



## T is for... (Checklist #20)

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**Category:** Dark Erotica

**Description:** Submitting to her best friend? Torture...

Tara has one rule at Las Palmas, the exclusive club that caters to LA's wealthy and kinky: avoid Nathan at all costs.

He's her colleague. Her best friend.

And a Dom.

For years, they've had an unspoken agreement to ignore each other within the club's walls, keeping their friendship and professional lives separate.

Until the checklist game.

Assigned the letter T, Nathan is ready to walk away the moment he realizes his designated submissive is Tara. He won't risk their friendship—no matter how tempting the idea of putting her on her knees might be.

He expects Tara to feel the same. But she wants to play.

She was already planning to leave Las Palmas—and submission—behind. Submitting to Nathan means risking their friendship outside the club, but she trusts him more than anyone. And that trust means she can indulge in the most extreme items on their list.

But Tara has a secret—the real reason she's walking away. And when Nathan discovers the truth, everything changes.

**Total Pages (Source):** 18

# Page 1

*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

The 3-D rendering spun slowly on the screen, a mess of lines and numbers. Unless you knew what you were looking at.

Nathan tapped the screen and leaned in over the dark-haired woman's shoulder, reading the technical notes attached to the slowly rotating image of what looked like a very fat pen.

"Based off a tattoo pen." Tara put two fingers on the screen and zoomed in. "A tattoo isn't actually how the subcutaneous biosensors would be applied, but calling them 'smart tattoos' and this a tattoo pen makes it easier for the doctors to understand." She looked up over her shoulder at him, her face a familiar half-exasperated expression.

Nathan chuckled, feeling her pain. Doctors were great. Doctors were the ones who actually used the biomedical products they developed.

Doctors also had zero patience with technical information. Hence reducing state-of-the-art medical innovation to "smart tattoo."

But "smart tattoo" did sound cool. Damn near everything Tara's team developed was cool.

Tara Patel, PhD, was smart, driven, witty, a little stubborn, and also his oldest friend.

And he was about to actively ignore her.

Tara hiked her bag up on her shoulder, still holding her tablet with one hand, the

screen tilted so he could see it. For a second, he wondered if he should offer to hold her bag or help her take it off her shoulder and set it on the ground where his own weekend bag waited.

Would that be weird?

Probably.

Tara would set the bag down if she wanted to.

“What type of system is running the data?” he asked, reaching over her shoulder to touch the screen and zoom out once more.

“Not my department.” Tara smiled. “I don’t?—”

The large front doors of Las Palmas opened, a group of three people entering together. A red-haired woman wearing soft feminine clothes that Nathan was fairly sure were stylish entered first, an overnight bag caught in the crook of her elbow. She was laughing and joking with the man who held the door open for her and the brunette who entered two steps behind her.

The brunette wore a trim suit that made Nathan twitch, because she looked like either a lawyer or investor. Both groups of people that Nathan did his best to avoid, though his bosses liked to bring them by his office and make him show off the multicolored hand-drawn system maps that were always his first step during the initial coding.

He flipped his attention back to his best friend, but Tara was watching the redheaded woman.

Nathan had no clue what the expression on her face meant. She didn’t look upset. At least he didn’t think she was upset. It was disconcerting, given how long they’d been

friends, that in this moment he didn't know what she was thinking.

Then again, he hadn't known she was a sexual submissive until several years ago when he'd run into her here at Las Palmas, LA's most exclusive BDSM club.

Nathan's eyes flicked to the doors that led into the club proper, his shoulders tensing. The foyer where they now stood was the transition place between the outside world and Las Palmas. This wasn't the first time they'd stopped here to chat, but it always left him with this itchy feeling that he was walking on the edge of something dangerous.

Tara shook her head once, looking away from the other members who'd pushed through the doors that open off the foyer. "What was I saying?" Once more, she looked up at him, and for a traitorous moment, his brain started to picture things it shouldn't. He stopped, because for fucks sake, he shouldn't think about his best friend like that.

"I think you were going to be snobby about being a product developer rather than a backend systems person," he said, maybe a little too quick.

Tara laughed, and the familiarity of the banter and her laugh made it easier to ignore where they were. "I'm not snobby about it." She turned off the tablet, stuffing it into a side pocket of her bag.

"You're a little snobby."

"Only because I'm better than you." One dark eyebrow arched.

Again, Nathan wrestled to keep his thoughts about his best friend appropriate for her status as his best friend.

“You’re jealous,” he declared, leaning back against the wall.

“Oh, this should be good. Why am I jealous?”

“Because I can sit in a nice air-conditioned office all day and drink tea whenever I want.” With anyone else, he would have said coffee, but Tara was a tea drinker.

Tara huffed. “Low blow, Joyce.”

“You know I’m right, Patel.”

Tara set her bag down, rolling her shoulder a little. It must be heavy. He should have offered to take it.

“Are you still working on that integration?” she asked, interrupting his thoughts.

“Yes.” He grimaced. “At this point, I think we need to bring in an electrician—not an electrical engineer, an electrician—and have him walk the consultant docs through the basics so everyone gets back on the same page.”

“The cardiologists will be insulted.”

“The lead consulting cardiologist refers to himself as a plumber all the time, so I don’t think he’d mind. Now, the product development team.” Nathan mockingly tsked and shook his head, eyeing his product development team lead best friend. “They’re a bunch of prima donnas.”

“Ha! I don’t think so. Though from what you’ve said, you could have better people.”

“You sure you don’t want to jump over and work on cardiac implants?” Nathan could get her hired at his current company in a heartbeat.

Tara shook her head. “No, you know my heart, and more importantly most of my research and experience is in CGMs.”

“I remember that time you disassembled your roommate’s glucose sensor. If only I’d known I was witnessing history in the making.”

She shook her head at his teasing. “If I remember, you tried dissecting the app’s coding.”

“While your roommate tried to edge out of the room.”

“Probably so we wouldn’t mess with her new sensor.”

They shared a smile, this conversation not new, the story one that they’d both shared at various times.

Twenty years ago, they’d been in the same lab section for a bio-systems course in college. That alone might not have led to anything, but about halfway through the semester, they’d realized they lived in the same off-campus apartment building when they walked out of class together, only to park their bikes next to one another outside the apartment ten minutes later.

They quickly became study buddies, declaring one of the handful of study rooms on the ground floor of the apartment building as theirs, and defending it from all other interested parties with prejudice.

Nathan had always wanted to do something that married computer science and biology. Bioinformatic engineering fit the bill.

Tara had originally planned on going into biomedical tissue engineering. He vividly, and with a good amount of fascinated disgust, remembered the first time she’d

explained how to 3D print a human ear.

Then her roommate nearly went into a diabetic coma, thanks to a faulty first-generation continuous glucose monitor that hadn't alerted to her dropping blood sugar. Tara had realized something was wrong and force-fed her M&Ms while calling for help. Nathan had his head out of his apartment door at the sound of running footsteps, jerking back as paramedics with bulky bags jogged past.

Tara's focus changed after that night, leading to, several months later, their attempt to reverse engineer both the hardware and software from her roommate's old sensor.

"Do you realize we've been friends for twenty years?" she asked after a short, easy silence.

He whistled, though he'd just been thinking the same thing. "Yea, I guess we have." They'd met when he was twenty, and he'd just turned forty.

Forty had once seemed so old, and yet here he was, feeling like he was still trying to figure it out.

Tara bent to pick up her bag once more. "We'd better go. I don't want to be late for whatever this meeting is."

They didn't look at each other, the mention of the meeting a little too close to acknowledging where they were, and why they were here.

Once they passed through the foyer into the club proper, they became strangers by choice and necessity.

Nate and Tara had more in common than shared memories and experiences, thanks to the long-standing friendship. More even than the fact that they were both biomedical

engineers could account for.

Nathan and Tara were both serious BDSM players, and they'd never once acknowledged the other's existence in the club.

"I'm working next weekend," Nathan said as he picked up his own bag, carefully not looking at her.

Tara nodded once. "Don't 'work' on the weekend for me." The emphasis on the word work was subtle but there. Nathan wasn't actually working next weekend. This was the code they used to check when the other one planned to be at the club. Saying you were working gave the other person the green light to come.

"I'm not planning to come for...a bit," Tara added.

If she'd been talking about anything else, he would have asked her about that vague statement. As it was, he merely nodded. "Sounds good."

For years they'd managed to make sure they weren't here at the same time.

Tonight was different, and they didn't have a choice about it.

The club overseers had called a mandatory all-member meeting. Nathan had been stressed about seeing Tara at the club since the encrypted email announcement arrived in his in-box, and had hoped to arrive early and avoid seeing her.

Fate had other plans, and they'd met in the parking lot, just steps from the front door.

Tara, in her normal calm, competent way, problem-solved and bypassed any awkwardness by casually walking in and then pulling out her tablet to show him her latest project.



But now the awkwardness was creeping back as they stood there, both holding their bags.

“After-work drinks on Tuesday so you can show me the rest?” he asked in mild desperation.

“Sounds good. I’ll text you on Monday.”

“Monday,” he agreed, hanging back as she headed down the foyer and into the Subs’s Garden.

Even thinking the word “sub” in connection to Tara made him twitch, so Nathan turned, making his way to the Den, which served as the locker room and lounge for the Doms, Masters, and Owners of Las Palmas.

Nathan would avoid even looking at Tara during this all-club meeting, and then he’d leave and never, ever, think about the fact that his best friend was a sexual submissive ever again.

He didn’t know the overseers weren’t going to give him a choice.

Nathan considered himself an easygoing guy, who preferred calm and logical interactions.

Right now, he was neither calm nor thinking logically. He was planning to throw Mistress Faith through a fucking window.

Not that there was a window in the small “tack room,” but he’d find one if needed.

“Nathan—”

“No fucking way.” Nathan shook the envelope he’d been given thirty minutes ago in her face.

The envelope was a dossier on his assigned sub partner for the club’s new, mandatory, “game.” An assignment that had been set by the overseers, who included Mistress Faith.

“Anyone but her,” he snapped.

Mistress Faith raised a brow. “I’m insulted on Tara’s behalf.”

Hearing her name sent a fresh jolt of...something...through Nathan.

“Give me a different partner,” he demanded, once more shaking the envelope. Inside was copy of Tara’s BDSM checklist. A complete accounting of every kinky, toy, and scenario she liked, wanted to try, or had as a hard limit.

Nathan’s heart had stopped—and luckily restarted without the assistance of any implantable cardiac device—when he saw who’d they’d assigned to be his submissive.

Tara.

They expected him to scene with Tara. To dominate her. Touch her. Use her.

His best friend of twenty years.

Nathan willed his mind blank, refusing to picture her as a sub, let alone his sub.

“No,” Mistress Faith said, arms crossed casually over her stomach. She looked every inch the Domme, and was unmoved by his panic.

“She’s my best friend .”

“Then you’ll do well because she trusts you. Some of the other assigned groupings are going to struggle with the issue of trust.”

“She trusts me to not... Do this... To her.” He waved the envelope wildly around the tack room.

The all-club meeting—which turned out to be a mild scolding followed by the announcement of the checklist game—had taken place in the large barn which was now called the Conclave. Calling it a barn implied worn wood and straw, but like everything at Las Palmas, the Conclave was elegant and refined. Horse stalls still lined one side of the main floor. Above them, a loft with ample seating looked down over the open space, which was the only indoor space large enough to hold everyone.

Nathan had made sure he was seated in the loft during the meeting so he wouldn’t accidentally catch sight of Tara, who would have been kneeling with the other subs on the ground floor.

The walls of the tack room where he and Mistress Faith stood were lined with equipment—bridles, crops, and whips all perfectly normal items to have in a barn tack room, except the bridles were sized for people.

“You’re making a decision for her,” Mistress Faith said. “If you’re truly her friend, you’ll tell her that you’re her partner.” The older woman raised her brows. “Unless you object to scening with her.”

“Of course I object. She’s my?—”

“Best friend. Yes, you’ve said that. Tell me, why do you object.”

He swallowed the words because she's my best friend! since that clearly wasn't getting him anywhere. "She's important to me. She's one of the only..."

He rocked back on his heels.

"Oh no, now I'm curious. What were you going to say?"

Nathan gritted his teeth. "She's one of the only people in the world I really care about."

Mistress Faith raised a brow. "Then it seems all the more important that you discuss this with her, and not make a decision for her."

Nathan shook his head.

"You knew she was a member, yes?"

"I did, but we don't talk about it. We don't come on the same weekends, not since we first saw each other and realized."

Mistress Faith arched a brow. "Tell me that you've never imagined having Tara submit to you."

"No, never," he insisted.

"Interesting. I believe you. You truly don't find her attractive, either sexually, as a submissive, or both."

"What? No! That's not what I said."

"Isn't it?"

“No.”

“Then you’re saying that you don’t actually respect or value submissives?” There was a cold warning note in Mistress Faith’s voice.

“What?! No! No.” He knew he was getting railroaded, but shit if he could seem to course correct.

“Is there some latent misogyny at play, Mr. Joyce? A woman who submits to you isn’t worthy of being your friend?”

Nathan stared at her, horrified at her words, and baffled how this conversation had gone so terribly wrong.

“I know submission is a gift.” He spoke slowly to make sure he didn’t misspeak. “I respect the hell out of anyone who’s able to give that kind of trust.”

“Ah, you don’t trust easily, do you?”

“No, I guess I don’t.”

“But you trust her. Value her.”

“Absolutely.”

“And you don’t want to see her naked.”

Nathan hesitated, only a fraction of a moment, before saying, “No, I don’t.”

Mistress Faith caught the pause, her brow arching.

“Nathan.”

“What?” he snapped. Great, now he sounded like a sulky teenager.

“If this is something you truly refuse to do, we provided options for you.”

Anyone who didn’t play the game had to give up their membership. He opened his mouth to do exactly that. He’d walk away rather than risk the friendship with Tara.

“But I want you to imagine what Tara will say?—”

She’d say she was glad their twenty-year friendship hadn’t exploded because the Las Palmas overseers were on a kink power trip.

“—when you tell her that you gave up your membership to the club without even talking to her about why. How will she feel? Relieved? Or insulted that you made a decision without consulting her?”

Nathan’s stomach knotted.

“Upset that you didn’t talk to her? Or maybe guilty because she’ll know you gave up something you need for her? Without talking to her.”

Nathan blinked, then scrubbed his face with his hand. “Shit.”

“You might,” she agreed mildly.

Nathan snarled at her, anger and panic still swirling through him. Tara mattered to him. He’d protect their friendship in any way he could.

But Mistress Faith was right. Tara wouldn’t want him to make any decision that

involved her—even tangentially—without first consulting her.

“Enjoy, Nathan.” With that, Mistress Faith exited, leaving Nathan alone in a room full of bondage and impact equipment, as a sense of dread slowly settled over him.

## Page 2

*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

Tara broke the unspoken rule of the Subs' Garden and pulled out her tablet. She shoved a chair into a dark corner of the elegant locker room and sat, shoulders hunching as she furtively tapped the screen. Something Nathan had said gave her an idea and she wanted to take notes before she forgot.

There were no formal rules preventing her from treating the subs-only space as a coffee joint and settling in to do some work. Still, she was breaking a social norm, and even knowing that, she didn't stop until she'd taken her notes. Normally she was all for the unspoken rule. Disconnecting from the rest of the world was a huge part of why she spent an almost obscene amount of money every month to be a member.

But talking to Nathan always sparked ideas.

She was tempted to keep her work tablet and sneak in some reading—she always had a list of journal articles on her to-read list. Instead, she put the work tablet away, pulling out the small e-reader she kept in her locker. Journal articles wouldn't hold her attention in this environment. They were always dry and technical, and tonight odd snippets of conversation about what the “game” and what was on the club's checklist would easily distract her.

Tara hesitated, e-reader in hand.

Normally, reading “smut” was part of her scene prep. She'd sit in the Subs's Garden and read, her body warming, skin starting to tingle as she enjoyed unrealistic but wonderful stories about people falling into bed, then into lust, and sometimes into love. All while having incredible, kinky sex.



Tara almost never left the Subs's Garden without priming her own pump. Even if she knew—thanks to pre-scene negotiations—that there wasn't going to be a sexual element to her submission, she made sure she was aroused.

Arousal made submission easier, so she got herself hot and bothered even if she knew her scene for the night wasn't going to have a sexual element, resulting in self-inflicted orgasm denial.

Leaving a scene frustrated and needy rather than blissed out from orgasms was disappointing, but she had a system in place to deal with it—a wearable G-spot and clit vibrator she'd insert before getting dressed in her street clothes. Controlled from her phone, she'd turn it on in the car and enjoy the drive home. Once in the safety of her apartment, she'd touch herself as she replayed the weekend's activity, and finally have the massive orgasm that would hold her for the next two weeks until it was her turn at Las Palmas again.

Her turn.

Tara looked around the Subs's Garden again.

The Subs' Garden was a suite of rooms. Normally the space felt almost empty, but since there'd been an all-club meeting, everyone was here. All around her the other subs were chatting and prepping. Some were sitting silently, looking anxious as they waited to be called to a playroom or courtyard by their new game partner.

She wondered which one of these people was going to be Nathan's partner.

Tara winced, tucking her e-reader back into her locker before going to the long counter and dropping onto a padded stool.

Thinking about Nathan was a bad idea. She was rather proud of how she'd handled

running into him. It wasn't the first time they'd huddled against a wall to talk shop, though usually it was a hotel hallway at some conference or other.

Tara took a comb from the elegant box on the long counter and brushed through her hair. It looked okay, but wasn't glossy and lush. She needed to do more than just wash it with a shampoo bar, but she'd never been good about a hair care routine the way her sister was.

Soon that would change.

Everything about the way she took care of herself would change.

She pulled her hair into a long ponytail at the back of her head, gaze skimming the reflection of the room and people around her.

This would change too.

This was the last weekend she'd be here.

Maybe this checklist game was a good transition into what came next. A remarkable end.

Tara rubbed lotion into her forearms, elbows, and neck, her focus on what the future might look like. Anxiety and joy in equal measure made her heart race.

She was lotioning her legs, more for something to do than any devotion to skin care, when the intercom in the ceiling clicked on.

"Sub Tara to the Iron Court. Wear a robe."

Tara stilled, anticipation and a touch of nerves sliding through her. Now she was

second-guessing her decision not to read some kinky romance. It was harder for her to submit when not aroused. But surely her “partner” would want to do some scene negotiation and maybe setup prep. Hopefully during prep she could come back to the Subs’s Garden and get herself properly ready.

The fact that she’d been instructed to wear a robe strengthened the idea that this was just going to be a “nice to meet you, what are you into” conversation and maybe scene negotiation, not jumping straight into anything

Tara stood, tugging at her club attire, before heading for her locker and grabbing a knee-length, sapphire-blue robe she usually wore for meals. The blue looked good with her complexion, but the soft clingy microfiber wasn’t exactly sexy the way shiny satin was.

In those moments, her mood shifted from pensive to anticipatory.

Tara checked her reflection one more time. She was smiling. The confusion and consternation she’d felt during the announcement had been replaced by excitement. Tonight felt right, this game the perfect way to end her time at Las Palmas.

Tara stepped out into the night, headed to meet the partner who would dominate her.

Tara shivered a little as she stepped into the Iron Court. Each of the three “courts” referred to a Spanish-style square building with an open-air courtyard in the middle. In the Iron Court, the garden didn’t have plants. Instead, the covered hallway lined the four sides of a haunting, statuary-filled space. Each of the doors that opened off the hallway led to a playroom.

These playrooms were designed for the darker and more intense scenes, many of them resembling medieval dungeons rather than elegant bedrooms.

Tara's excitement didn't dissipate, but it was tempered by caution. The point of the game was to push people to try new things. Both new partners and new kinks.

Where the other two courtyards had greenery and seating areas, here there were heavy concrete statues depicting moments from BDSM play.

Looking around, she wondered what letter she'd been assigned. She knew at least one of the playrooms had a cage in it, so maybe C for cage. She glanced around the eerie garden.

The small stage in the center of the courtyard would be perfect for some sort of auction scene role-play—though she didn't think “auction” was actually on the club's checklist. She just liked that trope in books.

Tara stopped beside the stone form of a naked woman on her knees, head bent, legs spread. She glanced around, a delicious shiver of fear working its way down her back.

A shadow moved, and for one fanciful moment she thought a statue had come to life.

The man has his back to her, his hair dark but painted silver by the moonlight. He wore classic Dom leathers—leather pants and a leather vest. The vest revealed thick arms, with enough muscle on his shoulders and upper arms to create curved contours. His skin was pale in the moonlight, almost glowing. This was a man who kept his shirt on, even during the long southland summers.

Tara walked forward, her slippers nearly silent on the hard-packed path between the statues.

Ten feet, five. She slowed, scuffing her foot a little to make sure he knew she was there.

The man flinched, his shoulders jerking.

But he didn't turn around.

Tara frowned at his back. Was this part of their assignment? She tried to remember items from the checklist that restricted sight. There was "blindfold" of course...

The moment stretched, silent and tense. Tara fingered her robe, wondering if he was waiting for her to speak, and if he was, what he expected her to say.

She considered and discarded several comments, but did rub the sole of her shoe on the ground once more, in case he didn't actually know she was there and hadn't heard her approach.

With an audible exhale, the man turned to face her.

Tara's reality exploded as two worlds that she'd kept distinctly separate collided, the shock wave from that collision rocking her back on her heels.

Nathan.

Nathan.

He glanced at her for only a moment, and whatever he saw on her face made him wince and look away. He tucked his hands into his pockets and for a wavering moment, she didn't see adult Nathan but college-aged Nathan, who'd stand up, hunch his shoulders, and shove his hands in his pockets whenever he was stuck on something and needed to think.

Nathan was here, waiting for her...because he'd been the one to summon her.

“You’re my checklist partner,” she said slowly.

“Yes.” He still wasn’t looking at her.

“That’s...” Her brain was stuttering, her heart thumping hard inside the cage of her ribs. “No.”

He grinned, face still turned away. “That’s what I said.” The smile faded.

Years of avoiding being at the club at the same time, and now they’d been assigned to work together.

Work together?

No, that language was her brain frantically trying to make sense of this. They weren’t assigned to “work together.”

They were scene partners.

He was supposed to dominate her. Nathan. Her best friend. As her Dom.

The thought stopped the air in Tara’s lungs.

“Mistress Faith wouldn’t budge,” Nathan said, shoulders hunching even more. “I tried. But don’t worry, I’m going to resign my membership.”

That snapped her out of the shock paralysis.

“No, you’re not,” she said instantly.

Finally, Nathan looked at her. For just a moment, his gaze slid down her body. It was

a quick glance, and if she hadn't been watching him she would have missed it.

But she felt that look down to her toes, which curled inside her slippers.

"You're not leaving Las Palmas," she rushed out.

He huffed once, the sound almost amusement. "Faith said you'd be pissed if I quit without telling you."

"You were going to quit without telling me?"

"I'm mildly annoyed that Faith was right." He tried for a self-deprecating laugh but it sounded strained.

"She was." Tara took a moment, sorting through her thoughts. "I assume you informed her it would be professionally awkward and generally inappropriate for us to scene?"

"I should have phrased it that way." He frowned in thought.

"What did you say?"

"I said you were my best friend."

Tara's heart swelled as she looked at the man she'd known half her life. There had been periods when they weren't close, work and life meaning they only saw one another at conferences, exchanging a few emails in the times in between, but time and again they found one another.

"We should get a drink." She felt like she needed a drink, which was rare for her.

His relieved exhale made her smile. “Yes. Let’s. I said meet here because I wanted privacy, but I could use a drink.” Nathan stepped up beside her and she turned to head back the way she’d come. Nathan’s hand pressed gently against the small of her back as they started walking.

Tara blinked in surprise at the touch. Nathan always held doors open for her—a gentlemanly habit that had nothing to do with her specifically. Usually, he ended up holding the door for dozens of people in his silent, polite way.

In twenty years, he’d never put a hand on her back to guide her.

Tara must have stiffened as she walked by his side through the courtyard, because after a dozen steps, Nathan cursed and dropped his hand.

“Sorry. Habit.”

It wasn’t his habit in the outside vanilla world. That meant it was his habit here.

If she wanted to extrapolate further, it was one of his Dom habits.

Meaning, that for a moment, he’d treated her the way he would a sub.

Tara looked at him from the corner of her eye, studying his face in the moonlight. She’d never seen him by moonlight. On the occasions they were outside after dark, they were usually in a large city and his face was lit by streetlamps, not the moon.

The library—which held no books on its shelves but rather a collection of antique sex toys—also housed the bar and a good amount of seating. It was crowded tonight, which made sense, given that every member was here.

“Your usual?” Nathan asked.



She hesitated, but one drink would be okay. She nodded. “I’ll find us seats.”

They’d had this exact conversation a dozen times over the years.

“I’ll get the drinks. Your usual?”

“Yes. I’ll find us seats.”

Usually, it took place in a crowded hotel bar during a conference. They divided duties logically—his size allowed him to push through crowds and belly up to the bar easier than she could, and Tara had no problem asking people for spare chairs or making them shift around to create space.

Though the library was crowded, she didn’t have to resort to seating negotiations, snagging a two-seater couch not far from the door. The large armchair to the right of the couch was currently occupied by a Dom, his sub kneeling on a cushion by his feet as they conversed quietly.

What if Nathan walked over here and ordered her to kneel in front of him?

Tara’s stomach muscles tightened, and she breathed through it.

Objectively, she was very aware that Nathan was good-looking, if not exactly handsome in the traditional sense. His sharp intelligence and quick smile were incredibly attractive. At least to her. Not that she was actively attracted to him. It was more that she was aware what his best features and qualities were.

Once... Once she’d had a massive crush on him, but that was back in college. She hadn’t dated at all in high school, too focused on getting the grades necessary to make it to college. Nathan had been a revelation of sorts—a little awkward back then but able to easily make friends and navigate any social interaction. Smart but not

competitive when it came to intelligence. Good-looking but not arrogant.

The first semester they knew one another, she'd dreamed of more.

Imagined them slowly starting to date.

Going to geographically adjacent, if not the same, grad school.

Getting married a few years later, when their well-paying jobs meant they'd have enough money to pay for their own wedding.

That had been a fantasy, born of her love for romantic movies and books.

They became friends, and she'd assumed it would turn in to more, until the night she caught him having sex with another girl. Kinky sex, with a girl he'd had blindfolded and tied down.

That had shocked her, and for a month she hadn't exactly avoided him, but she hadn't sought out his company. But the sight of him forcing the rope-wrapped woman to her knees, opening her mouth with his fingers, and then sliding his cock in, had more than shocked her. It had stayed with her. A seed planted that would take years to grow.

And in the meantime, she and Nathan had gone back to being friends, her crush smothered by the shock of what she'd seen, and the deep certainty that he wanted something she didn't have.

Back then, she'd decided that their friendship was far better than the fantasy relationship.

Nathan appeared with a highball glass in one hand, a bottle of hard cider in the other.

He passed her the glass. “They looked at me like I’d punched a kitten.”

She laughed at his disgruntled look, accepting the kalimotxo. Equal parts Coke and dry red wine, it was like a carbonated sangria, and had been her drink of choice since college.

“You like sweet drinks too.” She pointed at the cider.

“Yes, but wine snobs don’t care about mine.”

“Did you tell them to use a cheap, dry red?”

“I did. If possible, she was more offended at the idea of cheap wine than at mixing it with pop.”

She always thought it was cute when he said the word “pop” rather than “soda.”

They sipped in silence for a few minutes, and if there was a thread of tension in their normally companionable quiet, she ignored it.

What she couldn’t seem to ignore was the memory of his hand on her back, or the way his gaze had skimmed down her body.

A year from now she wouldn’t be sitting in a bar with him—not here, not at a conference, not a local bar for after-work drinks. She’d wrestled with that, with understanding everything she’d lose, thanks to the choice she was making, but what she stood to gain outweighed the loss. She hoped not to lose her friendship with Nathan, but from everything she’d read, once she did this, all the relationships in her life would change.

Tara sat up, thoughts snapping and flowing as she pulled apart and reassembled a

shocking idea.

“I know that look. Do we need a whiteboard?” Nathan looked around, as if he’d suddenly spot a whiteboard and dry-erase markers hiding in a corner of the sex club’s library/bar.

“They assigned us as partners for the game,” Tara stated.

Nathan’s shoulders tightened. “Yes. Like I said, I’ll?—”

“No, you won’t, because I’m resigning.”

Nathan leaned toward her, and his bulk seemed to loom over her. “Absolutely not, Tara.”

She had to swallow down her visceral reaction to both his physical nearness and the deep-voiced order. That was proof that her shocking idea was actually a good one.

“I was already planning to resign,” she explained. “It has nothing to do with the game.”

Slowly, Nathan retreated to his end of the couch, watching her carefully. “Do the overseers know?”

“No. I haven’t told them yet, but was planning to.” She had an entire plan in place, and coordinated both her life and work to ensure maximum success.

“Wait, wait. Why are you leaving? Are you not...into it...anymore?”

Tara’s cheeks felt hot, but her complexion usually didn’t show a blush, and with the low lighting, she hoped he wouldn’t be able to tell as long as she held her expression

still.

“No. But I have plans that will make coming here, even twice a month, impossible.”

Nathan was frowning again. “Is it a new job? I thought your current project was at least a five-year commitment.”

“It is. It will probably be closer to ten.”

“Wait, are they moving your lab overseas?”

“No, no. I would have told you if something was happening at work. This isn’t about work.”

He opened his mouth, and she shook her head. Just once, but his lips closed and he nodded. She wasn’t ready to talk about her plans with anyone aside from the medical team. Not yet.

And Nathan...

She had no idea how to tell him. Oddly, his opinion of her plan was one of the most important to her. Until she found the precise right words to explain it, she didn’t want to.

But she was also hoping he’d help her.

Never, in even her wildest imaginings, had she pictured asking him for help while in Las Palmas.

That brought her back to the wild idea she’d had only moments ago.

“Like I said, I was already planning to resign. Problem solved.”

He nodded, but didn’t look relieved.

Her stomach fluttered, the wild thought she’d had only moments ago seeming like more and more of a good idea the longer she sat here, and the more she drank.

Tara sucked an ice cube out of her glass, crunching it between her teeth as she worked through what she was about to say one more time. Nathan was attentively watching her, and she could feel his regard as if it were a physical thing. This should have been it, the end of their conversation—the problem of their game assignment solved by her impending departure.

But neither of them moved, and Nathan’s expression turned expectant.

Beneath her robe, her nipples were hard in the fetish lingerie.

Tara drank the rest of her kalimotxo in one go. Liquid courage.

Intellectually she knew it would take far longer than thirty seconds for alcohol to affect her enough to impair her decision-making skills or lower her inhibitions. But she could pretend, and later blame it on the half glass of red wine. Fortified by the courage placebo, she turned to face Nathan.

“I resign now, and we ignore the assignment. Or...”

Tara met and held his slightly widened gaze with her own.

“Or we do it. We play the game.”

## Page 3

*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

Nathan waited, holding himself so still and tight that his muscles started to hurt. Tara was making a joke, so really, he should force a fake laugh, but he couldn't.

The best he could do was hold perfectly still and try not to show his reaction to her words.

She was his best friend. His oldest friend.

He repeated those phrases, using them to create a shield that held back the fantasy trying to take shape in the dark corners of his mind.

“Nathan, did you hear me?”

“Yes.” He'd been holding his breath too, so the word escaped on a heavy exhale. “You almost had me going there for a minute.” Now, he did manage to fake a laugh.

“I'm not joking.” Tara's gaze slid away from his, her shoulders rounding. “Well, I wasn't. But based on your reaction?—”

Nathan moved before he thought better of it. He leaned over and grasped her wrist. Not her shoulder, which would have been much more impersonal, but her wrist.

Capturing, manacling, her with his hand.

He only ever touched subs like this.

Tara sucked in air, not looking at him.

“What do you mean you weren’t joking?” he demanded.

“It’s perfectly fine if you’re not interested?—”

“Tara.”

She stilled, her gaze on the glass she held in her free hand.

“Tara look at me.”

She turned, gaze rising to his face.

She obeyed .

Shit. And fuck yes .

“Were you serious?” he asked quietly.

“I was.” Tara spoke with a calm tone that belied her earth-shaking proposal.

“You understand how the game is meant to be played, right? We wouldn’t just be discussing our letter. We’re expected to scene together. Do the things on our list.”

Tara’s brow arched in a look he knew well. It was her “are you stupid or do you think I’m stupid?” look.

“Yes, Nathan, I understand.”

He sat back, methodically working through his reaction.

Tara tugged the wrist he still held. He hadn’t even realized he hadn’t let go.



And he didn't want to let go now.

So he didn't.

Nathan tightened his grip, just briefly. She stopped trying to pull away.

"Why?" he asked. "Why would you want to..." That statement led somewhere he shouldn't go, so he backtracked. "Is it because you really want to play the game?"

He was her only option of partner.

Tara shook her head. "No. Obviously the game is a factor, because it pushed us to be together when we normally avoid one another here. But if I didn't want to play the game with you, I wouldn't. As I said, I'm not going to be a member starting next week."

Nathan stared at her, a slimy dread filling him. "Are you sick?"

Tara's eyes widened, and she shook her head. Before she could speak, he cut in.

"If you are, just tell me what it is. I'll invent something. To fix it."

"Nathan, take a breath. I'm not sick. I'm not dying. I'm just planning to make a change in my life."

He swallowed, willing down the anxiety that her words had raised. She'd said work was okay, but maybe she was taking a pay cut and going into academia?

The need to know was riding him hard, but she'd given him that look that said she didn't want to discuss it further, and he would respect that. Even if curiosity was killing him.

“You’re sure you’re okay?” He rubbed the inside of her wrist with his thumb in a habitual comforting gesture he used with subs before and after applying cuffs.

It was terrifying that it didn’t feel weird to touch her this way.

Her breathing was uneven as she watched the small movement of his thumb. “I wish I could say nothing will change for us, but I know better. And I try not to lie to you.”

Slowly, Nathan released her wrist. He trailed his fingertips over her palm, eliciting a slow inhale as a reaction, before lacing their fingers together.

Tara gripped him tight, as if she were drowning and he were a rope.

His gaze flew up to hers, his heart hammering with panic. He didn’t know why she was holding on so tight, but if she needed him, he’d be there.

Tara showed no outward signs of distress, her head turned slightly away from him, her gaze focused on nothing in particular. Yet her hand still gripped his as if she’d fly apart if he let go.

“Tara.”

“Hmm?”

“Come here.” He tried to make it an invitation, not a command, but wasn’t entirely successful.

It would be easy to blame the location, say being in the club made him issue commands rather than requests, but it was more than that.

It was Tara.

Something was wrong. Something was causing her distress. And every molecule in his body wanted to wrap her up and hold her. To make her feel safe but also do things to her that would erase the rest of the world from her consciousness, at least for a little while.

Tara scooted toward him, still not looking at him. When her hip touched his knee, he gripped her waist, easing her up onto his lap.

She gasped in surprise, grabbing his forearms and holding tight.

Her body was soft and pliant under the robe. Possibly naked.

Was he really about to see his best friend naked?

Maybe. If they both threw all sense into the trash and went ahead with the game.

Did he want to?

Yes. He did.

And as she settled on his lap, Nathan slowly brought down the walls he'd mentally erected around Tara. The walls that kept her in a neatly labeled "friend" category.

Once, he'd let himself daydream about asking her out, but he'd been sure, so damned sure, that they wouldn't be sexually compatible. And then their growing friendship had become a relationship he wanted to protect at all costs.

If he'd known when he was twenty that she was not only smart, funny, strong, and gorgeous, but also kinky...

College would have been a lot different.

His entire life would be different.

When he learned she was a sub, he'd mourned what could have been.

Tara couldn't believe she was perched on Nathan's lap.

She'd had a bad minute there when he laughed, almost dying of embarrassment when she thought he was rejecting her proposal. Now seated with her back to his front, she had a moment of privacy, and used it to squeeze her eyes closed and grimace.

"You really want to do this?" Nathan murmured from right behind her. He felt deliciously warm where she was touching him—backs of her thighs, where his hands still rested on her waist.

"I want to at least discuss it." She was well aware that she was now backtracking, hedging her bets.

"Facing me, or facing away?" Given how close they were to one another, his voice was quiet, not a whisper but intimate, thanks to the lowered volume.

If she sat facing him, would she still sit on his lap? Maybe with her legs spread over his?

Her pussy clenched at the thought, the arousal shocking in its ferocity, given it was prompted by such a benign idea. Then again, it wasn't just the mental image of her thighs spread open for him that she was reacting to. His thumbs were sweeping little half circles along her sides, the touch firm enough to avoid being ticklish.

But maybe if she said she wanted to talk while facing him, he'd slide her off his lap, back onto the couch.

“Facing away,” she murmured, not wanting to lose the contact.

“Okay, slide back.”

Gingerly, Tara scooted her butt half an inch, her satin robe making it easy to slide on his leather-clad thighs.

Nathan huffed out a soft laugh, his fingers tightened, and he jerked her back. She yelped in surprise as her ass nestled against his crotch, her back smacking against his chest.

She felt his warm breath on the side of her head and cheek. Her hands tightened on his forearms.

They were both wearing clothes, and yet this felt more intimate than being naked with someone else.

More intimate, and more arousing. Her nipples tightened into diamond-hard points, and her sex pulsed in time with her heartbeat. She wanted to turn her head and kiss him. Wanted to feel his hand at her throat, and his body weighing her down. She wanted this man who knew her intimately to now touch her intimately.

The arousal that spread through her was like a wildfire—hot, fast, and destructive.

This was too much too fast.

She leaned forward, putting distance between her back and his chest, shocked and worried at the strength of her reaction.

His hands fell away, leaving cold spots on her hips from the loss of heat.

“Tara,” he sighed. “You can’t even bring yourself to sit on my lap. This won’t work if we can’t touch?—”

“Wait, just... I need a second. And that’s not what’s happening.” She took several deep breaths, until her brain no longer felt like it was murky with arousal.

Facing away was the wrong choice. She needed to be looking at him to have this conversation.

Gripping the bottom of her robe closed with one hand, she climbed off his lap. Nathan let out another sigh, staring down at his legs.

Tara nudged his ankle with her toe and he looked up, his brows rising as she slid onto his lap once more.

This time, she sat side-on, her butt nestled in the seam of his slightly spread legs, her back against the arm of the couch.

The new position meant he wasn’t taking her weight directly and entirely on his thighs. She was just under average height, but just over a “healthy” weight. Her detailed explanation about why BMI was a flawed measurement had only made the nurse at her doctor’s office sigh.

Nathan slid one hand between her body and the arm of the couch, pressing his palm against her lower back. “I don’t want you to hurt your back.”

She blinked, touched that he’d thought about it and surprised he remembered her back issues. Two years ago, she’d been so deep in a project that she spent seventy hours a week, for weeks in a row, hunched over a bench in her wet lab. She’d gone home only to sleep and eat, and the only exercise she got was walking to and from her car.

Her body objected to the schedule and lack of activity, with prejudice.

The back spasm had lasted ten days, and had been some of the most excruciating pain she'd ever experienced. She'd talked to Nathan every other day while she lay on the hardwood floor in her bedroom. He explained where and how he was stuck on his own work, the technical aspects of their problem-solving discussions helping to distract her.

"Thank you," she murmured.

"You're welcome." His hand was big and warm, and his thumb started to knead a muscle in her lower back.

Tara groaned, letting her head tip so she was looking at the ceiling.

"That's a dangerous noise to make."

Her head snapped up. Nathan was looking at her...mouth? She pressed her lips together, and his nostrils flared. He was looking at her mouth.

"Are you attracted to me?" Tara asked bluntly.

Nathan's lips twitched, as he was more than used to how direct she could be. "You know sexual attraction isn't necessary for BDSM."

"I'm well aware. Trust is what's critical." He'd dodged the question, but the way he was looking at her was an answer.

"And I trust you." His words sounded like a confession, as if it was something more intimate than trust he was admitting.

But maybe trust was the pinnacle. Broken trust could destroy love, but falling out of love didn't necessarily breed distrust.

"I trust you, too," she said.

"That's what I'm scared of losing."

That was a sobering thought, and she tensed, starting to climb off his lap before she'd fully processed his words. Her instincts were working faster than her internal monologue, and her instincts valued her relationship with Nathan more than...

More than what?

Why had she proposed playing the checklist game as assigned, when the logical course of action was to refuse?

Because you've always wondered what could have been.

And soon you're not going to have the time or energy to explore what-ifs.

Tara forced herself to relax, her tight muscles going soft, her weight settling on his thighs and against the arm of the couch.

Nathan's free hand, the one not supporting and massaging her lower back, settled on her bare knee.

Tara's legs were stretched out, her toes braced against the other arm of the couch, a slight bend in her knees, the soft material of her robe clinging to her legs enough that she wasn't too exposed.

His hand felt hot and strong against her knee, and Tara suppressed a moan.



Then his thumb tucked under the edge of the fabric, flicking it up. The bottom of the right side of her robe slithered to the side, exposing her right leg all the way to the hip.

His hand slid halfway up the newly exposed flesh. Tara held her breath, watching his hand, her whole body warm and tingling with anticipation.

“To answer your question,” Nathan said mildly. “Yes. I’ve always thought you were gorgeous.”

## Page 4

*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

“Always?” If that was true, she couldn’t decide if she wanted to kiss him or shake him.

His head cocked at her skeptical question, and something changed. She wasn’t sure how she knew, but it was as if the air got heavy and close. Physically the shift in his mood, his bearing, was visible only in small things—the slight angle changes of his brows and a tightening of the skin around his eyes and mouth.

Nathan sat forward, his back no longer making contact with the couch. His hand tightened on her thigh, and she stared down at where his fingers slightly indented her flesh.

“Tara, are you calling me a liar? Think very hard before you answer.” His voice was low and dark with warning, the threat of punishment implicit.

It had been years since she’d let herself think about this aspect of Nathan. Not Nathan her best friend but Master Nathan—sexually dominant and strict.

As her mind reeled, her body reacted to his dominance and the sweet promise of punishment. Her skin was hot and tight one second, pebbled with goose bumps the next.

He’d barely moved, and his words weren’t that shocking—the threat implicit not explicit. And yet she’d reacted as if he’d put one hand around her throat, the other on her pussy, and warned her to be a good girl. Until this moment with Nathan, the memory of a Dom doing exactly that had been a go-to memory for masturbating.

“Nathan,” she breathed, gaze searching his face. “Do you... Have you always?”

Some of the heat melted from his gaze and she mourned the loss. “Have I always thought you were gorgeous? Yes.”

“You can think something is objectively attractive, and still not be attracted to it.”

Nathan’s brows rose. “You’re not a piece of art I was admiring.”

“I am absolutely a work of art.”

He grinned, eyes bright. “Yes, you are. But to answer your question, again, yes. I’ve always thought you were good-looking and been attracted to you.”

“You never said anything.”

His head cocked to the side. “I wasn’t going to risk losing my best friend, especially when I don’t know if you were interested in me.”

Don’t. Present tense.

Shame heated her cheeks, because while Nathan had said he found her attractive, she hadn’t reciprocated. He didn’t know—because she’d never told him—what she did in the second year of their friendship.

“One of the reasons I introduced myself to you that day was because I thought you were cute,” she admitted. “Not just because we had a class together.”

He looked slightly alarmed. “Wait, were you hitting on me? I don’t...I mean, I was exceptionally stupid at twenty, but I think I’d remember if you hit on me.”

“No, I didn’t. I thought you were cute, and that made me nervous, and I was pissed at myself for being nervous, so I started the conversation instead of waiting and hoping you would.”

“Ah, that sounds like my Tara.”

The word “my” hit her like a punch in the stomach, but she ignored it. For now.

“I refused to let some frat boy—” she started.

“I wasn’t in a frat.” His lips twitched in an almost smile.

“—intimidate me. You seemed smart enough.”

“Thanks?”

“So, I introduced myself, and made sure we became friends,” she finished.

“Now hold on. I was the one who took us from classmates to friends. When I printed your paper and then ran across campus to turn it in. Before that, we were just people in the same class. After that, we were trauma bonded.”

It was Tara’s turn to laugh. “Trauma bonded?”

“Am I wrong?”

“No, that class was awful, and I would have failed without your help and sprinting abilities. I can’t believe the professor expected a hard copy.”

She’d been sick with the stomach flu, homesick since it was her first time being ill without family to care for her, and when she went to print her paper, her printer

refused to connect.

Her roommate hadn't been home, nor her friend next door. She'd banged on the off-campus RA's door, desperate, but she too hadn't been home. Near sobbing, Tara stumbled down the long hall and around the corner to Nathan's apartment.

He'd listened wide-eyed to her panicked confession that she was going to miss the deadline for the paper. She hadn't even gotten to the point of asking for help before he told her to run back to her room and email him the paper.

She had, and then stumbled back down the hall, headed to his room so she could pick up the printout. She'd had no idea how she'd magically get the hard copy turned in, since she didn't have the energy to walk or bike the half mile to campus, let alone get there in the fifteen minutes left before the deadline. She'd exited her room in time to see him disappear as he slammed through the stairwell door at a run.

"I thanked you for that, right?" she said, smiling at the memory.

"Multiple times. And you carried me through that one unit in organic chemistry." He grimaced, and she laughed.

A companionable silence fell.

Then Nathan's thumb swiped over the skin at the top of her thigh. She'd been ignoring that he was touching her bare leg, the hem of the robe having ridden up to mid-thigh.

Awareness slithered through her, making her skin sensitive and her nipples tight.

"So, we both found the other attractive, but never said anything." She tried to make the summary sound businesslike.

“Yes,” he agreed. “And I think... I think that was a good thing. I was a shit at twenty. And you were only eighteen.”

She'd graduated high school a year early, starting college at seventeen, while he'd taken a gap year between high school and college.

“You thought I was too young for you?”

“Yea, a bit. I already knew at that point that I had some deviant sexual preferences.” He looked uncomfortable.

“I know.”

His gaze snapped up. “You know? Or you knew?”

Oops. “I mean, I understand your concern. And that's sweet that you didn't want to corrupt me.”

It was getting harder and harder to ignore the waves of pleasure caused by the slow arc of his thumb. His touch distracted her to the point she wasn't as careful with her expression as she should have been.

“Answer me, please. You know, as in you now realize, or you knew, even when we were in college, that I was kinky?”

Tara blew out a breath, annoyed that he'd caught that.

“Tara.” The warning rumble that sneaked into his voice reached right into her, gripped the core of her submission, and demanded obedience.

“I knew,” she whispered. “I saw you, your senior year. I went to your apartment to

give you the copy of my notes you'd asked for, and I saw you with a redhead. She was in rope bondage and you put her on her knees and," Tara paused, trying to be as matter-of-fact as possible. "And you face-fucked her."

"Shit, I remember that night. How did you get in?"

"You gave me your door code, and your bedroom door was open, just a bit. I didn't see much, and I left as quick as I could." She cleared her throat. "I was shocked, so I stood there for several seconds."

"Shit," he said again, squeezing her. "I'm sorry you saw that. I didn't know." He grimaced. "Had you...were you interested in anything like that?"

"Honestly, I hadn't thought about it. I'd had sex before, of course," she said. "But as far as BDSM, I knew as much as anyone knows from pop culture."

She sensed he wanted to keep asking about this, and shifted unhappily on his lap. Nathan took a breath, let it out, and then leaned back, posture much more relaxed now than it had been half a minute ago.

"We both found one another attractive, but for our own reasons never said or did anything about it," he summarized, echoing her words.

"And that brings us to now. To...this."

"To this," he echoed, but he was no longer looking at her face. He stared at her legs as his hand retreated back to her knee. She sighed in disappointment, but wasn't wholly surprised that their reminiscing had killed the mood for him.

Oddly, it hadn't for her. There was no awkwardness in sitting on his lap, growing slowly more aroused as he stroked her, while they talked about their past.

Objectively, there should have been some level of disconnect, yet the combination of physical action and conversation proved not to be antithetical.

The silence, however, was awkward. And though she normally had no problem sitting in the hush of a long silence, his touch had her feeling just off base enough that she couldn't.

"To be clear," she said, trying to sound businesslike, "I'm only proposing that we play the game together."

"Only. You're only proposing that we engage in a power exchange and kinky sex."

"Sex is involved in our letter?"

"Oh yeah." A muscle in his jaw twitched.

"Oh...kay. New information." She stopped, thinking it through. Sex was never a given in BDSM.

"Change your mind?"

"No," she said slowly, because her primary emotion was excitement. She would have been disappointed if all they had was impact play. "I don't think so."

"Good." Slowly, giving her plenty of time to pull away, Nathan slid his hand under the crook of her knee.

And then Nathan did something that caused a seismic shift, the very foundations of the earth sliding and rocking against one another to reform the world as she knew it. He jerked her knee up, putting a more acute bend in her limb, and then gently forced her knee wide.



Tara took slow breaths, her toes digging into the cushion as she let her leg fall open. One side of her robe—the side he'd flipped up—fell away, exposing her all the way to her belly button, where the tie of the robe held the fabric closed. The glossy black latex gusset that covered her sex was exposed.

He pressed against the inside of her knee, forcing her thigh to spread wider. She felt her pussy lips part, and sucked in air as latex slid and rubbed against her sensitive labia.

His hand spanned her thigh, fingers spread. Experimentally, she tried to close her leg, and watched as the muscles in his forearm flexed as he countered the pressure.

“If we do this,” Nathan rumbled, “I’m not going to hold back, and no matter how hard we compartmentalize, it will change something between us.”

The intensity radiating off Nathan wasn't new. He was generally mild-mannered and easygoing, but when he was focused in on something, he got like this.

The idea of being what, who, he focused on was thrilling.

“I’m respecting the fact that you don’t want to talk about why you’re leaving Las Palmas. But the fact that you won’t tell me makes me worry that our friendship is already in danger, should we risk destroying it completely?” The question was more a rumination than an actual inquiry.

“Our friendship isn’t in danger.” She sounded breathy, in a way that wasn’t like her. The desire and arousal building inside her crowded her lungs, leaving her no choice but to take small, quick breaths. “It will just look different. We’ve remained friends through a lot of things.”

“True.” His gaze drifted to her lips.

Tara tucked in her lower lip, wetting it with her tongue. Nathan inhaled sharply through his nose.

“I want you to agree to something,” he said.

“What?”

“When we’re done with our letter, and have finished the game, you tell me what’s going on with you. What’s about to change.”

She nodded. “That’s fair. And I know it’s going to sound like I’m backtracking, but I was planning to ask you for help with one part of it.”

“Okay.” He kneaded her thigh. “I’m going to manfully not beg you to tell me because I’m dying of curiosity.”

She laughed softly.

His hand tightened, a soft warning. “There’s one more thing I want to check before we do this.”

Tara held her breath, wondering, hoping, that his hand might cup her pussy through the lace. That what he wanted to check was if she was aroused. She was, and was sure he’d be able to feel how wet she was even through the lace.

“I’m going to put my hands on the seat and keep them there.” His gaze tracked up to her eyes. “And you’re going to kiss me.”

The idea made her insides sparkle, as if she were filled with champagne. The hand that had been pressing against her back fell away, and he wedged between his hip and the corner of the couch. Then he removed the hand from her thigh, the loss of heat

creating a cold imprint of his palm and fingers.

Tara sat up, twisting, but the position was awkward. Taking a risk, she slid off his lap, turned to face him, and straddled his thighs, one hand braced on the back of the couch beside his shoulder.

Nathan was taking slow, deep breaths and he looked her up and down. The robe was still tied, but the front pieces no longer overlapped, revealing a strip from neck to pussy that showed glimpses of the black latex, vinyl, and lace fetware she wore.

Tara leaned down, lips hovering over his, as she slid her free hand into his hair. This moment had a dreamlike quality. It felt like she'd stepped outside reality and into a place where there was no tomorrow to worry about.

Only now.

Only him.

And a desire she'd repressed for years.

The first moment of the kiss was a shock, as if she'd grabbed a live wire. They both froze. Kissing Nathan was more powerful, and more intimate, than sex.

Oh, this was a bad idea. A wonderfully bad idea.

He groaned, and where her forearm rested against his shoulder, she felt his muscles tense.

Tara sat back, breaking the kiss. She felt this odd need to cry, though she wasn't sad. Her pussy pulsed in time with her heartbeat, her labia already plump as her body prepared to take his cock. It was a base physiological response.

All because of a kiss.

Except it wasn't just the kiss. It was who she was kissing that made her body react, even as doubts and alarms were spiraling around the back of her mind.

She was waiting for his hands to slide over her, for him to take control of both her body and the moment.

But Nathan didn't move. His bare arms meant she could see the flexed muscles, could see how hard he was fighting to stay still.

"I kissed you," she said. "You don't have to keep your hands down."

"That wasn't a kiss," he rumbled. "Kiss me like you mean it, Tara."

The deep voice, the command, his self-control...each was delicious and arousing.

Tara kissed him again, this time touching his lower lip with her tongue. His mouth opened under hers, and she tasted the inside of his lower lip, running her tongue along his teeth.

With a growl, Nathan surged up, doing what she'd been waiting for and taking control of the kiss. His tongue slipped into her mouth, and he tasted cool and a little sweet from the cider. He pulled back, only to tip his head the other way and kiss her again.

Tara's toes curled, and she grabbed his shoulders with both hands. His own hands were still firmly planted on the cushions. The leather of his vest was warm and smooth under her fingers, but she wanted more.

She slid her palms down the hot, bare flesh of his upper arms. He groaned into her

mouth, so she kept going. Hands kneading their way down to his elbows and along his forearms, until she pressed her palms to the back of his braced hands.

Nathan broke the kiss, and they were both breathing hard.

“Kiss over.”

His voice was harsh and for a moment, she thought he’d changed his mind. Maybe the kiss hadn’t affected him the way it had affected her.

“Which means I can touch you.”

Nathan’s hands flipped palms up, his fingers lacing with hers.

Then he wrapped one arm across her back, without releasing her, their joined hands at her opposite hip. Holding her tight to his chest, Nathan flipped their position, until she was seated on the couch, legs spread on either side of his body as he knelt on the floor.

They were staring at one another, both breathing hard.

“Last chance,” he warned her.

“What’s our letter?”

“T.”

Tara couldn’t think of a single kinky toy or activity that began with T. Then again, thinking in general was a little difficult.

“I want to do this,” she said, “with you.”

## Page 5

*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

Tara's head fell back against the couch, her body arched, thanks to the way he held her arm behind her back. The delicate line of her throat was exposed, and she watched him through thick, dark lashes.

Her breasts pressed against the fabric of her robe, the band of glossy black that crossed her sternum, hinting at some interesting lingerie.

Tara. His Tara.

Now about to be truly his .

“Say it again,” he demanded. “But say my name.”

She studied him for a moment before saying. “I want to play the game with you, Nathan.”

He shook his head. “Saying ‘play the game’ is evading, and you know it.”

Tara's lashes lowered, just enough to hide her eyes.

“I want to scene with you, Nathan.”

A dark, feral satisfaction was sliding through him. He wanted her with a terrifying ferocity. As if all the years of refusing to allow himself to look at, or think of, her in a sexual way had caused turbulent water to back up behind a dam. And now they were opening the floodgates.

Dominate her. Give her what she needs. Use and touch her in the ways no one else could, because no one else knows her like you do.

“If we’re doing this, we don’t cut corners just because we know one another.”

“Agreed.”

“Meaning, we negotiate before we start.”

“It feels like we’ve already started,” she murmured.

She was right. The way he was restraining one arm, manipulating her body, and issuing orders, weren’t best friend behavior. It was Dom behavior.

He nodded and released her hand, sitting back on his heels.

Tara scooted until she was sitting at the other end of the small couch, her toes tucked into the space between the cushions. It was an unexpectedly vulnerable move, tucking her bare toes away. He had to stop himself from reaching out and wrapping a hand around her ankle, to connect them.

Tara had one arm tucked under her bent legs, holding the back of her robe against her thighs.

He swallowed the impulse to grab her knees and spread her legs. To force her to have this conversation with her pussy on display.

Would that make her feel submissive, or would it make her feel awkward?

He didn’t know, and he needed to, because Nathan was fairly certain it would break something inside him if she was indifferent to his dominance.

Nathan rose to sit on the couch, bracing his elbows on his knees and gripping his hands together, and looking down at his hands rather than at Tara.

“What kind of Dom do you think I am?”

“What?” She clearly hadn’t expected that question.

“What kind of Dom do you think I am?” he repeated. “You know me, so I’m sure you have some idea. And whatever version of me you’re imagining is a factor in to your agreeing to scene with me.”

“If I guess wrong, will you change your mind?”

He looked over. “Maybe.”

“I don’t like unanswerable questions.”

“And I won’t touch you without first knowing what you’re thinking.”

“Isn’t that what negotiating is for?” Tara countered, crossing her legs and leaning toward him.

“This is the start of the negotiation.”

“No, this is you backing out after we’d just agreed we were doing this.” Tara’s expression was cool and professional. He’d seen that look on her face in meetings and when she presented at conferences.

And he knew it wasn’t real; it was a mask. She only looked like that when she was actively hiding her thoughts and feelings.



“Don’t,” he snarled.

“Don’t what?”

“Don’t hide. Not from me.”

Her breath caught, and she blinked. “You’re hiding from me. That’s why you’ve just changed your mind about this.”

“I didn’t change my mind, but you’re going to.”

“Ah, so now you know me so well you can predict what I’ll do? Please, tell me all about myself.”

Frustration rode him and he turned just his head to look at her. “Answer the question. What kind of Dom do you think I am?”

She opened her mouth, then paused. Her cool, intelligent gaze focused on his face, then slid down his body, seeming to assess his leathers.

“I’ll answer if, once I do, you tell me what kind of sub you think I am.”

He nodded. “Agreed.”

Tara looked him over once more. “I think you’re focused and precise. When you scene, you’re entirely present in that moment.”

He nodded, not in agreement but to acknowledge her statement. “And what kind of play do I prefer?”

She shifted, rocking her weight a little. Her voice wasn’t as confident now. “You’re

rules-focused. Some of those rules are impossible to follow—a way to punish your sub. That’s part of the game, and you and your partner both understand how to play it.”

“High protocol?”

She wiggled her hand side to side in a “maybe” motion. “I wouldn’t be surprised, but I don’t think you’d be that formal. I don’t think you want your sub always looking at the ground, or only speaking when given permission.”

This time his nod was one of agreement.

“I think that you’re careful and thorough, and you make sure you and your partner are both satisfied by the time the scene is over.”

Her voice was a bit breathy now, and her chest was rising and falling with deep inhalations.

Nathan looked at her. “Careful, thorough, and rule-oriented.”

“Yes. Though there was more nuance in what I said.”

“Fair.”

“So, was I right?” she asked.

“I am careful. Any Dom who isn’t doesn’t deserve the title.”

“True.”

“And thorough? Definitely so.”

Tara was watching him, assessing. “But?”

“But,” he agreed with a small smile. “I am not rule-oriented when I play.”

She held her breath, seeming to absorb that, but all she said was, “Oh?”

“I think you’re imaging I top the same way I work. Methodical. Slow.”

“Methodical would have been a more appropriate word to use.”

“But the wrong word,” he said softly.

“Oh?”

It was the second time she’d asked a question in that wordless way, and he smiled.

Nathan turned to face her fully, bringing one knee onto the couch, his forearm braced along the back. “The one thing you didn’t mention is sex. Do you think I top for power and control only? Maybe add in a dash of pain to satisfy any sadism? Are you picturing me flogging a sub, then having her kneel at my feet while I have a drink, and ending the night with a quick spanking before aftercare?”

Tara’s eyes met his, and the intimacy of holding her gaze was almost too much.

“Because if that’s what you want, I can’t...” He reconsidered. “I won’t top you like that.”

“How would you top me?”

He could tell she’d tried to make the words mild, almost disinterested.

The look in her eyes gave her away. She was desperate for an answer.

“When I scene, I touch and take everything I want.”

Tara inhaled sharply.

“I almost always have my hands on my sub, because while she’s with me, I want her to feel owned. And I want her aroused. Needy to the point of desperate every moment of the scene. If I allow her to come, I make sure that the satisfaction doesn’t last long. I play with her until she’s begging for permission to come again.”

Nathan rolled up onto his knee, looking over her with one hand braced on the arm of the couch behind her shoulder. She was trapped. Caged by his body.

“If I’m having a drink, my sub isn’t kneeling at my feet. She’s on my lap, legs spread wide. So wide that her pretty pussy lips are open too, exposing her core. And my fingers are on her. In her. Fucking her. Playing with her clit. Spanking her pussy, just because I can. Because I want to hear her yelp and whimper.”

Tara’s eyes slid closed and she swallowed hard.

“If I spank her, it isn’t because she disobeyed a rule. It’s because I want to. Because I like having a woman over my knee. Like it more when I spank her hard enough to leave a handprint.

“Then I make her take my cock in her ass so I can fuck her from behind and each time I thrust, I’m smacking against that sore bottom.”

“Nathan,” she breathed, eyes now wide.

“If I tie my sub up in public, I invite other members to taste her pussy, finger fuck her

ass, and pinch her nipples, because I want her to feel like a pretty sex toy.”

Tara jolted back, pressing her upper body against the couch and bringing her knees up, one arm wrapped around her thighs. His chest tightened as he watched her retreat, but he didn’t stop.

“If it’s a weekend-long scene, I expect her to fall asleep with her head on my thigh and my cock in her mouth.”

Tara’s lips were parted, and he could see the tip of her pink tongue.

“I don’t care how my sub talks to me. I’m going to tease and fuck her if she’s a brat or if she’s perfectly obedient. I don’t care about where she looks, because the way I touch her, use her, will leave no doubt in her mind who she belongs to in that moment.”

Tara whined low in her throat, and that sound made him want to do savage things to her.

“If I were ever to collar a woman permanently, she wouldn’t be my obedient submissive. She’d be my needy sex slave. Always wet. Ready to be used and fucked any time I wanted.”

“Do you always talk like this?” she breathed.

“Like what?”

“Dirty talk.”

Nathan smiled. “This hardly qualifies, and yes, during a scene I enjoy telling my partner what a bad girl she is. How needy and wet her pussy feels. Asking her if she

needs me to make her a good girl by fucking her tight ass.”

Tara closed her eyes and swallowed, her breasts heaving under her robe. She tipped her head back, exposing that pretty neck.

His arms and shoulders ached from holding himself still. He wanted to touch her, but she'd leaned back. Retreated.

Tara's eyes fluttered open, her gaze meeting his.

“Please.” One simple word, and yet it rocked the very foundation of his world, because he knew what she was asking for.

What she was asking him to do.

Nathan leaned down and licked her, dragging the flat of his tongue up the side of her throat. Tara gasped, jerking at the warm wet touch, but then tipping her head to the side to give him better access.

The taste of her skin was enough to take the edge off his desperate need, and Nathan pulled back, head dropping onto her knees, his own breathing labored.

Cool fingers slid tentatively through his hair. Nathan dropped his head until it rested on her bent knees. He stayed there only a moment, then sat back.

“I'm sorry.” His voice was rough. “I shouldn't have touched you, before or just now, without explicit permission.”

“Maybe not, but I like it.” Tara reached for her glass, found it empty, and frowned.

With a small smile, he passed over his own drink and she took a sip, making a face,

and taking a second sip.

“You’re right.” She passed it back. “I wouldn’t have guessed that was how you topped.”

He laced his fingers together and nodded, hoping his embarrassment wasn’t evident on his face.

“But I like it.” She took a steadying breath. “I really like it. And learning that you’re going to be handsy?—”

That surprised a laugh out of him.

“—doesn’t change my proposal.”

Afraid to hope, he scanned her face, reading her expression. Her lips were parted, the lower one glossy, either from their kiss or because she’d sucked on it again when he wasn’t watching.

“I want to play the game with you.”

Her dark eyes were both familiar and strange. Familiar because he knew her, strange because he’d never seen that particular look in her eyes.

“I want to submit to you, Nathan.”

## Page 6

*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

Tara had this wonderful yet sinking feeling that she'd just found something she hadn't known she was missing.

Nathan the Dom was something she'd let herself fantasize about once upon a time. Nathan the carnal, dirty-talking sex god was unexpected and wonderful.

The fact that she'd just mentally referred to him as a sex god was probably a very good indicator that it had been too long since she'd been well and truly fucked.

Not that she didn't usually have sex as part of her scenes at Las Palmas. She did.

But often sex was a tool used to reinforce the power exchange, or a final activity that indicated the scene was coming to a close rather than sexual desire being a constant within the scene.

Nathan looked at her, and she thought the expression in his eyes was hope.

Yet the silence dragged on, and she started to feel self-conscious.

"I've agreed twice now," she said, "but if you're not interested..."

"Oh, I'm very interested."

That shouldn't make her feel giddy with delight, but it did.

"We need to talk about how you usually submit," he said. "We talked about how I top."



“Could we...not?” Tara shifted, hugging her knees.

Nathan nodded. “That’s right, you want me to guess what kind of sub you are.”

Tara shook her head. “I changed my mind.”

“Why?”

“Because if you’re wrong, I’m not sure how that would make me feel.” She was fairly certain that she’d curl up into a humiliated ball if Nathan’s guess was wrong. She wasn’t entirely certain, so her statement wasn’t a lie, but it was a prevarication to protect herself.

“Then tell me about your last scene.”

She shook her head. “I don’t want what I’ve done in the past to influence what you will do.”

Nathan turned to face her, one leg on the couch cushion. He studied her for a long minute. “Did someone hurt you?”

Was he...angry? Protective?

To use his preferred curse: shit. The idea of Nathan being protective of her made her heart beat harder, and her pussy wetter.

Outside the club, men could fuck right off with that sort of thinking and behavior. Inside the club, where she let herself revel in the masculine-dominant female-submissive archetypes, that behavior was like catnip.

“No one hurt me.” The words came out soft. “Not the way you’re thinking.”

His gaze tracked over her. “Then they didn’t give you what you need.”

“I’ve been satisfied with my partners.”

“Not satisfied enough, if you don’t want a repeat.”

“I would have been happy to scene with you the way I normally do when I’m here.”

“Would have?” His frown melted into a slow smile. “You mean before me.”

“Don’t get cocky.”

“Is it the dirty talk? No one has whispered filthy things in your ear, and now that you’ve gotten a taste, you want more?”

His smile became a grin, and in that moment, he was the boy she’d first met. A boy who was a mix of serious intelligence and young-man cocky.

Tara rolled her eyes to look at the ceiling, fighting her own smile.

“Being serious for a moment,” he said. “I do need to know what you want.”

I want you.

Whoa. Her brain needed reins so she could pull back on some of these thoughts.

“I want to not make decisions,” she said instead. “I want to give up control, and with you, I want that to include not pre-negotiating everything we do.”

“Skipping negotiations...” Now he wasn’t just looking at her, he was studying her.

“I both know you and trust you. Everyone else in the club is a stranger, so during pre-scene negotiations, that’s a factor.”

“You hold back?”

“Yes. Not a lot, but I do. And I get very detailed during the negotiations. Timing is a surprise to me, but for the most part I know exactly what to expect.”

“And you don’t want that anymore.”

“I don’t want that with you.”

“Even though I’m not the kind of Dom you thought I’d be.”

“Yes. Maybe because of that. I haven’t had a scene that was primarily sexual in a long time.”

“Normally it’s focused on the power exchange?” A line appeared between her brows. “Or focused on pain? Are you a masochist?”

“Everyone here is a masochist to some degree,” she countered. “And yes, I’ve had impact-play focused scenes.” Tara cleared her throat. “You have my checklist, right?”

That’s what she’d overheard some of the other subs saying—that their assigned Doms would have been given a copy of the checklist they complete when they joined.

“I do.”

“So, you know my hard limits.”

He nodded.

“Can we just use that?”

Nathan leaned back, arms crossed over his leather-covered chest. It made his biceps stand out. His muscles weren't bulky, but there was meat on those arms, and she had this insane urge to sink her teeth into him. To bite him hard enough to leave an impression, and to earn herself a spanking.

“We can, on one condition,” he said.

She waved a hand, inviting him to continue.

“You talk to me,” he rumbled.

Tara blinked in surprise.

“During the scene, you talk to me. Tell me what you like, tell me what you're thinking. Tell me what you're hoping or fearing I'll do next. No rules about when you can or can't talk. If for some reason I think it will be better if you're limited in your ability to speak, I'll gag you.”

Regular, open, honest communication.

On the surface, it was an easy thing to agree with. Except that level of communication was actually more intimate than any physical touch.

“If I have to ask you how you're doing every two minutes because you aren't communicating with me, I'll stop. If you respond to my questions with only ‘yes, sir’ and ‘no, sir,’ I'll stop.”

“I...”

He raised a brow, waiting.

“I can try. That’s going to be hard.”

“I know it is. And I know you go quiet when you’re thinking. But I don’t want you living inside your own head for this.”

“If I fail, and you stop the scene, is that it?”

He snorted. “Shit no.”

She relaxed. “Okay, I’ll do my best.”

Nathan smiled, but it was more tentative than it had been a minute ago. “Last chance to back out,” he warned.

“I’m not backing out. I’m ready.”

Nathan stood, gathering their glasses. He looked down at her, and now his gaze was definitely possessive. “Lose the robe, and when I get back the scene starts.”

Tara watched him walk away, her heart in her throat.

For a horrible moment, doubt crashed down on her. This was Nathan. What was she doing? It was like he took her surety with him when he walked away.

Tara made herself stand up, hands gripping the sash of the robe so tight she thought the fabric might disintegrate in her hands.

It would help if she’d picked something a little more conservative to wear tonight. She’d been swayed by seeing all the other subs—and thanks to the mandatory

meeting, it really was all the other subs—in their fetwear and corsets.

Secretly she wanted to wear frilly, feminine items. One of the other subs owned a famous lingerie brand, and while Tara could afford the pieces, actually purchasing and then wearing them was beyond her.

In the outside world, Tara was a woman in a male-dominated field. She also had a job that required her to be mostly covered up for safety. Easy-to-wear slacks and comfortable long-sleeved shirts that fit nicely under a lab coat were her go-to.

When she needed to look more professional, she wore three-piece tailored suits made by a company here in LA. They blended traditionally feminine and masculine elements perfectly, and always made Tara feel badass. Plus, she usually had at least one pretty woman hit on her when she was wearing her suits, which was a nice ego boost.

It wasn't that she owned no dresses—about five years ago, there'd been a period where she attended a wedding every weekend, and had the wardrobe to match.

Nor was her lack of feminine attire both inside and outside the club an indication that she rejected feminine things. Her apartment was an oasis of pastels and gold, everything soft and clean.

Nathan was on his way back, and his brow was furrowed as he looked at her standing beside the couch still wearing her robe.

Whatever her reason for hesitating to purchase and wear soft, frilly lingerie, right now she regretted it. In her fantasy, she slipped out of the robe, revealing soft satin and frilly lace.

Movements jerky, Tara ripped off the robe, chucking it away just as Nathan rounded

the corner of the couch.

He stopped dead in his tracks, eyes widening.

Needing something to do with her hands, Tara reached up and back, pulling the black ponytail holder out of her long hair.

Tara's hair fell against her shoulders and back like a cape, adding to the fetish superhero vibe she was giving off, thanks to her lingerie. The black leather straps crossed her body, holding and compressing sweet, soft flesh.

A wide band crossed over her breasts. It covered her nipples but left both the top and bottom of her breasts—which were compressed and plumped by the restricting band—exposed. Vertical shoulder straps shot up from the breast band.

A scrap of glossy latex covered her pussy, straps radiating up from it like the spokes of a wheel or rays from the setting sun. The side straps angled over her hips, while the center ones rose to meet the thin belt around her waist.

First, he'd take off the breast band, which would in turn remove the shoulder straps. Then he'd rip the latex out of the crotch, but leave the rest of the straps in place.

The way the garters hugged her plump hips, pressing in slightly, made his cock hard. Normally he was a tits and ass man, in that order, but something about Tara's hips was doing it for him.

She shifted her weight foot to foot and bent her head. Her long, dark hair slid forward over one shoulder.

That hair.

He'd rarely seen her with her hair loose. On those few occasions he'd seen it down, it was usually only partially down, and fancy looking because they'd run into each other at a mutual friend's wedding.

This was different. Intimate. This was the way her hair looked in the privacy of her home. In the quiet moments when she let go of all her defenses.

Nathan took a step toward her, hand outstretched.

"Last chance to leave," he murmured. "After this, you're mine until dawn."

The look in her eyes was fearless when their gazes met. Fearless...and hot. Needy.

Fearless and aroused was exactly how he liked his partners.

"Yours until dawn." Tara put her hand in his, and when he tugged, she came to him willingly. Eagerly.

Nathan's cock twitched, that reaction far stronger than any time another woman had said that or similar.

He carefully gathered the hair that had fallen forward, bringing it back over her shoulder and then gathering the rest into a tail in one hand. Her hair was cool and heavy in his grip.

Still holding her hair loosely in his left hand, he reached back with his right, sliding his fingers into the heavy locks and along the curve of her skull.

He made a fist, gripping her by the roots of her long hair. Her gasp satisfied some dark part of his soul.



With a tug, he forced her head up and back, exposing the line of her delicate neck.

Nathan bent, licking the side of her throat he hadn't yet tasted, and this time when he reached the corner of her jaw, he sucked her earlobe into his mouth.

She wore small gold hoop earrings, and he flicked the warm metal with his tongue before tugging gently and letting her earlobe slide out of his mouth.

When he lifted his head, she was breathing hard, her hands gripping his sides as if he were her anchor. She pulled against his hold, probably trying to drop her chin so she could look at him.

Nathan tugged on her hair, eliciting a sweet little gasp.

"I like the noises you make." He ran his open mouth along the line of her jaw, and then down her throat, letting her feel the edge of his teeth.

"What do I call you?" Her voice was slightly strained due to the position of her head.

Nathan leaned back, eyeing her breasts and then tracing the lower curves with one finger. "Whatever feels right."

"I'd rather know what you prefer," she countered. "Unless the point is for me to get it wrong so you can punish me?"

Still holding her hair, Nathan pulled her forward until their bodies were flush. He turned her head to the side, her cheek against his shoulder, her breath washing the base of his neck with each exhale.

"I told you I don't do that. I'm not going to set you up to fail so that I can spank you. I don't need an excuse, or a reason, to put you over my knee."

He felt her full body shiver of arousal and reached around to palm her ass. There were more straps here, and he traced the lines that crossed her cheeks—two curving around from the front, and a third that was tucked between, G-string style.

He tugged one of the cross straps higher on her butt, then smacked that ass cheek, coming up from the bottom to get the lower curve. Tara groaned in what sounded like relief, as if she'd been desperately waiting to have her plump bottom reddened.

He was happy to be the man to do it.

The smack was loud, and for a moment, the conversations around them lulled as everyone looked over. When there were no further spanks, conversations started up again.

“I wonder which you'll like more,” he murmured. “Being over my knee as I spank you and call you a bad girl while you wiggle and try to get away, or being strapped down to a spanking bench while I slap this lush ass and praise what a good girl you're being to take your punishment.”

Tara moaned, bumping her hips back to make space between their bodies, her hands finding the stiff buttons of his vest and trying to work them loose. When that didn't work, she dropped her hands to his crotch, rubbing his hard cock.

Nathan buried his lips in her hair, hiding his smile, though with her cheek against his shoulder, she wouldn't have seen his expression anyway. “I can't decide if you're being bratty, bossy, or needy.”

She stiffened. “You know how I feel about being called bossy.”

He pulled her away so he could look at her, though he didn't release his tight hold on her hair. And when Tara tried to turn away, he gave her a warning tug that made her

go still.

“I know, and I shouldn’t have used that word. For that, I’m sorry. But my question stands. Are you being a brat, topping from the bottom, or just desperate for cock?”

“I’m not a brat.”

“I didn’t think so.”

“And I don’t want to top from the bottom. Giving up control is why I’m here.”

“Then you’re hungry for cock.”

“If anyone else had said that, I’d roll my eyes,” she huffed.

“Oh, by all means.” He wrapped his other arm around her, forearm braced against her lower back, then forced her into a backbend over his arm, her hands once more gripping him for balance. “Please roll your eyes at me.”

“I thought you said you weren’t strict, and didn’t need an excuse to punish.” Her voice was strained.

“I’m not, and I don’t. Doesn’t mean it isn’t fun. If you want to roll your eyes like a pissy teenager, I’ll play headmaster, bend you over a desk, and take a ruler to your ass.”

“Nathan,” she moaned.

He brought her up until she was standing straight, searching her expression.

“I have never, in my life, found the whole catholic schoolgirl thing even remotely

arousing...”

He swallowed the urge to apologize or backtrack, because he knew her, and knew she was going to say more.

“Until right now, with you.”

Nathan switched from fisting her hair to cupping her head, fingertips lightly massaging her scalp. “I’m just that good.”

Tara let out a startled laugh.

“No eye roll?” He tsked in mock disappointment. “I can do better.”

“You could tell one of those bad computer modeling jokes you use at the start of most of your presentations.”

“Excuse me, those are excellent jokes.” Nathan reached around and smacked her ass again.

They both froze.

For a moment, they’d slipped back into their normal friendly dialog, but then he’d warped it by adding the spank in response to her comment.

He pushed the circle of Nathan-and-Tara-as-scene-partners over the top of the Nathan-and-Tara-as-best-friends circle, creating a Ven diagram.

He had no idea what label to put on the overlap.

The silence became awkward, and he knew he was fucking this up. He’d been the one

to make it weird, and he was doing nothing to un-weird it.

Five minutes ago, he'd been sure they were past this, that they'd established they were fine scening together. Nathan slowly detangled his hand from Tara's hair.

Tara's chin dipped, and she let out a small sigh. It wasn't a sigh of relief, or sadness. He knew her well enough to identify that sound.

That was disappointment.

A surge of protective energy was followed by a less altruistic surge of sexual aggression.

He needed to make this woman submit. To use her and pleasure her until the only sounds she made were moans of pleasure and whimpers of need.

## Page 7

*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

Tara tensed, waiting. It was like that moment after a glass or plate falls off the counter, and, assuming you can't catch it, the only thing you can do is wait and see if it breaks on impact.

Most of the time it shatters, but there are instances where it falls just right. Where the fragile thing survives.

That's how Tara felt now, as if Nathan's words had accidentally pushed this fragile new thing between them off the counter and now, she could only wait and watch it shatter on impact.

Nathan tugged the strap on her other ass cheek, pulling it higher, which in turn pulled the entire thing tighter against her pussy. Then he spanked the cheek that hadn't yet been slapped.

In her mind, the glass hit the floor...and didn't break.

"I could add a little catholic schoolgirl play to my plan," he murmured. "T for teacher."

"I thought you were going to be the headmaster."

"Hmm, you're right. Then again, nothing about the game says we can only do what's on our list."

"What is on our list?" she asked, lips twitching up into a smile of relief that their friendly moment hadn't derailed what was to come.

“What’s on our list isn’t the same as what’s on the checklist for our letter.”

“Because you’re adding things like schoolgirl spankings.”

“I like the alliteration.”

“Thank you, I try.”

Nathan’s laugh rumbled through her. He had a wonderful laugh, and she’d once wondered what it would feel like to lean against him as his body vibrated with mirth. She’d never imagined she’d get to feel it like this, her nearly naked body flush against his chest.

“I love your laugh,” she said without thinking.

Nathan’s chuckle faded into a quizzical smile. “You do? I know I laugh too loud.”

“No. Not too loud.”

“I love making you laugh,” he countered. “Hard to do, so it makes it worth it when I finally manage.”

Somehow those words made her feel both special and anxious. She tried to cover it with an arched brow. “Are you saying that I’m humorless?”

“No, I’m saying that you don’t suffer fools, and don’t fake laugh at stupid programming jokes.”

“I have actually laughed a few times when you told that joke,” she said, then paused meaningfully. “But it’s usually because I’m laughing at how excited you look to tell your stupid joke.”

He spanked her ass cheek with two hard swats. “For someone who’s not a brat, you sure have a sassy mouth.” His head cocked to the side as if he were considering something. “No, not brat. Troublemaker.”

Tara couldn’t stop the small chuckle that escaped.

Nathan’s eyes narrowed. “Are you laughing at my joke, or laughing at me for telling the joke?”

“Not laughing at you . Laughing at your expression . You look very pleased with yourself for having thought of a T word that you can use in place of brat.”

“We can’t all be fancy with the alliteration. Some of us keep it simple.”

“Because alliteration is the height of sophistication.”

When Nathan abruptly sat down on the couch, his hands sliding off her, Tara wobbled on her feet, the loss of contact and body heat almost shocking. Regret inched up her throat and she opened her mouth to take back her comments.

They had, once again, started friendly teasing. They’d pushed past it the first time, but if they froze or retreated—even temporarily—every time one of them slipped into well-worn conversational patterns, they’d never make it through the scene.

It might have been fine to banter with him like this as friends, but they weren’t here as friends. She was supposed to be submitting to him.

The odd thing was, it didn’t feel like they slipped out of the scene, out of the moment. Low-level arousal thrummed through her like a persistent drum beat.

This time, she’d pushed the plate off the counter, and it looked like this time, it broke.



She swallowed against the feeling of loss, trying to figure out the most graceful way to walk away.

Nathan grabbed her by the thighs and tugged her onto the couch so she straddled him, her knees tucked by his hips, her ass resting on his legs.

Nathan's gaze drifted down her body and the mood shifted. It was a seamless, easy transition between familiar, comfortable dynamic to something new that was thick with sexual tension.

He kneaded her thighs, strong fingers digging in. She moaned, startled by the pleasure-pain of the deep tissue massage. His hand worked up toward her hips and she tensed, realizing that in this position her lower abdominal fat partially rested on her thighs.

She leaned back, trying to stretch out her torso so her lower belly pooch wasn't so obvious. Nathan reached up over her shoulder, grabbing a handful of her hair and pulling it forward to cover one breast. Then he carefully wound the mass of her hair around his palm and tugged.

"Going somewhere?" His gaze, which had been roving over her body, slid up to her face. "Or are you uncomfortable?"

"No, I was just..." She couldn't bring herself to tell him what she was doing. Admitting it would in turn reveal that she was occasionally self-conscious of her body. Tara didn't want Nathan to see her that way—as a woman who bowed to societal pressure to look a certain way. She was embarrassed that she was embarrassed, and scared he might react badly to her body, which in turn would kill their friendship.

"Just what?"

Tara leaned forward, internally wincing when the movement caused her belly to rest lightly on his fingers, which were splayed high on her thigh, the tips just touching the sensitive skin of her torso.

“Just what, Tara?”

“I was just stretching.”

“One thing that will genuinely piss me off is lying to me.” He looped her hair once more around his palm, bringing his hand hard against the base of her skull. “I told you I expect you to communicate with me.”

Tara stared at the place where the wall met the ceiling on the far side of the library, the noise of the people around them fading to a buzzing background noise. She had no idea how they’d gotten here and how everything had suddenly gone so wrong. She barely moved, and yet he picked up on the fact that the reason she’d leaned away was something important. Maybe this was the real danger. Not that this could damage the relationship but that he knew her so well that she wouldn’t be able to hide anything.

“Communication is a nonnegotiable. And if you can’t even tell me when something makes you uncomfortable, or when you need some space?—”

“It’s not that,” she assured him. Tara opened and closed her mouth several times unsure what to say, or maybe how to say it. She gave him a helpless look, and Nathan’s expression shifted, his grip on her hair softening.

“If I put you over my knee and spank you until your ass is burning and you’ve hit that nice emotional release, would you be able to talk to me then?”

Tara nodded her head jerkily, saying nothing.

“Okay, baby.” His voice was tender even as he scooted her off his lap so she was standing before him.

Tara felt oddly close to tears as she watched him prep. Nathan spoke briefly to the Dom in the armchair, then shoved the coffee table back and grabbed a thick blanket out of the basket beside the couch. He sat on the edge of the couch and turned slightly to the left, his thighs spread wide.

Tara stared at him, taking in this man who was both familiar and in this moment, a stranger. Just as she’d never realized how well muscled his arms were until she saw him sleeveless in his leather vest, she hadn’t ever contemplated the thickness of his thighs.

“Over my knee.” He patted his thigh once.

Taking shallow breaths, her pussy throbbing in time with her heartbeat, Tara stepped between his spread legs and lowered herself. His thigh was thick but also hard, she soon discovered.

Nathan had placed the folded blanket on the couch beside his thigh so that once she bent over his leg, her belly and chest rested on the blanket. She braced her toes against the floor, her own knees bent. With his other leg hooked over hers, he had total control of her lower body.

“Scoot up. I want your ass higher.”

Tara pushed forward with her toes, her skin squeaking against his leather-clad thigh. Instead of her belly resting on his thigh, the crease of her hip was centered on his thigh, her ass tipped up.

“This isn’t punishment,” Nathan’s voice rumbled, voice lower than his normal

speaking tone, and implacable. “This is because you need it. You’re holding back, but I know you want to be a good girl and answer my questions. Tell me all the things going on in that big, beautiful brain.”

He tugged the stiff straps of her fetwear until they were tucked along the inner curve of her ass cheeks. Given how tight the garment was, this spread her ass open, though the center string would cover her at least a little bit. She wasn’t sure if that was good or bad, just as she wasn’t sure if she was excited or mildly embarrassed that Nathan could probably see her asshole.

“I’m going to spank you hard, which means spanking you past the point where it’s pleasure and into the realm of true pain. That means we’re going to use the stoplight method. Don’t get me wrong, I won’t only stop if you say red. Say stop. Say you don’t want to do this anymore. Anything like that and I’ll stop and check in with you. But when I ask you where you are, you say red, yellow, or green. Does that work for you?”

Tara nodded mutely, then took a breath and made herself answer out loud. “Yes, Sir.”

She froze. That “sir” had slipped out due to either instinct or habit. Nathan rubbed her ass, hand moving in large circles over first one cheek, then the other.

“Don’t hold back, or hold anything in. I won’t let you hide from this, so if you try and close in, it will just make it take longer.”

Tara took a moment to wonder exactly what he meant by “this.” Did he mean this spanking, this confession that he wanted, or this thing between them?

“And I don’t expect you to be quiet or still. Like I told you, I’m not a formal Dom. In fact, I quite like watching someone squirm and bounce on my lap as I spank their pretty ass.” He palmed one cheek, squeezing.

“Yes, Sir.” This time she didn’t second-guess it.

His hand lifted away from her butt, and she expected him to give the other cheek a matching squeeze. Instead, his palm came down on her upturned ass in a hard, decisive spank. This wasn’t just a surface sting; he’d slapped her hard enough to make her flesh jiggle, and then he held his hand in place as if he were trying to imprint the spank on her butt.

Tara exhaled as she pressed her forehead against the blanket. Nathan’s hand lifted and again his next move was unexpected. Rather than switching to the other cheek to place a matching blow, he rained four more hard swats down on the same cheek, the last one almost exactly on top of the first. Pain and heat radiated through her, but their trajectory was inverse because as the pain faded, the heat built.

He rubbed her leg from mid-thigh, up over her ass, to her waist. Then he raised his hand and finally balanced her out, with a matching five swats to her other cheek.

The spanking hurt, as it should, but the pain was a temporary and small price to pay for the wonderful heat and throb it left behind. A throb that was matched by the way she could almost feel her heartbeat in her pussy. The latex gusset felt almost unbearably tight. Part of that was due to the way he’d adjusted the straps, but part of it she was sure was due to her labia swelling with arousal.

“Now we’ve got a layer of primer down,” he said.

Tara hid her smile against the blanket. Primer. Sometimes he was such a dork?—

Nathan’s big hand came down on her right ass cheek with a force that shocked her. The crack of sound hadn’t even fully faded before her startled cry of pain echoed against the walls of the library. The conversation in the room lulled in reaction to her shriek.

That hurt .

Then he did it again.

Nathan's hand came down in a brutal spank, this time hitting her sit spot—the sensitive place where ass met thigh. She shrieked, feet kicking up off the ground, and her right hand, which wasn't trapped between her body, his body, and the back of the couch the way her left was, reaching back and trying to splay over her ass to protect herself.

Nathan shoved her hand away. “No,” he scolded.

Dammit, why did she find that so hot? Her pussy throbbed in response to his words even as her ass continued to burn with heat from his delicious abuse.

“Where are you?”

Tara, still dealing with the shock of exactly how hard her best friend could spank, didn't understand his question.

“Where are you? Red, yellow, or green?”

“Oh.” She had to stop and think. She knew she wasn't in the red stop zone, but that really did hurt so maybe she should say yellow.

Except, if she said yellow, asked him to slow down, she wouldn't get where he wanted her to be. Where she needed to be.

“Green,” she breathed.

He stroked her back from the nape of her neck down to her waist with his left hand.

His palm felt wide and hot against her naked skin. “Good girl for taking time to think about it,” he murmured.

She didn’t even try to hide the needy little noise she made in response to the praise.

His left hand curled around her waist, holding her in place. Tara took a breath, tensing.

“No, no, baby,” he murmured. “Relax and just take it.”

She tried; she really did. But when his hand came down in a brutal spank on her left cheek, she pushed up onto her toes, legs straightening as she yelped. All that did was make it easier for him to spank her, and he took advantage.

Hard blows fell one after another, the crack of palm meeting ass almost one continuous sound.

Tara couldn’t hold still. She rocked her hips side to side, her feet scrambling on the floor.

He’d covered all her flesh at this point from the top of her ass down to the tops of her thighs. Now, every spank was landing on already hot, sensitive skin. It was starting to feel like she had a slight sunburn.

He hit one particularly sensitive spot and she lurched sideways, trying to slide off his lap. He must’ve anticipated the move because his fingers curled under the waist strap of her fetwear. His legs hooked over hers meant her lower body didn’t go anywhere. She managed to twist her upper body and get one hand onto the ground, but with him controlling her body from the hips down, all she was doing was bending awkwardly to the side.

“Where are you, Tara?”

Hearing her name was like a jolt to the system. She panted, still bent oddly. “I don’t know how to answer,” she said honestly.

“Okay. Tell me what you’re feeling.”

“It hurts.”

“This spanking is meant to hurt.”

“It’s natural to try and get away from physical pain,” she panted.

Nathan released her belt, instead gripping the back of the breasts band. Using it like a handle, he hauled her upper body back into place. He was manhandling her. Oh. Oh.

She swallowed against arousal so intense it almost made her lightheaded. He gathered her messy hair into a tail, twisting it once into a rope then wrapping it around his hand in a now-familiar move.

“It’s cute that you still get academic about things, even when your ass is on fire from a spanking.”

Tara could hear the amusement in his voice, but it didn’t make her feel embarrassed or ashamed. There was affection in amusement.

“Now answer my question.” His voice had deepened once more, and the command was unmistakable. “Do you need me to slow down or go softer? Are you at your physical tolerance limit?”

“Chartreuse.”



There was pregnant silence. “Uh...What?”

“Chartreuse. That’s the color you get when you mix green and yellow.”

Nathan’s hand slid from her right thigh up over her hot, aching flesh, crossed to her left butt cheek, and then slid it down that thigh. “First of all,” he mused, “assuming there really is a color called chartreuse, it’s got to be some kind of pink. The word sounds pink.”

“It’s not.”

“Seriously?”

“Yep.”

“Huh.” Nathan spanked her ass in an almost-offhanded way. This was more of a love tap than the true spanks she’d been getting, but she was already so sore and sensitive that she yelped, feet rising off the floor.

“So you’re somewhere between yellow and green,” he murmured.

“Yes, Sir.”

“Are you just saying that because you’re afraid I’ll be disappointed if I need to stop?”

“No,” she said firmly. “I’ve learned to be assertive about my needs, and my limits.”

“Okay, if you say it, I believe it, because I trust you.”

Something deep in her gut relaxed at his words.

Then she couldn't think anymore because he went back to spanking her. Based on the sounds, he was no longer spanking her as hard. Probably because he didn't need to. Nathan had done a very thorough job abusing her ass and upper thighs, and so now, even the lightest touch sent pain and heat zinging through her. Each spank caused heat to radiate, like ripples spreading through water.

"Ouch ouch ouch," she whimpered, reaching back with both hands to cover her abused bottom. He slapped each palm then grab her wrists, forcing them to the small of her back and holding them there with his spanking hand. His other hand still held her hair.

"You're such a good girl," he murmured softly, the tender words entirely at odds with the brutal way his heavy hand came down on her ass.

Tara cried out with each blow now, her hips constantly twisting in effort to protect herself.

"I bet your bottom hurts, doesn't it?"

"Yes, Sir," Tara whimpered.

"You're going to take it for me, aren't you, baby?"

She couldn't answer because she was crying out, her skin now feeling properly sunburned. She couldn't help herself but to shift her feet, almost dancing in place while still bent over his lap. As she moved, she felt the slick wetness between her pussy lips leaking out the sides of the latex.

"I think you're almost there." Nathan adjusted his legs, trapping hers tightly between his thighs. Then he tucked his right foot back, his calf pressing her knees together and vicing them between his leg and the front edge of the couch.

The restriction actually made it easier for her to calm down, though her breath was choppy.

“I want you to let go, just accept the spanking. Can you do that for me?”

Tara nodded frantically, each movement making her scalp prickling, thanks to his firm hold on her hair.

He released her wrists and spanked her hard twice more, once on each cheek. She needed to move to alleviate the pain, but with her legs trapped between his, her only option was her arms. Though she knew she shouldn't, she reached back, splaying her hands over her butt and whimpering.

“Move your hands, baby.” His voice was thick with warning.

Her fingers were trembling and she slowly bent her elbows, pulling her hands to the very top of her ass. The instant he spanked her again, her palms were back in place, covering her abused backside.

“Let's give those hands something else to do.” Nathan pulled on her hair forcing her head up and back, her body bowed in cobra pose. Except cobra pose required using your arms to brace yourself.

A distant part of her marveled at the genius, as she had no choice but to plant her hands on the couch cushion and support her upper body as he forced her into the backbend. This left her ass unprotected.

“This is gonna hurt, baby.” His tone sounded almost regretful.

Heavy hard swats of his hand made her ass jiggle, the heat sinking deep even as her skin stung and burned.

Tara tried to count—she wasn't even sure why—but she only got to three before the pain and arousal distracted her. He was merciless. Brutal.

Punishing her.

Hurting her.

Giving her exactly what she needed.

Using pain to offer her permission to submit.

Tears filled her eyes, and when she blinked, they slipped down her cheeks. The instant the first sob broke free, Nathan stopped spanking her.

But the spanking had done its job. Not just opened the floodgates but blown the entire dam, releasing everything she'd kept behind those walls.

Tara sobbed with great shuddering breaths. Nathan released her hair, pulling her upright. She expected him to cuddle her, but instead, he gently guided her down to her knees between his spread legs. She looked up at him through teary eyes.

Nathan cupped her chin and stroked her cheek with his thumb, spreading the wetness of her tears across her face.

“You took that so well, baby. Ready to be my good girl?”

“Yes, Sir,” she stuttered, still looking up at him, her muscles trembling slightly in reaction to the spanking.

“Then get up on my lap and spread those legs.”

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Tara looked soft and relaxed, even as her breath shuttered out with a few more sobs.

Nathan leaned down, gripping first her upper arms, then her waist, as she climbed up onto his lap. She straddled his thighs, ass hovering above his knees.

Nathan palmed her butt, relishing her gasp and whimper of pain as he kneaded her well-spanked ass. Transferring his hold to her thighs, he forced her to sit down, eliciting another gasp, this time followed by a groan.

She bowed her head, long hair bracketing her face.

Tara— Tara —was on his lap, legs spread, her mostly naked body bound in fetwear that made her look even more submissive than if she'd been naked.

Her breathing was a little shallow, and as much as he enjoyed the look of her lush tits compressed and captive under the black band, he was worried it was restricting her breathing.

Leaning in, he brushed his lips over the corner of her mouth as he reached around behind her to undo the two small buckles that held the chest band closed.

“Who helped you put this on?” he asked softly, eyes half closed as he focused on unbuckling by touch.

“No one.”

“You buckled this on yourself?”

“Yes. It’s not that much harder than putting on a bra.”

“Wait, you fasten bras behind your back? I thought you did them in the front and turned them around?”

“‘You’ meaning me personally, or the bra-wearing population?”

“I have worked very hard, for a good number of years, NOT to think about you and bras at the same time.”

The second buckle came loose, and she let out a relieved sigh. Nathan carefully slid the thin shoulder straps over the curve of her shoulders and then down to her elbows, before peeling the chest band forward and off.

Her pretty, plump tits jiggled as they relaxed, her dark nipples small, hard tips in the center of her wide, round areolas.

Horizontal lines marked her breasts above and below the areola, the groove looking deep and painful.

“You had it on too tight,” he admonished, tracing the angry lines with one finger. “You’ll hurt yourself.”

“And that’s your job?” Her head was still bowed, but she was looking at him through her lashes, a small smile curving her lips.

“Exactly.” He ran his thumb over her smile, and she turned her head, keeping her lips in contact with his skin.

He swallowed against the swell of need that little moment created.

“If there’s one thing I’ve learned,” he said gruffly, “it’s that subs are always far more brutal with themselves than a Dom would ever be.”

“I don’t know about that. I’ve met some pretty brutal Doms.”

“Fair point, but are you telling me that you’ve never had a Dom stop a scene when you would have kept going?”

“Fair point,” she echoed. “It happened recently in fact.”

He had a bad moment, shoulders tensing, as he imagined her with some other man. Even though he had no right to feel possessive...

“Wait, do you mean me?” He blinked at her. “Me and right now?”

Tara laughed, leaning in to rest her head against his. “Yes, Nathan, I mean you.”

He smacked her ass, just because, and she softened against him, her body almost melting into his.

“You would have kept the spanking going?” he murmured into her hair.

She nodded, chin bumping his shoulder.

“Even though we were well past the point of a little slap and tickle and into real pain?”

She nodded again.

“Say it,” he commanded.

“I loved being over your knee,” she replied instantly. “I love the feel of you spanking me. Hurting me the way I need. If it were up to me, you would have kept going. You would have gotten a slapper or a paddle, and kept spanking me.”

He gripped her ass as the last word faded, and she pressed into him, her bare breasts against his chest, though the leather of his vest kept him from feeling the hard points of her nipples.

“And this is why topping from the bottom is dangerous. Subs are all uncontrolled sadists.”

“Wouldn’t it be masochists, since the ones we want to hurt are ourselves?”

“Partially true, but I’ve also seen some sub-on-sub scenes that were genuinely terrifying.”

He loved the feel of her laughing in his arms. He’d never had a scene that flowed like this, from kink to conversation and back again.

“Your ass is done for now. Need to give this pretty girl time to rest.” He palmed her butt and gave it a little jiggle.

“Did you just refer to my ass as a pretty girl?”

“Yep. And it’s attached to more very pretty things.”

Nathan gripped her waist and she flinched.

Shit. Nathan jerked his hands up and to the sides, palms forward. “What just happened? Where are you hurt?”



Tara didn't answer, instead turning her face into his neck.

Nathan gathered her hair in his hand and yanked her head up, pulling until she was seated upright on his knees, her hands resting gently on her upper thighs, elbows tucked into her sides, hiding the place he'd just touched.

"Tara," he barked the word, made it a warning.

"It's not...I'm not hurt."

"You flinched."

Her face twisted with a grimace, but she didn't say anything else.

"Hands together behind your neck, elbows back." He released her hair as she obeyed, making space for her hands to slide under her hair, her fingers laced together at her nape.

Given how tight she'd strapped the band around her breasts, maybe it was the waist strap that was bothering her, and he'd touched a sore spot.

He unbuckled the belt, letting it fall around her hips and thighs.

There were no angry red indents here, and when he traced the faint mark the belt had left, she didn't react. He slid his hand down to her hip, holding her as he leaned to the side, checking for bruises or tender spots.

This time, she didn't flinch, but she did suck in air and hold her breath. He immediately lifted his hand. He'd barely touched her, so he expected to see an angry bruise where his fingers had been. An angry bruise he'd somehow missed noticing, which wasn't like him.

There was no mark, only soft, smooth skin.

“Tara, I’m hurting you, but I don’t know how. Tell me,” he demanded.

“You’re not hurting me.”

“Don’t lie to me, Tara. That’s a hard limit for me, especially when it comes to pain.”

“I’m not lying.”

“Are you tender here or…” He raised his brows. “Are you ticklish?”

“No, it’s not that.” She stared at his chest, lines bracketing her mouth in an expression that was almost a grimace.

“Talk,” he demanded, voice lower than it had been, as frustration and a desperate need to make sure he wasn’t hurting her gripped him low in the gut.

“Idon’tlikeitwhenpeopletouchmyfat.”

Nathan blinked. “What?”

Tara gripped her hips, squeezing her own flesh. “I don’t like it when people touch my fat.”

He stared at her hands, then her face, then back to her hands. “What the shit are you talking about?”

That startled a laugh out of Tara, and it was his turn to grimace.

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have said that. I’m not trying to be dismissive of your feelings.

But...what?"

Tara gripped the delicious soft skin low on her belly. "I'm well aware that this is what a normal female body looks like, but knowing that intellectually is different than actually embodying it to the level of not being self-conscious while naked straddling a hot man's lap."

"You think I'm hot?"

Tara pursed her lips. "That's your takeaway?"

"I like to focus on what's important."

Tara laughed, the lines that had bracketed her mouth finally disappearing.

Carefully, Nathan slid his hands up her thighs, then pressed his palms over the backs of her hands. "Will you move your hands for me, baby?"

Tara softened, her gaze dropping to his mouth, her lashes thick and lush as they partially hid her eyes.

Slowly, she tugged her hands out from under his, letting them fall to her side. He cleared his throat pointedly and she raised her hands, lacing her fingers together at the back of her neck.

"I won't tell you how to feel about your body. That's not my place, or anyone's place. Though I suspect some asshole did or said something to make you feel self-conscious."

"Honestly it's mostly society in general."

“Fucking society. Those shits.”

Tara laughed.

“But please believe me when I say that I personally find your body incredibly appealing. If there are parts of you that you don’t want me to touch, we can make that a hard limit.” He ran his hands side to side along her lower belly, occasionally feeling her tremble.

“No,” she murmured. “I don’t want to stop you from touching any part of me. I guess in a way, I’m used to Doms going right for erogenous zones. It’s...unexpectedly intimate to have someone touch my stomach, or my legs, or even my upper arms. All the places that don’t normally get touched.”

“Before, when you leaned away from me, was that about this?” He gently squeezed her.

She nodded with a sigh. “You were kind of tucking your fingers underneath my fat roll where it lay on my thigh.”

Nathan stared at her legs and hips. Yes, a little bit of her torso skin was resting on her thighs. But she was seated. Wasn’t that normal?

He cleared his throat. “To be clear, we are not going to refer to this sexy little area right here as a fat roll.” He ran his palms up her thighs until his fingers hit the “roll” in question. Pressing his palms flat against her lower belly, fingers splayed out along her hips, he squeezed. The hip straps of her fetwear were still in place and already compressing her flesh. Now his fingers joined in, making her lower body a study of soft flesh trapped by stiff straps and hard fingers.

“You see this?” He jiggled his hands, making her flesh ripple. “This is sexy as shit.”

“I want so desperately to believe you,” she murmured.

“And I want you to believe me when I say things like this.” He shifted one hand, sliding it up inside of her thigh. “But I know you. And words aren’t going to make you believe me. So I’ll just use this pretty body exactly the way I want.”

For the first time, he cupped her pussy, the latex slick under his palm, the heat of her almost scorching.

Tara’s head fell back, her tongue darting out to lick her lips.

“I’m going to use you as if you were my personal sex doll. Made just for me, exactly to my specifications.”

“It’s probably messed up how hot I find this.”

“Baby, we each spend five figures a month to be members of a semi-secret BDSM club. Messed up is where we’re most comfortable.”

This time, she didn’t laugh, though he saw the small smile play around her lips. Instead, she rocked her hips gently against his hand. Her arousal fluid leaked out around the latex gusset of the fetwear.

Nathan positioned the tip of his index finger in the center of the latex panel and pressed up slightly. It was thin latex, thin enough that he could tell her pussy lips were already parted. Spread either by the position of her legs or due to arousal plumping that sweet flesh.

He couldn’t wait to look. To see how pretty she was there.

He ran his finger along the valley of her sex, feeling the contours of her body. He

knew when he hit her clit, not just from the slight bump under his finger but in the way she froze.

She held her breath until he circled her clit, molding the latex to her. Tara groaned. It was a guttural sound without artifice—not a sexy sound but an honest one. He preferred honest. He didn't want any woman he was with, and especially not Tara, to mewl and pant and whimper because that's what she thought she should do, or what she thought he wanted.

“This pussy feels very wet.”

“It is, Sir.”

Again, the seamless transition back to a D/s dynamic.

He ached with the need to speed this up. To use her in order to pleasure her.

But it was the game that brought them together. The least he could do is play. Especially when it meant playing with her.

Nathan kept his hand on her thigh as he twisted, hooking his arm over the back of the small couch.

“Hey,” he called out to no one in particular. “Can someone bring me some feathers?”

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*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

Feathers.

Tara didn't want to admit how long it took her to figure out what letter T item would require feathers. When she did figure it out, she hid a grimace.

Tickling.

She hadn't really given much thought to tickling when it came to BDSM, but she understood how it slotted into sensation play. She had a few reservations, because she'd heard that sometimes tickling was tied to scenes where there was also age-play, and that was, for her, too far.

One of her favorite sounds in the world was the deep belly laughs and uncontrolled giggles of her nieces and nephews when she ticked them or blew "bubble farts" on their bellies. That mentally categorized tickling as a nonsexual activity for her.

However, she was fairly sure she hadn't put tickling on her hard limit list. Her nieces and nephews were toddler through first-grade aged, which meant she'd filled out her checklist when they were infants. Long before the word "tickle" became associated in her mind with cries of "tickle me, mausi !"

Nathan had a quick, whispered conversation with the Dom who'd responded to his call for help, turning back to her when the man walked away.

Nathan smiled at her, the expression achingly familiar, and then his gaze slid from her face down to her bare breasts, smile turning into a pleased Dom-smirk that made her tense even as her pussy clenched.

“You have lovely breasts.”

The muscles in her upper arms fluttered as she fought twin urges to either bring her elbows forward in a hunch to hide herself, or to press her elbows back, lifting and offering her breasts.

“It’s a shame what I have planned for them.”

A mildly horrified thrill ran down her back. “What do you have planned?”

“T.” He raised one brow.

“Tit torture,” she said on an exhale.

He nodded.

“But first tickling,” she said, not hiding her grimace.

Nathan made a noise best described as “gack” as he reared back, leaning hard into the couch. “Tickling? Shit no.”

Tara couldn’t stop the smile at his over-the-top reaction, even as she said, “Isn’t that what the feather is for?”

Nathan gripped her thighs hard, and instead of making her self-conscious about their size and squishiness, the hold, especially the pressure, felt good.

“Tickling...” Nathan made a dramatic gagging noise.

“Alright, calm down.” Tara dropped her hands to prop them on her hips and shook her head at his dramatics, though she was still smiling.



“Let me just compartmentalize my horror.” He mimed putting something in a box. “I expect you to pay for my therapy.”

She’d forgotten he could be like this, totally goofy and ridiculous. It was almost like looking into the past, at the young man she’d first met. Not that witty-banter adult Nathan was a bad thing. It was more that when they talked, usually it was work-based, and she got the sharp-intellected, serious-scientist Nathan.

In recent years, this goofy version came out only they were at a wedding and some ridiculous song came on, and he busted out the purposefully terrible dance moves.

“No tickling,” she said, half question.

“I’d rather put my dick in a blender than either tickle someone or be tickled.”

She couldn’t stop her gaze from dropping to his crotch.

This was Nathan. Her best friend. Her oldest friend. And yes, she was straddling his lap, mostly naked, after having been spanked, but thinking about his cock seemed?—

“Hey, come back. Get out of your head, Tara.”

Tara’s gaze snapped up to his.

He cupped her cheek. “Stay here, in this moment, with me.”

Emotion swelled, and her throat tightened as if she were about to cry again.

Nathan grabbed her wrists in his big hands. She expected him to guide her arms back into position, and was already starting to lift them.

Instead, he jerked her arms forward and down. Her upper chest and shoulder hit his chest as she was yanked forward, her cheek sliding against his before her face settled against his neck. He pressed her hands against the cushion on either side of his hips and then pulled his arms free, wrapping one around her back.

Her ass had lifted off his knees when he pulled her forward, and now his arm around her kept her in that position, butt elevated several inches.

His free hand came down on her ass in a hard swat.

Tara sucked in air, eyes wide in shock, and yes, pain. That hurt. Her poor abused bottom had only just stopped throbbing, and now he was lighting her up again.

He tightened his hold, reaching across her back to spank her other cheek.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” she yelped, jamming her shoulders and neck harder against him.

“What are you sorry for?”

“For dropping my hands.”

“Nope.” Another spank.

“For—”

Again, he spanked her, and that made two on each side. This was genuine pain, and yet her pussy throbbed.

“I’m sorry for getting lost in my thoughts and worries,” she said against his neck in a rush, pressing her face to the soft skin under his ear.

“That’s right, sweetheart.”

Baby. Sweetheart. Both names felt good, when she knew they shouldn’t.

He eased her back into a sitting position, and she kept her head bowed, shivering as fresh pain swept through her, once her butt made contact with his hard legs. She laced her hands together behind her neck.

“Look at me.”

Tara looked at him through her lashes, her body feeling soft and heavy with submission and need.

Nathan cupped her breasts, swiping his thumbs across her nipples. Pleasure transformed pain’s remnants, until the throbbing in her lower body wasn’t from the spanking but an extension of the pulsing need that throbbed through her.

“Better?” he asked.

“Yes, thank you, Sir.”

“How does your bottom feel?”

“It hurts.”

“You can do better than that.”

“It feels hot and raw. The skin is tender, but there’s a deeper ache too.”

He made a noncommittal humming noise as he once more cupped her breasts, idly thumbing her nipples. What fell between them wasn’t silence but a soft calm filled

with the sound of her quiet moans of pleasure and need.

“Here you go,” a male voice said.

Tara opened her eyes as Nathan released her breasts, reaching up and back to take what looked like a small feather duster from the Dom standing behind the couch.

“Thanks, man.”

“You’re welcome.”

The toy had a molded, dark-wood handle. Feathers of different sizes and shapes flared from the end, and when he held it straight up, it looked like a black and red bouquet.

“Tickling is on my hard limit list, if you hadn’t already figured that out. Sorry if that’s something you were looking forward to.” Nathan tested the feathers against his left arm, frowning in concentration.

“It wasn’t. I was planning to tell you that I would have changed it to ‘no’ had I known about the game and had a chance to review my list.”

“I’m glad I won’t leave your tickle fetish unsatisfied.” He held the toy parallel to the floor and twirled it so the outer ring of feathers brushed his skin.

“That looks a lot like tickling,” she said, unable to keep the comment to herself.

“I know, I’m assessing the least tickly way to use the teaser.”

“Teaser? Is teasing one of our items.”

“Yes.”

Tara opened her mouth, closed it, thought, then with a rush said, “What does that mean?”

Nathan looked at her, the hand holding the teaser dropping to the couch while his other palm landed on her thigh, squeezing with that deep pressure she liked.

“What does teasing mean?” he asked slowly.

“Obviously I know what the word means, but in a BDSM context...” She shrugged, hiding a smile at the way his eyes dropped to her breasts for a moment. “Isn’t teasing...edging?”

“It could be. I certainly think if I decided to edge you for a few hours and call it teasing, no one would tell me I was wrong.”

Tara genuinely wasn’t sure if she loved or hated that idea, and it must have shown on her face because he smirked.

“But my interpretation of the prompt is that while edging requires intense stimulation specifically intended to make you orgasm, teasing includes touches and activities that wouldn’t necessarily bring you to orgasm on their own.”

The slightly formal, scientific way he spoke made it perfectly clear, at least to Tara, that he’d put serious analytical thought into this.

His voice dropped to a low, seductive rumble. “So I could tease you like this.”

Nathan leaned and down, his nose brushing the top of her breast. Warm, damp breath washed over her nipple. Tara closed her eyes, holding still in anticipation of feeling

his lips and teeth closing around the tip of her breast.

There was a rush of cold that made her shiver as he inhaled, the action causing cool air to steam around her nipple, only to be replaced by his warm breath a moment later when he exhaled.

Her nipple was already hard and sensitive, given the arousal that was a constant low ache in her gut.

Her stomach was tight with anticipation, her pussy throbbing and hot as she took shallow breaths, her attention focused on her left nipple.

It wasn't until he exhaled for the fifth time that her need-addled brain realized the touch she craved wasn't coming. Her nipple was in his mouth, but he wasn't touching it. No sucking, biting, or licking.

This was his version of "teasing"—his open mouth poised at her nipple, letting her feel his breath, but not actually touching her.

"No," she breathed in horror.

A low chuckle rumbled through him. Nathan gripped her hips, forcing her to kneel up, her ass no longer resting on his legs, her thighs spread wide. She swayed a little, hoping she could bump her nipple against his lips, tongue, or teeth, but though he kept his head close to her breast, he was careful not to touch her.

The gentle tips of feathers slid over her ass. Her spanking-sensitized skin felt the soft brushing caress acutely.

He repeated the caress, the touch almost irritating it was so light, and nearly lost under the sensation of his hot breath fanning over her nipple.

Nathan lifted his head from her breast, studying her with eyes that glittered with intensity. She inhaled sharply as she held his gaze, feeling raw and exposed in a way that had nothing to do with physical nudity.

Without a word, he switched to her other breast, placing his open mouth over her nipple.

She shivered, the tip of the breast he'd just abandoned cold after the loss of his heat. Her nipple was hard and erect, her areola crinkled from the chill.

The feathered teaser danced up the front and side of her thigh, ghosting over her hip. He stopped there, skipping the ticklish skin at her waist, and instead flicking her tight nipple with the very tip of the longest feather.

Tara clenched her fingers together so tight they started to ache. It was the only way to combat this desperate need to grab him.

Every muscle in her shoulders and arms was tense with the need to force him to touch her.

Nathan must have sensed her tension, or maybe he could feel the tightening of the muscles along her back, because he lifted his head, once more meeting her gaze.

This time, the intensity was dialed back, masked by shrewd assessment.

“You don’t like teasing?”

“I expected it to be frustrating,” she said. “I didn’t expect it to make me angry.”

“Angry?”

“Yes.” She shook her head, grimacing. “I know I’m not the most patient person?—”

Nathan burst out laughing.

“Is the laughter really necessary?” She had to fight a smile but managed to keep her voice dry.

“Necessary?” Nathan leaned back, resting his head along the back of the couch. He scooted his hips forward a little bit, bumping against her inner thighs and almost touching her aching pussy. “No, it’s not necessary. But an understatement of that caliber deserves recognition.”

“At least I’m self-aware.”

“True.” Nathan’s gaze slid from her face down to her breasts, then lower still.

He lifted the feathered teaser, flicking it with short quick motions so that the feathers gently lashed her breasts. She leaned in trying to increase the sensation.

“You’re right,” he murmured. “You look more than just frustrated.”

“I guess frustrated and angry aren’t far apart.”

“You make me want to do something I’ve never done before,” Nathan said.

That had Tara going still, tension and anticipation freezing her in place.

“And what’s that?”

“I want to tease you until you’re so angry that you lash out. I want to push you to behave badly.”



“I thought you didn’t need an excuse to punish me.”

“I don’t. That’s what makes this odd.” He looked deceptively casual with his head resting against the back of the couch, looking at her from beneath half-lowered lids.

“But some fucked-up part of me wants you to try and fight me.”

Tara’s eyes widened.

“I want you to fight me so I can hold you down. Make sure you feel exactly how helpless you are because I’m more physically powerful than you.”

His words were shocking, but shock was not her primary reaction. Desperate arousal clawed her, clenching every muscle in her body. She felt fresh arousal fluid between her labia, and pool against the latex panties.

“That’s not normally part of my scenes. Not how I play,” he said softly.

“No,” she said in agreement. “It’s not something I look for either.”

Nathan sat up tossing aside the teaser and gripping her hips. “But?”

“But,” she agreed.

Neither one of them completed the thought.

But with you I want it.

But I trust you enough to do it.

Nathan cupped her breasts, thumbs pressed to the lower curve of her areola just below the nipple. Tara groaned between clenched teeth.

“You deserve to be teased.” Nathan’s voice was so low she almost wondered if he was talking to himself, the words not meant for her. “You deserve to experience this game and our items the way they were intended.”

She wanted to interject but stayed quiet, watching him as he looked at her breasts, cupped in his big hands.

“The problem is me. I can’t do it.” Finally he looked up. “I can’t tease you. I want you too much.”

Tara made a soft whimpering sound of need that would have embarrassed her in any other situation.

Nathan gripped her hips, fingers digging in. “Saying I should tease you is like asking a starving man to have a glass of water when there’s a feast waiting for him.”

Nathan’s thumbs slid over her nipples, pressing hard enough that her whole breast indented. Then he dropped his hands, palms skimming down her body before he rested his long arms along the back of the couch.

“Last chance to back out.” His voice was low and rough with need.

“Last chance?”

A smile flickered across his face, lightening the intense expression, though his gaze still slid over her mostly naked body in a way that was distinctly possessive and appreciative.

“Well, last chance, unless you ask me to stop, use a safe word, etc,” he amended.

“And if I don’t back out?”

“You want me to tell you what I have planned for you?”

“Yes.”

“Too bad.” Another grin. “In or out, Patel?”

“In,” she said without hesitation.

“Good girl. Now stand up.”

He guided her into a standing position. He didn’t let go, sitting forward and holding her hips as she shook out her legs. She wasn’t as young as she once was, holding a kneeling position more difficult now.

“You can drop your arms.”

He rose as she shook out her arms, and then Nathan laced his fingers with hers.

“Trust me?”

“Yes.”

“Then it’s time to go.”

*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

Given that the entire club had shown up for the game announcement, it wasn't surprising that they didn't end up in a playroom off one of the three named courtyards. Instead, Nathan led her to a bedroom in the separate hotel-esque building on the expansive Las Palmas grounds.

What the room lacked in specialized BDSM furniture, trunks full of equipment, and dramatic lighting, it made up for with a relaxed, intimate feel. The dark-wood floor and exposed beams contrasted with the pillowy white linens and plethora of fat white pillar candles.

Most of the candles had turned on with the flick of a switch. Only the half dozen candles safely inside tall, straight-sided glass holders on the heavy wood mantle above the Spanish-tile fireplace were real. Those Nathan lit with a long-necked lighter, and the faint scent of cedar and wax filled the air.

A wide, black iron candelabra, probably meant to go down the center of a mission-style dining table, was set in the fireplace, in place of logs. The glow from the battery-operated pillar candles set on each wax pan was nearly indistinguishable from the glow coming from the real candles, and together, they cast a half-moon of warm light over the floor in front of the fireplace.

If Tara had been even slightly less aroused, she would have campaigned for them to put on comfy robes and take a seat by the fireplace. There was one overstuffed piece of furniture, either a very wide armchair, or a narrow love seat, set at an angle facing the fireplace. It was enough for two, though they'd be squished.

Tara could picture it. Nathan would slouch back, his long legs sprawled and spread.

She'd sit sideways, her legs across his, her butt nestled into the space between his thigh and the arm. Then he could prop his book on her leg. They'd done it before, most recently when they were stuck together at an airport and had found themselves a quiet corner. She'd laid out her shawl to protect herself from the dirty airport carpet and lay down, legs draped over his thighs, and he'd propped a book on her shins. Normally she wouldn't have been able to sleep on the floor of an airport, surrounded by sound and strangers, but she'd drifted into a light sleep because Nathan was there, and she'd known she was safe.

Steering away from that thought, she rubbed her arms to get rid of the goose bumps. He'd helped her put on her shoes and robe before they left the library, but the thin robe wasn't much defense against the light breeze that swept over the open ground between the main courtyards and this building. Though all around them were the soft hills of the Malibu canyons, the ocean wasn't far away; its presence making itself known in the slight bite of cold contained in the breeze, cutting through an otherwise warm night.

Nathan turned to face her, closing the drawer in the waist-high dresser he'd been peering into. "Cold?"

"Not really."

"Then take off the robe."

The walk had taken the edge off her arousal, and she'd expected some transition to ease back into the scene—a conversation, maybe some light touches.

But his tone was low and serious, his brows pinched in a frown as he looked at her robe.

Tara slowly undid the knot in the sash, then paused, remembering what he'd said

back in the library.

I want you to fight me so I can hold you down. Make sure you feel exactly how helpless you are because I'm more physically powerful than you.

Tara looked at him from under her lashes. "Make me."

Nathan inhaled hard, eyes going wide as his gaze jerked up to hers. Tara lifted her chin, looking at him in challenge rather than submission. He took a step toward her, but paused, still hesitant.

They'd both admitted this wasn't normally how they played, but she wanted this. Wanted it so badly that the want made her reckless and wild.

Even within the safety and structure of a BDSM scene, she wouldn't have agreed to something like this with anyone but Nathan. Nathan who always had, and maybe always would, make her feel safe.

She wasn't even sure what the term was for what she wanted—was this primal play? Some sort of intro consensual non-consent? The part of her brain that was always running and analyzing wanted to ask, to define this liquid-heat need to confront him, challenge him, until he took control.

A larger part of her, mostly her pussy, told her brain to shut up and not ruin this for them.

Tara dipped her chin in the tiniest of nods, confirming that this is what she wanted.

Nathan lunged.

She'd expected him to move, but his speed shocked her, and on instinct, Tara

scrambled back a few steps, back smacking into the wall.

Nathan's hands slapped the wall on either side of her head, the sound shocking. She sucked in air and stared at his lips.

When they quirked in a smile, she leaned forward and bit his lower lip, just hard enough to make him jerk back in surprise. Then she ducked under his arm, racing for the door to the bathroom.

Nathan made a sound low in his chest. It was probably technically a groan, but her brain decided to label it a growl, and that made her nipples hard. New fetish unlocked, apparently.

But was it really a new fetish if she was already sure that the only person she'd ever want to explore it with was her best friend? Could a fetish be tied to a single person?

"Your ass ready for what's about to happen when I catch you?"

Tara grabbed the mission-style footboard of the bed as she passed it, using it as a pivot point to turn to face him. "Is that what you're going to do if you catch me?" she taunted. "Another spanking?"

Nathan stalked forward one step at a time, like a big cat. This was how she'd expected him to come at her before. "Among other things."

"You keep mentioning these other things." Tara took two sideways steps as he approached the foot of the bed. There was a three-foot gap between the headboard and the wall. The bed wasn't exactly centered in the room, but its placement allowed Doms and Masters easy access to the restraint points in the headboard, and every part of whomever they had on the bed.

She wanted to be that person on the bed, enough that she seriously considered abandoning this game of cat and mouse to throw herself onto the mattress like a good submissive, in the hope that it would get his hands on her faster.

As Nathan took another slow, deliberate step—one she matched with a sideways step toward the head of the bed—she dismissed the idea. She had, and would, willingly give him control, but right now she wanted him to take it.

“Your ass won’t be the only thing I spank,” he assured her.

That caused her to pause and think, and Nathan gained a step.

“Tit spanking?”

“Tit torture actually. So you might want to run.” Nathan lunged, once again startling her into flight.

Tara rounded the top corner of the bed, the soles of her flats slipping a little on the hardwood floor. She took a second to kick them off and that ended up being her downfall.

Nathan had reversed course while she’d been looking at her feet. She’d expected him to be behind her, so the instant her shoes were off, she sprinted forward, rounding the other top corner. But Nathan had doubled back around the foot of the bed.

Tara yelped when she realized he was in front of her and tried to backpedal.

Long arms reached out, gripping her shoulders. He yanked her forward, her chest slapping against his, her head tipped back so she could look up at him, her gaze sliding down to his lips then back up to his eyes. Tara grabbed his hips, digging her fingers into the leather, but didn’t try to push him away.



Nathan smiled, spun them both a quarter turn, and shoved her back. Tara fell onto the bed, her back arched, toes on the floor. Her hands lost their hold on him to bounce down at her sides.

Then Nathan was on top of her, strong hands wrapping around her wrists and pinning her hands beside her head. The toe of one boot wiggled between her bare ankles and kicked her legs wide.

Tara tugged against his hold, even as she raised her legs, hooking her ankles together behind his back. He sank forward, the leather of his pants squeaking against the vinyl gusset that covered her pussy. The pressure against her sex, her clit, was enough to have her moaning and arching up into him even as she continued a perfunctory struggle against his hold on her wrists.

Nathan slid her hands up above her head, stacking her wrists so he could grip them both in one hand. His now-free hand gripped her face, palm under her chin, his fingers and thumb pressing into her cheeks. Tara panted through parted lips, only to have Nathan apply pressure, forcing her mouth open wider.

The way he was touching her would have been horrifying in any other circumstance, and with any other man. With Nathan, it made her almost feverish with arousal. A flush swept down her body, and she moaned low in her throat.

Nathan forced her chin up and to the side, exposing her neck. He kissed her just under her ear, then licked the flesh he'd just kissed.

Her arousal must have made her hypersensitive. Her neck was always responsive to touches, but the sweep of Nathan's tongue felt like she'd been zapped with a live wire. Tara gasped through forcibly parted lips and tried to hunch her shoulder up into her neck to hide the erogenous zone.

Nathan let out another growl-like sound and buried his face against her neck, forcing her shoulder down. The slight stubble on his chin rasped against the base of her neck, the robe she still wore preventing her from feeling his touch on her shoulder. He kissed her below the ear before dragging his lips along the underside of her jaw. A heavy shiver shook her.

“Sensitive here,” he murmured.

“Not normally this sensitive,” she mumbled, not really able to talk, given that he still gripped her face.

Nathan adjusted his hold, now tenderly cupping one cheek before sliding his thumb into her mouth.

“Suck.”

She sucked and licked his thumb, desperate and needy, then stilled and whimpering when he went back to kissing and licking that spot high on her neck. Again and again, she shivered in reaction to the soft touches on sensitive skin.

Coupled with the way he held her down, the weight of his body on hers had Tara lightheaded with need. She felt wild and reckless, but also terribly, deeply submissive.

He pulled his thumb from her mouth, lifting up so he could look down at her. He fiddled with the knot in the belt of her robe for only a moment before giving up and simply yanking each side of the robe open, exposing her bare breasts.

He swiped his wet thumb over each nipple, the touch too quick for her to really enjoy, but the slight chill it left behind made her feel deliciously vulnerable.

“I think I’ll start with a taste.” The words were so soft and low she wasn’t even sure if he was talking to her or himself.

Planting his hand beside her waist, Nathan lowered his head, kissing her sternum before sliding his lips along her breast to her nipple. The teasing back in the library had been torturous, and for a moment, she thought it would continue and she’d feel nothing but his hot breath.

Nathan’s tongue swirled around her in a long, slow lick.

Tara let out a moan that was half relief, half pleasure. Waiting for this had become its own sort of torture. Maybe she could tell him that, make the case that the teasing and waiting together satisfied the tit torture requirement.

Except that the waiting also made her want. Want touched both tender and cruel. She wanted to know what he would do to her breasts. What this smart, kind, dominant man would classify as torture.

He lifted his head, blowing on her now-wet areola. The skin rucked up tight around her hard nipple. A shiver worked its way down her.

“Cold?”

“No, Sir.”

Nathan made pleased noises, then took the tip of her nipple between his teeth, biting gently and tugging. He lifted his head. At first just enough to stretch her nipple, her tightened areola having to relax. Then he kept going, lifting so the weight of her tit was pulling on her nipple. Pain and pleasure nipped at her, and she arched her back to relieve some of the weight. Her eyes had slid closed, but now she opened them, staring at the sight of her distended breast and the contrast between her flesh and his

white teeth.

Nathan's thick lashes partially veiled his gaze as he looked at her, his teeth firmly holding her nipple in a delicate but inescapable bite. He touched the very tip of her nipple with his tongue. The touch was so precise and focused that the resulting jolt almost felt like pain. Except her pussy throbbed with need.

"Oh, oh, oh," she panted. "That's... I..."

Nathan released her nipple, her breast jiggling as the soft mass shifted. Transferring his attention to her other breast, he licked the peak, his soft, wet tongue dragging over sensitive flesh. He blew over the tip of her breast, but she was so warm from arousal that this time, her areola didn't bunch tight around the tip of her breast.

He made a displeased sound, and when he bit her nipple, it was harder than what he'd done to the other breast. Rather than just a firm holding pinch, this came with a bite of true pain. Pain that had her arching up into him, seeking more.

He lifted his head, stretching her breast. It started to throb just as he applied the pointed tip of his tongue to the flat end of her nipple. Pleasure zinged through her, sharp and unexpected, and for a moment, she thought was going to come from this alone. She held perfectly still, even holding her breath as she focused on the feeling.

Muscles low in her torso clenched, as did her vagina, the pleasure quick but soft.

Nathan must have noticed her stillness because he released her breast, which bounced and jiggled.

"Did you just come?"

"I'm not sure," she said honestly. "It wasn't an orgasm orgasm but it was really

close.”

Nathan’s satisfied smirk would have been irritating on anyone else. “Maybe I should suggest to the overseers that we add tit orgasm to the checklist under T.”

“Maybe you should check to see if the experiment can be replicated.”

“And then some peer review.”

Tara stared up at him, fighting a smile. When he didn’t say more, she arched a brow. “No double entendre about how you’re my peer and going to review this?” She motioned at her own naked body with her chin.

“No. Because I’m not your peer. Not right now.”

Once more, with dizzying ease, they’d slipped from the scene, to friendship, and now back to scene. Submission slid over her like a warm shadow, and Tara went pliant under him, her body soft except for her legs which were still hooked around his waist.

“Who am I to you Tara?”

Alarm bells went off in the back of her mind because that question felt heavy and dangerous.

For one terrifying moment, she wanted to be brutally honest. If she was, the answer would be “my safe place.”

Also true but less dangerous was, “my best friend.”

More situationally appropriate, but no less dangerous was, “my master.” Within the community, there were different uses of the word. For some, it was the ultimate sign

of submission, that also signaled a permanence and formality in the relationship. For others, it was a title of respect.

For her, it was a sign of trust, because in her mind, there were things she'd let her master do to her that she wouldn't allow with someone who was merely a scene partner. And the fact that she wanted to use it with Nathan, when they'd barely started, was insane.

In the end, Tara went for a safe, and only slightly dangerous answer. "My Dom."

Nathan stared at her for a moment and she couldn't help but think that he was disappointed.

"That's right," he said in that low, dominant tone. "Which means I'm going to play with..." Another smirk. "No, not play. I'm going to torture these pretty tits."

Tara held her breath, waiting, but Nathan pushed up to standing, reaching back to uncurl her legs from around his waist, and hooking his elbows under her knees, holding her legs up, knees spread wide.

"Knees or on your feet?" he asked, tone making it clear he was asking a logistical question rather than teasing or tormenting.

It took her a minute to process his question, her attention held by anticipation. She was all too aware of her vulnerable, naked breasts framed by the sides of her robe. She hadn't moved her arms even though he'd released her wrists, so her tits were unguarded, her nipples sensitive from the touch of tongue and teeth, and throbbing faintly from being stretched.

"Feet," she said after an awkwardly long pause, shaking her head as if that would jolt her brain into working.

Nathan lowered her legs, but given the height of the mattress, once her toes touched down, it forced her back into a high, uncomfortable arch. She started to prop herself up on her elbows, but Nathan's hands were sliding under her—one under her back, the other cupping her neck. He raised her upper body until she was half sitting, half leaning on the side of the bed.

“You’re unexpectedly good at manhandling,” she breathed.

He pushed her robe off her shoulders. “I’m not sure if I should say thank you for the compliment, or be insulted that you thought I had such a loose grasp of physics that I wouldn’t be able to figure out how to move another person around.”

Tara’s gaze dropped to his arms as she undid the knot in the robe sash. “It’s not just physics. You’re...muscly.”

“I kind of like that after all these years I can still surprise you.”

And I’m going to surprise you, when I tell you what I’m doing with my life.

Nathan stepped back, and she watched as he prepared. An iron chandelier with faux candlelights proved to be more than just lighting when Nathan tossed white nylon rope over one of the crosspieces and gave it a tug, looking satisfied when it didn’t move.

He rooted around in a drawer for a few minutes, carefully laying out the things he wanted on top of the dresser. He didn’t hide anything from her, but at the same time, the candlelight didn’t provide enough illumination in that part of the room for her to see the smaller items, though some had a metallic glint that made her think nipple clamps.

She could clearly see a flogger and variety of crops.

When Nathan turned, she craned to get a better view at his selections, not looking at him even as he returned to the bed, lifted her arm, and buckled a cuff around her wrist.

“Looking for spoilers?” he asked.

“Is it meant to be a surprise?”

“No surprises,” he said more seriously, fastening the other cuff. “Not with this.”



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Nathan hooked his index fingers through the rings sewn into the thick leather cuffs, pulling her with him as he backed up.

They stopped under the chandelier. She held her wrists out at waist height as he threaded one end of the rope through both cuffs and pulled, drawing her wrists up.

“This is quick release,” he said as he started to tie the rope to itself in one of those complicated knots all Doms and Masters seemed to love. “If you need a break, just say so.”

Tara looked up at her bound hands which were stretched above her head, but not pulled so tight that it forced her upper arms against her ears, or would stress her shoulders or wrists. “I’ll let you know if I plan to dramatically collapse in my bonds. I don’t want to pull that thing down on my head.”

Nathan laughed, the corners of his eyes crinkling. “Dramatically collapse in your bonds? I kind of want to make that happen, but while this fixture is secure, I don’t know if it’s suspension-play level secure, so please let me know if dramatic collapse is imminent.” He finished looping and tucking the excess rope to keep it out of the way.

“I will let you know,” Tara agreed solemnly.

“Okay, I’ll be right back.” His lips twitched. “Stay here.”

Tara tensed, but she shook it off, one brow arching. “You’re leaving?” She was fairly certain the question had seemed nicely casual.

“I am. Because you’re short.”

At that, Tara sputtered in outrage, remembered anxiety forgotten. Nathan slipped out, leaving the door cracked. She listened to his quick footsteps retreat, then return. He toed the door open, carried in a counter-height stool, then closed the door. He set the stool in front of her, legs spread and braced so she now occupied the space between his knees.

Nathan gestured at himself. “Like I said, you’re short. This way, I don’t have to bend over or reach up the way I would in a regular chair.”

“I would hate for your arms to get tired while you were torturing my breasts.”

“Right?” Nathan grinned and grabbed her hips, yanking her forward a half step, until her thighs were wedged between his. He leaned in, burrowing his face between her breasts. The way he exhaled seemed almost like relief—the kind of relief someone felt when they came home at the end of a long day and lay on the couch.

She wished she had a hand free to stroke his hair, maybe cradle his head there. Hold him. Keep him.

Nathan turned his head, his silky hair brushing against the inner curve of her left breast. He kissed and licked her right breast, and the tender feeling faded as arousal surged to the forefront.

Tara twisted, trying to guide her nipple into his mouth, which was currently placing open-mouthed kisses along the inner curve of her tit.

A sharp spank sent her up on her toes with a gasp. Nathan’s face was still hidden against her breast, but she felt him smile.

“The rope is quick release. I can easily put you over my knee if it will help you remember who is in control.”

“Sorry, Sir,” she breathed.

He lifted his head. “I want to try something.”

“You’ve mentioned that. Several times.”

Another smile. “Something different.” The smile faded. “I want you to use my name. Instead of ‘Sir’ or...any other title.”

Tara hid her surprise, studying his face. He was frowning slightly, looking at her waist rather than her face or breasts, as if he were embarrassed by the request.

“Yes, Nathan.” She shivered unexpectedly. Nathan. Her friend. Now, at least temporarily, her Dom.

The last Dom she’d ever have.

His fingers flexed against her, digging in to her hips. He let out a heavy breath, then leaned in and sucked her nipple into his mouth.

Tara’s head fell back as he switched from sucking to biting and tugging. He teased her with tongue and teeth, always changing to keep the sensation fresh. Back to sucking, then biting gently.

Her heartbeat thudded in her ears, her face muscles aching as she screwed up her face, eyes closed so she could better concentrate on the feelings. Her pussy clenched each time a particularly effective touch made euphoria prickle through her like the trailing sparks of a firework. He cupped her free breast, taking the weight of her tit in

his big hand and digging his fingers in until her flesh plumped between them.

Distracted by the pleasure of his mouth and hands on her breasts, the spank took her by surprise. Tara lurched with a yelp as his hands smacked her ass. Given that her nipple was held gently between his teeth when she moved, the resulting flare of pain from her nipple matched that of the sting on her bottom.

“Thank me,” he murmured against her.

“Thank you, Nathan,” she stammered out, nipple aching.

“Shit,” he breathed. “I like that.”

Before she could ask him why he sounded so distressed at the admission, he was gone, jerking up from the stool and striding to the other side of the room, where he paused only momentarily before returning.

“Time to torture these pretty tits.” He held up a roll of black electrician’s tape, showing it to her.

It took Tara a moment to process what he’d just said. It felt like she had whiplash from the quick shift in the energy from soft and almost longing, to brusque and focused. “Tape?” she finally managed. “Is that one of the items?”

“No. I just like the look.”

Tara wasn’t actually sure what he was planning to do with the tape. In the few public BDSM clubs she’d been to, quite often, women wore Xs of electrical tape over their nipples to technically avoid being nude. Maybe he was going to cover her nipples, and just focus on the rest of her breasts.

The tape made a satisfying noise as Nathan peeled off a long piece, but he didn't tear or cut it off.

He stuck the end of the tape against the inside of her right breast, making sure it adhered with quick presses of his fingers. Holding the tape roll with his left hand, he pinched her nipple with the right and lifted her breast. Sweet pain flared as her nipple was forced to bear the weight of her tit.

Nathan ran the tape under her breast, up the outer side, across the top, and then over the starting point, circling the base of her tit with a band of heavy black tape.

He kept going, overlapping the stretchy tape until he'd created a two-inch-wide black band that turned her breast into a tight, round ball, forced up off her chest wall.

Then he switched to the other breast, repeating the bondage.

When he was done, both breasts were lewdly on display. Round, firm, and protruding rather than the soft teardrop shape that was natural to her.

Nathan pressed the back of his hand against each breast in turn, checking the temperature. "You'll tell me if anything starts to pinch, or you stop being able to feel what I'm doing."

"Yes, Nathan."

"Good girl."

Nathan settled onto the stool and stroked and petted her breasts, while Tara wondered how he was going to use nipple clamps, given that the bondage had caused her nipples to go flat.

He took her nipples between his thumbs and the knuckle of his index fingers, able to easily pinch them despite their non-erect state. Clamps weren't going to be a problem.

He twisted her nipples, and Tara let her head fall back, staring sightlessly up at the ceiling as she processed the feeling. There was a tight, stretching sensation in her breasts that was entirely new. Because her nipples weren't hard, it also felt like he wasn't pinching her whole nipple, which added an unsettling, incomplete feeling that had her longing for him to do more.

Touch her, hurt her, more.

The clamps would be interesting if this was how she felt just from his fingers.

But the gleaming silver toy he brought over wasn't nipple clamps.

"Do you know what this is?" Nathan held up the item he'd retrieved as he settled back on the stool.

The small device had a long silver handle that ended in a small pizza-cutter-like wheel, but instead of a blade, the edge of the disk was metal spikes.

"Pinwheel," she said, though she was fairly certain it had a technical name.

"This is medical grade, making it a Wartenburg wheel. Mostly used to test patients for neuropathy. The small pins allow for precision accuracy when mapping nerve damage."

"You're using your lecture voice, and it's way hotter than it should be."

Nathan grinned at her. "Glad you like it."

He placed the wheel on the underside of her right breast then slowly rolled it up over the curve. He avoided her nipple but caught the edge of her areola.

The tiny pinpricks were precise and relentless, yet frustrating.

“Again, Nathan, again,” she pleaded, eyes closed so she could focus on the feeling.

Once more, a path of pinpricks ran up her breast, but this time he was pressing harder, the pins indenting her skin. Tara hissed, going up on her toes.

“Heels down,” Nathan commanded.

Tara dropped, heels hitting hard.

“Open your eyes.”

Tara did, looking first at his familiar face. The heat and need in his gaze might be new, but she was rapidly coming to appreciate it.

Nathan held up another wheel, but unlike the first one, this one had multiple disks of wicked pins. It looked like a tiny version of something used to aerate a lawn.

“Watch. I want you to watch as I use this on you.”

Nathan positioned the wheel on the underside of her breast, pushing up, so for a moment, the weight of her bound breast rested on the pins.

Then he rolled it up the curve of her tit, passing right over her nipple. Pain exploded through her as the plethora of small spikes dug directly into her nipple. It stole her breath, overwhelming her as her mind struggled to put a label on what she was feeling.

If her mind would settle, her brain categorized this moment either as pleasure, pain, or normal pleasure-pain.

He did it again.

And again.

There was no label, no clear category for what he was doing to her. Pleasure and pain existed on a linear continuum, where one morphed into another.

The sting of a spanking became the physical pleasure of the deep, warm ache combined with an emotional pleasure at being spanked.

Direct clitoral stimulation right after an orgasm was pleasure so acute it slid over to pain.

No clean, linear continuum existed here. Instead of sliding side to side, closer either to the pleasure or pain ends of the scale, this was a three-dimensional fractal, complex and chaotic, sharp spikes of pain sliding down a facet of pleasure to fetch up against an intersection that was pain-pleasure, then making a sharp left to a different shade of pain.

Again, the pins passed over her nipple, this time moving horizontally.

This vacillation between degrees of pleasure and pain made Tara's teeth clench, her pussy throb, and her back arch.

"You're offering up your tits when you do that," Nathan said in a low voice.

"Because I need more," she said through her teeth.



She needed surety. Needed to label this either pleasure or pain. If not that, she needed to identify a predictable pattern in either his movements or the sensation.

Nathan once again positioned the spiked wheel below her nipple, digging the spikes in hard as he rolled it up over her nipple. When the wheel reached the tapeline, he reversed course, passing over her nipple once more, pressing hard enough that for a shocked moment, she was sure he'd pierced her skin. But when she looked down, all she saw was rapidly fading dots.

Tara tugged once at the bonds, desperate to rub away the lingering pain. She was helpless, unable to do anything but take it as her Dom teased and tormented her.

The constant changes in both sensation and pattern had her feeling on edge, out of control...

Helpless.

Deliciously, dangerous helpless.

Again and again, Nathan ran the pins over her skin, sometimes pressing hard enough to leave more of those small, quick-fading dots. Up and down, back and forth, the wheel stung and pricked her, until her throbbing tit felt raw and sensitized.

Then he switched to the other breast. Tara shrieked the first time he applied the spikes to that nipple, dancing back a step only for his strong arm to band around her waist, pulling her forward into the space between his knees.

“You’re going to take it for me like a good girl aren’t you?”

“Y-yes, Nathan.”

“That’s right. Lean on me if you have to.”

Nathan helped position her so her body was angled to his and she could rest her right side against his chest and shoulder, her ass propped against his thigh.

Nathan kissed the top of her abused right breast, then rested his cheek there as he worked the wheel over her left tit.

He focused on her nipple, with tiny back and forth rolls that caused rapid-fire sparks of pain to shoot through her.

Tara panted, tears wetting her cheeks, while her sex throbbed with need.

“Need me to stop?” he asked softly.

“No, no, no. I need more.” Her words came hard and fast. “I need you to fuck me. I want you to spread my legs and use that thing on my clit. I want you to bite me and hurt me and kiss me and...”

Tara screamed when Nathan bit one breast even as he ground the pinwheel into her other nipple.

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She could do nothing but pant and moan as Nathan softened his touches. Licking the teeth marks he'd left in her tit and switching to pricking the sides and top of her breast, giving her abused nipple a break.

She felt hot and shivery, every inch of her skin hypersensitive, not just her bound, pricked breasts. Nathan was merciless, in the best way possible.

His movements were faster, though he was still thorough—making sure every inch of that breast felt the sharp poke of the pins. The speed felt like impatience, and her sex agreed it was time to hurry up and get to fucking.

Tara was too deep in both her submission and her arousal to care about the embarrassing, mewling noises she was making, or the way she was grinding her sore ass against his hard thigh.

“You’re taking this so well.” Nathan’s hands on her hips eased her away until she was no longer leaning on him.

Tara watched him through her lashes as he moved the stool to the side, stepped back, and shook out the tails of the flogger he now held.

“Tara.” His voice was gentle. “I’m going to flog your breasts, and then crop your nipples.”

Tara whined in need and fear, swaying on her feet. Her vision was blurry, so she blinked away the tears, wiping her cheeks on her upraised arms.

“I don’t expect you to count.” Nathan reached out to palm one breast, fondling her possessively even as his words soothed. “All you need to do is accept it, and tell me if anything hurts too much, or if you can’t feel the strikes.”

Tara nodded.

“No. Tell me you understand.”

“Yes, Nathan.”

“I want to hear it.” He switched to gently squeezing the other breast, thumb idly rubbing her flat nipple.

“You’re going to flog my breasts,” she panted. “Then you’re going to crop my nipples. And I’m going to tell you if it’s too much.”

“Good girl.”

Nathan brushed each nipple with one finger in turn before shifting back several feet. He raised his arm and she traced the length of his arm to his hand, gaze skittering down the soft black falls of the flogger. He started working the flogger in the air, using only his wrist, the rest of his arm steady, his knees slightly bent.

He swished it through the air a few times before starting a rhythmic, repetitive motion. The falls traced an infinity symbol in the air.

It was almost hypnotic.

Nathan stopped just as she’d fallen under the spell of the steady movement, his arm dropping to his side. Tara stiffened as she looked at him.

Nathan's head was down, a faint line between his brows. He looked tall and strong in the candlelight, the muted shine of the leather causing faint highlights along the swells of his pectoral muscles.

Neither of them was fully naked, though the straps and thin piece of latex over her pussy weren't much coverage. She wanted him naked. Want to feel his big, warm body against her, skin to skin.

But his expression made her stomach clench with anxiety.

He looked upset, or maybe disappointed. He looked like he was going to walk away.

"Nathan."

Only his head turned, coming up just enough so he met her gaze.

"Nathan, please. Don't go."

The frown disappeared, his eyes soft. "I'm not going anywhere, baby."

He closed the distance between them, and she got what she wanted, his body flush to hers, leather warm against her bare skin. His arm around her back pressed her bound breasts to his chest. The tight bands of tape squeezed as he held their bodies together.

She was bound and helpless...by choice.

Her body his plaything to mold and torment...because she gave him that power.

With his forearm still pressing against her back, Nathan tangled a hand in her hair, tipping her face up.

His lips sealed against hers. The kiss was leisurely, his parted lips barely moving as his tongue touched the seam of her mouth, then ventured in when she opened submissively under him.

The hand in her hair tightened, and she sucked in air as pain lit up her scalp. Just another sensation to go with the throbbing in her abused, trapped breasts, the fainter heat in her ass.

Those sensations were pale in comparison to her vibrant, desperate arousal. She could feel her heartbeat in her sex. Each beat echoed by a pulse of need in her swollen, wet flesh.

Tara was trapped and achy, unable to even move her head as he continued the soft kiss so at odds with the way he held her and what he'd done to her breasts.

But the best of all this was the kiss. He tasted...right.

Nathan finally lifted his lips from hers. Their gazes met for only a moment before he yanked, forcing her head farther back until she felt the stretch along the front of her neck. She stared up at her bound wrists as he scraped his teeth along her throat.

Finally he placed a gentle kiss on each breast before testing the temperature of her flesh with the back of his hand.

Taking several steps back, he raised the flogger.

The first strike kissed the top of her left breast on a downstroke. A second later, a matching blow slapped against the top of her right breast.

The flogger was too soft for a sting, and instead hit with a soft thud that was almost a tap.

For one wild moment, she thought about begging him for more. Asking him to strike her breasts harder.

She was at the point in the scene where she would agree to anything. It was a dangerous place to be, but she was safe with him. Her dominant emotion was a keening need and desperate arousal. A need to be touched and used. A desperation to feel her body stretched around his cock—any hole.

But the part of her that was still rational and knew that she was in a compromised headspace trusted Nathan the way she'd never trusted a partner before.

She could beg him to mark her, hurt her, and he wouldn't take it too far.

She could beg him to degrade and abuse her, but he wouldn't, because he'd know it would leave too-deep emotional scars.

Nathan's wrist twirled the flogger in a steady, relentless rhythm, whipping her aching, sore tits.

Tap, tap, tap.

It struck the top of her breasts with each downstroke. The touch that had felt too soft began to ache from the repetition, the falls constantly striking the same spot.

"You're taking it beautifully." Nathan transferred the flogger to his other hand, shaking out his wrist.

"Thank you, Nathan," she breathed, not sure how loud or softly she might be talking, thanks to the thrumming sound of her own heartbeat in her ears.

"I'm going to work the undersides, and then I'll crop your nipples and we'll be

done.”

Tara made another humiliating, mewling sound of fear and need.

Once more, the flogger swung through the air in a sideways figure eight, but this time, he caught her breasts on the upswing. Her tight, swollen breasts bobbed with each strike. The falls licked up the underside of her tits, the sensation more spread out than it had been on the top. Again and again, he flogged her, warming her skin and ensuring she felt helpless, abused, and treasured.

Tara swayed, rocking her weight from foot to foot, but Nathan moved with her, his own knees bent, gaze focused on her breasts.

He paused, reaching out to touch her breasts with the back of his hand. Cupping one firm, round tit, he gently stroked her nipple with his thumb. “Last six.”

She arched into his hand, chasing the pleasure of his soft touch, but also offering herself to him—six more or sixty more, she was his to use. “Yes, Nathan.”

Her breasts bounced as he increased the intensity and struck her hard, the previously dull slapping sound louder and sharper than it had been. Tara pressed her face into her upper arm, panting out hot, wet air. She counted silently as he landed the final strikes, each hard enough that she jumped and jerked, whimpering softly.

The flogger clattered to the floor.

“Beautiful.” Nathan once more pressed the back of his hand to each breast in turn, before striding to the other side of the room.

Tara looked down at her breasts. They were patches of reddened flesh on the top of her already darker than normal, taut tits.



A sharp, concentrated snap of pain on her ass made her dance forward until her shoulders protested having her arms stretch up and back.

Nathan rounded to her front, a short crop dangling from one hand. The spot on her ass that he'd just cropped stung, and she tugged helplessly at her arms, wanting to rub it.

"Felt that, did you?" He grinned.

Tara tried to shoot him a doleful look, but she was too deep for banter. Her gaze snapped to the crop.

About the length of his forearm, there was nothing particularly special about it—black, with a folded leather keeper at the tip. The keeper was shorter than what would be normal on an actual crop or jumping bat, but very standard for a human-use impact-play toy.

The tip of the crop notched under her chin, tipping her face up. "I can see you thinking. Talk."

"Did you know the folded bit at the end of the crop is called a keeper?" Her own voice echoed oddly in her ears, though she held his gaze.

Nathan's lips twitched. "I didn't. Why do you know that?"

"Research."

"Hmm." He traced her collarbones with the crop, the leather cool, almost cold. Goose bumps broke out along her upper chest and arms. "Are you maybe focusing on that because you're nervous about having your nipples cropped?"

Tara breathed deep, the air feeling almost sensual as it brushed over her lips, and that

caress made her pussy clench.

She was aroused to the point of madness.

“No,” she said finally. “I’m thinking about what the tip of a crop is called to keep myself from begging you to do unspeakable things to me.”

Nathan stepped in, not close enough to press their bodies together but close enough to run his hand up and down her side from armpit to thigh. “At that point where everything, even things on your hard limit list, are starting to sound good?”

“Yes.”

“Then it’s time to finish this.” He looked at her with something like regret. “I won’t be gentle, just because you’re you.”

Before she could digest that sentence, he stepped to the side, then gripped the base of her right breast with his left hand, holding her just in front of the tape.

Her skin felt swollen and tight, the added pressure from his fingers almost painful. Her nipples were completely flat, and her areolas looked massive. Nathan rubbed her nipple with the tip of the crop, and pleasure slid through her.

Then he lifted the crop, and with a flick of his wrist brought the tip down right on her nipple. Sharp precise pain and a dark, taboo pleasure burned through her already abused nipple.

Tara shrieked, trying to back up, but he was holding her by the tit. With terrifying precision, Nathan did it again. Swinging the crop out to the side, then snapping it forward, the shaft parallel to the floor. The motion of his wrist might have been small, but thanks to physics—fucking physics—the end of the crop was moving fast. The

flat pad of folded leather snapped against her nipple.

Pain pulsed and spiked through her, the sensation now unequivocally pain. She couldn't hold still but also couldn't move. Couldn't get away from him.

Three more times he cropped her helpless nipple. Tara's nipple felt like it was on fire, the pain so intense that she was crying softly and almost ready to ask him, tell him, to stop.

After the fifth strike, he leaned in and kissed her nipple softly, then soothed it with a single swipe of his tongue.

Then the merciless man switched to her left breast.

Once more, he petted and stroked her taut, flat nipple with the crop. Knowing what was coming, how much this would hurt, make the waiting worse.

He snapped the leather against her helpless flesh, the short, sharp sound preceding the stinging pain by a fraction of a thought.

Tara cried out, then clenched her teeth, her sex pulsing both in time with her heartbeat and in sync with the strikes of the crop.

Three more times he cropped her nipple, relentless and deliciously cruel.

“Last one. Then you're going to come for me and show me exactly how much you like being played with like this.”

The final word, spoken in a low voice that was both familiar and foreign, had barely faded before he snapped the crop against her nipple one final time.

Tara screamed, a sound of pain and wild frustration.

There was a soft clatter as the crop hit the floor, and then his hands were on her. His fingers stroked and soothed her burning nipple before pinching gently as his other hand tangled in her hair, holding her head still for his kiss.

He claimed her mouth the way he'd claimed her tits. Her mouth belonged to him. This was savage and demanding compared to the last kiss. He still tasted faintly sweet from the hard cider, and she could tell herself the alcohol was why her head was spinning.

His hand abandoned her breast before tracing patterns down her belly, his hand finally sliding between her legs.

Desperate, Tara stepped wide. She knew she was a hot, sloppy mess. Knew he could probably feel the heat radiating off her pussy even before his hands made contact with the slick latex gusset.

Nathan's fingers traced the seam of her sex, pressing the latex between her pussy lips. Deep enough that his blunt fingertips bumped over her clit.

Her hips jerked, pleasure spiking through the lingering pain. She was so aroused that even with the muting effect of the latex, his touch was almost painful.

"You're hot for me," he growled in her ear. "Are you wet?"

"Yes, Nathan, yes," she whimpered.

He dropped his head into the cradle of space made by her neck, shoulder, and raised arm. Between her thighs, one blunt finger slid away from her clit toward her entrance. He pressed up, fingertip forcing the latex tighter between her pussy lips. Almost as if

he would force the material into her.

The latex tore with a pop, and his thick finger jammed up inside her, the penetration shocking and sudden.

She gasped, back arching.

And she came.

Hours of being disciplined and played with had brought her to the edge, and having him tear through her latex panties and drive that finger up into her was enough to push her over the edge.

Tara bore down, teeth clenched as the orgasm caused every muscle in her body to tighten. Her pussy clamped frantically on his finger, which felt shockingly thick and yet not thick enough.

The pleasure was almost its own pain—the release of tension like having a skilled masseuse dig their fingers into a muscle knot and force it to relax.

With the pleasure ebbed, she went limp. She relaxed into the post-orgasm relief, but it was short-lived. Her body still throbbed with need, and she had the horrible thought that she might never get enough of Nathan's touch.

That she might spend the rest of her life wanting him.

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Nathan slowly withdrew his finger from her hot, wet core and the sloppy sound made his cock twitch. Tara panted, her body clenching around him as if to keep him in place, her eyes wide and unfocused. He was pretty sure his girl had just come, thanks to nothing but a rather rough penetration.

His cock twitched as he imagined her coming on his cock rather than his fingers.

Nathan pressed the back of his hand against her tits, testing the temperature. Her skin was now cool to the touch except for the spots he'd hit with the flogger where the skin was warmer. Time to get her tits out of bondage.

Time to get her completely naked, lay her out on the bed, and feast.

Hooking his foot around one leg of the stool, he yanked it over and positioned it behind her, then undid the quick-release knot in the rope restraining her arms. Holding her hands in his, he guided her hands down even as he nudged her with his hip. She sat, and he brought her hands down to her thighs, giving her shoulders a few quick squeezes to ease any stiffness.

Starting with her right breast, he worked his fingers under the tape. She made distressed little noises, so he leaned in and kissed her forehead. Once he'd created space, he took the safety cutter out of his back pocket and inserted the blunt tip between the tape and her skin. With a few soft yanks, the embedded blade cut through the electrical tape, and he gently peeled the layered tape off her in one chunk.

After freeing the left breast the same way, he massaged her. Palms covering her nipples, he kneaded her tits to ease any discomfort from returned blood flow. And he

got to enjoy the way her skin plumped up between his fingers as he squeezed.

Through it all, Tara watched him from beneath her lashes, her wet lips parted in a way that made it impossible not to think about sliding his cock into her mouth.

He finished his ministrations with a quick stroke to each nipple—which caused Tara to jerk—then pulled her to her feet and made quick work of stripping off the now-ruined lingerie. Maybe he could pay to have the latex part replaced.

Maybe he should have warned her that he'd been known to tear latex rather than bother with the slow, careful removal process.

Fully naked except for the cuffs around her wrists, Tara watched him with heavy-lidded but bright eyes.

Nathan hooked his arm around her, pulling her naked body against his. She made a soft, needy sound as he held her tight against his leathers. A second later, her head came to rest on his shoulder and he swallowed against a sudden knot in his throat.

Then she shifted just a little, her soft lower belly pressed against his dick, and his mood shifted from unexpectedly emotional, to roaring arousal.

Not that he hadn't been semi-hard for what felt like hours.

The truth was that Nathan didn't find impact play arousing. Except for spanking, which he loved because usually it meant he got to have a woman face down over his lap. The view was always good, but what really got him was the weight of a soft body on his legs. Feeling her twitch and squirm as he reddened her ass with his palm. Impact-play implements almost always required stepping back—putting space between his body and his submissive's, with unfeeling wood or leather touching her rather than his hand.

What he'd just done with...too... Tara wasn't in and of itself arousing for him. What he enjoyed was using the pain as a tool make her feel both helpless and treasured. He liked seeing women relax into the power exchange. To drop their walls as they ceded their control. While there was something compelling about bound tits, he actually preferred them loose, so he could cup and knead them. Bury his face between them and feel the softness mold to his cheeks and chin.

With Tara, he more than liked it. Watching her go from still and stiff, with measured breathing and a watchful gaze, to loose and soft, her body rocking and swaying, her breath uneven, almost every exhale a needy sound...

He loved it.

"Come on, sweetheart." He wished he could pick her up, but his back liked to spasm at the least opportune times and the last thing he wanted to do was drop her.

With one arm around her waist, Nathan nudged her the few steps to the bed. He urged her onto it with a quick pat to her backside.

With an eagerness that made his lips twitch, Tara scrambled up onto the bed. He'd intended for her to sit on the edge, but she crawled right to the middle, spread her knees, and dropped down onto her elbows.

Her reddened ass and smooth thighs framed the glossy, plump lips of her pussy, now so beautifully on display. His girl was begging to be fucked.

Nathan swallowed hard and reached down to loosen the laces on his leathers before he accidentally strangled his dick inside the tight pants.

"Do you think I'm going to fuck you now, baby?"



“I need you, Nathan,” she said simply.

Shit. This woman was so perfect.

With his dick still tucked in his now-looser pants, Nathan climbed up and knelt between her calves. He gripped her hips, thumbs stretching across her ass. He kneaded her soft flesh, spreading her ass cheeks each time his hands contracted, his thumbs pulling her cheeks apart until he had a lovely view of her puckered anus.

Tara rocked forward and back, forward and back while making needy little noises. It would be so easy to take out his dick and slip it into her pussy. He wouldn't even have to do anything. He could let her work herself on his shaft until they both came.

But he had other plans.

Knee-walking back to the edge of the bed, he slipped off, then crouched to unlace his boots and kicked them, and his socks, off.

“Nathan?”

“I'm here, baby.”

“Am I topping from the bottom?” Her voice was small and worried.

He gripped her ankles. “No. You're just really fucking horny.”

“So, so horny,” she sighed.

“Still feeling like you might agree to anything?”

“Is there a wrong answer to that question?”

“No. Nothing you say will change what I’m about to do to you.” He put some steel in his words.

That was a lie, of course. All she had to say was stop, or any variation that meant stop. But he was guessing that right now—wildly aroused and deep in subspace—she needed his dominance to anchor her.

Tara gripped the comforter in her hands, pressed her face to the mattress, and moaned.

Plus, saying shit like that made her even hornier.

With a grin, Nathan yanked on her ankles. She yelped as he pulled her knees out from under her. Her body hit the bed with a soft bounce. Nathan slid his hands from her ankles to her knees, then using her legs as levers, flipped her over onto her back.

Tara gasped, staring at him with wide eyes.

He planted a fist beside her hip as he leaned over the bed. “Physics.”

Tara let out a startled laugh. “Fucking physics.”

The laugh turned into a yelp as he grabbed her knees and yanked again, dragging her across the mattress until her ass was on the edge, her thighs tucked against his hips, held in place by his hands cupping her knees.

He expected her to ask what he was doing, or to see her thinking expression as she tried to guess what was next.

Neither happened. She stayed soft and submissive, her expression relaxed and expectant.

Nathan switched his hold on her knees, cupping them from the inside, his palms turned away from his body.

Then he dropped to kneel on the floor at the side of the bed.

Tara's fingers turned into claws digging into the mattress and she raised her head, staring at him with wide eyes.

Nathan grinned at her. "I'm hungry."

Her eyes widened further, then her lips curved and she dropped her head back.

With a smile of his own, Nathan hooked one of her legs over his shoulder. The other he spread to the side, rotating it at the hip. He pressed her thigh open until it rested on the mattress, his hand braced and spread on her soft skin to keep her leg in the slightly awkward position.

He wanted maximum access to her pussy while he feasted.

Tara wiggled a little, flexing her leg. He gritted his teeth in a bid for control as he waited to make sure she was comfortable in this position. When she settled, Nathan hardened his grip on her thigh and finally—finally—tasted his girl's pussy.

He started with one long, slow lick right up her center, using his tongue to further part her labia.

Tara arched up, her heel digging into his back, her thigh pressing down hard on his shoulder as her hips and ass left the bed.

All that from one lick? Oh, this was going to be fun.

Nathan dipped down to her entrance, pointing his tongue and thrusting into her, then dragging it up the valley of her labia once more. When he reached her clit and tongued the protruding nub, her hands grabbed his head, fingers tangling in his hair.

He buried his face in her pussy, nose against her mons, and clamped her clit with his teeth in warning.

Her grip loosened, fingers kneaded his head, nails lightly scratching his scalp.

Glad they seemed to have come to an understanding, he went back to enjoying himself. He flicked her inner labia with his tongue, then tipped his head to the side, sucking one fat, wet pussy lip into his mouth. Biting gently, he sucked harder, drawing more blood into the engorged flesh.

“Why is that sexy?” Tara panted, tugging at his hair once more.

Grinning, he did the same thing to her other pussy lip.

With tongue, teeth, and lips, Nathan learned her most intimate flesh. He learned that when he circled her clit with his tongue, she relaxed against him, her breath hitching.

When he sucked her clit, she jumped and twitched in time with his sucking.

And when he carefully explored her, using his stiff tongue to push the hood farther back while learning the contours of her clit, she arched against him, panting his name.

All he could taste and smell was her pussy. His chin and lower cheeks were wet with her arousal fluid.

He'd known people who suffered through oral for the sake of their partner, or treated it like a necessary prerequisite. Nathan was convinced they were fools. He loved

this—the taste of her, feeling her response and reaction with his mouth.

Or maybe those fools who didn't like oral didn't have his control issues. Because he may be on his knees, but he never felt more in control of a partner's body and pleasure than when he could gently abuse her clit by pressing it against the edge of his upper teeth with his tongue.

"I'm close, I'm close, I'm close," Tara panted.

There were plenty of things Nathan wanted to say, but that would require he stop what he was currently doing. Opening his mouth wide, he sucked the upper half of her sex—puffy top of her pussy lips and entire clit—into his mouth. Biting gently, he let her flesh slip out from between his teeth, making sure to rake her clit with his bottom teeth.

Tara arched up, nails digging into his scalp. She tried to close her legs, but he slammed her thigh back down to the mattress, then gripped the one currently jammed against his ear and forced that knee up to her chest, giving himself that little bit more access.

One hand detangled from his hair, instead hooking around her knee to hold her leg in place. He murmured his approval against her clit, eliciting a gasping breath.

"Nathan, please, please," she whimpered.

Shit, he was close to losing his own control. Dropping one hand, he yanked the laces of his leather free of the grommets, opening his pants. His cock sprang out, brushing against the dangling comforter. Even that light touch had his lower back and balls tightening.

He needed to feel her unravel against his tongue. Needed to know what she tasted like

when she came.

Nathan shifted his grip on the thigh pressed open against the bed. Instead of his hand, he now held her leg in place with his forearm, his palm, and spread fingers braced on her lower belly.

Shifting forward a little, his cock rock-hard and leaking precome, he focused on her clit.

Nathan flattened his tongue and pressed it against her clit. He swore he felt the little bud pulse just before he started working her with the goal of making her scream in pleasure.

He rubbed the flat of his tongue up and down over her clit, the motion small, but based on the noises Tara made, more than effective.

And he didn't stop.

Using his tongue like this meant keeping his mouth open, which in turn meant spit pooled inside his lower lip. Pulling back to close his mouth and swallow would break the rhythm, and given how still she was, he was fairly certain any deviation from the current stimulation would topple the slowly building tower of her orgasm. Stopping to swallow was an amateur move, so Nathan let the spit leak over his lip to wet both his chin and her pussy, saliva mingling with her arousal fluid.

"I'm close," she whispered, the hand still tangled in his hair gripping him tight.

He dipped down to thrust his tongue into her pussy, and she whimpered at the loss of clit stimulation.

Don't worry, baby, I know what I'm doing.

He licked his way back up to her clit, once more rubbing her with the flat of his tongue, but this time he pressed harder. Tara's careful stillness broke as she started rocking her hips, rubbing her pussy against his tongue.

Tara sucked in air and held it, her hips going still, her thigh muscles tense under his forearm.

She was right there, the tower built and ready to fall.

Nathan pressed down on her belly at the same time he pulled back just enough to circle her clit with the pointed tip of his tongue.

Tara screamed, trying to arch up, but his splayed hand held her down. Below his palm, he felt her abdominal muscles flutter, while her pussy clenched, fresh moisture wetting his chin.

He tongued her through the orgasm until she whimpered "too much" while tugging on his hair.

Too much? No. Not enough.

Nathan licked her one last time, just to make sure this was his pussy to play with as he pleased. Tara jerked, gasping, then gasping again as he surged to his feet.

Her gaze fastened on his cock, which was embarrassingly wet with precome leaking from the tip. Tara looked soft and warm, her chest and cheeks lightly flushed, the faint indent marks from the tape still visible on her breasts.

He wanted to fuck her missionary so he could see her face, but his need to have her, to take her, demanded something harder.

“I need to fuck you hard.”

Her eyes fluttered closed. “Yes, Nathan.”

“Come here.”

Tara’s eyes opened, gaze flicking down to where he held his hands out to her. She curled her fingers over his palms and he yanked her to her feet.

Wrapping one arm around her waist, he tangled his hand in her dark hair and kissed her hard and fast. Her mouth parted, soft and submissive under the aggression of his kiss.

She relaxed against him, making little whimpery noises probably as a result of having her abused breasts mashed to his chest. He rubbed his cock against her soft belly, the friction good but not nearly enough.

Tara’s whimper became a gasp as he switched his hold to her upper arms, jerking her away from him.

Her eyes were wide and questioning. He wished he could give her a reassuring smile, but instead he spun her to face the bed.

Nathan gripped the back of her neck and bent her face down over the mattress.

Her spanked ass was full and lush, her dark hair spread out against the white comforter.

“Shit, you’re gorgeous,” he breathed, stroking her from her thigh, up over her ass to her waist with one hand while the other worked his dick, spreading the precome along the shaft.



“Condom,” he said, more to himself than to her.

“I’m clean. I got tested two weeks ago,” Tara said softly, eyes closed as her cheek rested on the bed.

“You want me to fuck you bare?” His cock twitched in his hand and he squeezed the base to help hold himself back.

“I want you to fuck me, and at this point I’ll take whatever’s faster,” she countered.

“But I’m saying you don’t need a condom if you’ve tested recently.”

“I have. I’m clean.”

“I’m clean too, and I can’t get pregnant.”

His throat was tight with arousal, too tight for him to reply. He wouldn’t have agreed to bareback with any other sub, hell, any other woman—especially their first time together.

But this was Tara.

Nathan grabbed her lower ass, pulling her cheeks and upper thighs apart to further expose her wet core. Angling his hips, he rubbed the tip of his cock through her slit, wetting himself with her arousal fluid.

“You’re so wet, sweetheart. Hot and wet and so fucking soft.”

He gripped his shaft so he could rub the head of his cock over her clit. Tara worked her hips with little jiggle movements. He was so turned on, and so sensitive because of it, that he could feel the tip of her clit rubbing right against his slit.

Nathan's jaw tightened, and he spoke through clenched teeth. "Are you trying to rub your needy clit against my cock to make yourself come?"

She panted softly, her hands curling and uncurling, creating wrinkles in the duvet. The muscles at the base of his spine twitched and tightened. He needed to stop before he came with his cock nestled in her folds, but not deep inside her where he wanted to be.

He released his shaft and spanked her gently. "Naughty girl. Who decides when your clit gets petted?"

"You do, Nathan."

The soft submission in her voice made him want to fuck her until she passed out. "Who's going to fill you up, give your pretty pussy a nice cock to squeeze?"

"You are, Nathan," she panted, and fuck if that didn't sound a lot like, You are, Master.

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*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

Nathan stroked the line of Tara's spine with his palm, smiling as she shivered.

"When I'm done fucking you, who's going to get on her knees and clean my cock with her tongue?" he asked.

"Me. Me." She licked her lips, eyes now partially open though unfocused.

"Good girl." Nathan notched his tip at her entrance. "Ready to take my cock in this tight little pussy?"

He thrust in just enough to seat the aching head of his dick inside her. Her vagina was soft, warm, and wet around him.

"Yes, Nathan," she gasped.

"Up on your toes," he commanded, wanting her hips just a little higher up so his cock wasn't angled down as he thrust.

She popped up another inch, and he braced her legs with his own, taking some of the pressure off her calves.

Time to finally, finally, enter her. Nathan planted his feet, reaffirmed his grip on her hips and ass, and yanked her ass back—pulling her onto his cock rather than thrusting his hips forward.

They both moaned once he was fully seated inside her.

“You look so good like this.” His voice was rough. “Bent over the bed, sore tits smashed against the mattress, ass red from being spanked.” He pulled out halfway, then thrust in again. “And my cock in your pretty, needy, pussy.”

“Nathan, pleas?—”

He grinned when her word cut off as he pulled out and thrust in hard and fast, her ass jiggling as his hips spanked her.

“What was that?”

“Nathan, pl?—”

This time, she stopped mid-word to gasp as he ground his hips against hers. He bit back a curse of pleasure as he felt the head of his cock rubbing inside her with the movement.

“Don’t stop,” she stammered. “Please don’t stop.”

“Don’t stop fucking you?” He rewarded her begging with half a dozen deep, rough thrusts. The angle wasn’t quite right, but this felt too good for him to want to pull out and make adjustments.

“Don’t stop talking to me.” Tara’s voice was low, a little hesitant, almost like she was reluctant to speak.

Wait, was she embarrassed?

“Does my smart, pretty sub like to be told what a hot cunt she has?”

Tara ground back against him in an affirmative response. Of course she liked it. The

woman was fucking perfect.

“Do you like hearing how tight you are around my cock?” Nathan started fucking her in earnest, leaning slightly forward over her as he thrust, his hands cupping her waist.

“Or maybe you want to hear about the things I’m imagining doing to you.”

“Nathan, I’m—I’m close.”

“Prove it. Show me what a needy pussy you have by coming on my cock.” Nathan hiked her hips up another inch.

Tara’s toes left the floor, and she braced her heels against his shin. His arms tensed, but he wasn’t going to be able to concentrate enough on holding her up, not when her warm channel was tight around him.

“Knee up,” he ordered.

After a moment’s confused hesitation, Tara bent her left leg, her thigh and knee now on the mattress. He tugged her hips once more, and she shifted her weight to the knee on the bed, her other foot braced against his shin. Nathan pushed down on her back, urging her to arch, which tipped her pelvis.

His cock, which had remained mostly inside her sweet body despite the movement, sank deeper.

He was so deep his balls were now nestled against her spread pussy lips.

“Fuck,” she hissed, grinding back against him.

He nodded in agreement, though she couldn’t see him. Gripping her hips, he ground

into her for another minute before pulling out and then slamming into her once more. He fucked her slow and hard, grinding against her each time he penetrated her. The hard slap of his hips hitting her ass echoed in the room, mingling with their heavy breaths and Tara's occasional gasps and groans.

Tara sucked in air and tensed under him, nearly quivering.

He thrust in once, twice, three times. On the fourth, her sex was noticeably tighter, clamping down as she orgasmed.

Satisfaction slid through him. There was something primal in the control he had over her in this moment. That he could bring her pleasure to the point that this brilliant, bright woman allowed herself to submit to a base physical need.

Her pussy continued to flutter around him as sweat slid down his chest, and his cock twitched, the pressure from her orgasm tightening things in his lower body.

"Nathan." His name was more than a name when she breathed out the word—it was a thank-you and a plea and spoken with trust and relief.

It was that tone, seeped in the trust of submission and relief of giving up control, that pushed him over his own edge.

Nathan jerked his hips in small, quick thrusts, focusing on the feeling of the soft walls of her sex rubbing his glands and shaft and the sight of her naked body bent submissively over the bed.

Pleasure gripped him, his cock twitching inside her. He made quick, small thrusts as he came deep inside her, groaning and shuddering.

Panting, he leaned over her back, a fist planted on the bed beside her waist, while his

other hand kneaded the thigh braced on the bed.

Tara pushed up on one elbow, twisting to look back at him. The position caused her hips to shift, his cock sliding an inch or two out of her pussy.

Nathan shot her a warning look and pulled half out, then thrust back in, hard. His hips hit her ass, knocking her forward, her chest and shoulders bouncing back down onto the bed. She relaxed, the hint of a smile touching her lips as she closed her eyes.

She'd liked that reminder that she was his.

Nathan gripped the hair that was spread over the bed, tugging to tilt her face so she was looking at the far wall, her cheek still on the mattress.

"You took my cock so well. Can you feel me inside you?" He flexed his hips, his cock still hard despite the orgasm. "Hear that? How sloppy and wet your pussy is from my come deep inside you."

Tara's eye opened, face tipping toward him. The look in her eyes was...he didn't have a word for it. But suddenly he was desperate to see her face.

He needed to be deep inside her as he looked into her eyes and breathed her air.

Nathan pulled out, petting her sides and ass before stepping back and finally shucking his leathers. He was hot and sweaty from the work of fucking her, so it took him a minute.

His good girl stayed right where he'd left her, one leg pulled up on the bed, the toes of her other foot stretched down to brace on the floor.

When he was naked, he rolled her over one final time. Tara lay her hands beside her

head, fingers curled softly over her palms. Her breasts were soft and vulnerable.

“Scoot up.”

He gripped her thighs, helping her shift up to the middle of the bed, until he could climb onto the mattress with her.

“Spread your legs. Wider.” He kneaded her inner thighs, then pushed her open wider still. Until her pussy lips spread apart, and he could see the creamy white of his come leaking out of her pussy.

“Spread yourself open,” he demanded, gaze fastened on her sex.

Tara’s fingers slid and slipped against her pussy lips, her labia slipping out from under her fingers as she tried to obey.

“Pinch your pussy if you have to.” His cock was still semihard, his continued need to possess and command her riding him.

Tara pinched her labia, spreading her sex so wide that her skin pulled tight, her dark pink flesh glossy in the low light. Nathan dipped a finger into her—causing her hips to bump up as she moaned—and spread his come over the inner flesh of her pussy. He worked his come over and around her clit with two fingers, while his other hand stroked his shaft.

Her obedience, his own fist, and the sight of his come glistening on her clit, did what he’d hoped, his cock stiffening, though not as iron-hard as it had been.

He moved into position between her spread thighs. “Arms up.”

“Are you going to fuck me, Nathan?”



He leaned over her, reaching up to grip one wrist, pressing her arm down into the mattress so she felt his control. He slapped her tit with his other hand, watching the soft flesh jiggle. Her free hand raised, fluttering near his wrist, as if she were going to grab his hand and stop him.

“Talk to me, Tara.”

Her gaze met his, but she didn’t speak.

He slapped her other tit, carefully watching her face. Tara bit her lip, fingers gently curling around his wrist, though she didn’t try and restrain him.

“Tell me to stop.”

“I don’t want you to stop.”

He raised his hand above her breast, her arm moving with his, thanks to her grip on his wrist. Tara didn’t stop him, merely watched his face as he once more slapped her tit, the motion awkward, given her hold on him.

“Tara,” he warned. “Talk to me.”

“I want you to stop. I want you to not stop.” She took a breath. “I want...you.”

Something cracked inside him.

Nathan shook off her hold, then released her other wrist, dropping down onto his elbows atop her. Their noses were inches apart, and when she exhaled a shaky breath he inhaled, taking a part of her into him.

She was already in him. A part of him. Had been for half his life.

Nathan shifted his hips, his cock sliding against, and then into, her.

He sank deep, their breaths mingling on twin sighs of renewed pleasure.

“Look at me, Tara.”

She obeyed instantly, holding his gaze as he rocked slowly into her pussy. He wasn't hard enough to fuck her the way he had, but that didn't matter because this wasn't about pounding himself into her. It was about existing in this moment, sinking fearlessly into the intense intimacy of his cock inside her, their gazes locked.

When Tara raised her head, he bent, accepting her invitation and pressing his lips to hers. He followed her down as she laid her head back, keeping their lips fused. He sucked her tongue, then thrust his into her mouth in time with his cock sliding softly into her.

Tara's back arched, her mouth pulling from his as she tipped her head back. He kissed the elegant long line of her throat, felt the vibration of her moan under his lips.

“Nathan, please. Make me come again.”

He started to shift to the side, trying to make space for his hand to slide down between them, but she stopped him with a shake of her head that bumped her chin against his temple.

“No, wait. Can you try with words?”

Nathan rubbed his cheek against hers, chest against her breasts though most of his weight was on his elbows, and lips pressed to her ear.

“You want to hear all the depraved things I want to do to you? You want to know all

the ways I'm going to use you as a cock warmer?"

Tara moaned, tipping her pelvis. He slid in deeper and felt the plump flesh of her mound—and hopefully her clit—rubbing against the skin just above his cock.

"Cock warmer?" she breathed.

"Don't you think my cock deserves to be nice and warm? And what a better place to keep it warm than in one of your holes." She moaned at the crude language. "I could make you sleep with your head on my thigh, my cock in your mouth."

Tara moaned, her pussy clenching around him.

"And when I'm working late, I'd put you on your knees under my desk. Pull your shirt up, and your bra down. Put clamps on your nipples and hook the chain to the arm of my chair so you couldn't get away. You'd hold my cock in your pretty mouth as I worked. Not sucking, not licking, just keeping me warm."

"You don't work at your desk," she breathed, a slight catch in her voice as he worked his hips, trying to rub her clit at the apex of each small thrust.

He kissed her earlobe. "That's right, a lot of the time I don't. So what would I do with you while I worked on the whiteboard? Leave you under my desk, legs spread, nipples clamped. But your mouth... Maybe I'd put a ring-gag in, keep you open and ready for me to slip my cock into any time I wanted. Or maybe I'd use a cock gag, so you'd remember what that pretty mouth was for."

He realized too late that they'd blurred the lines—this fantasy's setting his real life, his real office. He should pull back. Describe some BDSM scene that could only take place here in the club.

But the thing that cracked inside him not long ago took control.

He lowered his voice, half hoping she wouldn't hear what he said next.

“But shit, you're so beautiful and smart it would be a waste. I'd have you standing beside me, putting that incredible brain to work. Under your clothes though, you'd have a plug in that pretty ass, and clamps on your pussy lips.”

Nathan thrust harder, his cock hardening though he knew he couldn't come again. But she could.

She would.

Tara reached up, tangling her fingers in his hair.

She pulled his face down to hers. The urge to take back full control—to pin her wrists and bend her will to his—rolled down his neck, tensing the muscles of his shoulders, but dissipating under the soft pleasure of the kiss.

Tara's exhale washed over his lips, the sharing of breath unexpectedly intimate.

“Nathan.”

He met her gaze, held it as he pumped his hips, cock moving in small thrusts, most of his length remaining buried in her.

Her eyes were half closed, her pretty brown eyes veiled by long dark lashes. There were flecks of gold in the brown and a darker ring around the outside of the iris.

“Tara.” He dropped his head to hers. “You're so fucking beautiful.”

Her arms wrapped around him, one crossing the small of his back, her fingernails digging into his ass muscle as she arched against him.

“Close,” she panted.

Nathan grabbed her hip, holding her steady as he ground against her, mashing his pelvis against her pussy and rotating his hips.

Tara’s nails scratched paths in his flesh as her orgasm forced her into a deeper bow, the crown of her head pressed to the bed, her throat an elegant line under his lips and teeth.

He felt her pussy clamping his cock, felt the fine muscle tremors in her legs and belly.

“Tara, my Tara. So pretty when you come for me. Keep coming, baby. I want to feel you shaking.”

The words tumbled out raw and true if foolish.

When she collapsed flat to the mattress under him, throat working as she swallowed, eyes closed, Nathan leaned down and kissed her.

Only as his lips tasted hers did he let himself wonder if, at this point, was this even a BDSM scene anymore?

Minutes—he wasn’t sure if it was five or fifteen—When Tara shivered, Nathan pushed himself up. His back twinged a little, thanks to the odd position he’d been in—bent over the bed, upper body weight on his elbows, toes braced on the floor.

Pushing a hand against his lower back, he straightened. His cock, which had finally gone soft, stayed nestled in the warm, wet valley of her pussy until he pulled away.

He gripped her knees as he stepped back, knowing she'd slide off the bed if he didn't.

Pressing her thighs together, he turned her onto her side, knees up by her chest, then smacked her ass gently.

“Up on the middle of the bed, head on a pillow.”

She opened one eye. “The scene is done?”

“Yes. Aftercare time.”

She crawled up the bed, but when she reached for the edge of the covers, he leaned over and swatted her ass again.

She glared over her shoulder. “I thought this was aftercare.”

“It is. That was a vanilla spank.”

“That's not a thing.”

“Sure it is. Now stay on top of the covers until I get you cleaned up.”

Tara ducked her head, but slowly lowered herself to lay face down on the bed.

Nathan darted into the attached bathroom, taking care of cleaning himself up before finding the softest washcloths in the cabinet and wetting a few of them.

Returning to the bedroom, he paused for a moment to take in the sight of her—soft relaxed curves and dark hair waiting for him.

One knee on the bed, Nathan smoothed a hand down her back to her ass. “Does

anything hurt now that the adrenaline and arousal has faded.”

“Hurt, no. Ache, yes.” Her voice was slightly muffled.

He spread her ass cheeks. Tara stiffened, glutes tightening.

“Tara,” he chided, and she relaxed.

Using one washcloth, he gently cleaned her from the top of the crease between her cheeks down to her anus. He teased her a little. Pressing the washcloth-covered tip of his finger against her anus in a soft thrusting motion until she moaned.

Tossing the cloth aside, he took a dry one, this time moving efficiently to dry the flesh he’d just cleaned before tossing that washcloth onto the newly created laundry pile.

“Roll over.”

She rolled onto her back, looking up at him through her lashes. When he petted her thigh, she pressed her feet together and drew them up to her ass, letting her knees fall open.

Nathan bent to his task, carefully cleaning her pretty sex from gently strokes along the outside of her pussy lips where they met the crease of her thigh to spreading her open to pat, rather than wipe, her clit.

Even that made her suck in air in a way that told him she was nicely sensitive. It took everything he had not to lean down and suck her clit.

Finally he went to her breasts, draping cool, damp cloths over each for a moment while he finishing drying her pussy.

Not that it stayed dry for long. The sight of the creamy white fluid—his come—at her entrance made his libido roar, while his well-satisfied cock could only twitch.

Lifting the clothes from her breasts, he gently dried her, then leaned down to inspect her nipples, checking for any broken blood vessels or bruises.

Gently, he cupped one tit, rubbing her nipple with his thumb.

Tara caught her breath and held it, lashes fluttering.

“Hurt or sensitive.”

“Sensitive to the point of hurting.”

He immediately moved his thumb, then placed a gentle kiss on her breast. Sliding off the bed, he folded back the covers on his side, then patted the mattress. Tara rolled into the spot he’d just vacated and wiggled her toes under the covers, sighing happily.

Nathan pulled the cover up over her, then dug under the bed for the bag he’d stashed there, pulling out a pair of black boxer briefs.

“You get underwear?”

“Yep.” Nathan circled the bed and slid in beside her.

“And I...” Tara rolled onto her side to face him, arm tucked under the pillow.

“Don’t.” He rested his hand on her bare thigh, thumb moving in lazy strokes.

“If I wasn’t exhausted...” she breathed, sliding closer to him.



Nathan rolled onto his back, then hauled Tara against his side. It took them a minute to get comfortable, but they finally settled, her head on the corner of a pillow which in turn rested on his shoulder. One breast was pressed against his ribs, the other soft, delectable mound resting on him. He gripped her thigh, pulling her knee up across his hips to stop himself from grabbing that pretty tit.

They lay like that for several contented minutes. Nathan was fully relaxed—satiated and satisfied, both his libido and dominant needs quiet and content.

“Tara?”

“Yes, Nathan?”

“Why aren’t you in a relationship?”

“Why aren’t you in a relationship?”

Tara stiffened and considered pushing away. She was well within her rights to tell him it was none of his business. The question wasn’t appropriate in an aftercare setting. At least it wouldn’t have been with anyone else.

He must have felt her stiffen because Nathan’s hand tightened on her knee. “You don’t have to answer. I’m just curious.” There was a brief contemplative silence. “But you came closer than I did.”

“To getting married?” Tara reached over and brushed Nathan’s hair off his forehead, her initial resistance to his question softened by his subsequent words.

“Or a serious relationship. I’d say long-term serious relationship, but I think we both had long-term relationships that weren’t serious.”

“True.” Tara smoothed back his hair again, this time lightly scratching his scalp with her nails. “You can be with someone for years, but if you only see them once a month, or less, it hardly feels like a relationship.”

Nathan made a happy grumbling sound in response to her touch. “I think I dated that one girl for...two years?”

“Your grad school girlfriend?”

“Yep. I broke up with her when I started my post doc. Which is when you started dating that guy in med school.”

Tara grimaced at the memory.

Nathan popped up onto one elbow, tumbling her onto her back, then leaning over to peer down at her, their noses nearly touching. “What was that?”

“You’re too close. Making me cross-eyed.” Tara covered his face with her palm, fingers spread to brace against his forehead, and pushed.

Nathan flopped onto his back with a dramatic noise, causing her to laugh. Tara pulled the covers up over her cold shoulders and turned on her side, their legs still tangled together.

Nathan rolled to face her, and there was something shockingly intimate, yet almost innocent, about their positions. She wanted to pull the sheet over their heads like this was the backstory scene in a movie.

“Can I tell you something?” she said.

“Always,” he replied instantly.

“I tried, with Clark, the med student.”

“Tried wha—” Nathan stopped, eyes flicking over her features. “You tried a D/s relationship.”

She nodded.

“Was he into it?”

“He was into kinky sex.”

Nathan's jaw worked. "Kinky sex is different?—"

"I know that," she snapped back, feeling stupid all over again.

"Sorry, sorry." Nathan grimaced apologetically. "I know you know that. It's just...you hear people talk about how they're playing around with BDSM, and yeah, some bondage is probably okay, because being handcuffed to a bed is fine for people who don't really know. It's not like they're doing full suspension rope bondage."

"Agreed. And you're right about vanilla spankings. It's one thing to get a slap or two on the ass and call it a spanking." Tara's own ass tingled. Sadly, even the heat-turned-ache had faded now. "Being put across someone's knee and spanked past the point of discomfort to pain, and finally catharsis...that's something else." Her words came out hungrier than she'd intended.

Nathan exhaled in the warm silence that settled between them. "Why aren't you married to Clark? STEM power couple by day, Dom and sub by night."

She got the sense he meant it as a joke, but the words came out too hard, almost harsh.

"It was actually trying to be Dom and sub that broke us up."

He relaxed abruptly. "Shit, Tara," then more grimly, "How bad did it get?"

"It was fine, for a long time. Because it really was just kinky sex, and I was in charge. I planned the scenes, showed him videos if it was something new, and then even in the middle of the scene would ask for things. Not that there's anything wrong with that—plenty of subs help plan scenes during negotiations. And asking for things is good communication. And it meant I got exactly what I wanted."

She'd said "and" too many times, trying to justify something long over.

“Sounds like you didn’t give up much control. So, it was kinky sex with no power exchange.” This time, Nathan was the one to push her hair off her face.

“Until there was a power exchange,” she said quietly. “At least for me.”

They were silent again, his knuckles still resting lightly on her cheek. She cleared her throat, lining up the words of the story in her mind.

“We had this magic weekend where we’d both just finished something major. I think I’d submitted the first draft of a journal article, and he’d just finished a test. I don’t really remember anymore.

“I do remember sending him a series of hinting text messages about what I wanted to do that weekend. And I got the box of toys out from under my bed.”

“So big hints.”

“Very big hints. At least I thought so. I’m not sure if he didn’t get it, or was waiting until we got in bed that night, but I was too needy to wait and find out. When he went to brush his teeth, I tossed a pillow on the floor and when he came out of the bathroom, I was naked on my knees ready to suck his dick.”

“The hint to end all hints,” Nathan said solemnly.

Tara laughed. “At that point, it was a statement that I wanted to have sex, but the hint about what kind of sex—very kinky, BDSM sex—was what I was wearing.”

“I thought you were naked?”

“Naked except cuffs. I’d put the Velcro restraints on my own wrists and ankles.”

“You always were proactive.”

He was teasing, but she grimaced, answering honestly. “I didn’t want to be, but I needed to submit.”

Nathan’s thumb rubbed her cheek. “I understand that need. And when you’re in a relationship with someone who doesn’t either understand, or share, that need...”

“You feel trapped.”

His brows rose in surprise before lowering in a contemplative expression. “Trapped. I guess you are. You can’t just go out to a club and find someone to scene with. That would be cheating, unless you’d pre-arranged an open relationship, or an impact-play only scene or something like that.”

“A relationship with BDSM on the side...I think you either have to start out that way—hi, I’d like to be romantically and sexually involved with you, but once a month I’m going to meet up with someone who will tie me up and paddle my ass.”

“Not something I would have tried at the start of a relationship in my twenties. Or even early thirties,” Nathan conceded.

“The other option is that at some point, you have to have a conversation with your partner. A conversation that reduces down to ‘you can’t satisfy my needs.’” Tara shifted restlessly. “If you tried to get your partner on board with your kink, like I did with Clark, then if at a later point you negotiate for some level of open relationship so you can have a BDSM partner too, you’re explicitly telling your romantic partner that they tried and failed to satisfy you.

“If you instead spring the I-need-a-BDSM-partner issue on them months or years into the relationship, without first telling them about your need, it shows you didn’t trust

them enough to be honest about your sexual needs. And you didn't think them capable of meeting your needs, because you weren't even willing to let them try."

"It's hard," he agreed. "And you've thought it through more than I have, all the variables and outcomes." He pressed his hand harder against her cheek, not enough to turn her head, but it grounded their contact—like planting your feet and bracing against an ocean wave. "I want to know what happened that weekend with Clark."

She let the rumble of his words soothe her. Took comfort in his touch before answering. "What happened that weekend was...it was good."

Nathan's brows rose, and she quirked her lips in a wry smile.

"He took control. Really took control. Spanked me like he meant it. Did some stuff I hadn't explicitly asked him to do."

Nathan stiffened. "Did he hurt you? Hit a hard limit?"

"No, no, I liked it. It was nice to be surprised. But the problem was, I hadn't really been submissive with him before that weekend."

Nathan's hand slid back into her hair, cupping her head, his gaze lowering for a moment as he processed what she'd said. Then he grimaced. "Shit."

"See where this is going?"

"You went truly submissive. Subspace."

Tara grimaced a little at the term, but nodded. "I immersed myself in the power exchange."

Nathan opened his mouth, but she put one finger over his lips.

He settled, absently kissing her finger while his gaze stayed intent on hers, his hand cradling her head in a way that was both protective and possessive.

“It was the best sex we’d had, not only kinky but decidedly D/s. I slept naked, which I never do. After sex I usually put on PJs. But I went to sleep naked, submissive, and aroused, and woke up the same way.”

“No PJs?” Nathan lifted the sheets just enough to peer at her naked tits.

She smacked the covers down. “Don’t let in the cold air.”

He grinned, then hauled her against him. Sparks of sensation lit up when her still-tender nipples brushed his chest, and again when he grabbed her ass to pull her into the position he wanted. Only when they were once more settled with him on his back, her tucked up against him, did she continue. The covers were pulled up to her neck and held in place by his heavy hand resting between her shoulder blades. It was warm and safe here.

“Normally, I hit a point where I need out of the scene. Maybe I’m sexed out, or my body’s had enough. Or I can’t be in the power exchange anymore.”

Nathan rumbled his understanding.

“But that time... We started Friday night, and Sunday morning I was still submissive and needy.”

It was easier to admit this when Nathan wasn’t looking at her. She didn’t want him to see the remembered embarrassment that tinged her cheeks. “Clark was sitting with his back against the headboard. We’d just had sex, so he was soft, which was fine of



course, but I was still turned on. I was straddling one of his legs, rubbing my pussy against his thigh as we made out. He wasn't doing anything else, and after a while he stopped kissing me, but I was happy to just bury my face in his neck. He wasn't touching me anywhere but holding my hips."

Her cheeks were hot with remember embarrassment. How had she not noticed his disinterest body language?

"I thought it was part of the scene—him making me hump his leg to come, like a needy slut."

Tara tipped her head to meet Nathan's gaze, unsurprised to find he was looking at her. Again, they were so close it was hard to focus on his face, but she didn't want to put distance between them.

"I was at the point where I was calling myself a needy slut. I think I even said it out loud. 'I'm your needy slut.'" Tara grimaced at the memory, tucking her chin. His arm tightened around her, but he didn't say anything.

"Eventually I came, but it took a while. And the instant I did, he went into the bathroom to shower, then to the kitchen. I put on a robe and went out too, thinking we'd have breakfast."

Tara swallowed the urge to adjust the story, to minimize what happened next to make herself seem less...pathetic. Nathan deserved the truth, but more importantly, she knew in her soul he wouldn't think less of her.

"When I went to touch him, he looked irritated, so I stopped, finally catching on that we weren't on the same page. He said he hadn't expected to waste the whole weekend. He had work to do. He..." She stopped, adjusted her tone to make it clear her next words were a quote. "'I didn't expect you to take so long.'"

Tara could still hear Clark's frustrated exasperation. Feel twinges along the internal scar caused by the soul-deep humiliation that had cut her apart.

Nathan's muscles went tight, his body almost uniformly hard and unyielding against her. "What a shithead."

"Yes, but also no." She clawed her way back to an emotional neutral. "I mean, I wasn't paying attention to his emotions and needs. He was clearly not engaged?—"

"A sub can and should trust the Dom to make sure both your needs are met. Including the need to stop."

"I don't think he knew how to get out of the scene."

"Then he's a stupid shithead. Not just a shithead."

It shouldn't feel this good, this validating, to have Nathan upset on her behalf. If she were a coward, she could leave it there, but the same brain chemistry that made her a masochist urged her to keep talking. To lay her whole soul bare.

"I must have made a face, because he immediately apologized. But when he tried to kiss me, I backed away. I was scared that if he touched me, I'd want something more. That I'd need or demand more than he was willing to give."

"You were worried you'd ask too much of him, or did you not want a stupid shithead touching you?"

"If being a stupid shithead was a deal-breaker for sex, no one would sleep with men."

Nathan barked out a laugh, and she liked the way it made her vibrate. The moment of levity made it easier to continue.

“Our relationship was essentially over after that.” Tara swallowed hard, then cleared her throat. “He left, said he had some reading he needed to do. Apologized again. We didn’t technically break up until months later, but that weekend was the end.” She tried for a self-deprecating joke. “That’s my tragic backstory. My submissive needs killed my longest, and probably best, relationship.”

Nathan pressed their bodies tighter together, his presence warm and strong, but demanding in the silence.

Her throat was tight, making her next words quiet and thin. “I felt so stupid. So embarrassed.”

“Tara.” He twisted to press his lips against her forehead, holding them there as if he could heal her through the kiss.

“Even now, thinking about how I acted that morning, knowing that the whole time he was desperately hoping I’d finish so he could leave...” She jammed her face against his chest, as if she could hide inside her oldest friend.

“It wasn’t your fault. Your needs weren’t the issue.”

Tara took several deep breaths, willing away the remembered humiliation. She cleared her throat and eased back to her previous position. “That’s what my therapist said too.”

“Good. It was a communication issue. And I’m not saying it was only on his side. If he wasn’t familiar with D/s, then I’m giving you some of the blame for not prepping him with information about how serious a power exchange becomes.”

“Thanks for that,” she said dryly, but his words evaporated the tightness in her throat.

Nathan's hand moved to her hair, once more cupping her head. "Tara?"

"Yes?"

"How bad was the sub drop?"

She exhaled slowly, even as her heart clenched. Of course he knew, he realized, what would have followed after Clark walked out.

"Bad. I'd never really had sub drop before. I'm not sure I'd ever let myself be that submissive. Mostly I played at private parties, or with people I met at munches. Because they were strangers or short-term acquaintances, I could never really let myself go."

"But Clark was your boyfriend. You trusted him."

"I felt hollow after he left." Hollow wasn't a strong enough word for the way she'd felt, standing in her kitchen in shock, her body pleasantly achy from the sex but so, so cold after the heat of the humiliation. "I... I literally didn't know what to do. I sat on the floor for a long time before I eventually cried. It was only when I got angry—and I think it was dark by then—that I was able to get up and go shower. Pull myself together."

"No aftercare and sub drop. Shit." He kissed her head, and again there was something healing about that kiss. "How long before you tried scening?"

"Right question again," she said with a laugh. "It was years. For a while I thought I'd maybe been...I don't know. Cured?"

"This isn't a disease. You don't need to be cured or fixed."

“After Clark, it definitely felt like my need for sexual submission was detrimental.”

“You deserve better than that.”

“Thank you.” The blush that heated her cheeks at his words was a world away from the acute embarrassment she’d felt all those years ago with Clark.

“When I eventually did try and get back into the community” she continued, “and started looking for partners, I heard about Las Palmas. It took another year before I was financially ready to join, but I did, and my life has been much better now that I have a regular, safe outlet.”

“And that’s why you haven’t had a long-term relationship, or gotten married. You know you need BDSM, but you don’t think it works to introduce your needs, and BDSM, to a partner.”

“No,” she agreed. “I know there are people out there who are successful in doing that very thing, but I won’t attempt it.”

“And what about telling them up front that you’re going to come here once a month or so?”

“That’s an option,” she acknowledged. “But not what I pictured for myself.”

“Why?”

“Why are you asking?” She pushed up so she could look down at him. “Is that what you’re thinking of doing? I’d ask if that’s what you were already doing, but I know you’re not seeing anyone.”

“I definitely wouldn’t have just fucked you without protection if I were with

someone.” Nathan’s words were almost absent, his gaze having slid down to her bare breasts. “And you didn’t answer my question.”

“Neither did you.”

“I asked first.”

The way he was looking at her was making her blood heat, just a bare simmer of need. Her abused body screamed at her that she needed to be done for the night, so Tara settled back against him, repositioning the corner of the pillow she’d stacked on his shoulder.

“No,” she said. “I don’t want to try for an open relationship. Again, I know people make it work, but for me... If I’m with someone, I want to be theirs, and for them to be mine.” It felt silly to say out loud.

The idea of a single person being able to satisfy all of their partner’s emotional and physical needs was nearly ludicrous, yet that was society’s expectation, and even knowing it was unrealistic, she couldn’t out-think what her heart wanted.

“For me, if he—my hypothetical husband—was okay with me being with someone else, part of me would always wonder if it was because he didn’t care.” She exhaled a self-deprecating laugh. “My therapist says it’s a self-esteem and self-perception issue. My partner’s acceptance of my seeing someone else to get my needs met could be a sign of love—of them wanting me to be satisfied and fulfilled, and therefore welcome things that allow me satisfaction.”

“Good therapist.”

“Annoyingly so,” Tara agreed. “Even after she said that, I couldn’t stop thinking that if my husband was okay with me going to another man, okay with another man

touching me intimately—even if there was no penetrative sex—it would mean he just didn't care about me. Didn't care what I did, or who I was with."

"This hypothetical husband is a shithead."

A strangely comfortable silence fell. Tara felt lighter for having shared this, but now curiosity nipped at her. She opened her mouth to ask him about his relationships, why he'd never married, but what escaped was a yawn.

Nathan pulled the covers back up over her shoulder, and the exhaustion that had been held at bay by their conversation pounced, weighing her down. The last thing she felt before she fell asleep was Nathan once more kissing her forehead.

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“How long are you going to read the instructions?” Tara rattled the chain obnoxiously to underscore her question.

Nathan didn’t look up. “Until I’m sure the person who wrote them knows what they’re doing.”

“I looked at the specs. Even if you put both electrodes on the left side of my chest and turn it all the way, it wouldn’t cause a problem.”

“Unless you have a previously undiagnosed heart condition.”

“You do realize that those things—” Tara balanced on one foot, and used the toes of her other foot to point at the device on a small side table. “—were originally created for medical use.”

“Yes.”

“And creating medical devices is what I do.”

“And you remember I’m currently working on a cardiology implant, and regularly have to bring in electricians to explain stuff to the consultant cardiologists?”

Tara sighed, aggrieved, but it was exaggerated. Mostly. He was being thorough to the point of pedantic and she was standing here naked, wrists overhead, now chained rather than tied to the light fixture.

“I’ll be right back.” Nathan pushed up from the chair, the instruction manual still



open in his hand.

Tara stiffened, not wanting him to leave but also not willing to say so. She didn't hide her physical reaction because he wasn't looking at her. At least she didn't think he'd been looking at her. However, Nathan turned abruptly, studying her.

"You tensed up." He scanned her up and down. "Why?"

Tara blinked, caught off guard.

"Tara." His word was a command.

After the casual, almost normal, banter and conversation they'd been having, and despite her current situation—wearing nothing but a short silk robe, bound in leather and chain—she was startled by the dominant command.

"Clark used to leave in the middle of sex to go get something," she blurted out. "Or go wash his hands. He washed his hands a lot. I hated it because I don't like being alone when I'm restrained, and because... Because him leaving was a reminder that he hadn't prepared. Hadn't thought about or planned what he was going to do, and therefore didn't have what he needed."

Nathan took a moment to absorb and process her words, then walked over with quick, sure strides.

He kissed her, fast and hard, one arm around her ribs, a hand at the back of her head. "I'm sorry I went to get the stool last night. If I'd known, I would have just used a chair, or called someone to bring it."

"It's really not that big of a deal, this is a me issue?—"

Nathan touched his lips gently to hers until she stopped talking, then kept their foreheads together once she was quiet. “If you don’t like it, if it makes you feel undervalued, then it is a big deal. And an us issue.”

Tara swallowed. “Thank you. For saying that. But if you need something for the scene, please go get it.”

Nathan leaned back, and his grin made her narrow her eyes, even as her pussy throbbed. That was the devil’s own smile.

“I was going to go get a whiteboard.”

She blinked. “What?”

“A whiteboard. We’re working with a lot of variables. Contact type—pads versus insertable. Pad size and shape. Pad location. Insertable location—anal or vagina. Unit mode. Amplitude. Frequency of stimulation, and current pattern.”

That unique mix of trepidation and arousal roared through Tara, making her thigh muscles tremble.

“That’s a lot of variables to track,” he said in mock concern. “Hence, whiteboard.”

Despite the thick, warm arousal sliding along her bones, Tara mean-mugged him. “I’m not a test subject.”

Nathan pursed his lips. “No, in this scenario you’re more of a...practice dummy.”

Tara kicked him. Not hard—just tapped her foot against the outside of his calf—but the retaliatory spank was enough to push her up on her toes and make her breath hiss between her teeth. Heat and a prickling sting on her left ass cheek, and only that

cheek, made her want to both rub away the sting, and kick him again to get a matching swat on the other side.

“Time to get serious.” Nathan returned to the TENS unit.

“I’m still a little confused that this is under T, not under E for electrical play.”

“Electrical play implies I could use jumper cables and a car battery.”

Tara almost choked on her own spit. “W-what?”

“Electrical play is really broad, and also very dangerous.” Nathan applied a couple electrode pads to his forearm and started testing. “Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation units are designed for use on the human body. Even better, this is a kink-specific tool. A TENS unit for muscle pain wouldn’t have a dildo. Or a plug.” He reached into the case and pulled out a short silver dildo and a fairly substantial plug.

Tara rubbed her tongue along the inside of her teeth, her body throbbing in response to the sight of the toys in his hands.

Nathan rose from the chair, dragging the side table with him to the open area where she was restrained. Next, he brought over both the bar-height stool from last night and the mission-style ladder-backed chair from the desk.

Nathan placed the chair in front of her and sat, leaning back casually as his gaze raked her up and down. That was all it took for the mood to shift, sliding along one of those complex angles, to a place where she was both helpless and safe. Where she could, perhaps for the first time, submit without reservation.

If it had been anyone but Nathan sitting there with an electrosex toy, she would have been anxious, prepped, and ready with her safe word. If she did ask him to stop, it

wouldn't be because she felt unsafe.

Nathan sat forward, looking over her again, but more slowly. He'd been the one to hand her the robe, but now, the fact that she wasn't naked felt almost disobedient. As if she were trying to hide what was rightfully his.

Wide, warm palms cupped her breasts, the heat from his hands sinking through the whisper-thin satin of the robe. He thumbed her nipples until they hardened, then flicked them gently with his nails. Tara gasped at the sharp pleasure, her elbows coming down as she instinctively went to cover the sensitive tips of her breasts.

"No," he said gently. "Elbows back."

Slowly, she repositioned her arms, raising her hands and tangling her fingers around the thin chain.

Nathan spread open the robe, carefully tucking it to expose her breasts, but keeping the bottom closed.

He'd inspected her breasts when they woke up, worrying over the few faint bruises, but he'd also been pleased. She'd seen it in the possessive way he looked at the marks, and had called him on it. He'd admitted to enjoying the site of his marks on her, then hauled her into the shower. After a shower and breakfast, they'd crawled back into bed. Tara had been ready and more than willing for sex—kinky or otherwise—but she'd been full and warm, and they ended up napping for several hours instead.

He hadn't touched her intimately since they woke up from the nap.

She hadn't come since last night, because while they'd fooled around in the shower, neither had orgasmed.

“Still tender?” he asked, rubbing his palms over her so that the very tip of her nipple just barely brushed his hand.

“Yes, but I don’t think it’s from last night.” It took everything she had not to thrust her chest against his hands. The contact was maddeningly faint, and yet pleasure and need zinged through her, sharp and maddening.

“Oh?”

“I’m aroused.” She tried for a matter-of-fact tone, but her words came out both breathy and needy. Submissive.

“Of course you are.” He moved to her back, pressing their bodies together. Tara leaned into him, letting her head fall back as he reached around to keep playing with her tits.

His lips touched her hair, her temple, soft and gentle to match the way his fingers rolled her nipples.

“Technically,” he whispered, “I could add some electrode clamps to these pretty things.” He tugged her nipples softly. “They have them, and if you plug in the clamps, the unit automatically reduces the max settings to a safe level.”

“Are you going to, Nathan?”

There was a slight pause, then he cupped her breasts, lifting them in his hands. “No. Because no matter what they said, I can’t bring myself to run a current through your chest, near your heart.”

He flicked her nipples with his thumbs, the hard of his nail catching her on the upstroke, the softer pad of his thumb caressing on the down swoop. The touch was

casually possessive in the best possible way but at odds with the kiss he placed on her head.

The kiss was reverent, almost devotional. No one looked at the couple in The Meeting on the Turret Stairs, and thought “Oh, I bet he treats her like his personal sex toy.”

Yet with Nathan, it was both. The kiss felt like devotion from a knight, while his hands on her breasts felt like the confidently propriety touch of a Master.

Those two things weren’t as different as most people believed.

Her thoughts had turned almost philosophical as her lower body tensed in anticipation, while her neck and shoulders relaxed in submission.

That morphed into a different kind of tension when he moved away, leaving her back cold after the heat of his body.

Nathan dropped down into the chair facing her. Holding her by the hips, he squeezed until she looked at him.

“I tested it on myself, yes including on my dick, when I went to get it this morning. It’s an odd sensation, a buzz, sometimes a tingle, and maybe a little pain, but even on the highest setting, it wasn’t all that painful. If you feel anything that isn’t one of the things I just described, you need to tell me immediately.”

“Yes, Nathan.”

“I’m speaking directly to your masochistic side.”

Tara smiled, then fixed her face in a serious expression. “I understand.”

“Try again.” He lightly slapped her breast.

“I understand, Nathan.”

“Better.” He studied her with exaggerated displeasure, but she managed to suppress her smile.

He reached into his pocket and pulled out...

Nipple clamps.

I thought he wasn't...

Nathan cupped the clamps in his palm and jiggled them, making the metal clink. “Just because I’m not going to use the clamp electrodes, or even the pads made especially for breasts, doesn’t mean I won’t play with these pretty things.”

He held the clamps up for her to see.

The spring-loaded clamps were made of a circle of metal with two flat bars inside the circle. Pulling back on small rods separated the flat bars, creating space inside the circle for the nipple. Release the rods, and the bars snapped together, pinching anything unlucky enough to be positioned between them.

Anything like her sensitive nipples.

Tara watched, not breathing, and he applied the first clamp. He was gentle with it, slowly releasing the rods, his knuckles pressed into the meat of her breasts as he guided the metal to first grip, then pinch her nipple. The clamp was heavy enough that it pulled at her, weighing down her breast.

He was crueler to the second breast, releasing quickly so the bars snapped down onto her nipple. Tara whimpered, back arching.

“Shit, you’re so sexy when you make that noise,” he rumbled, leaning in to lick at the very tips of her captured nipples.

Her tits throbbed, nipples burning, and she wanted more.

“Spread your legs. Wider.”

Tara watched him through heavy lids as she obeyed, her arms now stretched high above her, thanks to the new position. She was helpless, vulnerable, and he was about to do unspeakable things to her. She should have been scared, or at least wary.

She wasn’t. She was aroused...and impatient.

She needed. Needed him to touch her. Abuse her. Needed him to use her for his own pleasure. Needed to live in this fantasy moment where she was helpless, with no power of her own. Totally at the mercy of her Master. His to pleasure and hurt.

Nathan took a soft cloth and carefully wiped her pussy lips, removing the thin layer of arousal fluid that coated her hairless labia. Spreading her legs had parted her labia, exposing her core. The cloth brushed her clit and she sucked in air, back arching.

“Are you trying to sneak in an orgasm?” In contrast to the words, his tone wasn’t teasing but low with warning.

“No, Nathan.”

He hummed doubtfully, then dropped to one knee, his face level with her pussy.



Two fingers spread the top of her labia wider apart, and her breath caught in anticipation of pleasure.

Nathan scrubbed her clit with the corner of the cloth, the touch rough, almost impersonal. The soft fabric felt like sandpaper against her arousal-sensitive clit. Tara screamed in both shock and pain, instinctively closing her legs.

Nathan pinched her clit with the cloth, his knee and opposite shoulder braced against the inside of her legs, keeping her spread wide for him.

He rolled her clit, and it felt like he'd touched a live electrical wire to her nerves. What she felt wasn't pleasure or pain, but something deeper, something base and raw.

She was panting, a hint of a whimper threaded through each exhale.

"Please, Nathan," she pleaded.

"Please fuck you?" His other hand braced against her inner thigh, thumb touching her entrance. "Pinch your clit harder?" He tugged gently on her clit. She screamed, going still. Her head felt heavy, her body flushed and needy. She took a jerky breath, and the heavy clamps on her nipples bobbed, tugging on the tips of her breasts.

"Please do things to me no man has done before," she breathed, any verbal filters and checks she had stripped away. "Prove that I belong to you, body and soul."

Nathan stilled, then exhaled heavily.

There was a brief flash of embarrassment as she played back her words, but there wasn't time to dwell on or regret what she'd said.

Nathan released her clit, and she rocked back. He made one more pass over her sex

with the cloth, drying her skin, before pushing up off the floor and dropping onto the chair.

Nathan picked up a long oval electrode pad. “Close your legs.”

She had only a second to wonder if he’d changed his mind, before Nathan hooked a hand behind her left knee, lifting her leg until her foot was braced on his knee. He spread her leg open, exposing her pussy as she balanced on her right leg.

Peeling the backing off the electrode, he leaned in close to her sex and carefully applied the sticky pad to her labia. When she put her foot down, the shot lead tapped on the inside of her thigh.

He applied a matching electrode to her other pussy lip, the sticky gel pad cold as he pressed hard to make it adhere.

“Leg down, and spread yourself again for me.”

She took a minute to adjust to the odd feel of the sticky pads, then obediently spread her legs.

“To complete the circuit, the electricity will travel through your body.” His fingers traced a path from one electrode, across the inside of her labia just below her clit, to gently tap the second pad.

“You may come from this, you may not. Once I start it, I want you talking the whole time. Tell me what you’re feeling, and where you’re feeling it.”

She nodded, but that wasn’t good enough. He tweaked one of the clamps, and she yelped before quickly saying, “Yes, Nathan.”

“Good girl.” He plugged the short wires from the electrodes into the pin leads. She’d thought the black box on the table was the TENS unit, but it turned out to just be a case for the unit itself, which was much smaller than anticipated—a wireless handheld box.

The screen lit up as he turned it on. She braced, but nothing happened.

Tara opened her eyes, glancing at Nathan, and then blushing when she realized he was leaning back in his chair watching her, the control box cradled nonchalantly in one hand.

“I hope you come.” His gaze raked down her. “I like the idea of making you orgasm for me without ever touching you.”

Tara wet her lower lip, holding his gaze.

“Helpless and coming. Putting on a show just for me.” He leaned forward, gaze intense.

Still looking into those familiar eyes, she didn’t notice his hand move. Didn’t see him activate the current.

A deep buzzing feeling started in her pussy. It was faint, and felt just out of reach, though it was quite literally coursing through her body.

“Tara,” he warned, and she remembered his instructions.

“It tingles, almost a buzz. It doesn’t hurt, but it’s not exactly pleasurable either.”

A pause, and then the sensation changed, a sharper buzz, almost like the pins and needles from having feeling returning to skin that had gone numb, pulsed through her

in waves.

“Nathan,” she hissed, head falling back between her raised arms.

“I need more information than that.”

“It’s sharper. Doesn’t hurt, not really, but it’s in the...wrong place. It’s not on my clit, but not in my vagina either.” She blew out air, lifting her head. “It’s frustrating.”

A slow grin spread across his face.

“I knew I shouldn’t have admitted that,” she sighed.

“But you did, because you’re a good girl.” He looked down, and the sensation changed again, becoming stronger. Enough to make her gasp and whimper.

“It hurts,” she breathed.

“How much.”

“Not enough.”

“I do love a good girl masochist,” he murmured.

The pattern of sensation changed, as did the intensity. Eyes half closed, Tara stopped trying to analyze the sensation. She stopped trying to figure out precisely what he was adjusting—amplitude versus pattern versus current—each time the sensation changed. Instead, she submitted to the sensation as she’d submitted to him, words tumbling from her mouth as she narrated what she felt. The constant buzzing and tingling passed through her sex but not her clit. The sensation was right there, so close, but not where she needed it.

It didn't take long for her to grow restless, her hips thrusting and tilting, as if she could move the current up half an inch. Move it to her clit, where she needed it.

Slowly, the feeling faded, and she opened her eyes, staring at Nathan as he clicked down the controls until it was off.

Two thick fingers thrust into her, the invasion sudden and shocking. Tara gasped even as her back bowed, her muscles fluttering and clenching around him. She was close, so close.

He pulled his fingers out, reaching up to smear them against her lips, then rising to kiss her, driving her own flavor between her lips with sweeps of his tongue.

"You stopped talking to me," he murmured.

Anxiety pinched her. "I'm sorry, Nathan."

"We can't keep going if you don't talk to me."

"I was concentrating."

"On what? On the pleasure? The pain?"

Tara met his familiar gaze, though the look in his eyes, the dominant, possessive tint, was still new. New but...right.

"I was trying to will the current to move," she admitted.

His brows rose before his mouth tipped in a grin. "Will it?"

"I couldn't feel it in my clit."

“And you wanted to.”

Tara just stared at him.

“Right, of course you want electricity coursing through your clit.”

“Obviously,” she agreed, deadpan.

Nathan chuckled, then kissed her head before dropping back into the chair.

Carefully, he removed the two electrode pads. The sticky gel pulled, but didn't really hurt, especially because he was gentle.

He looked up. “We're going to try a different placement.”

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*Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:53 am*

“One here, and one here.” He touched her mons and then reached lower, tapping her perineum. “Send the current right along here.” One blunt fingertip traced up, dipping briefly into her entrance, then between her arousal-swollen labia, and across her clit.

To finally, finally have some stimulation on her clit was more relief than pleasure. She inhaled as his finger glided over her, waiting.

Waiting for him to do it again.

Waiting for the orgasm she desperately needed.

Nathan pulled back and reached into the box, selecting two more electrode pads. Tara rattled the chains in frustration.

He wiped the skin between her vagina and ass, drying it, before placing a square pad there, the sticky gel cold. The second pad was a crescent shape, the inner curve arching over the top of her slit. He pressed hard, adhering the pad. She tipped her hips, hoping to make one of his fingers accidentally slip down to her clit. He grunted in amusement as he gave her pussy a firm pat that she wished had been a spank.

“Talk to me,” Nathan commanded as he once more connected the leads to the pads.

“I’m frustrated.”

“Sexually or emotionally?”

“Both.”

He arched a brow.

“Sexually, but also, the sensation was...unsettling.”

“That makes sense.” With the box in one hand, he gently petted her labia with the other.

“Touch my clit,” she blurted out. “Please.”

“No.”

That blunt denial kicked her brain deeper into subspace. After all, it was his decision when and how she was touched. She was free of the burden of choice, and begging wouldn't change that.

A soft zap made her gasp. It felt like a shock of static electricity but on her pussy. Then it started. A low buzz up and down her pussy. The sensation rose and fell, from the soft buzz to a hard prickling that danced on the edge of being pain.

“Nathan,” she stammered.

“Tell me.”

“It feels... It's not a vibration, but I want it to be. It feels like it could be. When it... There, now.” She panted through the sharper sensation, sagging a little as the intensity subsided. “It's like pins and needles after your foot falls asleep.”

“It hurts?”

“Maybe? I don't know.” She wanted to tell him about the facets of pleasure and pain, about how the linear scale she'd always used before was far too simple.



The current raced under her skin, stinging and tingling, stimulating her in that odd and unsettling way. Nathan played with the control, looking down to adjust, then back up at her, his gaze raking up and down her body. Assessing and watchful.

He made another adjustment, and the pattern changed from soft swells and dips, to hard jagged spikes. This finally felt like the shocks she'd expected when she saw the TENS unit. Her hips jerked with each small snap of pain.

“Does that hurt?”

“Yes, don't stop. Please.”

“Are you going to come?”

Eyes screwed shut, she thought about it, finally shaking her head. “No, I don't think so. It's stimulating, but not in the way?—”

He changed the intensity, keep the pattern the same. Now the peak of each steep wave was a burst of sensation that had drawn back from pain. It wasn't pleasure, wasn't pain.

She felt it at the base of her clit glans, and up under the hood. She felt it around her entrance. Her nerves sparked and sizzled from the current.

“Oh God, that one,” she breathed. “That. Whatever that is. Make a note.”

“I told you I needed a whiteboard.”

Tara laughed—a tinge hysterical. Maybe it was the tightening of her abdominal muscles as she laughed that triggered the orgasm. Maybe it was the deep emotional connection she felt to him in that moment. Maybe it was being chained up and

helpless as her Master used her in a way that felt dangerous and forbidden.

Tara's eyes popped open as her lips parted, her orgasm a shock to her. Nathan's satisfied gaze swept up and down her body as she shivered helplessly through the orgasm that she felt in her bones rather than her skin and muscles.

"Nathan, Nathan," she chanted his name, until the bone-deep pleasure became too much for words and she clenched her teeth.

It felt like minutes but had been only seconds. She waited for the orgasm to ebb.

Nathan's fingers flickered over the controls.

"Nathan!" His name was a scream as the pattern shifted once again, a terrible, wonderful pricking sensation buzzing between her taint and clit. The pattern had gone back to soft swells, but the intensity was higher.

Tara screamed through her teeth, body shaking as he forced her through another orgasm.

"I like this." Nathan's voice was low and almost cruel. "Making you come without even touching you."

She moaned, the sound guttural as another wave of pleasure pushed her down, down.

"What a pretty, obedient sub you are. Coming even though nothing is touching your clit. Nothing in your pussy."

Her moans became a keening whimper. Tara's legs were shaking, her arm muscles screaming, and she held herself up. She tried to close her legs, if only to improve her balance—it wouldn't stop the low-level current flowing through her—but Nathan

knocked her legs apart once more, forcing her to stay open.

“Talk to me,” he commanded.

“I can’t...I don’t. I don’t know what my body’s doing. I don’t know if I want it to stop or want you to turn it up, make it hurt.”

He rose from the chair, cupping her cheek and tipping her face up. “That’s not your decision to make, is it?”

“No, Nathan,” she breathed, and they both knew that what she’d really just said was, “No, Master.”

Their lips met in a kiss that was almost reverent, broken when she cried out in pain against his lips as he pulled hard on one nipple clamp.

“Do you think you can come again from the pain of having the clamps removed?” He kissed her cheek, the spot under her ear.

How could she answer that, when she barely understood the low rolls of pleasure that still swept through her every few seconds. Had she been forced to name what was happening now, she’d call it an orgasm, or a series of orgasms, even though it was both more and less.

“I don’t know,” she whimpered.

“Let’s find out.”

Nathan leaned back, grabbed the posts on the left clamp, and pulled the plates apart.

Tara hissed as blood rushed back to nipple, the sound choked off as he removed the

other clamp. Her nipples burned and throbbed. If he rubbed them, they would feel better, but Nathan didn't touch her, only watched as she whimpered and twitched.

“One more thing, and then I'll let you down.”

He picked up the box.

She tried to brace herself, but she was nearly limp, her body soft and open to receive whatever he gave her.

He kissed her gently, and she knew that meant he was going to be harsh. Part of her hoped it would be impact play—spank her pussy or tits. But she knew it wasn't that. Knew he was going to amp the TENS unit up to pain levels.

She braced herself and held his gaze. Nathan's smile was soft as he manipulated the controls without looking.

Sharp pain shot through her sex. A terrible, sharp pins and needles sensation pricked her from her channel to her clit. She was past screaming, eyes fluttering closed.

The sensation stopped, gone after only a second, but its echo lingered.

“Breathe, Tara.” Nathan braced his body against hers as he reached up and unhooked her wrist cuffs from the chains.

She collapsed against him, rubbing her aching nipples against his chest. When she finally closed her legs, she felt the thin wires against her inner thighs.

“You took that so well, sweetheart. Such a good girl.” He stroked her hair and back, briefly squeezing her ass. “But the scene isn't over, unless you need it to be.”

At that, she looked up, leaning back against the hand gripping her ass. “The TENS unit scene?”

His gaze unforgiving. “Yes.”

She swallowed a whimper. She wanted to be done, because as wild as the successive orgasms had been, the intensity was hard to handle. Her pussy still buzzed with lingering sensation.

With anyone else, she would have stopped it here and now.

But this was Nathan.

“I’m ready.”

Nathan nodded, not smiling, but his gaze was satisfied. Possessive.

Unhooking the leads, he led her over to the bed and directed her to lay on her back.

“Hands.”

Tentatively, she raised her arms, holding her hands out to him. He clipped the wrist cuffs together, which she expected.

The metal thumb cuffs were a surprise.

She held still as he positioned her thumbs in the twin holes in the thin metal oval about the size of a deck of playing cards. It clicked as he tightened the device around the narrow part of her thumbs.

“Thumb cuffs,” he said. “Second to last letter T item.”

Tara wasn't ready for the dread those words created. If this was the second to last item, it meant when this scene was done, they only had one more.

Or maybe this was it. Maybe after thumb cuffs, he'd add in whatever the last item was. This could all end, they could end, in the next hour.

Her time being a sexual submissive was almost over.

Dread choked her, made her breathing shallow as Nathan ordered her to put her hands above her head. It was shocking how restrictive the thumb cuffs were. She was used to restriction on her arm movement being centered on her wrists—cuffs or rope. Now, the metal clip connecting her leather wrist cuffs felt loose compared to the restriction of the thumb cuffs, which forced her hands together. She was glad she was lying down. If she'd been standing, or even sitting, it would be too easy to accidentally yank on the cuffs.

Focusing on the thumb cuffs while testing several different hand positions distracted her from spiraling with thoughts of the future. He gripped her ankles, putting her heels against her ass and pressing her knees open in a butterfly position.

The short connecting wire coming off the electrode pad on her mons tapped against her inner labia as she was spread open.

Her attention was ripped back to the present as Nathan stripped off his clothes. Tara literally licked her lips in anticipation as his hard cock was revealed.

Nathan set the TENS unit on the bed by her feet, and her ardor cooled somewhat. She wasn't sure she could do that again. Maybe if she got some electrolytes and stretched...

She opened her mouth but quickly shut it as Nathan pulled on a glove, attaching one

of the leads to the dangling connection wire coming off the wrist. He connected the second wire to the pad on her mons.

He held up his gloved left hand, holding the TENS unit in his right, then raised his eyebrows.

“Oh!” she exclaimed, realizing what was about to happen.

His grin was almost boyish as he clicked on the TENS unit. She tensed, but nothing happened. Her logical mind had known nothing would. The circuit wasn’t complete.

“Electricity needs two points to create a circuit. With this—” He wiggled his fingers in a little wave. “—anywhere I touch you, the circuit will close.”

Nathan gently curled his gloved hand over her knee.

The result was a short buzz, like soft static electricity, then a faint tingle up and down her thigh. If she concentrated, she could feel the path the current took from his hand down her thigh to her sex.

“Tell me.”

“Too faint.” Tara closed her eyes, blocking out the visual input to focus on the physical. “Turn it up.”

Nathan’s hand slid down to her ankle, the tingle spreading but growing fainter.

Then he grabbed her other ankle with his un-gloved hand and in two quick motions, yanked her legs into the air, ankles together.

Tara yelped first in surprise, and then again in pain as he spanked her.

“I like knowing what you want, but when you want something, you ask for it, sweetheart.” Spank, spank. “Issuing orders will always earn you a reminder of who’s in control.”

Both ankles in one hand, he forced her knees to her chest. This position stretched the skin and muscles of her ass tight, causing each spank to feel harder, sharper. And the sting...

Wait. That sting wasn’t just sharper than normal because of the position of her legs.

He was spanking her with his gloved hand. And he must have turned the current up, because each spank landed with a zap as he completed the circuit, and a deep thud of his heavy hand making contact.

“I’m sorry, Nathan!” she gasped out. She hit the point of pain quickly, either due to yesterday’s spanking, or the added zap of electricity that came with each spanking. Tara even tried to reach down and cover her bottom, but she’d forgotten about the thumb cuffs, and quickly dropped her hands back into place above her head, after painfully yanking on her thumbs.

“I’ll be good,” she whimpered.

“I know, baby. I know.”

He slowed the spanking, stroking the back of her raised legs between each swat. Her ass was burning, though nothing compared to yesterday, when he finally lowered her feet to the bed. Her skin tingled, but she wasn’t sure if it was because of the current.

“Back in position,” he ordered, watching her as he stripped off his glove. “Wider.”

She tucked her feet up by her ass and spread her knees as wide as she could, feeling



the stretch in her inner thigh muscles. Feeling cool air on her sex as the position spread her outer and inner labia.

Nathan studied her pussy, and a double helix of arousal and embarrassment slid through her, the sensations linked because being so exposed always deepened her submission.

Tara watched through her lashes as Nathan grabbed another electrode pad, eyes rounding in surprise as he reached between his own legs.

When he attached the lead that had been on the glove to the pad now stuck to his perineum, just behind his balls, her eyes felt like they were going to pop out of her head.

“Holy shit,” she breathed, using his favorite curse word.

Nathan grinned. “That’s right. You’ve got one side, I’ve got the other, and when my cock touches you, the circuit completes.”

Tara opened and closed her mouth several times.

“Thinking it through, baby?”

“I’m... That’s...”

“I was going to tease you. Rub my cock all over your pussy.” His jaw flexed, throat working as he swallowed. “But I need to fuck you. I need to be so deep inside you that you can fucking taste me.”

Tara had no words, too caught by her own arousal to answer. Instead, she slid her feet across the mattress, bracing them so she was ready to cradle his body as he fucked

her.

Nathan knelt between her feet, the mattress dipping with his weight. He placed the TENS unit by her shoulder, carefully arranging leads so they went under her leg.

Moving slowly, head bowed so he could watch and make sure his cock didn't touch her, Nathan positioned himself, his fists indenting the mattress on either side of her breasts, his elbows locked.

Finally, he met her gaze, a savagery flicking across his expression. He looked like he was barely holding on to his control, and the idea that she'd caused this made her feel beautiful and powerful.

Nathan's hips dipped, and the head of his cock touched her entrance.

The quick zap of pain made them both freeze, his cock posed at her entrance. Now, there was a faint prickling tingle, neither pleasure nor pain but that same unsettled feeling.

Whatever Nathan saw in her expression made him smile, just a quirk of lips before his jaw firmed and he thrust into her. She was tight from the orgasms he'd already given her, and the invasion of his thick cock was deliciously painful.

Nathan dropped to his elbows, head bowed. She kissed his sweaty brow, and he tipped his head, letting his temple rest against her lips as he slowly withdrew. The prickling tingle followed the motion of his cock, and she whimpered at the sensation.

"Pain?" His voice was rough.

"Only in the good way."

Torturously slow, he slid in once more, grinding his hips against her once he was fully seated. Spread wide as she was, he was pressing against her clit. Muscles fluttered low in her belly, coiling tight, and it had nothing to do with the TENS unit.

“Please,” she whispered against him. “Please fuck me hard and rough and make me come on your cock.”

Nathan made a sound that was almost a growl, pulled out, and then slammed into her. Tara’s tits bounced, her erect, sore nipples rubbing against his chest.

He fucked her like he hated her, his cock the instrument of her punishment the way the flogger and crop had been. Tara loved it, her hips rising only to be slammed down when he thrust in. The incessant zap of the TENS unit was becoming painful, but she would scream if he turned it off.

“Who do you belong to?” he snarled in her ear, his sweaty cheek pressed to hers.

The question should have set off warning bells. Instead, it notched her pleasure higher. “You, Nathan, you.”

“That’s right. You’re mine, Tara. Mine.”

She was overly sensitive and overwhelmed, and when the orgasm finally came, it tore her apart. Tara screamed, back arching hard, despite his body atop hers.

Lacing her fingers together to protect her thumbs, Tara hooked her arms over his shoulders, holding him to her as her body spasmed and clenched. His cock felt impossibly huge inside her, her pussy so tight around him, it was as if they were fused together in that moment.

Nathan hissed out a breath, hips jerking in small movements. He kissed her so hard

their teeth clinked, and she realized he was coming too, her orgasm having triggered his.

It went on forever, and not long enough. When the sensations finally subsided, Tara felt wrung out, tears prickling her eyes.

“Can you turn it off,” she whispered, the buzzing feeling in her pussy too much in her post-orgasm state, “please.”

“It’s off,” Nathan mumbled against her neck. “I set a timer. It was only one for the first five minutes.”

She was able to raise her head just enough to see the screen, and confirm it was, in fact, off. That meant the odd buzzing feeling was just her body processing and reacting to what he’d just put them through.

“Now we’re done,” he said softly, easing out of her.

He probably meant the scene, but tears sprung to her eyes, and she swallowed.

Nathan bent, starting aftercare with removing the electrode pads. He cleaned her with a warm microfiber cloth, his touch exquisitely gentle. She still jerked and whimpered when he touched her clit and cleaned around her entrance.

He was so gentle, so perfect. When Nathan helped her up and wrapped her in a massive, fluffy robe, repositioning her on the bed so her head was on the pillow, the first tear fell.

“Hey, hey, you okay?” Nathan lay down beside her, face-to-face. “Does something hurt?”

She shook her head.

“Sub drop?”

“Nothing hurts.” The words were strangled, her throat tight with tears.

Nathan scooted closer, tangling their legs while his arm hooked over her hip. “Cry if you need, sweetheart.”

Tara took a shivery breath, aching with a sense of loss for what could have been for them.

“Nathan...”

“Yes?”

“I’m going to have a baby.”

“I’m going to have a baby.”

Nathan froze in a state horror-filled petrification for several seconds as he processed Tara’s words.

Finally, the statis broke as his brain blared alarms and he went into crisis mode. He tried to jump off the bed, but ended up sort of rolling off the side, falling on his ass.

“Nathan!”

Tara leaned over, and he almost head-butted her as he scrambled to his feet. “I just electrocuted you! I just...I electrocuted a baby?”

His skin was numb, the edges of his vision had gone gray, and white noise had replaced any intelligible thoughts.

He was going to vomit. Or pass out. Maybe both.

“Nathan, no, wait?—”

“Obstetrician,” he blurted out. “I think one of the other Doms is an obstetrician. I heard him talking about baby stuff in the parking lot.” Nathan skidded around the bed, grabbing for his pants. “The sneakerhead. What’s his name?”

Tara was on her knees in the middle of the mattress shaking her head. She reached for him, her fingers just brushing his arm as he raced for his clothes. He felt sick at what he’d just done to a pregnant lady.

And not just any pregnant lady. Tara. His Tara.

She'll be a great mom.

That thought made him pause, because while it was true, it was seriously unhelpful right now.

“Nathan, look at me.”

“I’m going to go get a doctor. Then I’ll take you to the hospital. Maybe they have an ultrasound machine here. Is ultrasound a kink?” The words came out so fast that they ran together.

Tara lunged, wrapping her arms around him. He grunted as she managed to pin his arms at his sides, her face pressed against his shoulder blade. Tara tugged once, and he resisted. He needed to go find her a doctor.

Tara slid off the bed, still hugging him. As she pressed against his back, he swallowed hard as emotion slammed through him.

With a grunt, she threw herself backward onto the bed, still holding him. The move was so unexpected that he lost his balance and fell with her. He ended up with his feet on the floor, his upper body half on the mattress, half on Tara.

“Nathan, I’m not pregnant,” she wheezed.

The ringing in his ears subsided. Tara wiggled out from under him. Kneeling, she braced her hands on his shoulders and leaned over, her dark hair a closed curtain around their faces.

“I’m not pregnant.” She smiled but it was tinged with sadness. “I’m sorry I phrased it that way.”

She wasn't pregnant. The sick dread in his stomach eased, and he took his first real deep breath.

"I'm not pregnant," she said again.

"Shit, Tara. I thought I'd just electrocuted a baby."

"I know you know that's not how that would have worked." Tara's tone was a lovely combination of exasperated and amused. "Even if I were currently pregnant."

"Don't try and be logical while I'm having a fucking heart attack." Nathan was only half joking.

Her lips twitched up into a true smile. "I'm sorry I gave you a heart attack."

Nathan sat up, Tara easing back as he did, though she kept her hands on his shoulders. He turned to face her, pulling one knee up on the bed. As his panic subsided, the questions started to pile up.

"Okay, I might still be having a heart attack." Nathan rubbed his chest, and though he was again trying to make a joke to break the tension, his heart was still beating too fast from the panic. "But I will acknowledge that you didn't actually say you were pregnant. You said you're having a baby. Adopting?"

Tara switched from kneeling to sitting cross-legged, the robe gaping open to reveal her inner thighs before she tucked her linked hands into the well of space between her legs.

"No. I'm going to get pregnant, I'm just not currently pregnant. And because of that, I'm leaving Las Palmas."

Nathan considered himself both eminently logical, and a quick thinker, but this



conversation made him feel like a ping-pong ball bounced between paddles.

“Tara, maybe it’s the lingering adrenaline in my system making me stupid, but I do not understand. You’re going to have a baby, but aren’t pregnant or adopting.”

What was he missing?

Tara closed her eyes, inhaling. He tried to give her time and space to gather her words, but his thoughts were still whirling.

“You’re planning to try and get pregnant? I thought you weren’t seeing anyone? And what the hell does any of that have to do with your membership?”

She let out a slow breath and opened her eyes, holding his gaze with calm focus. “I realized a few years ago that I wanted to be a parent.” Her tone was the confident, measured one she used when explaining something scientific.

“I’d always figured I’d have children, assuming my partner wanted them,” she continued. “But well, we went over our dating difficulties. I thought about looking for someone who was specifically interested in settling down and having children.”

“Breeding kink.” The words slipped out before he could stop them.

Tara scowled at him, and Nathan barked out a laugh. “Sorry, sorry. That just slipped out...” But now he felt more normal, the laugh dispelling the last of his own tension, even as hers mounted.

Nathan watched her face, reading what she wasn’t saying. Her words felt almost rehearsed, as if she’d already presented this explanation several times.

“I thought about it, but decided not to join that dating app for people who want to settle down. I realized that timing-wise, I’d have to go from meeting someone to

getting pregnant with them really quickly.

“So, I decided to be a single parent.”

“Sperm donation,” he said, feeling stupid he hadn’t figured it out. Watching her, he was sure the decision had come with a heavy emotional cost, but there was no evidence of it in her expression or voice.

“Yes. Sperm donation. I went to a fertility clinic. I did four rounds of IUI—inter-uterine insemination—with no results. They told me when I first came to the clinic that given my age, my best option was IVF, but I was sure that the IUI would work.”

Finally, some emotion leaked into her words. Tara had never failed at anything in her life. She was brilliant, hardworking, and stubborn. In the twenty years he’d known her, he’d watched her set aspirational, if technically attainable, goals and reach them every time.

“Did they know why the IUI didn’t work?” He wished he had his phone so he could do a quick search for details about these procedures.

“Most of the testing is blood tests and ultrasounds, and mine were all okay. Well, appropriate for a woman my age. There are a lot of variables, but it wasn’t unrealistic to think IUI would work.”

“I didn’t mean to say it was. I don’t know anything about this. I have heard of IVF. That’s the frozen embryo one, right?”

“If you’re lucky, yes, you end up with viable embryo.”

“Wait, so you have a frozen embryo and they’re going to put it in you.” He gestured vaguely at her abdomen, as he tried to picture how exactly it all worked.

Tara stared at him for a blank moment, then burst out laughing. “You suddenly look like you have absolutely no idea what a naked woman looks like, let alone how female anatomy functions.”

“Remember, I just thought that I had my electrified dick inside your pussy while you were pregnant, potentially zapping the shit out of your fetus.”

“Still not how that would have worked.”

“Me and my heart attack don’t care about logic.”

“Okay, I’ll accept that.” Her lips twitched. “But to answer your question, no. I don’t have an embryo.” She stared down at where she’d jammed her hands between her thighs. “Yet.”

Sensing she needed a minute, Nathan remained externally silent. Inside, his thoughts jump around, as a wild hope started to form deep in his gut.

She looked up, shoulders braced as if she were expecting him to react badly to whatever she said next. “I start my four-month IVF cycle next month. I stop my birth control when I start my next period. That’s step one. I start prescription medication a few weeks after that.”

The timeline shocked him. This was all happening now. Right now.

“I got the go-ahead to try an IVF cycle about six weeks ago, after some additional tests. I took a few weeks to think about whether or not I was really going to do this, especially because my insurance isn’t covering any of it, so best-case scenario it’s \$30,000.”

He choked on his own spit, staring at her eyes wide.

Tara grimaced. “More realistically probably going to be closer to fifty, due to the advanced genetic testing I’ve opted for.”

“Shit,” Nathan breathed.

“One of the things I decided to do was to give up my Las Palmas membership.”

“Because of the cost.”

“Partially. But also, because I don’t think that I want to come here and submit to some random Dom once I’m a mom.” She held up her hands, head shaking, as if he’d reacted badly, though he hadn’t reacted at all. “I know. I know there are plenty of people who are both kinky and parents. I’m just saying that for me, especially as a single parent, I don’t think I’m going to be able to give up control enough to submit.”

She finally looked up from her hands, but her smile trembled. He could see the muscles in her chin quivering as she fought some heavy emotion. “Knowing I was leaving is why I agreed to this.” She gestured between them. “I don’t think I would have been okay with spending just one weekend with you, and then seeing you with other subs.”

Nathan went very still. I don’t think I would have been okay with spending just one weekend with you, and then seeing you with other subs.

That implied she believed, even before they touched, that they’d be good together. She’d just said the quiet part out loud.

Nathan stared at his best friend, the realization he’d been desperately ignoring finally crashing through to the forefront of his thoughts.

He was falling in love with her.

He already loved Tara—how could he not after 20 years as friends—but he was on the cusp of being in love with her. He wanted to be her Master and her husband and...and the father of her children.

Nathan silently had a second heart attack as his world tilted on its axis, thanks to the revelation.

“This weekend was a last hurrah. My last time in the club. My last drink for a while. Last sex.”

That brought his thoughts to a screeching halt. “What do you mean last sex?”

“After everything I said, that’s what you’re stuck on?”

He arched his brows, refusing to be distracted.

“Once I start the prep month medications, no sex.”

“So you don’t accidentally get pregnant?”

“That and so I don’t end up with ovarian torsion, which can be caused by exercise, sex, and even repetitive twisting motions.”

Nathan resisted the urge to grab his balls to protect them from torsion. “Oh shit.”

“Need money. No sex for months. Not going to be submissive anymore.” She shrugged helplessly, and for a moment she seemed young, the girl he’d first met still inside the woman sitting in front of him. “Hence, leaving Las Palmas.”

Nathan needed a minute to finish processing his emotional revelation, and figure out how he was going to tell her.

“I was going to tell you,” she said after a moment, “about the IVF, because I was thinking of asking you to be my ride to and from the surgery.”

“Wait, surgery?”

“To retrieve the eggs. It’s conscious sedation, but I can’t drive myself home. Right now, I haven’t told anyone what I’m doing. I don’t want anyone to suffer through the emotional roller coaster with me. I’ll tell people either once I get pregnant, or when I stop trying. But I need a ride to and from surgery. And I figured...well I’m always comfortable with you.”

Nathan stared at her, heart beating hard against his ribs, and this time it wasn’t an anxiety-induced heart attack.

Tara gathered her hair over one shoulder, twisting it into a rope with a practiced flip.

“Sorry, I guess my filters are still down.” She frowned down at her lap. “And I’m realizing we might need a break after this. Spend some time apart so we can...reset. It won’t be for a few months, but still, I’ll ask someone else.”

That broke him from the stasis that had taken hold.

Nathan reached out, grabbed Tara, and hauled her against him. The position was awkward until they got their legs sorted out, but in the end, he had her where he wanted her—snuggled up against him.

At first, she was tense, but after long minutes of stroking her back, Tara relaxed against him.

“Is it just submission?” he asked.

She sat up, but only enough so she could meet his gaze. “What?”

“I mean, you can have kink without any power exchange. The D is only one of the four letters in BDSM.”

“I... After everything I just told you, that’s what you want to ask?” Her lips twitched.

“Yes.”

“Okay.” She frowned. “I...yes. Yes, I’d have kinky sex, as long as I trusted them. I worry that without the pressure of the power exchange, my partner might hurt me, himself, or both of us. Or I might slip into submission once the cuffs were on.” She grimaced. “So maybe I’m changing my answer. Vanilla sex only.”

Nathan didn’t bother to hide his horrified expression, and she grimaced.

“You don’t trust that your hypothetical husband would care enough about you to do some googling before trying something kinky.”

“Husband? Who said anything about a husband?”

He had, because he wanted to be her husband.

But he couldn’t say that now. They were still in aftercare, and by her own admission, her defenses were down.

No, he’d have to wait to tell her that after loving her for decades, he was now falling in love with her. She needed time before hearing that he was sure the only reason they weren’t already together was that their timing was terrible, and that at a certain point, protecting their friendship became more important than gambling on what they could have.

He wanted to be her husband, her kinky lover, her partner in raising a child.

Maybe they could save money and use his sperm...

He laughed at that, mostly because he was imagining her face when he made the joke. She looked up from where she was snuggled against him.

“What are you laughing at?”

“Nothing.”

Her gaze narrowed.

“How long after birth before you’d be up for a gang bang?” he asked, blinking innocently.

Tara choked on air as she sat up, staring at him.

“Okay, not gang bang. Not really. Triple penetration. That’s our last item. Timing-wise, it sounds like we’ll have to wait until after the baby.”

“I’m— It’s not— You?—”

“You gotta finish a sentence, baby.”

Her breath caught, face softening when he called her baby, but she shook her head. “I’m not playing the game anymore. I’m leaving. I’m done.”

She wasn’t leaving. They were leaving. He didn’t need the club if he had her. Also, a triple penetration scene was pure hypothetical. He wasn’t going to let two other men fuck his wife. Unless she was into it. If she made that needy noise...

A vivid image of Tara looking up at him, his cock in her mouth as two other men fucked her pussy and ass, had his dick twitching.



“If you want to do a triple penetration scene, we have to do it now,” she declared.

“No. We’re done.”

There was a shock of hurt in her gaze before she lowered her lashes, and Nathan realized how that would have sounded for her.

“With D/s. We’re both done with D/s.”

“For the weekend,” she said slowly, eyes darting over his face, brows drawn together as if she were trying to solve a problem. “I mean, for you it’s for the weekend.”

“No. We’re done. Both of us. With D/s and with Las Palmas.”

“Nathan, no. You don’t have to leave just because I am.”

“Have to? No. Want to. Yes.”

“Why?” The single word question was almost anguished.

Fuck, this was aftercare, and the rules said he should wait until he was sure she was back to her emotional baseline before any important conversation. The rules said it would be better to walk out that door and have her meet him somewhere else when and if she was ready. Given that this conversation was only tangentially related to BDSM, realistically, they should be talking outside the club.

He didn’t give a shit about the rules. If he walked away right now, even if he told her he wanted to keep talking, it would hurt her. And he wanted to dedicate the rest of his life to making Tara feel safe and loved.

“Well, I could say it’s because once we’re officially out of the scene, say, in the parking lot... I plan to ask you out on a date.”

Tara's eyes rounded.

"I know, a date sounds ridiculous, given that we've known each other for twenty years and just had sex, but it would be weird to propose in a parking lot."

"Nathan! Propose? That's not funny." She tried to glare, but there was hope in her gaze. Hope that made his own heart soar.

"I'm not joking."

"But you... We... Why now?" Her eyes were luminous.

"Because you're my person," he said simply. "Girlfriends, subs, they came and went, and that was fine, because they were...waves." He warmed to the metaphor that had just occurred to him. "They were like waves breaking against the cliffs."

"Am I...am I a cliff?"

"We are. Together. I knew the waves couldn't break me, because you were there. The two of us, standing together against the waves."

She blinked, a tear slipping down her cheek. "That's the most romantic thing anyone has ever said to me."

"I've thought about you, in a non-friend way, more than I should have."

"I was stupidly in love with you in college," she said, her laugh watery. "But at first, I was scared because I didn't think I was into BDSM. By the time I realized I really, really liked it, you were dating someone."

"I almost asked you out," he admitted. "Except before I could work up the courage, you started seeing Clark."

He wondered if they'd always regret what could have been, or if what would be was enough to make it all worth it.

"I would tell you all that," he declared dramatically. "Except I won't say any of it. We're in aftercare, and any serious, life-changing conversation would be inappropriate."

"So, you're going to wait until we're out in the parking lot to ask me out?"

"Would it be weird to skip some steps and just propose?"

Tara fell back on the bed, hands on her belly as she laughed helplessly. "I was actually thinking that this weekend made it easier for me to give up BDSM, because how could I ever sub for anyone else. Do you know how many times I almost called you 'Master'?"

Nathan leaned over, caging her in his arms. "Yes. I do. I heard it, even when what you said was my name."

Her expression sobered, so he leaned down and kissed her before she could start worrying.

It didn't work, because when he lifted his head, she looked sad. "I meant what I said. I don't think I'm going to be able to, or want to, submit if I'm able to have a baby."

"I don't care."

"You just said you want us to do a triple penetration scene in a year or two."

He snorted. "That was just to work you up. I'm not letting anyone else touch my wife."

Tara inhaled slowly. “Fuck, that was hot.”

He grinned. “See? Getting to call you ‘my wife’ will satisfy all my possessive Dom needs.”

“Are you sure? You’re a Dom.”

“Being a Dom, all of BDSM really, is about getting your needs met. It’s just a framework of rules and words we use to structure getting what we each need. I don’t need BDSM if I have you.”

Tara’s breath caught. “I’ve been so scared to lose you. I was terrified that if I was able to have a baby, I’d never see you anymore. I hated myself because each time IUI didn’t work, I’d cry for days, and then there would be this little bit of relief, because it meant nothing had to change. Not yet.”

“I will be there when you have a baby.” He pursed his lips in mock consideration. “Would be kind of hard not to be there since we’ll be married, living together, and I’ll be the baby’s father.”

Tara sputtered.

“And to be clear, I don’t give a shit whose genetic material is used, though I do have a dumb joke about saving money if we use my sperm.”

Tara laughed, and there was such joy in the sound that he grinned, rolling onto his side so they were face-to-face on the bed.

“But we’re going to wait to have this conversation until the parking lot,” Nathan declared piously.

“Of course.” Tara’s nod was solemn, her grin anything but.

“And then, once the baby is...two maybe? We’ll have a good babysitter by then. Then we’ll come back to the club. Special one night only.”

Tara’s breath caught, her gaze heating even as her lashes fluttered. She knew where he was going with this.

“We’re going to leave Las Palmas now, but we’re not done until, for one night only, you role-play as a sexual submissive.”

“And what would you have me do, while role-playing as a submissive?” she whispered, voice husky.

“I’d order you to get on your knees and take three cocks.”

“I thought you weren’t going to let anyone touch your wife,” she breathed.

He rolled up, leaning over her once more. “Unless it makes you hot and needy.” Nathan spread open the robe. Her nipples were hard, and she arched into his hand when he gently cupped her breast. “I think you’ll be my very good girl, and spread your legs when I tell you to. I think you’ll be perfect and obedient. And then you’ll be getting fucked in every hole because I want it that way, because...”

Apparently, he wasn’t moving fast enough. Tara shoved him over onto his back, jumped to her knees, and ripped off the robe. “Take off your pants.”

Now it was Nathan’s turn to obey. He gladly shucked his pants, lay back, and let Tara slide that warm, wet cunt down onto his shaft.

He didn’t need her to be submissive.

In the end, he just needed her.