

The Creep

Chapter Three

After more than a month of bi- and tri-weekly hypnosis sessions, it would be inaccurate to say there had been no progress. There had. By three weeks in, Stacey had relaxed enough to enter a mild hypnotic state. It ended the moment he attempted a suggestion – “raise your right hand” – but two sessions later, survived a request to repeat her mantra of trust and relaxation, which she kept up for the remainder of their hour. Two more weeks later, hand-raising was achieved. Her neatly manicured fingers, their nail polish the only signs of advanced grooming on her whole body, remained in the air for almost twenty seconds before her eyes fluttered open and a suspicious glare replaced hypnotic docility. The week after that, the duo enjoyed their first session absent the reassuring presence of Stacey’s gun. That they had been conducting their sessions with it sitting in her purse was news to Martin, but the added revelation of its absence seemed to signify some form of advancement in their pursuit.

However, to say their progress was incremental would be, at best, debatable in regards to precisely how one defined incrementalism. If one subscribed to a broad interpretation, in which coincidence and familiarity were ascribed as affirmative evidence, then yes, they were gaining increments. A less generous definition, however, would – and did – leave the both of them frustrated and irritable over the whole affair.

“We only have until the start of summer,” Stacey griped after letting herself in for the start of a Sunday morning session. While her family was attending church, here she was inviting a man of very questionable integrity to reduce her to a pussy-drooling smattering of jiggling flesh. “At this rate, we won’t get there by *next* summer.”

They had agreed not to speculate aloud that their goal may well be unachievable altogether, and Martin likewise honored that pact in his response. “We’ll get there. You’re going under easier and faster every week. Last time it only took twenty minutes.”

“Yeah, but then as soon as you tried to get me to do anything – anything but that stupid chant – it broke and I couldn’t go back under for the rest of the session.”

“Hey, for the record, the chant is not stupid. It’s the best improvement we’ve had since we started. But it’s hard to get a lot of mileage down Trust Avenue when we started at concealed carry and video surveillance. That’s a lot of baggage to overcome.”

“For the millionth time–”

“I know! God, believe me, I fucking know.” Martin rolled his eyes so hard they almost did a second lap with the momentum. “The recordings are non-negotiable. No questions about why you’re here. I know. I’m only saying, that’s a lot of baseline reservations to overcome. That we are where we are is impressive, considering.”

“Well? What do we do about it? Because if I have to sit here for another hour watching you jerk off to me airing out my pits again, I’m a lose it.”

Martin had decidedly not jerked off in her presence, not even on those occasions where she remained in trance, content with her mantra. It had not been easy. “So, I did have an idea. There’s a catch, though.”

“I do not like the way you say that.”

“Yeah. That’s why there’s a catch. So I’ve been studying up on phobias. See, a phobia an irrational fear of—”

“I know what a phobia is, professor.” With her tripod and recorder in place, she settled onto the couch, laying down flat. As usual, she left her shoes on as her feet moved up to the couch cushions just to annoy him. “This isn’t that. It’s not ‘irrational’ to be afraid some pervert is going to rape me when I’ve almost asked him to.”

“I wouldn’t expect a modern woman to subscribe to the ‘she was asking for it’ mentality.”

“What the hell ever. They can shake their fists angrily every time they hear someone go ‘look what she was wearing!’ But there’s a big difference between a girl dressing cute and one shoving her tits in some dude’s face and asking him if he wants to find out how creamy her pussy is. Second bitch don’t get to be offended when she gets stuffed in a trunk is all I’m saying.”

“Wow. Just wow. Anyway, back to my point? So sure, maybe you’re not phobic, but there is obviously some paranoia there. I can keep reassuring you until I’m blue in the face that I won’t cross any of the lines you specified, but studies in overcoming phobias suggest that’s unlikely to help. Like reminding someone having a panic attack over their fear of flying that air travel is actually very safe. They probably know that. That’s why they call it irrational.”

“All right, I think I hear you. So, what do your little books say does work?”

“This is gonna be circuitous, but bear with me. So our goal is to make you lust after me, right? To get there, we’re going to need to move from our present point – let’s call it tolerance – through a few more points.” He ticked them off on his fingers. “Say, comfort. Trust. Acceptance. Curiosity. Experimentation. Enjoyment. Delight. Some kind of spectrum like that, whether or not it winds up anything so linear in practice. But we’re hitting a roadblock with your not-phobia.”

“I *do* trust you. As much, maybe more, than I would trust any guy in this circumstance. I can’t even imagine going into some other stranger’s apartment like this. So?” Stacey gestured for him to move on with it.

“So, some experts think the best way to overcome a phobia is to confront the fear. Mind you, not immersion therapy like you see people do on TV. Like, say someone has thalassophobia – fear of deep water.”

“I do have thalassophobia. I *hate* open water.”

“Right. So, say we were to charter a boat, sail a few miles out to sea and toss you overboard. You can see the sharks from the boat, and now they’re all around you, swimming around in little sharky circles.”

“Jesus cock-sucking Christ are you stressing me out right now.”

“OK, but now, what if I reminded you sharks almost never eat people?”

“I’d get my ass back in the boat and dice you up into fucking chum and we’ll test that theory.”

Martin smiled. “Exactly. But what you could do is go to the beach with some friends, around people, and try to do a little snorkeling in the shallows. When you get comfortable with that, go out a little farther. Maybe try it on your own. And so on – you get the idea.”

“So, what. You want to just make out for a while, see if it grows on me until I’m ready to beg for your dick or something? Because guess again.”

Hearing her say those words alone was enough that he had to fold his hands over a developing boner. “No. But, well, I said there was a catch, and here it is. Your hang-ups, justified or not, are making it all but impossible to go any further. So I thought that maybe, since like you said, time is a factor, we could short-cut it and do a little bit without hypnosis. Only until the comfort’s there, and then we’re right back to it.”

Stacey sat up in a huff. “What? No! The whole fucking point is that you hypnotize me into wanting to fuck you!”

“But this might help get us from where we are to there. Don’t you see? We–”

Then she was on her feet. “Abso-fucking-lutely not. I’m not gonna come over to your dingy little apartment and girl talk with you until we’re just two buds who figure we may as well fuck each other! Mind-fucking me into needing your dong and making a go at being fuck buddies aren’t the same thing at all! Hypnotize me into wanting your hog, or tell me you can’t!”

He looked up at her, looming, sneering coldly. He mirrored it the best he could. “OK, fine. I..”

The second word caught in Martin’s throat. It had lain dormant in there for some time, and every session it crawled closer to the exit. Every week spent pondering what motivated this gorgeous creature to seek out a nobody like him only drove him closer to resentment. Did she share his hypnosis fetish? Was it some dare from one of her sorority sisters? Had she been hypnotized already by some malefactor and was seeking out someone with the skills to dredge something out of her subconscious? The more he thought about it, the more bizarre and elaborate the theories became, and not a one of them had a lick of evidence. Certainly the prospect of bending *the* Stacey Reeves to submit to his sexual desires was the stuff of fantasies, but if she only meant to dangle it

in front of him and never put it within his reach, then it was the cruelest prank imaginable.

She was so *hot*, though. If only there were some way to make her accept doing what he asked so long as it didn't cross any of her lines! Then...

"I can do it." He said it before the realization had fully formed, much less become an actual plan. "Now please, lie down, and let's get started."

Two weeks later, Stacey entered Martin's apartment with what was meant to be a glower, but really ended up as more of a sulk. She wiped her feet on the rug, then bent down and untied and removed her shoes. Martin was watching the sight of her bent over, and no doubt enjoying it despite her oversized t-shirt covering most of her ass, but there was nothing she could do about that. Without so much as a hello, she set up her camera, settled onto the sofa, and conveyed her impatience with an unblinking glare.

He proceeded without fanfare into the induction, her lips retaining their downward tilt like a child sent to the principal when it was totally that other kid's fault. There was no one else for her to blame for her predicament, however. She had, quite literally, asked for this.

The induction was time-consuming with their new paradigm. Her subconscious fought it, resented it, even as it knew it had no choice. Frequent reminders were necessary from her old mantra.

"You trust Martin Manning. You're relaxed with Martin Manning. You feel comfortable around Martin Manning." So it went, over and over, pausing at intervals to let her repeat and internalize. A typical induction was usually more about quieting the conscious mind, but since the whole point was to create a state of calm, relaxation, and lack of inhibition, the mantra they'd been reinforcing while she was under had become part of the process of going under in the first place.

Martin could only imagine what her relationships with others must be like, men in particular, if her attitude towards him and their shared project constituted "trust, relaxation, and comfort." The woman probably needed to be roofied just to show up to a date in the first place. Eventually, however, her eyelids stopped twitching, her body went slack, her hung indelicately open.

"Stacey?"

"Mm." Sometimes when she was hypnotized, he thought she was trying to say his name, but was too relaxed to make it past the first letter.

"Stacey, do you remember your mantra?"

"Mm." Then, after a moment, "Which one?"

"Start with the first one. Say it for me." *For me* was a recent addition. Getting her to do things explicitly *for him* could be an important step. For all he knew.

"I trust Martin Manning. I feel comfortable around Martin Manning. I like being with Martin Manning. I want Martin Manning to hypnotize me. I'm comfortable being hypnotized." On and on she went, her little sulk fading. It never did quite disappear, though. The use of his last name felt cumbersome, but she had both a cousin and a high school friend with the same name, and they'd agreed it was best to proceed with caution.

"Very good. You did a very good job."

"Mm." A brief smile. Flattery did all right with her, usually.

"Now the second one. Do you remember that?"

The smile fled. “Yes.”

“Could you say it?”

“Mm. I could.”

He rolled his eyes. Even her subconscious was oppositional defiant. “Stacey, recite it for me.”

She took a slow, deep breath, chest swelling. God, how he couldn’t wait to get to a level when she stopped wearing these boring, formless outfits.

“If I tell Martin Manning I won’t do something, I don’t have to. I don’t have to do anything that’s humiliating. I don’t have to change the way I dress unless I want to. I don’t have to tell anyone about our time together unless I want to. I don’t have to let him touch me unless I want to. I don’t have to touch him unless I want to.”

The first part of mantra 2.0 came with a look of some small self-satisfaction, perhaps some relief mixed in as well. It was there to keep her comfortable, to keep her from panicking out of her trance at the rest of it.

“Otherwise, I have to go along with what Martin Manning wants. If he wants to talk about stuff I didn’t forbid, I’ll talk to him. I’ll be honest with Martin Manning. If he wants me to watch something or read something, I’ll do it attentively. If he asks me to do something I didn’t forbid, I’ll seriously consider doing it – especially if it doesn’t cost me anything. Embarrassing isn’t humiliating.”

Her recitation was markedly improved from the earliest phases. It was admittedly some word salad, he knew. Martin hadn’t been able to devise a way of phrasing it that a) was simpler and b) that Stacey would agree to. She’d not liked it, true, but after nearly storming out of his apartment altogether, he’d explained what he hoped for them to achieve from it and she’d conceded. Very, very grudgingly, but concede she did. It *was* hypnosis, per her insistence, and the previous mantra had helped prepare her to accept his recommendations. After all, she presently didn’t want to fuck him, so it stood to reason that wasn’t going to change unless she agreed to some things she didn’t want to agree to.

Her recordings became an asset, helping her practice until she’d memorized it. He caught a few minor alterations, but whether they were intentional or an accident, it didn’t significantly alter the message so he let it slide. If she was being straight with him, she’d been using her downtime to repeat it to herself for weeks now. If class started late, get a few reps in. In the shower, or using the bathroom. Putting herself to sleep at night. On the treadmill at the rec center. Stopped at a red light? Take a turn brainwashing yourself.

Today, for the first time, Martin meant to move from saying the words to acting on them. Time to find out if it was doing any good. He gave her time for a few repetitions, her fingers twitching the whole time. It was a signal he recognized, that she was uncomfortable, or maybe just unhappy. When they started flicking around too

much, it meant the trance was about to break. Before she hit that point, he told her to stop.

“Stacey.”

“Mm.”

“Did you ever tell me I couldn’t ask you about your love life?”

“No.”

“Good. So if I wanted to ask you some questions about it, you’d say...”

She hesitated. Her pout intensified. “I’ll talk to you about it. And be honest.”

“That’s good. So, Stacey...” Martin’s breath caught. Here it was. For the first time in his short life, he was at liberty to ask a beautiful woman a skeezy question – and quite possibly to receive an answer. If it went according to plan, soon he would be able to accompany his post-session masturbation jam with actual knowledge of the inner workings of the filthiest portions of Stacey Reeves’ imagination.

Then again, if it did not go according to plan, Martin’s short life might become reclassified as Martin’s *entire* life. This woman had privacy issues the likes of which he’d never dreamed of. And a gun.

“Tell me what kind of porn you’re into.”

His heart hammered in his chest...

Exactly once. Her response was automatic, and the most disappointing response available. “No.”

“Oh.” Well shit. “Why not?” He omitted the remainder, *you prude bitch*, aloud.

“I don’t have to.”

“Don’t have to watch porn?” He supposed that made sense. A girl as hot as Stacey could probably find a guy on minutes’ notice to enact any fantasy she could dream up if she so chose.

“Don’t have to tell you.” Even her subdued, hypnotized tone managed some condescension.

“Because it’s embarrassing?” he pressed, wondering what weird fetishes beyond hypnotism she could be harboring.

“Because if I tell you I won’t do something, I don’t have to.”

“Oh.” Hm. What did that even mean? Something to ponder later. For now, she was still placidly under. Her freedom to deny requests that crossed her boundaries seemed to be keeping her relaxed about the direction of questioning.

“All right. Let’s try something else. Tell me what size bra you wear.”

“33 D.”

Martin’s sudden, feverish giggle brought on a fresh round of finger twitching. It was all he could do not to leap out of his seat and shout in triumph. It worked! He’d asked this uppity bitch how big her tits were, and she’d told him! The woman wouldn’t

even wear a top that showed the outline of a bra in his presence, but now he knew. Articulating why this revelation was so exciting was beyond him, but excite him it did.

With a force of will, he calmed himself, resolving to maintain his cool going forward. “Do you trim your pubes?”

She hesitated, her frown deeper than before. “Does waxing count as trimming?”

It answered the question, but he gave a quick “yes,” and received one in kind.

Stacey Reeves waxed her pussy. Fuck.

“How do you feel about blowjobs?”

“Disgusting.”

So much for that. “Ever have any bisexual thoughts?”

“When I was younger. Not for a long time though.” His mental image of Stacey scissoring one of the busty girls in his cohort winked out as swiftly as it formed. So much for that.

“What do you think is your best physical feature?”

“My face.” No hesitation. This was another something to which she had already devoted some thought.

“Really? Not your boobs, your ass?”

“My boobs and my ass are hot, but I’m *really* pretty. Was ranked prettiest in Delta Alpha Theta.” She didn’t frown at that one. It would be tempting to think her conceited, but no objective observer could find fault with her conclusion. The notion of a ranking gave him questions about how the ladies of DAT house spent their free time, but this wasn’t an interview about her sorority.

“Have you ever used your looks to get what you wanted from someone?”

“Yes.”

“Tell me about a time you did that.” Martin crossed his legs and leaned back, ready for story time.

“I got you to hypnotize me,” she said simply.

Martin sighed. Fair, but still bitchy. Pressing for another example was an option, but her resistance soured his enthusiasm in a hurry. A frown of his own was developing; if she was going to be difficult, then so could he. If he pushed her too hard and caused her to wake up, so be it.

“Have you ever had anal sex?”

“No.”

Of course not. “Ever let a guy fuck your tits?”

“No.”

“Do you own any sex toys?”

“Yes.”

“Tell me about them.”

“Mm. One. Stole it from my freshman roommate.”

“Uh, what? Why?”

“She reorganized my shoes. Didn’t ask. So I took her dildo. Wrote her name on it. Left it in the lounge. RA found it. She got so embarrassed.” A thin smile.

“Jesus. For moving your fucking shoes?”

The question had been meant rhetorically, but her subconscious wasn’t processing that. “She was a cunt before that. Kept it as a trophy.”

Fair enough. Onwards he went. “Ever gotten a facial?”

“No.”

“Been spanked?”

“Mm.” Oho! “By my dad. I tore the head off my sister Kira’s doll.” Oho.

“Had a guy’s finger in your ass?”

“No.”

“Had someone choke you during sex?”

“No.”

“Threesome?”

“Not yet.”

“Had a—” Martin blinked. “Wait. You have one planned?”

“Yes.” To his undying delight, Stacey’s slender thighs rubbed together as she deliberately, deliciously, licked her lips. It was an image that he had no doubt would remain with him into his old age.

“Tell me about it.”

Her fingers fumbled at each other spasmodically. “No. You said I don’t have to answer any questions I told you I wouldn’t. No.”

Now that was interesting. There weren’t many forbidden topics. Still, she was obviously on the cusp of waking up; time to back-pedal. He went back to the mundane: favorite cereal, first concert, list her cousins alphabetically. Soon her hands settled back onto her stomach, which meant it was time to go on. That was enough dicking around with idle curiosity. Time to learn something practical.

“Tell me what turns you on in a guy,” he proceeded.

“Nothing, really.”

They frowned together this time, though hers in distaste, his in bewilderment. One thing to accept that a woman who looked like Stacey could afford to be choosy, not ready to settle for any mediocre male specimen, but “nothing” took things a little far. Well, unless...

“Hold up. Stacey... are you a lesbian?”

Fidget. Fidget fidget. *FidgetfidgetfidgetfidgetTHRASH*

Stacey was suddenly sitting upright, gasping, panting. “What the hell did you just do, Mesmer? My heart’s beating like crazy!”

He wasn’t about to be put off, though. “Are you a lesbian?”

Then she was on her feet, scowling murderously down at him. “What?! Who the fuck do you think you are?!” Her eyes darted to her purse. With the rage smoldering behind them, he wondered if she were regretting not bringing her gun.

“I’m not judging! I just... you said...”

“The deal was supposed to be you getting me to do little stuff to nudge me in your direction! Watch porn with you, look at your stupid baby-dick, make sexy moans or whatever – not bare my goddamn soul! What the actual fuck is wrong with you?!”

Her shove was more than enough to bowl his chair over backwards, sending the hypnotist sprawling until he rolled into the opposite wall. He caught her foot as it swung toward his stomach. His chivalric resolve not to hit a woman was put to the test as she wrenched it free and tried again, and again. At last, she simply grabbed a jar candle and launched it at his head. He dodged in the nick of time, the glass shattering against the wall and spraying across the living room.

Martin had been two years younger and forty-four pounds heavier when he started graduate school at Lakeview. It had been that candle, nearly burned down to the wick, which had affected the difference. The scent of warm apple pie had made an acceptable substitute for the *taste* of warm apple pie, beguiling his sweet tooth into impotency.

Martin had very much liked that candle. He was finding that he did *not* much like Stacey Reeves.

The display stalled her, and he took the opportunity to regain his feet. “I barely even probed the surface, Stacey! Almost every question I asked was some kind of tell. No boyfriend, not interested in getting one, no experience with men to speak of.”

“What, you were asking me if I gave good head? If I liked a hard dick in me?”

“No! I mean, sort of, yeah – but that’s the point! If I couldn’t even get you to talk about sex, how in the hell do you expect me to get you to actually want to do it? And that was before I knew you were a fucking lesbian!”

“You got something against gay people? I knew you were a pervert, but I didn’t think you were a homophobe, you creepy-ass limp dick mother fucker!”

“I’m not! But if you aren’t into men, what the hell are we doing here?” Then he answered his own question. It was all too obvious. “Holy shit. Stacey is this... is this some kind of gay conversion therapy or something? Oh my god. Is that what we’re doing? Why you’re hiding it so hard, so paranoid of anyone finding out? That’s it, isn’t it!”

Martin’s brain raced down the trail of breadcrumbs from their interactions, revising his mental portrait of her. A gun-toting father, raising his oldest daughter to protect herself from the rougher boys in their provincial village. Hiding out at the public library to escape male attention, to help pave her way into a university and from there into a career that would never send her back. A pretty little sister looking up to her

worshipfully; meanwhile Stacey looked back trying to conceal her shame, unable to shatter little Kira's rigid image of her third rate hero, the prom queen of Bumfuck, Nowhere. Getting to college to find out the frat boys and sorority cunts who instantly enveloped her into their circle were no more accepting, and finally turning to an outcast who could turn her into what she believed they would accept when there looked to be no safe outlet to be her true self.

If it wasn't that, no doubt it was some variant of it. Whatever it was, it was tragic that she'd been driven to these extremes.

"No!" she roared to his accusation. Then she wilted, looking down. "Or... well, so what? If it gets you what you want, what do you care about why anyway? You didn't twenty minutes ago!"

"Do you understand the legacy of conversion therapy? That's not a line I want to cross. Shit, Stace, I wouldn't go to a white power rally to get in your pants, either, in case you were going to ask."

Her fist clenched. He braced himself, but no swing came. "So you'd rather have your pathetic principles than my pussy? That's what you're telling me?"

"What you're asking isn't just wrong – though it is wrong – but it's probably impossible, too. You can google it. God, no wonder you were pushing back so hard! Do you even appreciate how much harder it's gotta be to tweak the kind of man you're attracted to, as opposed to tweak the goddamn sex you're attracted to?"

"I'm not asking you to give me your bullshit therapy course, asshole. I'm asking you to hypnotize me. Reach into my head and break some taboos, make me do what we want. It's totally different from what you're talking about."

"No. Look, I'm sorry. I really am." He *really* was. "But my answer is no. You have my word I'll keep this to myself. Like you said, who would believe me? But–"

Then she punched him. It was a hell of a punch, the sort of blow that in a less evolved mind might have cemented some negative stereotypes about her kind. He was still catching his breath on the floor when the door slammed behind her.

Naomi sighed. “Do we really need to rehearse again? I thought you said you had it down after all that chanting stuff we did a few months back.”

“I told you, we’re upping our game. The stuff we’ve been doing is amateur. We have to have something new, fresh.”

“Right, because that’s why people go to a hypnotist show. For cutting edge techniques. My boobs, no part of the appeal.”

Martin wasn’t even tempted to look down. Teasing was an art form in which she possessed extensive experience. Still, after growing accustomed to the sight of Stacey Reeves’ lying before him, it was difficult to descend from hottie to cutie.

“We’re never going to make a name for ourselves—”

She interrupted him with a jab to the chest. Not painful, but recent assaults had made him jumpy, and he flinched harder than he was proud of. “Make a name for *you*, you mean. You better not start using *my* real name.”

“Fine. I’m never going to make a name for myself if all I can do is get a girl to blink a little bit and unbutton her top.”

“Look, I’m not trying to rain on your parade or anything, but you’re never going to make a name for yourself because you’re a flippin’ hypnotist. Go on, name one famous hypnotist.”

“Svengali.”

She cocked her head to the side. “I thought you said he was fictional?”

“Well I could name real ones but you... wouldn’t, um, have heard. Of them.” He sighed. “Fine, but still, I can take pride in my craft, can’t I? I told you, I’ll pay you for your time. Just please, OK?”

She folded her arms. “I want another \$50 per show, and \$20 an hour for practice.”

“Seriously?! You already made me up your pay last time we practiced. I’ll pay you for these extra sessions, but come on. As it is, pretty much all the money I bring in with this is going to you.”

“Pretty much all the money you bring in from this is coming from me. Sounds fair to me.” Admittedly, they were nice boobs.

“\$25 a show. That’s the best I can do.”

The round-faced bottled blonde mulled it over, but at last gave a sigh of resignation. “All right. If you say that’s what you can afford, I trust you.”

Martin offered a hand, and they shook. With the clock running, he wasted no time getting her laid out on his couch and proceeding with an induction. Like when he’d used her to prep for Stacey’s early sessions, it was difficult to tell how well any of it was working. In their shows, her hypnotic state was an act, or at least he was pretty sure it was. He didn’t ask, and she was gentle enough with his pride not to say otherwise. He

had made it clear these sessions were supposed to be real, but he wasn't entirely sure she knew the difference.

So he put her under and tried out some of the chanting he'd done with Stacey. She complied without complaint. One of the traits that made Naomi so perfect for these practices was her casual certainty that he wanted to fuck her, and her equal certainty that it would never happen. It wasn't condescension, as it had been with the last woman he'd had on his couch, but rather a confidence in her judgment. Life had not always been kind to Naomi, and she was not about to squander what progress she had made on a dubious prospect like Martin la Mesmer, even if she found some small charm in his earnest fixation on his strange hobby. So she chanted about trust and comfort and relaxation, and he tried not to make any unfavorable comparisons.

"How do you feel?" he asked some time later as she sat up.

She yawned, stretching her arms and shoulders. "Good! Bored, sort of, but really relaxed. My muscles are like jello."

"No offense taken," he assured her despite her not having said she hadn't intended any. "Do you feel... different? You know, like, did anything seem to stick?"

"I don't know. Like, I feel comfortable here, relaxed, I trust you, all that stuff you've had me saying. You know that stuff really gets in your head? It's like I hear it—"

But Martin was looking down at his phone, again. He shook his head and put it back in his pocket.

"Who's that? Same person who's been at you the whole time I've been here? I was sorta out of it, but I thought I kept hearing a buzz."

"Yeah, same person."

"Why, Mr. Mesmer, you got a special lady in your life?" Naomi grinned toothily.

"No. Hell no."

"I dunno, your mouth says no but your pouty little face says yes."

"She's not important. Can you come back tomorrow?"

She could not, but made plans to return in three days' time. His phone buzzed again as he walked her to the door, and she departed with a knowing smile over her shoulder, despite not being capable of ever guessing who was texting him or what the nature of that text was.

He waved out the front window, sulked for a few minutes, then finally read Stacey's message.

Let's keep going. You were doing so well! You can't tell me you aren't still thinking about me. About what I want you to do to me. About what I want you to make me want to do to you.

Martin shook his head. The first week had been threats and non sequitur fits of rage and vitriol. One night Stacey had come over and tried to force her way in. Only when a neighbor emerged and threatened to call the police if she didn't stop trying to

kick down his door did she withdraw. No doubt her fear stemmed more from being discovered in his company than anything the milquetoast campus police might threaten local legend Stacey Reeves with.

Her second campaign was more difficult to withstand, though withstand he had. There had been no transition. *I know how to make fires that can't be put out* came last Thursday night, and then Friday morning he awakened to *I'm still doing what you told me to do, Martin. I still trust you. Just let me in and make me need you like I know you need me.* It wasn't exactly artless, though it was debatable how much rhetorical skill was required to bandy about a few key words and phrases. *Want me. Need you. Hypnotize me.*

Reading up on conversion therapy was all it took to keep him honest, though. He wouldn't be the first to try to hypnotize someone into switching to the other team, and the anecdotes of just how colossally the process had failed were horrifying. Even with her sincere participation, the odds of it all ending with her gun in her mouth were much better than whatever dim prospect of success he might have. He could be no part of leading someone to a place like that.

Leave me alone, he replied. It was the only reply he'd let himself give.

Naomi's car started in the lot. There was still some bitterness over her pay hike, but he did hope the woman could at least fix up that garbage car of hers.

Meanwhile, Stacey replied. *I'm going to spend an hour obeying your post-hypnotic suggestions. Then we can talk again.* Ugh. She was learning the terminology – or what terms google supplied her – just to entice him. He tried not to picture her in her room at Delta Alpha Theta, lying flat on her back, dressed far more casually than she ever had for him. Eyes closed, mumbling the words he'd given her. *I'll talk to him. I'll be honest with him. I'll read and watch attentively, whatever he wants. I'll consider doing what he asks.* It wasn't exactly those words, nor was it exactly *I can't stop frigging my pussy whenever I think his name,* but god. Compare that to her total ignorance that he or anyone resembling him had or ever would exist. He shut off his phone for the night, but there was more waiting for him the coming morning.

And so Stacey worked on him. Never did she get a different response from him, but she was undeterred. Mid-terms came and went, during which she relented only somewhat. Seldom, if ever, had he seen someone with such perseverance in the face of such seeming apathy. Several times a day, sometimes spread out morning to midnight, sometimes in bursts, Stacey came at him.

Hypnotize me.

Leave me alone

Please?

Leave me alone

I know you want me. I know you're jerking off like crazy missing me.

Leave me alone
What if I forget the words? What if we lose the gains we were making?

Leave me alone
I know you can make me want to fuck you.

Leave me alone
What if I told you it's not what you think it is? Maybe I have other reasons.

Leave me alone
*C'mon "la Mesmer." Hypnotize me. This is your shot to earn your cheesy
nickname. Hypnotize me. Become a legend.*

Leave me alone
I watched some hypnosis porn, just to see.

I think I get what you like about it.
We could watch some together, if you want.

Leave me alone
I want to want to fuck you so bad. Please?

Leave me alone

It was exhausting, especially since she made many strong points in her favor. Even Martin knew it was quite possible she might catch him at a weak moment or slip between the gaps in his defenses. No matter how she came at him, though, he didn't engage. So long as he kept up his firewall, she couldn't get into his system.

At least, not until one day when the door to his apartment opened, and striding through the doorframe was Stacey Reeves.

Or someone much like her. Over their months of sessions together, Martin's mental image of the woman had undergone significant revision. Prior to that day backstage at the Lakeview Lounge, Stacey Reeves had been no more than her instagram persona. Airbrushed to perfection, every shot immaculately posed and rehearsed, flawless everything. Not so much as a hair out of place. There existed a picture of her at the beach in a bikini top and a thin dress billowing up around her waist without quite revealing her bottoms, a wave splashing up her legs, droplets of water caught mid-air. Her panicked laughter, fending off the splash, could have been on a magazine cover. It had taken her four hours to get the shot perfect, including drying off between attempts, leaving Martin's guess at less than fifty percent of the reality.

While getting to know her, however, he had grown accustomed to a markedly distinct Stacey Reeves. One who wore minimal makeup, if any. One who had no trouble hiding killer curves in her comfy wardrobe. One who often as not came in stinking of sweat from her workout at the Lakeview rec center. One who belched like a caveman if she drank so much as a sip of anything carbonated.

This was not that Stacey. This was instagram Stacey, and only then, seeing her float through his doorway did he appreciate how little she relied on filters. Tits. There

were her tits. A plunging neckline in her sky blue top revealed a deep line where a bra that had to have been designed by a man with tastes mirroring his own thrust them outward and upward and inward. They were eye-popping. The shirt was brief, displaying a tummy so flat, so tight, that her navel was a narrow vertical line, a sparkly little stud glittering in its piercing. A ruffled pink skirt that somehow had four layers to it despite not making it more than a third of the way down her thighs went with a pair of matching pink heels, gawdy plastic straps wrapped around feet and ankles. The flower tattoo on her right thigh that he'd only glimpsed online was suddenly half-revealed to his eyes, the brevity of her skirt imploring him to crane his neck to drink in the rest of it.

Yet in spite of all that, it was her face that arrested his attention. It was, in a word, a boner pill with a body leaking out of it. Tweezed. Plumped. Brushed. Her eyelashes were longer, eyebrows thinner. The blue in her eye shadow was a perfect match for the blue in her top, linking those rich hazel eyes to her set of big bouncy boobs. The earring he could see sparkled to draw the eye, revealing to him that he had never realized how sexy an ear, of all things, could be. A thin wisp of black hair hung separate, down one cheek and curling around her chin before dangling down towards her breasts, was begging for a man to reunite it with its fellow strands. Her lips glowed so pink they'd probably register on a Geiger counter, but theirs was the sort of radioactivity that promised the granting of superpowers.

"Hi, Martin."

"Uh, hi Stacey." What? Had she just become so hot that her name became a word in a foreign language that he didn't know how to pronounce? The fuck? "Erm, Stacey."

She gave a thin smile, not at all unaware of the effect she was having on him. "You can call me Stakey if you want. I like that better than all that 'leave me alone' nonsense."

Oh right. He wasn't supposed to engage. Too late now. "On your way out to a big date?"

She turned and closed his door so slowly it could only be to remind him not to forget how incredible her ass was. How could someone that fit still have an ass that generous? There had to be some kind of hot girl exercises they kept a secret amongst themselves. "No. I wore this to come here. For you."

"I thought you said I couldn't tell you how to dress."

"You didn't," she said quickly, a bit of the Stacey he knew seeping into her voice. She squelched it fast, however. "It's just... well, you gave me a lot of time to think about things. Obviously our... relationship, if you want to call it that, was a little more one-sided than I'd thought. You were doing what I asked, and it was even starting to work a little, I think. Not that you turn me on at all, yet—" Her eyes rolled to glare at her own tongue. "—but I kept figuring the end game was payoff enough for you, and it clearly wasn't. So... yeah. Here I am. Thanks for leaving the door unlocked by the way. Not that

I didn't think I could get you to let me in, but harder to seduce a guy through a peephole. Unless he's even more of a creeper than you."

Martin looked her over, her insult unheard. And then some more. Fuck, she could hypnotize a man just by standing in front of him. "You look great, Stace. Really. *Really* really. But that doesn't change what we talked about." He flinched as his libido tried to score a throat punch.

"I didn't get dressed up to come say hi and figure a cute outfit was going to make you betray your principles. I'm not a total cunt." She tapped her lip, snickered. "Not all the time, at least."

"So then... why are you here?"

"Right. So... yeah. I'll be frank. We just burned two and a half weeks right as we were getting somewhere. I was really starting to feel it, to change. Even now, with you ogling me like you paid for the privilege – and maybe you kinda did – I actually feel weirdly OK about it? I tried to take things further on my own, try more, um, 'advanced' mantras, but without you, without the trance, it doesn't work. Gave myself a panic attack a couple times, actually. Was pretty fucked up. My bunkmate Monica lost her shit when she came in on me... never mind."

If the sight of her hadn't been enough to get hard, her confession was more than enough. It was working. She needed him. Wanted him. God, it was like the text, but they were being narrated by a sexual goddess, right to his face.

She continued, "Anyway, I know I'm asking you to do something you're not comfortable with. Yes, I could tell you that this isn't about lesbian hang-ups, but there's too much I'm not ready to tell you, or anyone, to ever make you believe it, so whatever. Long story short, I figured if I'm asking you to cross a line for me, I should be ready to do the same."

Did she really think his integrity counted for so little?

Then again... maybe he was just being stubborn. She had, after all, asked for this. Nobody had made her seek him out, made her go crazy over it like a mosquito at a blood bank. And she was offering to compensate him for it, something she'd never even pretended to do before. Yes, if they ever hit a day where she begged him for sex, it would feel like it was all worth it, but that was definitely distant, and probably impossible. To put some literal skin in the game... it counted for something.

And that skin... so much skin...

So be it. Yes, it felt dirty. Yes, there might be ethical questions he'd be asking himself until the end of his life. Still, if she was willing to dress up like *this* for him, there wasn't enough capacity for that magnitude of willpower in his entire stunted soul. Being willing to objectify herself for him, it was too rich a gift to pass up.

That all went through his mind in the time it took her to pause for breath. She finished her offer. "So I thought I'd give you a couple options. You can either see me

naked, or... I'll suck your dick. Your call, whatever you want. Tonight only. As long as you promise to keep working with me."

"I need a moment to think it over," he croaked.

Stacey's disappointment at his lack of instantaneous refusal wasn't subtle. If she'd known that Martin's hasty retreat was, in part, because he had just come in his pants, she might not have taken it so hard. He went first to the bathroom, and once he'd handled matters there, retreated to his bedroom.

It did, however, give him time to think, and at least a modicum of clear-headedness. Not enough to grant real consideration to his scruples, no. The insidious connotation of conversion therapy was well-deserved, but Martin Manning would have done a lot worse for a lot less. The outfit alone had granted him whatever peace he'd ever have with crossing that line in the sand.

The real question was which prize he coveted more. A sight that could never be unseen, or the smug satisfaction of taking Stacey Reeves' oral cherry?

His erection had not waned in the least by the time he returned, fresh briefs still cool beneath his jeans. Stacey still stood in front of his couch, still radiant as the sun in July, awaiting his decision. She said nothing. Much as he would have enjoyed hearing the offer from those lips once more, he didn't dare risk breaking whatever resolve of her own it had taken to say it the once.

"Strip, Stacey."

Like in his fantasies, a smile bloomed on those rosy lips at his straightforward order to disrobe. It wasn't glee at the opportunity to pleasure her master, no, but it was the perfect prelude to the main event. Before she began, however, she took two steps forward, bending down to look him in the eyes, inches away. How had he not noticed her perfume? She smelled almost as fuckable as she looked. That she'd fallen prey to the classic sorority girl trap of finding a decent scent and practically bathing in the stuff only enhanced the effect.

"Swear to me you'll finish what we started," she whispered.

"I swear."

"Say it. I need to hear you say all of it." Right in his ear, this time, one hand cradling the back of his head.

"I swear, I will make you beg to be allowed to fuck me."

White teeth shone as she drew back. "Good. Then I'll strip for you."

It wasn't a show she put on. She took off her clothes the way she would in the privacy of her own bedroom at the DAT house. Stacey removed one article of clothing at a time unhurriedly, no fucks given for anyone's field of vision or the way her increasingly revealed pieces were displayed. She took off her clothes, no more, no less. Her bra and panties matched, fire engine red, ruffled fabric not unlike the skirt now

crumpled up on his living room floor where her camera usually sat. The underwear was dropped atop it.

There were too many details to drink in. Her pussy was baby smooth, waxed, just like she'd told him weeks ago. Her nipples were the same cheery pink tint as her labia, which she immodestly displayed when bending over to peel down her underwear. There was a small birthmark on her left buttock. The flower on her hip wasn't colored in, though she explained she meant to finish it someday when she caught him inspecting it. Her ass jiggled even more than her tits when she walked in those heels. Heels, which she left on at his command. She stood there, hands on her hips, welcoming his gaze, in nothing but those cheap, slutty shoes and a conceited grin.

"You'd better get used to this."

"This is a one-time thing. Look as long as you want – I'll spin for you if you'd like to see the back – but it's tonight only."

Martin wagged a finger reprovingly. "Oh no. Remember, if I tell you to do something and it's not forbidden, you have to at least consider it."

Her grin slipped. "You can't tell me how to dress."

"But I just did, and you just obeyed. You don't have to feel embarrassed about it. If you're going to fuck me, you're going to need to be ready to get fucked, Stace, and that means clothes off." He twirled his finger, and at his command, almost by reflex, she spun to display her bare ass to him. Another gesture and she bent forward, back arched, cunt and asshole alike available to be taken. (At least they were in terms of their physical readiness, if not psychological.)

"I..." She took a slow breath. "I'll consider it."

"Tell me you're sorry you didn't get to blow me."

She looked over her shoulder. "Do you want me to sound like I mean it, or do you prefer the sincerity of sarcasm?"

"Fake it 'til you make it."

"Fine. I'm so sad I didn't get to suck you off, Martin," she simpered, skipping the T in his name for extra cuteness, then cut the moment off with a snort. "Feel better?"

Martin left her in place, bent over, supporting herself on the arm of their hypnosis couch, tits dangling, quavering with each breath, ass in the ready position for a royal pounding. He paced around her, studying her perfect body from all sides. Her breath had a tremulous quality to it. Considering she'd never let a man see her naked before, some anxiety was to be expected, he supposed.

"All right, next question. Honest answer this time."

She replied in the monotone of her hypnotic mantra. "I'll be honest with Martin Manning."

"Are you turned on right now? Even a little?"

Stacey froze. Somehow, that question cut to something deeper than the flesh. To bare her pussy was one thing; the last time she'd bared her innermost self, she'd almost ruined her whole mad scheme. The question was a violation more personal than if he'd jammed a couple fingers unasked right up her dampening pussy.

"Wait..." Stacey touched her slit, probed inside gently with an index finger. When it withdrew, there was a faint sheen to it, glistening in the overhead light. "Holy... I guess I am. A little."

Martin beamed, kneeling down behind her. His face was close enough to her cunt that if those lips could draw breath, he'd feel it on his cheeks. She didn't move an inch. Stacey Reeves trusted Martin Manning. He didn't touch her, though. Not yet. Instead he picked up her underwear and offered it to her. "I am going to make you want to fuck me so hard you're gonna need sturdier shoes to keep on your feet, Stace."

She accepted her panties, though there was no rush to put them on. Stacey Reeves was comfortable around Martin Manning. "A little more now."

"Get used to it."

She glanced at the couch. "I have my camera in the car, if you want to go right now. Dressed or not, your choice. I did offer you this one night."

From prior experience, Martin knew full well not to proceed with this complicated game of incremental submission without a plan in place. Suggestions needed to be considered carefully, worded just so, notes taken on her reaction so that adjustments could be made. Diving in dick first would be a mistake, potentially catastrophic. That she still felt she needed the protection of her camera spoke volumes about the distance they still had to cover.

Still, he would have agreed in a heartbeat if Naomi weren't still hiding out down the hall. She'd seen and heard too much from her vantage point in the bathroom when Stacey first arrived, hidden around the corner as Stacey made her vulgar offer. Far too much had transpired now to try to smuggle Naomi out without talking about all this first.

"Tomorrow."

Stacey's head snapped back, surprised and perhaps a little wounded. "Bad timing, huh?"

"I'll need to do some planning first. But tomorrow. Wear something like this." He pointed to her discarded articles of clothing.

"Like this?" she repeated. "So, something cute bordering on slutty?"

"Just slutty, but if you want to call it cute, Stace, be my guest."

"You can't tell me how to dress, you know, la Mesmer," she said, but teasingly, as she worked at getting her panties back on over her heels. "But I'll consider it."