

Femdom at Work

"Enter!"

May always found it hard to fire people. Not just painful and awkward, but so physically demanding that it sometimes made her vomit afterwards. It was even worse when the person was someone she hadn't been introduced to, some face she had just seen in the hallways, someone who had held a door for her, who she had greeted with a reserved 'Morning' in the elevator.

The door opened, and Eric Clay stepped in, one of the engineers who did crazy things using math. He looked terrified. He knew what was afoot.

"Sit down, Mr. Clay."

By rights it should be the person's immediate superior who had to conduct these conversations, but someone higher up in the company had decided that the pleasure should fall to one of the middle managers in the HR department.

Namely May. Namely the forty-something, bitter divorcee who didn't have any close friends, who always dressed conservatively, wore horn-rimmed glasses that made her seem like one of those teachers who hated kids, and had a bosom that could be used to batter down doors.

"Thank you, Miss Bergh." Eric Clay was in his twenties, the kind of handsome man with broad shoulders, strong hands and a winning smile that she pretended she didn't notice. She remembered his smile. Had to, for it was not present now.

May was a bitter divorcee mainly because the divorce had been her fault. She didn't have close friends because she didn't seem to find anything to talk about to the other women at work. She dressed conservatively because she was fat and hated fat people who flaunted their huge bodies. She didn't hate kids, but she had always had a hard time getting close to her daughter who now lived with her father. And the purpose of her bosom was apparently to make her back hurt.

"We have some important matters to discuss, Mr. Clay," she said. "And it concerns certain irregularities you have shown at work during the last few months."

"I-I know, Miss Bergh." He was sweating. A lot. It surely couldn't be because of... No, surely not.

"As you know, here at H&W we have a policy stating that employees must arrive at work no

later than 09:00."

Her modern, white, seventeenth floor office wasn't very big, but at least she had an office. Outside was cubicle hell. Her office walls were glass, decorated with a frosted, wavy kind of pattern. The clear parts ensured she didn't have any kind of privacy.

"I know, Miss Bergh." His face was pale, paler than it ought to be despite the situation. He wore a suit, which looked nice but a little crumpled. As he bent forward a little his tie dangled back and forth in front of her desk.

"Do you, Mr. Clay?" She lifted her horn-rimmed glasses and looked at him. Being weak or understanding was the worst thing you could do in these situations. She was about to fire him. Acting like it was painful for her - now that would be tactless. "As far as Mr. Charles is aware, you have not been at work earlier than 10:00 this last month."

"I am sorry, Miss Bergh. I have a tendency to oversleep. It will never happen again. I will buy one of those old-fashioned alarm clocks and put it out of arm's reach. I will buy two." He looked at her with his wry smile. It made her irritated. Not only because he tried it, but because it worked. He was a really handsome young man. Even though he hadn't shaved this morning.

"That would help," she said. "But what we are most concerned about... are the results of the drug test."

Eric Clay didn't have an answer to that. That is, unless it was the way his shoulders lost all strength and his pale face fell, ending up studying the floor under her desk. Her sturdy, black shoes with the two-inch heels were down there, a size that she refused to acknowledge. Why hadn't she worn a nicer, more feminine pair today? Probably because she didn't have any.

"You have been using cocaine, Mr. Clay."

"I... I..." He didn't get any further, just fell silent.

"This company has a zero-tolerance policy towards drugs, Mr. Clay. Zero tolerance."

Oh God! He looked so utterly devastated. She felt like the worst person in the world. Probably was, too.

"I am..." he tried, then started again. "I am sorry. It will never happen again. I promise."

His tie swayed back and forth. It was a broad, red power tie, probably high-quality silk. Right now, it looked like the sad, tattered leash of some cold, wet, and beaten dog. She felt like

picking up that leash, rubbing him down, giving him something warm to drink, putting him in front of the fireplace, making him happy again.

"A zero-tolerance policy," she repeated, then moved her eyes to the computer screen and brought up his company file. There had to be... She couldn't just...

"Please, Miss Bergh. Please don't fire me. I have been stupid, I know, but... I can't lose my job. Please."

He was almost groveling, neck bent in supplication. Their eyes did not meet.

How pitiful he looked! Like she was in complete control of his future. That thought made her feel funny. Complete control.

But she wasn't. She was just the messenger, sitting here because no-one else in the firm wanted to see people crying. No-one else wanted to be yelled at.

Well, she would be in control all the same, and damned be company policy! She was going to give him a second chance. A man as handsome as him, he deserved it.

There, on the flickering, old computer screen, was the answer she had been looking for. Mr. Clay, an internal report by Mr. Charles said, had performed very well the first six months of his time with the company. Extremely well. Taking initiative, solving complex problems, popular with his colleagues, given a substantial raise. Wow, Mr. Clay earned more than her!

She looked at him again. His head was still bowed. None of them had spoken for the few minutes while she had been reading. How long would he have waited for her to speak?

"Under ordinary circumstances, Mr. Clay," she said, "we would have to let you go."

"I know, Miss Bergh." His voice was meek.

"If any other decision were to be made, you would have to change your attitude. Considerably." She didn't usually employ her strict voice in these situations, did she? That was reserved for the girls who worked under her. Who hated her.

"Oh, I will, Miss Bergh."

"I will follow up your case personally."

"Yes, Miss Bergh."

"You will take a drug test every Monday for the next two months."

"Yes, Miss Bergh."

"You will be diligent in your work. I will be in constant contact with Mr. Charles. Have no doubts about it."

Indeed, she would have to call Mr. Charles as soon as Eric Clay left her office and returned to work instead of packing his personal possessions. If Mr. Charles reacted in the wrong way, then she would be called in for a similar conversation. She was way out of line.

"Yes, Miss Bergh."

"You will..." She took a deep breath. She wet her lips. She began again. "I am at my desk every day at 08:00. You will drop by so that I see you are at work."

That was a strange request. What about 'send me an email,' or 'give me a call.' to prove the same thing?

"Yes, Miss Bergh."

"Make sure you dress sharp and be clean shaven." She loved well-groomed men in suits. Secretly.

"Yes, Miss Bergh."

"That will be all, Mr. Clay."

"Yes, Miss Bergh. Thank you, Miss Bergh. I will do anything you ask me to, Miss Bergh." He hurried out of the room, not lifting his eyes to look at her.

She was supposed to call Mr. Charles but couldn't. Her body was quivering, her mind tossed about. She felt like she had just been made love to. Wow.

After some time, she did pick up the phone, dialing Mr. Charles' number. Sigh. What had she just done?

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May had never known a weekend to last as long as this one. Maybe back when she was still married, and she and her ex-husband had pretended that they loved each other and so spent their free time together? She sure didn't miss those never-ending compromises filled with

irritation and desperation. She had been able to bring him along to the art gallery. Correction, she occasionally had, but he had either been sulking all the time, or made fun of the modern art. And modern art had a lot of potential to be made fun of.

Being single she could go alone and spend hours there, like she did this Sunday. Just walk around, check out the new exhibition, have a cappuccino in the smart, little cafe, talk with other art lovers.

Her heart wasn't in it, though. All she could think of was Monday morning. All she could picture was the clock on her desktop showing 08:30 and no sign of Eric Clay.

Then the call from Mr. Charles' superior. Not the nice and understanding Mr. Charles, who had thought that giving Eric a second chance was a splendid idea, but the man who had called her afterwards and yelled at her that he would get her fired or demoted or... Yeah, him.

She tried to tell herself that this was what she was fidgeting about, but it wasn't, really. No, as silly as it sounded, what she really dreaded was being stood up by Eric Clay.

She wanted to see him at precisely the time she had chosen for him. She wanted to see him wearing a sexy suit and a power tie, his hair brushed, wearing the kind of manly cologne that could make her weak in the knee just entering the elevator after he had left it. She wanted to see him smile at her for the first time, pearly teeth, twinkling eyes. Just a quick 'good morning'.

Then she... What would she do? Smile back at him and tell him to get to work? Or maybe...

Maybe make him wait a little after he had knocked at her office door? Maybe look at the computer screen, not acknowledging his presence for a few seconds, not until his scent reached her? Maybe look him up and down before she nodded, approving him? Just... Keep him on his toes. Wow.

What should she wear? Oh dear.

She hurried home from the art gallery.

Her wardrobe was never filled to overflowing, but if she was looking for something to catch Eric Clay's eyes, then there was even fewer choices.

Catch his eyes? Really? She was an old, fat hag. Forget it.

Yet she couldn't forget.

Short skirt? Or one that at least didn't fall further than her knee? She picked out a black one.

Still conservative, though, but it would have to do.

There was a pair of shoes with three-inch heels at the back of her closet. Bought for a cruise several years ago, the big Marital Argument Cruise. She hadn't worn them since. They fit. Barely. Oh, Mr. Clay, please look down at my shoes again!

Bra and blouse? She was a 42G and needed all the support she could get, but still went for two inches more cleavage than what her back appreciated.

She usually chose a subdued, conservative red lipstick, but she had another, bolder one. Would the girls at the office notice? Would they talk? Why, oh why did she care about that?

In the end she chickened out, went with her usual outfit. It was silly, she told herself, to dress up for this kid. He wouldn't even be there at 08:00.

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But Eric Clay was there at 08:00. And Eric Clay made her speechless for the first time since her ex had asked for a divorce.

Eric Clay had brought her flowers. Roses. Red.

Eric Clay had bought the largest bouquet of long-stemmed roses in the whole city. He had carried it past the security guard, ridden the elevator with it, walked through the corridors with it, paraded it between the girls outside her office, making sure everyone knew his face, making sure to kick-start the gossip.

"Mr. Clay, I..." She stammered and stuttered and blushed and did all those things she hadn't done since she was fourteen and actually been asked to dance at the prom, instead of sitting around drinking soda, eating chips, and pretending she did not care. All her thoughts of playing distant, reserved, and cool were burned away by the heat in her cheeks.

"Miss Bergh." He came over to her, looking just the way Hollywood tried to get their Wall Street stock brokers to look, and presented her with the flowers. He actually knelt, a small dip of his knee. "I can't tell you how grateful I am that you decided to give me a second chance. Larry, Mr. Charles that is, told me that such things never happen in this company."

"Mr. Clay, I..."

"Eric? Please?" He actually begged her to use his first name.

"Mr. Clay, you should not thank me." And you should not confuse me like this! And not put on

this kind of show for those cackling hens outside! "It was a decision based on your excellent skills and knowledge. Please, I cannot accept these." But she had already taken the roses from his hands.

"Hey, you can't deny me the privilege of showing some gratitude!" He winked at her and smiled, stepping back. The smile was as charming as she had feared.

"This is not appropriate, Mr. Clay, I-"

"Too late for that now! Got to run to my cubicle. I am on probation, you know. You can punish me tomorrow!"

The door closed behind him. If there was one thing May did not want to do to Eric Clay, then it was to punish him. She wanted to do many other things to him, though. There had been a new spring in his step, one that made her heart race. He was like, to use a silly expression, a feisty, young stallion and she was... She would be the one to tame him. Wow.

There was a knock on the door. It opened before she could say 'Enter!' It was Linda Andrews, twenty-six, blonde, ex-personal trainer, and the worst gossip in all of HR.

"Would you like me to get you a vase for those, Miss Bergh?"

Listening to her voice was like drinking a gallon of syrup.

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When Eric Clay knocked on her door the next morning at 07:58, suited up and smiling like she was the only woman in the world, he made her forget all about yesterday's embarrassment.

Almost. Linda had managed to position herself by the water cooler. From there she had a full view of whatever went on in her office.

"Shall I take them back and throw them in the trash?" he said.

"What?"

He nodded at the flowers in their tall, flashy crystal vase. Linda had placed them in the middle of her desk. She had moved them to one side.

"No, Mr. Clay. And thank you. But please, no more of this."

"Of course not, Miss Bergh."

"It's good that we understand each other, Mr. Clay."

"Yes, Miss Bergh." He gave her that smile again. "What's she gawking at?"

She looked at Linda who was suddenly busy filling a cup with water.

When she turned back to Eric Clay, he was gone. On her desk, next to the vase, lay a small box of sweets. Of fancy, delicious, expensive sweets.

Mr. Clay, she decided as she watched him wink at Linda on his way out, was a wild, playful, stubborn stallion.

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Eric Clay brought her small gifts all that week, and every time she told him not to. But he just winked at her and carried on.

On Friday afternoon she got a call from Mr. Charles. He was really impressed with the transformation, he said. Suddenly the old Eric had returned, and with a vengeance. Her way of doing things should be made company policy.

She spent Saturday in a euphoria.

She spent it shopping, something she was usually not a fan of. She bought herself a pair of three-inch heels, which knocked the socks of the Marital Argument Cruise pair. She bought two, no three!, blouses that said 'I love my 42Gs'. It was sort of embarrassing having to purchase them, but she decided not to care. Two skirts, conservative still, but shorter. Oh yes, definitively shorter. And perfume. Man-killer perfume. She made them wrap it, pretended it was a gift. Yeah.

Then she had gone home and had tried it all on. That had made everything fall apart.

She was fat! She was old! She was ugly!

She looked like trash in these clothes.

The only reason Eric Clay flirted with her was that she could get him fired. He was manipulating her, while at the same time putting the moves on Linda or whichever skirt crossed his path. Bastard.

How much had she wasted on these slutty clothes? Too much! She wanted to throw them in

the trash. Almost did, but then decided to bury them deep in her closet instead.

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Monday came, and she was decidedly cooler towards Mr. Clay. He just smiled his wry smile and left her alone. She fingered the scented candle he had left, deciding that she didn't care if Linda saw her tossing it in her waste paper basket. But she made sure she was alone when she fished it out again and put it in a drawer.

She had no idea why she did what she did. Whether Eric was being grateful or even flirty, he was still being nice to her. And, if he was up to anything else, anything more, then she was probably doing her best to ruin it. Way to go, girl!

Eric Clay brought gifts for the rest of that week as well, but she could tell she was, what: hurting him?

The next Monday he didn't bring any. Just stood there in the doorway and said, 'good morning.' Still smiling, but without the previous energy. He did the same on Tuesday, he did it on Wednesday, and for the rest of the month. And she, all she did was say 'morning, Mr. Clay,' hardly without raising her eyes to meet his. Linda snickered as she watched them.

She called Mr. Charles, and Mr. Charles said that Eric Clay was still doing excellent work, that he was so happy Miss Bergh had taken charge.

The next morning, at 07:59, she told Eric Clay he did not need to stop by anymore.

"Really?" He did not show anything on that pretty face of his. "It's no trouble, Miss Bergh. In fact, I am just goofing around when I get to my desk, drinking coffee and chatting with the guys for about an hour. You know. Hell, I can even get you your morning coffee, if you want. We even got this fancy Italian machine, makes the best cappuccino--"

"Mr. Clay," she said. "Please don't tell me about your failure to comply with our agreement. From now on you will go to work and do what you are paid to do, without me as a crutch. And I am perfectly capable of getting my own coffee, thank you. Are we clear, Mr. Clay?"

"Yes, Miss Bergh."

When she had left, she had a short, short moment of intense pleasure. She had told him how things were going to be, and all he had said was 'yes.' Then she realized she had told him she didn't want to see him anymore.

A vision crept over her. Eric Clay. Napkin across his arm, serving her coffee in a fine china cup from a silver platter. She taking a sip, looking up at him, nodding, smiling. And Mr. Clay standing there, holding the platter until she had finished the coffee, waiting. Waiting on her. Silly thoughts.

Two weeks later she was roused from her daydreams by a phone call. It was Mr. Charles' superior.

Mr. Charles' superior yelled at her. A deadline was approaching. Everyone was at their desks, working their asses off. Where the hell was Eric Clay?

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The Dark Tower. The club was called the Dark Tower, and it was open from sunset until sunrise.

May had never heard of it before one of Eric's co-workers had mentioned that Mr. Clay used to go there. It was, the co-worker had said, a kind of leathery heavy metal place. Or something. It sounded like the kind of place where wild, young men went to do drugs. If she was any judge, and she wasn't.

Right now, the Dark Tower was just an address in the city center, a doorway leading down to a basement, and a small sign in neon. It showed the titular structure, a damsel in distress on top of it, and a knight with a sword that looked more like a bullwhip coming to her... rescue?

Right now May was way out of line. It was after work, yes, but going to clubs to round up employees was not company policy. Screw company policy. This was May policy.

She was worried about both her own future and Eric's. She was, but what she really was, was furious. Eric had been told what he was to do, by her! And had promised to do it, but hadn't. She was betrayed. She was disobeyed. Somehow, she took it very, very personal.

Mr. Charles had tried to call Eric Clay again and again today. He had sent him messages on every social media site that these tech geeks loved so much. He had contemplated going to his new, fashionable apartment building to get him.

She had done that, and what a tall building it was! Eric Clay lived on the 25th floor but had not answered when she rang his bell. That was it, she had to go clubbing.

When she had last gone to discos and clubs the echoes of the 80's had not yet died away. She

had not enjoyed it much, but it was not because of the pastel colors, Milli Vanilli, or her inability to hook up with the cute boys. She had hated the noise and the smoke and the drunken people and having to sit still and shout 'What?' to people for five hours before she felt she could go home.

As she descended the stairs to the Dark Tower, she had a feeling that being there as a forty-something would be even more painful. In so many ways. It was a little after eleven, and she had put on the clothes she had purchased in her frenzy over Eric. They were, she concluded, the least ill-suited for this kind of place.

The stairway was painted black with a rose motif in silver on the walls. Lots of thorns on those roses, almost like barbed wire. She could hardly see where she put her foot down.

The music coming from below was not heavy metal, it was some kind of steady rhythm, techno stuff, but with a doom and gloom edge. Headache-inducing stuff. It smelled like beer and old sweat. What were the chances Eric even was here?

She almost turned around and left when she reached the bottom of the stairs and saw the man in the bondage gear.

Seriously? Chains and leather across his chest and a dog collar around his neck. Latex pants. His hands apparently handcuffed behind his back. And the piece de resistance, a kind of black hood with slits for eyes and mouth.

"Welcome, Mistress," he said, bowing to her.

She didn't meet his eyes, intimidated despite his helpless state. She just stepped through a low, narrow, dark doorway and entered an inferno of kink.

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The club was filled with freaks. Half of them were just ordinary young people with too much makeup and too loud clothes.

The other half... Half of the other half wore dog collars with impractically long spikes. She had seen people wear them in the street, occasionally, and had disapproved, strongly. If a punk like that tried applying for a position at H&W, well... Did they actually use those things for anything, or were they merely some kind of stupid fashion statement? And if they used them, then... She didn't want to think about that. Eric Clay better be here!

Some of the others wore bondage gear, and a few had short leashes dangling from their collars. They were the 'slaves,' she assumed.

The 'masters' were easy to spot, the slaves crowding around them. Almost all wore black, and the men typically had full beards and long hair, also dyed black. They had some admirers, but nothing like the female masters.

There were throngs of wriggling, needy people on the dance floor, barely leaving the two females at the center small circles to move in.

They didn't seem care. Dressed in latex and lace and leather and satin, they danced and twirled and rocked, relishing in the attention and lust radiating from their worshipers. Most of those were men, and she could see erections bulge out. The women admirers touched their breasts, tossed their hair, doing everything but strip-teasing to get the slightest glance.

There were clumps of panting, sweaty people at the bar, facing their objects of desire, aching for any kind of attention.

Wow. The closest woman was fat. Not fat like her, but truly obese. Her PVC dress could protect a car from the rain. Her breasts were as large as wheels. Ten handsome men surrounded her, and she was sitting... Sitting on the backs of two more men, two strong, burly men, heads squeezed together by her thighs, their bodies almost lost in her overflowing fat.

The next woman was almost twenty years older than May, with gray hair, curly, long. She was smoking a cigarette from a long-stemmed tube held in a hand clad in a long, red, velvet glove. There was no ashtray to be found, none but the gaping mouth of the half-kneeling man next to her. May pulled her face away just a second too late to see her knock off some ash and the man moan as he... ate it.

Beside her stood a young woman with a short, elegant whip in her right hand. The men that surrounded her seemed to do their best to flatter her, and if she was pleased, she would smack them a little. On their bottoms, across their chests, in their faces and, most popular it seemed, between their legs. As she watched, not able to believe her eyes, one of the men had an orgasm. The woman flicked and flicked at his crotch and the massive rod that desperately wanted out of his pants. Suddenly he began moaning and shaking, rotating his pelvis faster and faster. The woman giggled and hit even harder and finally, when he slunk away with a wet stain on those pants, whacked him across the buttocks.

May felt eyes on her. Curious, measuring eyes. Who was she? Why was she here? Oh God, someone would soon come over and talk to her. No, no. She couldn't take that.

As she turned around to walk back out, she finally saw him. Eric Clay.

The last female master was a petite, young lady, of about Eric's age. She wore a tight top and a

mini skirt. Her hair was honey gold all the way down to her buttocks. A man kissed her hand. A man was attached to a leash in that hand, kneeling off to one side. A man was kneeling by her other side, his power tie tied to her belt, his head bowed, his arms tied behind his back, his hair caressed like he was her dog.

Eric.

Seeing Eric Clay in that position was just surreal, shocking, terrifying.

It also made her extremely angry.

Angry at him for skipping work just to subject himself to... this monstrosity. Angry at Goldilocks for treating him like that, treating anyone like that. Angry at all the freaks for living out this sick nightmare. And so angry at herself for being so scared of the situation.

She felt her body wobble, felt the tears pressing on hard behind her eyes.

No! She would not fall apart.

May Bergh, the fat forty-something divorcee with bad eyesight, marched up to Goldilocks like she was stepping into a room full of tear gas. In and out before she had to breathe again.

The patrons looked at her. Oh Gods, what if they thought she was Eric Clay's mother coming to rescue her wayward boy from a life of sin? She tried not to look at them. She also tried not to meet Eric's or Goldilocks' eyes, just stopped next to him and pulled him to his feet.

Tried to pull him to his feet. Oh no. The tie, broad and red, was still attached to the woman's belt. She pulled at that end. Didn't budge. She pulled at the double Windsor. Well, if that budged, it was because she choked Eric Clay.

"What the fuck do you think you are doing?" Goldilocks had a high, almost nasal voice. It would probably fray anyone's nerves, unless they liked angry, shrieking women. These men probably did.

"Someone get me a goddamn pair of scissors!" May still didn't dare look at Goldilocks. Wow, she was so scared she even cursed. She never cursed.

"Hey! You!" Goldilocks pushed her. Her admirers looked unsure. Was this a game? Would there be a 'chick fight'? Men made jokes about how much they loved chick fights. Men were idiots.

"Scissors! Now!" The good thing about being a fat woman was that there was nothing a petite

one could do to push you away.

One of the bartenders, long black hair and an Iron Maiden t-shirt, handed her a small pair.

She took them and jammed the tie between the blades.

Eric Clay looked at her like he had no idea what was going on. He was drunk, or worse.

Goldilocks hit her across the hands, trying to get her to stop. She didn't, she lashed out with her left and hit the woman's mouth. She yelled and called her a 'crazy bitch.'

True, she might very well be a crazy bitch for trying to cut a tie with a pair of tiny scissors, but she gave the small instrument the best she had. Cut a little, then tore, then cut, then jerked, making Eric Clay gag, then cut some more, working in a fever.

"Stop her!" Goldilocks called out.

"No-one touches me!" May roared.

No-one did.

Then the tie was severed, the last strand of expensive silk falling to the attack from her angry, desperate, shaking hands and blunt scissors. Eric Clay fell back, on his butt, looking at her like she was an alien come to give him an anal probe. Yuck.

"Come on," she bade, "we are leaving!"

"Eric," Goldilocks called, "you stay with me."

Eric Clay looked from May to the other woman, hardly aware of what was going on. Talking to him was no use.

She went over to him, grabbing him under one bound arm, straightening him up.

"Ouch!" he called out. He must have hurt his arms falling.

All right, then. If that was the way it had to be.

May Bergh took hold of the remaining end of the power tie, then led Eric Clay out of the Dark Tower like a dog on a leash.

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Dragging a man with his arms tied behind his back down dark city streets was not the kind of exposure May Bergh was comfortable with, much less pulling him along by his tie.

She stopped just outside the Dark Tower. A couple was coming down the sidewalk, the woman gasping as she saw them. They both started giggling, and May felt her face burn red as she released her grip on Eric and began looking for a taxi.

"May? May?" Eric said, in an almost sing-song voice. "What are you doing here, baby?"

She could have objected to the 'baby.' She did object to it, but felt it was no use telling him. "Bringing you home, Eric. Trying to help you to keep your position."

"Listen, May. I am sorry, but I just... Sheena come to town, and I just..."

"Sheena?"

"Yeah."

"Goldilocks? The one who... That young woman you were with?"

"Yeah. My ex-girlfriend. Or maybe not. I don't know. She wanted to see me. She loves the Dark Tower."

"And you, Mr. Clay? Do you love Sheena more than you do your job?"

"Come on, May! It's not like that! I just overslept this morning! I swear, I was going to tell Larry, but I..."

"Did you do drugs today, Mr. Clay?" She spoke like she really was his mother, his hillbilly mother who didn't know what 'doing drugs' really meant, but who knew it was a 'bad thing.'

"No, May, I-"

"Don't lie to me, Mr. Clay!"

"I am sorry, May. Sheena, she offered me some coke before we went out, and I just love the high so bad. I don't get worse at my job doing it, you know, so I didn't... Sorry, May, I-"

"You call me Miss Bergh, do you hear?" She probably shouldn't be so angry with the man. That was his mother's job, but she couldn't help herself.

A taxi pulled up and she pushed Eric inside like a policewoman helping a suspect into a patrol car when she's a little rusty after some years at a desk job. She sat down beside him, only to see the cab driver looking at them with wide open eyes, terrified.

"I know," she said. "I truly am the proudest mother to ever pick up her son after his bachelor party."

The man grinned. "A little early for that to end, no?"

"It went on for far too long if you ask me."

The car moved into the traffic, and she made Eric Clay turn around. He wasn't handcuffed as she had thought, but wore some kind of broad, leather straps buckled in place around his wrists. The straps were connected by a fine, metal chain. Fine, but strong.

Eric Clay would not be able to escape them on his own. Eric Clay would keep them on until May Bergh decided he could take them off.

Why was she even thinking such thoughts?

She struggled a bit when releasing him. The straps were stiff and sturdy. Eric's wrists were strong, sparsely covered by fine, black hairs. He was a real man, was Eric Clay. But the straps were stronger.

She put the things in her purse, and the pair of them looked out of their respective windows for the rest of the ride.

"Listen, Miss Bergh, I am so sorry," he said as he stood by the door of his apartment building. "I just need..." He looked lost for a moment.

"Be at my office at 08:00 Monday morning. No gifts, no flirting, no messing about. Just let me see you, then get work. And if you are late again, then you are gone. For good."

"Yes, Miss Bergh."

"Good night, Mr. Clay."

"Good night, Miss Bergh."

When she came home, May realized she still had the leather straps in her purse. Damn!

She took them out, put them in a plastic bag, and buried them deep, deep in a drawer.

Then, on Sunday morning, she took them out again and laid them on her table as she drank her morning coffee. They still scared her, at first, then she began having visions in her head.

Maybe it was those visions that made her accept Eric's invitation to come with her to the theater the next weekend?

May felt uncomfortable when she saw Eric at the station. She had texted him and told him which train she would be arriving on, and now here he stood, waiting for her, looking strong and handsome and... Completely normal, looking at the doors, trying to see her as she alighted. It was embarrassing, that's what it was. The memory of the big man crawling at Sheena Goldilocks's feet. Yuck. The daydreams of him crawling at hers. Oh, dear Lord.

"Hey, May, Miss Bergh! Finally, there you are!"

He came over, not a shade of red on his face, and gave her a big hug, a big hug full of cologne and smooth cheek. A hug that was, like everything else going on at the moment, miles outside of her comfort zone. But apparently Eric didn't see it that way.

"Finally?" she said. "I arrived on the train I told you I would, didn't I?" Was that the nicest she could be?

"Of course you did!" He winked. "May Bergh wouldn't dream of being late. She is stayed neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing her appointed course with all speed."

"What?"

"Just some old nonsense I memorized to make myself appear intellectual. I guess I failed at that. I am sorry that I didn't pick you up in my car, but they managed to lose the Rolls at the dry cleaners and the Porsches all got the flu."

She smiled. Funny guy. He seemed so happy. Eric Clay was a strange man. In so many ways. "Then I guess you would have to carry me on your back," she returned. "But then either I would die from embarrassment or you from a fractured spine."

"Something like that! I guess I will have to stick to opening doors for you and toss my jacket into any dirty pool you might want to walk dry-shoed across."

"That won't be necessary, Mr. Clay. Your jacket is far too smart for that." And his tie. His tie

looked exactly like the one she had cut off. Coincidence?

"Well, that's nothing compared how you look. Wow, you've got to be voted next year's Miss HR Dragon, looking as hot as all that!"

She laughed. No reason to be offended, even though she had spent hours deciding to wear the same clothes she had worn to the Dark Tower, except for a different jacket. Being a man, he would probably never notice her small selection of nice clothes. But he would notice that she had squeezed the perfume bottle too hard when she applied it. "And you look like any Wall Street yuppie, not even dry behind the ears yet."

"Hey, I didn't mean to fool you: I am not rich, and I don't really have a car."

"I know. I have seen your salary. In fact, I can cut your salary at any time, should I feel like it."

"Really? I should be on my best behavior, then."

"You can start by taking me to the theater."

"Theater?"

"Yes, to see the play. Love's Labor Lost, wasn't it? Old Bill S."

"That? Oh, that was just a ploy to get you to go out with me. No, I want take you out to a dinner."

She began laughing again. Apparently, Eric Clay could do nothing wrong today. "It seems someone will have to teach you your manners, young man!"

"It seems that this someone will have to be you, old lady." He smiled like the sun on the first day of spring and offered her his arm.

May Bergh smiled back at him, unsure of which object at which season she resembled, and put her arm in his. Together they walked out of the station, and she did not care who saw them together.

She asked him where he was taking her for dinner.

"Anywhere you want, just say the word," he said.

"You tell me you haven't made a reservation?" What was he driving at?

"We'll just call around as soon as you have made up your mind."

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

"You're taking me out, remember."

"Oh, I will pay, have no worries." Eric Clay apparently couldn't stop looking handsome with his sparkling, teasing eyes. They were strolling through the park, and the sun was about to set behind the tall, naked trees of early spring. His back was to a pond, and there was still a little ice left in places. A couple of ducks by the shore were asking them for breadcrumbs. "I just want you to choose the restaurant. I want you to choose everything today. You're worth it."

Wow. Everything. Wow.

"Yes?" he said. "Steaks? Burgers? French, Italian, Chinese, Indian? I will even come with you to an English restaurant if you so desire. Though I will question your sanity if you do."

"There's an English restaurant in town?"

"Don't be absurd! They even closed down the last one back in London."

"All right," she said after she was done laughing, halting so that he also had to stop. "I want you to take me to the Bodega Roja."

--

The Bodega Roja was where the HR department had gone for their Christmas dinner, and the Spanish themed place two things she appreciated. One was the stalls of massive, dark wood that let them eat in virtual privacy.

"I'll sit here," she said, choosing the side that let her see the waiters approaching.

"Yes, Miss Bergh." He beamed at that.

He made her feel confident. Wow. She decided to go through with what she was planning as they walked to the restaurant.

The second nice thing about the Bodega Roja was that they served excellent tapas.

When they had laughed and fooled around, ordering almost everything on the menu, Eric bent

forward, excited.

"I am so grateful you decided to go out with me. I will do anything you wish, May."

It was an invitation, and she was finally ready to accept it.

"Anything?"

"Yes!"

"Then tell me everything about Sheena."

"Everything?"

The Bodega was full of patrons and they had been lucky to get this table. Still, they could have been alone in the world, hiding behind their red, velvet curtains.

"You heard me, Eric."

"You call me Eric now?"

"I call you Mister Slow if you don't answer me."

Sheena, Eric said, had come into his life when they were both students. Met her at a party with 'Erotica' as a theme. Sexy music, students doing soft strip teases, orgies in the dark hallways of the university. Clean, wholesome fun.

He had worn just a blazer and a tie. She had wielded a cat o'nine tails, and grabbed him when he had fought with tens of other, horny young guys for her attention.

They had made love in his room, she had tied him up and ridden him until he had been driven crazy. And begged for more.

That was a few years ago, and he had realized he was indeed crazy. Sheena had treated him bad, he said, but it was not until a year ago that he had taken charge, broken up with her, and moved here.

Mistreated him? she had asked. With the straps and the whipping and... And that sort of thing?

She had blushed, no surprise there, but so had he. Eric Clay had actually blushed.

Just as he was about to answer, his grin forced like she had never seen it before, she put a finger over her lips and silenced him.

It took two waiters to bring them all the tapas, which ended up covering the whole table in small, silvery bowls and wicker baskets. Hot prawns, cold cheese, sausages, meat balls. Everything from traditional Spanish items to dishes not even pretending to ever having gone on vacation to the Iberian peninsula, to stuff she couldn't identify.

"Oh yes." Eric reached out with his fingers. "I just love them chorizos."

"Stop," she said.

"Huh?"

She drew a deep breath. Here goes nothing.

"You only eat what I tell you to eat, and when I tell you. And you use a fork. If not, then you don't get to eat. I am not dating a slob."

Eric Clay's eyes widened. He gripped the table. His mouth dropped open. Eric Clay was speechless, paralyzed.

"Got a problem with that?" She felt brave, yet he could still just laugh at her or roll his eyes. That's what happened behind her back whenever she tried to put her foot down with Linda and the other girls. She hadn't realized until now how much, how incredibly much, she wanted to put that foot down.

"No, Mistr... No, May!"

"Good." Yes! "Not the sausage. The ham. It's the best I ever tasted. The pig roams the forests around Salamanca and eats only acorns. Don't mess up your palate before you have tried it."

He used his fork to pick up one of the single pair of thin, thin slices of dark, almost black ham. It was that expensive. His eyes were on hers as he rolled it up and put it into his mouth, savoring the taste, his eyelids dropping a fraction of an inch. Eric Clay had long, thick lashes. She liked that.

"That... That was the best ham I ever had."

"Glad you liked it. How did that Sheena mistreat you?"

"She treated me like shit," he said. Then he laughed. "Well, I do love to be treated like shit, but not just any old shit, like shit that still gets some love and respect. You know what I mean?"

"Never use the word 'shit' around me again, Eric. I am trying to eat."

"I am sorry, May," he said while she chewed the ham. It was just as good as she had remembered it.

"Try the Manchego, then go on."

"Yes, May!" The cheese almost fell off his fork. All his attention was on her. "Sheena always wanted to be in control, which was fine, but she was mean, selfish. She didn't just insist I take her out, she made me take her to places I could not afford, whenever she fancied a good meal. I had to give her gifts, which I liked, but she demanded them, demanded a lot of expensive stuff she never even used. And she would just call me when she was bored. She made me drive her around town, which was hot, but she also made me wait while she dated some other guy, then had me drive them both back to her place, claiming I was her cousin. She made out with other men at parties, she loved partying, introduced me to a lot of bad habits. And in a way, apart from the sex, she never gave me anything back."

"Why did you do put up with it?"

"I..." He blushed again. Cute.

"Tell me." She pressed him. She liked it!

"Can I have one of the sausages now?"

"No. Do as you are told, Eric." She was calm, but he listened like she spoke with the voice of a Goddess.

"I did it because... I loved being her slave. You see?"

Slave? That was a word she wasn't used to hearing. It made her feel uncomfortable, not least because she liked it so much. She still had his leather straps, still took them out and contemplated them, still daydreamed.

"Maybe." That was all she said. She tried to act cool, even though she ached to shout out and command him to go on.

"I wanted to do everything for her, you see. But I should have said no to the bad things. I was scared senseless when she texted me and said she was moving here some months ago. I knew

I could not resist her."

"You said you want to do anything for me. Anything. Why do you make the same mistake again?"

"I guess I just happen to be an idiot." Again, that smile.

"Eric Clay!"

"Yes, May?"

"You will not let me or anyone else do anything bad to you, do you hear me?"

"Yes, May."

"This is no joke!"

"No, May."

"Good. Now eat your sausages. All of them. But if you find you have had enough, you tell me."

"Yes, May." He took a piece of chorizo. "Oh, and, May?"

"You don't talk with your mouth full anymore, either."

He grinned and chewed.

"May?"

"Yes, Eric?"

"Would you like to have coffee at my place?"

--

Eric Clay had a wonderful, chic flat with a big, central window and a lovely view of the bay. It was not big, just one bedroom, but two people could easily live there without killing each other. It was a little messy, but she guessed it was tidy enough for a bachelor's pad. He had a big couch and recliner that was placed in front of a table facing a huge tv-screen.

Eric had been wild-eyed as he had taken her here. He had opened every door for her, tipped the cab driver like he was a millionaire, and said 'Yes, May,' to almost everything she had said.

She had never been given this much attention before. She liked it.

She liked it so much that when he had taken her coat and bowed her in, she sat down in the recliner without being invited. She was in charge. Why, oh why, had she never done this before? Why hadn't she met Eric Clay twenty years ago?

"Would you like some coffee?" he asked.

"Yes, please. A cappuccino, even though it's eight in the evening."

"May I have one?"

It was absurd he should be asking such things in his own home, but it felt just right. Just right. Inspirational.

"When you have tidied a little. This place is a mess."

"Yes, May."

She had never seen someone work so hard. The man was running around like his life depended on it, putting away magazines and dirty socks and empty soda cans.

"May I have one now?" He stood in front of her, five feet away, almost at attention, his body quivering. "A coffee?"

She was leaning back in her chair, pretending she was dead calm, sipping the excellent cappuccino his coffee machine had made. "Clean this table. It's not been washed since you moved in, has it?" It had been, of course. She was only being difficult, but it could do with a dusting.

"Yes, May."

"Use soap, Eric."

"Yes, May."

When he bent forward and let her study his butt as he cleaned, she noticed a line on his upper thighs. Eric Clay had pulled his underpants down when she was not looking. Naughty!

She got it confirmed when turned around and faced her. There was a tent pointing straight at her. Insult or compliment? Compliment, definitively.

The scene was so beautiful. This young man was having the hots for her. For May, the boring attendant to the Queen of gray mice.

"Coffee now, May?"

"Yes, Eric. Now you may have coffee. You're a young man, you'll have a double espresso."

"Yes, May."

"And another cappuccino for me please, Eric."

"Yes, May."

Eric asked her where she wanted him to sit, and she insisted that he choose. "Whenever you most want to sit, Eric." She didn't mind all the 'Yes, Mays,' but he ought to show a little initiative.

He did. He sat down right at her feet, crossed his legs, his pants stretched so tight she could have seen every involuntary movement of his manhood. That is, if she had dared look straight at it.

"I love your shoes," he said.

"You are into discreet women's footwear, Eric?"

"I am into the sexy shoes of powerful women."

"These shoes are not sexy, Eric." They were hardly less dull than the awful ones she wore to work.

He finished his espresso in a single gulp, grimaced, then looked at her with eyes of pure, fiery desire.

"C-Can I... May I kiss your shoes, May?"

She was taken aback. Kiss her... No!

She tried not to show it, tried to appear cool, to hide her fluttering heart by sipping her cappuccino. What to do? Shriek and run away? Tell him to get lost?

No, no. She couldn't. Couldn't ruin this. She couldn't mess up this one, last chance of happiness in her life.

Look at him. Look at the big strong man at her feet, begging her. Wow.

"One kiss," she said. "One, single kiss. And if you start licking them or sniffing them, then I'll be inside a cab heading home before you can say 'freaked out'."

She would freak out in the morning, she knew.

He gulped and put his cup on the table. Back on his knees, he looked her straight in the eyes and she didn't need his pant-tent to tell her he was aroused. Aroused as she had never seen a man before.

Oh, please want me, Eric Clay. Please want me as madly as man can woman.

In the end he had to let go of her eyes. In the end he had to lower his head and extend his lips and let them meet the black leather of her right shoe. She didn't feel it, but she didn't have to. She became excited herself. But she would hate herself in the morning. She knew it.

"Now," she said as he lifted his head again, still with that needy look on his face, "I want you to take the shoe off and kiss my foot. Just one kiss, mind you. When you are done you can give me a foot massage. But don't you dare look up my skirt or even touch me above my knees."

"Yes, May."

She watched him as he kissed her again, only this time she could feel his hot breath and soft lips against her stockings. Why was she still wearing them? He had pulled his underpants down, after all. Why couldn't she make him tear her stockings off with his teeth?

She couldn't. Instead she leaned back and just savored the moment as Eric took her feet into his big, powerful hands and began rubbing them. It felt good. Everything about this felt good.

It was dark beyond the large window and she could see the stars and the lights on top of other, taller skyscrapers, fighting to outshine each other. Those stars were really suns, huge explosions in space so well hidden that all you could see was a little twinkle in the sky. Which was just how she felt.

Eric put her feet in his lap and rubbed the soles, massaged her ankles, and caressed her legs and her knees. The man had warm hands. Really warm. She bet a long line of women would form to have their feet rubbed by this beautiful man if they only knew how good it felt to be touched by him.

"May, May, May..." he whispered.

"Shh..." she said. "No talking."

--

Then she felt it. Something touched her toe, something warm and round and a little yielding. A chorizo sausage wrapped in his pants, she thought, almost hysterical.

"No," she said.

"I am sorry, May."

"Didn't I tell you not to speak? Rub my feet."

At first she was just happy she had not pulled her feet away, but after a while she felt... Was it really that awkward, what he had done? What would have happened if she had let him go on?

She glanced down at him through closed lids. He was looking up at her, a tender look on his face.

Why not?

She knocked his bulge with her big toe. Oh my God! Look at the man start! Wow.

She knew she would freak out in the morning.

She nudged him again, with the other big toe this time. Again, he started, again the tenderness replaced by pure need.

"Rub me for fifteen more minutes, then you can have some more."

"Yes, M-"

"No talking, I told you. Make it twenty, then."

She soon regretted those twenty minutes. Deep inside, from the heart of the star that was May Bergh, came a yearning to be a supernova. And now she had to wait. Because of her own, silly mouth. She had never been fascinated by male genitalia before, but now she couldn't stop looking at the pant-tent.

She knew she would freak out in the morning.

Both were eager to get started, but they had to wait because she was stupid. Wow.

But why? She was in charge, surely, she could do anything she wanted?

She knocked his bulge again, as hard as her toe and position allowed her.

"Ahh...!" Eric breathed.

"Pay attention! Make it good, or I reset the clock."

Eric made it good. He worked like she had legs of wood and he was a cave man making fire. It was almost painful.

A few more minutes passed, then she hit him again. Apparently, he couldn't stop jumping.

"You are ignoring the soles, Eric."

He didn't ignore them anymore.

In the end, after a lot of fun, twenty minutes had passed. They looked at each other.

"Put away the coffee cups, then fetch me a glass of ice water."

When he returned, he saw her sitting almost sideways on the recliner, one stocking-clad leg on the armrest, dangling slightly. He almost dropped the glass.

"Come closer, Eric."

"Can I take off my pants?"

"No talking."

He gave her the drink, then reached out for her foot.

"No hands."

He nodded, then put them behind his back. She made her foot sway a little, back and forth, and he seemed unsure of what to do. Excellent. Set him a little problem.

Then he put his pant-tent inside the reach of her toes. She bumped into it. Whoops!

As he just stood there, she began tracing out the shape of it. Despite pants and stockings, she

could still separate the head from the shaft, still feel how thick it was as she stroked it up and down on one side. Up and down. Then the other side. Up and down.

She lifted his balls up with her toes, and he drew his breath. Oh dear, oh dear. So sensitive, those balls. What if she got a tiny bit of a cramp and just happened to kick them a little? Oh, poor big, little Eric.

She kept on caressing him, lazy as if stroking his hair one Sunday morning, but then Eric began to move on his own. He had been forced to bend down a little to make their body parts meet up, and now he stood there, moving his pelvis like a belly dancer, rubbing and rubbing against her. She found it hilarious and began to giggle even though she tried to swallow it.

"Wh-" Eric began.

"No talking!" She broke out laughing, hysterically.

Eric had no clue what was going on, except that he had to keep rubbing. He didn't let up for a second. Oh, poor big, little Eric, so totally under the spell of his desires. Under her spell.

When her strange amusement died down, he began breathing more heavily, like he was exhausted. His eyes went from being jammed shut to looking at her like at some abstract painting he didn't understand, to gawking at her foot, to close again. His face was taut, rigid.

"Maybe we should stop before we go too far?" she said.

He whimpered. Big, strong man.

"Nod your head if you agree."

She had not seen anyone shake his head like that before.

"This is a silly game. Tell you what, Eric. I will count to ten, and then we stop. Got that?"

He could nod his head as well as he could shake it, could Eric Clay.

"One," she said.

Eric Clay went frantic.

"Two."

He began shaking, slapping his pant-tent against her foot.

Oh dear, oh dear. It was so difficult for him to get stimulated the way he wanted without his hands, without her help. Poor Eric.

"Three four five."

He yelped. Urgency. Despair. Desperation. He looked as if someone had told him that Santa Claus wasn't real, that someone had stolen all his presents, and that the delicious steak he had been served for dinner on Christmas Eve had been Rudolf.

"Siiiiix."

He pressed the tent against her sole, and it was all she could do to keep her leg still. Strong man, Eric Clay. But she could break him just like that. He began rolling his pelvis, grinding against her, eyes closed, breath going like a marathon runner with asthma.

"Se-ven!"

She pulled her foot back and, when he tried to follow with that single-minded desire of his, stopped him by placing her sole on his belly.

Then eyes met. She jerked her head. He retreated a step.

"Se-ven!" she repeated and kicked him with each syllable. Kicked his balls, gently, just to see the reaction. He jumped, but didn't retreat an inch. She could probably do anything to Eric now, and he wouldn't care as long as he was given pleasure. Would she? Maybe later.

Unless, of course, she freaked out in the morning. Which she knew she would.

"Eight."

Eric went back to grinding now, and May couldn't help enjoying herself. All this strength in one man, and she controlled him, controlled all of it.

What would he do if she broke off and asked for another cappuccino?

And why didn't she break off and tell him to make love to her?

Because right now this was all she could handle.

"Nine!"

Eric rocked and rolled his groin as if his life depended on him winning a hula hoop competition.

Faster, faster.

His eyes on hers, beautiful, big, needy eyes. Everything was about her now. The building could be falling down, and he wouldn't stop his crescendo.

He got up on his toes, he sucked and sucked in breath, her sole warmed up from the intense rubbing, and then, then...

"Ten. And don't you think about getting my stockings soiled!"

She didn't think it through, just pulled the foot away. The thought of walking home with his... juice on her toes, in her shoes. Yuck!

Eric remained standing, quivering, shaking, moaning, and her eyes went from his open mouth to where the tent jerked up and down on its own. The wet patch forming on his pants fascinated her, growing, spreading. Wow.

Then it was over. Eric Clay calmed down, the big, strong body at rest, if not at ease, the pant-tent fallen down.

"Thank you, May," he whispered.

"So, what now, Eric?" She suddenly felt cheated. The magic was gone, but the star was still burning. Burning hot.

"Now?"

"Yes? Do you want a slice of pizza, then go to sleep like other men? Should I go home?"

Eric Clay spent just a fleeting second considering that, then he dropped to his knees. He cradled her feet in his arms and bent his head over them.

"May Bergh, I will do anything you wish. Anything."

May listened to the fire roaring inside of her.

Go for it!

"Eric Clay, I want to tie you down on your bed."

--

Eric Clay had a big bed that was practically made for being tied up. The headboard was of cast-iron twisted in some kind of wavy pattern. There were only two bedposts at the other end. A tall man like him probably liked having his feet dangling off the edge.

Eric Clay also had more leather straps in a secret drawer. She practiced opening and attaching them while he took a shower, washing away his juice. Silly woman!

When he returned, she would be ready for him. Finally, it was her turn, finally she would get to explore his body, to ensure everything went according to her wishes.

He came into the bedroom, naked and uncaring like any Greek God. She patted the bed beside her.

"You want me there?" He plopped down beside her, within kissing and fondling distance.

"I want you," she said and handed him two of the straps, "to secure your own legs."

"Oh, May!" he winked at her and took them. "Be gentle with me?"

"Soon you will beg me to be rough with you." Was it really May Bergh who said these things? She liked this new May.

Yet she would freak her old self out in the morning.

"I certainly hope so." He spread his legs and leaned forward, attaching the straps.

On a whim she ran a finger down his spine.

He shivered and looked at her. Smiled. Lovely man.

She handed him another strap. "Right arm."

"Do you want me to-"

"Yes, Eric."

He did it, and he enjoyed doing it. It wasn't easy doing it to himself, to his right hand, and he made a lot of nervous jokes.

All she did was sit still and be calm, answering with single-syllable words. It made him feel

more nervous, and helped her be less so. Why not? This was her time.

"And now this." She put the last strap in his left hand.

"Seriously?" he said. "I can't do that."

"Then you have a problem."

"But you are going to do it, right?"

"Am I?"

"Please?"

"Please what?"

"Please tie me up."

"Did you promise me you would do anything for me, Eric?"

"Yes!"

His manhood was flaccid, so she didn't really understand why he was so eager. Men were strange.

"No."

"No?"

"If I do anything, anything! you don't like, you tell me. Tell me to stop. You hear me, Eric Clay?"

"Yes, May."

"Good. Where were we?"

"Please, please, please tie me up!"

"Oh, now I remember."

Her fingers shook as she attached the strap. How crazy wasn't this? Would she have believed this scene if she had seen it play out as she stepped out of the train to meet Eric Clay.

"Happy now, Eric?" She rose and looked down at him.

He certainly looked happy. Expectant. Eager. "Yes, May."

"Good." She blew him a kiss and left the room, closing the door after her.

"Hey?"

That was all she heard. 'Hey.' If he had shouted 'Stop!' she would have stormed back in. But he didn't.

"May?"

She didn't answer. May needed to breathe, to think.

"Hello?"

Yes. Yes, she would do it, would go through with it.

"You are coming back?"

She went to the bathroom. His voice could still be heard, so nothing to worry about.

She undressed, then took a shower, used his shower. Dried herself off, using his towel. Even stole some neutral lotion of his. Even looked through his shelves. No trace of Sheena Goldilocks there. Good.

"May? What are you up to?"

Her stockings remained on the rack. And her bra. And her panties. All she wore as she re-entered the bedroom was her skirt and her top.

"Oh May, May, May..." he said. "My God, you look sexy."

"Thank you, Eric." She sat down on the bed next to him. The clue was not to show him how insecure she was. Insecure, and excited. May Bergh knew she had never been this aroused before. "You were not afraid I would leave?"

"Not for a second."

Probably true. He looked very comfortable for a tied-up naked man. She decided that she would do something about that. She would not release Eric Clay until she got him so out-of-control as he had been before he had his orgasm.

"Eric?"

"Yes, May?"

"You look sexy."

"Thank you, May."

She lay down next to him, using his pillows to support her head. His chest was so broad, with smooth muscles covering his ribs, a patch of black hair in the center, above the nipples. Then his shoulders. Oh, those shoulders. Love me, Eric Clay, love me and put those arms around me.

But not tonight. Tonight, he was all hers to do with as she pleased.

So many firsts today, and not just the dirty stuff. Her ex and her had not really made love before, not those long, sensuous sessions that she craved. There had been no time for her fingers to play with the skin of a naked man.

Eric Clay might have spent himself, but he was still responding to everything she did. Letting her fingertips trail up and down his muscles, tracing them like a sculptor does her latest creation. Pinching his nipples a little. Pulling at the hairs. Tickling. Wow, was he ever ticklish!

He tossed himself about, cringed, bent, shook, but there was no escaping her playful fingers

"No, no!"

"Yes, yes!" She laughed. Couldn't stop. Soon she was straddling his chest, not caring about her weight, and tickling him like he refused to confess to the Spanish Inquisition.

In the end she fell forward onto him, her face so close to his that their noses almost touched. There was a shade on his cheeks. He hadn't shaved since this morning. Maybe she could shave him? Shave certain parts? Later. If there was going to be a later. She would, after all, freak out in the morning.

There wasn't a lot Eric Clay could do right now, but one of them was to kiss her. It took her completely by surprise. She hadn't kissed a man since... whenever.

It was only a brief touch, but it was good. Very good! Why hadn't she thought of it?

He kissed her again, longer this time, long enough for her to savor him. His breath was warm, almost hot, and he kissed like a man. Eager, aggressive, not caring if they chipped a tooth or two.

She let him, let Eric Clay kiss her just the way he wanted, let herself be ravished, and loving it. No teenage girl had ever before been kissed with such passion behind some shed in the schoolyard.

In the end she began to play coy. It wasn't hard, just lift her head a little, half-inch by half-inch up away from him.

Eric followed, eyes closed, caught up in the kissing. In the end it just wasn't possible for him to get his lips up any further, no matter how much he tried, no matter how much he looked like a ravenous baby bird begging for food, his arms straining.

"Please, May!"

"Only when I want to, Eric."

"Yes, May."

She kissed him. Kissed him her way. Slow, lingering kisses.

After a while, a long while, she slid off his chest and returned to cuddle him. Looked at his face. Handsome, needy. Looked down.

Wow.

"Oh, Mr. Clay! Ready for me so soon? What would you like me to do now, Eric?"

"Touch me?"

"Don't whimper. Speak like a man."

"Please touch me."

"Touch you?"

"Yes!"

"Like this?" She caressed his chest. Couldn't get enough.

"Not that!"

"Then what?"

"My cock!"

"Didn't I tell you something about dirty words?"

"Yes?"

"Then why do you disobey me?"

"I am sorry!"

"And don't whimper, Eric!"

"I am sorry!"

"You are getting pretty close to a punishment."

"Oh yes!"

"Oh yes?"

"Please punish me!"

"How?"

"Spank me! Whip me!"

Oh dear. Again, something she was not ready for. Yet at the same time, something she should have expected. Yup, she walked right into that one.

This was unfair! She was in control, so why should she be the one thrown off balance? Eric looked at her with those big, needy eyes, confusing her even further.

No. She wasn't going to do what Eric Clay wanted her to do. She was going to do what May Bergh wanted. And if he had the kind of desires he claimed, then he would agree. But she wasn't going to ask him.

May Bergh was going to be boring and old-fashioned and he'd better like it because that was

all he was going to get.

She got back on top of him, straddling his chest. Thank heavens the man was so big, or she would surely have broken his spine.

Now, how would she... God, she was closing in on fifty, and she didn't even know how to ride a man. What if she couldn't get it to fit inside? What if she was too fat to lift her body up long enough? What if Eric got that awkward 'It's all right' smile on his face as she tried and tried?

It turned out not to be a problem. She was wet.

She, May Bergh, was so wet that she even felt a drop trickle down her thigh. Wow.

She wiped it off with a smooth movement. At the same time another smooth movement slipped Eric Clay inside her.

Eric groaned loud enough to tell even the security guard on the first floor that someone was getting some, way up in the building.

She... He was inside her. Big, hard, fitting her like she couldn't remember being possible.

Oh, Eric, Eric!

What to do now? She didn't... She could... Her body wasn't made for this. She was going to look so silly!

May leaned forward, with Eric still inside her, and kissed him. Better stick to what she knew.

He followed her, pressing his groin up, the straps giving him just enough freedom. As she kissed his cheeks, feeling the rough stubble against her lips, he began moving inside her. In and out, in and out.

Oh, Eric, Eric!

She began to feel dizzy. He touched every part of her body, he caressed her nerves, he kissed her soul.

Oh, Eric, Eric!

His face was turning red, he panted, his face strained. Oh, Eric, Eric. All you want to do is be inside your May. All you want to do is to please her. All you want to do is to get another release.

And she, May Bergh, was in charge. She decided if he was going to get any pleasure or not. She could do anything to Eric Clay. Anything!

That thought, just that small thought, that tiny idea sent an earthquake through her body. Oh, Eric, Eric! You make me come just thinking about you!

Or did she? She could have been a virgin, could poor May Bergh. Was this how it was like?

No, no.

She was not done, she wanted more.

"Eric Clay," she said when the earth had calmed down, the star had stopped flaring. "We need to talk."

With that she leaned a little more forward, just far enough that however much the big, strong man strained, he could do nothing but wait at the gates of glory.

"May! Please! Let me!"

"Stop, Eric. No more bawling and whimpering. Do you understand?"

"Yes, May."

"No more whimpering, I said."

"No, May."

"Better. Why, Eric?"

"Why?"

"Why me?"

"Why you?"

"Think about the question as long as you like, then answer me."

He did, but he also tried to kiss her, to fight the straps, to enter her. She would have none of it.

"I..." he said after a while. "I have always loved women in control. Ever since I was a boy. You

know... And... Just seeing you sitting there in your office when I came in, with your stern look, about to fire me. It was like... Like you had all the power in the world. And then you let me stay on. So kind. And gave me rules. Oh, I could not believe it! I wanted to do everything I could to make sure you saw I was a good boy for you! I wanted to crawl and kiss your feet in front of all your employees! May, you are... So good and kind and funny and smart and sexy and everything! You are the one for me. Keep me tied up until tomorrow morning, May, I don't care as long as you don't leave me!"

That, May thought, was worth a kiss. She felt like crying.

"Compared to Sheena-" he began when the kiss was over.

She put a hand over his mouth, determined not to be compared to her. Not now, not ever.

They looked at each other. They knew.

She pinched his nose shut. They looked at each other.

"Don't mention her again."

Time passed. Eric entered her again. She let him. They looked at each other.

He began to struggle. She waited.

Then, only after she had counted to twenty in silence, did she release him. And let him slide out.

"Oh, May! That was so hot! Do it again!"

He fought to enter her again, out of control.

"No!" She felt drunk, high on power. "Be silent! No more talking!"

Her voice was almost a shriek. May Bergh had also lost control. And May Bergh, she liked it.

She sat down on him, hard, made him plunge deep into her, then leaned forward again.

"You fuck me now! And fuck me good!"

Eric Clay began moving again, and this time she helped him, rocking back and forth, using muscles she hadn't known about to embrace his manhood, caress it.

"Faster!"

She slapped him. Right hand to his left cheek. The sound was hard, loud.

"Oh yes!" Eric shouted.

"Shut up!" She slapped again. The other hand. Harder. The sight of Eric Clay was swimming before her eyes, she felt like she was spinning.

"Yes!"

"Shut! Up!" She stopped slapping, just grabbed hold of his shoulders as she rode him, squeezed them as hard as she could. There was no stopping her now. Nothing! "You do what I say!"

"Yes!"

She kissed his throat, sucked to create the mother of all hickeys, bit into his skin with her nails. Tore his skin. Blood. Eric yelled "Yes!" without stop.

She slapped again, she kissed, she scratched and bit and moaned and yelled and threw her head this way and that and rode him and rode him and felt the world falling down around her and her star about to explode and her ears ringing and then! and then she was consumed in fire! Drowned!

And Eric came inside her, and she kissed him and kissed him and kissed him and put her arms around him and wanted to never let him go.

--

She freaked out in the morning.

Couldn't take it.

What she had done.

Being a bitch.

Tying him.

Slapping him.

Making him bleed.

She was a cruel, vicious woman. It was even illegal.

She left before he woke up. Ran home. Didn't answer the phone. Cried. Hid in the darkness.

Sent him a text

It was wrong. It was over. Never contact her again. Never show up at her office door. No gifts. Be at work at 08:00 every day and send a mail. Professional relationship. It was over.

Turned the phone off. Cried.

--

The next Monday was the worst day of May Bergh's life. She wore her drabest clothes, her least inspiring makeup, and was locked up in her own mind from the moment she got out of bed until she sat down at her desk, trying to find something to do that would take her mind off her misery.

She didn't. Of course, she didn't. She hated her work, she hated her faux-modern office, she hated Linda and the other cackling fools outside, even going as far as refusing to look their way. And she hated herself. Hated herself because she realized she had messed everything up but did not really know what to do about it.

The life Eric Clay offered her, was that what she wanted? The tying up and the slave things and all that? She had lived almost fifty years without it, why go crazy about it now?

She felt like one of those old women who had flings with male prostitutes. Who pretended it was all about love and affection because nothing was spoken out loud, because it was just a matter of expensive gifts and favors.

Now she had been given her one day of sunshine and sweet grapes, and could return to her ordinary, gray life. And the man? He had other women to serve.

Except it wasn't like that. Eric Clay had done nothing wrong. He had behaved, not like a perfect gentleman, but exactly like what had been advertised on the tin. It wasn't her who had been wronged, it was him.

Eric did as she had ordered. No, not as she had ordered, as she had told him to. The email arrived at 7:55 and was long. Really long.

It started by him begging to be allowed to come to her with his bunch of roses and explain everything and make everything right again. She couldn't, just couldn't, read the rest of it.

Instead she sent a short reply. Thank you. Have a nice day.

One day she would go and talk to him, beg forgiveness for running away, and for refusing to see him. To explain why she couldn't take part in the world he had shown her, even though making love to him had been the most exhilarating experience of her life. Right now, she couldn't, because that would make her break down and cry. And May Bergh didn't cry.

Tuesday's mail from Eric was also substantial, starting with the words 'Please, let me...' She didn't let him.

Wednesday came with a new, pleading mail. Thursday the same. Friday's seemed almost desperate with several exclamation marks ending each sentence.

Every day, all he ever got in return was a short acknowledgment that she had received the mail.

On Friday she got an envelope in her mailbox. No message. Just a key card and a four-digit code on a post-it.

On Saturday he broke her instructions and started texting her. What was wrong? He would do anything to fix it.

She didn't reply, she just sat in her living room with the lights off and stared at a TV-screen without registering what was on.

On Sunday the messages stopped. That's when she broke down and cried. It was over. She has ruined everything.

On Monday she was determined to answer him properly. To tell him she needed to talk, and would they have lunch together and sort things out? She had even written the email by 07:55, ready to reply to him.

At 08:05 his mail hadn't arrived. At 08:30 she knew something was wrong. At 09:00 she called Mr. Charles who confirmed her fears. At 09:30 Mr. Charles' superior yelled at her again. At 10:00 she had taken the key card and the post-it and left the office, heading to Eric's building. Half an hour later she had arrived.

Her Prince was trapped in his castle, and she had come to rescue him.

--

As she stood in the elevator, watching the lights on the display change, she knew what had happened.

Either Eric had contacted Sheena, or she had called him. It didn't matter. She was there, now, inside the apartment, where May had made love to him only a week earlier.

The thought made her want to cry. No, not cry. Kill. Kill him, her, or herself. She didn't know. Kill someone, then cry a little.

She tiptoed over to his door, then put her head against it. It was 11:00. She would surely kill herself with shame if she should burst in on them right in the middle of poached eggs and toast and freshly squeezed orange juice.

That crazy, possessive woman from work. Yeah.

Music was playing. Some kind of soft crooning. If it wasn't jazz or classical, May Bergh was trouble. Couldn't tell Elvis from the Beatles. Couldn't name any artist more recent.

It was sensual music, love-making music.

That's when she began crying.

The bastard! How could he! It was hardly one week since...

She turned away, walked back down the corridor towards the elevator. That was it. She would go back to the office, Eric would be fired, and she would continue her life. She didn't want someone like him in that life.

The elevator began moving. One floor, two...

Would Eric want someone like her in his life? Wham bam, thank you sir?

She pushed one of the buttons. It was almost a punch, and only a split second decision made her stay away from the alarm button. The elevator stopped three floors below Eric's. She ran up the stairs. Ran, because she forgot that the elevator could take her back up.

She put the ear back against the door. At first, she was only able to hear her own heart racing from the sprint, then the soft music returned.

At first the strange noise seemed to be part of the slow beat of the tune, some lazy drum

sound.

It wasn't. It was the sound of a whip. Hitting naked skin, flesh. Probably. She was no expert.

No! Not that! Anything but that! Was that all they could think about, the crazy perverts? She wanted to turn around and leave again, just leave it all behind. Move away, get a new job.

But not without speaking to Eric one final time. That was all she wanted. Speak to him and get everything sorted out. Or messed up even more.

She unlocked the door with her card. Deep breath. The sound of the whip went on and on.

Run away!

She opened it, and the music washed over her. Now there was no mistaking the sound of... of Sheena Goldilocks whipping Eric Clay.

Get out!

She stepped inside and closed the door behind her.

Idiot! What are you doing?

Then she panicked and hid in Eric's closet.

Yes, this was going all right, she thought as she leaned against his thick, winter coat which smelled of Eric. Way to go, girl.

"And that," she heard Sheena's high, nasal voice say. "Was number one thousand. How does that make you feel, Eric?"

"Punished, Mistress." He shouldn't call her that! He shouldn't be talking to her!

"Really? Really? You with scratch marks from that fat bitch all over your chest. No, Eric, that was just me blowing off steam. Yesterday, when you came crawling back to me, I gave you what you wanted. Now the time has come to pay for being unfaithful. Your punishment is just about to begin. Show me, Eric, how sorry you are that you fucked that old cunt. You are sorry, aren't you?"

"Yes, Mistress."

May felt the tears coming, but she fought them down.

"Can I borrow your credit card, Eric?"

"Yes, Mistress."

"Do you mind if I visit that jeweler across the street?"

"No, Mistress."

"And buy myself a little something to make me happy again?"

"Yes, Mistress."

"You'll not go anywhere in the meantime, will you?"

"No, Mistress."

May heard Sheena, on long, thin stiletto heels, walk to the door and leave the apartment.

She didn't need more than a moment's thought before she left the closet and used the security chain to lock the door. It was time to have that talk with Eric.

--

Eric Clay was secured to his bed using the same straps May had used, only pulled tighter. He was on his belly, his buttocks looking like raw, minced meat. Thin pink and red lines covering them like painful memories. There was blood on his skin. A horse whip lay next to the bed, stained red.

"Oh, poor Eric!" she said, even though she had wavered between 'You bastard!' and 'You idiot!' before saw him.

"May?" He looked at her like she was an approaching avalanche. "Go away! What are you doing here?"

"This fat bitch," she said, "is not going away until we had a talk."

"Yes, May."

"Don't you even think about Yes May-ing me!" She sat down on the bed beside him. Didn't look at his tender flesh. "Eric, I am sorry ignored you. I was confused, I..."

"Please release me?"

She did as he asked, and he got up. Gingerly. He didn't even try to sit next to her, just stood there. Then he put his arms around her, and she began to weep.

"May, May. Why are you here?"

"I don't know," she said. "Eric, she is hurting you. Get away from her. Please."

"I... Yes, yes I should."

"Then do it!" She felt like throwing herself at his feet and begging him.

"Yeah."

They looked at each other.

"Is there anything I can do for those... Your back?"

"It will heal."

"You should see a doctor."

"Yeah."

"Eric! You are not taking this seriously!"

"No, May."

"And don't say that!"

"Are you ordering me not to?"

"No!"

"Then I will say it. Yes, May. No, May. Please, May." He looked rebellious. Good, so he did have a spine, after all.

"What's wrong with you?"

"What's wrong?" he almost shouted. "What's wrong is that you don't understand anything!"

"What is it that I don't understand?"

"What I need!"

"You need someone to hurt you?"

"See, you don't get it!"

May had no idea what to reply. They kept staring at each other.

"Eric!" It was Sheena's grating voice, drowning out the smooth vocals of the cloying love song.

"What the fuck is going on! Did you lock me out? Eric! Get the fuck over here and let me in!"

May looked at him. He looked about.

"Well?" She spoke quietly. "What are you going to do, Eric?"

Eric went silent. Sheena banged on the door, promising him all kinds of punishment.

"Well?" she repeated. "Tell her to go away? Ask her in?"

"It's not up to me, May. It's up to you."

"We are not playing now!"

"Do you think I am playing?" The look he gave her was intense. "But you, you are playing! You have to decide, May. Either you get the fuck out of my life, or..."

"Or?" She didn't want that. If there was one thing she had just realized, then it was that she didn't want to lose Eric.

"Or you take me. All of me. My friendship and my love and my servitude. I need to be your slave, and you have to decide, right now, if you want that or not."

Sheena kept banging.

"Yes," she whispered at last and felt fifty pounds lighter.

"Thank you, May!" Eric embraced her and kissed her, almost like a teenager. "Thank you so much!"

"Go get rid of her, Eric. Get rid of her forever."

"Yes, May." He released her and started for the door, as naked as the day he was born.

--

Sheena didn't stand a chance. Eric Clay could be a real man when he wanted to, and his voice boomed through the building, making it sway. He relieved her of his credit card and key card, then sent her packing in no uncertain terms.

She tried yelling, she tried punching, she tried kicking. Nothing worked. She had to leave, and she did so in a fury.

May sat chuckling on his bed, happy that Eric finally took charge of his life. No, no. Happy that he chose her over Goldilocks. She was old enough to admit that to herself.

"The guys at the Dark Tower better prepare themselves." Eric grinned at he limped back into the bedroom. "Sheena's going to be in a foul mood tonight."

"Eric." She took a deep breath.

"Yes, May?"

"That name will never be mentioned in our home again."

"No, May." He suddenly smiled. "Our home?"

"You wanted me, you got me. I like this place." She tried to hide how nervous she felt. Was he going to accept...?

He was. He threw himself, or as close as is possible with such raw buttocks, at her feet, clutching them. "Thank you, May." Then he kissed one of her shoes. "Thank you." His lips began moving up her legs.

"No." She pulled the foot away.

"No?"

"You belong to me now, and you do what I tell you to do."

"Yes, May. How may I serve, May?" He looked up at her, and she could see that he was hard.

Men were crazy.

"You know."

"I do?" He grinned, his manhood quivering.

"It's Monday. You should be at work. I should be at work. The first thing you will do is call Mr. Charles and apologize for not calling in sick today."

"Yes, May. Sick?"

"Of course. You can't go to work in a state like this. The next thing you do is call a doctor. Get those wounds looked at. Today."

"They will heal."

"Today."

"They are going to ask-"

"What's that, Eric?"

"Yes, May, I will."

"When I get off work I want a nice, home-cooked dinner waiting for me. And the biggest bouquet of flowers you can find on your way back from the doctor's. I think I deserve that. Don't you?"

"Yes, May. You do. Yes, you do."

"You got a long way to go before I am ready to forgive what you just did. And if you think that means tying you up and doing things to you that you think are sexy, you are wrong."

"Yes, May."

"You will come with me to modern art exhibitions, without complaining, with enthusiasm, faked or no. You will learn to love jazz and be a regular at the opera."

"Can I reconsider?" Again, that smile that melted her heart.

"Absolutely not. You belong to me now."

"And then we can have sex?"

"Sex?"

"Yes, May?"

"Sex, Eric, will be my reward to you. And the way I see it you have not been on your best behavior lately. I will have you squirming at my feet before I have sex with you again. I will have you doing every little thing to please me before I have sex with you again. I will have you begging to find new ways to make me happy before I have sex with you again." She wasn't sure she would be able to follow through on that. She felt excited just saying the words.

"Yes, May. May?"

"Yes, Eric?"

"I am the happiest man alive."