

Assignment: Tracker

by Wrestlr

[M/M, MC]

Synopsis: In this sequel to "Assignment: Cowboy, " the mind controller goes after a tracker.

Disclaimer: The naked hypnotist strides confidently into your room. His lips curl in what might be a smile as he dangles his shiny crystal pendulum before your eyes and announces, "Listen and obey. If you are not of legal age, or if you offended by sexual situations, you will leave this place immediately. From here on, no matter how realistic it may appear, everything will seem like fiction to you, a pleasant dream where scientific possibilities and laws may change according to my suggestion. Now, if you are willing, sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride."

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By Wrestlr

Author's note: This story is partially a sequel to and follows the events of ["Assignment: Cowboy."](#)

His body was long and lean, the kind of body developed in a life where speed and agility are as important as strength.

The tip was good--he was there, all right. He was seated at the bar when I walked in. He had his back to me, but I identified him immediately because, with his shoulder-length black hair, he stood out from everyone else.

My target was a half-breed. Darvenek, on the other hand, was a clan city. Almost everyone in this city was a member of the Darven clan. Like most clans, they bred for a standardized look--in this case, every clan member was blond with curly hair within a shade or two of the standard, had one of two facial types, had one of five body types. The clan running this backwater country had built eugenics into every fiber of politics and the state religion; if you didn't meet the standard, you weren't given clan membership, and without a clan membership you were nobody, several steps below second-class citizen.

My target was definitely not Darven-clan, not a full one anyway. He was born into one of the undefined wilderness clans, the clans outside the western cities. But while they weren't as conformist as the Darveneks, even those outlying groups frowned on inter-clan breeding. My target was half Darven-clan on his mother's side, half-wilderness on his father's. His father's people rejected him, and he grew up a loner, an outcast

oscillating between life in the wilds and life in the underbelly of this city, semi-attached to his mother's people. He learned to be suspicious of everyone, these days preferring to spend most of his time in the wild territories, coming into the cities only to trade and buy supplies. It was all in his file. I had practically memorized it.

At some point a few years back, he wandered far from home, into my country. He got scanned coming into some city or another, where things like that are routine. High probability of being a Talent. The bastard probably didn't even realize he was likely to get caught, or else he'd never have risked it. His file suggested he was too smart for that. In his case, he turned out to be a tracker; not exactly a Talent, not in the usual sense, but a special skill that was maybe hereditary in his clan, evolved through their nomadic history--once he fixed himself on something, he could find his way to it, no matter where it went, or how far away, or how well it is hidden. Even though he wasn't a Talent, he still got "recruited," which is a fancy way of saying the Institute took him into custody for a detailed evaluation until they could figure out exactly how his tracking skill worked and how to profit from it. Our boy here didn't cotton too well to being penned up, and he escaped the first chance he got, which turned out to be nearly three whole months later. By then, the Institute had a rather large file on him and his abilities. I knew, because I had read every word of it. The Institute was very thorough.

They also don't like people who just take their leave whenever they want. The Institute is a pretty good gig for some of us, like me, but there are plenty of rules that must be followed. Our boy here had never been one much for rules. He snuck away from the Institute when he was eighteen, nearly ten years ago. Left the country too, so the Institute officially couldn't touch him, and hightailed it back to this backwater burg. But that didn't mean the Institute didn't keep an eye on him. Maybe they just never thought coming after him was worth it. Keeping a

rebellious loner like him on a leash can be expensive. Maybe they never thought his skill was worth it--not flashy enough, no general applications. But they kept tabs on him, which turned out convenient now that he might have information the Institute wanted. Maybe the Institute couldn't officially touch him, but I was there incognito. In and out, and no one would be the wiser. That was my specialty.

This city didn't have Talent scanners. Didn't have much of anything, out here on the bum-fuck edge of nowhere. Even calling it a city was generous. Someone like him could hide in a place like this. Hide from anyone but the Institute, that is.

From his father's clan, he inherited his long, lean build and dark, straight hair. From his mother's, high cheekbones and fair skin; he wore his hair long in the way of his mother's people, pulled back in a ponytail that fell just below his shoulders, though on him the length of his dark hair probably emphasized his otherness. From somewhere else came his orange eyes, possibly a secondary effect of the gene pool that gave him his skill. I bet he learned early on to use his exotic looks and those orange eyes to make the Darven-clan girls drop their panties and squeal with delight, especially the girls looking to rebel against parental authority and clan conformity. They opposed inter-breeding, but inter-fucking?--he had probably found many sex-partners with a taste for the exotic over the years.

The good citizens here in Darvenek gave strangers a wide berth. It was a crowded city, packed with people, a sea of blond hair, and people who weren't in their clan were viewed with suspicion. That's probably why he chose this backwater dive bar just inside the edge of the city. Lots of lowlifes and out-clans congregated there, so people were less likely to notice just one more outsider. Under these dim lights, his orange eyes were less noticeable.

Technically, it was late afternoon. The run-down bar was open for business; probably never closed. The obligatory whorehouse next door--just walk through that side door--was an independent outfit, not one of the corporate McFleiss franchises, probably run by the same people who kept this bar going as a humanitarian tax write-off. The whorehouse wasn't officially open yet, but I could sense the thoughts of three or four flesh-workers inside, bored, but not yet bored enough or desperate enough to be looking for business. They wouldn't interfere. That left the seen-it-all bartender, the waitress, three other customers already working on their daily drunks, and my target. No one here was going to give a rat's ass what went down except maybe the bartender or the waitress, and they'd only care if my target was running a tab. Plan was, I'd go inside to tag and bag the target; the Colonel would cover the outside as backup. A good plan. Simple, effective, proven--just the way I liked 'em.

He slouched on a stool at the bar, nursed a beer, the expensive bottled kind that I was surprised this bar managed to stock--probably black market. He had not shaven in the last couple of days, sported dark stubble on his cheeks and chin. He wore jeans, a stained white wife-beater that had definitely seen better days, an ancient cowboy hat that might have been a real antique, a vest decorated with his clan's tribal embroidery, and boots. A *leather* vest. Leather boots too. And the little stone animal totem necklace around his neck dangled on a leather cord. Around both arms, just above his elbows, he wore an armband of what looked like raw leather. Leather is rare and expensive, and technically illegal since the PETA Party came to power in Darvenek a few years ago and passed all those laws. Maybe he used leather for barter currency in the wilderness. The dim lighting made the real-ness less obvious, but it stuck out, if you knew what you were looking at. He looked like he knew how to fight; he might not be the biggest or meanest guy around but he could still fuck somebody up. His cool *don't fuck with me* confidence and the various knives stashed on his person or maybe just his fists were all

he needed to keep somebody from trying to relieve him of that valuable leather.

The target slouched over the bar, looked bored, drummed a finger lightly on the beer bottle he was nursing. The bartender was at the opposite end, busy doing something to justify ignoring everyone and everything around him. The rest of the stools alongside the bar were empty--still early. The few other people in the place were at tables or booths away from the bar. I walked over to the bar and parked my ass on the stool a discreet two seats down from the target.

The out-clan waitress--and I use that term loosely, since obviously her clan bred for physical size and mannish features--headed my way but paused as she passed the target and noticed the strips, as if for the first time.

Dion, I reminded myself. The target's name is Dion.

"Excuse me," the waitress said to him, already bordering on indignation. "Is that ... *leather*?"

"Technically, it's rawhide," he said, casual and friendly as a wolf, "but yeah."

She recoiled, entirely too feminine a gesture for such a masculine woman. "You *know* killing animals is *illegal*, don't you?"

"So I hear," he purred, with the casual smile of a hawk eviscerating a weasel. "And I also hear there's not a lesbian alive who deep down doesn't really want to suck dick."

Her jaw dropped. From the way it flapped there, she couldn't come up with a snappy comeback. So she did the only thing she could think of:

she walked off in a huff, forgetting all about me and my drink order.

Me? I'm with the Institute. They sent me to lasso this straggler and wrangle him one way or another into working for us on a special little assignment. *Yippee-ki-yay, motherfucker*. "Recruiting" him was a simple in-and-out job. I was going in solo. Walk in, get the target, and walk out. Make it subtle, the Colonel said, and make it fast.

The Colonel says I lack subtlety. Maybe that's true in some ways, but I get results, which is probably the only reason he tolerates me. The Colonel is a Normal--at least I think he is--and he's good with weapons, good at killing people. His idea of "subtle" is killing with only one bullet, or just breaking one arm. He is not what you might call a "people person." He was covering the back door, expecting the target to bolt past me. I usually pretended the Colonel's habitual lack of confidence in me after three years of working together wasn't annoying.

Nobody here was going to call the police on an out-clan for wearing leather. This wasn't that kind of place. The bartender looked my way when the waitress stormed off but not right at me. That's probably a good habit, given his clientele. I was incognito--no stylized Institute *I* logo on my shirt to warn the natives. He just wanted to make sure no trouble was starting. Trouble comes in a lot of forms, and none were good for business on a boring afternoon. He was Darven-clan through and through, but old. Apparently the bar didn't bring in the cash for him to afford those fancy rejuvenation treatments. Just as well. The full clan members who had real money to spend probably went to a better class of house than this, like their local McFleiss franchise.

I motioned for a beer. The bartender gave a small curt nod. Thirty seconds later, a glass was in front of me and I put my money on the counter beside it. I took a sip mostly for show. Strong, not watered down

like some dives. I was there on a job, so I didn't risk more than a second swallow. Alcohol fucks with your head. My Talent is mental. I wasn't about to risk alcohol messing with my ability to get the job done.

I took another look around. Two years ago, I'd been in another bar, another dive, another city. Maybe all dimly lit no-tell bars looked like this: familiar and generic at the same time. I'd been there to do a job, which involved apprehending a man in an unscrupulous line of work. He was a rough man too, but he conducted himself with a sense of honor. He didn't look much like this target, this Dion, but they both had the same tightly held code of honor that structured their lives.

Back then, two years ago, Cowboy--his real name was Billy--got himself in some trouble. I had a job to do; I had to bring him in, but I tried to give him a second chance. I never heard anything else from or about him. Sometimes, when I thought back to him, I wondered if he had managed to take that chance and make it work for him. I hoped he had. I'd only known him for a few hours, but he left an impression. I missed him, sometimes, though I knew I shouldn't. In my line of work, people came and went, and you learned to make the most out of what little time you got.

Back to the there and now. According to his file, the target was just shy of thirty years old, but he looked a couple of years younger, mid-twenties. Maybe Dion's people tended to look younger in the eyes of outsiders. Billy was in his mid- or late-twenties too. With his cowboy hat and dark hair, from behind this Dion could be mistaken for Billy.

But this target wasn't Billy, and I still had a job to do. Dive bars on the edge of cities were often places where the outsiders met the morally ambiguous. Here, I was the outsider, and the target--Dion--was the morally ambiguous. Or maybe it was the other way around.

I slid one stool closer to him, then to the one beside him, our shoulders nearly touching. He didn't show he noticed, kept fidgeting one fingernail against the corner of the beer label, but he growled at his bottle low enough only I could hear him, "Your best bet is to keep it in your pants until the brothel opens in half an hour, friend. They might have somebody better suited for what you're looking for. No offense, but I'm not interested."

"You misunderstand, friend," I stage-whispered back. No one but him would hear. "I'm here about your brother."

I felt his thoughts twitch in surprise, touch on memories of his younger brother. I made a note of that.

"Don't got a brother, friend," he replied, still not turning away from his beer bottle to acknowledge me.

"Half-brother. Two years younger. Unlike you, he's full-clan." I said it as proof that I knew, and I felt his thoughts crystallize a half-second before his body stiffened.

"Relax," I told him. "In case you haven't noticed, you can't move unless I let you."

He had indeed noticed. I'd had the foresight to slide my thoughts into his head and take control even before I first sat down, so gently he never even felt it. That was probably the only thing that kept him from pulling a knife on me. He had one in his boot, one in his pocket, and a little one in a holster just inside the left side of his vest; the moment I got inside his head, I knew about all of them. I made sure his hands never left his beer bottle. If I wasn't every bit as good as I thought I was, he'd skewer me the first chance he got.

"Who are you, friend?" His voice was surface-friendly, not quite masking the icy hardness.

"Institute," I said with a pause--*two, three, four*--for him to digest that fact. "Relax. I'm not here for you. Like I said, I'm here about your brother. And don't try lying to me again either, because obviously I'm a mind controller and a strong one too."

"I'm listening." Obviously.

"Your brother's gotten himself in some trouble. He took something that didn't belong to him, and the rightful owner wants it back." Maybe the situation was similar and that's why I was thinking about Cowboy. I needed to stay focused, though. Neither Dion nor his brother was Cowboy.

"Yeah? Who's that?" Meaning, *Who's pulling your strings?*

"Nobody you need to worry about."

"I don't know where he is. Ain't heard from him in months."

"Maybe. But I think you know how to find him."

His thoughts did this little panicked dance in my grip, but his face never flinched. He was probably one hell of a bluffer in poker games, if they played poker in Darvenek.

"Yeah," I said, "I know all about you and that little skill of yours. And I'm thinking you don't have to know where your brother is to know how to find him."

He didn't say anything. Which meant he didn't try to deny it or lie his

way out of it. Honor is a rare commodity.

I laid it out for him. "The way I see it, you have two choices. Option one, you and I can go into the storeroom out back where we can be alone for twenty minutes and you cooperate."

"Is there an option two?"

"Sure, but it involves a man called the Colonel who's waiting outside with enough firepower to level a city block." That was only a slight exaggeration. The Colonel preferred guns, but I'd seen him whip up makeshift explosives out of ordinary industrial cleaners and take out a good-sized office building once. If he had a Talent, the Colonel's would be the ability to look at something and see how to break it or kill it. That kind of skill probably didn't come in handy at parties but, like I said, the Colonel isn't much of a people person anyway.

The target, Dion, didn't flinch at the Colonel's name. Maybe the Colonel's reputation hadn't spread this far south yet. Yeah, and maybe pigs have learned to strap on pink fairy wings and take to the skies. Like I said, this guy had one hell of a poker face. Or maybe he thought I couldn't be talking about *that* Colonel.

No matter. I continued, "Option two didn't work out so well for the last couple of guys who tried it. Very messy, very final, and you wouldn't believe the paperwork we had to fill out. Trust me--option one works out better for everybody involved, and we all walk away smiling afterward."

"Except my brother."

My turn not to lie. "I don't know the details, but he pissed off some very important people. This way, fewer people get hurt." Especially me,

apparently, judging by the little fantasy this Dion was entertaining about what he'd do to my lifeless body with his biggest knife if he got free of my mental clamp. Quite creative, really, and fleshed out with plenty of details about what my spleen would look out on the late-afternoon pavement and how my blood would smell. He knew I picked up on that, was trying to shock me into loosening my hold. I didn't recoil, though. I've got a good poker face too. Besides, I'd run into a fairly high number of authentic sickos in the three years I'd been doing this work. Dion couldn't compare to them.

He stared at his bottle. "Option one," he said finally. "Can I finish my beer first?"

"Sure," I said, knowing good booze is hard to come by in clan cities like this. I gave him enough leeway to bring the bottle to his lips and drain it, but not enough to let him smash it against my skull like he wanted. He was a fighter, was going to fight me every way he could--not that it would do him any good. I liked that. I liked his spirit.

"Let's go," I told him, and stood up. "I've got a schedule to keep before the Colonel decides to come busting in here and shoots everyone anyway." Which was only a slight exaggeration. He wouldn't shoot *everyone*--because he'd have to fill out far too much paperwork explaining why his assigned Talent got filled with bullets along with everyone else in the bar. While I'd earned a degree of grudging respect from the Colonel in the time we'd been working together, the real reason he put up with me was the amount of paperwork involved for him if I turned up dead. At least that's what he kept telling me, and I had little reason to doubt him. The Colonel wasn't the sort to joke about that--or anything else really. Just another way in which he wasn't a people person.

Dion stood up and looked at me, directly, for the first time. We were about the same height, same build, but all the ways he was thinking about beating me if he got the chance showed he didn't see me as a physical threat. He'd handled bigger and stronger, often. He kept making little attempts to see if I had let my hold on him loosen, so I kept firm control of the parts of his mind responsible for moving his body.

"Store room, through there," I said, indicating the door behind the bar. Not the one to the brothel, but the other one labeled "Employees Only" that led back to the office and storage. The bartender bristled as we came behind the bar, since customers behind the bar usually meant trouble, but changing his memories of us was a simple chore. *They left out the front door*, I whispered into his mind, convincing him he'd seen us leave instead. Fortunately this place was too run-down to have security cameras, and too out of the way to have its exterior monitored. That was another good reason to make contact here.

The bartender and waitress rarely went into the storage room during working hours. I'd pulled that information from the bartender's thoughts earlier. Dion and I wouldn't be disturbed there for a while. The area was small, mostly boxes on shelves or crates pushed up against a wall, leaving a bare concrete floor space maybe six feet square, dim, lit by a single bare bulb overhead that washed everything in weak yellowy light.

Dion turned in the center of the floor as I made sure the door was locked. He evaluated me with cool efficiency, still letting nothing slide past his mask. But I was inside his head, privy to the nervous uncertainty.

I touched the bridge of my nose. "Look me in the eye," I said, and he did. This was mostly for effect--I don't need eye contact to reach into someone's thoughts, but sometimes it helps them focus on me, and I

needed Dion focused.

I reached into his mind and felt for the keys. Most Talents have mental keys that turn the ability on and off. I didn't find any in Dion's mind. I fished among his memories of living in the wilderness with his father's clan, still nomadic, of learning to survive on his own, of coming to the city of his mother's clan, learning to survive by his wits. Dion was resourceful--I acknowledged that much.

"I don't need your pity," he grumbled, which told me he was aware of what I was doing. He had trained himself to fight physically and he'd built up plenty of mental discipline, but he didn't know how to push me out of his head. He had already lost this battle, but that didn't mean he was going to make this easy for me.

I needed to distract him. Fortunately, if our proven Plan A was *walk in and nab the target*, I had a proven Plan B of my own.

Reaching into his pleasure centers and giving them a mild nudge made Dion's thoughts go bright with surprise. Confused, he didn't realize the arousal flooding his man-parts, flushing his cheeks, was my doing. I pressed my face closer, my body closer, letting him become aware of my heat, my presence, in a new way. My hip pressed against his groin, sliding efficiently against the hardness rising there. He groaned, then flushed again when he realized what he had given away.

"Shh," I shushed. When his guard faltered, I found what I was looking for. Few men can stay one hundred percent focused on something else when their dicks are hard.

The Institute was right--what Dion had wasn't a Talent, not in the usual sense. It was something older, more *connected* somehow--more like carrying a map of the world in his head.

"Think of your brother," I whispered.

He groaned again. But mention of his brother brought the memory to his thoughts, the same pattern I had noticed before. Dion's skill seemed to ... well, *vibrate* for lack of a better word. I had a general sense of his brother sort of in *that* direction. South, maybe? Not much to go on. Dion's skill felt like a radio receiver at the edge of signal reception, fading in and out, static-y, just enough *something* coming through to know there was something there.

The Institute's files suggested he was capable of more, and his brother should have been a good, strong memory. I should have been getting more than just this glimmer. Maybe Dion wasn't cooperating completely. Or maybe I needed to increase the efficiency. I had a Plan B for those contingencies too.

I slid my hands inside his vest, tracing the map of his abs and ribs around his torso. One hand found his nipple through his wife-beater and gave it a casual pinch. Dion started a moan but clamped it inside, still unwilling to surrender anything. "That what you're really after?" he breathed against my face, trying to taunt me with a little laugh that didn't quite happen.

I wrapped my other hand around his neck and hauled his head forward. Dion didn't fight my mouth pressed against his, but he didn't cooperate either. Another nudge at his pleasure centers, harder, made his mouth open, trying to gasp, and my tongue slid inside. I made sure he felt the wet rub of my tongue against his all the way down to his dick. He tightened his legs to hold himself up against the blood-rush flooding his cock.

My hand dropped from his nipple to his jeans, pressing, rubbing his

erection through the rough fabric. No underwear, I bet. Dion's head was swimming in arousal now, he was going to cum soon if I wasn't careful. While that technically would have fulfilled Plan B, I don't like to jump that far ahead.

"Get naked," I hissed at him, sending the command into his mind too for emphasis. I pawed at his belt, then the crotch of his jeans, working the button open, and the zipper. His arms wiggled free of his vest and lifted his wife-beater over his head in a smooth, practiced swoop.

No underwear indeed. Pay me.

I tugged his pants down to his knees, dropped to my knees in the same motion. That dick of his was six inches long and thick--definitely thick--the foreskin already pulled back. I licked the perfect mushroom head of it as soon as it cleared the cloth, licked under the ridge.

I remembered Cowboy's dick was a big longer, not as thick, but just as generously foreskinned. *Head in the game*, I chastised myself, returning to the task, target, and cock at hand.

Dion's hand landed on my head, threaded through my hair, but not hard enough to threaten me. I wasn't letting go of his thoughts. I could multi-task, and I'd done this often enough to be good at it.

"Fucking *fuck*," he gasped eloquently as I lapped at a salty drop of pre-cum from the slit.

"You're gonna cum so hard you'll forget your own name," I promised, "so finish getting naked if you don't want to get your clothes messy."

"Gonna make me," he rasped, but I couldn't tell if it was a statement, a question, or a challenge.

He parked his ass on a convenient crate, yanked at his boots until he pulled his feet free of them and the jeans that hobbled him. Even pulled off the rawhide armbands and the little leather cord necklace. This man took *naked* seriously.

He had a fine body, lean and muscular in all the right ways. His skin was golden-brown, paler below the tan line at his waist from being shirtless under the wilderness sun. He inherited the light dusting of hair on his chest from his father, since Darven-clans don't have much body hair. That thick cock of his?--No clue where he inherited that. I wasn't there to discuss genetics.

"Get up there. Hands and knees," I barked, gesturing at the crate where he sat as I kicked his discarded clothing aside. He hurried into position, in profile to me. "Turn that way--face the wall--ass toward me." He caught on quickly. I pushed his knees apart so I could get closer, between his legs. He looked at me over his shoulder. I could feel the curiosity radiating out of him. "What's the matter? Nobody ever eaten your ass before?"

"Shit--fuck--" he managed while my tongue worked around the nether-entrance to his body. Another little jolt to his pleasure centers kept him docile and happy while I focused a little more attention on his asshole, flicking, wetting, while my hands pulled him wider, fingers digging in hard. He squirmed and I held him tighter, spread him wide enough for my tongue to spear a little way inside.

"Oh, shit ... fuck ..." he sighed again, and then I was licking again, tongue teasing at a million tiny nerve endings, sensations that I underscored in his head, and he groaned. When I drove my tongue in again, he bucked back against that blinding heat and pleasure.

He groaned again as my finger slid inside. "Nuh-Not like this," he stammered. He was close, too close, so I backed off.

I pulled him off the crate, down into the floor with me. A jolt of lust through his mind had his dick so hard it was almost vibrating. I put my head in his crotch and licked his shaft, magnifying the resulting sensations in his head, like I was tickling nerves he didn't know he had. I mouthed my way down the underside of his dick, then nibbled at his ballsack with my lips, sucking one of his big balls--too big to fit both at once--into my mouth, as I rubbed his asshole with a fingertip.

I was still fully dressed. Dion's fingers reminded me of that when I felt them pawing at the crotch of my pants. He worked my zipper open and fished my hard-on roughly out through the opening. His hand tested the size of my rod, wrapped around it, stroked it. Was he expecting me to beg for it?

I wrapped my lips around the crown of his cockhead, tongue tapping the weepy slit, and then I slid my mouth down, slowly, tight and wet, until my lips sealed around the base, meeting the ring of my fingers around the root. I swallowed once and sucked back off just as slowly. When my teeth grazed the head exactly right, Dion shuddered and clamped down all his muscles because his balls were starting that hike up.

As my head went down again, his dick sliding deeply into my throat, I felt Dion's tongue swirl around the head of my own cock, swiping the knot of nerves under the head, tracing the vein along the underside. When his mouth enveloped the head and started to suck my whole cock inside, I realized this man had sucked a cock before--enough times to get competent at it too. He wasn't skilled but, unlike Cowboy or many of the others, I didn't have to tell Dion what to do. My dick was longer, and he handled it with ease. With gusto too. Maybe, during those long

lonesome nights in the wilderness, he'd learned to handle whatever companionship life threw his way.

I curled my tongue around the slippery, salty weight in my mouth, tightened my lips, began bobbing to meet my twisting hand. Dion tried to mimic me and succeeded mostly, though he wasn't quite as adept as some of the master-level tactics I used to keep his skin singing with pleasure.

Dion's scent got stronger; the taste of pre-cum filled my mouth as I sucked it from the slit. My tongue made a lightning figure-eight around the head that dragged a gut-teasing whimper from him, a sound I felt vibrate around my cock in his throat. I sucked hard, lips pressed under the head.

His mouth came off my dick--*pop!*--and he groaned, "I'm gonna--ah--"

I pulled off his too. "Yeah, of course you are." Then I gave his pleasure centers a jab as I ran my lips down the satiny underside of his dick-shaft, flooding his body and mind with blinding intensity, tipping him into orgasm, as spasm after spasm of cum shot out of his mushroom cockhead and splattered on the concrete floor between us.

I wiped my mouth with the back of my hand and watched Dion wallow through the last of his orgasm. That did it--his defenses were down, and I took advantage, invading every part of his mind.

He rolled onto his back, the orgasm-flush slowly fading from his chest, dazed into semi-consciousness, his thoughts too fragmented now to realize what had happened and what was different.

But first things first. I was a man with a hard-on myself, and I needed to get off too. I knelt beside him and stroked my sensitized cock, making

sure to share the sensations through the funnel into Dion's brain. When I came hard, ejaculated onto the concrete and mixed my cum-splatters with his, his head orgasmed again with the power of my climax too as I hammered my influence decisively throughout his thoughts.

Now that I had Dion drained, docile, and dominated, it was time to get to work. The Colonel would come looking for me in a few minutes, and I needed to report some success. I went back into Dion's head and looked for the keys to his skill again. I found the memory of his brother and connected the memory to the skill. Without his conscious mind restricting the results--

Holy fuck! This was like experiencing the world as a series of connections. Lines spiraling off into time and distances but still connected to the here and now that was Dion. This way was-- That one led to-- And this one--

The Institute evaluators had asked the wrong question. It wasn't how did his skill link him to people and things. No, the question was how did he keep from getting lost in all the links to everyone and everything that ever meant something to him. No wonder his conscious mind put blinkers on his skill--he had to, in order to function in the world. Just experiencing the world like this made me dizzy, overwhelmed.

Okay, I had to get control of this before I got lost in it. I focused on some of the brightest and strongest connections. That way, sort of southwest-ish, were a cluster of contacts that seemed, for lack of a better word, kind of orange. His father's clan. I seemed to know not only direction but distance, as though I knew exactly where they were. Dion's skill was not just tracking but range-finding.

And there, due south, brighter orange because I was looking for it: that

one had to be his brother. I knew exactly where he was. Not *where* as in building and address, but I knew the direction, I knew how far away, and I knew I could follow this line right to him.

"Get up," I told Dion, practically yelling the order into his mind too. "On your feet. Get your pants on." All he needed was his pants to be street-legal. We didn't have time. Leaving all this expensive rawhide for that bitchy waitress would be shame, so I bundled up Dion's boots, vest, and the rest while he struggled into his jeans. He could get the rest of his clothes on once we were in the car and in transit.

We burst out the back door. "About time," said the Colonel, as usual not hiding his annoyance. He didn't have to ask if the bare-chested man following me was the target. There aren't many gold-skinned, orange eyed, dark-haired out-clan men in this blond, blue-eyed city. He also didn't have to ask why the target was bare-chested and barefooted. Like I said, the Colonel and I had worked together for around three years now.

I pushed past him, and Dion followed, like he was leashed to my thoughts, which he was.

"No time," I barked at the Colonel as I fast-walked in the direction we'd parked the car two blocks away. "We have to go now." The Colonel's standard glower hardened--he didn't like being given orders, especially not by a Talent. "I'm connected up to him. The records were right--he's got a hellacious tracking ability. I know right where his brother is." The Colonel would forgive me if that last statement proved true. Our mission hadn't included apprehending the brother, but we hadn't expected him to be nearby. The Colonel wouldn't mind earning a little bonus.

The rental car was a couple of years old, low-end, gray, boring domestic; it was practically invisible, intended for two purposes only: unnoticed

transit and clean getaways--though the Institute expected no getaway would be necessary if its agents did their jobs properly. "Drive," I told the Colonel. I piled Dion into the back seat and climbed in after him. "South. Hurry. He's about one hundred kilometers due south."

The Colonel, accelerated us around a slow-moving truck, probably breaking at least five local traffic laws. The Institute would smooth that over with the authorities later. The Colonel was working out the navigation in his head. "The airport? There's an airport just under one hundred kilometers south of here."

"Yes," I said without thinking. Somehow I knew that was correct.

The Colonel pulled out his phone as he merged us onto the main road, doing nearly double the speed limit and accelerating. He spoke quickly to whatever poor slob was unlucky enough to take his call, told him to scramble a task force to meet us at the airport. *Task force* is Institute-speak for a bunch of heavily armed agents, most of whom shared the Colonel's sunny disposition, if not his skill at killing people.

Most of the trip was vacant highway through the wasteland between cities. The Colonel wove in and out of what little traffic we encountered, at twice the speed I'd have dared. Twenty minutes later, we were nearly halfway to the airport. I kept Dion dazed and disoriented, firmly under my control, and a little aroused to I could keep his skill working overtime. I had to keep tabs on our next target, his brother. I could feel we were getting closer, and I wanted to know if and when he started moving.

And no, even once we settled into the mostly boring part of letting the Colonel drive, I never got around to getting Dion dressed.

"He's moving," I said.

The Colonel snapped, "What?"

"He's moving." Meaning the brother. "Heading east. Fast too. Really fast."

"Shit. He must have boarded a plane."

The Colonel thumped around on the passenger seat, trying to find his phone. He had to take his eyes off the road. The car drifted toward the shoulder, then jumped as the wheels went over some piece of hard roadside trash. He yanked the steering wheel--at this speed, the car careened back across the lane. The Colonel got the steering under control, but that fast *fumpfumpfump* and the jolting ride meant we had blown a tire. He had to slow down, pull over, pull us to a stop. At least the Colonel couldn't blame this on me.

Dion blinked. "What the *fuck*?" He looked around, looked at me. Blowing the tire and getting pitched around in the back seat had broken my concentration, mostly broken my hold on him. I could keep him from moving--I just needed a second to get myself together and get a better grip on him.

The Colonel was already on the phone to the Institute, telling them, "Yeah. He says the target's in motion. I think he's on a plane ... Yeah ... Uh-huh ... No, we don't know which flight or destination." He scowled at me in the rear-view mirror. He gave them the time when I'd said the target was moving. "Check the flights lifting off in the last twenty minutes, especially the ones where the flight plan heads east from the airport. Can't be that many. Call me back once you have a list." He hung up and scowled at me again in the mirror. "Stay here. Don't let it get in any trouble," he said, meaning Dion, as he got out to change the tire.

The last flush of adrenaline leaving my system still had me shaken.

Dion's thoughts were quicksilver, and I didn't have a good grip on them. The way the Colonel slammed something around in the trunk didn't help, a distracting jolt.

Dion grabbed his boots off the floorboard with one hand and shoved at the door handle with the other. He made it too--popped the latch, threw open the door, and stumble-heaved himself out, in less than three seconds. I hadn't spent the last half-hour or so buried in his head for nothing, though, and I bored back deep into his psyche before he managed to get more than two steps. I clamped down and froze him in place.

I climbed out of the car, pretended not to see the Colonel scowling at me as he hauled the spare from the trunk. If Dion had gotten another two steps, the Colonel would have dropped him with a bullet through the head, regardless of how much paperwork was involved, and then given me the silent treatment for the rest of the day. The Colonel hates to waste ammunition even more than he hates paperwork.

But Dion froze. The Colonel rolled his eyes and turned his attention back to the spare.

"Bad boy," I hissed as I reined Dion in. I couldn't blame him, though. He saw a chance and he took it. I respected that because I'd have done the same. Cowboy'd have done the same too. Besides, I like it when they struggle a little.

I closed the car door behind me and strolled over to Dion. I scolded him again with, "Bad boy." With my hand behind his shoulder and my thoughts in his head, I guided him back to the car.

The rational part of his mind had shut most of his skill safely away behind barricades again. I needed to unleash it. What worked before

would likely work again.

Oh, sure, I could have just poked around in his mind and made him relive a memory of sex, or given him a fantasy of the best sex he ever imagined, but where was the fun in that? For me, I mean.

I stroked my fingertips from the waistband of his jeans up the small of his back, up his spine, and grasped his neck. Gentle, firm pressure eased his torso forward and down. "Bend over," I said. "Hands on the car. That's right." He dropped his boots as he assumed the position I had in mind.

His face was inches away from the window. He could see himself reflected in the glass. He was going to watch everything that happened to him in the window like a mirror. Everyone should have something beautiful to watch.

I stood close behind him, kissed his shoulder. I reached around his hips and unsnapped his jeans, unzipped them, worked them to his calves. After a mental prod, he extracted his left foot from his pants so he could spread his legs, anchor himself, leaving his jeans clumped around his right ankle.

I pulled a packet of lube out of my pocket and dropped it on the ground between Dion's bare feet. I knelt there too and palmed Dion's ass cheeks. I ran my fingertips across the hard flesh of his ass cheeks, prying them apart, burrowing my fingers into the crack. I found his asshole and massaged it, then got my tongue in there and licked and lapped at it until it was wet enough. Then I slid one finger alongside my tongue and pushed up inside, giving the arousal centers in his head a simultaneous jolt. Dion squirmed and ground his hips hard against my face. With my finger still in his ass, I pulled my tongue down and pressed my lips

against the back root of his ball sack, kissed it softly. Scrotal hairs tickled my mouth. I stuck my tongue out and gave his balls a good washing. They hung heavy in their fleshy pouch but were starting to ride up as his dick continued hardening, plump and getting ready for release. I opened my mouth wide to take them both in at the same time, but they were too big. I contented myself with sucking on the right one and then the left.

Cowboy had had big nuts too, I remembered, then made myself snap back to the task, and man, at hand.

I worked my finger in and out of Dion's ass with longer, faster strokes. Then I added a second. I didn't have to tell Dion how to grind his ass back against my fingers. He groaned like he enjoyed it. This man seemed to know how to use his ass already.

Soon, I had my pants open and I squeezed lube out of the packet. I worked some over my erection and the rest into his asshole. Then I readied myself for the initial plunge, with one hand on his hip, the other hand guiding my shaft, probing his asshole with my cockhead. With excruciating slowness I entered him. Dion had been staring at us reflected in the mirror, but he shut his eyes and grimaced from the size of me. "I know, buddy, I know," I murmured. "I'll go easy." I let a little ripple of pleasure play through his mind to distract him.

I began fucking Dion with a gentle, slow tempo, whispering reassurances, my hands either gripping his shoulders or caressing his torso. He opened his eyes and met my gaze reflected in the window, watching me carefully. He moved his body in pace with mine, and everything was alright again; the feeling of me filling him exciting him into new hardness.

The car jolted as the Colonel lowered the jack. I didn't care if he saw, he'd seen it all many times before.

The Colonel rolled his eyes as he tossed the jack back in the trunk and grouched, "Damn!--do you plan on fucking each and every damned one of them?"

I grinned. We'd had this conversation before, many times. "Only--the ones--I like," I panted, not breaking my fuck-face.

Dion moaned, which got my mind back on the job at hand. I quickened the pace, thrusting deep, grinding my pelvis against his ass. I reach down and cupped his erection, squeezing it gently. Dion arched his back. I started jacking him off in time with my fuck-strokes. He bent his head back over his shoulder and we kissed, clumsily, trying to thrust our tongues deeply into each other's mouths but never quite managing more than a lip-lock because of our bodies and panting.

A transport truck roared by us on the road. We were in plain sight. The truck didn't slow but the driver hit the horn twice--*bwa-ook-bwa-oooook!*--the sound dopplering as the truck continued its rush down the road. I chose to interpret the horn as encouragement and raised my arm in salute.

Dion seemed to be coming to enjoy it. His gasps and groans were just loud enough to hear over the rough smack of flesh, so I tried to fuck every last whimper out of his throat. His arms gradually slacked until his head pressed sideways against the window, eyes closed, mouth open, cheek-flesh squeaking against the glass.

My hips thrust me forward so hard my balls ached from slamming into Dion's body. I hit the tip-over point where my cock burned and my orgasm started erupting up through me body. Everything stuttered like

electricity, then burst in a long flood of white heat, roaring through me, squeezing the breath from my lungs. I funneled everything I was feeling into Dion's head, overloading him with the ecstasy.

Our orgasms seemed to stretch forever. Dion's still-pulsing ass muscles milked my cock until I just hung my head against his shoulder and dragged air back into my lungs. His cum mixed with the lube, all over my fingers and his cockhead, as I gave his rod a few last strokes. Aftershocks chased up and down my nerves. I fought exhaustion but let myself slump against Dion's sweaty back. I was back inside his head completely again, with the guards off his skill. I could feel it again.

The Colonel's phone rang. "Yeah ... Good." He repeated three city names to me, destinations for the candidate departures.

I shrugged.

"I'll call you back." The Colonel snapped off the call.

"I've got an idea," I interrupted, before the Colonel could bellow at me. I climbed in the back seat of the car, hauling Dion, still naked except for his pants bunched around his right ankle, along with me. His head sagged back, mouth hanging open, as I locked his conscious mind into an unbreakable deep sleep; he would stay that way as long as I needed access to his skill--safer for all of us. I could ignore his soft snoring.

I'd worry about his ass getting lube stains on the car seat later. It was just a rental.

I leaned over the seat, pulled the road atlas out of the compartment, turned to the map of this hemisphere in the front. I held *north* toward us, and *south* toward the airport in the direction we'd been traveling. Then I reached into Dion's head and brought his skill to the image of the

map. I compared where the trace of his brother seemed to have been, where it was now, and the map. Dion's skill gave me a clear line where his brother had been and where he was now, I just had to triangulate where he would be going.

"I've got him," I yelled at the Colonel through the window glass, with the name of the one of the candidate destination cities. "And yes, I'm sure." Well, I was reasonably sure anyway.

The Colonel made the call and gave them the destination.

"They've got a local task force heading to the airport now," he said, as he dropped Dion's boots, collected from outside where they'd been dropped, over into the back seat with us and settled himself in the driver seat. He pretended to be too busy firing up the engine again to congratulating me for a job well done. But with the Colonel, not being scowled at was congratulations enough.

I knew the drill. Since the Institute probably had no official standing in the destination country, whatever local agents were available would impersonate the state police; they would tell the airport security team about a "credible threat" of a terrorist on the plane, or an international criminal, or some such. The details varied, but the process remained the same. The brother would be intercepted and arrested, then turned over to the agents, who would make a show of taking him into custody for the locals and whisk him off to whatever fate the Institute had in store for him.

"Now," the Colonel said as he steered us back onto the road, "we wait."

Waiting involved driving to the nearest town, a backwater still close enough to Darvenek to be crawling with Darven-clan, but the bloodline was less pure here in the sticks. We passed other facial types and hair

colors as we drove. We wouldn't stick out as much.

The Colonel found a small, simple hotel, not too run down but obviously a place frequented by travelers who just wanted a bed for a few hours before moving on and weren't willing to pay for amenities. No security cameras, no questions. In short, perfect for us. That, and the Colonel was cheap.

I stayed in the car with our naked sleeping charge, while the Colonel went into the hotel office to deal with the registration. The ID that the Colonel showed would, of course, be false since we were incognito in this country where the Institute had no charter, and he would pay in cash. At places like this, the clerks didn't look too closely or ask questions. I knew my role, and I made sure the uncurious clerk emerged from the transaction without clear memories of the glowering man who paid, or the men in the vehicle he glimpsed through the window, or even the vehicle itself.

The Colonel moved the car to the back. He tossed me a key-card. "Don't get any ideas. I'll be in the room next door."

I had a room to myself? That was unusual. Usually the Colonel got one shared room with two beds. But we still had Dion semi-officially "in custody." The Colonel didn't care to watch.

Privacy is a luxury, and the lack of the Colonel's glowering presence made the small, merely adequate room seem palatial. I tossed Dion's bundled boots and clothes beside the bed as I marched him into the bathroom for a long shower.

I let Dion gradually "wake up," but I never let go of him. We might, after all, still need him or have to haul his ass back to the Institute. But right then, I had different plans for that ass.

After our shower, with his long, damp hair freed from its earlier ponytail and coiled about the sides of his neck, Dion cinched a towel around his waist as if suddenly modest. He sat on the edge of the bed with his knees immodestly apart and I could see the edge of his cockhead in the shadows between them.

"You must be hungry too," he said, scratching his chest as if making a casual observance. "I could go find us some food." And perhaps find a chance to escape, if range weakened my hold just enough. Motives are transparent to a telepath.

I grinned. I liked his spirit.

Several hours had passed since I'd met him in that bar. I *was* hungry.

"I'll go get us some food," I said, locking my gaze to his. "I saw a burger place down the block. Dion yawned; his eyelids fluttered and closed; his body slumped slowly back on the bed. "But you, mister, are going to stay asleep again while I'm gone."

I woke him when I returned, twenty minutes later. He blinked, groggy, reorienting himself.

I held the bags where he could see them. "I got you a double cheeseburger with bacon and the works, hold the onions. Fries too." Since this was a fringe town, it was a real burger too, not one of those meat-free recycled soy creations that passed as "burgers" in Darvenek. Fucking PETA Party.

He frowned, wondering how I knew his favorite down to the "no onions" part. I tapped my index finger against my temple twice, grinned. He figured it out.

But really, who wants to spend all night kissing someone who just ate onions?

My phone rang. We were halfway through our burgers, with Dion trying hard not to let evidence of how much he liked his slip through his poker face. I hauled my phone out of my pants pocket. Only one person ever called me. "Yeah?"

The Colonel said, "They got him at the airport." Meaning the brother. "Picked him up when the plane landed, just like you said. You did good ... again." I'd been working with the Colonel long enough to know a compliment when I got it--and that was all I'd be getting.

He said, "We got a new assignment. Be ready to move out in the morning at six."

"What about Dion?"

"Orders didn't mention him." The call ended. Like I said, the Colonel is not a people person.

But he had told me everything I needed to know. Usually, our down time was filled with the Colonel teaching me the finer points of how to shoot, how to use a knife, how to fight--that sort of thing--which basically meant him kicking my ass. I couldn't always rely solely on my mind. Talent, he was always telling me, because I could never know when I'd get in a situation where it wouldn't work. My Talent is, for example, useless against things that don't have minds, like robots. And we run into killer robots a lot more often in this line of work than one might imagine.

The Colonel made no secret about barely tolerating me. I never took offense because, well, even that grudging respect was more than he gave

most people. So a night without him scowling at me was a rare night off.

Burgers, fries, drinks--finished. Dion got up to go piss, a good, long one too. The bathroom had no window, so I didn't worry about an escape attempt. He hadn't gotten dressed; he still wore that silly, still slightly damp towel around his waist. Wore it when he returned from the bathroom too. As if he still had some modesty to preserve around me. He stood there watching me, since I was still calling the shots.

I had re-checked the door locks, turned off the lights, and begun to undress, getting my shirt and shoes off.

I tugged Dion down onto the bed with me. "Wait," he complained. "I-- Do we have to ... Oh, fuck ..." His protest got lost as I flooded his mind with arousal. I tongued a nipple and began a series of tingling nips until I reached his navel. I bit the waistline of the towel and tugged. The cinch opened easily. When he moved toward me, the towel fell away, unnoticed.

On my back, I tucked a pillow behind my head. My pants were open now. I wouldn't say that watching Dion surrender to the inevitable and suck me off was as good as the actual blowjob, but it definitely added to the experience. Naked Dion looked up at me from my navel before working my pants down further. When he bit and tugged gently at my pubic hair, I shivered. He looked up at me again. His expression revealed he was about to be consumed by the intensity, which I already knew. Lust burned brightly in his thoughts. He couldn't stop--didn't want it to stop. He wanted to give me everything I wanted to take. It had been a long time since anyone looked at me like that, like all he wanted to do was taste me, pull me into his mouth, and right then all I wanted to do was feel the heat of his throat burning around my shaft.

Dion's strong hands stroked up my thighs, nails tickling my skin, thumbs rubbing the crease of my groin. His nose pressed into my skin as that mouth licked and sucked at my ballsack, lips stretching wide. I pushed up on my elbows to watch, then fell back when the pressure got too tight, too much, too good.

Dion released my balls and kissed up the side of my erection. Those lips, that tongue, were satin, sun-warm as he lapped and slicked my dick. He leaned so he could look up at my face as he took the head in his mouth. He used his hands now, on my balls and shaft, and I caressed the back of his head to encourage him to start sucking soon, suck it deeper, harder. Dion brushed the head with his lips, tongue, his stubbled cheek. I gasped at the rasp, watched, waited.

Dion teased me. Tongued the head, just around the rim, flicking hard underneath. Everything slipped away from me except the sensation, until the whole world was just the two of us there on the bed and all that mattered was what was happening between my thighs. Dion opened his mouth and guided my cock shaft inside, over the softness of his palate, down into the velvet constriction of his throat. All the while, his tongue glided across the underside, as his hand tugged gently on my balls.

Dion's mouth got incredibly tighter, hotter, wetter, which was why I didn't notice until his finger was already sliding into my ass, buried to the hilt before I could blink. Too smooth and slick to be spit--Dion must have managed to reach for the lube I'd left on the bedside table. I meant to say something about not getting ideas, but everything felt too good to argue just then.

Ecstasy kept me lightheaded enough that my protest at the second finger got swallowed inside a moan. A moment of clarity let me think about what Dion was doing, how I could feel him combing inside my ass,

feeling for that swelling against his fingers. There. *Yes. There.* And that was my last conscious thought. I gave in and let the pleasure use me, push me until everything came back into sharp focus when I hit that release. Heat and pressure pounded me until the motion of my hips stuttered and froze, and I pumped down Dion's throat. Dion stuck with me, riding every last spurt with me, slowing to licks as my cock began to go soft.

Those fingers felt a lot more noticeable going out than they had been going in. I noticed a lot now. My hand had a death-grip in Dion's long hair. Dion's mouth kissed the inside of my thighs until I freed my hand, one finger at a time. My thighs ached almost as much as my throat. Crap, what had I said--yelled?

"Uh?" I said.

Dion grinned. "Just a lot of *oh fucks*," he said, as if he were aware of my thoughts too. "But I'm surprised the neighbors ain't banged on the walls.

As a telepath, I knew the only neighbor was the Colonel, and he had heard it all before.

My abs couldn't seem to pull my body up anymore, and I collapsed back on the bed.

Dion climbed up, cock thick and blood-dark against his belly. I reached for it, but he rolled his hips away. "Wait a little. I'm so hard, I'll shoot too soon to enjoy it."

I tried to figure out a way to get us both comfortable that didn't require using any of my muscles, but Dion took care of it. He laid down alongside me, curling with his back to me. He pulled my arm over him. I rolled toward him a little, pressing my chest to his spine.

How often have you, with a man ... I wondered.

"Not often," he said, picking up on my thought. "Not in a long time. I prefer women. Sometimes when I was a kid I needed money, and there weren't a lot of jobs in Darven for an out-clan."

I was pretty sure I hadn't broadcast that question into his head.

He said finally, "But I know how to enjoy it when it happens," putting an end to the conversation.

I pressed my chest against the hard warmth of his back. I should have reached for that erection I'd seen poking up, but I just needed a few more minutes before I could make my muscles work right, after that orgasm. Dion slid his hand back across my hip. I kissed the back of his neck.

My quick-recovering cock started to stir again. My mouth sucked gently at one vertebral lump on his neck as my hand slid up and down across his chest. He gasped harshly and pressed his hips back against me, rocking back and forth. An impossible desire wound through us, stiffening my cock further.

He said, "Do it."

I froze. The tension in Dion's muscles quivered along his back.

"Go ahead."

I rolled away, reached for the lube, and rolled back a second later. I could feel him willing his body to relax, waiting for me to move him onto his stomach or back. But I kept my chest pressed to his back, even as I hooked one leg between his and used mine to lift his up a little.

He tensed as cold lube brushed against his asshole. He knew the contact was too chilly to be anything but fingers.

"I can take it."

"I don't want you to just take it. I want you to cum and enjoy it."

"Shut up and fuck me."

He was thinking just two of my fingers were thicker and longer than some of the few cocks he had had in his mouth. My leg kept his open but, being on his side like this, all he had to do to stop the slowtwisting stretch of my lube-slick fingers in his ass was to roll away. He didn't.

He liked this. He wasn't sure how he was going to feel when those scissoring fingers turned into my dick, but he had already had my dick in his ass earlier, when I fucked him beside the car, though he didn't remember the details. He was thinking this was a lot better than the previous fucks he remembered. My fingers found, pressed, circled hypersensitive nerves.

My dick had come back to life with a near-painful rush of blood. My fingers fucked into him now, quick thrusts that made him want to press back to keep them trapped deep inside. He opened his eyes, looked back and down at my body behind his. I kissed the top of his shoulder and watched him watch us.

The flood of embarrassment inside his head was as powerful as his arousal. He knew I wouldn't let him pull away, wouldn't let him say no. But he was afraid of how ridiculous he might look, what kind of face he made as he rode my fingers like a horny whore.

"You feel so good. So smooth and tight and hot." I said that to reassure

him. My words twisted inside his head along with the feeling of my fingers twist-thrusting inside his ass, pumping more heat into his cock.

"Shut up," he gasped, trying to keep his pride by keeping control of the situation, because *Fuck you* would have been inappropriate. "Come on if you're gonna."

The first inch was the hardest, the stretch of the intrusion, the strain of coaxing his muscles open. It made his breath catch. I leaned forward and kissed his neck, nibbled his ear, to help him through it. He thought a hand on his dick would be more helpful, but I was afraid he would cum. He didn't touch his cock either. He released a long breath. Inside his head, I made sure his nerves stayed on the good side of pain as I slid deeper.

"Good. Move." He understood I controlled his mind, but he was still trying to control the situation. "Fuck me if you're gonna."

My hips moved in short, tight strokes, just enough to tease the rolling bursts of sweetness from inside of him. I leaned up to watch his face, to watch him bite his lower lip as I quickened the pace. He reached out and grabbed the edge of the mattress to keep himself steady.

"Yeah," he muttered against the sheets. His body agreed, shuddering as the speed of my hips increased. His other hand wrapped around his cock, stroked, matching my motion. "Faster. Harder. Fucking fuck--"

His stomach lurched as he yielded to the power building up inside, let it fill his nerves. My body and thoughts seemed to be all around him, in him--mouth, cock, ass, hand, body. He barely heard my almost-there grunts against his ear.

"Harder," he said, meaning *Don't stop--please make it last*.

"Yeah, faster," he said. *Make me cum.*

Then as I slammed forward, he realized he'd only had half of my cock. The shock of being so full so fast slingshot him into his orgasm. He felt himself explode, felt it burning him from the inside out.

As Dion rode out his release, I pulled out and rose over him. He reached for my cock and jerked it with his fist. I bent down and kissed him back into his body as he stroked me, stroked me until I was stuttering through my own climax.

I slumped, folded around Dion, heart thumping, muscles limp again.

It was good, he was thinking. He didn't say anything because he was afraid of sounding stupid, but it felt good, and safe. He didn't want to be sexual with guys often, but this had been better than those other times.

Cowboy--Billy--had liked my cock up his ass too, nearly as much as Dion had.

"You're not gonna fall asleep on me, are you?" Dion chuckled, his laugh rumbling into my body.

"Not yet," I said.

"Good."

I took a few more deep breaths.

He said, "You realize, soon's I can get hard again, I'm gonna be the one fucking you into the mattress."

"Absolutely," I agreed.

I opened the hotel room door at precisely six o'clock the next morning, five seconds before the Colonel could knock. I was fully dressed and ready, of course. In addition to not being a people person, the Colonel hates to be kept waiting.

The Colonel looked over my shoulder. Dion was in bed, asleep on his back, the sheets up to his nipples, chest bare above that, snoring softly again.

Orders didn't mention him meant we were to use our own judgment. The Colonel probably preferred to put a bullet through their heads and dump their bodies somewhere. I preferred to erase their memories of us and release them. We usually did it my way. Like I said, the Colonel hated to waste ammo.

"He won't remember a thing about the last twenty-four hours," I said, settling the choice of options. "He won't wake up for hours, and by then we're long gone. No memory of us whatsoever." Which meant our tracker here wouldn't be able to find us. Dion would wake up in a strange hotel room, cheap, but probably better than a lot of places he flopped.

The Colonel nodded and grunted and turned toward the car. Case closed.

I jogged to the passenger side. "You're driving. I had a long night." Obviously, since the Colonel had heard most of it through the thin walls. I chose not to mention that my cock and ass were still sore. Some things are private.

The night before, too, I'd used Dion's tracking skill one last time. With his guard down, as he was finally falling asleep, I connected his skill to my memories of Cowboy but I got no results. I knew it wouldn't work that way, but I was still curious enough to try. Dion had never met Cowboy. There was no connection there to track. Or maybe Billy hadn't

made it out alive.

Either way, I had to live in the here and now. Billy. Dion. Like I said, in my line of work people came and went, and I made the most out of what little time I got.

I had to live in the here and now. That meant the Colonel and I had another job to do. I opened the passenger door and climbed in. "So what's the next assignment?"

Assignment: Cowboy

by Wrestlr

[M/M, MC]

[Synopsis: A mind controller goes after an assassin.]

Disclaimer: The naked hypnotist strides confidently into your room. His lips curl in what might be a smile as he dangles his shiny crystal pendulum before your eyes and announces, "Listen and obey. If you are not of legal age, or if you offended by sexual situations, you will leave this place immediately. From here on, no matter how autobiographical it may seem, everything will seem like fiction to you, a pleasant dream where scientific possibilities and laws may change according to my suggestion. Now, if you are willing, sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride."

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Comments to wrestlr@iname.com

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- http://members.tripod.com/~Brook_J (MC and general M/M stories, plus my home page)
- <http://www.asstr.org/~wrestlr> (MC and general M/M stories, mirror site)

- <http://www.asstr.org/~mcstories/Authors/Wrestlr.html> (MC stories)
-

Assignment: Cowboy (Second Chance)

An Institute Story

by Wrestlr

"I've never met a mind controller," he said. "Uh, before now, I mean."

I shrugged, said, "It's a living."

He eyed me skeptically. "And people pay you? For that, I mean. Controlling minds?"

"Sure. People will pay for almost anything," I said. "You'd be amazed," even though I knew he probably wouldn't. "Mostly it's politicians who need a few of their colleagues to change their votes. And sometimes, of course, there are the less ethical assignments."

I left that comment hanging in the air between us, establishing us as kindred spirits. Men with secrets.

We were sitting here in this dark bar. Josie's. So dim and smoky you could barely see more than ten feet. A dive on the south side of town. Most folks don't come to Josie's. Certainly not good law-abiding folks. The place is always packed, though. Josie's is a hangout for lowlife and scum, and this city has plenty of both, if you know which rocks to look under. Offer a little incentive, like stopping short of breaking a jaw or two, and people in the know fall all over themselves telling you which

rocks. They said to look in Josie's, tonight.

The Cowboy, they called him, on account of that black cowboy hat he always wore. Ex-Navy SEAL. Hit man. Assassin. General gun for hire and all-around killing machine. But just a killer--not a thief or a thug. Word was, the Cowboy had principles. Funny thing, that--he'd kill, but he wouldn't steal. He was proud of that distinction. I could feel it when I first got inside his head a few minutes earlier. But he'd done something he deeply regretted--I could feel that too. He'd violated that principle and wished like hell he could undo what he'd done.

Word on the street was, he crossed Mr. Johannsen. Johannsen's people had hired the Cowboy for a routine hit. But, seems the Cowboy found something at the scene, something he decided to take with him after all. Something Mr. Johannsen wanted back. Johannsen had connections with the Institute--he called them, and they handed us the job of getting that something back.

Don't call Johannsen a "crime lord." He's a "businessman." There's a difference. His business just happens to be on the wrong side of the law. But a businessman has to watch out for his investments.

Not many guys come into Josie's wearing a black cowboy hat. The Cowboy's trademark. Yep, this was my guy. When we got the tip, I hustled my ass over to Josie's. The Cowboy was sitting at the bar, alone. You could tell by looking at him he was a cut above most of the lowlife in there. He bathed regularly, for one thing. He was younger than I expected for another, not bad-looking, probably still had all his teeth.

It was still early, so the place was only half-full, plenty of open seats up at the bar. There was an empty stool beside him. I parked my ass on it and ordered a drink. No Institute logo on my clothes--I was undercover.

The Colonel always said I lacked "subtlety"; tonight, I'd show him subtlety.

When I first sat down next to the Cowboy, Wendy had just stepped onstage and into the spotlight, just warming up. A familiar country song barreled out of the jukebox. Something sad. A woman's voice--her lover done her wrong. Good old Patsy Kline. Wendy wore her usual outfit: cowboy boots, spurs, jeans, gunfighter's holster belt, a lariat. She was just starting her dance, getting the crowd all worked up, blond hair swinging this way, bare breasts swinging that. Wendy is what you call "hot," practically "incendiary." You didn't have to be a mind reader to know the man sitting beside me was on fire. He was gaping open-mouthed at her and nursing a concealed hard-on already. She looks like an angel, moves like an angel, and half the guys there would give their right nut for five minutes in bed with her. If I'd peeked into the Cowboy's head right then, I'd have probably caught him thinking about doing things to her that would have made even me blush. Hell, every man in that bar except me was already breathing heavy, and Wendy and Patsy hadn't even made it to the first chorus yet. Too bad Wendy just wasn't my type. I stay away from women. Especially beautiful women packing a loaded .45 in their holster belts.

I sat there next to him. Watched him watching Wendy. He nursed a beer, obviously waiting for someone. A contact? Business to be conducted? He had to know Johannsen had people scouring the city for him. So far, he'd done everything right--changed his habits and schedule, cut his hair and dyed it a different color, stayed in anonymous public places. Something brought him to this dive for a reason. I had a job to do, but I was wondering if I should care about that reason. Probably not. Whatever it was, it must have been really important to bring him out of hiding and into Josie's.

I called the bartender, Josie, over and ordered another drink. One for the man beside me too. Scotch. A better grade than Josie normally served unless you asked for it, and I made a point of asking for it. He had eyed me suspiciously--he didn't know me from Adam. But he thanked me for the drink, and gradually we got to talking. I said, "By the way, my name is--" and told him my name. Not my real name, of course. He grinned and said, "Glad to meet you. So what do you do?" I noted his practiced ease as he evaded giving me his name, deflecting the conversational attention back to me. He didn't lie, didn't give me some phony name. The Cowboy is honest. That's part of his rep too. One hundred percent honest. Which was why Johannsen and his people were so surprised when the Cowboy walked away with something of theirs. Something they wanted back. It must have been worth a fortune. Too good for even a straight-arrow killer like the Cowboy to pass up. He had gotten careless on his way out--a security camera caught a quick glimpse of him leaving with the satchel under his arm. That, and taking the satchel in the first place, were the only mistakes the Cowboy had ever made, the only blemishes on a spotless record.

Maybe he deserved another chance, but he wasn't going to get one. Worse, Johannsen wanted him alive. That's why he called the Institute and that's why they assigned me, rather than just turning the Colonel loose to do what he does best. But Johannsen wasn't the forgiving type--that would be bad for business. He wanted the Cowboy delivered alive, but the odds were against the Cowboy staying that way.

The Cowboy reminded me of me. Similar ideals. We had honesty in common. If I had found that satchel full of money and diamonds, would I have given in to the temptation to take it? Would I have regretted it almost immediately too?

I reminded myself this man beside me was just a paycheck waiting to be

cashied.

When he asked what I did, I told him the truth. I control minds--I just didn't tell him I was on the clock. Wouldn't have made any difference. I said, "Are you ready to go?"

The Cowboy, he looked at me, confused, trying to think it over. Something must have been nagging at him, but maybe he couldn't quite follow his thoughts through. Couldn't focus on his objection. So he nodded. I knew he would. With my Talent, I'm *very* persuasive.

The parking lot was dark. That Josie, she never was much for lighting, and the people who came here liked that just fine. The parking lot was empty of people too.

"What the *fuck* am I doing?" he muttered breathlessly.

My hold was slipping. I pushed him up against a neighboring truck, moved in close, quickly, before he could react. The Cowboy was a former Navy SEAL. Late twenties. Kept himself in top condition. He could probably put me in traction for a very long time if he got his head clear. But he didn't stand a chance against me. All I needed was a quick distraction.

I moved in close and kissed him. Close enough to feel that Wendy-induced hard-on of his press against my thigh. That distracted him, all right. He sputtered and tried to push me away. "I--I'm--!" *Straight*, his thoughts practically yelled at me.

"Not tonight, you're not," I said, all confidence. It worked. I was in deep now. I felt his confusion. He couldn't figure this out. He didn't push me away. I wouldn't let him. I gave that hard-on of his a gentle squeeze, then pulled away. "Take me back to your place."

"Okay," he said meekly, losing a fight he hadn't even known he was in.

I followed him to his car. A brand-new Jaguar. Still had the dealership sticker in the window. A car like this? It's not subtle. This was the kind of car a man like the Cowboy would dream of buying himself on his way to the city limits as he skipped town, planning never to come back. Hell, he should have already been gone, past tense, and he knew it. This guy was still young but he wasn't stupid. He knew how these things worked. Something made him take this reckless chance. At least he knew enough to have stashed his new car in an abandoned parking complex two blocks over.

I drove. Hell, I'm gay, but I'm a guy, and I wasn't going to pass up the change to drive this juiced-up hard-on on wheels. German engineering at its finest. Too bad the Institute wouldn't let me keep the car.

I drove because, sometimes, this mind-trick thing I do, it makes guys zone out. Last thing I needed was for Cowboy to zone out on me while we were flying down the highway at nearly double the speed limit. I had to shake his shoulder a couple of times en route as it was. "Stay with me, Cowboy," I barked. If he wondered how I knew his code name, it didn't seem to register. Or maybe when a guy wears a cowboy hat, everybody calls him "Cowboy."

I drove to the hotel he named. It was on the north side of town, the respectable part. Not quite the rolling hills where the rich folks lived, but damned close. Probably the last place anyone would think to look for a hired gun on the run. I pulled up out front, tossed the keys to the eager young valet. Checked out valet-boy's great legs disappearing into his snug shorts. I winked and he grinned. I pocketed the claim check stub. Followed the Cowboy up to his room.

Billy. The Cowboy's name was Billy. A small fact I pulled out of his head. I didn't much care. I kept telling myself I didn't much care. I knew I'd probably never see him again. But every now and then I liked to remind myself that these were still people. People with hopes and dreams. Billy here probably dreamed of starting himself a nice, respectable life somewhere, a life that didn't involve taking other people's lives. Well, in that case, he shouldn't have taken from Mr. Johannsen.

Nice room. Huge. Almost a suite. Had its own little living area and a separate bedroom. Definitely high-class. A lot better than the places the Colonel and I usually bunked on our assignments. Expensive. More of Mr. Johannsen's money gone.

I told Cowboy to have a seat on the couch. I hit the mini-bar and poured us a couple of drinks. Some brand of scotch so high-class I'd never even heard of it.

We had a little time. I handed Cowboy his drink and sat down beside him, sipping my own. Smooth--really smooth. The liquor didn't just let itself get swallowed--no, it caressed my throat, made love to it all the way to my stomach. High-class the whole way.

Up close, in good lighting, the Cowboy was a fine-looking man. You could tell from the way he wore his clothes he had a good body under there. Kept himself in top shape. Late twenties, but not too late. Dark-haired. Good-looking. Maybe his nose being a bit too large for the rest of his face kept him from being classically handsome, but I wasn't complaining. Not at all.

I finished my scotch. "On your feet. Take off your clothes," I told him.

He blinked at me. "Huh?" he said, but I was already inside his head. He

stood up and started to strip. Probably didn't understand why, but did what I told him anyway. Like I said, he never stood a chance against me.

Off came the black leather jacket. The shoulder holster and pistol. The smaller pistol strapped to his forearm. The belt. Shoes. Not Italian leather--no, he wore the more practical kind of boots you wear when you might have to kick the shit out of somebody, which in the Cowboy's line of work probably happened a lot. The pistol tucked in the back of his pants.

Off came his expensive white shirt and undershirt. Damn fine torso--wide shoulders, tapering V-shape down to a trim waist, not a hair on his chest, oblong nipples, muscled but not overblown, the kind of body that comes from fighting for a living, not shoving iron weights around in a gym. I've got a good body myself, but the Cowboy?--if my concentration slipped, he'd probably be able to tear me in two with his bare hands.

He put his hands on his pants and paused, glancing at me.

I nudged him, said, "Go ahead."

He unsnapped his black slacks. Unzipped. Shoved them to his ankles. Snug black briefs. He stepped out of his pants. He hopped a little on one foot as he wrestled off that first sock, which made me grin. He was steadier for the other sock. Hooked his thumbs in the elastic waistband of his briefs and rolled them down to his feet. Naked now except for his black cowboy hat, and reaching for it. "Leave your hat on," I told him.

He stood there, looking vaguely embarrassed as I surveyed his body, appraising it like a jeweler. I smiled--I liked what I saw. Damn sexy. His cock was semi-erect. I nodded at it. "Stroke it," I said. He looked at me funny, but his right hand wrapped around it, a familiar old friend, and

started doing that familiar old dance, a man bringing himself to hardness.

His cock looked to be six and a half inches, the foreskin already skinned back, the head large, purple, shiny. This would be easier if he was horny, distracted.

I patted the couch seat beside me, and he sat down again. I leaned in and kissed him, tasting the booze on his breath, the smoky air of Josie's clinging to his skin. After a moment and another nudge, he found himself kissing me back. He was pretty good at it too.

I pulled away. We were both breathless after that kiss. I put my hand on the back of his head, applied a little pressure to aim it toward my crotch. His eyes flickered uncertainly. He stammered, "I don't--I don't--" Then, nearly whispering: "I don't know what to do. I've never--not with a guy ..."

"Tonight," I assured him as his nose rubbed alongside my zipper, "you'll know exactly what to do."

His cowboy hat brim hit my hip and his hat toppled off into the floor. He mouthed my cock through my jeans. My rod was hard, had been since the first moment I walked over to him at the bar and touched his mind with mine. His mouth found the swollen ridge of my cock through the fabric and he cupped with his lips. I unsnapped my jeans as his mouth massaged my dick through the fabric. I had to push his head out of the way to unzip, and his mouth zeroed right back in once I parted the flaps of my fly. I wasn't wearing underwear. His tongue probed inside my pants and found my pubes and the base of my erection.

I wriggled my jeans down a bit and pulled out my cock. A moment of confusion played across his face as he wondered why he was doing this. I smirked and whispered, "Suck it," and he did.

He gagged almost immediately but came off it coughing. He caught his breath and went back to work. Definitely an amateur at handling this kind of weapon. But he threw himself enthusiastically into the inevitable. A few instructions from me, and he was administering a perfectly passable first suck-job on my rod.

I told him to stand up and bend over the arm of the couch. I picked up his cowboy hat and plopped it firmly down on his head. I brought the supplies I would need. A condom and a travel packet of lube. I dug them out of my pocket and dropped them onto the couch cushion beside him--so he would see and understand what was coming.

With what was going to happen to the Cowboy here, I decided it didn't matter if we sent him off walking a little funny. The minute the Cowboy fucked up that job for Johannsen, he was on borrowed time.

I pulled my shoes and pants off. Shirt too. I picked up the condom, tore open the packet, rolled it on. Maybe the Cowboy was a short-timer, but I planned on living a good, long time. I was generous with the lube. I figured a condemned man had the right to a last night of pleasure.

The Cowboy--Billy--didn't understand why. All he knew was he wanted my cock inside him more than he had ever wanted anything else in his life. More than that bicycle when he was eight. More than getting into the SEALS program. More than the satchel full of Johannsen's money and diamonds he took from his target's place three days ago.

Entering him from behind, I kept pushing more and more of my throbbing cock up his ass. So tight--so hot. His head was buzzing with ecstasy. It was the least I could do for him. I shoved my dick in deeper, deeper. He whimpered and squirmed with the bliss of it. Too bad we didn't have much time left.

My pubes scraped his ass. I was all the way in. He moaned something like, "*Ahhhhh-yeeee*," when he realized he had my entire pole up his ass.

He settled into practically purring as I fucked him. He was bent over the arm of the couch, gripping it, legs spread. I fucked him, slow and relentless as a summer storm, finding ways to push buttons he didn't know he had. His cock was hard too and oozing. Instead of jacking off, though, he held on tightly to the arm of the couch, against the buffeting I was giving his ass.

I kept pounding at his ass. I was tireless. I wanted nothing more than to fuck him all night long, but we didn't have that much time. I was making sure Cowboy had never felt anything so intense and wonderful in his whole life. His eyes, when he tipped his head back toward me for a kiss, were glazed. He was totally consumed by the fuck.

Right on cue, the door opened, and the Colonel walked in.

"Who the fuck is--" Cowboy snapped, nearly breaking away before I clamped down on his thoughts and got his head calmed down again.

I murmured in his ear as I kept driving myself in and out of his ass, "That, my friend, is the Colonel."

The Cowboy understood what that meant. The Cowboy was a killer with a good rep, but the Colonel was a legend. Cowboy's eyes widened and his body stiffened, starting to panic. "Easy, baby," I cooed. "Easy. Too late for that. Just relax." *Damn!*--It took me nearly fifteen seconds to get his thoughts fuzzed out and get him lost in the fuck sensations again!

The Colonel had followed us from the bar, given me the half-hour head start I always asked for. He acted like he'd seen it all before--mostly because he had. He gathered up the Cowboy's clothes and weapons. "He

give you any trouble?" the Colonel asked absently.

"Naw," I panted between fuck-strokes. "Came along--quiet as--a lamb." I patted Cowboy's shoulder. "Isn't that right, Billy?"

A nudge from me and he obediently gasped out, "Yessir!"

"Our boy packed himself a regular arsenal," the Colonel mused. He parked himself in a chair and started searching through the Cowboy's pants pockets.

"Try the--scotch," I panted to the Colonel, fucking Cowboy harder, faster. "I--recommend--it."

The Colonel tossed Cowboy's pants at my feet and said to me, "You find it yet?"

"Of course." I plucked the Cowboy's hat from his head, tossed it to the Colonel. "Inside lining," I rasped.

The Colonel dug inside the hat and pulled out a small key on a green plastic tab. He picked up his phone and dialed the rendezvous number, gave them the hotel name and room number. "Ten minutes," he said to me, pocketing his phone again. Plenty of time.

My nuts ached. My breath came fast and hard. Cowboy's cock was stiff as steel and kept bobbing and slapping against his tight abs as I fucked him. I reached inside his head and gave him a good jolt. He couldn't take it anymore--without either of us touching his cock, he blew. His cock went from drooling pre-cum to pulsing and throbbing and spurting rope after rope across the couch. Cowboy howled as his entire body convulsed under me.

At that moment, I sank my cock in him to the hilt and spewed my spunk deep in his ass. Pleasure exploded throughout my body. I held on to Cowboy's hips for dear life as I rode him through my orgasm. I nearly blacked out from the intensity.

When the moment released its grip on us, Cowboy just fell face-first across the couch, totally drained. My dick dislodged from his ass with a "*Pop!*" I stepped back, still panting, barely able to stand, and pulled off the full condom. I dropped it in a waste basket for the housekeeping staff to deal with.

We were almost out of time. I pulled my clothes on. "Stand up," I told Cowboy, and he did, a good marionette, expression still dazed. "Get your pants on." He reached toward the floor for his clothes. "Just your pants." He pulled on his black pants. "Put your hands behind your back, please. That's a good boy." He did what I told him, docile as a kitten. The Colonel tossed me a pair of handcuffs, and I snapped them around the Cowboy's wrists.

A coded knock on the door. The Colonel, hand hovering over the pistol he concealed, the casualness of a born killer, went to the door. After checking he opened it and three men entered. Stone, Johannsen's right-hand man, and two thugs.

"That him?" Stone said.

"Yup," I said, pushing the cowboy hat down on Billy's passive head.

Stone turned "You find it?"

The Colonel tossed Stone the key on the green plastic tab.

"What's this?" Stone said, snagging it in mid-air.

Stone's head swiveled back to me when I said, "Bus station on Main Street. He swapped tabs on the key, so invert the numbers."

The tab read "72," but the stolen satchel was in Number 27 instead. Clever, Cowboy, clever.

I said, "It's all there, except for what he used to pay for this hotel room and that Jaguar."

Stone looked at the Colonel. "Jaguar?"

The Colonel tossed him the valet receipt. "Downstairs in the parking deck."

Damn, I'd have liked to keep that car, but you don't cross a man like Johannsen lightly, and we couldn't risk Cowboy here snapping out of it later and spilling the beans about his Jag. Oh, well. "Don't forget to tip the valet," I said, remembering that smile and those snug shorts.

Stone looked at the keys. "I think this concludes our arrangement," he said and gestured at one of his thugs. Thug opened a mobile phone and said a few words into it. "My associate," Stone said, "is authorizing the transfer now. The agreed-upon funds will be in the Institute's account within ten minutes."

I took a little peek in his thoughts--he was telling the truth. I nodded, so imperceptibly that only the Colonel saw it. If I hadn't given him confirmation, the Colonel would have perforated the lot of them. And deadly as the Cowboy's rep was, the Colonel was even deadlier. They'd have been dead before they even saw him draw his guns. You don't cross the Institute, and you definitely don't cross the Colonel.

"We'll take over from here," Stone said, and the other thug grabbed

Cowboy by the arm.

"This mind-zap I put on him," I told Other Thug, knowing Stone was listening. "ought to keep him cooperative for another half-hour, more or less." Other Thug recoiled as if I had live snakes growing out of my head. I get that reaction a lot. Like his mind would be worth controlling. I said, "So you might want to have him secured by then." Because a pro like the Cowboy could probably take these two goons apart even with his hands cuffed behind his back once he started thinking clearly again, sore ass and all.

I hadn't lied--just exaggerated a bit. My mind-zap would probably wear off in more like twenty minutes. The Colonel did not seem to notice the exaggeration.

Maybe a little of Billy's principles had rubbed off on me. Maybe Billy would find himself with a little ten-minute window of opportunity there before they expected him to wake up. What he did with that window would be entirely up to him.

Stone and company hustled Cowboy away. Wherever they were taking him, I knew they planned it to be a one-way trip. *Bye, Billy, I thought to myself, it was fun and you were a great fuck, but you fucked up--whether you pay your debt or run, I wish you better luck next life.*

The Colonel gathered up Cowboy's arsenal, readying to leave, leaving the rest of Cowboy's clothes for the housekeeping staff to handle. "You did good again," he muttered at me, "but--*damn!*--do you plan on fucking each and every damned one of them?"

I shrugged and grinned. We'd had this conversation before, many times. "Only the ones I like," I said. "Now, you got a new assignment for me?"
