of the drug and partly to escape the pain searing into my brain, radiating from every part of my body as the barbs dug into me, the caning picked up at or during the fucking. And, all the while, that camera pointed at me, capturing everything. Who watches stuff like this? I couldn't help but wonder in times like that if my final video was to be my final execution in some manner. Would I care if it happened? That was usually when my mind gave way ...

But, instead, I find myself in this clean, if rustic, room. Sounds are coming to me in addition to the visual of the room; a window is open above me, a breeze through trees causing the sunlight to dance across the wall, a dog barking nearby, sounds of nature, birds, water lapping against something. But, no traffic, no city, or residential sounds, no kids playing or men yelling or arguing, no airplanes, trains, or trucks. Except for nature, it is quiet.

The room was quiet, too. It was rustic, like I imagined a cabin looking, but cozy. There was no radio evident, alarm clock, TV, or computer. There was no overhead light fixture, just a kerosene lamp on the bedside table. To the side along the wall was an IV stand with a bag still hanging from it but no longer being used. There was bottles of medicine on the nightstand, painkiller, anti-biotic, and sedative. Also, a tube of ointment for wounds.

Somebody was spending a lot of time taking care of me. I woke up periodically, even if just for moments. Somebody was helping me take medicine, clean my wounds, give me shots, and take these pills, giving me something to drink. A man. A big man? I remember a man and woman but only once and she referred to him as doctor. That was recent, but time meant nothing to me at this point. It seemed like a safe place, the window was open, the door was ajar giving a nice breeze through the room. I lifted the top sheet and looked down, I was naked, but that only made sense. I could see the

marks where the barbed wire had dug into my breasts and stomach. They looked pretty much healed with little scabs. I threw off the sheet and swung my legs over the side of the bed. The effort produced some pain from my backside, but not as much as I was anticipating. How long have I been here, or was it just the care I have received. A mirror was on the wall opposite, a full length mirror, and I stared at myself. I put my hand up to my hair and touch it, ran my hand through it. My hair was clean and brushed, there were no knots and tangles.

There was a little desk along the wall. A vase of, I was guessing, wild flowers, they were just put into the vase, not arranged ... a man, a man not accustomed to doing such things. But they brightened the room, added a sense of joy to it. Then I saw the other two things, a tall glass of water and a large mug with a spoon in it. All the way across the room. To encourage me to get up once I finally woke up? "Okay, then, if that's what is expected of me ..." I smiled, wow, a smile ... how often has that happened in the last years. And, within minutes of waking and taking in my surroundings, I have already had a smile. I gingerly walk, carefully, a step in front of the other, until I am in front of the desk. I drink deeply from the water and I don't want to stop. This is the best water I have maybe ever tasted. When I take a breath, I look closer at the mug; it is soup, which is the reason for the spoon. I put the glass down and take up the mug; it is still warm, not hot, just nicely warm. I take the spoon out and lick it, then put the mug to my lips and sip it. Yes, nicely warm. After several drinks, a thought comes to me. Nobody woke me, but there is warm soup and chilled water, perhaps the ice cubes just melted. But ... he couldn't know when I would get up or he might be waiting here. How many times did he refill the containers, anticipating me waking?

I heard the dog bark excitedly outside and I moved to the open window, still aching with each step, while drinking from the mug, now using the spoon to get vegetables and pieces of meat out. I looked out and saw the dog at the end of the dock barking at the lake. No, at someone in the lake, someone swimming toward the dock. The dog was a large black lab and was clearly very excited at the approach of the swimmer. He stopped maybe ten feet from the dock and was treading water, slapping the surface, then, "Come on, Blackie. Jump!" The dog took a single step and went airborne in the direction of the man, then they both went for the side of the dock. The man lifted the dog onto the dock and turned his back as the dog sent a wild spray of water in all directions.

I laughed. A smile and now a small laugh? I look down at the mug, the bed, the IV stand, and medicine, the evidence of a lot of time, effort, and care. A tear came to my eye and I wiped it away. How long has it been that I allowed tears to come?

I looked out to the dock just in time to see the man climbing up onto the dock. "Oh ... my ... God!" It just came out of my mouth. I seemed to remember a big man, but ... oh my god! This guy wasn't just big, he was naked and ... big; he was naked, and had more muscles shown on his body than four or five other guys I have seen lately all combined. And ... dear god ... he was naked and ... big ... I mean BIG. My mind was connecting all this, a big powerful man like this, a setting in the woods, and he provided all this caring? As he walked up the dock, he stopped and picked up a towel and dried his hair, face and chest ... well, I guess it was just a joke that big men didn't have big cocks.

Just then, he looked up at the window, saw me, put the towel around his waist, and waved before calling out, "Well, the dead arise. Welcome back to the world." He made a beeline for the house. I heard a sliding screen door open and close. There was silence as I waited, then there was a knock at the door and he waited. He didn't just come in. I wasn't used to this consideration.

I reached down, grabbed the top sheet, and held it up to me, "Come in."

He opened the door, saw me standing with only a sheet held in front of me and swore ... at himself, not me, and left. He was back in a moment holding two shirts to me through the cracked open door,

"See if one of these covers you. Sorry, but I don't have any women's clothes here."

I took them from his hand and he pulled the door closed. I put the sheet back on the bed and held out the two shirts, one a tank top, the other a black tee-shirt with Black Sabbath on it. Both seemed huge to me. I tried on the tank top and it dropped to mid-thigh, I was a little exposed from the side at the arm holes but was covered on top and bottom. I opened the door and handed him the black one. "No, keep it. Until we get you some proper clothes, these will have to do. Sorry."

My eyes were down, looking at the shirt, but also nervous of making eye contact. "Thank you, sir. You might not think it is much but it is more than I have had for a long time."

I could feel his eyes on me and there was silence for a long time, at least some minutes. "Well, we'll get into that eventually. Listen, you go out onto the porch and I'll meet you there. Want more soup? And water? I'm going to have some."

"Thank you, sir; yes, it's very good."

He laughed at that and turned, I followed him. There was a bedroom right next to the one I was in. Across the hall was a bathroom and a room with a large desk that held a laptop and files. Those four rooms formed a hallway that emptied in a large room that was front to back. The front, I assumed was also the normal back. Usually, the side with the large sliding doors to the outside was the back. This side had both the main door and the large sliding door, both emptied onto a large, covered porch. In one corner of the room was a wood burning stove set on pavers on the floor. One wall was nearly covered with shelves that were jammed with books, hard cover, and paperback. There was a large chair that appeared to see the most use next to the large glass door, a coffee table covered in magazines, books and newspapers, the dates of which were weeks old. There was a large couch, probably large enough even for this man spread out on. Opposite the hallway we just came out of was an entry to a kitchen. I couldn't see much but it looked complete with a kitchenette table and a couple chairs. Then there was a closed door.

He had already disappeared into the kitchen so I went to the porch. I couldn't immediately determine which was his favorite chair and I knew better than to sit in a man's chair, so I stood at the railing, fixing my gaze on the lake and forest covered mountain slope on the other side. I heard the screen door slide open and I turned.

"I meant for you come out here and sit. You probably want to be up, but you are going to be weak." I still hesitated until he took a chair, then I quickly settled into the other one. They were exactly the same; could it possibly make a difference? But, I knew, the smallest things seemed to make a big difference to the men I belonged to. "The men I belonged to". So, what was I doing here? What was the story here?

I took the mug of soup and quickly drank and ate it. I didn't care why he laughed at my comment earlier, I thought it was delicious. When I was finished with the soup, I scraped the last piece out, ate it, and put the mug on the small table between our chairs. He was watching me, "There's more if you would like some."

"No, sir. It was delicious but I think that is enough for now. Thank you, sir."

I could tell he was deciding something in his head. He wanted to say something, but was struggling. He finally made a decision and sat back, facing the lake and sighed deeply. Then it was quiet until that large black lab came bounding up the steps to the porch. I reacted at his sudden appearance. The dog went directly to the man who loved the dog up, and then he looked to me, "Are you afraid of dogs?"

"No, sir, not at all. In fact, I am very comfortable with dogs, if they like me. He just surprised me; I guess I'm not really sure of my surrounds here."

"Fair enough. Well, this handsome guy is Blackie. I know, it's not a very original or creative name, but he was here as a pup when I bought the ranch. We've become best friends."

"Sir, forgive me, but ... a ranch? This seems more like a vacation home, a primitive one, with the kerosene lamps and wood stove, but certainly not a ranch even with the other building there."

He followed my eyes and laughed. "Yeah, I suppose it does seem that way. Actually, the ranch is on the other side of the mountain behind us. When I was thinking about buying this, the old man who owned it brought me up here and said this was where a house should be built. I had to agree, so I did. It was hard to get all this up here, but where there's a will, right? The big building is a barn for the cow and a few horses, there is a stable on the other side. The other building is for my trucks and workshop and wood storage." He looked into the house, "The primitive ... you are right, of course. I was looking for a complete change in life. I didn't know a thing about ranching and am not sure I know a whole lot more now. When I built this, I made the decision that the bathroom, kitchen, pump house, barn, and the work building would be all that had electricity. Heating would be by wood, not furnace. It would force me to be different." He was quiet for a few minutes, thinking again, perhaps weighing how much to share so soon. "I wanted to find a place where I could ignore the rest of the world, as much as possible."

Ignore the world. "Sir, do you mean 'hide' or 'run away'?"

"No, I mean 'ignore'. I'm not in trouble with anyone that I know of. I've ... well, I've lived a complicated life so far. I thought it was time to slow down, way down. Don't get me wrong, though, there is non-stop work around here, life isn't boring. I've been here a couple years and there are still parts of the property I haven't set eyes on. No, 'ignore' is the right word. I just didn't want to be bothered by the world anymore."

Who the heck is this guy? What kind of life did he lead before that he wants to so thoroughly change his existence in it and not be in any kind of trouble? "Can I ask a question, sir?"

"That's why we're out here. Oh, yeah, I introduced Blackie but not myself." His big hand came out to me, "Mitch Conner."

I took his hand, "Catherine Abernathy, but years ago, friends called me Cat."

We talked for hours, avoiding the difficult things, focusing on the property in front of us, the ranch land, and livestock on the other side of the mountain. He did most of the talking and he seemed intent on doing so, allowing time for me if I wanted it, but not pushing me, perhaps giving me time to adjust to the surrounding, gaining some comfort. We were interrupted by a racket in the trees beside the house. Something was mad, frightened, or disturbed. Blackie barked a few times in response, but the basic noise didn't seem driven by the barks, instead the barks seemed driven by the noise. Mitch saw my distraction and chuckled, "That's a squirrel. I think there is a squirrel nest back there somewhere. When Blackie gets too close, the squirrel goes nuts, scolding him endlessly until he leaves. The squirrel doesn't make him leave, but the noise does. As you can hear, that noise just irritates him and restricts a part of the place he can comfortably wander." It made us both smile as Blackie rounded the corner and came up onto the porch, sighed deeply, and lay down.

This man made no demands or presented any expectations. I was waiting for the other shoe to drop, so to speak. That night, I expect something to happen ... it didn't. He was sitting in his chair reading some detective novel, mostly lost to anything but the book and Blackie who would occasionally raise

his head for another pet. I was flipping through a magazine that was three months old. I was yawning and kept drifting asleep. I popped awake and looked toward him, he was watching me, and smiled when our eyes met. He got up and came to me, put his hand out and stood me up. He put his hands on my shoulders, guided me to the guest room, and stopped at the doorway.

"Don't stay up because I am. Go to bed and I will see you in the morning." He turned to return to the other room.

"Sir ..."

He stopped and returned. I lowered my eyes as he came to me, it was reflex. He stopped right in front of me, put a hand under my chin, and raised my head so he was looking directly into my face and eyes, "A new rule is needed: I am not 'sir'. My name is Mitch. No English Queen has ever Knighted me that I can recall. I think I understand why it is coming out, but I want you to try to address me, not some controlling figure. Okay?"

I had to smile; even when trying to be firm with me, he turned it gentle and added something light. "I'll try, but ... I am so conditioned."

"Like I said, Cat, I think I understand. All that I ask is that you try."

"Okay, I will. But, Mitch," and he smiled, "why am I here? Why are you caring for me? Why am I still here?"

"Where could you go? I couldn't very well take you to the Sheriff or hospital, could I. 'Honest, Sheriff, I found her like this.' Besides, there were other reasons why I couldn't. Tomorrow, Cat, tomorrow we talk about this. Okay?"

"Okay, s ... Mitch. Thank you. I mean, thank you for caring for me."

The day started out normal, which is decidedly abnormal for me. I woke up at my own time except perhaps for the sounds of life outside the room. There was the smell of coffee coming through the door to the room that was about six inches ajar. There were sounds of nature, once again, from the still open window. But, the sounds that motivated me to get up was of Mitch and Blackie moving around the yard outside. I got up quickly and was pleased that there was less stiffness than I felt yesterday. I stood at the open window and watched this big man playing with his dog, throwing pull toys, and playing tug-of-war with him. Blackie leapt at him when he turned his back and the dog managed to knock him over, immediately arms came up to hide his face from the dog who danced around him pushing with his snout to try to lick any skin he could find. There was playful barks from the dog and laughter from the man.

He pushed the dog to the side and regained his knees, then seeing me in the window. His hand shot up, he waved happily at me, and I returned it a little more timidly. The dog proceeded to take advantage of his distraction and knocked him over, once again. I laughed aloud, grabbed the tank top that I wore yesterday and realized that he undoubtedly could easily see me naked. I ran to the bathroom, rushed through those needs and pulled on the shirt as I walked quickly down the short hall, grabbed a mug and coffee and out to the porch.

As soon as the screen door slid to the side, "Good morning, Cat! I hope our playing didn't wake you."

"Good morning, you two. It was a wonderful sound to hear in the morning." Blackie left Mitch and came running to me at the sound of my voice. "Well, this is a surprise; you've decided I'm okay?"

Mitch was walking up to the porch steps, "He's an excellent judge of character, you know." I chuckled and just watched him. He was so at ease in the world, it was like he expected to always to be in control of whatever situation came his way. "I'll get the coffee and some rolls. Then, we can talk." He said we would and he apparently meant it.

When he sat down with his own coffee, he looked out across the lake, sat up straight, and pointed. "Look a moose just in the water on the other side." I had never seen a moose except in pictures before. Could this place get any more interesting? "Sorry, okay ... so, why are you here and not somewhere else? Why couldn't I just have gone to the Sheriff or the hospital with you?" He started in on the story about accidentally see something and confronting it. He mentioned killing the four men and tying up the camera guy, his phone call, and the FBI. He talked about the doctor and nurse examining me and their prognosis that I would be safer and better suited to be here than in a hospital.

"You mean you made a phone call on that special phone, you left, and the FBI came and cleaned up? You weren't in trouble for killing those guys?"

"It's complicated. Cat, there are things I can't talk about, not yet. There things the FBI doesn't really understand, they just know they have been told not to pry and to work with me. Believe me that is very frustrating for people like the FBI."

"So, the FBI and not the local or state police ... Wow. Am I going to have to talk with these guys sooner or late?"

"Definitely! The camera guy has been talking but the real details are not coming out, yet. They will want to know your story, how you got involved, if there is an angle through you on these people. They think this is some kind of porn, torture, slave trade ring. Probably also drugs. It's a complicated case, though, and finding an angle to get into the people to discover more information is the key. There is nothing for certain, though. These kind of people are crude and assholes, but they are generally pretty careful to protect themselves. If people below them in the food chain start being compromised, they just shut down, cut their losses, and move to another location."

"When will they want me? And ... will I be on my own at that point?"

"You're wondering if I am going to drop you off at the FBI and be gone? That, Cat, is up to you."

"How?"

He studied my face and eyes, gazed out over the lake and into the mountain. I doubt he was looking at anything specifically, just gazing, thinking. He smiled and gave himself a slight nod of agreement, turned back to me, "You just have to decide what you want. I can drop you off and leave ... or, I can stay with you, you with me ... a little longer, if you want." He seemed less sure of himself for the first time. It was like he was on unfamiliar footing, a place where he lacked experience.

Most of the morning had passed in our talk and he still hadn't started on his questions about me or my telling my story. Instead, he asked if I could swim and I responded that I loved to swim in high school until I ran away. He stood and put his hand out. I took it and he pulled me up and into him, I was against his body, very close, my breast pressed into him. I looked up at him and I knew what I was feeling, a need for contact that wasn't abusive. The eyes I saw coming back to me showed his own need, his wanting. Instead, he turned, still holding my hand and led me out onto the dock. At the end, he took off his shoes, then his tee-shirt, and finally his pants and underwear. He stood beside me naked. His loose fitting clothes did nothing for him, he was magnificent, tall, wide, muscular everywhere, his chest, arms, stomach, and legs. God, I never saw so many muscles. I

wanted desperately to reach out and touch him, touch those muscles. But, whether I would have or not, he dove in and resurfaced ten feet away.

"Come on, Cat, no swimsuits allow in this lake. It's plenty deep to dive in."

I pulled the tank top over my head and saw him looking at me from my head to my toes. I froze where I was for just a moment; it had been so long since a man just admired my body without the intention of using it or abusing it for his own singular pleasure. Snapping out of it, I dove in and came up next to him. We swam next to each other, each using smooth and easy strokes. He led me away from shore and soon I recognized some rocks piled. He stopped and approached the rocks slowly and I soon discovered why. Just beneath the surface and marked by the rocks was a large shelf of rock. The shelf wasn't more than four inches below the surface.

Once on top, he explained the rocks. "I nearly clipped this thing with the outboard when I was running around. I noticed the wake change as I ran past it and circled back to investigate. I marked the corners with the rocks."

I duplicate his action of leaning back on elbows. We were facing the house and I could see Blackie walk to the end of the dock and lay down, probably on our clothes. The mountain behind the house was tree covered and then changed to rugged rock outcropping. There were boulders strewn along the slope.

"So your ranch is on the other side of that mountain?"

"Yes."

"For the amount of time you spend on this side, how good of a rancher are you?"

He laughed, "Even you can tell I am not a very good one. I am trying to learn, though. My only saving grace, I am afraid, is that the previous owner was worse." I looked quickly to him, he saw my disbelief, and he laughed, insisting that it was true.

He was so easy. He quickly made fun of himself, but was just as quick to encourage or reassure me. I lay next to him in the shallow water, naked next to his nakedness, and I felt very conscious of it. I had been so used to being naked in front of men and to being touched and used without my consideration or acceptance, now I was very aware of my nakedness, but was comforted, oddly, by his comfort in being naked and so casually.

I turned to him, "You interrupted five men from beating me. You could have just continued on your way and called the Sheriff. Why did you take the personal risk?"

"Yes, there was a risk. But, they had been drink, I hadn't. They were boisterous and wild; I was calculating the angles and likely moves. They were going to be wild in an assault; I was going to be precise and deliberate. There was a risk, but I was trained for that situation, I didn't think they were." He turned to face me, put a finger on my right nipple, then my left. "Ultimately, I took the risk for these."

"My nipples?"

"No, as nice as they are, no." He touched my left nipple again, this time pointing out the small marks around my nipple. "Those are burn mark, aren't they? Electrical. At some point, they put clips on your nipples and used something, probably a transformer, a small one, to send electricity into you. It hurt didn't it?"

"Yes, it did."

"Look here." He point his finger on his own nipple, then the other. I leaned closer and parted the chest hair; I found marks like mine but even more pronounced, larger, and uglier when I found them.

I put my fingers on each nipple in turn, touching the marks around them. "How?" I leaned in and kissed each one. "You were captured weren't you? And ... tortured."

"Yes, there and other places I don't like to think about. It was a dark time. So, when I saw what was happening to you, I couldn't just go away. I had experienced it; I knew what you were going through, even if you had passed out by then."

"If you were captured, how did you get away? Rescued?"

He smiled but it was forced. He hesitated, he was deciding, again, if he should say more. "I became compliant, lulling them into a sense of security with me. The guards became complacent, careless. It cost them their lives."

The Sat-Phone buzzed a week later while we were eating dinner. The senior agent wanted a meeting. They would be out in two days. The next day, Mitch had two horses saddled and waiting outside, tied to the porch railing. We were going to the old house on the other side. He thought he saw the clothes of the old man's wife in a closet. Neither the old man nor Mitch later had the interest in sorting through all the stuff so it continued to just sit there in boxes.

It shocking to realize, but it had been nearly two weeks since arriving at this idyllic location. Tee-shirts and barefoot the entire time, and it never seemed inappropriate, restricting, or awkward. But he was right, if I was to be interacting with others, I needed something in the way of clothes, even if it was hand-me-downs from an older woman. He also warned me about riding, that I shouldn't rely on my feet in the stirrups too much. Without boot with a good heel, my foot was likely to slip right through. He said we had a serious shopping trip coming up. Those little things came out in his comments; there was nothing in his attitude that indicated a short time-frame.

Inside the house, he led me to the location of the boxes and left me alone as he went on his own search mission. He returned a while later with another box, this one full of outside shoes and boots. I was in the midst of trying on a light dress with straps and standing in front of the full-length mirror. I folded the hem to just above the knees, then pulled in the waist at several locations. He was watching me. "I have a sewing machine and all the attachments and spools of thread. It was one of the things I did take from here."

"You are full of surprises, good sir." As soon as it came out, I tensed.

He was smiling, "Relax, that was an appropriate use." He walked up to me, again put his hands on my shoulders so we were focused only on each other, "I am proud of the effort you are putting in to react to me as a man and without the slave side coming out." I smiled at his words. My chest swelled in pride that the work and turmoil within me was recognized. Then he did something even better; he pulled me into his arms and body, his powerful arms and body seemed to engulf me into him. I felt the most safe and protected than I might have ever felt ... in my life. Then as he released me, he shifted his hands to the sides of my face and he seemed to slip right into my being through them. My heart rate increased sharply, my breathing was catching irregularly, my nerve ends became hyper sensitive, and I just KNEW he was going to kiss me. And he did ... but my forehead. I nearly groaned in frustration.



We came away with three garbage bags of stuff tied to the saddles. The woman was generally my size but thicker in the waist. I had some alterations to do for a summer type dress to wear for the interview the next day. Even the boots fit, it was a look that Mitch was immediately in love with, me wearing only a tank top and cowboy boots. Sitting in the saddle, my bare butt showing as I bounced in the saddle, my breasts moving freely under the shirt, and my feet securely in the stirrups. We were free to ride at a gallop now and he loved the view it gave him. For me, it was thrilling, exciting that I created that interest, stimulation, and reaction.

We dropped the bags at the house, and took the horses to the barn. He gave me a crash course on caring for the animals after a ride. He unsaddled the horse he rode, a handsome stallion, and I moved him to a stall. Upon returning, I was just in time for him to be taking the saddle off the horse I had ridden, a mare. He had said mares were supposed to be more gentle and easier for a new rider. As he pulled the saddle off toward him, the top of the saddle came to view at eye level and he stopped, looked at the saddle, then to me, and got a big smile on his face. He brought the saddle down to waist level and rotated it to my eyes, there on the top and center of the saddle seat ... was a large wet spot. And I blushed. How many times have I blushed around this man? I had been used and abused physically and sexually by men my entire adult life, but with this man, I blush.

When the FBI group arrive the next day, it is by car. Mitch checks the monitor that is hidden in a cabinet in the kitchen, he presses a button, and the gate several miles away at the narrow dirt road slides open. They pull up to the house in a black Suburban, how cliché is that? There is a general nod of recognition to Mitch but they are not there to talk to him. I am watching this from the kitchen window. Mitch brings them into the large room and chairs are gathered around the couch where Mitch and I sit. From our location we are looking out over the lake, their view is out smaller windows butting into the forest and the slope up the mountainside.

Besides the senior agent, there are two other men and a woman. One of the men is getting a small recorder setup and everybody waits for him. Mitch has already briefed me that these people are not here for me but for their investigation, my concerns and issues may have nothing to do with theirs unless they overlap. Therefore, he instructed me to answer their questions and offer information as it pertains to what has happened, but if he squeezed my hand, I should stop and let the conversation get back to point. They might try to delve into areas that don't concern them relative to this case and her situation. The guy handling the recorder was a technician, the other guy and woman were field agents.

The man they are interested in is Harry Banks; he is the man I knew as the Master of the slave house where I was caged for the past years. They asked me to briefly outline my life and how I got to be with Harry Banks, who they now know to be in Alamosa. So, I began my monologue, never so grateful for having Mitch at my side to help me through it:

I was an only child. My father was physically abusive to my mother, especially after drinking, which seemed to be most of the time. He took out his frustrations that were centered on his lack of personal ability and control of his behavior on the only person in the world who still supported him, his wife, my mother. By the time I was fifteen, he apparently came to some strange conclusion that I was now old enough to be the brunt of his frustrations, also. Mom and I were now both beaten, but mom's was always much worse. When I was seventeen, he beat mom so badly that she was taken to the hospital and he was arrested. I heard the officers talking about the county child system, but I took off into the night before that could happen. I didn't have much when I ran and lived in the streets and with a few friends for a little while. I met a guy who was good, supportive, and caring. Within months we were married, despite the fact that I hadn't turned eighteen, yet. He never explained how he got that done. I was just grateful to be away from that awful life.

My life seemed to have turned a good corner and for several years it seemed idyllic. Then, he lost his job, started drinking, and eventually became physically abusive, too. I lasted four years with him before running, again. I didn't even bother with a divorce, why should I since he didn't have anything. I then bounced from one guy to another, all dominant, controlling men who quickly saw my submissive side and were able to pull me further into that kind of behavior. Each man became more dominating and controlling, and soon I was just passed from one to the other. I was a sexual plaything almost before I knew what was happening, control being completely taken from me. The men used me freely day or night. Their friends soon had access to me, day or night, if he was home at the same time or not. There was a steady stream of men coming to use my body. Eventually, it got to the point that I was forbidden to ever wear clothes unless specifically direct and instructed. I was to be always available to men, no matter who the man was.

If there were a party, I would be brought. There might be twenty men and only me, but I wasn't to refuse anyone. One night, a guy showed up who was invited by someone who was invited. These gatherings quickly were out of control, nobody knowing everyone attending so almost anyone could crash the party. There was something about this particular guy, though. He talked to the other guys more than he participated, asking question about me, what they did to me, what they had done, what my limits seemed to be. The guys always drank too much and sometimes became physically abusive as they fucked my every hole repeatedly. He was given the impression that I could endure almost anything. I think they meant by a cock, that wasn't what this guy was thinking, he was thinking something much more.

Then, everything changed, and it was lightning fast. The guy who was currently controlling me was gone, but there were two guys in the house and they had just finished fucking me when the front door burst open. That guy and three others walked in, surveyed the situation, and told the two to leave. They did with only a minor protest, swearing that they were going to complain. After the two drove away, they pulled me out to their van. It had just snowed five inches, it was five degrees, and I was taken out barefoot and naked to the van. I knew right there that my life had just hit another all-time new low.

From the van, I was taken directly into a basement. The basement was fitted with three cells, each having a single mattress on the floor, three of the sides and the top were steel bars with a door of bars in the front. It was no more than six feet deep by seven feet high by four feet wide. Each backed to a concrete wall. The cells were bolted to the floor and wall. I was pushed into one of the cells and the men left. I was the only one there, the other cells were empty. I looked at the cell and it seemed like new construction. There were several devices around the room, the likes of which I had never seen. I would become very familiar with them very soon. The walls were covered with whips, canes of various sizes, dildos, plugs, and things that were completely foreign to me.

From that day on, for the next two and a half years, I was abused in ways I didn't know could be done. Before, with the other men, I was used by cocks, repeated, but seldom really beaten or physically abused beyond the endless sexual use. This, I was to learn, was to be sexual, physical, and psychological torment. And it was frequently recorded. Things were put into my pussy and asshole and I was stretched wide and objects were put in, sometimes insects, mice, or snakes. It was as if in their minds it didn't matter what they used, just another object to fuck me with or to put inside me. Their minds became perverse with the things they tried. All the time recording it. When the mice were used, I was spread wide and their escape required them to clawed at me inside, finally pushing through my lips to escape. Insects were similar. Grasshoppers scratched and sometime bit. I don't know about insects, but the mice seemed panicked and terrorized by the experience. Dogs came into being used when a participant arrived with his dog. At first it just wandered around or slept, but when I was strapped over a bench, essentially on my hands and knees, the dog came up to me after the other men had used me, licking and eventually mounting me. He was clumsy and it was

frustrating for him and painful for me. But they started purposely involving dogs after that. Once, they brought a larger, more powerful dog, and when it was tied to me, they put towels under my knees, whipped the dog causing it to move around the room, and pulling me by the knot in my pussy along the floor. I thought the knot would rip right out of me that day. I think the dog was equally terrified, as he growled and barked as the men laughed.

Other times, hot wax was dripped or poured on me; they even opened me once, someone hold my pussy wide open, and poured melted wax inside me. Nobody can imagine what that feeling like on such tender tissue. I was whipped and caned. I was tied into devices that left me in positions with no possible movement, but my pussy and ass completely open to be used. And, so often, it was recorded. I could hear them talking, like it had nothing to do with me, their animal or thing. 'Torture Cell.com' they called it. There were two other women eventually, each taken from whatever life they previously had, one from prostitution, the other seduced for a thrilling adventure only to find this as her new life. Each would be used in the same way but were built up to each new experience, partially by being made to watch the abuse of another. Nothing seemed out of bounds to these men as they considered new ways to record how the human female body could be used.

That day in the forest, was one of the worst. It seemed the basic intent was for whipping. Sure, they were fucking me in any of my holes, but they seemed to want to hurt me. The event this time seemed specifically intended on hurting me, the sexual use was almost incidental. Three separate group came. I didn't think any of the groups saw the others. During these really bad sessions, they used the drugs. It made us more pliant, I supposed.

It took hours to get through the description and then the questions: would I recognize this Banks? Yes. Do I know where the house is? No. Would I recognize the house? No. Would I recognize the inside in the basement? I shuddered, yes. Would I recognize the upstairs? Yes. Would I recognize others involved? Some, yes.

It was late afternoon and as they left in their vehicle, they indicated that at some point in the investigation they will need more from me. They were making progress through the camera guy, but there were a lot of holes. They were having trouble tracing the money or the porn business or the website back to this guy. They believed he was at the top, but he was clever and thorough. They left and Mitch returned to the monitor and waited; once they are through, the gate rolled shut. I was exhausted.

Mitch didn't bother to ask me, he simply led me back to the large room, sat on one end of the couch, and pulled me down onto it, lying along the length, and my head in his lap. He was stroking my hair, lightly touching my arm, side, waist, and hip. We were watching the last of the sunlight disappear over the mountain across the lake. It was so beautiful, the scene so peaceful, and his touches so soothing, gentle, and caring. The tension, turmoil, and stress of telling my story left me, it was replaced by the peace of him, his presence, his touch, and his smell. As I drifted into sleep, not wanting to move, to leave him, his touch, a fleeting thought went through me - why couldn't I have found this man all those years ago?

Three weeks later, I am getting much better about not letting 'sir' come out of my mouth. I can tell Mitch is pleased with my progress and comfort. Blackie was as likely to come to me for a pet or scratch, as he was to go to Mitch. Mitch called him a traitor but I can tell it was just teasing the two of us, probably me more than the dog since Blackie wouldn't understand the teasing.

Over the next nights, I try to give myself to him. "Sir, I ...." "No." Ugh, I said 'sir'! The next night, "I ... want you to have me ...." "No." What? Refused? I didn't use 'sir' that time. The next night, "You have been so good to me, I want you to take me to your bed and have me." "No." Again? Do I repulse

him and he is only being nice to me, but doesn't find me desirable? No, not the way he has looked at me. So, what was it? That night as I puzzled over it in the dark ... OF COURSE!

The next day we go for another swim and are relaxing on the rock shelf. I rolled to my side and looked at him, I leaned into him, my breasts squashed against his body. My fingers go to his nipple and I see the burn marks, I bend over, and kiss the nipple and marks. I looked up at him, "Mitch, I ... I ... I want ..."

I keep hesitating. He jumps in, "Cat, you're blushing!"

"I am? Yeah, I probably am. Mitch, I want you to make love to me. I want to make love to you." I reach down and tentatively take his cock in my fingers; I can feel it begin to harden. "I want your cock to make love to me. I want my pussy to make love to you. I need you, Mitch, I want you. I hope you want me. Mitch ... I want to feel what it is like to be loved, again." I was blushing stronger now and I knew it.

He smiled and pulled me on top of him, put his hands on each side of my face, and smiled a huge smile. "Hi, Cat ... I've been hoping you'd come out. I would do anything you want, but to you, not the slave." He then kissed me deeply, and long. I felt his cock completely harden under me, my pussy lips spread by my straddling him and his cock pressing against me. A single movement (him or me?) rubbed my clit against his cock head ... and I orgasmed. I held him tightly and rode it out.

When my body stopped shaking and my heart rate and breathing returned closer to normal, I raised up from him slightly and ventured a look into his face. He was watching me and seeing my eyes shining, he smiled, "You needed that." I blushed at the thoughts and feeling still coursing through my mind and body. He kissed my forehead, "I love it when you blush, Cat. You may have been treated as a slave for sex and pain, but that's not who you are, not when you blush like that with me."

I dropped my chest back into his, my cheek pressed into his shoulder. I sighed deeply and moved my pussy mound against his cock. I kissed his shoulder, "Yes, I needed that, but not the release in and of itself. I needed to know that gentle and caring was still something that I could identify with, react to, and enjoy. I needed to know that I was still a woman and hadn't been turned into a thing that is used."

His hand moved my head up and my face to his, he looked into my eyes and I saw so much contained in them shining out to me, openly and freely. He moved my lips to his, we kissed, again, even longer this time, but gentle and tender. When he broke it, he was again looking into my eyes; I could see a smile in them without needing to see the rest of his face. "Cat, there was never a doubt in my mind about the kind of woman you truly were. You just needed to be able to bring her out. I am sorry I was hard on you, pushing you away, not making it easy with more guidance. But, you needed to discover the route out by yourself. Otherwise, you would just be acting and responding the way another man was directing you. You needed to be past that."

I didn't say anything, I didn't do anything in response, I just sat up and looked down at him, touching his marked nipples like he has touched mine, a shared recognition of a very unique bond between us. I leaned down, kissed him briefly on the lips, and while in that position, slipped a hand between my legs, took hold of his magnificent cock, raised it slightly and pushed back against it, moving around on the head until it pushed between my lips and entered my pussy, just barely, but there.

"Now it's time to do it right." He smiled at me and that smile disappeared when his mouth opened as I pushed back against him and took his cock deeply inside. "I have wanted this so much for a long

while now ... and it is sooooooooo good!"

"I know ... hmmm ... I know you have, Dear Cat. And I made it hard for you."

"But ... oooooooooo ... Nnnnnnnn ... but I know now, what kind of man you are. I ... I ... know what ... mmmmm ... what kind of woman you ... you want. You ... want me ... and that is soooooo hot!"

I moved on him, taking him completely into me, deeper than any cock has ever been before. Women might agree that size is nice but not the best, that love and sharing will outweigh just size. But, size, combined with love and caring ... OH MY GOD! I orgasmed, again.

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CHAPTER THREE

Roughly a month later, we had settled into something of a routine. We still hadn't gotten out to do shopping for me. I was still wearing his large tee-shirts, tank tops, and the old dresses I had taken in and shortened. I still used the guest room, but there were nights that I now spent with him in his bed. We were casual and neither of us spoke about the future, our desires, or specific expectations. Except for the case with FBI, of course. That one topic took us into the future with expectations and scheduling.

It was late summer now, the days were still bright and hot, but the nights could easily turn cold. Well, maybe not really cold as much as colder than before. Mitch mentioned in passing about the winters with deep snow in the valley and the winds and drifting on the ranch land on the other side. For weeks now, we have been building shelters along the eastern slope of the mountain for the cattle and horses, something he had ignored the two previous winters. It was as if he had an 'Idiot's Guide to Ranching' book hidden away somewhere in his bedroom or office room. Every so often, there would be a new agenda item for the coming days, something new to learn and accomplish. With the coming of fall, those things seemed to take on more urgency as thoughts of winter approached. But he was still Mitch. He seemed to arrive at a comfort place with us and he felt free to go off doing some of the tasks he needed and leaving me with other things to do. As I continued to work on moving away from seeking his approval for every new action or completed task, he became more comfortable in assigning some tasks for me to take on. For instance, I became responsible for the cow, milking it, feeding and cleaning the stall.

I also took on responsibility for much of the house and surrounding area, such as the vegetable garden. It was something I had familiarity with and comfort doing, although it took some experience for cooking on the propane gas stove and range. I was clearly a city girl and as I quickly came to realize, he was very new to all this, also.

He came in very late in the afternoon, nearly dark, with the sun behind the mountain. I had a dinner prepared and warming due to his late return. But, before we sat down to eat it, I directed his attention to the Sat-phone on the counter. "Mitch, the message light came on about two hours, ago."

He looked at it like it was an omen and perhaps it might have been much of his life. That light might have meant a new mission requirement, change of plans, or change of target. It wasn't like a real phone that might simply be a message from his mom or family. He picked it up and brought it to the table, sat down, punched in his code, and listened. He looked up at me as I dished out the first servings and placed the remainder on the table. Somehow, along the way of living together, we became accustomed to sitting so we were at adjoining sides of the table rather than across from each other. It wasn't that we frequently touched each other with the closer proximity, but it was as if we expected that we might.

He thought for a moment, looked up at me, set the phone on the table, punched in the number, and put it on speaker. "Special Agent Baxter."

"Mitch Conner." So far, I thought, these two aren't too much into small talk.

"You have this on speaker, it sounds like. Is she there, too?"

"Catherine? Yes, she is. The only reason for your need to contact me would be about her case."

"True. Okay ... we need to meet here in our offices and the sooner the better. I think we should plan on at least a half day for briefings and re-interviews."

"Is there a problem with the case? This sounds different."

"I think it is subject to your perspective. But let us talk with all the information, not bits and pieces."

Mitch agreed that we would be in Denver by noon the day after next. There was always things to think about when there were animals involved. He didn't feel he could just lock the front door and leave for a couple days.

After a few mouthfuls of the casserole, "It looks like you are getting that shopping trip, after all. We'll go up tomorrow afternoon, stop in Colorado Springs maybe. There should be good options for women's clothes there. The next morning we'll head up to Denver and look up the local FBI." He looked at me with that look of deciding, "I suppose I should be a gentleman and ask, should I reserve two rooms or one?" I could tell by the look on his face that he was very serious about giving me the option. I could also see the implication of my answer in his face.

I reached across the corner of the table separating us, the short space that made the opportunity for contact so real, and put my hand on his arm. "I would like one." And I felt it, again. Why do I do that with him?

We didn't go nuts; at least he insisted that we didn't. To my standards of money and shopping, though, we did. He took me to a nice dress shop where I was outfitted with two nice dresses that could be used in multiple occasions and a pair high heels in a color that would be good for either. A lingerie shop where I was discretely fitted for bras in various styles, then panties, and stockings. The stockings were interesting, he wanted both stay-up and garter belt. Next was a casual wear shop for some casual skirts and top, shoes, a jacket, and hats. Then an outfitter where he had me fitted for two pair of cowboy boots, one for general riding, and the other for work and dirty. I got three pair of jeans, work shirts, my own tee-shirts, and tank tops.

He continued to insist it wasn't that much, that the case with the FBI was liable to take some time, and I didn't have anything, anyway. He thought I should be comfortable in my own clothes. The funny thing was that the old dresses I had modified made me feel somewhere between a country woman years ago and a hippy woman. Of course, having the new clothes didn't mean I always had to wear them when around the house, if I was comfortable in the others. And, once again, the act of buying clothes, the discussion of comfort, was completely independent of any discussion or recognition of the future or how it related to us. But things were mentioned, comments made about future events, fall coming, winter coming after that, plans for the animals and their feeding, and the storage of supplies for the winter when getting out could be difficult. We talked around it and continued to; at some point, it would need to be addressed.

That night, though, all of that was separated from us. That night it was just us, alone in Colorado Springs. We were checked into a very nice hotel, relaxing in the room, each with a bourbon from the

mini-bar. Our talk was easy and casual, some about our plans for dinner, some about speculation about the meeting tomorrow. But all of it without stress or tension. He looked at the bedside alarm clock and made the decision that we should get ready and he established a plan. Did I mention he tended to take control when he just reacted within a situation? It is what he does, like then. He was going to shower first, dress, then go down to the lobby and decide on a restaurant for dinner and return. That would give me time to get ready.

I enjoyed the rest of my drink, sitting by the window looking out over the mountains to the West and Pike's Peak to the Southwest. I heard the bathroom door open, turned, and saw him come out with a towel wrapped around his waist. He took out the clothes he intended to wear to dinner and laid them out on the bed, then stopped and looked at me. I continued looking at him.

"Do you intend to just watch me get dressed?"

I smiled, enjoying his slight feeling of awkwardness, "Yes, I am. There isn't a woman I could imagine that wouldn't want to be sitting where I am to watch you getting dressed." He not only smiled at me, but also moved around the bed to where I sat, bent to me, taking my face between his hands, and kissed me passionately. He looked at me as if he was going to say something, but ... he didn't. He moved back to the bed, let the towel drop, and proceeded to get dressed. He blew me a kiss and was out the door. I didn't move for several moments. I sat and replayed what just happened in my head. Yes, I teased him about watching him get naked and then get dressed. But, he didn't hide from it, minimize it, or make fun of it. He came to me, acknowledge what I was really feeling, and reciprocated it with a kiss, a wonderfully passion filled kiss.

When he returned, I heard the card key unlocking the door and the door opening. I was standing by the bed in front of the wall mirror, dressed in stay-up stockings, a white lace thong, and white lace bra. I was bent over the bed to pick up the dress with my back to the door, knowing I was presenting him with a view of my ass as he entered. I heard the door open and not close. I turned just enough to look over my shoulder, seeing him standing in the doorway looking at me.

"Wow!" It was all he seemed to be able to say. It naturally pleased me to no end.

I smiled back at him, "Thank you, but perhaps you could close the door?"

He nervously laughed and came up to me as I turned to him. "Cat, have I told you how beautiful you are?"

"Amazing what nice clothes will do, huh?"

"No, not the clothes, but seeing you here like this ... maybe out of the context of everyday ... you really are beautiful. And ... and I really am sorry if I haven't said it more. I ... you ..." He couldn't finish, didn't know how to finish, I don't know. But he took me into his arms, again, and held me, kissing me with passion and feeling. When he broke the kiss, "Maybe we should just stay here ..."

"No way, mister. I finally get to the big city ... first, you take me to dinner." I pulled the dress over my head and turned my back to him. He zipped the dress up, I turned and kissed him lightly on the lips, "Then, sweet man, then ... I have some ideas."

That night was a new experience for us together. It was almost fairytale-like. We walked to the restaurant a couple blocks from the hotel, the entire time I was holding his arm. It was the first time in a long time that I had heels on, but it all came back to me quickly. And it felt so comfortable, walking along, hanging on his arm, and small talk banter between us. The restaurant was magnificent and we enjoyed a very nice bottle of wine. The walk back to the hotel was much the

same, but much more so. Several times during the walk back those few blocks, we stopped to kiss, completely oblivious of anyone who might be around us.

Still half a block from the hotel and in a darkened part of the sidewalk, he stopped me again, pressed me up against the window front of a store, and kissed me passionately and intensely. He continued to press me against the window and pulled his face from mine to look into my eyes and face. I was nearly overwhelmed with desire and need. My mouth hung slightly open with deeper breathing and my eyes were entirely focused on his, searching him for the next move, the next whatever. And his eyes were searching mine at the same time, gauging my interest, my readiness, and willingness. With his hands on either side of my face, he kissed me, again, not gentle or timid, but with an intensity of a passion that was welling up inside us both. He kissed my neck and exposed shoulder, first one and then the other, his hands now on my sides and stoking up and down to my hips. His hands continued down my thighs and he lowered himself, couching in front of me. I watched as he slowly descended, still kissing me, but through my dress, his hands continuing down my legs until he came to the hem. He raised my dress up slowly and looked back up to my face and I continued to watch him as his hands raised up along my thighs, now under my dress, up my stockings until his hands were on naked flesh of my thighs above stocking tops. They continued higher and I sucked in air as he came to my hips and the narrow band of my thong. Then I gasped as he took hold of the waist band and started lowering it down my hips. He pushed them down my thighs until they fell to my feet.

He looked into my eyes. I was standing in front of him, pressed up against a shop window store ... and my thong was tangled at my feet. He raised my chin so we were looking into each other's eyes, "Hand me you thong."

He stepped back slightly and I bent down to step out of the barely there piece of clothing. I immediately and willfully handed him the flimsy thong. He slipped it into his pocket and took my hand, leading me to the hotel entrance. As we walked into the lobby, he leaned close to me, "You are without panties right now walking through this lobby, how do you feel?"

"I have been naked in front of men for several years now until you. In all that time I didn't feel as stimulated and turned-on as I do now."

"Good, because we aren't done."

As we waited for the elevator, he looked around us. It was not terribly late but late enough to be quiet. Apparently satisfied that we were alone, he turned me to face the elevator door and slowly lowered the zipper at the back of my dress. I sighed and moaned at the recognition of his actions. What was going to be the next action? Was there even going to be more, or was this tease it? The elevator arrived and a couple slight older than us got off, but Mitch stood closely behind me while they exited. On the elevator, we waited for the doors to close, and then he slid the straps off my shoulders and pushed the dress down until it fell to my feet. He didn't move to pick it up or to have me do so. Then, as I was coming to grips with the mental image of me standing in the elevator of a hotel in my bra and no panties, I felt his fingers working the hooks of my bra. The next thing I knew, he was picking up my dress and holding my bra. I was now in only stockings and heels. The elevator dinged as it came to our floor and I tensed, but when the doors slid open, there was nobody in the small alcove.

I felt his hand on the small of my bare back as he guided me out of the elevator and toward the hallway. I was nearly in a trance as he guided me down the hallway to our room. His hand moved from the small of my back to my butt, stroking it firmly. I couldn't wait any longer and stopped in the middle of the hall. I pressed him this time up against the wall and kissed him, my arms around his

neck.

"Mitch, I am so hot right now." I was looking with lust into his eyes and he saw it. "I need you to fuck me, Mitch."

He smiled and pressed forward into me until I bumped into the opposite wall and now I was the one pressed into the wall and he kissed me hard, his hands moving openly and urgently over my body. He then took my hand and led me further down the hall to our room.

I heard a door open and close somewhere down the hall in the other direction. I stood patiently behind Mitch as he took the key-card out of his pocket and opened the door. I was in the middle of the hall, not hiding behind him, wearing only my stockings and heels. It was one of the most erotic feelings from that exhibitionism. Yet, that act of exhibitionism was nothing compared to the humiliating exposure and treatment I had endured before numerous men before. It thrilled me what I have felt since Mitch took me in and started caring for me and guiding me through a re-entry to 'normal' life. I found myself continually anticipating and hoping for more experiences and intimacy.

Inside the room, I turn at the bed and put my arms out. He flipped the key-card on the dresser and walked into my open arms. He enveloped me as I did him. We kissed and kissed, our mouths in contact and our tongues coming into play. I pulled away, hugging him tightly, my head on his shoulder. I kissed him there and sighed into him, "Oh, God, Mitch!" His hands were moving over my bare back to my ass, he pulled me tightly into him, and I sighed more as his hard cock was pressing into my abdomen. And it was getting harder.

I took a step back and began unbuttoning his shirt, pulling it out from his pants, and then pushing it off his shoulders and down his arms. I put my hands on his now bare shoulders and lowered them onto his powerful chest, touching his nipples like a new ritual of recognition between us. I kissed each nipple, then his chest, then his face and lips. While I was busy doing that, though, my hands were busy with his belt, loosening it, then the clasp of his pants and the zipper. I pushed them down his hips and at the same time pushed him back so he was sitting on the edge of the bed.

I knelt down before, taking the waist of his pants down his legs to his feet. I removed his shoes, then his socks, and finally his pants. I put my hands on his thighs and stroked up to his underwear until I came to the waist band, grabbing it and tugging it down so he raised his butt up off the bed so I could remove his underwear. I returned my hands to his thighs, moving them up, again, only this time to his hard cock. I took his cock in my hand and glanced up at his face. He was watching me, not my hands, but me. He was smiling. I turned my gaze to the cock in my hand and crawled slightly further between his legs so I could bend over and kiss the head. I licked the underside to the head before taking it into my mouth. I sucked and swirled my tongue around the head. I pulled up to the top and off, I licked the length and looked back up at him briefly before returning my attention to it. It seemed magnificent to me and I have certainly seen a lot of cocks. It had to be ten inches and it might not be considered monstrous, but it was certainly big. But the most significant thing to me was that it wasn't going to abuse me or even just use me. It was going to love me. And, I now truly believed that.

I continue to suck and lick him, just enjoying him, the feel of his cock. I then slowly stood and kissed my way up his body until I was kissing his mouth. When I broke the kiss, I just looked into his eyes, "Now, please, I need to feel you inside me." With that, I moved next to him, bent over the edge of the bed, my legs spread. I was exposed and ready for him. I knew my pussy lips were already glistening with my juices, I was very ready. I looked over my shoulder at him. His hand was on my ass as he stood up and took his position behind me, guided his cock to the entrance to my pussy. He could see the look on my face, the intense look of lust on my face.

Then, with hands holding both of my hips, he leaned forward and plowed deeply into me, driving his long, hard cock into me as deeply as he could. It was not a need felt only by me, but felt by both of us. I moan out to him, spurring him to continue, to drive me further and further into my increasing state of lust and overload. I couldn't contain it any longer, "Oh dear god, Mitch, yes, please ... oh, yes, please ..."

He fucks me hard in this position, this dominating position. Then, after many minutes, he pulled sudden out of me and I moan my frustration and my pussy was clenching in an effort to regain the feeling of being full and pleased. I feel the bed move and jostle me and I see him crawling up onto the bed, lying on his back, his head on the pillow. He was holding his glistening cock up in the air. I scramble up onto the bed, to him and straddle him, taking his cock from him and easing my body over it, then descending down its length. I was riding him hard, raising up, and dropping fully. I was oblivious to anything but this joint moment of pleasure. He had my nipples between his fingers, squeezing them, gently twisting them, and pulling on them. It was while he was pulling on my nipples that I felt it, him tensing underneath me, his hips rising, his mouth opening but soundlessly for moments until, "Ohhhhh ... Cat, yes, yes, YESSSSS ... oh, fuck ... Cat ... I am ... am cummmmmminnnngggggg!" And he did. Powerfully! And my feeling him cum inside me, the first powerful spurt of his seed into my hungry, convulsing pussy, and I came with him. I dropped to his chest and held onto him tightly, nearly as tightly as he was holding me. It was wonderful and everything I could have hoped for, and did hope for.

The next day we were at the FBI office building exactly on time and Agent Baxter is waiting just inside for us. He is noticeably taken aback by my appearance and it becomes slightly awkward. I am wearing one of the new skirts Mitch purchased for me. It comes to just above my knees with a wide belt and a white blouse with short sleeves. That I am also wearing a white lace bra is just visible through the fabric of the blouse. Beyond that, I am wearing flats on my feet. Mitch smiles at me and takes my hand. Baxter hasn't seen me except from the horrible pictures and he few times at Mitch's in one of the old, modified dresses. This is clearly a different look.

He gets us through the sign-in process and we get our 'visitor' badges that we are told must be worn and visible at all times while in the building. Up two floors, we are led into a small conference room. I enter and discover that Baxter has held Mitch back at the door; I stand just behind the table and wait.

They are speaking quietly and I cannot quite make out their conversation, except for a, "How is she doing?"

Mitch looks toward me and smiles, that alone making me feel more at ease, "She is doing great. I think she has mostly pulled out of the experience. I am no doctor and I am sure there will be moments of regression and fears resurfacing, but I think she is doing amazingly well."

He just nods and enters the room. Mitch comes to sit with me and two more agents enter. They sit on the same side with Baxter. Then a woman enters and sits at the end of the table, separating herself from both of the groups. Baxter starts with opening introductions of everyone, including us. He identifies one of the agents as a technical specialist, the other an associate field agent. The woman is an assistant Federal District Attorney.

"Catherine, we want to officially thank you for all the assistance and information you have provided. Working on your case has opened a separate and very wide reaching investigation starting from the group you unfortunately were caught up with and spreading out to groups and individuals local to Denver and Colorado but also extending across the country. That's the good news."

Mitch squeezed my hand, and focused on Baxter and then the attorney, "That must mean there is bad news."

It was the attorney, "Yes, there is, at least probably for Catherine. Of course, that is depending on how vested she is in the prosecution side of this. We do not believe we have a case against anyone on the abuse angle that is directly a result of her. The evidence doesn't come together with strength to seek prosecution."

I am shocked and look quickly at Baxter for support, but back to the attorney, "What? You have pictures of what I looked like. What about the videos that were recovered that showed the abuse and assaults? What about the camera guy that was captured?"

"Yes, all valid and very ugly. You are right, even the camera guy gave names and locations of these events. It looked solid, but ... there is a major complication. We went to interview this guy Banks who was supposed to be the lead on the whole slavery side of the case. He already had his lawyer with him and ... they showed us some things that pretty much eliminates our ability to show cause for a warrant to search his property." I just waited and felt Mitch's hand tighten on mine, his thumb lightly stroking. "They have a video of you specifically and coherently accepting all liability for the following actions that would be performed on you, that you agreed to the events that were to follow of your own free-will, and that you enjoyed the infliction of pain upon your body." She then hit a button on a remote, the lights lowered, and a video flashed onto the screen opposite her. It did indeed show me saying all those things. I was naked, sitting on a stool in a room that I knew to be the basement, one of the few angles possible that would not show the BDSM equipment available. "Do you remember that?"

I started crying, not sobbing, but tears were streaming from my eyes. Mitch put his arm around my shoulders, "Yes, I do. You don't understand how this worked! They could and would do anything they wanted to me, sexual, physical, and mental. They would do it all. They made us act out those tapings every so often. If we didn't cooperate and be convincing, the activities were always much worse. So, yes, we did them and we made them to appear as pleasant as we could to stem some of the worst abuse."

Baxter interjected, "Catherine, please, you have to understand, it isn't that we don't believe you. We have seen this before, but this guy is very careful and good. But, no judge is going to give us a search warrant to go into his house after seeing this." The discussion continued about what the investigation was finding, the trail of money and drugs, the trail of money and porn, prostitution, and what they believe is interstate slavery. Some of it they have already traced strongly enough to people to make arrests and to assign agents to pursue other angles. But, in this case, it is drying up. "We know from you and the camera guy that the basement of his place is the location of his operations. That is where the women, two more we believe, would be. We just can't get in there. We're sorry."

With that, the meeting seemed to break up. The attorney got up and left, the other two agents did the same. Mitch started to rise and Baxter put his hand out to stop him. He waited until the others were out of the room, and then closed the door. He returned to his chair and leaned forward, looking at each of us in turn. "Our hands are tied. As law enforcement, we can't do anything. It isn't the old West, anymore. We can't just kick in his door and force information out of him. That might be what needs to happen, but ..." He was looking intently into Mitch's eyes, now only speaking to him. "If anything more could come on the abuse and slavery part of this, Catherine's situation, it won't be possible by us."

Mitch was staring right back at the FBI Agent, and then nodded, "I understand, Agent Baxter." He

stood up and assisted me. He stopped at the door, his hand on the knob, turned back to the Agent, "Has he been under surveillance, though? Is he still? Was it, is it, obvious or covert?"

Baxter smiled at him and that seemed strange to me. Both the questions from Mitch and the smile from Baxter seemed odd. "Yes, we have had him under watch since the first contact and, yes, we have been obvious. We didn't want him to think he could move his operation or the women. We were hoping to find his setup intact. And, we do plan to continue watching him, but his lawyer will get an injunction against that. After four days we will have to pull the surveillance."

Mitch put out his hand to thank him, but Baxter wasn't finished. "Catherine, your assistance has been very helpful and we recognize the very real danger you could still be in. Until this is concluded or Banks is behind bars, there could be some retaliation on his part if he were to locate you. The government would like to offer a relocation for you. We can set you up in a new city, with a job, and place to live."

I looked at him in surprise, "I don't know what to say, that is very generous." I felt Mitch's hand release mine and back up just a step. My hand felt so empty after having had Mitch's supportive touch for so long. I resisted looking at Mitch, remaining focused on the Agent, "Could I have some time to think about it and possibly where?"

"Of course, but this does close soon. This is Thursday, so get back in touch one way or the other on Monday, okay?" I stepped up to him, kissed him on the cheek, and thanked him.

The drive back to the ranch was very quiet. I was lost in three chains of thought: the disappointment that some form of vengeance or retribution might not be realized; persistent thoughts of Mitch; and, what my next choices should be. It had been years during the time of my control since I had a clear thought about what my life could be like, what I would want it to be like, or what I would even like to do with my life. The long drive from Denver to the ranch was only the beginning of the quiet time. It continued into the next day. If I spoke twenty words to Mitch, he might have not spoken more than half that in response. It was awkward, but I was absorbed in this thinking.

Friday night, I was finishing the dinner dishes when Mitch came in quietly, stood to my left, and put his arm around me, his hand on my right hip. I was again in one of the old dresses I had modified. They were comfortable, loose, and warm enough for the early fall evenings. It was only recently that Mitch had started a fire in the wood stove in the large room and he had done so this evening. It was nice to have his presence as I finished up with the dishes. His hand on me was reassuring, that our quiet time was not an issue, just time I needed, and he had sensed and honored that.

He pulled my hip against his and stroked my side from my hip up to alongside my breast. "How are you doing? I wanted to give you the time you might need. This could be a major change in your life. A good one, finally, but still a major change. The quiet between us is driving me nuts, though. So, how are you doing?"

I pulled the stop in the sink, rinsed the soapy water down the drain, and dried my hands. I turned into him and pressed my body into his. I could feel my unrestrained breasts press into him and I wondered if he could feel it, too. I was sure his touches had already confirmed that just because he bought me several bras, it didn't mean that I was routinely wearing them now. As I leaned against his front, I put my head on his shoulder, and wrapped my arms around his body. His body is hard and muscled. I love the feel of it against me and under my hands.

I looked up at him after a moment, "Mitch, thank you for being understanding." Tears started coming to my eyes and a couple escaped and dripped down my cheeks. He brought a finger up and

carefully wiped the tears away, then lifted my chin to kiss me softly on the lips. He didn't say anything, just gave me a small smile. He took me to the other room.

"Can we talk, then? Are you ready?"

"Yes, I want to. I need to."

He went back the kitchen, retrieved two glasses and an open bottle of bourbon. We sat in what had become our own chairs; I had claimed the other one like his for my own. We talked for half an hour about the FBI, the lack of a case, the FBI offer to move me and set me up, and my feelings. He poured us each a little more bourbon. Rather than leaning back into his chair, he leaned his elbows onto his knees, the glass of brownish liquor in his hands between his knees. "I get the sense that you are not convinced about taking the FBI's offer. You just naturally came back to the ranch with me when you could very easily have just stayed in Denver and be taken care of by them."

"I guess you are right."

"But, you came back here, why? But, let me finish that thought ... I don't mean that I didn't want you to. What I am wondering, more than just wondering, is why YOU wanted to come back here? What is happening, what are you looking for?"

I looked at him with only glances as I stared mostly at the floor, his feet covered in socks, and my bare feet. I was nervous. This was the first time in all the time I had been at his place that he asked that question, the first time he broached the subject of future, of expectation. "I ... I don't know how ... I ..."

He stood up, went to his office, and returned with paper and pencils. He handed me a piece of paper and pencil and kept one for himself. He sat back in his chair with a magazine to write against. "I want you to write out your feelings, or thoughts, about why you are here, or why you are still here. I am going to do the same thing, only mine will be of my feeling about you being here. We can share them and talk it out. Mine is not going to take much, I already know. You take whatever time you need. Maybe this way it will be easier to express. Remember, this is to express our thoughts, so be open and honest. We can talk out the meaning it might have. Don't try to anticipate what I might like or what I might not like."

I found it was easier. What I couldn't get to come out to him verbally, just poured out through the pencil onto the paper. I filled the front and turned it over to continue on the back. I looked up and saw him watching me, sipping his drink. I looked at the paper on the arm rest, then up at him, and back at the paper. There was only a line of writing on it. I thought about that and skimmed my own writing, smiled and added a short note at the end.

I looked up at him, "Now what?"

He put his drink down, uncrossed his legs, and held open his arms. He wanted me in his lap and it pleased me that he did. He was in control; he was leading me through the final stages of thinking this through. I got up, stepped to him, hiked up the hem of the dress, and sat back onto his lap. His arm immediately came across me, pulling me in tighter and in the process, his arm pressed up into my breasts. I leaned my head back and kissed his cheek, "Now what? This is always nice, but now what?"

He chuckled, "I think it is nice, too." His hand came onto my front and I felt it lift my left breast. I leaned back into him, accepting the touch, and not dissenting. "We let the other read what we wrote. Should there be any order of who is first?"

He had his paper in his other hand, it contained so little writing. "Can I see yours, first?" He handed it to me and I turned it over. As I anticipated, it did only contain one line of writing: 'Because I love you, STAY!'.

I could feel the tension in his arms around me as he waited for a response that seemed slow in coming. A delay that was not caused by uncertainty or confusion, but caused by my entire heart and soul feeling overwhelmed. I anticipated that a relationship of some level had begun to form between us, but I didn't imagine that this man, so private and guarded, felt this intensely. I put the paper to my face as tears welled in my eyes ... and I think this scared him.

"Cat ..."

I pulled the paper from my face, it was wet in places from the tears on my cheeks, I twisted my head to look into his face, and I smiled, a reassuring and grateful smile. "Stay? Really? You want me to stay here?"

He kissed my cheek closest to him and wiped both cheeks with a finger. He's been doing that for me, lately. Then he did what I have become so fond of; he put a finger under my chin and raised my face to his, and we kissed. "Not just stay here, Cat. Stay with me, be a part of me. I don't understand it, Cat, I am bewildered by all this to some extent, but I trust it. I have never met anyone, man or woman, that I have been able to even begin to open up to, with whom I can be fully relaxed. Until you. But ... this isn't fair; let me see what you wrote before I say more."

I handed mine to him. It was filled with thanks and gratitude for nursing me, caring for me, protecting me, and leading me from emotional and psychological vulnerability. I wrote specifically about how he led me to take control of my interaction with him, gain confidence in myself and relationships, and supporting, rather than taking over, my dealings with the FBI. I wrote about the freedom he allowed for me to consider the FBI offer without pressure or manipulation, another example of giving me back control over my decisions, life, and future. When he came to the bottom of the front page, I took it from him and folded it in half and gave it back to him, hiding the last thing I wrote in a determined effort to release my complete feelings. It was all more of the same but with more rambling as I was pouring out thoughts that were loosely connected. He stopped and looked at me for permission to turn it over. My god! How long had it been before Mitch, this sweet, strong, powerful man, since any man sought permission from me? I nodded in agreement and he read my final words: 'I love you, Mitch! Can we make this work?'

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## CHAPTER FOUR

Communication pretty much ended at that point. His hand moved to my breast and fondled it as he sought out my mouth with his. As our cheeks touched in our passion, I felt the prickling of his whiskers, which became distinct within days if he didn't shave, and it was another part of him that yelled rugged and manly. But, like now, the person inside was sometimes different, softer, and yielding. The seeming contradiction experienced simultaneously was in itself tremendously arousing, and the best part was that he didn't seem to know it. Between what was in my head and what I felt on my lips, I was moaning into his mouth. And then there was the apparent answer to my written question through the physical expression of his hands and lips. He broke the kiss, shifted his weight and legs underneath him, and stood up. From a sitting position with me in his lap, he stood up. Neither of us is any longer young, but he is sooooo strong and confident in his abilities, at least his physical abilities. I hung onto his neck as he securely held me in his arms and I kissed his neck repeatedly. He stopped and I raised my head to see why.

He dipped me to the kerosene lamp, I smiled at the understanding of his intention, yet secure in his arms, and I turned the lamp off. The room, and house in fact, instantly was black; but he maneuvered the room with the confidence of someone used to navigating these darkened rooms over several years. He walked past the guest room I had been using and went directly to his bedroom. He set me onto the floor, moved to the lamp next to the bed, and turned it on, but very low. Returning to me, he unfastened the dress, released the little belt, and pushed it off my shoulders. With that, I was naked before him. He looked into my eyes and then down my body, his hands moving where his eyes went, from my arms up to my shoulders to my face, then down to my breasts, to my sides and hips and coming together from both sides to the space between my legs. I gasped with each new spot touched. I felt as if virginal on my wedding night with a new husband discovering me for the very first time after long and anxious anticipation.

My head nearly swooned. The entire time I have known this man, he has been kind, caring, watchful, and protective. He took me in under his protection, mysteriously at first, until I discovered the link he felt that existed between us. With supreme tolerance and patience, he led me out of my fears and timidity, away from my impulse to only please and yield, and to give me security in expressing my needs, desires, wants, and feelings. Even in this most recent of choices: do I leave and live a new life on my own; or do I stay and live a new life supported and shared. Even in this choice, he refused to manipulate me, to influence me in any way. All that despite apparently having a strong preference of his own.

He encouraged me onto the bed as he pulled the covers down. When my head was on the pillows, he moved to the side of the bed and quickly stripped, then stopping to survey my body. Even in the low light, I could see the tenderness along with the desire and anticipation. Of course, my own eyes weren't static either, his desire and anticipation was evident in more than his eyes. We have loved before, sometimes wildly, sometimes quietly, sometimes outside in nature like the first time out on the rock in the lake. This intensity, the mood, the feeling were completely different from any of those times before. Tonight, there wasn't a question as he passed the guest room, yet there wasn't a sense of domination or taking away my choice, there was only a sense that the choice had been mutually decided and agreed upon through our written notes. When he brought me to his room, to his bed, it seemed, felt to me, light-years from being taken to his bed for sex; it was far from even being taken to his bed to share the night; this was every bit like being offered his bed as my own, a place that we will share, a place that I will only know comfort, security, and peace.

As I said, my head nearly swooned.

He wasn't done, either. He crawled onto the bed and approached me. He bent each knee, kissed it, and then splayed it out to the side. When he was done, he was kneeling between my wide open thighs. He looked up at my face, pulling his gaze from my obscenely exposed pussy, and just as he looked up, my hands found their own way to my breasts as I waited for him to approach further and love me with his body. But he didn't. Instead, he lay down between my thighs, his face at their junction, I could see his nostrils flare as my scent came up to him, his eyes half closed and he breathed in deeply. When he opened his eyes fully, he smiled at me. Then, he kissed my lips, then the skin between my thighs and my lips on either side, my clitoris hood, and back to my lips. This time, though, his tongue came out, just a little, but enough to gently part my lips, not enough to penetrate, but to barely part them. He crawled up and kissed his way up my stomach, to each breast and nipple, and finally to my neck, ears, and cheeks before settling onto my mouth.

He pulled up slightly, enough for us to breath, and speak. "I love you taster, Cat. I love your scent. I love the feel of your lips." He kissed me, again. "I love these lips, too." It made me giggle at the tease. I felt like a girl underneath him, a girl experiencing these wonders, loving the attention from a loving man.

I put my arms around him and mashed my lips onto his, probing with my tongue onto his. I pulled slightly apart, searching his eyes that were tender and soft, soft eyes in such a hard man. My eyes turned into a smile as I licked my lips and he noticed and watched me. "Mmmmmm ... yes, I agree." He looked puzzled. "I do taste good." We both laughed and that sent him back down my body, kisses left along the way, to my open pussy.

He licked, sucked, tongued, and probed me with tongue and fingers. He played with my clit, flicking it, sucking on it with his lips, and taking it between his teeth and gently nipping and pulling on it. He did the same to my lips, outside and inside. I just knew I had to be in heaven now, I thought it was perfect before, but a man spending this much time on me, to please me ... oh my god, has this ever happened to me?

I reached down and put my fingers into his longish hair, pressing his mouth into me, my hips rising to increase the pressure even more. I moaned out my pleasure. I was sooo close, but ... but I wanted him inside me when I came, I wanted to cum around his cock. I pulled on his head, he looked up at me, my eyes pleading with him and my voice followed, "Please, Mitch, please, I want you, I need you, now."

He kissed his way up to me, but was much faster this time. When his head reached mine, I wrapped my arms around his neck and pulled him to me, engulfing his mouth with mine, moaning into his mouth as we kissed. He pulled apart just enough to guide himself to my opening and he pressed in only inches, waiting there with just the head inside. He was supported above me on his arm. I looked down between us and saw his hard cock connecting the distance between our bodies. I looked up at him; my mouth was slightly open, breathing through it in anticipation of more penetration. He inched a little more, reached down with his head, and kissed each nipple.

"I love your nipples, Cat."

"Even though they are marked permanently?" I absently moved my hands to him and fingered his nipples. He smiled and inched in a little more. I gasped. "I take that to be a 'yes'." We laughed into each other's mouths as he drove fully into me and I cried out in joy and pleasure to have him fully and completely inside. I held him tightly, then moved a hand to his head, stoking it and his hair, the other caressing his back down to the small of his back, feeling him flexing as his hips moved to smoothly drive his cock into me and nearly all the way out before returning after a momentary hesitation at both the deepest and shallowest part of his stroke. It was slow, intimate, and intensely loving. With my face alongside his head, pressed into his shoulder, I gasped again as he pressed in for extra depth and I took in his own scent. Mmmm, yes, I know that smell, already. His smell, what I enjoy about still wearing one of his tee-shirts, to feel it on me and smell him close even when he isn't.

We love for a long time, longer than I think I have ever been with one man at a given time. And, it was the most intense sensation, emotionally and physically, that I have ever experienced.

The next morning, I awaken to sunlight. And no Mitch next to me. Not too surprising, if the sun is shining in over the mountain, it isn't early. And, I have learned that Mitch is an early riser. There is always plenty to do around the place and the shortening days make it more important to use the available time. I get out of bed and stand, stretching with my arms above my head. I see him. He is standing at the end of the dock in shorts and a tee-shirt. Blackie is sitting next to him and they both seem lost in gazing across the lake. There is a mug on the dock next to him, probably empty by now. I open one of the dresser drawers, pull out a tee-shirt of his, and smile. It's the Release the Beast one he was wearing on that fateful day.



In the kitchen, I grab a mug and fill it. The pot looks like he couldn't have had more than one mug this morning so I fill another. I have to put one mug down to open the sliding door, then again to close it. It is awkward, but I manage to accomplish it without soaking myself in hot coffee. As I turn, I see Blackie has heard me and is loping to me, his tail wagging faster than his feet are carrying him. I greet him happily but my hands are full. He follows alongside me until we reach Mitch.

"I thought you might need more coffee ..." as I hand him the second mug. Then, one hand now freed, Blackie is more insistent. I crouch down and pet, scratch, and stroke him before standing next to Mitch. I shiver and lean into his side, my arms pressed tightly to my sides, "Note to self: just because Mitch seems comfortable in shorts and tee-shirt does not mean I will be."

He is laughing but at the same time puts his left arm around my shoulder and guides me in front of him and wraps me in his arm, the other holding his coffee. "I guess I have acclimated. Is this better?"

I press back against him and wiggle my back and butt as if I am trying to somehow get in even closer, and crane my head to the side and up to look at him, "This is always better." He kisses the top of my head. We both finish our coffee in silence, each in our own thoughts and gazing at whatever across the lake and up the mountainside. Mitch takes my mug with his and sets both on the dock surface. As he straightens back up, he uses both arms around me, pulling up against my breasts. I wrap my own arms around his and add my own squeezing to what he is already applying. "Mitch ... our conversation last night ... do we need to revisit that I want to stay here with you? Do you feel being pressured?"

He turned me around in his arms and did that thing, again. He put his finger under my chin and raised it so we were looking at each other. I love that thing he does, it feels so gentle, intimate, and tender. "Cat, as I recall the events correctly, it was I who first indicated that I wanted you to stay, not just here at the house, but stay with me. I meant that much more personally, I thought you understood that."

I smiled at him and allowed my head to relax against his chest. "I did, I do understand that difference. I ... just wanted ..." but I stopped. I pulled my head back and looked up at him, "Mitch, I love you. I wrote it yesterday, I needed to verbalize it, too."

He smiled; he slipped his hands to my waist and lifted me off the ground. I wrapped my arms around his neck and my legs around his hips. "Catherine, Cat, I love you. Nothing has or will change. I want you with me; I think I need you with me." We started kissing and he turned on the dock and started walking toward the house.

I laughed, "Mitch, put me down. You can't carry me that far."

"Oh, yes, I can. Besides, I like holding you, one hand on your bare butt."

"Well, don't, we need the mugs? Besides, you'll get me all horny, again."

"I fail to see the downside here." I was blushing, again, and we were both chuckling, but he did put me down. I went back for the mugs and bent over with my back to him, I did it straight legged, sure that I was showing a lot of leg, maybe part of my butt, too. He was waiting for me and as I passed him on the dock, he grabbed for my ass causing me to shriek and he chased me all the way to the house, his laughing mixed in with my shrieks as he touched my ass, frequently being exposed as the bottom of the shirt bounced from my running.

I offered to make a breakfast and he went into his office. As I was putting things on the table, I could

hear him talking. I went to the doorway to tell him it was ready and I heard him telling someone he would let him know if he was needed and that it would be very soon.

Breakfast was quiet and I found myself trying to fill the void, but I told myself to stop. I also told myself to just ask why he had become so quiet. So I did. "Mitch, is something wrong? You've become so quiet."

He put his fork down and leaned back, looking only at the plate of half-eaten food he'd just abandoned. Then he leaned forward with his elbows on the table pushing the plate in front of him, and then turned to look directly at me, which caused me to pause. "This isn't right!" I got nervous. What isn't right? We're not right? Has he changed so fast? "You deserve some form of closure on this and they can't give it to you."

I waited a moment. He was clearly agitated and before I confronted him with an argument, I wanted to give him a moment. "Did you get closure, Mitch? When it happened to you?"

"Yes! I killed them."

"Oh ... that's right. Well, you killed mine, too."

"Not all of them. Not the head of the snake." He took several deep cleansing breaths, they seemed to help. "Cat, I don't mean to go in and kill more people. What happened in the forest was their decision because I wasn't leaving you there. I told them that." He was shaking his head, he got up and went to the window and looked out at the lake. For several moments he just stood there, but I could see the tension coming out of his body. He sat back down and took his plate for another forkful. Then, he started over, "Cat, I'm sorry. The down-side of our relationship, the only one, is that I take you very personally now. I might sometimes become over-protective, I don't mean it as a negative to how I feel about your abilities." He reached out to take my hand. "What I meant was that there should be some kind of justice closure."

"I thought Baxter was clear that they weren't able to get that evidence to move in that particular direction."

Mitch smiled and leaned onto the table, again. "He was very clear that THEY couldn't get the information, that they weren't able to get a search warrant signed. But, he was also very clear about what he did need but that none of the law enforcement agencies would be able to do it."

"You mean he was asking you to do it? He needed it to be done outside the agency?"

He smiled, again. "No, he couldn't ask. No, he was just making conversation ... over explaining the reasons. Even in his own office he can't know who might be listening. He would be likely breaking the law if he went outside law enforcement. He even mentioned what gang might be interested in that residential area."

"Why would that be important?"

"Because, if a gang hit the house in a residential area because of a perceived conflict over drug and/or prostitution control in the area, numerous enforcement groups would be interested and have justified entry if there was conflict there."

"He was telling you how they could gain access for search ... without asking you to do it." I looked up at him, now scared. "All because he knows what you did before?"

"He only has his guesses, Cat. He wouldn't have the clearances to KNOW what I did. He only knows that my history has some interesting gaps if you look closely." He was still holding my hand. "So, my question to you, do you want some retribution? And, if so, do you want to participate?"

"Are you serious? Wait! Yes and yes. Before you can change your mind." We both laugh, but laced with tension, this time.

"Okay, come on, there is more you need to learn about me and what we need to do."

"The two of us are doing this?"

"No, I'll bring someone else in, too. I trust him completely. But, you need serious training because I am going to have to rely on you to protect my back as well as protect yourself." He pulled me along behind him, outside and across the yard to the work building that was the garage for his two trucks (the work one and a new one for going nice places), ATV and yard tractors. It was also his work shop and I found an elaborate gym setup. He admitted that he has sloughed off on that since I arrived, but that was going to change. He asked if I saw anything unusual compared to the appearance of the building on the outside. I didn't. He walked me to the far end and put his hand on a light switch there. He flipped it and nothing happened. I looked around and there was one light that was still out. He called that a decoy, it never did go on. He pressed something underneath and the switch box opened. He closed it, again, and showed me how to press the proper location. Then he gave me the code, "3 - 1 - 2 - 0". The wall section next to it cracked open. It had looked solid.

"If you ever have trouble remembering the four digit code, just think 'CAT'. The third letter, first letter, and twentieth letter." My mouth hung open. He changed the code since knowing me. He just smiled.

He pushed the wall open and turned on a switch and lights went on the full width of the building. The inside of the building was fifteen feet shorter than the outside. This room was fifteen feet by thirty feet. And it was full of things to make war with. Pistols, rifles of numerous types, clothes, cases of ammunition, and latched crates along the wall. The outside wall contained weapons on pegs and covered twenty feet of it with work benches underneath.

"Where did you get all this?"

"Most of it is collected from missions. Some I purchased from discrete contacts for unsanctioned missions."

He walked me over to the pistols. Many looked the same and there were multiples of many of the types. He took several down, feeling them in his hand, then selected one and handed it to me. "I think this will be the best one for you." He then took another down, very slightly larger and I saw why he selected this one for me, my smaller hands. He then showed me at the workbench the safety, ejecting the magazine, filling the magazine, loading the magazine back in and cocking it by sliding the top back. It was a nine millimeter, or so he called it. That was the caliber of the rounds. Then he showed me the proper way to stand, holding it with my right hand (my strong hand) with my left under the butt of the handle for stabilization. Then he took me outside, stopping for some square targets. He led me to an area in the forest behind the building that he apparently used for practice. I shot that pistol for an hour, reloading the magazine repeatedly. He seemed completely unconcerned about how many rounds I was firing.

He was behind me watching. I was wearing ear protection as he was. He had a big smile on his face. "Don't laugh, I'm trying."

"I'm not laughing, Cat. You've destroyed that target. You're just shooting a scraps of paper stuck into the tree bark now. What I was smiling about was such a beautiful sight. What could be finer than a nearly naked woman firing a gun ... and so well."

In my concentration, I had completely forgotten about how I was dressed. I laughed myself, then showed him that I was putting the pistol on safety, then struck a seductive pose. He walked up to me and took the pistol and set it on a tree stump, then pulled me into him. "How do you feel?"

"Horny."

He laughed, "I meant about the pistol, the shooting."

"Ohhhh, fine, good." I pressed my pelvis into him hard, "I thought you meant the other because of what I feel poking me here." He laughed but saw I wasn't, my eyes reflecting a need that I wanted satisfied. "I want you here, out here in the forest. Then, I'll be a good girl and practice some more."

He pulled the tee-shirt over my head in a quick move, "Don't try too hard to be a good girl."

"Hmmmm ... I think I can manage that, actually." I stripped his shirt off, then unbuckled his belt, and unsnapped his shorts. In minutes, we were both naked. He grabbed me and lifted me up; I put my arms around his neck and legs around his hips, crossing my ankles to lock them. He bounced me up a little higher and I felt him move one hand from my butt, then felt being poked on my cheeks, then between them. "Oh god, Mitch! You can do this?!?" Between the two of us, I felt him finally slip just between my lips and he froze. I moved my head to his and kissed him hard. With our lips just in contact, "Fuck me. This is so amazing!"

He slowly lowered me onto his cock and I groaned out loudly. "Oh, my dear god, you are so strong." He lifted me and let me drop back down. I was dripping wet and I slid over him easily. I never wanted him to stop. This was again beyond my experience of loving, so totally trusting in a man in such an intimate moment. It seemed he was showing me time and again that he was mine, completely, and without doubt and question. We kissed and hugged and he raised me and lowered me. And somewhere in there, I figured out that with my legs tightly wrapped around him, I could participate by raising myself with my leg muscles.

I giggled and he stopped, "Am I doing something you think is funny, young lady?"

"I'm sorry, no, no, it was just ... well ... suddenly I thought we are both getting a workout now." I kissed him, "And, thank you for calling me a young lady." He chuckled, too.

But, we were only minutely distracted as our arousal remained high and it wasn't long before we were clutching each other tight as we climaxed. First, it was him and feeling his cock jerk inside me and spew his seed into me, I came right after him. I hugged him tight and kissed nearly every inch of his right shoulder as I continued to sigh my release and gasp for air. I sighed again into his shoulder, I could definitely get used to sex like this with him.

We took a long break after that ... in bed. I slept, like a very satisfied woman, but on waking, I had the distinct sense that he hadn't. And, I was right. He was working out details for the 'mission', as I was now calling it. This was going to be one of the coolest things I had ever done. Well, at least right up there with having sex with this guy. But seriously, it was going to be cool and the thing that kept it from being cooler was the knowledge that it was also very dangerous. I trusted that he would have it worked out, but men like those we were after were always prone to do the unexpected. He repeated that a million times. Later in the afternoon, I took 'my' gun and another box of rounds to the target area. This time he had me focus on multiple targets, moving randomly at four targets on

trees, some close, some far, some to the left, ahead, and to the right. By the end of that session, I thought I was doing pretty well. He couldn't believe I had no experience, he said I had 'talent', a natural proficiency with a gun. He said after this, he wanted to see me handle a rifle. There was a mountain lion causing trouble and he was thinking of going after it, which would be good training for tracking, targeting, and shooting.

But, first, we had to get through this. That night we spent hours at the kitchen table as I described the inside of the house on the main floor and basement. I had never been to the second floor, so it was a mystery, but he assumed that was just bedrooms since I had already identified where the guy's office was in the basement. And, there was a door in the basement I never saw into. I knew people went in there, usually in groups but they always turned the light off so it was too dark to see anything.

We were meeting the third member of the group (Hansen, that's all I was going to get out of him) in the middle of the afternoon to get ready and go over details. When we met him at a cheap, run-down motel, he was very polite and considerate of me. I could tell it was because of Mitch.

He kept telling me to just do what Mitch said and everything would be fine. Then he looked at Mitch, "I remember the first time he took me out. I don't think he trusted me, at all."

I looked at the two of them. They were very comfortable and easy with each other, but it was clear that Mitch was the alpha. "Well, it appears it all worked out well for you two."

"Yeah, well, I'd go anywhere Mitch sent me."

"And, you know I would go anywhere with you, no matter what."

I snickered, "Should I leave you two alone for a while?"

Mitch grabbed a pillow, which probably wasn't all that clean, and pitched it at me. He missed, but I managed to grab the lamp before it crashed to the floor.

Hansen slapped Mitch on the arm and pointed at me, "Good reflexes, too."

He snorted, "Don't encourage her. Now that we are here, I can't believe I brought her. This is no place for a rookie."

I stopped where I was and looked at him. I was fighting back tears and anger, tears that I might disappoint him, anger that I might not get the chance to see those guys get theirs. "I'll stay here, Mitch, you tell me to and I will. No harm, no hard feelings. I'll trust your judgment."

"I'm sorry, Cat, really. As it gets closer, the tension builds and I am worrying about you, protective, again. No, the plan needs three. Like I said before, you have skill, just keep your focus, and watch my back once we are inside. And, if someone moves aggressively, just drop them like I showed you, take out a knee and they are down. We'll be using silencers like we practiced this morning, the neighbors won't hear that part until we're ready for them to hear and call the cops." Then he turned to Hansen, "Did you get all the stuff?"

He pulled three duffle bags into view. He pushed one to Mitch, one to me, and the third was apparently his. He pointed to the bathroom, "You might want to go in there. We'll change out here." He turned and then turned right back, "But no peeking! I'm a sensitive, modest kind of guy."

Mitch pointed to the bathroom, "God, you two! Let's focus here!"

I was closing the door, but as I was, I heard the exchange outside and smiled.

"Mitch, give her a break. You know I always joke around before a mission. I can see it in her eyes, too. She's letting go of some tension, just like I do. I can already tell, she's a hell of a woman, Mitch. You're lucky to have found her. And I know you are worried about her, but give her some slack here."

I opened the duffle bag and started pulling things out and laying them out on the sink, counter, and the edge of the bathtub. The clothes were black, heavy duty cloth: cargo pants, mesh belt, tee-shirt, and long-sleeve shirt with front pockets. Then, I saw it, an armor-vest and made for a woman. I shrieked out, "A vest! Holy cow! For real?" All I heard from the other side was mumbling and laughing. Probably mumbling from Mitch and laughing from Hansen. I was liking Hansen a lot, but I sympathized with Mitch's plight, he cared too much to be casual with my participation.

Then the combat boots (black) and socks. At the bottom was a communication system with transmitter, two thigh strap-on holsters with guns and silencers attached, four extra magazines, a combat knife. That seemed to be it until I turned to bag over to be sure. I had stripped down to bra and panties to start dressing and out fell a black piece of cloth. I held it up and ... a thong?!? I went to the door, opened it and held it out in front of me, "A thong?!? You got me a thong?" I held it out toward Mitch, "Was this your idea of funny, mister?" He just held up his hands defensively to plead innocence. He looked at Hansen, though, who was keeping busy tying his boots. Perhaps that was a good thing given how I was dressed, or undressed, at the moment. I threw the scrap of cloth at Hansen and closed the door.

Mitch looked at him as he inspected the thong, stuffing it into one of the cargo pockets, "I think you just burned up some of the points you previously earned."

Once dressed, I marveled that everything fit perfectly. I guess Mitch paid closer attention during our shopping trips than I thought. It was rather erotic feeling that a man knew my sizes so well. I came out holding the knife, holsters, clips, and guns. Nobody mentioned the thong, again, and I couldn't see it lying around, either. I made sure the guns were on safety and looked at the guys. Mitch came over and helped me get the holsters securely on so they were a part of my thigh. The knife slid into a holder on the vest and the magazines in cases on the belt. He then handed out very light, open mesh, ski-type masks that only showed the eyes.

Before I adjusted to the reality of being dressed like someone ready to make an assault on someone and to the reality that these two men expected me to be a full and integral part, we were cruising past the house and the surveillance car across the street from it. The night was just turning dark. Mitch noted that the closest street lights were apparently out. Hansen just smiled. He had shot the sensors out with the silencer early this morning in preparation. Now, the area surround the house was black dark. He turned the van around and came back directly toward the front of the surveillance car with his brights on. That effectively blinded the guy and we slipped out of the side of the van as he slowed. I followed Mitch to the shrubs in front of the house and waited with him. I saw him pull his gun and I did the same, fingering the safety to remember where it was in the dark but leaving it on. After a few minutes, Hansen's voice came over the comm-units, "I'm in the back neighbor's yard. I have to tranq the dog before going in." Hansen and Mitch wanted to just shoot the dog, but I had argued against it. The dog had been made to rape me on occasions, but it never did it with violence or brutal action like the men. The dog was actually a relief sometimes from the men. Even at the time when it came out of my mouth, I was surprised I could feel anything positive about this place.

"I'm in the yard, approaching the house. There are guys in the kitchen. Checking it out."

I nudged Mitch, "How does he check it out?"

"Small mirror on an extending rod." I could tell that questions weren't encouraged.

"Three in the kitchen. They're drinking beer and eating take-out." He described each.

I interrupted, "He's the boss. The one you described as 'mousy' with glasses. Go figure, huh?"

"No lights upstairs, but yes in the basement." I shrugged my shoulders.

Mitch considered it, "Okay, it might be just the women in the basement. But, we have to allow that there might be another one down there." He looked at me, then the car across the street. "Okay, we go on my three count. Hansen, you come on ten."

We were all wearing skin-tight gloves. Mitch took out a remote from his cargo pocket and pointed it down the street. He said, one. He pushed the button and a series of cars down the street started beeping, honking, and flashing lights. "Two, three." We were up on the stoop with me holding the outside door open for him and he kicked the front door in, me charging in behind him, covering the stairs upstairs. Shortly after we were in and chairs were flying in the kitchen, the back door was kicked in. The three men were caught between three 9 millimeter guns pointed at them. I was crouched down alongside Mitch just as we had practiced as part of the entry sequence. Once they were all on the floor, I moved quickly to close the front door and check on the car across the street. The diversion seemed to have worked perfectly.

The next step was to determine if there was anyone else in the house to worry about. Hansen moved to the stairs going upstairs and confirmed that the upstairs was still dark. He then went to the kitchen, which contained the access stairway behind a closed door to the basement. He was to keep an eye on it as Mitch sought the answer.

"You," he went directly to the guy I identified as the leader, "how many are in the basement besides the women?"

He tried looking up, but Mitch poked him in the head. "I told you to look only at the floor!" He looked at me to gage my handling of it all. This was what jobs sometimes involved for him and Hansen. This was new to me, but it was amazingly acceptable to me. I hadn't realized until we were inside the house and confronting these men, just how much hate I harbored for them. It was then that I realized a startling thing about myself. Mitch had spent very focused time with me over the past couple days to get me comfortable with this weapon, considering small targets and quick, reflexive responses. He made it very clear today and tonight that if I was participating, it couldn't be as a spectator, and it had to be fully participatory. If the need arose, if Mitch indicated a need, I had to pull the trigger. As I stood over these three, Mitch focused on questioning, I was covering him. I held the weapon steady and roaming over the three prone bodies in front of me, the safety off, and my finger on the trigger, a slight pressure already being applied so the response from me could be immediate. This was all the result of the quick training Mitch had given, reinforced, and repeated.

Mitch was getting frustrated. He was getting nothing from the men and we were on a short time schedule to avoid detection by the car outside. The three men were on their fronts, flat on the floor, their legs parted, and their arms straight out beyond their heads. He walked to the leader, asked his question, again. Receiving only a 'fuck you', he stepped on the guys hand. He cried out, but remained resistant. Mitch looked up to me as he stepped to the side and I knew what he wanted, I was about to shoot a human being. Well ... okay, maybe a sub-form of a human being. I lowered my aim to the guy's right knee and pulled the trigger. The silenced weapon spat out a whisper of the explosion that occurred inside it and the man screamed.

Mitch moved to the next guy, "How many men are downstairs?"

Clearly he wasn't used to being in this situation himself, he was noticeably shaking and he appeared to have wet himself. "Only one guy with the two women." He started spewing information like a spigot that had been suddenly fully opened. "He was down there using, playing with one of the women. He was half drunk and half stoned when we came up here." He was induced to persuade the guy to come up to the kitchen. He stumbled all the way up and hadn't been aware of the commotion going on above him.

In short order, we all moved down to the basement. Two of the guys had to help the leader down the stairs, a blown out knee pretty much devastated the guy. I didn't have much sympathy, in fact, none. In the basement, memories came flood back as I saw the empty cage that was mine, the racks and machines. I watched the guy not putting pressure on his leg and I got pissed ... big time pissed. I remembered times when I was made to step onto tacks put on the floor and then perform erotic dances without showing indications of pain. I remembered them pouring tacks into my pussy, then setting up a fucking machine to pound into me for an hour. Afterwards, it took the other women that long with a speculum and long tweezers to extract all the tacks, especially the ones that had been embedded into my tender flesh inside. Without speaking I indicated to the two helping men to back off. I then indicated to the leader to walk to the vertical 'X' rack against the wall. It was only four steps but it caused him tremendous pain to get there. Mitch moved in and tied him with the straps, his arms, and legs to the 'X' planks. Meanwhile, Hansen had the other two tied back-to-back against a steel pipe column.

Mitch hit the leader once in the jaw, once in the stomach, and kicked him in the damaged knee. "Now, we can continue this or you can become very cooperative." He then asked about the drugs, money, videos, and records of his business. He hesitated; Mitch stepped back and didn't even look to me this time. He didn't have to, whether I was proud of it or not, I wanted to do this. This time it was his left knee. The guy screamed more.

Mitch walked up to him, "She'll keep doing this. You need to understand how motivated you have made her."

"Her? What are you talking about? Why?"

Mitch nodded and I walked up to him. I glanced to the women who were cowered at the back of their cages, and the men who didn't seem to want to watch. I raised the mask from my face when I was about twelve inches from his. It took a minute, then realization was in his face, and the next moment, terror was in his face. "You! No! No way, how ...?"

I moved away and Mitch stepped up, again. "I said she was motivated. Can your simple mind even imagine all she would like to do to you right now? She's already ruined both your knees. I've trained her to go to small targets, joints that immobilize but leave you alive. Frankly, I don't care, sooner or later, you will give me everything. Are you ready to hurt more or cooperate?"

He was very willing to cooperate. Thankfully, even though I found pulling the trigger wasn't that hard given my feelings for him, I didn't relish inflicting new pain levels. He gave the location of the safe, the combination, where they had raw footage, videos, and records of drugs distribution, porn distribution, and where the women were shipped as slaves. When he said some young ones were shipped overseas, I thought Mitch might actually kill him, but I stepped between them after several kicks to his ruined knees.

I sent Hansen and him to look in the safe. They came out with two backpacks, each carrying one. As



they headed for the stairs, I stopped at the cages and the women inside. Mitch encouraged me forward with a hand to the small of my back, "No, they have to stay there until the law enforcement agencies find them. It will build the case stronger." I nodded my understanding but couldn't help not looking back at them one more time. If not for a chance encounter, that's where I would still be ... just like them.

Upstairs, Mitch was weighing the two backpacks in his hands. The one he gave me was surprisingly heavy. I assumed the other was even heavier. Then Hansen left out the back kitchen door and Mitch described the escape plan, I thought he was nuts. We moved to the front door, cracked it open, and unlatched the outside storm door, Mitch in front. He was marking time with his watch. He reached into my pack, re-zipped it, smiled at me, pulled the pin on a canister, threw it into the kitchen, and pulled me out the door. As he hit the front stoop, there was an explosion down the block behind the surveillance car, then the van with the sliding door wide open came charging down the block and slowed as we ran from the steps to the street. Mitch ran down the front sidewalk and I ran at an angle to his right as the van approach from the left. From behind me came a deafening bang from the concussion grenade Mitch had thrown. Dogs started back all over the neighborhood from the two explosions. I saw Mitch dive into the side of the van as it continued to move to my position and I dove in. That was when I realized why Mitch wanted to go in first. As I slid across the floor of the van, I slammed into Mitch, not the outside wall of the van.

His arms went around me as the van picked up speed, past the wreckage of the exploded car he had parked earlier that evening. Mitch closed the side door and a couple more turns and we were on the highway by the time we heard police and fire sirens. It was only ten minutes later when Hansen pulled into the shopping mall parking lot behind Mitch's pickup truck. We threw the back pack and the duffle bags into the back bed, but there was something I had to do, before we left. This was supposed to be a quick transfer and leave, but I opened his door and pulled Hansen out of his seat. I wrapped my arms around his neck and kissed him square of the mouth. "I hope we meet again soon, Hansen."

I turned and jumped into the passenger seat, Hansen still standing behind the truck with his mouth open. Mitch was watching the rearview mirror and chuckled, "I think you gave him a short-circuit, he's still standing back there." I turned in the seat and looked back; he seemed to recover and got back into the van. The next moment we were headed in opposite directions. Hansen was headed North on the interstate for the Denver Airport where he would abandon the van in the garage, pick up the rental he had reserved, and returned to his home. It would be weeks before anyone got suspicious about the van and since we all wore gloves; any finger prints would not lead anyone back to us.

We were headed home. Wow, really? Home? But, that's what he said, 'we' were going 'home'. That part made me feel good. The other parts of the night gave me pause. I was staring out into the black void that is ranch land at night. There is absolutely nothing to see except for an occasional homestead light that made you wonder why anyone would have stopped and settled in such a place. And, yet, I was staring out into that void, as if that void might somehow yield some answer to an unspoken question.

Between my staring out into the black nothing and the dashboard lights showing on his face, I knew he was frequently glancing my way as we traveled down the dark and lonely road south. "Are you okay, Cat? Are you bothered by what happened tonight? Talk to me, please."

I twisted toward him, tucking my left leg under me, and my back nearly to the door, despite that seatbelts make that very difficult. "You're sweet. Thank you." I was quiet for a moment, watching him as he drove, but he was also still clearly waiting for me to continue. "Okay, I'll talk. We still have

another hour left, so here goes ..." I took a deep breath and until that moment had forgotten that we were still dressed in the same clothes with the vests. I slipped the knife out of the scabbard and looked at it in the dim light of the dashboard. It was very sharp. I put it back in and snapped the strap into place. "Mitch ... I love you. That's number one and the most important. You've given me, opened up to me, a life I didn't know was even possible, anymore. And that presents a feeling of not being able to repay a debt when the debt is so huge." I put my hand up to stop him as he started to respond, "Shhh, you just listen. You wanted me to talk, so be careful what you ask for." The smile we shared was obvious despite the dark interior of the truck. I was quiet for a moment as I collected my thoughts.

"So, huge debt ... okay ... but, what I want you to understand, and to understand without doubt or question, is that my love for you is bigger than the sense of debt. I don't know if that makes sense. What I mean is that despite that I could feel I could never repay you, my love is completely aside from that sense. Mitch, to that point I am making a mess of trying to explain ... there are two things that are obvious truths to me about you in regards to me: one, a million men could have driven past on that road, but you would have been the only one to stop and confront five men for a stranger; two, the thing that is in you, that part of you that makes you that way ... is why I love you, and I feel that my love for you, in you, is a celebration of that part of you. Neither of us is young or naïve after what we have been through, I know we have only known each other a very short number of months, I know there is much to learn about each other, but that is what I want to do. I want to learn all about you and you to learn all about me. So, this took too long to get to ..." He laughed. "The important thing I want you to know is that when I want to do things for you, when I express my gratitude, thankfulness for you, it is that love. I will always be grateful to you for standing up for me, but with freewill that wouldn't keep me here. Now ... this is hard now to say, but if you had initially applied a dominant attitude like other men had, I might well have remained in a compliant demeanor. But, you gave my freewill back to me, and it was with that freewill that I wanted to stay and to love."

I reached out and touched his leg, feeling it twitch as his foot moved slightly, "One more thing is our personalities. We can discuss this at a later time, but I know our personality strengths are in conflict. And, I love you for that, too. You are a very dominant and controlling person, Mitchell Connor. Very. It shows in athletics, your military career whether you were senior rank at the moment or not, it showed in your ... what ... other career. It showed in your handling of Agent Baxter and Hansen. Your natural personality reaction is to control and dominate the relationship. You've done the opposite with me." I laughed, "No, you haven't been compliant. NO. But, you have been very careful not to get in the way of me learning to take control of myself." I took a deep breath before proceeding, "And me ... you know I am a basic submissive. I had been forced to live without will power for so long, but even without that, I was always more comfortable with someone making decisions, telling me what to do, and leading my life. You've force me to go beyond that, to make decisions for myself, to do things not to just please someone else, but because I want it or want to do it. And that has been very, very, VERY hard for me to adjust to. Hell, you knew I was very sexual but insisted that my approach was not to please you, to give you, but that I wanted it and wanted to SHARE it." I stroked his thigh; again, I felt the muscles underneath his pants, "We will talk about this another time."

He venture a look at me, "Well, we've got more driving ..."

I laughed, "I know, I'm not done, yet." I touched his shoulder, "Mitch, I don't want you to worry about tonight. You know, it is funny, the thing about submissive and all. I never thought of myself as being able to hurt someone like that ... with them, it wasn't even hard. I don't know if I should feel bad about that, but I don't. Now I'm done."

He put his hand out and I grabbed it. "I am glad, Cat. You'll see how much this ends up helping the FBI and other agencies."

"You seem to be driving fast, why?"

"Sooner than later, the connection will be made and the FBI will be contacted and when that happens, someone is going to ask Baxter about a potential of our involvement. We have a lot of motive. I want to be back at the house as quick as possible. He will try my cell but at the house, it won't have reception and go straight to message. That only means the cell is at the house or the phone is turned off. Then, he is bound to check the Sat-phone. We don't have to be there when he calls, but it shouldn't be too late.

We had just gotten through the gate onto the property when the light went on the Sat-phone indicating a missed call. It took us another twenty minutes to navigate the narrow track in the dark; we pulled into the barn alongside the other truck before we got out, grabbed the bags from the back of the truck, and headed with them for the secret door at the back. While we walked, Mitch checked the message and returned the call.

"Baxter, what is it?"

"Thought you might be interested in the excitement up here. You know that house we were watching? We got a call from the local cops; three guys raided it, did all kinds of damage, and gave the locals a reason to go in, which led to us being inside. That's where I am right now, in fact. So, it's good that you are home, that takes you off the suspect list, or the thank you list depending on your perspective." He went on for a while, talking about the drugs found, the slaves in the cages, the men tied up and the leader with two shot up knees. In the short time they had been there, they had found evidence to tie him and his organization to numerous violations to result in significant prison time. He ended by saying he was thankful they finally got the right break.

After the call, I said I needed bed in a bad way. He dropped everything, turned out the light and locked up the room. Inside the house, he sent me to the bedroom while he went to the kitchen. I was undressed to my bra and panties when he came in with two glasses of bourbon. He handed me one of the glasses, "Wow, lace underwear under all the combat clothes, that's hot. Speaking of which ..." He dug into his cargo pocket and pulled out the flimsy, black, lace thong. "I can't wait to see this on you ..."

I walked up to him, took the nearly nothing piece clothing, twirled it on my finger, and clinked his glass with mine, "Sir, you name it, you can see me anyway you want me ..." He didn't object to my tone this time, he just smiled and took me into his arms.

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CHAPTER FIVE

I wasn't sure what the next day was going to bring. Heck, I wasn't even that sure what that night was going to bring. As it turned out, it was for a good reason. After my tease, we got into bed naked, I curled up comfortably with him spooned up into my back ... and promptly fell asleep. I was tired, emotionally exhausted by the day, and relieved as if a tremendous weight was suddenly removed from me. And, I suppose, it was in a way. I had carried around the guilt of my past, the frustration and emptiness of an unresolved conclusion, and the hopefulness, maybe even unrealistically high hopefulness, of this man I was now sharing not only a bed, but a life with. Before entering into the events of last night, two of the three seemed to be headed for unbelievably positive outcomes. Not only did my hopes for this man seem realistic, they seemed to be even unstated to the reality I was

finding. I found myself at times cautioning myself against a letdown. Given my experience with relationships and picking men, surely this would also end in some disappointment if not outright disaster. But, it didn't, it only continued to get better, get more solid, and get strengthened by earned trust.

And, the guilt, guilt over my weakness and acceptance of such an existence ... what guilt? It had been exactly like that ... a realization one day that I no longer felt that guilt. If there is a diametric opposite of mind numbing, this was it. I had lived an adult life of guilt, of falling victim to men, of acceptance of that victimhood, of the things that I did or were done to me, and, maybe the most guilt producing, of my inability to break the cycle of use and abuse that had become my mere existence. But, that man, this man behind me now, the one that had to be too good to be true, the one that proved over and over that he was really that good, that man refused to allow me to live in that guilt, in that place of low, or no, self-esteem. He pulled me out, set me onto firm ground, and watched over me. Then, patiently, he pulled me out, again. And, again. He continued, refusing to accept the place I had lived. When I looked at myself, what I began seeing was a strong woman, a woman capable of things I hadn't considered. I also saw a woman, through his eyes, that was desired, needed, wanted, and trusted.

That brought me to the frustration and emptiness of an unresolved conclusion in the judicial process. Now, to be honest with myself, I only have renewed hope, and reason to hope, that the judicial process will draw to a satisfying conclusion now. But, in a sense, even that judicial process conclusion isn't as important. That woman that I see in the mirror now, that strong woman I see now in my reflection, last night she blew away that bastard's knees. No trembling hands, no fear in the execution of the act, and no self-recrimination now. Should I be proud of that? I don't know that I am proud of it. But, I am not sorry. Last night not only gave me that sense of resolution personally, but saved two other women, will probably put four bastards behind bars, and provided the FBI with leads on multiple fronts for further investigation.

It is early morning and it is out of character, but I am awake and Mitch is not. Those satisfying thoughts have been through my mind, having the effect of energizing me for further exploration and development, and I am watching the light outside slowly brighten. I push up against him, but he is on his back, not his side, and pushing into him is not nearly the contact I was hoping for. Without seeing him, I knew he was sound asleep. His regular, shallow breathing, and his snoring. On his back equals snoring. It is not an awful sound, not at all something that is bothersome, but somehow endearing and comforting. I love that I already know little things like this about him that can make me smile. Things like the way he curls his toes into the grass when he first goes outside barefoot; like the way he flexes his quadriceps in his thighs when driving, that I only know because I like to touch him, if only his leg; and like the way he'll carry on a conversation with Blackie, but only if he thinks they are alone. These and many more things that can bring a smile to me just with the thought and experiencing them over. These simple little things from this big, tough, Army Ranger who lived Black Ops missions and presents an image of 'no fear' ... now he's my rancher.

When your life changes this dramatically, it is easy to thank your stars or your luck. Or, it is easy to be overwhelmed and intimidated by the gift you have been given, thereby doing anything and everything you can in a vain attempt to repay that gift. I knew what happened wasn't fate and certainly not luck. It was this man. And, completely bewildering to me, he sought nothing, he only continued to give: safety, protection, security from the outside, time to mend physically, and even more time to heal mentally and emotionally. He completely rejected my attempt to give myself to him whether in the old 'you saved my life so my life is now yours', or that I might try to give in service to him out of gratitude. The only thing I could give him was what I managed to give out of free-will and my own control of myself. I sighed long and several times ... perhaps the one thing that was the hardest for me to accomplish. But, in the process of that struggle to accomplish just that, I

did grow in strength and confidence. I rolled into him, sliding my leg over his, my hand on his chest, feeling his chest rise slowly in sleep. I stroked lazily up to his strong, developed chest and down to his stomach. That insistence from him, that stubborn insistence, ended up providing me with an even greater gift, the gift of independence of my will, to give and reject as I wanted, to be my own person, selfishly if I chose or loving and giving if I chose.

I obviously chose the latter. I was intent now to be the best of the parts that were me. He wanted to know me, to be interacting and engaging the real me, not a pretend me that was only trying to make him happy, anticipate what he wanted, or giving him less of me than I had to offer. He gave me that freedom of will, I was now going to experience it in the life I had left.

Free-will meant taking joy and pleasure for myself as well as for others and right now, this instant, that joy and pleasure was within inches of my hand as it went lower and lower on his stomach. I knew my hand was close and I debated with myself if I wanted to chance waking him by playing, but my hand went lower as if with its own mind. My fingers touched him, it was lying across to the side. My touch was gentle, nearly only grazing the surface of him. I felt it grow, move, turn as if it was alive, as if it were some kind of snake I was charming with my touch. I told myself to do it. I ducked under the covers, wanting to keep him warm, to delay his awakening for a while, yet. I slid down along his body and to the side further for a better angle and in the dim light sneaking in from the edges of the covering, I gazed at my goal, my interest, his cock. I placed several fingers over it and tenderly grasped it enough to move it to pointing directly at me. After releasing it, I watched as I felt it move in my fingers. I completely removed my fingers and leaned in closer, breathing on it, performing an experiment of sorts on his unconscious reaction to various stimulation. I kissed the head and saw it move slightly; I put out my tongue and licked the hole and saw the same reaction; I breathed on it, my lips mere fractions of an inch from it, and it grew, moved, twisted as blood began pumping into it.

I moved further away and listened intently, my hand on his bare stomach, listening and feeling his rhythm. Yes, I was convinced he was still asleep. The small movements I was enticing from him were subconscious, his body reacting independent of his mind. I smiled. I was enjoying this, the subtlety, the delicacy, the intimacy. I knew hard cocks. I knew the power men derived from using them. This was a new way of experiencing what they could be when they weren't used as a weapon, used to control and dominate, but instead, a part of a union in love and sharing. I watched as it slowly retreated from growing, saw how it again moved, twisted, and turned in its retreat. I breath on it again, flicked the top with my tongue and watched it all over again. I was fascinated by this simple thing, this intricate reaction to my delicate action. No longer was a soft cock something that my mouth needed to harden. No longer. Now, this soft cock, this soft penis ... penis or cock, did it matter, really? It was neither, it was Mitch ... could simply be enjoyed.

I moved in closer for good, this time. I placed my head softly on his abdomen and opened my lips to take the head just inside and sucked several times. I felt it begin to grow, again, but more deliberately this time, faster by the prolonged and aggressive touch and action. I opened my mouth slightly, very slightly, but enough for it to grow into it. I simply lay there, not moving my head, but moving my lips, my tongue, and sucking on it. It continued to grow and soon I had a mouth full of him, enough so that I pulled back slightly to allow for more of him to grow. And, he did. And, I continued my soft and gentle action on him.

I saw more light, I felt the covers shifting, and then I felt his hand on my head, a moan come from him and his hips flex barely off the bed. But, I didn't stop, didn't change my actions, and didn't increase or decrease my efforts.

"My god, Cat ... oh my god ... this is wonderful ... you are so good ..." He chuckled and stroked my

hair, which was continuing to grow long. Mitch likes long hair. Those men kept it short so it wouldn't get in the way of the cameras. I wanted long hair, too. "Is this going to ... mmmmm ... to be the new ... way to wake up?"

"Nuphmm lekennphm."

He laughed, "My dear, didn't your mother tell ... oooooooo ... tell you not to talk with your mouth full?"

I pull off and bit down on him, very softly but he still felt my teeth, "Should I come up to talk or ..."

"Sorry, stay right there, please. I love this. I love you."

My mouth stopped. I felt him flex inside my mouth and stiffen a little more. Yes, we wrote those words to each other, but they have been missing from our mouths. Hearing the words were reinforcing, strengthening, and gave me a kind of anchor in our relationship. Now, I went after him with new vigor and interest, intent on making him cum, to taste him early in the day. I did. He did. We did. His hips rose off the bed, making me rise with him to keep him in my mouth, he twitched, jerked, and strained. When he spurted into my mouth, I gulped, expecting and receiving more, many more such spurts of his seed. Each one I gulped and swallowed. At the end, I sucked on the head, running my thumb and forefinger along the length to squeeze out the last drop and taking it in, too.

Later in the morning found us in the garage building, more specifically in the hidden room in back. Part of my abbreviated, compressed weapons training was the constant need to care for the weapons. Since I was the only one who fired my weapon during last night's escapade, I was the only one that needed to break it down, clean, and reassemble. It wasn't as if I had that much experience but I had to do the same thing each time I practiced so, with Mitch nearby, I managed just fine. In fact, I was so focused on that task that I didn't really notice what he was pulling out of the backpack we returned with at the other workbench. When I was completed, I filled the magazine that had been in the pistol, inserted it, and put it on safety. I inserted the pistol in the thigh mount holster and hung it back onto the wall.

When I turned to Mitch, I see he has spread out some things from the backpack that now laid empty. I saw another pistol that looked a little bigger, one I hadn't noticed before, and a box of bullets. Then I saw a stack of official looking paper, like certificates, and several more sheets of paper to the side of them.

I come closer and look from alongside him. He said the pistol was a 45 caliber, not really too special except that it would be more powerful in stopping a charging bear or wolf, if we encountered one in the forest. He had generally been lax on carrying protection in such an event but seeing it in the safe caused him to reconsider. So, he took it. The official looking papers were bonds. I asked about them.

"Remember how I said I made money on missions when it was just 'available' at the end of a successful mission? It was just like this. These are bonds that the guy converted to from cash or he was given instead of dealing in cash. It's not really that uncommon. Cash can disappear or possibly be traced. Bonds are harder. For one thing they have to be signed over to be worth anything."

I turned one over and saw all the signature spaces were still blank. I just looked up at him.

"That's what these other sheets are for." He moved one over to me, it contained the signature. I just nodded. "Yeah, I needed a model for forging the signature, then they can be converted for value into an account."

"Isn't that close to stealing? Or, is this like Robin Hood?"

He laughs. "Definitely not like Robin Hood. He gave to the poor. So, maybe it is a little like stealing since I keep it. But, Cat, the government would otherwise just confiscate it and dump it into some agency account somewhere and be lost. I consider it a collateral reward for the risk I accept."

I smile at him and hug him from the side. "I am not arguing, just understanding."

"Good, because this is going into your account."

I look at him in shock. I don't have an account. "What account?"

"The account we have to create. I am going to recommend you use the same firm I use, but it is really up to you. I want you to have your own fallback money, just in case. I am not anticipating anything, Cat, but my life hasn't been without angering certain people around the world." Of course I'll use the same firm. He assures me that at some point in the future, that account would be created. He assured me, like there might be some reason why I might question him. Like there might be some reason why I suddenly would feel the need to have separate funds available to me that was independent of him. How absurd could that be. Having been with him, growing with his encouragement, evolving into a stronger, more independent woman, how could I even doubt that about him?

We went into the house for an early lunch before our next chore, cutting fire wood on the mountain slopes above the house. Entering the kitchen I see the light blinking on the Sat-phone. I point to it for Mitch's benefit. He punches in his code and listens, then punches in a series of numbers, pushes 'Hands free' and sets it on the kitchen table. I can hear it ringing on the other end, then it clicks in as it is picked up and another series of clicks. Mitch has been explaining more about these mysteries to me, warning me that I should never let it be known that he has shared. The last series of clicks is the encryption system, which secures the conversation.

"Ola, my friend."

Mitch is shaking his head at the sound of Hansen's voice. "Ola? Hansen, have you ever been to Brazil?"

"Well, no, but I want to. Besides, if U2 can use it in one of their songs, why can't I use it? Ireland has nothing to do with Brazil, either."

"Okay, Ola, Hansen."

Hansen laughed. "You have this on speaker, I can tell. Is your beautiful partner there with you?"

"Ola, Hansen." Mitch shook his head, again. He remembered the last time, just last night, when our playfulness turned against him.

"An angel, I swear. Someday we'll have more time."

I laugh and hug Mitch, "I think Mitch is already regretting the thought." That brought a laugh from Hansen.

Mitch interrupted, "That's not why you called."

"See what he is like, Cat. He never relaxes."

I have Mitch in my arms from behind, my hands moving on his body, and I kiss his neck. "Oh, no, he definitely relaxes. Maybe it's your approach, he relaxes for me just fine."

A long silence ... "I was wondering if the boys up there ever contacted you." Mitch and I looked at each other and chuckled at the sudden change in topic. Mitch went over the discussion last night and commented on his art work on the garage door that I never saw. Apparently, its existence proved to the local cops that the local Hispanic gang was responsible despite the declarations of the men found inside. Mitch promised we'd get together sometime under better circumstances.

With fall already started, and my first winter coming after that, we took horses into the forest to cut down dead trees and trim them for fire wood. The plan is to cut them down, trim them, then drag them out to be cut into sections lengths for the stove and split. Once inside the forest and out of the breeze, it quickly gets warm. We are both in jeans, flannel shirts, and cowboy boots. Mitch has outfitted me in several different styles of boots depending on the situation. Hiking boots, work boots for around the barn, yard, and using the tractor or ATV, and cowboy boots that are nearly a must when riding horses. We are about twenty feet apart, working on opposite ends of a tree he just felled. I look up and see Mitch stripping off his shirt; I like watching his muscles in action, even just taking his shirt off.

"You guys are so lucky to be able to just take off your shirts."

He doesn't even look back at me, "Just do it."

"What?"

"Do it, Cat. Who is going to see you? Except me, but you're not going to say that's a problem are you?" I can see his demeanor change as he looks at me, "Besides, you look great, who wouldn't want to look at you."

I take off my shirt and continue working in my bra. It is amazingly freeing ... and sensual at the same time. He is using the gas chainsaw while I am using an axe to cut off the smaller branches. Later, he comes back to cut off the larger branches. I catch him watching me when I don't hear the saw angrily chewing through wood.

"We have work to do, mister." The comment is light and teasing. I am trying to paint a picture of what he is seeing, but I am failing miserably. I guess I am not much of a painter when it comes to seeing myself. But, I do have something of an image: half naked, my back shiny with perspiration (we don't sweat, we perspire), the muscles I do have flexing as I swing the axe overhead, lopping off the smaller branches, and (probably the part he likes) my breasts swaying with each swing. But, it feels nice to me, the freedom of movement, the knowledge that Mitch has stopped to watch me, and the sensual feeling that gives me as a result.

"I can't help it, Cat. What a sexy sight! A fine looking woman in tight fitting jeans, cowboy boots, and bra. And, if that isn't enough, wearing work gloves and swinging an axe. Damn!" My image confirmed. Maybe I can paint ... at least in my head.

What could I do but smile. Was that a compliment, or what? I smile at him, turn back to my work, but playfully call over my shoulder, "We have work to do."

He got a playful tone in his voice, too. "Maybe it's time for a break."

I smile to myself before looking over my shoulder, "Maybe when the chainsaw runs out of gas." I was having to work hard at just teasing him, I wanted to stop as much as he sounded like he did. God, I

wanted this man now. But, it seemed I nearly always wanted him. It was an amazing thing for me to discover that indulgence in sex would become so enjoyable, so intensely enjoyable. And, that the enjoyment came not from being stimulated myself, as much as the stimulation of sharing with each other, often through subtlety.

We were fifty feet apart, working on different trees when I heard the chainsaw sputter ... then stop. I held the axe in my hands, my back to him and waited. The sun was still high overhead, I was breathing hard from the excursion, and I know I was sweaty. I admit it, I was past the 'perspire' label, I was full on sweaty. But even that felt good to me, felt right to me. Part of it might be that this is a ranch and we were just two people to work it. I felt like I was a part, a necessary, worthwhile part. As I stood there, my lungs filling with the thin mountain air of the altitude, beads of sweat ran down under my bra and between my breasts. Yes, oddly, it felt good.

I heard him pulled the starter rope repeatedly, but it failed to restart, it truly was empty. I stood for a moment, how should I handle this. I could feel him watching me. Probably wondering if I had been serious before, or would I even remember. But, I was stopped, that must have given him reason to think I was deciding something. And, I was deciding. Should I just turn around and wait for him to make the move, first? What would really please him? I was to the side of him, but down the slope some. He was above me slightly as he watched me, waited for me, anticipating my decision, my move. I looked straight ahead of me, over the forest to the lake below, the mountains on the other side, the blue in the lake water that was rippling from the gentle breeze, and the even bluer sky above. It was stunning, more beautiful than beautiful. The view, Mitch behind me, and my own feelings filled me to bursting. I knew what would really, really please him, it was plain to me, as plain as the view in front of me. For me to make the move. If we felt we understood something of each other before, each day brought that understanding increasingly clear. We both knew that he was dominant and controlling in his interactions with others. We both knew that I was submissive and yielding in mine. But, I understood, clearly understood, that he wanted me to be able to take more control, more determination in our relationship. If he were to take his natural controlling approach, I suspected that he feared that sooner or later I might look at our relationship as just another existence of control by another man. So, I knew what would please him the most.

I leaned the axe against the tree trunk I had been cleaning, removed my gloves and dropped them next to the axe, reached behind my back and unhooked my bra. I removed my arms from the straps, and holding it in place against my front, I turned to face him. It had the desired effect; I saw him standing and watching, still holding the chainsaw, his eyes glued to me. I let the bra drop and demurely smiled. If he felt watching me before was a 'what could be finer' type moment, seeing that I could have this effect on him, stopped in his tracks ... was mine.

I took a few steps towards him, he put the chainsaw down carefully and moved a few steps towards me. I stopped, looked down at myself, past my naked breasts, my nipples already hard and wanting, to my jeans and boots. I smiled; yes, do it, show him your desire for him. I moved my hands to my breasts, squeezed them, felt my nipples, pulled them lightly, and looked directly at him. He stopped, twenty feet from me, he stopped and watched, again anticipating that I was giving more.

I looked at him, not smiling, not anything. Except I was biting my lower lip, I was nervous, anxious, I was hotter for him than I had ever been. God, that must be hot! But, that's the feeling I had, needing, desiring, wanting, but also an element of controlling the situation. He was stopped, mesmerized even. Internally, I smiled. He wanted me to take some control, to lead us in action sometimes, the effect seemed to turn him on as much as it did me. He face was soft, his eyes completely on me, his body ... god, his body! My right foot went behind my left and I pried the boot loose and kicked it off. I tried the same in reverse but had to lift my right foot to remove that boot. I unbuckled my belt, unsnapped my jeans, and pushed jeans and panties down at the same time. I

stood before him in my socks. No! I lifted each foot and pulled them off, tossing them over my shoulder. I stood before him, separated by twenty feet of forest clearing. That body ... is it wrong that a woman is jealous of a man's body? Okay, I don't want his body, but it looks soooooo good on him. His chest is wide, like slabs of beef, his back is wider and when he uses it to pull, it expands like a fan. Six-pack? This man has a six-pack.

How weird is this? I am standing before him naked, wanting to attack him and I am standing here admiring his body. I carefully cross the twenty feet, careful of the burrs and sticks hidden in the grass. As I approach him, his arms are hanging at his side, his eyes on me, completely focused on me. I see his hands making movements to rise but he is keeping them down. He sees me making the moves, controlling the situation and he seems intent on letting me. I smile up at him as my naked breasts come into contact with his body. I put my arms up to his neck and he can't contain his arms any longer, they rise and take me, lifting me off the ground. We kiss ... we kiss.

I break the kiss and hug him hard and tight, my face in his neck and shoulder, my lips kissing him there, my eyes shut, squeezing him tightly, feeling his naked front against my naked body. I open my eyes and gaze at the setting, the horses tied by long leads to nearby trees, Blackie roaming the area, the mountains reaching high above. I see a shadow pass and look up, a smile of peace and wonder crossing my face. I am naked, in the arms of this wonderful man, surrounded by all this majestic beauty, and high overhead is a circling eagle. I lean back to see it better, "Mitch, look. A bald eagle. This is perfect, absolutely perfect. Thank you."

He chuckled, "Now, what are you thanking me for? The eagle? I had nothing to do with the eagle, the warmth of the day, or the mountains around us."

"Maybe not directly, but you had everything to do with my being here to enjoy it." I kiss him, again, looking into his eyes and my face transforms completely in a smile that spreads from my mouth and eyes and across my entire face. "But, you had everything to do with my being able to share it with you."

I unwrap my legs from around his waist and he lets me down to the ground. I am kissing his chest, spending time on his nipples, pulling back to look closely at the burn marks around his. What a strange thing for us to have in common. All the while, though, my hands are working at the buckle to his belt, the snap on his jeans, and the zipper. I lower down his body, kissing his stomach. That wonderful six-pack; does he have any body-fat? I kiss each distinctive muscle showing on his stomach and look up at him from below, "Can you train me, Mitch? Can I develop these, too?"

"You're really going to stay with me, then? You aren't having second thoughts about this life? About my violent past, the simplicity of my life now, the hard work?"

I straighten up, running my hands on his chest to his shoulders, down his arms to his hands, which I take into mine and lift them to my breasts, pressing them against my nipples. "I'm here for as long as you want me."

"Then you'll be with me forever."

I press the side of my face to his chest, tears begin leaking from my eyes and wet my cheeks and his chest. I sink down before he notices ... a silly woman's emotions getting the better of her, again.

I push him against the felled tree for him to sit as I straddle his leg, my back to him as I pull up his foot and pull at his boot. I get the right one off and straddle the left one, pulling it, struggling more this time, shifting my feet for better leverage, knowing I am point my butt right at him, but soon I will have him naked, too.

I hear him mutter, "The moon shining bright in daylight."

I glance up, just reflex I suppose. There is no moon, then ... I glance and smile. I wiggle my butt at him, "A full moon." We both laugh and at that moment his other boot comes off. I pull off his jeans and underwear at the same time. I was ready to suck him to get him hard, I was gladly ready to do it. And, I still could just because I enjoy him on my tongue and in my mouth, but he was already hard and I wanted him inside me.

I point down to the ground and he moves off the tree, lying on his back. "You have a plan, my dear?"

"You want me to be your cowgirl, that's what you're getting, stud." He smiles up at me but his eyes travel from my face to between my legs as I step over his body and lower myself over his mid-section. I take his cock in my hand, point it up and move my already wet and ready pussy over the top. I move on it just enough for it to be just inside me. I look up at his face, neither of us has a smile, only intense anticipation. Anticipation that I let hang in the thin mountain air for another moment or two as I move slightly, but not taking him further into me. Then, suddenly, without warning, I push back onto him and take him nearly all the way into me. His mouth opens and he sighs, just as mine does.

We are both urgent in our fucking. Even though I am in the dominant position this time and his motion is restricted, he is flexing and thrusting with the limited effect he has available to him in this position. For my part, I am rising and falling with long strokes. Long because I can; long because he is. In the end, our climaxes are nearly upon each other, one undoubtedly the result of the other. My back is arched and my pelvis is pressed against his. When I am past the most intense part of my orgasm, I drop down onto his chest and kiss him, kiss him anywhere my mouth touches.

Afterwards, and while still joined, Blackie surprises both of us by licking my leaking pussy, also contacting his softening cock. I had forgotten about him, but he has never approached us before, but we have never been with him like this before, I realize. My reaction is immediate, "Blackie! OH MY GOD!" I moan, my mouth dropping open, then remember that Mitch is here, too. I look down at him and see his eyes on me. This isn't just me and a dog, not like when I was a slave and didn't have a choice. This is different and I see it in Mitch's eyes, too. Then I hear him moan and gasp ... and ... my god, he's lengthening inside me! Blackie is still licking at us. I am moaning and Mitch is now hard and moving in me. As I moan out my reaction to the insistent tongue, I search Mitch's eyes for an indication from him, a smile forms across his face.

"This doesn't disgust you, then?" He doesn't even answer me, he pulls me to him and rolls us over, breaking Blackie's contact, and is now in position to fuck me missionary. Which he does. The intensity that comes from him in this second fuck is tremendous, not viscous or brutal or abusive in any way. He is still kissing me, he whispers in my ear his love, but his cock is driving into me, as though even he can't believe he is already hard and fucking so soon after just cumming. And because he did so recently climax, he lasts deliciously long this time. Outside, as the air cools with the late afternoon sun lowering, our intensity never allows us to notice the change. He moves me through several position changes until he finally announces his climax after getting me into the doggy position. How appropriate. It was a dog, Blackie, that stimulated us for this encore performance.

We don't even mention, much less discuss, the contact with Blackie on the mountainside that day. Not for several weeks, anyway. It is on my mind, sometimes it seems it is constantly on my mind, itching at me to scratch it. But, I don't dare. Mitch's reaction on the slope that day was positive, but it was in the heat of passion. What would his reaction be under calmer, cooler, and less emotional conditions. But, it isn't forgotten. I think about it, I look at Blackie differently after that, and I catch

Mitch watching when I interact, especially playfully, with the dog. His interest doesn't seem troubled or tense. In fact, it seems curious.

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## CHAPTER SIX

Several weeks later we awaken in the morning and are surprised by an early dumping of snow. Mitch assures me this is not a precursor to a hard, long winter. I have to admit, I am relieved. I am probably more of a warm-weather-girl, but I made the decision easily that Mitch was worth the effort of learning to live in and, hopefully, enjoy all the seasons. The overnight snow is only (he says, only) about six inches of new, fresh, snow; but to me it feels like so much more.

I have to admit to myself, even if I can't quite immediately to Mitch, that it is beautiful. I have a thick robe on to guard against the cold as I make my way to the kitchen to get the coffee started. I see the white landscape as I pass the large sliding doors and hesitate only a moment before hustling to kitchen. I am returning to the porch door and find Blackie pacing before it. I am not sure if he had always been allowed indoors at night, but since I have been more involved in the house, I have let him in at night. It has become the routine now and Mitch hasn't objected, not strenuously, anyway. I step to the main door, pulling the robe a little tighter around me as I open the inside. With Blackie at the outside storm door, I open it and lean forward to avoid having to step on the threshold, which I was sure had to freezing. I close both doors and return to the sliding doors to watch. It is amazing to me still how animals adjust to their surroundings. He is running, stopping, turning, and running in circles, leaving a very pronounced path in his wake.

I feel strong arms taking me from behind, pulling me into him, and I yield to his embrace, which is followed by a kiss on my neck. I shiver at the touch.

"Cold, Cat?"

I turn and face him, kissing him quickly on the lips. "No, my dear man, that was all you. And, I love it that you can cause me to react that way."

He smiled that smile of his, the one that melts me as I see the gentle softness coming from him in these quiet, intimate moments we seem to have more and more. This big, tough guy opening himself for gentleness. I've thought about that, too. I know it is his gift to me, something he has managed to work at to give. It has more to do with my ability to give to him, to share with him openly and spontaneously. I don't mean sex, that would be easy. No, my giving and sharing allowed him to open himself; it was my ability to do that, which allowed me to be his partner, a partner on level footing, if not completely equal footing. I am still feeling indebted to some extent, not in the way of necessarily giving my being to him, but recognizing that this is his house, property, and personal space that he is allowing me into. A feeling that I hope I outgrow as our relationship continues and our bond becomes continuously stronger and reliable. A feeling that will become moot if our life can become as one.

I return to the kitchen to get us coffee while he stokes the stove. I search the cupboard for the largest mugs available, fill them, and return to find him sitting on the couch, the fire in the stove blazing brightly. He sees me looking at it, then at him questioningly.

"No magic, Cat, just really good embers, some kindling, and stoking with more wood. It should be warm in here in moments."

I hand him both mugs and curl up next to him, pulling the robe tight around me, again. "Darn, I was

hoping to have to rely on body heat.”

He gave me one of the mugs, put his free arm around me, and squeezed. “You can have that, unless it gets too warm.”

I look up into his eyes, “Too warm ... then I’ll take off the robe.”

Carefully, intent on not spilling hot coffee, we kissed.

I was partially sitting, mostly leaning on him, his arm around me and stroking my arm as I sipped the warming coffee and felt this area of the house warm and radiate further into the house from the stove that sat in the corner opposite the kitchen. Outside, the scene was magical as the sun rose fully over the mountain behind us. The lake shined with blue as did the sky. The storm had gone in the night as it came, it left behind a bright sunny day to dawn on us. Everywhere but the lake and sky above was white with the new snow. The snow, early for the season, was heavy with moisture, sticking to every horizontal surface, limbs of trees, and entire boughs of the evergreen trees. It was a classic winter-wonderland photo opportunity. But, neither of us moved, simply content to sit in our closeness and warmth to enjoy the view. Clean, white everywhere, except for where Blackie had been chasing around. Then, in a flash went a rabbit from right to left. I reacted and looked up at Mitch, then he said, “Watch”.

Sure enough, a much bigger flashed went by, this time black. I chuckled, “I don’t think he has a chance.”

With the coffee finished and a good, hearty breakfast into us, Mitch had me back in the bedroom. No, as much as I lobbied for getting back under the covers and ‘sharing body heat’, he wouldn’t hear of it. Well, he did hear it, he just said ‘later’, with a big smile.

We were going outside to enjoy the wonders of the early snow in the mountains. He said I wouldn’t survive the winters holed up inside and, besides, the work on a ranch wouldn’t wait for spring. I was getting the chance to break in the new winter clothes we bought at the outfitters in Denver. I nearly felt I was going to melt with the clothes I had on, but he assured me that would change once we were outside. I didn’t say it, but that was exactly what I was afraid of. Entering the laundry/mud room, he pointed to our cowboy boots. So, we were going riding. Interesting ...

In the barn, we walked between the stalls and I looked into the empty one that had been home to the cow when I was first here. I never did get the hang of milking and the constant need for milking was a royal pain as far as I was concerned. Plus, I didn’t like the fat-rich milk coming straight from the cow. Interesting, as I looked back on it, it didn’t hardly take any convincing for Mitch to make the decision. Before I knew it, he had backed the horse trailer into the barn and pulled back out, headed for one of the towns with a butcher. From that point on, we bought all our milk and we had some fresh steaks and hamburger. I learned a valuable lesson that day; sometimes a simple comment about your feelings can be all that is needed to spark a concurring feeling and action from the other person.

We took the horses into the mountain behind the house. I was wondering why we weren’t taking the ATV, but I quickly realized the beauty around us and the quiet of the horses. Blackie was following us or ahead of us, mostly dependent on him finding something to scare up in the brush. As we climbed above the house, it wasn’t hard to be overwhelmed by nature’s marvel. As we guided the horses in a zigzagging, back and forth, route through the trees, I am enjoying the sudden beautiful change to the landscape. From an eventual vantage point above the house and above the tree-line, the thick, clinging snow on everything with a surface to hold onto was contrasted by the dark lake

water and the brilliant blue sky. It was enough to make my heart skip a beat and my breath to catch as I sat astride the horse, gazing out over the valley below. I was lost within myself and this beautiful world surrounding me. I had closed my eyes, my face turned up to the sun, feeling the warmth of the sun even in this early winter's appearance. I opened my eyes to a renewed vision of the spectacle: the dark of the lake water below; white everywhere, except for the dappling of darkness in the forest where the trees showed through; the mountains with their craggy rocky formations and peaks; and the blue, blue sky with just a few floating white clouds drifting by like ships at sea on a lazy cruise. My eyes flash open wide and my heart beat went crazy, though, when Mitch maneuvered his horse quietly alongside mine, pulls me into him sideways, both of us leaning into each other from our saddles, spanning the distance between the horses, and we kissed. Wearing cowboy hats, gloves, and heavy jackets, I am comfortable in the bright sun, and I wish we could do more.

Back home, we of course take care of the horses, first. Despite the cold high altitude air, they were the ones doing all the work of getting us up and back down. Mitch was careful to choose his route to give them solid footing, which extended the distance we actually had to travel. We got them settled into their stalls, brushed, watered and fed. I was, of course, slower at this than Mitch was and he had left the barn, first checking the heater on the wall near the door at the end away from the horses. He wanted the barn warmer than the outside but not too warm.

I slid the large door just enough for me exit and as I pushed it closed, I was confronted by an assassin. It was a well placed snowball that splatters above the door and rains down on me. Thankfully, the wide brim of the cowboy hat protected me from the falling snow pieces. I can't believe I was now seeing the playfulness of this guy. It seemed I got to discover more about him as time went and he and I became increasingly comfortable and committed to our relationship. I slowly turned around to confront him, not at all sure what I am getting myself into. Mitch was starting a snowball fight and was blocking my way back to the house from the barn. He had a snowball in each hand and released one and it splattered above me, again. Certainly, that had to be his intention. I can't believe he would miss in the same location twice in a row unless that was intentional. He had a funny look on his face, challenging, daring me to retaliate. Which I did, of course. Sometimes I really wonder about my intelligence. I crouched down and make a couple snowballs of my own. As I stand up, I am calculating my strategy. Yeah, right! I look across the space between us at a high school and college football standout and all-around athletic stud. And, if that wasn't bad enough, I was trying to stare down someone who our government sent to face off against international killers. Like I said, my intelligence could sometimes be called into question.

I finally gave up, my throwing was terrible, and decided to chase him, instead. I jump onto his back, he tripped, and we wrestled on the ground, quickly getting covered in snow. I can tell he is being gentle with me (thank you, thank you), and I get away, but he soon has me trapped at the dock. My only escape is to go down the dock, which is no escape at all. I plead for truce and he reluctantly agreed. I walked toward him and he was visibly tense. Clearly, he is expecting me to break the truce and jump him, again. Instead, I move into his arms and he picked me up, I can feel him relax. God, I am like nothing in his arms! And he know it.

"Mitch, will you help me build my first snowman?"

He set me down and looked intently at me, "Your first? Are you serious, you've never built a snowman?"

"Not that I remember, anyway." He wrapped my gloved hand in his. He was looking for a good place to build it. I told him I wanted it at the end of the dock. My logic was that it could be seen from the house and be a lookout for anything approaching from the lake. He smiled at my teasing about his constant concern about security. The snowman became five foot tall, nearly the same as me, and at

the end of the dock. It required us to roll the balls of snow the entire length of the dock, one of which dropped over the edge, splashing him. Thankfully, winter gear is for the most part water resistant. By the time it was done, I was shivering. For a warm-weather-gal's first full day in the winter, I didn't do too bad.

Returning to the house was through the laundry/mud room. The boots and outer clothes came off and a lot of snow in the process. I was amazed at where the snow comes out of as we take off layers. No wonder I was getting cold. Mitch is stripped to his long-johns and disappears quickly into the main room where he is again stoking the stove. I knock both boots, coveralls, and jackets of the last of the clinging snow, hang them to dry, then sweep the snow to the drain to melt. I enter the main room in my own long-johns, very sexy, I might add, according to Mitch and looking at him carrying wood to a small pile by the stove, I have to agree. He went on and on about the new fibers that allow the under layers to be thinner and form more closely to the body. I am admiring the fit on his body, too. Then, he stopped as he was about to set the wood down and looked at me. Instead, he dropped the wood and they bounce off each other on the pavers the stove sits on, he stepped to me and held me at arm's length, looking me up and down.

"Who would believe long-johns could look so sexy." He kisses me fully on the lips, his hands wandering over my back, to my ass. "I'm feeling warmer, already."

"Hmmmm, well then, wait until you see what I have on underneath them." He gave me a quizzical look and slid a hand to my breast. "Remember that little black, lace, item Hansen brought that night?"

He moved his hands to the top of my long-john bottoms, but I slapped his hands away. "It needs to get warmer in here."

He pouted a moment, then his face cheered as he appeared to have an idea. He led me to the couch, put the blanket over me, then went into the kitchen. I couldn't see what he was up to, but I heard the refrigerator open, the cabinet, and the tea kettle start whistling. Soon, he returned with two steaming mugs of caramel colored liquid. I smelled it and smiled, then sipped it.

"Oooooo, sweet but with a bit of a kick."

"A hot-toddy, bourbon or brandy, honey, and hot water. It will take the chill off." He sat down next to me and I leaned into him. I guess it has become one of my favorite sitting positions. I cover the two of us with the blanket and we sip the warm, soothing drink that not only warms with the hot liquid, but also with the effects of the alcohol.

He made us another, which I gladly accept. The stove was hot and radiating good heat from the other side of the room, the hot fluid and liquor was doing its thing, and being under the blanket with Mitch was definitely adding its own heat. His free arm was around me, but the hand was not idle. From innocently stroking my arm, his hand had moved to my breast. I know he feels the bra underneath but the touch still feels good to me. As I finish my second drink, I put the mug down and squirmed in his arms to kiss him fully on the lips and that sets us both into more purposeful action.

It isn't long before I pull the blanket off and stand up in front of him. I started to gently, slowly sway my hips and body as though to music only I could hear. I gazed at him, my eyes now sultry, "Are you ready? I said you had to wait until it was warmer. Well, stud, you have certainly done a wonderful job of making me feel warmer." He smiled but his eyes never leave my swaying body and I mean body, because I don't think his eyes have made contact with mine for the past minutes. I continued to sway but my hands move up my body to my breasts, which I squeeze and push together. I then

slowly slid them back down to the waist of the bottoms, I hook fingers into the top elastic, and move one side and then the other side down my hips about three inches at a time. I am dying to show him, but I also want to tease him and know that he is feeling the tease. This is the first time I have worn these, only finding them in the drawer this morning by accident. With the bottoms now halfway down my hips, he can see the sides and he now knows I wasn't teasing him about that. I turn my back to him, bending over at the waist as the bottoms are sliding over my ass cheeks and he sees my bare ass with only that wisp of black lace across my ass and the smallest amount disappearing between my ass cheeks.

I push the bottoms down and try to step out of them, but the ankles are elastic, too. I break the mood completely with a case of clumsiness as I try vainly to pull them off my feet. I lose my balance and fall back into the couch and Mitch. He catches me and I can't stifle a giggle, then full laughing, which he joins. I may have broken the sexy mood of a strip tease, but the resulting effect was a relaxed mood and comfortable in being ourselves. And that felt perfect.

He pushed me back so I was on my back and my legs came up to him. He took on leg, then the other, pulling the bottoms off, then tossing them onto the coffee table. I was lying back, my legs up in the air with him holding them there. He was looking down at my ass, the thin piece of lacy material coming from between my legs and into my ass cheeks. He separates my legs about six inches and looks into my eyes. I am watching closely, knowing how I want this to go and hoping he does, too. His eyes change from gaging my reaction, to lusty, and then to smiling as he recognized a similar response from me. Holding my legs apart just a little to see into my eyes, he shifted his gaze to the specific location where my legs join. He opened my legs further, slowly, but his gaze doesn't waver, his inspection becoming more intense and deliberate. I raise my head off the seat of the couch just the amount needed to see what he is seeing, what has his attention so fixed. What I see makes me blush slightly as he again glances up at me, sensing my slight shift in position. The small piece of material intended to cover me, barely as I recalled when I put them on this morning, had one side of it slipped between my lips. One entire lip of my pussy was showing.

I watched him as he looked, then looked up at me. He kept looking back and forth, my partially covered pussy and my face. He put my left leg further to the side until it was on the top of the couch back, then pushed my knee further toward me so the leg was firmly on top of the couch back. He then moved my right leg off the couch, my foot resting on the floor. With his eyes on mine, his right hand slid from my mound, up my stomach, under my top, and capturing my breast covered in a lacy bra he still hadn't seen. I sucked in a deep breath at his deliberate action, the precise action I had hoped for earlier during my ill-fated strip tease.

He leaned forward, bracing his other hand against the arm of the couch just beyond my head, and kissed me. He looked into my eyes and kissed me, again. "I want you, Cat."

I was sure the look that came over my face wasn't exactly a smile, not with the power of the emotional state coursing through me at the moment. But, I also knew it expressed my own eagerness, "Then, take me, please!"

He didn't wait, he didn't think, not even to consider how he wanted to do it, or even how I might want it. His eyes shifted to my body and the important part that was his intention now. He grabbed the wisp of material that was the thong and pulled it. He apparently didn't think it through when he spread my legs so wide. I raised both legs up into the air and raised my hips from the surface of the couch. The thong was going up my legs and off my feet in seconds. I watched him more than the disappearing thong. His eyes intent, focused, and fixed on this singular task. With the thong joining the bottoms on the coffee table, I didn't wait for him to reposition my legs, I replaced both as they had previously been. And, I waited, anxious, as anxious as he appeared.



He stood up next to the couch and it was my turn to watch. I knew what was happening and I enjoyed it every time. He quickly lowered his long-johns and underwear in the same motion. His cock came into view and it was already half-hard and as he now struggled to get them off, I watch his cock move and sway. I reached for him, sat him down on the edge and without moving much myself, wanting to be exposed to him blatantly like this, I pulled each leg of his bottoms off his feet. Before releasing him, I quickly grabbed his stiffening, quickly stiffening, cock in my hand and stroked him several times, all the while looking up into his face, sharing a look while preparing him fully to take the next step.

The next step, the only conceivable step for either of us, was immediate, powerful, and consuming. He regained his position between my still spread legs, guided his hard cock to the opening of my wet pussy, and drove in several inches, recognized the ease with which he entered my ready body, and drove completely into me. It was so quick and urgent that it took my breath away. So unlike most other times when we have joined, as our relationship has evolved and grown, but at the same time so wonderful and intimate that we accept these differences in our sharing and giving ... and taking.

He pulled out, slowly, nearly completely, so that only the head is still within me. My mouth has opened as he pulls himself out, until he stops and he is still just inside. My mouth sighs, as if I was reacting to a potential frustration of losing him being inside. As my mouth closed with the satisfaction that he is not pulling out, I moan with that relief, and I look up into his face as he remains just inside. His face is studying mine, searching for an indication of something, and I smile up at him, but it is a smile laced with my own lust and desire. I think I know his mind at the moment. His initial thrust was uncharacteristically powerful, something he may have felt at times before but controlled, being sensitive to my past, not wanting to duplicate an action that had been forced on me by men in my past. I had come to know this part of him, this part that provides safety, reassurance, and confidence so I can take back control and my right to express my desires, preferences, and pleasures.

I simply return his gaze, but move a hand to the side of his face, a lust laced smile over my face, and I nod to him. It is all the signal he needs. He thrusts completely in a single stroke until our bodies again hit. Then over and over. It is the most powerful fucking we have shared, yet. But, still, his eyes and his strokes are caring. He isn't pounding brutally at me, punishing me, or oblivious of my reactions. It is all about my reaction to his action as I moan and groan and I realize that my moans are only half the sounds I am hearing as we seem to be in chorus with each other.

Our climax is equally urgent and rewarding. Virtually one on top of the other; we collapse into each other. Rather, he collapses into my arms and my body seems to collapse but merely just relaxes into the couch. My legs are around his waist, reluctant to let him move at all, perhaps even fearful of losing this contact with him. But, eventually, he does shrink and as if it has a mind of its own to escape my body, his penis slips out from me. I think we both sighed ... I know I did when there was that loss of him inside.

He gives me a kiss and stands up, his cock head dripping a last drop of fluid ... his or a combination of ours. He announces that he is making us another drink, this time bourbon on the rocks. I am to remain where I am, but I half sit up, half still slouched. My eyes close as I concentrate on the last physical and emotional reactions of climax gradually subside. I tell myself I will refocus when he returns, but until then I will just enjoy the feeling.

I am not immediately aware that Blackie was again smelling around me, between my legs, picking up my scent. I feel something, a touch, but furry, along the inside of my thigh. I open my eyes to investigate and find Blackie between my splayed legs, his snout stretching out towards me, his nostrils flaring with the detection of scent. I watch him, he clearly has my scent. His snout is still a

little over twelve inches from my pussy, but his neck is stretched out towards it.

Mitch has re-entered the room with the two glasses. But he stops as he sees Blackie approaching me. Blackie stops his sniffing, perhaps satisfied that he knows the source and looks at me, then he seems to recognize Mitch's presence and looks at him, also. I was still watching Blackie, but glance to Mitch when Blackie does. He has been watching us closely, a look that is different on his face, an expression of curiosity, intense interest, and ... yes, I think lust, renewed lust. But it doesn't seem like the kind of lusty expression indicating an intent to do something, but ... different. He simply nods to me. And, I know his interest, why his expression was different. This is new for us, we haven't even talked about it, but he knows I have had some experience with it, even if forced.

"Are you sure?"

"You talked about the dogs before. You said they used you, but not brutally like the men. You said you enjoyed them because of that, maybe more than the men."

"That's true, but ... it's a dog."

"But, not just any dog. It's Blackie."

"Mitch, I don't want this to be a problem for us. I have you, I am happy."

"Cat, I've seen you with Blackie. You love him, too. You have Blackie and me in your life now, don't you? If you are able to experience, love fully, both of us, might you be even happier?"

"Oh, Mitch, I ... I'm not sure I could stand being happier than I am already."

"Then you should find out. As for me ... it being a problem ... look ..." I had been focused on him, his face and eyes to gauge his reactions to this bazaar exchange, but I did look. Still without his bottoms, it was quite evident. He was rock hard, and he had just filled me with his cum.

I shift my gaze back to Blackie who is still between my legs. He had been following our conversation ... well, not really following it like he understood it, but following our voices, looking from one to the other. He might easily have been concerned about his approaching me like this. He might easily have seen me as his master's ... god, I looked into Blackie's eyes, in his way of reference, he would see me as his master's bitch. Jeez, was this really going to happen? I wasn't Mitch's bitch ... no, he didn't think of me that way. The other men, sure, but not Mitch. But Blackie, yeah, Blackie would think of me that way. My mind was spinning, my equilibrium was off. I thought I was understanding my place with Mitch, my place here in his life ... now this.

Why was everything so complicated. At the very time that I felt I understood what was happening, what my place was with Mitch, in his life, in my life, this comes up. But, I study Blackie as he considers me. His interest is primal, base, and simple. For all I know he has never, I mean ever, consummated the feeling he was now aware of because of what was in front of him. I shifted my attention to Mitch, was he serious? He was okay with this? Really?

He moved towards me. He smiled as he placed my drink on the end table next to the couch. I grab it and took a healthy gulp. It sent my brain into a spin. A gulp of straight bourbon. It will do that to me. Maybe I didn't need my brain foggy right now. Maybe I should have stayed aware of all the nuances around me. I want Blackie, though ... the same thing he wanted .. the same thing Mitch was saying was okay. No, not okay, not just okay. He made a point of making me fully aware of just how much the potential, just the potential, of Blackie and me going further had aroused him, stimulated him, and was clearly looking forward to, hoping for, it to happen.

I am still slouched on the couch, my legs open, and Blackie between them at my knees. How long have I been like this? Only minutes? Really? This seems like such a major step, yet Mitch is encouraging me. He is standing next to me, watching me.

He puts a hand on Blackie's head and at the same time leans forward. I look up as he does and he kisses me. "Do it, Cat. But only if you want to. Don't do it because I want you to. As much as you are concerned about this coming between us, I don't want you to do something that will be a problem for us because I asked you."

I reached both hands up to his face, pulling him in for another kiss. Without taking my eyes off his, I remove one hand and pat the inside of my thigh, "Here, Blackie."

He was a dog full of interest and intrigue. He may never have come into contact with a bitch before, but instinct seemed to be taking over. He looked up at Mitch, perhaps having long ago accepting him as the alpha male and more recently me as his. Even that thought alone gave me a warm feeling. Mitch only encouraged him, not verbally for he may never have understood that, but physically. Mitch stroked Blackie's head, then moved the same hand to my wet pussy, the pussy he had only minutes earlier deposited his seed. He stoked me, separating my lips and slipping a finger inside, then bringing that finger to Blackie's nose who stopping looking to us for any indication of acceptance, and moved forward to lick the presented finger. When Mitch pulled his hand away, Blackie moved up, sniffing, his nostrils flaring as he gathered in the scent, a scent that from now on would be known to him as me, me ready for mating.

With no hesitation present in his demeanor any longer, he moved up to my pussy, sniffing constantly until his tongue finally shot out and swiped me. The first time was just a touch, a taste, an exploratory effort. I reached between my legs and petted his head, stroking the side of his face, and that was all the confirmation he needed. His licks became long and strong, fully covering my pussy from bottom to top, each time flicking over my clit. On the third such lick, I moaned out my pleasure. Soon after, I realized my legs were spread out even wider than I had remembered. I found Mitch sitting in his chair, sipping his drink with one hand, stroking himself slowly with the other. I was ready to swoon by these things occupying my mind: the sight of Mitch stroking himself while watch us, obvious beyond any question how much he was enjoying what he was witnessing; the marvelous feeling tongue working my pussy and clit; and, the very real anticipation of experiencing Blackie inside me, if I wanted it. And, how could I not want it. It wouldn't be the first time to experience a dog mating with me, but it would be the first time to experience it when I was the one who wanted it, where I wanted it, and with a dog that I truly liked and felt a bond with.

My persistent moaning and enjoyment of Blackie's tongue in front of Mitch, and Mitch's obvious enjoyment of watching us, convinced me to take the next step and cross the line that would define a new relationship for all of us from this moment on. I reached down to Blackie's head and held it, gazing into his eyes, those big brown eyes, I sat up and kissed him on the nose. He looked a bit puzzled by the change, but the kiss and hug that followed seemed to reassure him. Mitch even hesitated in mid stroke as I moved, interrupting Blackie's licking of me.

I walked the few steps to him, bent over, kissed him on the lips and let my hand cover his over his cock. "Are you sure, Mitch? I don't want any regrets."

"I love that you are that concerned about our relationship, even now at this point of your stimulation. Yes, I am sure. Enjoy him. I can see that he fully intends to enjoy you."

I chuckled with him in recognition of the obvious. We both were looking at him as he stood sideways to us, his reddish cock sticking well out of his sheath. I kissed Mitch once more before moving to the

floor, on my hands and knees, turning to present my ass to a new lover. A lover who came up behind me, licked me more between my legs, covering both my pussy and asshole. I reached around, pushed his nose away and patted my ass to encourage him to mount me. He seemed confused, not quite sure what his next move was supposed to be. He jumped up onto my back, humped a few times, but hit nothing, not even my butt cheeks. He jumped off, walked around me, licking my face as he passed, before jumping up onto me, again. This time he was far enough to hit my cheeks, but repeated humps failed to hit the mark. I was at a loss until I remembered that the men would hold the dogs to me for them to achieve penetration. Once they were inside with a good amount of cock, they seemed to stay in.

"Mitch, could you help him. I think he needs to learn what it feels like and the sequence."

I heard him rise from the chair, "What should I do?"

"I'll try to get him into me, if you can just hold his ass tight against me until he has good penetration. This is so obscene, asking you to help me get fucked by your dog ..."

I felt Blackie being pressed into the back of my thighs and ass, I reached underneath, found his cock and guided him to me. Moving my ass up and down, side to side, he finally made contact with my hole, and when he did, he hesitated only a moment before plunging into me. Mitch held him there as I felt the dog move on me, now tightly against my ass. Then, it started and I groaned out, that rapid humping of a dog. I had nearly forgotten what that felt like, actually not sure I ever felt it like it was now. Not that Blackie was necessarily any better or worse than the other dogs, just that this was Blackie, not some dog, and ... more importantly, this was what I wanted, rather than having done to me. I reveled in the experience, not just physically, although that was at the moment an immensely powerful experience, it was also emotional. One hand went to the side to touch him, then shifted to over my shoulder to touch his head and I shivered. As he continued to hump frantically into me, his furry body rubbing along my thighs and back, but the intense emotion came from a series of licks on my neck and shoulder, then feeling an occasional drop of drool, all a part of him, and the complete experience.

I cried out at the feeling of the knot pressing against my opening, pushing, pressing, with equal urgency. I pressed back against him, wanting to experience everything with free-will, with my own eagerness, and craving. As the knot finally passed through my distended lips, I cried out. Mitch was next to me in a flash, asking me if it was alright, if I was hurt, if he should stop Blackie. I looked up at him, tears at the corners of my eyes, but a smile on my lips.

"I love you. I love Blackie. This is wonderful. I want to fuck you two forever."

He kissed the top of my head, stretched out beneath me so his head was under me only at a right angle. He was smiling up at me. I smiled, through groans, moans, and sighs. My pussy was full of dog cock and knot and the dog on the other end was working himself into a lather of eruption. Below me was my lover, a man who I have known barely half a year, a man who I completely and utterly trusted ... and loved. God, I love him! His hand moved up to pull my head down and we kissed, long and deep. His other hand wound beneath me and took a breast, pulling on a nipple. At the same time, unknown to him, Blackie tensed inside me, his cock and knot swelled to seemingly enormous size and he exploded inside me, spurt after spurt of his warm cum shooting deep into my pussy. The combination of the two males in my life jointly working my body put me over the edge and I came, orgasmed, exploded into a shuddering mass of involuntary shaking and mind numbing jolts of pleasure sent through my body.

It was awkward, it was clumsy ... but it was wonderful with Mitch with me completely at the end.

Blackie and I remained tied for minutes, maybe many minutes. Who cared, I was kissing my man.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

That night with Blackie was followed by another try several days later. Mitch and I never specifically talked about how Blackie might fit into a sexual relationship. He seemed to just be content that it was. That first time with Blackie was nice. Yeah, I know, 'nice' doesn't sound like an overwhelming endorsement for canine sex, but 'nice' is a world better than 'not nice'.

We may not have talked specifically about how Blackie would fit in (and suddenly that sounds like a pun), but we spent considerable time talking about the awkwardness of the experience with Blackie. Maybe it was me who spent the considerable time talking about it, but to his credit, Mitch was a patient and supportive listener. I knew he was a smart man.

It did bother me, though, that the experience wasn't everything I had hoped for. Call me silly, but I wanted it to be special if we were adding Blackie to our relationship sexually. I guess that's why I felt compelled to talk about it, my attempt at working out the difficulties. Not that I expected Mitch to come riding in a white steed in shining armor to save the day. Well ... maybe a little hope, I guess. But this was something Blackie and I would have to figure out. Mitch did come out with a comment that I thought we might be stuck with: 'practice makes perfect'. As kids, we hear that from our parents like some kind of mantra they are lectured on in the hospital with each birth of a child. Go figure, according to Mitch and my current way of thinking, it applies to mating with dogs, too.

And, that is exactly what I did. But it was a literal pain in the ass. That random humping into me, blindly thrusting and hitting everywhere but the right spot, was frustrating, too. I could tell it was frustrating for Blackie, too. He would jump off my back, walk around me, lick me, and jump on top of me to try, again. Sometimes it would take several such attempts. When we were mated, though, ohhhh ... yes, that was sooooo good. It was just getting to that point.

My white knight came through, after all, though. Maybe not a white knight, my rancher-cowboy-assassin ... that's a lot to live up to. We were sitting in that little café in Pagosa Springs. That one he liked so much across the road from the river he used to sit with coffee and think. We had come to town for shopping for food supplies and were ending the stay in town at the café. Mitch had long since told me about his stops at this café, including how he had stopped here on that fateful day. And, I had long since noticed the looks from the servers as we sat in the corner booth together. Initially, the looks were not pleasant, like I was somehow striking a death blow for any chance these women may have had for this mysterious man. I suppose in a way that is what my presence meant. But, they warmed quickly as the routines stayed virtually the same, except for my company and two coffees-to-go. We were even seen sometimes crossing the road to sit along the river.

On this day, though, Mitch was on the laptop. He said he was doing 'research', using the café's free Wi-Fi. This doesn't happen often, that one of us would be absorbed on the laptop leaving the other largely ignored. So, when it happens, I find something to distract me, knowing it must be something he feels is important and that it won't distract him for long. This day I was distracted by the passing traffic on the narrow and winding road outside. Every form of vehicle from semi-trucks to small cars were flying down and up the valley road. Most of them seemed to be well in excess of the speed limit given the tight curves through this section of road. I was thinking to myself it was some kind of miracle that more accidents didn't happen. All it would take is a wandering moose or deer from the forest to cause any of these to end up in the river. That was when he interrupted my musing.

"Okay." He turned the laptop to me, "Let's try this." He left his side of the booth and joined me on my side, describing how he Googled 'women who love dogs' and getting a million hits. He then refined it to try 'animal sex forum' and found Beast Forum. After a quick perusal of the site, he quickly signed-up, and started poking around the story section. He found a story that was about a woman loving a man and dogs in a sharing relationship. He pulled it up, 'Michele's New Life'. He showed me that he copied it into a Word document and saved it to the desktop. "That's a long one, it will keep you busy for a while and may give you some ideas. But, there are others. Explore."

I looked up at him, checking around us to see if anybody might be watching what I was looking at on the screen. "Serious? You want me to do this?"

"You want to enjoy Blackie, don't you? It seems better to get help than struggling and maybe or maybe not finding a satisfactory way."

"I have to admit ... I'm tempted. If this person writing the story really knows anything about mating with dogs, it might help." I clicked the name of the author and was taken to the Profile page. "What? This is a guy! No offense, but what does a guy know about a woman ..." I lowered my voice, "... a woman and her dog?"

"Hey, don't just be tempted, go ahead and read this one or others and interact. Look at the reactions, the exchanges. Besides, maybe he does his homework, does research for his story. Look at how long it has been going on and the following it has had. There must be something there. Our tagline is 'Rancher & Cat'. The password is the code. You know, the numbers for Cat."

That's what I did. With no internet connection at the house, I relied on downloading likely stories from the site into MS Word for reading. I also learned that Kindle could use MS Word files and that made reading them even easier. That Michele story was huge and contained some interesting information, ideas, and suggestions. I was still suspicious, though, of a man writing about something so intimate to a woman, but from my experience so far, I was impressed. The rest of it was ideas and techniques that I was now more committed to trying. The characters in the story seemed to have a relaxed and easy relationship with the dogs they had trained and I was determined to achieve a similar relationship with Blackie.

It took me weeks to get through the entire story, but I found good information and ideas already within days of starting to read it. I quickly incorporated the idea of stimulating Blackie to a nearly erect penis and I did that mostly with my mouth, just like the character in the story. It was an interesting experience at first because it seemed so unusual, even more so than being fucked by the dog. I also began working with Blackie on the concept of training him when and when not to approach me sexually. Even though we lived an isolated existence for the most part, I found it made a difference just for us that Blackie wouldn't be sticking his nose into my crotch as the mood struck him. When he began to understand the difference and only approached me for that when I was naked, it became so much simpler. In the winter months, being naked was more because of already intending to play sexually with Mitch, so Blackie's involvement gradually became more routine. When the intention between Mitch and me was more personal and romantic, as it sometimes is with couples when it isn't just playful, we adjourned to some time behind the closed door of the bedroom.

What pleased me and excited me was the easy and accepting relationship that quickly evolved among the three of us, Mitch, Blackie and me. I was the single member of the group that was used to frequent sexual activity. Mitch had little exposure to long term relationships with women or sexual involvement before taking me into his life. Blackie had been a virgin, having never experienced a female before me. But, I was on the opposite end of the spectrum. Sex, whether willful or forced, had been a major part of my being for much of my adult life. Now, it was a pleasure, not a regret or a

fear. Now, I relished the opportunity to receive and give pleasure through my body. I loved the intimacy of the act whether it was with Mitch or Blackie. And, Mitch seemed to share the same longing. Our loving and physical contact became more and more frequent, often small touches, strokes, and squeezes were given back and forth as we moved around the house, barn, garage, or outside. Those small moments only kept the need and fire strong for when we had the opportunity to do more about it.

Was I so sure that Mitch was comfortable and supportive of including Blackie? Oh, yes! I have learned that winter nights are long when you are in a valley between mountains. Thank god, I have two loving males to keep me satisfied. And, they do. Which is why I am so sure about our relationship. Tonight has been like many in the recent past. Mitch and I have just completed another loving, intimate, and explosive fuck on the couch. Most of the time it is more like love-making, slow and tender; tonight, though, was more demanding and urgent from both of us. We had to change positions three or four times, all the while remaining on the couch. When we were done, spent more like, we both were stretched out alongside each other, limbs draped over the other, and silly but satisfied grins plastered on our faces.

After, though, was the true sign of comfort of our new life. Once we had essentially recovered, perhaps not fully, but enough, Mitch slipped out from under me. This by necessity causing me to turn on the couch so I am slumped, my shoulders and head resting on the back of the couch, my butt and legs stretched out in front of me. Mitch headed for the kitchen and the bourbon. Is it a rut if you enjoy it? I have come to be very fond of bourbon, but I am no connoisseur, I know he likes Jack Daniels, but he also gets other brands on occasion. I'm not sure I can tell the difference from one time to the next. I just know I have come to like it and having a drink, either on ice or straight, is a nice after part of our sex, usually quietly embraced, sipping, and talking. Usually, the wood stove is blazing, allowing us to relax naked in the large room even with a foot or more of snow outside.

This night was no different. The stove was blazing, my body and mind were numb, but deliciously numb from the orgasm that crashed me. Once again my mind is trying to come to grips with just that element of this existence; an orgasm that crashes over me like some massive wave coming in from the ocean, traveling how far from the depths of the deep sea, just to crash over my body like it was spread out on the beach. And, how often have I marveled at that sense? How many times have we made love? Yeah, probably that often. To think, all that was done to me, the forced sex and penetration, the element of pain, electricity, everything that could cause my body to react with a cum, even if involuntary, all those time, and none were like this. None were like any of these, from the first time out in the lake on the rock to this one.

So, here I was, once again half aware, only part of my butt on the couch and my legs slightly spread. Only half aware, that is, until Blackie came to me. Then, I became very aware, and I became instantly re-stimulated. My first awareness was of his tongue, that long and wide tongue, swiping me from below my pussy to some place over it and onto my mound. That first contact was marked, an exclamation mark, when that wonderful but slightly rough tongue slid over my clit. A long, prolonged, contact. A contact that he repeated after only a momentary hesitation, when he received no negative command from me. I suppose it might take him a little more time to accept that his attentions were now welcome, modified by the clothing rule, of course. My eyes drifted to the kitchen door but there was no Mitch, he was still occupied. Not that it mattered in truth, though, my legs opened wider and my arms raised and folded behind my head, opening myself to this new attention ... this new welcome attention.

Blackie continued to lick or more like lapping at my pussy, which contained Mitch's seed and my own orgasmic juices. I was sure his was lapping up the results of my just completed love-making and a smile crept across my face, at the same time that a contented and expectant sigh escaped my lips,

my mouth.

It was at that exact moment that I sensed, heard, or felt a movement or presence. I half opened my eyes to find Mitch approaching with two glasses that I knew would contain bourbon, no ice, not in the winter. He was still naked, too. Of course he was. He held out one glass, then seemed to change his mind as he leaned down to me to kiss me. At the same time the glass touched my nipple and I smiled into his mouth. He pulled back with a big smile, handing me my drink and looking down at Blackie lapping away at my pussy. I took a sip of my drink, closed my eyes, but smiled. When my eyes open, again, I saw him in his chair, sipping his drink and focused on Blackie and me. My eyes drift down, his legs were open, his cock was not hard, but it was semi-hard. Amazing, he just came inside me, it was his seed that Blackie was intent on whether he knew it or not.

I looked at him. I sipped my drink, again. I don't know if I am blushing or not. I feel like I should be, though. "This seems so obscene."

He smiled, sipped, but his eyes were on Blackie's tongue action ... and exactly where his tongue was. "Obscene ... because a dog is licking you, or because I am watching it?"

"You ... because you are watching it."

"So, you admit that Blackie licking you isn't the obscene part. You like him licking you; you like him fucking you."

"Oh god, yes! I love it! I love that both of you can love me! Hell, that both of you can use me."

"There is a part of you that likes being used, isn't there Cat? You are a submissive at heart."

I moaned. His words, Blackie's tongue ... my god. "Yes, you know that, already."

"Remember the story, Cat? The woman in the story? She couldn't refuse the dog; hell, she couldn't refuse any of their dogs."

I hadn't thought he read that far into the story. Was he going to do it? Finally? "Yes, yes, I remember."

"You'd love to be told you can't refuse Blackie, wouldn't you?"

"Oh god! I love it, I love his tongue."

"His cock, too?"

"Oh, yes!"

"His knot, too?"

"Oh god!" I thought I was going to cum right there. What he was doing to me ... my mind was reeling in anticipation, my body was reeling from the insistent attention from that tongue. "Yes, yes, yes, I love his knot! It fills me up so much."

"Say it, Cat."

Oh no! He wasn't going to tell me! He wasn't going to make me do it. He was making me do it. Again, his demand for my strength, my control, my decision, and my freewill. "Yes, I admit it. If I can't be submissive to you, I want to be submissive to him."

"You will be his whenever he want you?"

"Yes!"

"You will be his bitch?"

"Yes! Oh, yes, I will be his bitch!"

"Anytime you are naked, you are his."

That last part wasn't a question. He was telling me. He was affirming a change in the way things were, how they will be. I looked at him. His eyes were on mine. Mine were on fire. His were intent, deliberate, and challenging. He only said three words, "Prove it ... now."

A challenge. A command? I scrambled onto the floor after setting my glass on the end table, surely spilling some in the process. I am on my hands and knees, sideways to him so he can see my compliance, my eagerness, and my desire. Blackie is at my ass in seconds. He is sniffing me, licking my backside this time. I wiggle my ass, breaking his contact, and pat my ass cheek. He jumps up onto my back and I grunt when he lands hard on me. His hips start humping immediately and I reach between my legs. Just like in the story, I feel his cock and guide it to my pussy and he is inside me. He thrusts at the first touch to my hole and he is embedded nearly fully in one thrust. That, combined with the other, the licking, Mitch's comments, his challenging comments, all lead up to an abrupt and surprising orgasm. My eyes flutter open as I stabilize myself to the rapid thrusts from Blackie and the rising and crashing orgasm coursing through my body. In those flutters of my eyes, I see Mitch sitting in his chair, his drink held to his lips, his other hand wrapped around his now hard cock, and a big smile spread across his face, his eyes twinkling in delight.

It seems to me that only minutes after my body is recovering from the orgasm that I feel his knot pressing against my lips. Undoubtedly, it was longer than that, but I find myself having to focus my energy and attention to the knot, clearing my head to press against Blackie, to assist him in successfully tying with me, knotting his bitch to dump his seed. I know that is Mitch's challenge, his intent for me now. His words, his guidance in the conversation, all leading to this, my declaration of submission to Blackie. Other thoughts that are fleeting in my mind, about Mitch and his words and whether there was more dominance in them for me, are all pushed out, perhaps to be reconsidered at another time. But, not now, not at this moment. At this moment, at this time, my interest is bound up in the same interest as Blackie's. He and I have mated before, this isn't nearly the first time for us. But, this time it feels so much more, so much different, like he actually is taking me as his bitch, like I am actually giving myself to him to be his bitch. With that sense in my being, the knot pressed into me, I cried out, my head raised up and I nearly howled in response. And, I again came, an orgasm rolling over me with one shudder after another, my eyes shut tight, but my mouth open. I felt myself, my pussy walls, clenching around the cock and knot throbbing inside me. Then I felt more, I felt him twitch, jerk, and eruption, shoot his seed deeper into my already spasming pussy.

It seemed like many minutes before his knot had shrunk sufficiently to be pulled out of me. But, I had no real idea how long it was. My head and upper chest had collapsed to the floor. Blackie had turned and frequently pulled to test the tie, each time his knot seemed to bump my g-spot, and each time it caused a shudder and gasp.

When he pulled out, it released a flow of his and my juices escaping my gaping pussy hole. I collapsed completely onto the floor and felt a blanket being placed over me. I recovered quickly, though, I wanted to, to see and to hear Mitch's reaction, his response to my actions and acceptance of his challenge, his direction of me becoming Blackie's. I raised myself to my hands and knees, the

blanket sliding off in the process. I looked to the end table, my drink was gone. I looked to Mitch and he was holding it. I crawled to him, on my hands and knees. When I came to his knees, I raised my shoulders and head, kissing his leg, his knee, and then resting my cheek onto his knee. His free hand came down to my head and he actually petted it. He stroked my cheek and ran his fingers through my hair. I found myself squirming at the touch, finding surprising pleasure and satisfaction in this form of attention from him.

I raised my head and looked up at him from my kneeling position, "Was that satisfactory, sir?" I sucked in air, gasping, wanting to pull that word back in as soon as it escaped my lips, but it was out, gone into the air for both of us hear and react. I waited. I watched his eyes and he searched mine, as though looking for something in me or perhaps in himself.

He smiled and pulled me up and into his lap, my pussy still releasing small amounts of Blackie's cum as I shifted position and sat onto Mitch's lap. He pulled me into his chest, I felt his cock stir under my butt.

"It was beautiful, Cat."

I snuggled closely into him, content in our relationship, and secure in his feelings for me. We finished the drink and found ourselves in bed. We made love, again. This time slowly, without urgency. It was beautiful. It was more. It was a perfect ending to the experience. I wrapped my arms around his as he held me after. I smiled in the dark, moving my butt into his groin.

He chuckled, "Enough, woman! Time for sleep." But, he kissed my shoulder, neck, and ear, while pulling me in tighter, pressing his groin into me in response.

Hmmmmmm ... I am certainly a very well satisfied woman by my two loving males.

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## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

One of the things about 'ignoring the world' that Mitch finally gave into was cell coverage. And, I think it was only because of me. I really think he would have been perfectly happy and content without easy contact with the outside world, but he saw my becoming a major part of his life as something needing a reconsideration. I tried arguing with him, but that only seemed to strengthen his resolve. He felt we needed easier contact with the outside world and especially for emergencies. I wouldn't find out until later what was really behind this concern.

A month later he was in town for some supplies and returned with several large containers. The contents were said to be able to boost cell coverage in problem locations. I was skeptical, after all, we had a mountain between us and any cell tower regardless of direction or service provider. When I expressed my doubts, he merely pointed up the mountain behind the house.

"Yes, the mountain, that's our problem."

He chuckled and draped an arm around my shoulders as we stood alongside the pickup truck. I was looking at the boxes, he was looking up the mountain slope. "I love how you can fight me, now." I might have blushed by his heartfelt comment, but who would know under all these clothes to ward off the cold. It amazed me sometimes how far he had brought me to being the kind of woman, the kind of person, I had never been allowed to experience before. He pointed with his free hand, fingers didn't exist with the heavy mittens we wore. "Up there, that is where the booster needs to be setup."

"On top of the mountain?" I admit, I was looking at him like he had lost his mind. We hadn't been there in good conditions. Now we were going in the winter?

It was a week and a half before he announced that it was time. He had been waiting for the right combination of conditions: temperature, clear skies, wind, and forecast. We would be using horses to get up there and to carry the equipment and necessary tools, the mountain behind us was in the 10,000 foot range with rounded tops as opposed to the craggy peaks that are more representative of the higher mountains. In other conditions it might merely be a challenging hike, in the middle of the winter it would be beyond a challenge and would introduce considerable danger, too. On the one hand, I was still questioning the wisdom and necessity of undertaking this in the winter, even when conditions were at their best. On the other hand, though, I took great pride in the knowledge that Mitch held my capabilities in such high regard to rely on me to handle the task without overly complicating the effort by taking care of me at the same time.

We were successful in getting the booster in place and it was every bit as difficult and challenging as we anticipated. Despite that the temperature was favorable, at that altitude it was still cold. And, the installation was only temporary. We would need to return in much better weather for a more permanent foundation system. The unit came with a solar panel to power the unit. At that elevation, solar power was ideal. From the top of the mountain, there was direct line of sight to the nearest cell tower to the northeast and the house and yard below.

But, the really amazing thing about the day was the view. From the top of the mountain, approximately 10,000 feet, the view was stunning, breath-taking. To the west was the lake the next mountain range beyond. The lake was white, completely white, with the frozen surface and close to two feet of snow depth. Just below was the house, a column of smoke rising from the wood stove chimney. It all looked so small below us. To the east was nothing. Well, maybe not nothing, there was a lot of plains to the east. From the top of Pike's Peak, just to the north, it is said that you can see all the way to Kansas. Pike's Peak is 14,000 feet. We took the Cog Train to the top once. It was amazing. And, I could feel the difference of 14,000 feet. Did the 4,000 feet matter if we could see Kansas or not? I had no idea, but I knew there was nothing between us and Kansas that was close to half that elevation. And, the neat thing about Mitch was that while I was staring off at these things, he never once interrupted my enjoyment of the situation. It was as though he completely understood that life could be very short and life should be grabbed when it was available.

Mitch was still concerned about my personal safety. He didn't believe the 'others' knew where he lived but he was worried that they might have a vendetta against me for initiating the FBI investigation. His worry was only reinforced when Agent Baxter confirmed the word on the street to the same effect. Using our enhanced cell access, he was checking in with Baxter. But, despite the better access to communication beyond our valley, he was still very restrictive of who would have knowledge of his cell phone number. And, he continued his habit of changing out phones and numbers on a regular schedule.

I had a large pot of soup that I had made from scratch heating on the stove and ready for serving. I walked to the room Mitch used for his office to tell him lunch was ready. The one-sided conversation I heard was interesting.

"You let him out?" "Okay, yeah ... sure, I suppose. Even he gets due process and he probably can afford bail." "So, what do you think the situation is?" "No, I don't want anyone here as a guard. If I think that becomes necessary, I have someone else in mind." "Okay, but is there any way they could even know where we live? I've been very careful about that and we haven't been in the paper or anything like that, at least not that I know of." "So, what you are saying is, be careful when going into Alamosa." "Thanks, Baxter. I mean it. I appreciate the heads up."

He ended the call and dropped his head in his hands. I hadn't seen him quite like that before. It was like something was weighing heavily on him, something that was bothering him. Something that was a complication. Something he hadn't wanted to consider but was now a reality.

"Mitch, lunch is ready." I hesitated at the doorway when he didn't move. "Is something wrong, honey?"

He turned to me, looking me up and down. A smile came to his face. I was dressed in an extra-large sweatshirt of his and wool socks. That was all and he knew it. Our life had become much more sexual, much more comfortable in our approach to it, too. The introduction of Blackie into the mix seemed to open that door that allowed us to be completely open about it. I was only partially successful at training Blackie on when I was available to him, but it was close enough. Dressed as I was now, he was likely to stick his snout under the bottom and sniff and lick me. But with dresses, he didn't. He seemed to know what the difference was but I knew I could never communicate that to him.

It was nice for Mitch, though, too. As he came to me, I knew how this would be. He was still bothered by whatever it was, but he took me into his arms, hugging me tight to him, and one hand slid down my back to the bottom of the sweatshirt. Then his hand was cupping my bare butt cheek. Just the anticipation of that simple action that I would have been disappointed if he hadn't done, it was enough to get my motor humming, again. It seemed I was happiest and the most content when I was with Mitch or Blackie these days. I was in heaven when I had both at the same time. Maybe it was spending so much time in the house during the cold, snowy winter days. Right now, though, nobody was complaining, not me, Mitch, and certainly not Blackie.

Over lunch, Mitch explained the conversation with Agent Baxter. Banks had been released on bail. The worst part for me was that the word on the street was that he had a vendetta against me for establishing a case against him. He also knew, even if it was rejected by all law enforcement agencies, that I was the one who shot out both his knees. That I was among those who extracted information about his operation, stole his bonds and cash, and left his computer system exposed for the law to dig into. He knew the theory of a gang-hit was phony; he just couldn't prove it. But, apparently he took small comfort in possibly getting some satisfaction by putting a 'hit' out on me. Now, I understood Mitch's concern, his hesitation, and his feeling of being overwhelmed. In our short life together, we have already expressed the bewilderment of what life would be like without each other. How does that happen for such strangers, opposites in so many ways?

I am not sure if it was by accident or wanting to divert my attention away from the threat beyond us, but my man came up with a new and unique way of challenging my workouts on the cold days of winter that followed. Whichever, it served the purpose of keeping me working out with him religiously. Hmmm, maybe 'religiously' would be an inappropriate word to use to describe these new exercises.

He established and introduced each in succession. There were limber or isometric exercises that we did in the comfort of the house. There were others that were done in the garage building with the use of weights. We were in the area of the garage building with the weight equipment when he first introduced the new exercises. The first one wasn't with weights, but knowing him I could see how they might be added.

"Honey, remember when you asked me if I could help you develop your own six-pack stomach?"

I was almost nervous to respond. Ever since he had dramatically increased our workout, cardio and resistance training. Hesitantly, "Yes ..."

"Take off your clothes." It was our habit to get the garage warm for our workouts, but naked? But, he was already stripping out of his shorts and tee-shirt. He stood in front of me, just waiting. Him and his hard-on. He had obviously been thinking about this next step and finally decided to act on his idea.

I shook my head but stripped off my workout outfit. "Now what? Sex is great and gets the heart pumping, but ... really?"

He sat down on the bench we used for dumbbell and barbell presses and exercises. He motioned for me to come to him. Hell, there was a magnificent hard penis standing straight up ... I was going to walk away from that?

"Okay, this might be indelicate, but ... are you wet? Are you ready or should I lick you first?" He got a smile, "Or, maybe you would prefer Blackie?"

I swatted his shoulder, "Blackie is wonderful. You know that. But, you, you wonderful man, are just as wonderful. I am plenty wet. What do I do?"

"This is going to a little awkward, but ..." He went on to guide me through the position. He wanted me sitting on him, his hard penis inside me, and my feet on the opposite side of bench. Once we were in position ... hmmmmmm ... what a position ... he took my hands, "Now lean back as far as you can, then pull yourself back up. Essentially doing a sit-up."

I looked at him with questions across my face, but I tried it. He held on to my waist, not my hands, forcing me to do the work. His hold on my waist only anchored me to him. God! You can't imagine the sensations. It was a deep sit-up, each time allowing my shoulders and head to sink further down closer to the floor. Then pulling myself up with my abdominals. A wonderful alternative to a heavy piece of equipment in a gym. The best part? The movement inside me. My butt was on his thighs, my pussy anchored by his cock, my legs on the opposite side of him, my knees bent and feet pressed into the floor. As I crunched up, especially when I was leaned back the furthest, I felt the muscles of my abdomen straining and contracting, but I also felt his cock inside me sliding, pressing into the top of my pussy as I leaned back and driving deeply into me as I sat up. Over and over I did that exercise. It also incorporated another aspect of resistance training that he talked about ... confusion. My body wasn't sure if it should focus on the cock inside me or the work my abdominals needed to perform.

He inserted a few more while he was at it. He said these might become a regular part of our workouts, too. I wasn't going to argue, even though they did complicate the normal moves considerably. One was what he called the 'wheelbarrow'. This one he said was for core strengthening and for arms and shoulders. It started with me braced against the bench and jumping my legs to his waist, him taking hold of my hips. He then inserts himself into me, holding my hips and pulling us together, my legs stretched out behind him. He then backs up slowly and I put one hand and then the other onto the ground from the bench. Now we are in the wheelbarrow position similar to what everyone did as kids. The trick was to keep my back perfectly straight and to move around the garage when I could only use my hands and arms for stability and movement. He, of course, simply followed where I led us while his grip on my hips keeps us together, his cock penetrated inside me. The movement of his walking caused him to pull slightly out and then push back in as he moved and held me.

Another one worked the triceps and shoulders. He took a laying down position alongside the bench. I put my hands on the edge of the bench and my feet on a second support on the other side of him. I was spanning his body at this point. I then lowered myself down to him, virtually only using my triceps. He positioned his cock by aligning his position below me until I felt his cock at my pussy

hole, at which time I descended completely. The exercise was to slowly raise myself up with my triceps nearly to the top of his cock so only the head was still inside me. He assisted by using his hand as a stop so I wouldn't come completely off. These were like triceps dips at a gym.

Squats had become a regular movement and I had worked up to some good weights at the same time. They really worked the legs and butt. What woman doesn't like a tight and firm butt; and, what man doesn't like to watch one? His addition for this exercise had him flat on the bench on his back. I positioned myself straddling the bench and him while holding lighter dumbbells than I normally would. As I lowered my body down, he again did the aiming until once again I felt his cock at my entrance. Then I lowered down over him until he was completely embedded inside. The movements then were to raise and lower as straight as possible while only using my legs.

The positions he introduced for inside the house were more for flexibility or isometrics. Somehow, it always seemed to be for me to be the flexible one. One was what he called, Face Off. The only thing I could guess was that in this position as he sat on the floor his face was in my pussy. He sat up straight on the floor, his legs slightly spread. I stepped over him so I was facing away from him. Then going into a semi-squat position, I bent over at the waist until my hands touched the ground. My legs are spread on either side of him. In this position, I carefully move my head and adjust my feet until I can take his penis into my mouth. These actions have the effect of also pushing my spread open crotch into Mitch's face. It has a side benefit for him in that he has to remain in perfectly straight position to have access to my pussy with his mouth and tongue, so it assists in his posture strengthening, also.

Another one was nearly the reverse. It required me to be bent over backwards. This was extremely difficult and took a lot of practice. But, we're all about doing things the proper way so no amount of practicing was going to get into our way. Remember as a kid doing that bridge backwards with your feet planted and reaching over your head and arching your back so your belly pointed towards the ceiling? That's what this was, with some interesting twists, of course. I found it easiest for footing to do this on the floor with blankets for padding. One of the differences is that this is done while kneeling. I reached far back to get into the bridge pose, raising my body once my hands were in place. Then, in that position, Mitch slides in underneath me. As he does, I simply open my mouth and watch his cock coming toward me as he maneuvers, taking him into my mouth. He then raised his head to start eating out my pussy and clit. This was very enjoyable and very intense. It took a lot of flexibility and tight core to get into and hold the position. Getting out of it was interesting, too. Mitch assisted with care so I didn't pull something in the process.

Another one was with me in a headstand, not a handstand. I start out in a kneeling position and place my head on a small cushion on the floor. Then, with Mitch's help, I straighten my knees and raise my hip, and keeping my abs flexed throughout. Once I was vertical with my head and two elbows/forearms as a three based support, Mitch gets into position and completes my final position, which is with my legs spread as wide as possible (if you try this, you look like the 'Y'). The finishing part of getting into position is Mitch wiggling his legs between my arms and head on either side, holding his cock at the appropriate angle so I can accept it into my mouth. By the time that is completed, he is in perfect position to now lick, kiss, and tongue the spread open pussy in front of him. When in this position, the blood rushes to the head and while the initial sensation passes fairly quickly, an orgasm in this position is quite intense.

As these exercises were added to our workouts, then to our just fun time, the winter days and nights became increasingly fun. I also found myself looking forward much more to working out with this man. And, that had an obvious effect on my body ... well, in a couple ways, actually.

We have been very careful since the warning from Agent Baxter. Most of the shopping and supply

trips have been by Mitch alone. I have protested regularly, of course, but he tends to err on the side of caution almost anytime. With me, though, he seemed even more determined to be cautious. But, it seemed that by late winter the supposed threat seemed a distant memory for both of us. We had spent the winter busy with the ranch and animals as we could manage to do the work. Getting to the horses and cattle on the other side of the mountain was the most challenging. The shelters we had constructed in the fall and the feed and hay stored at each was needed this winter since the snow fall was at or more than normal. That, of course, made foraging by the animals harder. Our chore was to get to the animals, break open more bales of hay and feed for them. The old 4×4 pickup or ATV were the workhorses during the winter. They made good time and were effective in the snow. The horses were slow and their footing was often questionable. Besides, it was often too cold for me to spend that kind of time exposed to the weather. As winter seemed to be winding down, it was looking like we, make that Mitch, had guessed right on the amount of food stuff for the animals. This might be the first time in years, much longer than Mitch had owned the place, that the animals had a chance of bringing new life to the ranch. I think I was a little more excited about the prospect than even Mitch. Maybe it was a female thing; a woman's relationship to bringing new life to the world. Maybe especially since I knew I would never have the chance to do that myself.

The months that passed since our first experience of the three of us sharing sexually were wonderful. The addition of Blackie into our loving and sexual play provided a welcome diversion to the long winter nights and too cold days.

We had only recently started something new for us: threesomes. This night it had been Blackie on my back fucking me royally with Mitch in front feeding me his cock into my mouth. These sessions had raised all our stimulation. Knowing and even seeing canine sex occurring in the house was kinky and stimulating for Mitch, but being a part of it seemed to raise his excitement even higher. I enjoyed it anyway, but the extra that it gave Mitch made even my experience better.

So, what could be better? We were settled into a happy, erotic life that kept us all satisfied, but especially me. When Mitch announced that we were going into Alamosa for a day of shopping and diversion, I was ecstatic. I had been cooped up too long and was eager to hit some stores and spend some money. The first thing that came to mind was a small bikini for the summer in the lake. Of course, before the purchase could be made I was sure Mitch would remind me that swimsuits weren't allowed in the lake. But, I planned on insisting ... just in case. I may never get a chance to wear it, I love the experience of swimming in the nude. Heck, I love being nude. I can't wait for summer! When I expressed that same anticipation earlier to Mitch, he warned me that now that I was fucking Blackie, being naked around the house and yard would just encourage the dog. I smiled even now at the memory of my response and his laughter. All I said in response was, "And where is the downside?"

The day in late winter breaks clear and warm in the air. It promises to be unseasonably nice, if you can believe the forecasts. But, it is the chance we have been waiting for and we take the truck into Alamosa for routine shopping including more clothes for me for the coming warmer seasons. Including bikini, if we can find such a shop already stocking swimwear. I have my fingers crossed.

Upon entering Alamosa and cruising down the main street of shops, I nearly jump out of my seat when I spot a small women's shop with a mannequin in the window with a one-piece swimsuit. I am pointing and jumping in my seatbelt, only grunt coming out of my mouth. He smiles while shaking his head, but finds a parking space nearby. With his hand tightly around mine, he leads me across the street to the store. It is only after the second time that I come of the fitting room modelling yet another bikini that it occurs to me by the devilish smile on his face that his interest is in part to introduce exhibitionism into our relationship. When it finally did sink into me, I rushed into his arms wearing the latest trial.

"Your dirty old man. You're doing this on purpose." He just smiled and didn't say a word. "Okay, I want you to find the skimpiest one out there in my size. You want a show ...?"

When I put on his selection and looked in the mirror, I blushed. I couldn't help it. There was nearly no material there. A narrow triangle of material over each nipple and fine strings holding the top together. The bottoms were ... heck, I'm not even sure there was enough material to call it a bottom. An equally narrow triangle that perhaps tried to cover my pussy, but was failing if I moved in the slightest way. The strings were equally fine to the point of almost not being seen. Against my white, winter skin I looked a sight. But, Mitch was calling me out and I was the one who made the point of showing him up. I stepped out of the room and did a twirl for him but I rushed back into the room, convinced I could never wear that. I would be more comfortable naked.

I bought a nice bikini that was small but more than a few pieces of thread. Mitch was still teasing me about the show I had put on as we walked down the sidewalk in pursuit of a coffee shop. I acted put out but I was enjoying the familiar, secure nature of the teasing and back-and-forth that was spontaneous and comfortable. How can a lover be real if he is always serious and intense about everything. Mitch can tend to be very serious and cautious about things. If he is bringing out a side of me that exhibits confidence and strength, I think I am bringing out in him a side that is free and relaxed. And that may have nearly been our downfall.

Mitch ran across the street to put my purchases into the truck cab. Then ran back to me, standing on the sidewalk in the middle of the block. The early spring-like weather had a mob in town, strolling the shops and enjoying the gift of warm weather. The natives to the area knew, of course, that this was indeed a gift and winter still had some fight left in her. But, for this day or however long it lasted, they were going to make the most of it. So, when Mitch jumps the slush and melting snow in the gutter to land on the sidewalk in front of me and takes me into his arms with a big smile and even bigger kiss, it is on a sidewalk crowded with people. I giggle with some embarrassment at the public display but I am quickly over that when the kiss continues. I wrap one leg around his as he pulls me into him with more feeling and pressure, seemingly attempting to feel more of me pressed against him despite the thick winter jacks we still have to be wearing.

When he releases me, our upper bodies separate but my leg is still wrapped around his and I gasp at the emotion just expressed by my 'non-public displaying man', the intensity of the feelings I just experienced as a result, and the need to refresh my lungs with air. It is another moment before I realize that much of the crowd around us has stopped where they were to watch us with large smiles, maybe taking this display as another sign of impending spring and budding newness after another hard winter. It is another moment, as my leg unwinds from around his, that I recognize the sound of soft clapping and giggles from young girls. My blush is immediate and deep.

Mitch's cell phone chimes the arrival of a text, which diverts us from the attention of the crowd and they disperse as our attention turns to a more mundane part of life. He looks at it curiously because he never gets a text, few people even know about his cell phone number. He fusses internally for a moment, he has kept this number twice as long as his routine would dictate only because it has aided in communicating with Agent Baxter, but the case is winding down now. It seemed from our perspective the case was over except for the trial and we, or I, wouldn't be a part of that, anyway. The federal assistant attorney for the region was close to going into trial and she assured me that I wasn't going to be required to testify; the other two slaves (women) would be sufficient.

Standing on the sidewalk, the crowd again milling around and ignoring us, he finally looks at the text: 'I am in Alamosa. I was planning to contact you for a meeting. I thought I saw your truck going the other direction. Meet me at Kay's Café to talk in fifteen minutes.' Kay's Café? We've never been to that one. We didn't know where it was. Mitch was mumbling to himself, curious why Baxter would



assume we knew about it; and why didn't the text show up as 'Agent Baxter'? His private cell phone? Baxter would surely bring a cell phone if he was in town and calling quickly after spotting the truck. Maybe it wasn't so odd, after all. While he was pondering that issue, though, I spotted Kay's across the street. It was the second store front from the corner. It was a small little coffee shop/café with a doorway in the middle and two large windows on either side. The window on the left was painted with 'Kay's' and the one on the right 'Café and Coffee'.

I point across the street. Despite being near the corner, he takes my hand in his and jaywalks directly across to the entrance. We have to run to avoid an oncoming car and jump the slush at the other gutter. Inside, it seems quiet but nice, peaceful, and homey. I have even got into his habit or just became accustomed to his habit or preference and go to the corner booth on the left side. A middle aged server arrives quickly and takes our order of coffee, dark roast and black. Mitch is sitting on the side with his back to the wall while I am across from him, my back to the rest of the café. Since Mitch seems preoccupied, I volunteer to the server that we are waiting for another. She smiles and has our coffee to us in only moments. They are served in large heavy mugs, the kind that will hold the heat of the coffee for a long time. Clearly, this is a place that welcomes customers to sit and relax. Soft and gentle music is coming from speakers that I can't find, it seems to surround us. At a table nearby is a woman with her laptop. Wi-Fi must be available here, also.

We wait. It has to have been more than fifteen minutes, not that it has been a problem, Mitch and I spend a lot of time just being together these days, talking, sharing, and even just looking into each other's eyes. We are just happy and content in our company. We do order some apple pie and a re-fill of coffee. We wait some more. Still, no Baxter. With a bit of exasperation, Mitch calls Baxter's number, not the number on the text.

"Are you coming?"

"Coming where? What are you talking about?"

"Your text said to meet you at Kay's Café in Alamosa."

"Mitch, dammit! What's wrong with you! Why would I send you a text?!?"

"Dammit!" And, Mitch realizes his carelessness. His eyes are scanning the café but only sees the same people who have largely ignored us the entire time we have been there.

"I'm sending the team that has been watching the house. Are you carrying?"

"Yes, but just a single 'nine'."

"I'll have them hurry. Don't shoot them, they will be the ones with FBI on their armor vests."

Mitch doesn't laugh. He is completely disappointed in himself. Our life had seemed so normal and safe, with seemingly ample time passing since the threat of retaliation had been identified. With his eyes scanning the outside of the café and the street, he calls the waitress and asks for the manager. A woman of about fifty arrives promptly with a wide smile on her face, drying her hands on her apron.

"I am sorry, ma'am. I am a federal agent and I think I have been led into a trap, right here. I really am sorry. What I need you to do is please get all your customers and service people into the back and against walls. I assume there is a back service door to the alley, please lock it. Please hurry."

He told me to go with them, but I refused. He was arguing with me and I with him until he suddenly

stopped, his eyes fixed outside.

"Get under the table and against the outside wall!" This was no suggestion or request. This was him being completely in charge and directing what had to be done for our survival. As I twisted to slip under the table, my eyes spotted four men walking across the street. Two on each end held some kind of automatic assault weapons. One of the two in the middle had a shotgun. The other had a large pistol. After that quick look I was under the table. Under there I scanned the back of the café and found nobody. The manager had successfully moved the other six people into the kitchen area.

Mitch wanted me under the table because of the approach they were making on the café and I wouldn't have time and be too exposed to now make it to the relative safety of the kitchen. He also knew that he had to remain behind. If there was nobody in the main part of the café, they would search in back where everyone else was hiding.

There was no subtlety in the attack. The two men with automatic weapons approaching the two large windows opened fire on full automatic fire. I could hear screaming outside of the building as people reacted and ran to avoid the attack on the small café. The men had to know that such an attack would bring the local police quickly, so they were brazen. As the two men unloaded their second magazine through the now shattered windows, tearing up countertop, table tops, chairs and everything else in the way, the two other men charged through the front door. They turned in opposite directions but neither found a target. It became very quiet except for the men's boots crunching on the broken glass that now covered the floor. The man on our side was walking diagonally to search the most area quickest. When he was in line and about to spot Mitch and me under the corner table, Mitch slid out and shot the man in the knee, which was about what he could see. He then turned rolled and turned, and shot the other man with three shots. When the first man fell, it was towards us and he dropped his weapon as he did. Mitch put another shot into his head.

There were at least two more men and time was wasting. They were either going to come in quickly, because of the sounds of sirens in the distance, or they were going to run. I was hoping for the latter, but it was the first. Mitch reached for the automatic weapon, checked the magazine, seemed satisfied, and slid his pistol to me. I unconsciously checked to make sure the safety was off and a round was chambered, even though I knew he had just been firing it.

Mitch slid across the floor and behind an overturned table to separate himself from me. Despite the fact that they were after me, they would have to react to any gun fire and that would be from him.

The next thing I heard was charging feet and a rapid fire of shots from the weapon Mitch had pointed around the side of the table. Then it was quiet. Quiet except for some moaning, I hoped from one of the men because from what I could see, Mitch was acting okay. He remained behind the table and shifting to the other side to peek around that side. Then he was in a crouching position, the weapon at his shoulder and ready.

I saw him move out of sight. I presumed he was checking the men. Suddenly, the sounds were of sirens coming in our direction, still some distance away, but moving quickly. Then, "Stop right there. Drop the weapon and turn around." I heard something hit the floor and rattle as it came to a stop. "Where is she."

"Who?"

"Who the hell are you? You know the woman this is about. Where is she?"

There was nothing, only the shuffling of feet. It was an odd sound, like each step, left or right, was more of a drag than a step. But I pushed that out, Mitch was in danger and because of me. I peeked

out from under the booth and saw that he only made perfunctory check of the tables and booths. He already seemed fixed on the counter and door leading to the kitchen. He was prodding Mitch in that direction. I didn't have a clear view from under the booth table so I had to move out, rose to one knee and aimed, just like I had been taught. It was Banks. That was why each step sounded like a foot being dragged. Both knees were heavily braced.

"Asshole!" He turned around, startled and angry at his stupidity. At least I hoped so. I hoped that was the last thought in his mind because at that very moment I squeezed off a single shot that hit him in his left eye as he was turning in that direction toward me.

Mitch seemed to almost catch the weapon that dropped from his hands and looked about to fire. But there was no movement. None.

I was about to relax, finally, but ... "You ... inside the café ... you're surrounded, front and back. There is no way out." There was a slight pause and I looked to Mitch. He seemed to smile.

"The cavalry has arrived."

"Drop your weapons ... put your hands above your heads and come out slowly."

I think they were actually surprised when we did. Funny thing about adrenaline; I recognized Mitch's joke about the cavalry and smiled in return. I was casual but very careful not to make any sudden moves in leaving the shattered café. It wasn't until after that it started sinking in, and it wasn't very much after. We were taken by a couple cops each, handcuffed with our hands behind our backs and taken to separate police cars. Before anyone even came to the car I was in to talk to me, to ask me questions, I had lost it. The adrenaline gone, spent, consumed by my nervous system, I fell apart. The fear that adrenaline had pushed aside, the thoughts of how close it had been that Mitch might have been killed, that others in the café might have been injured ... that I might have been killed ... all rushed in.

Mitch was nearly ready to kill someone else for keeping us apart, especially when he caught sight of me in the throes of hysterical sobs in the other car. The police intentions and reasons were legitimate, of course. They had to first determine what had happened and why. Two things happened in near simultaneous events that straightened everything out: first, the owner of the café identified Mitch as the one who had taken quick action that saved the customers and staff; second, was the arrival of the FBI stake-out team who were able to positively identify us and clear us. While we were being questioned by a small team of police an hour later, Baxter also arrived on the scene. But, now, the group questioning us was also made-up of FBI people. It seemed to take on a life of its own, but at least I had Mitch's arm around me.

Mitch was taken back into the café, what was left of it, for a break-down of what happened and where. The lab people would process the evidence and develop their own conclusions and report, but both the local police and FBI agreed that his account sounded right.

Mitch, on his way out of the café, spotted the owner with police and the staff. He waved to me, I think to let me know that it was okay. Okay? Maybe not 'okay'. Probably he meant we were almost done here. I watched him walk over to the owner. As he approached, she seemed to start crying and threw her arms around him. He was back in his awkward mode with crying women. I guess it was still awkward unless it was me ... They talked for a few more minutes, she was watching his face intently as he talked and she became more animated as he talked. At the end, she threw her arms around him, again. She didn't quickly release him this time. She then looked a little embarrassed and shook his hand.

When he came to me, I hugged him. Then, "What was that all about?"

"Women! All I wanted to tell her was that I would see to it that her place was remodeled exactly the way she wanted it. That she shouldn't worry about the money, I would be in touch soon to work it out."

I hugged him, again. Without breaking the hug, "You're such a softy."

He chuckled, "Don't let anyone else hear that, okay?" I laughed with him. How does he do it. He is joking shortly after what just happened.

Agent Baxter walked up to us. "You two are okay to leave. I told the locals that you could be reached through me, that it was a federal thing."

"Thanks, Baxter. I mean it. But ... listen, there has to be a leak in your group somewhere. How else could Banks have gotten my cell phone number?"

Baxter looked at Mitch for several minutes, running through the knowledge, the facts, the logic of what he was just told. "Damn! Okay, you have to be right. His eyes were blazing with anger. It was obvious by his reaction that he realized the same thing. I knew that he would find the source ... and that poor person.

We were half-way home when I fell apart hard. Mitch pulled over to the side of the lonely county road. The truck was half way in the ditch to be off the road surface. When I opened the door to get out for fresh air, I tumbled out into the ditch. I stumble through the ditch and fell into a fence ... a barbed wire fence. I scream hysterically as the memories came flooding back, filling my mind, my brain with all the pain, terror, and hopelessness of that day. It was like the large stream that cascades from the mountains to the north of our lake. Fallen trees had completely blocked it, filling and overflowing where water wasn't meant to flow. Mitch blew the jam apart with a grenade that he had me practice with. The water went down the proper channel in a torrent, crashing against rocks, boulders, and trees. Nothing seemed safe in its path ... nothing could stop it, again. That was what this was like, a torrent of emotion and pain and misery crashing over my being.

I find myself in his arms. I don't know when it happened. I remembered the barbed wire fence ... then nothing. Then, I was in his arms. I was shaking, shivering, convulsing with sobs and wracked with anguish. He just held me, like he can, like maybe only he can. Time didn't seem to matter, how long he held me wasn't important, wasn't relevant. But, in his arms I calmed down, my anguish simmered to sniffles and an occasional sob.

"I killed someone."

"Yes."

"I ended someone's life."

"Thank you."

"What?"

"Cat, it was him or me. Thank you." That brings a first smile, small, fleeting, but it was. "You shot him before."

"In the knees. This time ..."

"Did you have a choice, Cat?"

"No."

"And you're still feeling bad?"

"Yes."

"Good. I never intended you to be a killer by training you, only so you could defend yourself. You did that. Actually, you defended me. Killing isn't easy, and it should be a moral problem."

"Is it for you?"

He didn't want to look at me, I could tell. I forced our eye contact. "No. It isn't for me." He stared into my eyes. There were things going on behind them, again. I could feel it, even see it. "We don't need someone else who is insensitive to killing in this family." He kissed me lightly on the forehead. "Let's go home."

For a long time after that, the drive was quiet. The sun had set behind the mountains while we stood in that ditch. Now I stared out of the truck window into the darkness ... again. I seemed to be staring into the darkness when I am working things out. And, I was working out two things simultaneously. One was that I had just taken a life, but that was working itself out. The FBI, Sheriff, and Mitch all called it justified and self-defense. The other?

I saw Mitch watching me, again. And, again, it was his face illuminated by the dash reflecting in the dark window in front of me. "Are you okay, honey?"

Honey? We're changing, our familiarity, our comfortable approach to each other. "Yeah, I was just thinking about something you said?"

"What was that?"

I was nervous, should I utter it now? I was so tired, my brain seemed frayed by everything. "Never mind. I'm too tired to think. Later, okay?" Of course, it was. But the thought wasn't leaving me, not really, not even close. I just didn't dare ask him about it. He said, 'in this family'. He also said, 'let's go home'.

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CHAPTER NINE

My recovery from the attack at the cafe, almost losing Mitch, and my killing a man even if he was an asshole, occurred with far less trauma than what I suffered through after the abuse that Mitch had rescued me from. It still came to me with a rush at times, typically when it was quiet but fully awake. Sometimes in dreams I would see pieces of that day, the sounds, the flying glass, and the most scary of images for me - Mitch standing in front of that psycho with a gun pointed at his head. Mitch made me promise to tell him about every occurrence, to talk each one through. The talking about it seemed to have the effect of making it something that could be dealt with, then left behind. To not fear the images, but to look headlong into them.

I wondered if that was what Langley did for their warriors. Did they bring them in after difficult missions? Did they have them decompress, talk through the nightmares, the images of those they killed, and the civilians that were caught in the middle when it went badly? Was that why he knew so

much about it?

Over the couple weeks since the attack, the images have faded and left me ... for the most part, anyway. The flying glass and shattered surfaces in the café began easing when we again met with the owner and gave her a check for a down payment for an architect to make any changes she ever dreamed of. Seeing Mitch being held at gun point faded with his constant reminder that he was still beside me, holding me, teasing me, and loving me. He made the observation that seemed to allow me to release it all. In all our talks of dreams and images, my killing Banks was not one of them.

Shortly after that, Hansen showed up. Not on our doorstep or at the door knocking like most households. He couldn't get past the gate at the edge of the property and he had no intention of climbing the fence or gate that he assumed would only send off alarms or signals in the house, anyway. So he called on the cell phone and asked for permission to enter. Mitch was in the barn tending to the horses when I heard the cell phone chime as I was busy in the kitchen. I was only wearing one of his sweatshirts, again. I was hoping for some attention from either Mitch or Blackie. Blackie had gone off with Mitch to the barn, though. I was supposed to be cooking up a mess of chicken breasts that could be used quickly in a number of dishes, including sandwiches. Hmmm, maybe taking Blackie with him wasn't just coincidence ...

I dried my hands on the sweatshirt and picked up the phone. The phone almost never went active, hence the reason neither of us kept it close by. I looked at the screen and I unconsciously shrieked. There on the screen was the name 'Hansen' and his picture. I was willing to bet that it was the only contact with a picture associated to it. Okay, maybe his mom.

"Hansen!" I shrieked it.

"Damn, Cat! I used to have two good ears ..."

"Sorry, but ... where are you? When are you going to come visit us?"

"Actually, just as soon as you open this damn gate. I am standing at the road by your gate."

I opened the cabinet door and looked at the monitor. "Hansen!"

"Yes, Cat. I already said it was me. Could you open the gate?"

"Sorry ... this is just so exciting! I had been hoping you would come visit! Here, the gate should be opening." I press the button. "I'll go tell Mitch. Oh, Hansen!" I saw on the monitor that he was already climbing into the pickup. I dropped the phone on the table and ran for the door and sprinted to the barn. It wasn't until I was half way to the barn that I remembered that I was barefoot and only wearing one of Mitch's sweatshirts. Yes, it was very large on me, but my legs were bare and the cold air blew right up my otherwise naked body.

After telling Mitch about Hansen being here, he pulled up the bottom of the sweatshirt, swatted my bare butt and sent me into the house to get dressed so I didn't intimidate the poor guy. As I ran back to the house, now very much aware of the cold and my state of dress, I wondered to myself just why he, Hansen, means so much to me. I have only met him once and that was when we went after Banks' house. As I flew into the house and down the hall to the bedroom, I could only imagine that part of it was that he was there for us, no questions asked. He travelled a distance because we needed him. But, probably, more to the real point was that he meant so much to Mitch. Mitch didn't easily let on how much he might feel about someone. I became an exception. His mother, brother and sister were obvious ones, too. But the surprising one was Hansen. The way Mitch talked about him was beyond friend or even brother. Their time together, doing whatever it was they did, had

created a bond that transcended normal male uneasiness for commitment. And, as I hurried back out to the large room and the main door, now with jeans on but still barefoot, I knew my affection for this man was an extension of my love for Mitch. And, it felt entirely appropriate.

I looked to the left where any vehicle would be coming from but couldn't see very far down the track. I looked to the right and found Mitch walking back from the barn, bundled up in his winter work gear. I then saw him stop and wave to someone to my left and I knew it had to be Hansen. When his pickup came to a stop in front of the house, Mitch was standing by the driver's door. They shook hands but quickly went into a manly shoulder hug, the way men do because it probably wouldn't be manly to fully embrace so they kind of bump opposite shoulders. I was standing in the doorway watching, itching for them to hurry up, and I realized I wasn't just anxious, I was bouncing in anticipation, little hops on my toes staring out the door as Hansen followed Mitch up to the porch.

I took several steps back, but when they were both inside the house, I ignored Mitch and leapt at Hansen, forcing him to drop the duffle and catch me. I mean I literally leapt at him. Hansen was aghast, his eyes wide, but Mitch was laughing. "I warned you. I told you how much she has been looking forward to a visit from you!"

I looked into his eyes, then at his lips, only inches from mine. He looked nervous, but I was comfortable. Mitch and I had talked about my feelings for Hansen and he was fully supportive. It wasn't that we generally considered having a sharing relationship, but this was Hansen and he was different. He was already like part of the family, a strange family maybe, but still a family. So, I kissed him. It wasn't just a kiss ... it was a kiss ... on the lips, full contact, and full emotional feeling behind it.

It took him by surprise, not just surprise, it made him nervous. He looked at me with wide eyes and stammered at Mitch. I backed up and went to the kitchen telling them to talk while I got dinner ready. It might have been a little early, but I reasoned that they needed time to talk, to catch up, and discuss whatever it was that brought Hansen here in the first place. As I moved around the kitchen preparing something easy and quick for dinner, I tried to eavesdrop just a little.

"She really likes you, Hansen."

"I gather that. But, that doesn't bother you? I mean, you're okay with that kiss?"

I heard him laugh. "I'm the one that encouraged her to take charge of herself, to take control of some situations. She's responded very well, I would say to taking that to heart. To answer your question directly, yes, I am okay." I heard a chuckle. "There's more you'll learn if you can stay for a few days, or longer. It would really please both of us."

"Well, I suppose I could for a few days, but I was planning on a hotel in that town, to be out of your way."

"Don't bother. You have your stuff? We have a spare room."

"You know me, I hate to leave anything behind for someone to look through."

I poked my head through the kitchen entrance, "Then it's settled. Mitch, show him the other room. We'll work on him to stay longer once he's in there." I blew them both a kiss and disappeared back in the kitchen.

All I heard was, "I told you. You're going to have to answer to her. Don't fight it, man, she wants you here."

Dinner was fine and casual. During dinner, Hansen told us the real reason for his being here. He said his handler let him know about the shootout at the café. He was told that it seemed to be handled and we were okay, but the FBI report did mention something about a breach in security. That was when he made the decision to use some downtime to investigate himself. He met with Baxter just today and found that everything was nailed down. He did find the leak that put Mitch's cell number into the hands of Banks. It turned out to be a data processor, basically an FBI clerk. He had run into some financial trouble and succumbed to the temptation of a buy-off. Although the FBI and other agencies attempt to monitor these types of security risks with employees, some always get past them. I understood the explanation and even accepted it. Of course, we survived. I also knew that if one of us had been hurt, I might not have been quite so understanding.

We adjourned to the other room with beers. Hansen said he had something for me. He said it might make a part of life a little easier, but it was up to me if I wanted it. I had given him 'my' chair by Mitch's and I sat on the couch, Blackie at my feet. He kept looking up at me and I kept shaking my head, no. I noticed that each time it drew a smile from Mitch and soon a quizzical look from Hansen, but he had something on his mind.

He went into the spare bedroom and returned with a large manila envelope. The outside of which was marked, "SECRET". Not top secret, so I guessed it wasn't State secrets. He handed it to me and I just looked at it before looking back at him as he sat down, then bounced back up to get three more beers and distributed them. I still hadn't opened the envelope.

He smiled as he returned to the chair, "Open it Cat. This isn't one of those things that gets better the longer it remains unused. It only has value if you decide to use it."

Before I could, though, "Why ... how?" Mitch was surprised, too, apparently. But, it seemed that he had an idea of what was inside.

"Open it Cat!" Then he turned and answered his most trusted friend. "I was on assignment, one of those hell-holes where you can't really trust either side, but you hope at least that our side is a little better. I kept thinking about Cat, what happened to her, all those years lost, never to be gotten back. Then, I got an idea."

"Imagine!" They were back into their comfortable ribbing and needling of each other. Sometimes it seemed a bit harsh, but just dare that someone else would say the same thing when the other was around.

"I know, right? And you weren't within thousands of miles ..." I was starting to rip open the top flap, looked up at them and saw the smiles on their faces. "Anyway, when I got back, I just went upstairs and asked. They were only too happy to help."

I had the envelope open and dumped the contents onto the couch next to me. My eye was drawn to a small plastic card. As I reached for it, my other hand went to my beer. I took a gulp while looking at Mitch and he nodded.

I read it, "Catrina Michaels. Cody, Wyoming. A driver's license. The picture on the front is me. The birth date, weight, and height all are correct." I am talking to myself as I looked at it. How can this be, I wonder, but not really wondering too specifically or the answer would have been obvious. I see another document, a copy of an old document really. "My birth certificate? No, Catrina Michaels' birth certificate." I read it closely, studying the details. "This is so weird. West Park Hospital. Birth size: 7 pounds, 9 ounces, 20.5 inches." I looked up at Mitch, he was smiling. I looked at Hansen who was just gulping more beer and he was smiling but with a bit of reservation.

"I suppose I should have asked you first, Cat, but I thought it would help."

"Do you mean that this is me, now? I am Catrina Michaels and all this is what people would find?"

"Give me your reaction ... yes, if someone searched for you with your description and name, social security, driver's license, anything, they would only find Catrina Michaels with that history. There is a little binder of history in there."

I dug through the papers spread out next to me: besides the driver's license and birth certificate, I glanced at school records, Holy Communion from St. Anthony, school records from the University of Wyoming (apparently I only lasted two years in Communication and Journalism), and discharge paperwork from the Air Force.

"I was in the Air Force? I spent a lot of time in Guam as a Communications Specialist." I looked up at Hansen. "Why that?"

He looked at Mitch and he indicated that he should answer that. Mitch was smiling at that nice bit of history was added for me. "I spent a lot of R & R on Guam. A lot of people went to some exotic places, but Guam suited me. It had some beaches, but it was mostly quiet and the people were/are very patriotic and supportive of the military." He looked at Hansen, "I assume the dates match up generally that Cat and I met for the first times there?" Hansen just smiled.

I dropped everything that had accumulated on my lap back onto the couch as I got up and walked across the room. I went to Mitch and kissed him on the lips. "I love you, Mitch."

I then stepped to Hansen, moved his hands, and sat down on his lap. I threw my arms around him, looked to Mitch for his reaction, and he nodded with a smile. I responded with a smile, then gave Hansen a big kiss on the mouth ... hard, with passion, and feeling. Needless to say, he was stunned and, again, a little nervous. When I separated myself from him, "You are staying here."

He, of course, tried arguing with me, but Mitch interrupted him, "Give it up, guy. Take it from experience, you are going to lose."

But I did jump up off his lap and resettled into my spot on the couch. This time I was going into the details of each and every document. Periodically, I noticed that my drink was refilled next me and I would look to the guys and give them a grateful smile before turning my attention back to the documents

Mitch came to me, taking the transcript of my made-up history out of my hands. I had dozed off from a potent combination of excitement, long hours of reading and memorizing, and more alcohol than I had had in a long time. I noticed Hansen was missing and the light was on under the door of the guest room. I accepted Mitch's hands to pull up and leading me to our bedroom. Passing the guest room, though, I stopped, knocked on the door and cracked it open.

"Thank you, Hansen. I'll see you in the morning."

That night, despite my tiredness and fatigue earlier, I couldn't fall back to sleep. Mitch, bless his heart, fought off sleep to gently touch me and cuddle, sensing that conversation was about to come, it was just a matter of when. I didn't make him wait long.

I turned to face him. The room was dark but we rarely closed the curtains on the windows and the light of the moon shone in, casting a muted glow into the room. "Mitch ..." No more came out. I thought I was ready, I had repeated it several times in my head, but now ... nothing. It wouldn't

come out.

I could see his smile at me, but I felt his hand stroking my hip and up to my breast even more. "Say it, Cat. You can say anything to me, you know that. Whatever it is, we'll talk it over."

I leaned in to kiss him on the lips. It felt good, it felt reassuring as his hand slipped off my hip, onto my butt, and pulled me tightly into him. He was hard. He was very hard. He was anticipating something. Maybe ... maybe, he already guessed from my earlier actions.

"Mitch, you need to tell me if this is way out of line, but ... well, I really like Hansen, and ... well, and ... you two are closer than brothers, you know?"

He chuckled, "Cat, spit it out. I know very well my relationship with Hansen. We've saved each other's lives so many times we couldn't even count, anymore. You're right, that builds a relationship that can't be duplicated in the normal world." He raised my chin (yes, that finger under my chin), searched my eyes and planted a soft kiss to my lips. God, I love this man! A touch like that, his hardness pressing into me ... I'd do anything he'd ask. I'd be his submissive, his slut. Damn, I'd be his slave! But, no, he would have none of that, he wanted me strong, independent, inside my own control. I put my arm around his neck and pulled him close ... and I sighed deeply. "Cat, I know how you feel about him, too. I knew it before. I saw it again, tonight."

"Mitch, I want to love him. While he is here with us, I want to bring him into our fun, our sex. I want this, Mitch. But, only if it won't be a problem for you."

He smiled. We were on our sides, facing each other, and pressed tightly against each other by both of our arms pulling at the other. His hand slid down my leg to my knee and raised it and pulled it over his hip. With my leg draped over him, I was fully open to him and he slid the same hand between my legs. He gently (god, how can he be so gentle and so strong at the same time?) grazed my lips. It almost wasn't a touch, it just floated on the surface of my lips, exactly between them, but never entering me. It wouldn't have been an effort for him, I knew I was wide open for him.

"My woman is ready for something to happen now."

I pulled my head back just enough to see into his eyes. "Am I your woman?"

He pulled me in so tight I thought I was going to have trouble breathing, if it lasted. "My dear lady, I think you've been my woman since the time I was nursing you in your recovery. I just had to realize it. Yes! You are my woman. I hope you'll have me."

I gave him a peck and a hug, my leg still draped over his hip. "Went out on the limb without a safety net that time, didn't you stud? And, I love that you did that for me. Yes ... yes! Yes, I'll have you and I want you, too." He slid his cock into my wide open pussy. God, I knew I was wet and had to be open, but for him to slide that wonder thing into me so easily? "Ooooooooooooo ... Mitch! Yes, I ... OOOHHHHHHHHH ... I love you inside me!" I hugged him tightly as I had a minor orgasm. "But ... oooooooooo ... but tell me before my mind turns to jelly ... hhhhhhhhhhhh ... about Hansen ... about him involved."

He was sliding in and out of me. It was awkward in this position, but with him in me ... wonderful.

"Yes. I think it is time for you to enjoy a human DP." I shuddered. "And Blackie ... I wonder ..." he pulled almost all the way out before driving back into me, "... a triple penetration?"

I had an orgasm right then and there, blowing circuits in my mind. But he never stopped moving

inside me. He never stopped loving me through the orgasm. Even before I was through it, he rolled me on top of him and my legs instinctively moved to kneel over him and my ass took over the motion, rising and lowering on his wonderful cock.

I felt him twitch inside me, felt him press up into me with even more urgency ... and, as I felt the first of his spurts coat me inside ... I wondered what Hansen would be like with us. I came, again.

The next morning was like most any other in the winter, meaning I was getting the coffee ready first before worrying about breakfast. And, I was wrapped in a thick robe. Blackie was at my side, or right behind me, the entire time. I was sure he could smell me. Thinking about it, that he could smell me, caused a shudder of nasty, wonderful, excitement. I had climaxed several times, Mitch had cum inside me, and I knew, just knew, that Blackie was smelling that. I couldn't resist it, I had to feel him, if just his tongue. The house was quiet but I knew Mitch would be coming out soon. I had no idea about Hansen. But, I needed to chance it, if just for a moment. I crouched down, spreading my knees wide. I held Blackie's head between my knees, I saw his nostril flare at the scent he was picking up, but he didn't advance on me despite my open invitation. My robe! He could see, he could smell me, but I had clothes on. I undid the tie around my waist and flung the robe open, exposing my front to him. It was enough, it looked enough like 'naked' for him, and he advanced. He snout between my thighs, his tongue shooting out and a first lap at my pussy. Yessssss, yes, yes ... ohhhhh, what a wonderful feeling.

Just as I was about to lean back onto one arm to open myself more for him, I heard a door open and then close. Was it Mitch? Could I chance it to enjoy just a bit more? No! Snap out of it, Cat! If it is Hansen, you'll cause a problem for sure. My mind can be so wild, but I jump up, causing Blackie to jump back, too. I turned my back to the entrance to the kitchen, fumbling for the tie of the robe.

"Good morning, Cat. I smelled the coffee." I just got the tie secured and turned around. I wanted to be tentative with him this time. I had other plans but I didn't want to scare him off before those plans could be comfortably put into motion. I stepped up to him, put my hands on his shoulders, and gave him a peck on the cheek.

I turned to the cabinet for a mug, poured some for him and turned back to him. "Did you sleep well, I hope?"

"It is eerily quiet up here. It is so quiet I think every sound is something to worry about. Once I got used to it, that it was just the way it was, I slept like a baby."

Mitch walked in, I gave him a much bigger kiss. We talked, I made breakfast, and we talked more. Later, Mitch took Hansen on a tour of the place. I stayed in the house to give them their time. But, all I could think about was how I was going to get Hansen involved with us. That Mitch was not just okay with it, but wanting it to happen. And, Blackie ... he mentioned Blackie, too. Oh, god, what was I going to do?

After dinner that night the guys stayed at the kitchen table while I cleaned up. No, they both tried to assist me, but I insisted they could just keep me company. That by itself would make me happy. It worked and they relaxed, soon sharing stories, partly for my benefit and partly for their own reminiscing. Regardless, the banter was strong and effective, just like the Jack Daniels I was feeding them. Actually, more to Hansen than to Mitch.

Then, Mitch came up to me as I was about done with the dishes. He hugged me around the waist and whispered in my ear between kisses, "He can't keep his eyes off your ass. He's trying to be discreet but is failing miserably. If you want to go ahead with this, it is now or never." He then kissed my

neck and the hand that would be unseen by Hansen slid up to my breast. "I love you. I love you, not for this, if you do it, but because ... because of the woman you are for me."

I leaned back into him and turned my head for a kiss, "You two go sit down in the other room. I'll bring more drinks out. I know what I want to do." He just smiled, but he also gave my ass a loving pat as he turned. That, though, he made sure Hansen saw.

When I finished with the kitchen cleanup, which wasn't that long later, I peeked into the other room to see them settled into the easy chairs. I took down three new glasses from the cupboard and poured a double into each. I looked to the doorway, again, just checking out of nervousness, but was not able to see either of them. I took a deep breath. I was nervous, no question about it. Why, I wondered? Did I think he might not want me? Did I think he might be offended by the offer? Mitch didn't seem to think that was even a consideration. It never came up as a thought, warning, or option to approach in a certain way. He seemed to be completely confident in his best friend's reaction. I thought I was, too. Now, at the moment of initiating it, I had my doubts, my concerns, and ... what? ... worried for Mitch? I decided what I needed was a hit of bourbon. A little extra courage.

Then, after taking another deep breath, and the realization that this really mattered to me, I unbuttoned the flannel, very unsexy, shirt I was wearing and pulled it off my shoulders. Before dropping it onto the table, still holding it to my front, I peeked at the doorway, again. If they stayed in the chairs and I hadn't moved, they still weren't going to see me. Besides, girl, having Hansen SEE me was the whole idea. After admonishing myself, I dropped the shirt, unsnapped my jeans and ran the zipper down. I shimmied out of my jeans, then my socks. I dropped all of them onto the table, turned to the doorway (if they came in now, they may as well see what I was doing!), reached behind my back, unclasped my bra, slip it off my shoulders, and finally added my panties to the pile on the table.

Another deep breath. I wanted this; even better, Mitch wanted this, and I was now confident that Hansen would love it. Naked, I took up the three glasses after re-filling mine, and walked into the room, holding the drinks more to the side than directly in front. I figured that would present a better, more unobstructed view of my body. And, the effect was priceless. Hansen's mouth fell open when he saw Mitch refocus to the kitchen entry and finally turned. Mitch had a huge grin on his face as Hansen looked from me to Mitch, back to me and staying on me. That quick look back to Mitch apparently was enough to convince himself that this was all good.

"I have new drinks for you guys and something more for you, Hansen."

I gave out the drinks, then stood in front of Hansen. His legs were crossed. "I wish there was something else I could call you besides 'Hansen'. 'Hansen' just doesn't quite seem personal enough, right now."

I noticed that since the initial quick look back to Mitch, his eyes hadn't wavered back to him. His attention was fully on me, especially specific parts of me.

"Right now, you can call me 'Dopey' for all I care."

I smiled at that, but I didn't think he noticed.

"Okay ... Dopey, will you uncross your legs, please?"

Now, he looked up at me, but he wasn't reacting to the name I used. He uncrossed his legs and I sat in his lap. It was like he didn't know what to do with his hands. I indicated his drink, "Drink, please." He did, a healthy one, too. I took it from his right hand and leaning forward, put it on the side table

between the two chairs. His left hand was awkwardly across my shoulders, like it had to be there, but ... I took his right hand, now empty and sticking out in the air, and placed it on my left thigh, my left naked thigh. When his hand slipped a little toward my knee, I recaptured it and pulled it further up my thigh toward my hip. I pressed it into place and patted it. It was now much closer to my hip, and my pussy, than before. I snuggle into his lap and body much closer, much tighter, and his left arm couldn't help but relax and slide down from my shoulder, down my arm, and to hip.

As we talk and share experiences and some private knowledge, Mitch is careful to keep the conversation away from me, helping to keep me comfortable. I periodically reach up and kiss Hansen on the neck or cheek and he relaxes more. His hands are not stationary, any longer. He is gently moving them over me. As his left hand moves up my side, underneath my arm, he grazes the side of my breast and I close my arm over his hand to keep it there. He looks down at me and I smile at him.

"That's nice Dopey. I like that gentle touch."

He pulls me into him tighter and kisses my forehead. "Maybe 'Hansen' would be better. Especially, now."

"Now? Does that mean you want something more to happen?" I purposely move his left hand to cover my left breast. I then take his right hand, separate my thighs a bit more and place it between my legs. I feel him tense. "It's okay." I kiss his neck, again. "I want it, Hansen. I can feel you under my butt, I know you want it, too. Mitch ... Mitch is more than okay with it. We talked about it last night. I've been waiting for this all day, Hansen. You've been on my mind all day." I separate my thighs more, his finger tips are at my pussy lips. "I can feel your readiness. Can you feel mine?"

His fingertips become alive, they move to my lips, along my lips and just between them. I know I am wet, I was willing to bet that I was sopping wet.

"Oh, god, Cat ... you ... I ..."

"Yes!"

I stand up, holding Hansen's hand in mine, pull him off the chair, and into my arms. He is shorter than Mitch and we are nearly at eye level with each other. It's weird, I am so used to now having to look up to look at the man I am about to fuck. I put my arms around his neck and kiss him hard on the lips. We are standing directly in front of Mitch, and that adds to the excitement for me. I am kissing his best friend, I am about to make love to his best friend, and before the night is out I will probably be fucking his best friend. I turn him toward the hallway to the bedrooms, but stop next to Mitch. Still holding Hansen's hand, I bend over and kiss him.

I announce to Mitch, but also to Hansen, "We're going to bed now." Hansen's mouth hanging open, again. He still hasn't assumed anything about this. Is that the mark of a true friend? Even with all that I have done to indicate what is going to happen, he still is waiting for it to be crystallized for him, not allowing any assumption that could cause a problem?

Mitch smiles at me, nods to Hansen, and returns with another kiss, "Will I see you later?"

I smile at him before turning to look at Hansen over my shoulder, "Probably not." Hansen gives a resigned and accepting smile.

Mitch puts his hand behind my neck, pulling me a little closer, and kisses me deeply. Then, just loud enough for Hansen to also hear, "I'll see you in the morning, then."

With his hand in mine, I led him into the guest bedroom. Inside, I closed the door behind us, turned around and stopped. I just looked around the room.

"Cat? Is something wrong? Is this wrong?"

I moved to him to kissed him on the lips, letting my hand slide from his chest to the front of his jeans. He was very hard. I smiled at him and pointed at the bed, "When I finally came to a couple days after Mitch rescued me, this was where I was." I went to the window and looked out at the blackness. "Out there is the dock. I woke to the sounds of a man talking. Obviously, it was Mitch and he was talking to Blackie. He was naked. I'll never forget that image, the first image of my man, naked on the dock after a morning swim. He saw me in the window and waved. Then it occurred to me that he could see that I was naked, too. But, he was the one who was caring for me." I looked around the room more, still holding his hand, changing hands as I turned in a circle. "This room has so many memories for just a room." I was facing him, again. I put my arms around him, pressing my body into his, my groin into his crotch, feeling his hardness against me through his jeans. "Now, if you will do me the honor, it will have another wonderful memory for me."

"I ... I hope I don't let you down."

"Not possible."

"How can you be so sure?"

"I care too much for you. I think you care too much for me. When you care, you make it good for each other. I've learned that with Mitch."

My hands were working the buttons of his shirt, then his jeans. I knelt down to remove his shoes, his socks, then to pull down his jeans, and finally, watching his face, his underwear. Before they were on the floor, I took his cock into my mouth and sucked. Once my hands were free, I held it out, stroking it as my mouth sucked on it, kissed the head, and licked the entire length. It was already hard, sucking him was just for fun, but I didn't want his first time to be too fast. Yes, even in my head I already knew this was going to be many times. I rose to my feet and removed his shirt and undershirt. I stroked his chest, inspected his nipples and kissed each one. They were unmarked, undamaged, lacking any signs of having been abused. I wondered if he knew the details about Mitch's torture. Maybe ... maybe that is something a guy like Mitch withholds from a friend, sparing him those details.

Now completely naked, too, I maneuver him back to the bed. I stop him at the edge, pull the covers down, baring the sheets so later when we are spent and exhausted by our sex, we can easily cover ourselves. I put him in the center of the bed, we'll start there ... who knows how we'll end up. I knew I certainly didn't. I didn't know him as a lover; did he like to move around, change positions, be athletic, or did he like to stay in a position to completion? I hoped he liked to move, change, and experiment. Mitch did and that was something I loved about sex now, so much more than when I was restrained, helpless to participate or guide the activity. Yes, now was better.

On his back, his arms to the side and his legs slightly spread, I crawled up from the foot of the bed, then with my head down, planting kisses as I went, I slinked like a cat on the prowl. And, I was. I was Cat (the connection just hit me) and I played it out, striding over his body, my tongue and lips touching him as I move along his body. Mitch loves this, the anticipation, the uncertainty of what I will do next. Mitch has come to know me, though. He knows there a dozen or so thing I might do, randomly joined together but never the same way. Hansen ... well, he doesn't have a clue. His eyes are fixed on me like a teenager somehow finding himself with an experience woman.

Reaching his head so we are eye to eye, mouth to mouth, I kiss him ... long and passionately. He gasps into my mouth. I love the feeling, the knowledge, the sense that I have my partner consumed with the initial actions of our lovemaking. Done right, the small things, the anticipation, the uncertainty, heighten the experience. My mound is pressing hard into his already hard and straining cock. I move my breasts, my nipples, into his chest. All the while looking into his eyes. I kiss him again, my tongue becoming part of the game, into his mouth, clashing with each other's.

I pull back, gazing into his eyes, "We're going to make love, first. Later, if you wish, we'll fuck."

I lay on top of him, stretch out along his body, my breast pressed into his chest, my groin pressed into his hard cock. We kissed ... and kissed. It was lovely. It was passionate. It was also tender. Then, I thought he had too much gentle, maybe he wasn't capable of just tender and loving. He rolled us over so he was now on top. He raised himself above me, supported by his arms, kneeling between my legs. He looked down at me, his eyes searching mine until he bent down and kissed me, again. But it was still tender, kissing me, slipping a tongue just inside my mouth, taking my lower lip between his and sucking, then kissing me.

I felt his body shift, his weight moving to one arm as the other moved down between our bodies. I felt him at my pussy, running a finger along the length of my lips, slipping just inside them.

"You are very wet, Cat."

"I know. I want you, Hansen. I want you inside me. And, if it isn't soon, I may need to forget about that gentle, loving experience and just rape you."

He simply smiled. I felt him move his cock to my pussy and move it up and down my slit. My mouth opened into a sigh as he went up and down several times. Then I felt him slip the head of his cock against me, a slight pressure to hold it there, then it parting my lips. Or, did my lips part to take him in? He was just inside my lips, remaining there, unmoving. My eyes closed at the first touch of his cock parted my lips, at the first moan of pleasure and anticipation of what was now for sure to come. No more wondering, hoping, or yearning. No, now I knew I was going to be sharing myself with Mitch's most trusted and best friend. I was definitely going to have the chance to share with him my love, Mitch's love, through my body and being.

Slowly, oh god, so slowly, he inched his way into my wet and eager pussy. It felt that I was getting wetter just in the anticipation, that I had to be leaking around his cock as he barely moved into me. My mouth opened wider, I breathed in with short intakes as another inch of cock entered me. I exhaled with each moan and gasp that escaped my mouth. When I felt his body against mine, that I had all he had to give me, my mouth closed after a final and long, "Ooooooooooooooooo" escaped. Then, a smile, contented and pleased, crossed my face. And, with that I ground my hips up into his.

My eyes flickered open and I saw him supported above me, a smile on his face as he looked down, his cock slowly and smoothly moving in and out. "What?"

"You're beautiful, Cat. The smile on your face, like you are wholly content and comfortable with what is happening."

I smile at him, reach up and kiss him, "I am! I love the feeling of you inside me."

He was studying me. Did he understand me? Did he understand what was happening? "You love to fuck?" He continued gently sliding in and out.

I searched his eyes now. "Maybe ... probably ... yeah, I guess I do. But, no, that's not what I mean. I

love you, YOU, inside me. There's a ... difference. I don't pretend that my body hasn't experienced a lot things, that a ... hmmm ... lot of things were don't to it. But with Mitch, and now you, ... oooooo ... it is different. The connection of what is happening in my pussy, in my head and in my heart, joined together makes the experience explosive ... even when gentle."

His eyes continued to watch me for a moment or two more, but his hips continued as they had been. He seemed to understand, though. A contented smile came over his face as he eased himself down over my body and we fucked missionary to climax.

He rolled to the side, relieving my body from carrying his weight. He stroked me, and I him. Gently, still, as our respective orgasms ebbed and slowly died away. My hand slid down to his soft cock. I wasn't done with him. I want more and I wanted to give him more. But, I knew, understood, that he would need to recharge, recover.

I raised myself to my elbow, "You should retire, Hansen. Mitch did, you should, too." He looked at me and shook his head. I cocked my head, "What?"

"Are you always so talkative, relaxed during sex? Most people I have known are into the act, intense, and focused on the sexual feelings and actions. You don't seem that way."

"I don't know. Maybe because sex was always something so intense before. Now, it is something to enjoy and experience as it is happening. Come to think of it, yeah, maybe I do. I know that Mitch and I will start laughing if something odd happens or something becomes clumsy and awkward. Rather than pretending it didn't happen, or feeling embarrassed, it seems more natural to laugh, giggle, or give him a swat if he goes in the wrong hole. We don't stop, we just recognize that other things are happening, physically and in our brains. It seems that denying that would be denying part of the experience." I swatted his shoulder. "That was for ignoring my comment and changing the subject."

"Mitch has you, it's different."

"He didn't when he retired. He says there is an increase in odds the longer you stay in after a certain time. Get out, Hansen."

"I wouldn't know what to do."

"Come here. We could use the help." I stroked his cock, taking it in my hand. "You already know I like you ... a lot." He smiled at that and sighed at the touch and I felt a change happening already. "You could stay here. Or, if you want, we could build a place by the lake, your own space, but we could still be close. Please think about it."

He pulled me to him and kissed me hard. "Mitch has been after me, too. Okay, I promise, I will think about it."

I smiled wide, kissed him quick, then slid down his body, engulfing his cock into my mouth. It started growing immediately. And, once he was hard, I rolled on top of him and rode him hard. But this time, we were all over the bed, changing positions repeatedly. It was glorious and we both found sleep quickly afterward.

The next morning I woke up early as was becoming my habit to match Mitch. It was slightly disconcerting to wake in the guest room but I quickly remember the previous night and Hansen. I turned to him, watched him sleeping and debated if I should wake him or not. I wanted to get up to get the coffee going, but also wanted to start the day off well for him. I decided to let him sleep ... and start his day off well.

I eased under the covers, finding his soft cock and quickly made it hard with my fingers, tongue, and mouth. I frequently stopped, gauging his breathing, his body motion, and then proceeding.

When he erupted in my mouth, he came awake. At least, he said my name. When I came out from under the covers, he still seemed to be asleep. Maybe even a little deeper now.

I had the coffee brewing and just put some rolls in the oven cooking when Mitch came into the kitchen. Blackie had been following me around the kitchen constantly, not a few feet away the entire time.

"How are things coming here?"

I looked at him suspiciously, but intrigued. He seemed up to something and that often meant fun. "Everything is done. Just waiting for the timer to indicate the rolls can come out of the oven."

"Good." He undid the belt of my robe and slid it off my shoulders. Then he opened his robe, pulled a chair out from the kitchen table, and sat down.

I knelt down in front of him with a smile. I took his already hard cock into my mouth, taking it out, I looked up at him, a question on my face, "But, why did you take my robe off?"

He just pointed behind me. I turned, knowing who was there, he had been there since I came into the kitchen. I smiled, took Mitch back into my mouth, and patted my ass cheek. Within moments, I was sucking Mitch's wonderful cock and being fucked by Blackie. When Hansen walked through the kitchen entryway, Blackie was just pushing his knot into my pussy. The sight of Hansen and receiving the knot at the same moment caused my first orgasm of the day.

During the next days I enjoyed my first, but not last, double penetration by the men who love me, both ways, meaning pussy-mouth and pussy-asshole. Then, my first triple penetration with Blackie; I am straddling Hansen, Blackie was on my back and inside my ass, and I am sucking Mitch. With all that happening, I hear Mitch, "Isn't that the most amazing feeling? Feeling that other cock sliding along yours just in the next chamber?"

I am sad to see Hansen leave, but he insists he must. He has a job that was scheduled. Mitch argues with him to leave the Company like he did. The odds only get worse the older a person gets. Hansen insists he will return. He also insists he will seriously consider retiring, maybe even helping us on the ranch. It is something to hold onto. We have no other choice, though. We each make our decisions, then we have to live with them. Mitch and I tried, desperately. But, Hansen made his choice. Or, maybe we should look at it that he honored his commitments and will then consider our pleas for a change.

A month later and winter is definitely in the rearview mirror and spring coming, even in our valley. But, we still haven't heard from Hansen. Mitch tries to reassure me, that missions don't go on a rigid schedule. Sometimes things happen that completely change schedules and everything becomes a run by the seat-of-your-pants. He is trying to help me, but it isn't working. I can tell by the look on his face, the sadness and concern in his eyes. Then, the worst sign of all, he gets a call on the Sat-Phone. We haven't received anything by the Sat-Phone in what seems like forever. I hate to even have Mitch pick it up. And my fears are right, of course. Of course, now I have to be right! The backup team brought Hansen out and home. But ... Hansen is dead.

I watch Mitch closely after that call. I have wondered if even I mattered as much to him as Hansen did. I even wondered if his mother mattered more. But, this was Mitch. This was the man who had survived awful losses before, suffered personally before. It wasn't long before I realized, accepted,

that this might have a lasting effect on him, but he was okay. At least, as okay as someone can be after such a loss. Considering it was Mitch, that was pretty okay.

One night Mitch is standing in front of the large sliding doors. Spring is definitely coming, but in the mountains, that takes some time to actually take hold. He is quiet and naked. We have just made love, not just we, but the three of us. Mitch watched Blackie and me, he loves that. Then after we finally separated he made us drinks. I saw it on him, again. The tension in the muscles in his back and shoulders.

"What is it, Mitch?"

"We should go see my family."

"You want me to meet your family?" I am puzzled. This is the first he has brought it up, but there is a sense of urgency in his attitude.

"Yes. We have to."

"We have to? Okay. You say when." I was a little bit nervous. This was unlike Mitch. Usually, we talked about these things. This was coming from nowhere.

"Soon, very soon. Damn, this isn't right! I should have been more prepared. I'm not, I didn't plan this right. You deserve better ..." He was upset and I had no idea what he was talking about. Was this all coming back from Hansen somehow?

I am nearly panicked, "Mitch!"

He turns, sees the look on my face, and walks to me. There is something in his eyes, an almost little boy look that has me completely mesmerized and bewildered. Has he EVER walked towards me naked and my eyes didn't immediately at least glance down at his swaying penis? No, but this time the look in his eyes held my undivided attention.

"Tell me, Mitch. Just say it."

He looked at me and exhaled a long breath that I doubt even he realized he had been holding. He looked up at the ceiling, sighed deeply again, then looked down at me, and knelt on one knee in front of me. My heart caught ... suddenly, instantly, nothing else in this house, in the valley, or on this Earth existed ... and all time stopped.

"Cat ... I ... this should be better ..." He breathed, again. "Okay ... Cat, will you please marry me? PLEASE."

MY GOD! I know my eyes opened wide, my mouth dropped open ... and nothing came out. I just stared at him. I could see the look in his eyes change, I could see the panic come into them. He stood up, took a couple steps backwards, bumped hard into the heavy rough wood coffee table and nearly lost his balance. I was following him, though. I didn't know I could move so fast while in a daze. I reached out and grabbed his hand, keeping him from falling. We stood an arm's length apart, just looking at each other. Finally, my voice came to me. But, it wasn't a word or two or three ... it was a squeal, a squeal of delight and soul-filling excitement. Somehow ... who knows, who cares ... I was in his arms, again. My arms around his neck, my legs wrapped around his waist. I was kissing his neck and shoulder and repeating one word, "YES! Yes, yes, yes ... oh my god, YES!"

Before I know it, almost in a daze after being asked, we are in Texas. His family has arranged

everything for a small wedding and reception. They are shocked that we prefer to return to the valley rather than a honeymoon somewhere hot with a beach. I tell them they just haven't seen what a paradise we live in.

After all the fuss of the wedding and reception where I meet all of Mitch's childhood friends, Mitch's mom walks up to me, "Thank you, Cat!"

"Me? Why are you thanking me?"

She pulls me into her, kissing my cheeks, "Just look at him! I haven't seen him this comfortable, relaxed, and happy for ... gosh, it's been since maybe when he was in school. That's why 'thank you'. I never thought he would ever find someone who could live with him, tolerate him, make him happy, AND be happy with him."

I look over to where he is sitting with his sister's two kids, reading them a story, making them laugh with absurd sounds and exclamations. Yes, he was definitely a different, more relaxed man than the one I had first known. His sister has now joined us and our arms are intertwined. "Well, it's been two way, then. I was afraid it was all what he was giving me." I watched him a moment longer, then, "You have to come up and stay for a while. It would be perfect for the kids with the lake, the boat, the horses, and hiking in the mountains." They agreed that they would try.

His brother is teasing. "Mitch, I don't think I heard what your wedding present was to your beautiful wife."

Mitch's wedding present: buying the adjacent ranch. An additional 10 square miles, all range land.

"Very romantic, Mitch! That just sounds like a lot more work."

"It is, but ..." He comes to me and announces that also coming with the sale: Belgian Malinois. Herding dogs. Two of them. Height: 24-26 inches. Weight: 60-65 pounds. Intense best describes the Belgian Malinois. This is a high-energy breed with a need for regular mental and physical stimulation.

That brings a coy smile to me that I try to share only with him ... and, of course, a very deep blush that is impossible to hide.

THE END