

# **Sandman**

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Her beauty captured my soul.

I just stood there, precious time ticking away, and watched her sleep. I'd seen sleeping women before -- many, many times before -- but when I first saw Gabrielle's face in the dim light of my penlight, everything stopped for a long moment while I studied her face, so serene in sleep.

The moment seemed to last for hours, but was probably only a few seconds. Then her face twitched -- the penlight was rousing her. I held the little pump spray bottle close to her mouth and pressed the button once, letting a light spritz of the contents coat the lower half of her face.

Her eyes opened at the slight hiss of the pump and the feel of the cool liquid on her face. The beam of the penlight filled her eyes -- beautiful, bottomless brown eyes -- and she gasped in surprise, which was exactly what I needed her to do. Along with air she drew in a hefty dose of the drug I'd sprayed on her face, a fast-acting relaxant used in some hospitals for calming highly nervous patients long enough to administer a conventional sedative. For the second or two it took for her lungs to send the initial dose through the bloodstream to her brain, she looked up at me like a frightened child. I had a cotton cloth spritzed with the same solution in my right hand, ready to stifle a scream, but it wasn't necessary. She took a second breath, then a third, and her eyes lost their focus as the drug took effect. It would only last for a few minutes, but that was more than enough time for my purpose.

"Relax, Gabrielle," I whispered, laying the cloth aside. "You are safe, safe in your own bed. You are having a strange dream is all." While I spoke to her, my right hand dug in my side pocket and pulled out the crystal on its simple black cord and suspended it in front of my victim's face, twirling and spinning it, aiming the penlight at its center to enhance the prismatic properties of the crystal.

"A strange, sleepy, relaxing dream," I continued. "You are dreaming that you are being hypnotized by a mysterious, attractive stranger. You see the crystal before you, drawing your eyes to its center, the colored lights reflecting in all directions, relaxing you more and more as you gaze into its depths. Your eyes are captivated by it. They can't look away; they don't want to look away; all they want to do is stare deeper and deeper into the center of the crystal, the eyelids getting heavier and heavier as you relax ... "

Between the dissociative effects of the drug, her half-asleep state to begin with, and my own consummate skill as a stage hypnotist, she had no chance. Her eyes glazed over and closed on my command. And once again, I had the opportunity to relax a little myself and drink in the beauty of her sleeping form. Reluctantly, I dragged myself away from her bedside and got back to business.

Tonight that business was the age-old art of stealth burglary. Out of habit, I took a quick look around the bedroom. Aside from the high-rise luxury condominium itself, Gabrielle lived modestly for a high-profile TV news reporter, which she was. The closet was full of practical, all-business-all-the-time clothing; the items in her cherry jewelry box were of good quality, but not valuable enough to be worth the effort of taking them; the bank envelope taped to the underside of a dresser drawer held only a few hundred dollars in cash, her passport, and some leftover traveler's checks.

But those weren't my reason for invading Gabrielle's condo. In the beginning, when bookings for my stage hypnosis act were few, far between, and low paying, I had supplemented my income with this sort of petty thievery; nowadays, I deal in a much more lucrative commodity.

Creeping into the second bedroom, I found my true objective: Gabrielle's computer. It was a Mac Powerbook G3, very nice, with all the options. I turned it on and waited for the system to boot.

The first thing it did was prompt me for a power-on password. My respect for Gabrielle went up -- almost any decent laptop provides this simple security feature, but few people are wise enough to use it. If I'd merely taken the laptop with me, it would be worthless -- the hardware may be nice, but the true value of a computer lies in the data it holds. Fortunately, my methods are much more subtle and effective.

"Gabrielle," I called softly as I returned to her side. "You are still in a deep, hypnotic sleep. I want you to imagine for me that you have awakened,

and that you want to update your notes for the story on Platt Pharmaceuticals you've been working on. What do you do?"

Her mouth opened slowly. "I get up," she said thickly, "and go to my computer. I turn it on and type in my password."

"Listen to me, Gabrielle," I whispered. "That password is very important, you know. If you've made it too easy to guess, someone could come in and read your notes. I hope you made your password a nice, difficult one that is hard to guess."

"Yes, I did," she mumbled. "Very hard to guess."

"But at the same time," I continued, "you must be able to remember it yourself. It's important for you to show me that you remember it. Can you remember your password, Gabrielle?"

"Of course," she said. "It's WILDFLOWER782. I can always remember that."

"That's very good, Gabrielle. I'm very proud of you for choosing such a wise password. Do you also use a password on individual files, so nobody can read them but you?"

"No," she admitted with a sigh. "I used to, but Edgar always gets annoyed when he can't remember the password for a file I've given him, so I stopped."

"That's okay, Gabrielle," I assured her, enjoying the smile that came over her at my words. "I'm sure your files will be quite safe with that good, strong password protecting the computer. Make sure you keep that password, Gabrielle."

"Okay."

I told her to just relax, picture the crystal in her mind, and just watch it spinning until I called her name again, ignoring any sounds or movements around her, then went back to the Powerbook. I typed in her password; the computer finished booting and gave me access to her desktop. It didn't take long to find the files my clients were interested in -- judging by her filing system, Gabrielle had a neat and orderly mind. *I'll bet even her brain cells are beautiful*, I thought to myself.

Within 20 minutes I'd hooked up a portable Superdisk to the machine and copied all of the files that looked useful or salable. I spent a few more

minutes returning the machine to its original state. Now it was time to restore Gabrielle to hers.

As I approached the bed one more time, I was again struck by how beautiful she was. Unable to resist the urge to see more, I peeled back the blankets. I was disappointed -- she looked as though she had a splendid body, but it was covered from neck to mid calf in unglamorous blue and white striped flannel. A practical nature is a fine thing in a woman, but this was taking it too far.

"Gabrielle, my sweet," I said softly. "Soon your wonderful, hypnotic dream will be over and you will return to normal sleep. When you wake in the morning, you will feel completely refreshed and content, and will remember nothing about this dream at all. It's not important to remember the dream, because none of it really happened. If anything seems odd or out of place in the morning, it's okay to just ignore it and act as though everything is the way you expect. Also, you will find that you no longer wish to confine yourself to wearing practical, businesslike clothing all the time. You love the feel of fine fabrics against your skin, fabrics like satin and lace and silk. The texture of these fine fabrics makes you feel wonderfully alive and sexy and confident.

"And now, Gabrielle, I will count to three. On the count of three, your mental image of the crystal will fade away and you will return to normal, restful sleep. Nothing will disturb that sleep until it is time for you to wake up in the morning. One ... two ... three. Sweet dreams, Gabrielle."

Her body shifted ever so slightly as she slipped from trance into normal sleep. I felt a strong impulse to bend over and kiss her, but my common sense held me back. Instead I crept quietly out the door and down the empty stairs, undetected as always.

Professionally speaking, my encounter with Gabrielle was highly profitable. Not only did I collect the agreed-upon fee from my pharmaceutical client for identifying the anonymous sources who had been leaking embarrassing information to Gabrielle, but some of the other files I copied contained information of great value and utility to the campaign manager of an embattled member of Congress, who paid handsomely for the "motivational speech" I gave to him using the files' contents.

In the days to follow, however, when I thought back to that evening, it wasn't the impressive financial gain that came to mind. It was Gabrielle

herself: the tranquility in her face, the depth of her brown eyes, the way her black hair flowed naturally around her, the sharp mind that showed in the way she organized her life. I found myself turning more often to the TV for news, especially Gabrielle's station. Seeing her on the tube was nothing new -- she was well-known locally, probably headed for network in another year or two -- but now that I'd seen her in person, she seemed more real to me than ever before.

Gabrielle occupied my thoughts so much that, when my contact at the pharmaceutical company came back to me with a follow-up request, I broke one of the cardinal rules of my nocturnal business: never hit the same mark twice.

And so it was that about six days after my first visit to Gabrielle's condo, I found myself once again looking down at her quiet, sleeping face. My spray bottle and crystal at the ready, I played my light across her face again. She woke with the same start, inhaling the relaxant, falling back against the pillows as I wove my spell around her mind once again.

Something was different this time. Once I had her well under, imagining my crystal spinning before her, I was able to take a closer look and notice that her shoulders and arms were bare, save for a pair of thin, shimmering straps. I lifted the covers and beheld the results of my earlier suggestion: Gabrielle was now wearing a peach-colored silk chemise which flowed smoothly over her skin. *Now that's more like it*, I thought admiringly. Her bare legs looked so inviting that I lifted the silk slightly to peek underneath and note the cotton panties. I also noted that her nipples were erect, telegraphing their shape through the gown. Slowly, gently, I caressed one through the silk with my gloved hand. When Gabrielle moaned softly in response, my cock responded. How I would have loved to slide it inside her ...

But no -- this was still a business call, and a risky enough one at that without leaving semen samples behind. I took a deep breath and imagined tying a tourniquet around the base of my cock until it slowly settled down again. Self-hypnosis is a very useful tool at times like that.

"Gabrielle," I said softly, "how do you feel?"

"Mmmmm," she replied sleepily. "Dreamy ... sexy ... warm and tingly in my boobs."

"How do you feel about Platt Pharmaceuticals?"

A frown clouded her face. "They're evil and greedy. They made Tranquin so expensive to buy that the people who need it most can't afford it, just so they can make fat profits from the insurance companies."

*You're probably right*, I told her silently, then got to the purpose of my visit. "Gabrielle, you've been given wrong information about Platt. Platt spent millions and millions of dollars to develop Tranquin so that people would have an effective antidepressant that doesn't harm their sex drive, but the FDA kept demanding more and more trials before they would agree to approve it. Platt would love to lower the price, but they can't until they cover the cost of all those extra unnecessary trials. So you see, Gabrielle, it's really the bureaucrats at the FDA who are responsible for the high cost of Tranquin. Somebody should investigate that story, don't you think?"

"Yes ... investigate ... "

"And then there's the insurance companies, especially the HMO's. They have millions of patients who could benefit from using Tranquin, but they refuse to make it easy for doctors to prescribe it. Instead, they insist on trying to make people pick from their list of cheap, less effective drugs. That means there are fewer Tranquin customers, which is causing the price to stay high. Somebody should tell the people about that, too, shouldn't they?"

"Yes ... tell the people ... "

"Gabrielle, I know you're an intelligent and fair-minded reporter, much too smart to be fooled by those people at the FDA and the insurance industry. They want you to believe that Platt is an evil, greedy company looking to gouge people who need Tranquin. The truth is, Platt is a generous company just trying to recover their costs so they can stay in business. Whenever you think about Platt Pharmaceuticals, Gabrielle, I want you to remember how dreamy and sexy and happy you feel when I do this."

I let my hand touch her breast again, gently sliding the silk over its surface, teasing the nipple, bringing a low moan from her lips.

"Every time you think about Platt Pharmaceuticals, you will experience that same wonderful feeling, and you will know that they are truly on the side of the people. Do you understand, Gabrielle?"

"Yes ..."

"Very good, honey," I told her. She smiled a sleepy, happy smile. "And now, it's almost time to go back to your regular sleep. I'm going to count to three, and on three you will come out of trance and go back into deep, refreshing, natural sleep. Nothing will disturb you until it is time to get up in the morning. But from now on, Gabrielle, any time you hear my voice say the word 'Sandman', a wonderful, warm, heavy feeling will come over you and you will immediately slide back into a deep, lovely, obedient, hypnotic trance even deeper than the one you are in right now. Will you do that for me?"

"Yes ... Sandman ... "

"That's good. One ... two ... three."

*Why did you do that?* I asked myself, referring to the induction trigger. *You're not coming back here again.* My common sense told me I'd better not -- twice was risky, coming back a third time would be foolhardy.

Of course, my suggestions worked. Gabrielle continued to pursue the Tranquin story with all the vigor that had won her the respect of viewers and other reporters; however, her angle of attack changed dramatically. Instead of cornering Platt officials and asking hard questions, she took her cameras into the offices of the FDA and several major insurance companies, demanding that they justify the practices which had contributed to the high cost of this terribly important new drug. My contact told me Platt was extremely pleased, and I received a hefty bonus in addition to my usual "consulting" fee.

And best of all, every time Gabrielle mentioned the name 'Platt Pharmaceuticals' on the air, her hand would steal over and touch her left breast for just a moment. I spent hours watching the news, taping her segments and rerunning them so I could admire the results of my work.

The next few days I spent in West Virginia, doing my hypnosis act at a minor comedy club outside of Charlestown. Ten years as a stage hypnotist, and I was still only getting bookings in crummy little dives that nobody interesting ever goes to. I'm a damned good hypnotist -- you can ask Gabrielle if you don't believe me -- but I guess not much of a showman. Truth to tell, I'd probably try harder if I really needed the money.

The first thing I did when I got home was turn on the TV to see what Gabrielle was up to. I knew the Platt story had fallen by the wayside; Gabrielle's change of angle had apparently confused her peers enough that the feeding frenzy broke up, relegating the story to the back pages of the print media. From reading her computer files, I knew she had a story on Medicaid fraud that was ready to go and fully expected to see it early in the newscast.

When the second commercial break came with no sign of Gabrielle, I was irked. Halfway through the final segment, when Gabrielle finally came on to deliver a puff piece about some retired janitor who'd won the lottery, I was so dumbfounded I barely noticed the lace-trimmed blouse that she was wearing underneath her black blazer. Since when does a reporter of Gabrielle's stature end up interviewing lottery winners? Something had to be wrong.

I had to call in a favor, but a few days later I had the name and home address of the station's executive director in charge of the news division. It was a neighborhood I knew well from previous excursions, a nice quiet suburban conclave full of big houses with tall fences. His two children, it turned out, were away at college, so I had only the director and his wife to deal with. A quick spray from my handy little pump bottle and they were both very easy to manage.

"Listen very carefully, Howard," I told the director, my crystal holding him completely in its thrall. "I am the owner of the station, and it's very important that we talk about what you're doing with Gabrielle Walker. Why has she been getting less air time lately, and doing such unimportant stories?"

"She screwed up on the Tranquin story," he said groggily. "Got people at the FDA all pissed off and the insurance companies threatening to sue us. And somehow Platt found out who her sources were and they dried up. I decided she should lay low for a while, earn her way back to the top spot."

My blood boiled. This pompous, ignorant prick wouldn't know a good reporter from an Amway salesman, and here he was passing judgment on my Gabrielle.

"You've got it wrong, Howard," I scolded him. "Gabrielle Walker is the best reporter you've ever seen. She's tenacious, insightful, independent ... everything a reporter should be. In fact, with her talent, she shouldn't be



chasing stories at all -- she belongs behind the anchor desk. The sooner you get her there, the better off my station will be. Viewers love and respect Gabrielle; if you continue to mistreat her, she will leave and you will lose your audience, which means losing your job. You don't want that, do you?"

"No, sir."

"Good, then we agree. Gabrielle is to be put back on her normal assignment, starting with that hard-hitting Medicaid fraud story she's been working on. And starting now, you're going to see to it that she gets every opportunity to take over as anchor. Oren Stevenson has been there too long; the station needs some fresh blood, someone the viewers can relate to and admire ... someone like Gabrielle."

"Yes ... of course ... "

There was an extra fire in Gabrielle's eyes the next evening as she delivered the first part of her Medicaid fraud story at the top of the hour. If her businesslike dress plunged a little lower in the front than usual, showing a hint of white lace around the shadow of her cleavage, I'm sure it didn't hurt the ratings any.

I told myself it was foolhardy, stupid, reckless, totally against all common sense and self-preservation, but that night I nonetheless found myself back in Gabrielle's bedroom, standing over her sleeping form.

She was in another silk chemise tonight, a pale blue one with white lace trim at the bust and the hem. Gently, slowly, I put my hand over her breast and caressed her through the silk. She stirred, smiling, then opened her eyes with a start and a gasp.

"It's all right, Gabrielle," I reassured her. "It's me, Sandman." At the sound of her trigger word, Gabrielle's eyes dropped shut and her entire body relaxed with a deep, satisfied sigh. Not quite her entire body, I noticed -- her nipples became firm and erect, pushing up against the silk as the rest of her sunk deeper into the bed. I caressed both nipples for a few minutes, talking her deeper into trance, until she was moaning steadily and the scent of her arousal began to tingle in my nose.

I lifted the bottom of the chemise and saw that she had new underwear, an off-white mesh thong that failed miserably at hiding her curly black thatch. The cotton insert was thoroughly soaked and reeking of her juices.

"Gabrielle, my sweet," I said. "Your secret lover is here. Already you've felt the pleasure of my touch, arousing you, making you feel so wonderful. You love the feel of my hands on your body. My touch, the touch of your lover, never fails to arouse you. In fact, you have become so aroused at my lover's touch that your sex is dripping with the desire to receive me. Your body knows that great pleasure is only moments away." Coaxing her to lift her butt a little, I pulled down the thong panties to expose her glistening center. "Go ahead, Gabrielle ... feel how very wet you are, how very ready you are to receive me. Touch yourself in all of your favorite places, each touch making you more aroused and more anxious to receive me inside you."

I watched, my cock threatening to burst through my black slacks, as Gabrielle's fingers probed her own private area, circling her nub and spreading the slick fluid all around. Her moans grew louder and more impassioned the longer she went.

*Don't do that!* my common sense screamed as I peeled the glove off my right hand. I was in the grip of a more powerful force than common sense, however: gently, firmly, I removed Gabrielle's hand from her center and replaced it with my own.

"I am about to enter you now, Gabrielle," I told her. "When I do, it will give you the most intense sexual pleasure you have ever felt. I will count to five, and at the count of five your body will experience the strongest, longest, most satisfying orgasm you have ever had. You will continue to orgasm until I tell you to sleep; then you will fade into a normal, natural sleep that will not be interrupted by anything until it is time for you to awaken in the morning."

With that, I plunged my first two fingers deeply into her vagina, putting gentle pressure on the slight bulge in the top wall where I knew she would feel it most intensely. She shuddered and gasped, then went back to an ever-increasing rate of moaning and panting. I teased her nub with my thumb while stroking the inside of her with my fingers, and I could feel her body struggling to hold off orgasm until it received the command. I counted to five slowly, relishing the uncontrollable passion in her face and her body, and let her come until it seemed she could stand no more.

"Sleep, Gabrielle," I told her. "Sleep now, and awaken in the morning feeling better than you ever have before."

Before leaving, I took another short look around. The array of practical cotton underwear I'd found on my first visit was gone; a wide variety of soft, shimmering things had taken their place. These were much nicer, much more fitting for my Gabrielle. So were the various silk, satin, and lace slips, camisoles and blouses that I found hanging in the closet, the older broadcloth things relegated to a back corner. I approved.

My Gabrielle's Medicaid fraud piece more than made up for any damage done to her reputation as a reporter. She made her debut at the anchor desk the following week, marking the beginning of a sweeps period. She looked absolutely radiant behind the desk, her soft, sexy voice giving the news a whole new level of compelling interest. I watched every minute of it with her thong panties from our latest encounter -- I didn't remember tucking them into my pocket, but they'd been there when I got home -- clenched in my hand. The scent of her juices in them was faint but still detectable.

The next morning, I thumbed anxiously through the Style section of the morning paper; my Gabrielle must be mentioned in there, I reasoned. Sure enough, she was -- but not, as I was expecting, in the TV column. Instead, I saw her name in bold type in the 'Reliable Source' gossip column:

Local news reporter **Gabrielle Walker** finished her first night at the anchor desk, where she is filling in for vacationing **Oren Stevenson** all this week, by painting the town. Sources say her chosen escort was fellow newshound **Tom Matthews**, fueling speculation that the pair may be collaborating outside of work.

Obviously, this would not stand. I thought briefly about paying a call on Mr. Matthews, but abandoned the idea -- if I warned him off, there would be many others willing to take his place. No, this was a problem that needed to be attacked at the source.

It had only been a few days since my last visit with my Gabrielle, but I couldn't afford to wait any longer. I crept into her room that night, roused her with my penlight, and said the word that sent her into blissful trance.

"We need to talk, Gabrielle," I said after deepening her hypnotic state. "Tell me about your relationship with Tom Matthews."

"He's a guy at work," she said slowly. "We've dated a couple of times lately. He wants more, but I'm not sure I do."

"Of course he wants more ... all men want you, my Gabrielle, but only one is worthy. Tom Matthews is a walking Ken doll, a pretty face with no substance. He is not worthy to lick your shoes, my darling. Indeed, none of the men you see in the waking world are right for you. None of them can give you the pleasure that I give you, my Gabrielle. I, your secret lover, am the only man who can please your body and your mind. You must love me, and only me. Do you understand?"

"Yes ... only you ... "

"That's right, Gabrielle, only me. Other men will desire you, many of them will try to woo you, but you must remain faithful to me at all times. You may socialize with these men, but you must not become involved with anyone other than me. If someone else presses you for dates, for attention, you will invent excuses that will not betray our secret love."

Slipping off my glove, I lifted the covers and reached inside her nightgown. My fingers slid up her thigh and found nothing but warm, soft fur and moist skin -- she was wearing nothing under the silken sheath. She purred sensuously as I caressed her mound, slowly spreading the increasing moisture around and parting her nether lips.

"You love the feel of my hands on your body, Gabrielle. My touch arouses you more than any other touch; my voice arouses you more than any other sound; my kisses arouse you more than any other man could ever hope to. Feel the raw pleasure of my touch, and my kisses, and my voice, and let them bring you to a deep, intense, satisfying climax ... and as you submerge yourself in the sexual joys that I can bring you, realize that no other man can give you this kind of pleasure. No other man can make you come."

I probed her slit with my thumb and fingers for a while, listening to the sounds of her ascending passion as I touched all of her favorite spots. When she was dripping wet and nearly out of her mind, I spread her legs apart, peeled the black hood off my face, and dove in for the kill.

She climaxed almost immediately. I let her enjoy it, kissing her inner thighs gently while she writhed on the bed until the pace slowed, then sank back in and traced circles around her clitoris with my tongue. Her legs clamped down on me and she climaxed again. I let her ride it out, and then at the very end I stimulated her one more time and sent her over the edge yet again. My face was coated in her delicious juices when I finally let up. I reminded her again that no other man could make her feel this way, and sent her off to sleep.

I managed to hold out almost a week before going back to see my Gabrielle again. I was struck immediately by how content she looked, and noticed that she was now sleeping between satin sheets. Her eyes opened when I touched her through the satin, but there was no gasp and no look of fear in her face. Instead, she gazed intently into my eyes, the only part of my face visible through the black hood I wore, and waited.

"It's Sandman," I said, and enjoyed watching her eyes fall closed and her body slide deeper into the sheets. I peeled away the top sheet and drew in a sharp breath myself: my Gabrielle was naked.

I sat there on the edge of the bed for untold time, studying her body as it lay ready for our mutual pleasure. Her nipples were already standing up in anticipation, and the familiar musky scent I'd come to love was already rising from her center. The sight of her breasts, felt so often but now seen for the first time, was too much to ignore -- choking off the scream of protest that rose from the back of my brain, I removed the black hood I normally wore and nuzzled my face between her breasts. There was a strong scent of perfume on her chest which filled my head and overrode almost all of my remaining reason. I spent a long, happy time suckling at my Gabrielle's breasts, kissing and sucking and caressing them freely, listening to her impassioned moans and losing myself in them.

My cock ached to be inside her, but my embattled sense of caution managed to win that skirmish; instead, with the flush of her excitement covering her skin from throat to crotch, I settled down between her legs and adored her. Her body responded to my loving attentions in a most satisfying way, climaxing again and again as her thighs squeezed around my head. Partway through I realized I was coming as well, pumping large amounts of my own seed into my pants. There was a large damp stain around my zipper when I got up, but I was lucky -- none had soaked through to the sheet.

I'd given myself quite a scare -- I'd come close to leaving a dangerous piece of physical evidence behind, something I'd never done before. My Gabrielle would never betray me, of course, but I hadn't escaped suspicion for all these years by leaving evidence in my wake. I would have to be more careful.

The ratings for my Gabrielle's newscasts were excellent -- a good 10 percent above the station's normal share for the 6pm and 11pm slots. The station didn't hesitate to issue a press release trumpeting the numbers, fueling speculation that they may offer her a permanent spot as co-anchor. The papers picked up on the story, and it became a minor scandal when an "anonymous source" inside the station speculated that my Gabrielle's sudden success may be less a function of her journalistic talents than of her ability to wear peek-a-boo lace with a business jacket. *Probably Oren Stevenson*, I thought to myself. *That sanctimonious prick*. It had only been a few days since my last visit, but I felt that a celebration was in order.

This time, when I crept into my Gabrielle's condo, I had a picnic basket with me. Quietly, letting the anticipation build in my loins, I set out the contents of the basket on the dining table: a magnum of champagne, chilled and swathed in a cloth napkin, and two flutes. The vinyl tablecloth I laid out on the living room floor for a different purpose.

I made my way to the bedroom to see my love. Without waiting, I peeled back the satin sheets and beheld her stunning, naked body. She stirred at my first touch and met my gaze just before I sent her off to sleep. I sat on the edge of the bed with her, lovingly stroking her breast with a gloved hand, until I heard a sharp metallic click.

"Take your hand off her, you pervert."

*Calm and relaxed*, I told myself as I turned my head slowly. I could just make out the speaker in the dim moonlight from the windows: a tall, gangly, redheaded woman with anger in her eyes. The open closet door behind her told me where she'd been hiding; the way her hands held the gleaming 9mm Beretta, cocked and ready to fire, told me she was skilled in its use. My best chance was to put the intruder off balance, so I turned back to my Gabrielle again as if nothing out of place was happening.

"I said stop that!"

I counted a quick three in my head as I continued fondling my Gabrielle's breast. "She likes it," I said quietly, keeping my head very still. "See how her body responds to my touch?" To prove my point, I gave the breast a good squeeze, rolling the nipple between my fingers, and my Gabrielle gasped and moaned with pleasure, arching her back in a most satisfying way.

"She does *not* like it," the woman insisted. I repeated my action and let my love's obviously increasing arousal prove the lie. The interloper watched as I removed my glove and began fingering my Gabrielle's center, then could watch no more.

"What the hell are you doing to her?" she demanded, moving closer to my line of sight in an unconscious attempt to regain control.

Still I didn't look away from my love. "That should be obvious," I remarked. "I'm giving her an orgasm. The first of several tonight." To punctuate my statement, I slipped two fingers deep into my Gabrielle's canal and rubbed her G spot, bringing her to an instant and loud climax.

"Un-fucking-believable," she said as the moaning subsided. "Aren't you even going to ask who I am?"

"You'll tell me soon enough." Beneath my hood, I smiled -- she still had the gun, but I had claimed for myself the position of power.

Sure enough, my suggestion was immediately rewarded. "I'm her friend, Vanessa," she said, her voice full of anger and now frustration. "Gab's been acting very strangely lately ... she's stopped dating, and her taste in clothes has changed ... then there's that whole fiasco with Platt Pharmaceuticals -- she acts as though nothing went wrong there, but she blew a big story. The other day she remarked that some guy has been breaking into her condo, feeling her up and going through her things, but it didn't seem bother her in the least. Well, it bothers me, so I decided to find out for myself."

I waited long enough to make this so-called friend wonder if I was paying any attention to her at all, then spoke. "Gabrielle, my love," I said, still running my hands over her body. "Do you want me to stop visiting you at night? To stop touching your body? To stop loving you as no other man ever could?"

"No," came the breathless reply. "Please don't stop. Don't ever stop."

In my peripheral vision, I saw Vanessa lower the gun and approach a little closer to the bed. "Gab, you don't know what you're saying," she argued, the anger in her voice replaced by bewilderment. "He's got you brainwashed or something. Don't you see how sick this guy is?"

My Gabrielle said nothing; she was too busy moaning as I stroked her, bringing her closer to another orgasm. The only voice she wanted to hear was mine. Seeing the intruder's eyes locked on my Gabrielle's enraptured face, I picked up the pace of my caresses with one hand. With the other, I slowly reached into my pocket and found my little spray bottle. "She's not listening to you," I said as a distraction. "The only sound my Gabrielle wants to hear is my voice."

The redhead made her final mistake -- she took her right hand off the gun, took the remaining steps over to my Gabrielle's side, and tried to shake her awake. With her body now between the gun and me, I had the perfect opportunity -- my hand with the little spray bottle came up and I pumped twice, hitting her squarely in the face. The intruder shrieked as the solution burned her open eyes, wiping frantically with her free hand while she pointed the gun at me with the other. I counted three gasping breaths and saw her face begin to slacken. Then, and only then, did I make direct eye contact.

"That gun is very heavy, Vanessa," I told her, slowly and deliberately. "Very heavy ... so heavy you can barely hold it anymore. Feel the weight of it dragging your arm down, down, down ... deeper and deeper ... pulling you down ... so heavy ..." I watched with satisfaction as her arm, as if drawn by gravity, sank down until it was pointing the gun at the floor near her own feet. "You're feeling so sleepy now, Vanessa," I continued, "Sleepy and tired ... so sleepy and so tired, that you can no longer keep your eyes open. Let them close now, Vanessa, let your eyes close and sleep. You know they must, you know they need to ... let them close now, and listen carefully to my words."

Her eyes closed and a look of relief came over her face as she slipped into trance. I relieved her of the gun immediately, de-cocked it, then removed the magazine as well as the round in the chamber before turning my attentions back to Vanessa. I gave her another quick shot of my relaxant to ensure her cooperation a little bit longer, then took her deeper and deeper. She tried to fight me, but her own body betrayed her, obeying my every suggestion, until she finally slumped to the floor and surrendered.



"Vanessa," I asked my new subject, "what did you plan to do with me and that gun?"

"Stop you," she answered thickly. "I was going to keep you covered with the gun while Gab called the police."

"Would you have shot me if I'd resisted you?"

"Yes ... in the leg, or something like that."

"And why would you have done that?"

"Because you're a creep ... a pervert ... "

I fumed in silence for a few moments. *Creep, am I?* I fumed silently. *Pervert? We'll just see who the real pervert is!*

"You're wrong, Vanessa," I said, gently stroking her hair, fighting to keep the rage out of my voice. "I'm neither a creep nor a pervert. I'm Gabrielle's secret lover, the Sandman. She enjoys my visits, just as I enjoy visiting with her. Anyone who would try to interfere with that could never be a true friend to her. You must never interfere with our affair again, do you understand?"

"Yes ... never interfere."

"Very good. Now tell me something, Vanessa: have you ever had sex with another woman?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I'm not like that," came the timid response. "It creeps me out a little."

A most satisfying response; controlling the anger became easy. "Listen to me carefully, Vanessa. You may not have realized it before, but you actually do want to have sex with other women. Lots of other women. Whenever you see a woman, you will find yourself thinking about having sex with her. You may feel disgusted with yourself for having these thoughts, but they are in your nature and can't be ignored." Vanessa squirmed, but didn't reject the suggestion. *A closet lesbian is born*, I applauded triumphantly to myself.

"In fact," I continued, "the first person you want to have sex with is Gabrielle. When you awaken in the morning, you will see her lying naked in her bed and the desire to make love to her will be overwhelming. The more you try to suppress that desire, the stronger it will be. You will find a pair of panty hose and tie her hands together at the headboard so she can't stop you; then you will take off all of your clothes, climb in between her legs and perform oral sex on Gabrielle. You will continue doing this no matter what she says, growing more and more aroused the more she speaks, until you orgasm. Once you orgasm, you will stop. You will confess that it is you who have been sneaking into her bedroom at night and molesting her, because you are obsessed with her and want her to be your lover. You will then do anything that Gabrielle tells you to do, even if she says to go away and never speak to her again. Do you understand, Vanessa?"

"No," she whined weakly. "I don't want to ..."

Another dose of my relaxant overcame her reluctance. A wicked smile crept over my face when she relented. "And now, Vanessa, I want you to go to sleep. You will sleep without interruption until Gabrielle's alarm clock sounds; you will then turn off the alarm and obey your instructions."

"Yes, sir." My vanquished enemy sagged a little more as she drifted into sleep. I took the opportunity to set my Gabrielle's alarm clock about half an hour earlier than usual and turn it on.

My Gabrielle lay on the bed still, her body flushed and warm, waiting for more stimulation. I had other things in mind, however. "Gabrielle," I called to her. "At the count of three you will awaken, feeling refreshed and happy. Nothing you see, hear, or do will seem unusual or strange. You will know that I am your secret lover; you will be happy to spend time with me, happy to do anything I ask you to do, because we are so deeply in love with one another. One ... two ... three."

Her eyes fluttered open and then fixed on me with love. "Hi," she said sweetly, making no attempt to cover her nakedness.

I took her hand and kissed it. "We are celebrating your success tonight," I told her. "I brought champagne. Would you like to come have some with me?"

"Certainly." She slid quickly out of the bed and followed me, pausing only long enough to grab a pink silken bathrobe and slip it over her shoulders.

The champagne had lost some of its chill during the unexpected interruption, but was still cold enough to serve. I popped the cork, using a cloth napkin to capture it, and poured two glasses.

"Why the robe?" I asked casually as I handed her a glass.

She giggled. "The windows, silly." She pointed toward the glass doors at the end of the living area, which led out to the small balcony.

"Of course." I closed the vertical blinds and then slipped off my hood, the better to enjoy my champagne. "To our love, and to your success," I offered, holding my glass in the air.

My Gabrielle smiled brightly and touched her glass to mine. The champagne was deliciously dry.

"The papers suggest that you may be offered a permanent anchor job," I said. "Do you know anything about that?"

"They already did," she admitted, grinning. "But I turned them down."

I almost dropped my glass. "Why would you do that?"

"An anchor is just a figurehead, darling, not a real reporter. I love the hunt, the deadlines, the grand feeling I get from being first with the most. It's a tough, unforgiving, brutal job and I happen to be damned good at it. Why would I want to give that up just to sit behind a desk reading someone else's copy from a teleprompter?"

I was flabbergasted. If she had any idea of the risk I'd run to get her that offer ...

"Listen to me, Gabrielle," I said seriously. "For a woman with your abilities, there is no more appropriate job than anchor. The exposure will lead to better offers, bigger networks, and who knows? In time, you could be producing your own investigative reporting specials. You need that anchor job; it's important for your future happiness. In a day or two, the station will offer you the anchor job again. When they do, you must accept it. Do you understand?"

Was that a tiny flash of resistance in her eyes? If so, it passed quickly. "Of course, honey. I'll accept it if they offer it again."

"They will," I assured her. Time to change the subject. "So tell me about Vanessa."

"She's a good friend," my Gabrielle replied. "We've known each other since I joined the station."

"What would you do if you woke up one morning and found Vanessa trying to have sex with you?"

"I'd probably freak out. I don't have a problem with lesbians in general, but I don't want to be one. Vanessa wouldn't do that, anyway; she gets the shivers whenever someone even mentions the 'L' word."

"Actually," I contended, "I think Vanessa really is a closet lesbian. In fact, I think she desperately wants you as her lover. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if she even snuck into your condo sometimes at night and molested you in your sleep."

My Gabrielle shivered. "That would be too weird," she said.

"Much too weird," I agreed. "In fact, if you ever wake up to find her touching you in sexual ways, you won't find it pleasurable at all. You will immediately resist her. Tell her to stop, demand that she stop, until she does. And then, you will tell her to leave you and never try to contact you again. You'll do that, won't you?"

"Yes, of course."

"I know I can count on you."

Sitting there at her glass-topped table, watching her drink champagne while the pink robe fell open around her, I was overcome with the burning need to make love to my Gabrielle. That night, I had come prepared to follow through on the desire.

Setting my empty glass down on the table, I walked around behind my Gabrielle and began massaging her shoulders through the robe. Her body melted under my touch. "Mmmmm," she purred, "I love the feel of your hands on my body."

"Oh, really?" I teased. "How much?"

For answer, my Gabrielle stood up and turned to face me, dropping the robe off her shoulders. "This much," she said lustily, and drew me in for a long, slow, open-mouthed kiss.

My hands explored her back and bottom as our tongues danced together. Every time I started to pull back and breathe, I found her mouth closing hungrily on mine again. I felt fingers working at the front of my pants, and her hand slipped inside to grab the stiffening length of my cock. I could feel my own self control withering as my cock grew in her hand -- I wanted nothing more than to throw her down on the floor and fuck her brains out. "I want you so much," she breathed between kisses. "Please fuck me, Sandman. I want to come. I want you to come inside me."

The whole time she talked, she was also working at my clothes. My pants fell to the floor, and she began to strip the shirt off my back. I allowed her to keep going until I was standing amidst a pile of my own discarded clothes, as naked as she was. My Gabrielle put her arms around my neck and climbed onto me, wrapping her legs around me and clinging like a warm, beautiful vine. My aching shaft was tantalizingly close to her sex; I could feel the moisture coating it, dripping down from just above.

Through an effort of will I walked us both over to the living room. I put her down on the tablecloth and she immediately climbed up on her knees to catch me as I reached for a foil packet I'd left on the coffee table.

"You don't need that," she said to me. "I'm safe, and I know you're safe too."

"It's better this way," I replied truthfully. "But you can put it on me if you wish."

My Gabrielle was happy to take the packet from me and, from her kneeling position, roll the condom onto my cock. One hand snuck around and fondled my balls while she finished seating the condom in place, and almost caused me to come right then and there. "On your back," I croaked, and she complied immediately, falling backward onto the tablecloth and spreading her legs wide.

I dropped down between her legs, lifted her bottom, and slipped easily into her ready and waiting receptacle. My Gabrielle arched her back and thrust herself into me, grabbing my waist with her legs and pulling me in as tightly as she could. I felt forward with a hand, grabbing a breast and caressing it in rhythm to the movement of our hips. We rocked and

moaned together, faster and faster, louder and louder, until I exploded inside her. She felt my orgasm begin and cried out with the force of her own climax. We remained locked together, our loins shuddering together in sympathy, until the intensity subsided, then I released her and let myself slide down beside her to recover.

"Gabrielle?"

"Yes, darling?"

"Go back to your room, my love. Get in bed and wait for me there."

"Okay."

I watched in admiration as my Gabrielle's beautiful, naked form rose from the tablecloth and padded lightly back to the bedroom. I sighed heavily; making love to my Gabrielle had been wonderful, but now it was clean-up time.

I used a dry corner of the tablecloth to clean myself, being careful to keep it folded in toward the middle, then carefully dressed again. I folded up the tablecloth, keeping the surface we'd made love on to the inside, and put it back in the picnic basket. The condom I flushed, being careful not to leave any fingerprints on the commode or sink area. The leftover champagne I poured down the sink, then the bottle, cork, and glasses also went back into the picnic basket. Using a clean cloth, I carefully wiped the glass tabletop, kitchen counter, coffee table, and any other surface that I had touched while my gloves were off, then dropped the cloth into the basket. I took one more look around: as far as I could tell, all possible physical evidence of my presence was now either in the picnic basket or down the drain.

My Gabrielle was on her back in the bed, her naked body telegraphing through the satin sheet, waiting for my return as instructed. "Sandman," I said to her, and I watched her eyes lose focus and close down.

"Gabrielle," I said softly. "In a moment, I am going to kiss you one more time. When I do, you will have the most delightful orgasm you've had tonight, one that will be so strong and so long that when it finishes you will fall into a deep, restful, and natural sleep. Nothing will disturb that sleep until you to awaken in the morning. You will not awaken until you feel someone's tongue touching your genitals. That someone will be Vanessa; when you do awaken, you will react the way I suggested that you react. When she leaves, you will get up and go about your day. You will not

remember the time we spent together tonight, and you will be relieved to know that with Vanessa gone, nobody will be molesting you anymore in your sleep."

I watched her face as my suggestions sank in, and reinforced them several times before going on. My pulse quickened as I prepared to give her the final suggestions of the night.

"Tomorrow, Gabrielle, you will meet a very special man. He will come to the building at 10:20am exactly in order to look at the empty unit which is for sale on the 8th floor of this building. At 10:20, you will find an excuse to come down to the lobby and you will meet this man. His name is Peter, and he is a stage hypnotist. Your conscious mind will find him fascinating, and will feel a strong sexual draw to him; your subconscious will recognize that Peter is actually me, your secret lover, and will ensure that your conscious mind falls deeply and passionately in love with him." With that, I wished my Gabrielle goodnight and kissed her, triggering the orgasm that would send her to sleep.

I watched her sleep for a few minutes -- she was breathtakingly beautiful, as always -- then gathered up my hood and basket and stole away into the night.

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10/5/00