

Epilogue
Two Weeks Later

Cole approached Daniel's main house with more than a touch of trepidation. Daniel had come by the guesthouse earlier in the afternoon to talk with him and get his advice and approval for the item being addressed at tonight's group meeting.

If he'd read the plan on paper, he'd have agreed with its merits. Yet reading a plan and being an active participant in it were two completely different things. He had his doubts, but he'd agreed.

Cars and trucks lined the driveway and as he walked closer to the main house, a familiar truck passed by. He turned his head and saw Dena waving out the passenger window.

Jeff parked the truck, opened the door for Dena, and they waited for him.

"Cole," he said, extending his hand.

"Good to see you tonight, Jeff," Cole said and he couldn't help but notice that the other man didn't seem half as dour as he had in the past. Likely due to the woman at his side. "Dena."

She lowered her eyes. "Master Johnson."

Cole couldn't help but smile. The lovely Dena had fought for and won her battle. A braided black leather collar adorned her neck and he'd heard Daniel mention something earlier...

"I hear congratulations are in order," he said.

Dena gasped and dropped a hand to her belly. Jeff calmly draped an arm around her shoulders and tapped her left arm. "I believe he's talking about our engagement, Angel."

The moonlight bounced off the diamond solitaire on her ring finger.

"Oh, right," she said and looked up at her master with an expression of love so deep, its intensity hit Cole right in the center of his gut. Kate had never looked at him that way.

Jeff lowered his head and brushed his lips against Dena's. After the brief kiss, he looked over to Cole. "I want to say *thank you* for watching over my Angel while I was away."

Translation: I know you asked her to play, but I'm willing to overlook it since she came back to me as a result of that conversation. However, ask her again and I mount your head above my fireplace.

"You're welcome," he said, walking toward the main house. He looked over his shoulder. "And congratulations on the other as well."

Jeff's hand dropped to lightly stroke Dena's still flat stomach. "You have to act surprised when we announce." To Dena, he said, "And you, try to work on your poker face."

She giggled. *Giggled*. "Yes, Master. I'll try."

Cole shook his head and opened the door to Daniel's home. He wondered if Kate would have looked at him that way if he'd agreed to have kids. Likely as not, she wouldn't.

He walked down the stairs to the meeting room across from the playroom and opened the door. From the looks of it, besides Jeff and Dena, he was the last to arrive.

Daniel and Sasha sat in two chairs facing the group. Julie sat on the front row. There were three empty chairs next to her. He left two seats beside her and sat down in the last one.

"Master Parks and Dena are right outside," he told Daniel.

When they arrived, everything proceeded like he expected. While Daniel called the meeting to order, Cole studied Sasha.

She was too thin, he noticed that immediately. She had a waifish look that made her look gaunt and unhealthy. Her dark hair was short and spiked, which only served to enhance the overall pallor of her expression.

Her head shot up as if she felt the weight of his stare and she regarded him with cool green eyes. So steady was her gaze, he wondered if Daniel had told her. He didn't think...

Either way, her bracelet was red and his was black. Any submissive worth her training would know better.

Lower your eyes, sub, he mouthed and she shook herself as if realizing what she'd done and turned her gaze downward.

She didn't look his way again.

Daniel turned his attention to her. "Sasha has asked to rejoin the group following her lengthy absence. The senior members have agreed, but believe a retraining would be beneficial."

Sasha nodded. She'd obviously been expecting this.

"Do you agree, Sasha?" Daniel asked. "I feel the need to remind you, you can say *no*."

She sat up straighter. "Yes, Master Covington, I agree."

"Very nice, Sasha." Daniel's smile was gentle and kind. "Your willingness is noted and appreciated."

Cole noticed she appeared to glow with happiness at his praise. *Interesting.*

Daniel addressed the group once more. "The senior members believe it for the best she train with Master Johnson." Daniel waved in his direction and all the air seemed to be sucked out of the room at once.

Sasha's face turned several shades paler.

Nope. Daniel hadn't told her a thing.

Julie jumped to her feet, breaking the silence first. "What? No."

Dena tugged at her shirt to no avail.

"Julie, sit down," Daniel's voice was thick with displeasure.

"You can't do this," she said and then added, almost as an afterthought, "Master."

She stood with her arms crossed. Daniel's kitten had claws, it seemed. Unfortunately for her, it hadn't come to her attention that her master was a lion when crossed.

"Sit. Down. Now."

"You can't let him train her." Julie pointed in Cole's direction. "He's a bastard in the playroom. He'll scar her for life. Are you *trying* to make sure she never comes back?"

Everyone gasped.

Dena uttered a soft, "Fuck."

Cole smiled. Bloody hell, the meeting just got two hundred times more interesting.

Julie looked around the room as if suddenly realizing what she'd done and started to sit down.

“Oh no,” Daniel said, his voice harder than Cole had ever heard. “Remain standing.” He turned to Cole. “Master Johnson, I apologize on behalf of my submissive for the complete lack of respect she has shown. If you would like, I’ll allow you to punish her before I do.”

That Daniel even suggested such a thing indicated how angry he must be.

Cole shook his head. “Thank you for the apology and the offer, Master Covington. I accept the former, but decline the latter. I trust you to do a through job on my behalf.”

“Very well,” Daniel said. “Julie, go wait in the playroom until I’ve calmed down enough to deal with you properly.”

No one met her eyes as she walked out of the room. When the door clicked behind her, Daniel turned once more to the woman at his side. “Sasha?”

Cole watched in dazed wonder as Sasha stood on trembling legs and walked toward him. She knelt clumsily at his feet and her body shook as she answered. “I accept the group’s recommendation.”

The only sound in the room was Dena whispering for a second time.

“Fuck.”