

## BREAKING SKYE

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This could not be him. This man could not be the one who would strip her bare, put her on her knees and do unspeakable things to her...lovely, wicked things she had only ever imagined in the darkest corners of her mind.

When she'd posted the ad on bondage.com she'd imagined finding a man with an air of command. A man who carried himself with utter confidence. A man who could guide her through this experience with capable hands.

He was all of these things. But he was too beautiful to be real. Like some fallen angel with his evil-looking goatee, his sharply-honed bone structure, his too-lush mouth. He had shoulders like a Greek god beneath his black trench coat. Droplets of water clung to the fabric, and she watched as he shrugged out of the long coat and shivered a bit at the damp, San Francisco cold. Perhaps he was human after all.

He spoke her name in a low voice that felt like a caress. "Skye."

Certainty in his voice. She had a feeling this man never doubted himself. A Dominant through and through. What had she heard this kind of man called in her research on the Internet? A true Dominant?

"Yes. You must be Adam."

He nodded, took her hand as he slid into the chair across from hers. He held on just a moment too long, the flickering heat of his touch making her wonder if she wanted him to let go. The tiny café table seemed like too little space separating them. Adam Dunne had an enormous, palpable presence.

A waitress came as though summoned and took his order for an espresso while Skye made a brief study of his face. Absolutely masculine, every line, every plane. A short, thick thatch of brown hair a few shades lighter than his goatee. She loved it. He had a small scar just below his lower lip, making his features appear even more masculine. His eyes were a dark, dusky blue framed in thick lashes. God, what it would be like to have those eyes turned on her, focused..

She shivered, and realized he still hadn't released her from his grip. She glanced down and saw another scar on the back of his left hand, a small crescent around the joint of the thumb. Why was it she wanted to run her finger over it? When he turned to her, meeting her gaze, she shivered again with a fine, pure heat.

*Lust.*

She hadn't expected to feel this.

"Are you all right, Skye?" He smiled. Gorgeous white teeth.

*All the better to eat you with.*

She really had to get a hold of herself. Carry on a

conversation like a normal person. She pulled her hand back and put it in her lap.

"What? Yes, I'm fine. Thank you."

"Am I the first Dominant you've contacted?"

"No. There have been several others but they...I don't know. I wasn't comfortable with any of them."

"Are you comfortable with me?"

It felt like a trick question. Her pulse was racing at a thousand miles an hour.

"I don't know yet."

The waitress brought his espresso in a small, white china cup that looked even tinier in his hand as he lifted it and sipped.

"Just relax. We're here to get to know each other. To see if we'll work well together." He put his cup down and leaned forward a bit. "You said in your e-mail that you're interested in exploring what it's like to be a submissive. Interesting, the way you phrased it. It seemed detached. As though you don't think of yourself as a submissive."

Very observant. "I don't. I believe this is simply one small corner of myself. That this one experience will purge this...yearning from my system."

"I'm not sure that's a healthy attitude to have going in."

"I think exploring even your darkest side can be a healthy way to express repressed desires, needs. Once expressed, the need often disappears. It's the symbols that count, what these

things represent to people. To me."

He sat back in his chair, raised one dark brow. "You truly believe that?"

"Of course. I'm an artist. I believe very strongly in symbols."

"That's not what I meant. But you know that. Are you at all willing to have your mind changed?"

Why the sudden flutter in her stomach? She picked up the cup of Darjeeling tea she'd ordered before he'd arrived, sipped, found it cold. She set the cup down again.

He leaned forward in his chair, until he was only inches from her. The warmth of his hand slid over hers again. He said quietly, "I think I can challenge your theory. But that's not why I want to do this with you. You intrigue me, Skye. I've worked as a trainer for ten years. I've learned to read people. I can read you. So strong on the outside. So controlled. You need to break that control. To let it go. I can do this for you. But only on my terms."

She swallowed hard. His hand on hers was warming up until it seemed to scorch her skin. Her whole body surged with need for his touch. She shook her head to clear it. "What exactly are you suggesting?"

"That you give yourself over to me."

"That's what I'd intended. For one night—"

"One night won't work. It'll take at least several evenings. This is a process, Skye, not an event. That's not

how the human mind works. And as much as this experience will be physical, the most important part happens in your head. Brain chemistry, psychology, your personal history, symbols, as you said. It all comes into play. Did you really think you could do all that in one night?"

"I...I don't know..."

Her mind was spinning. She *had* thought that. Foolish, she could see now. But could she do what he was suggesting? Losing control for one night, that she could manage. That she could excuse. But more?

He slid his hand up her arm, leaving a trail of sensation even through her cashmere sweater. When it came to rest on the bare skin at the back of her neck her legs trembled and went weak. His hand was absolutely burning on her skin. Her body flooded with desire. Physical desire, yes. But also an inexplicable desire to please him. This stranger with the smoky blue eyes that seemed to see right through her. Eyes like the misty February sky outside.

Her heart hammered in panic. But she didn't want to run. She wanted—needed—to understand why this man was making her feel like some trembling virgin with starry-eyed fantasies flashing through her mind. The same images that had plagued her since she was a teenager. Fantasies she had finally decided to live out.

God, she was really going to do this!