

CS

**THE END
OF A
HERO?**

***SLAVE LORD
TRIUMPHANT***



Chapter 1

As a child, Carter Blue watched in horror as his mother and sister were murdered. From that night of horror, a HERO was BORN. Carter grew up to invent the cybernetic combat chassis and became the hero known as C3-- hunting down those who do violence against women and bringing them to JUSTICE.

Now, after an epic battle with the super-powered villains Whips and Chains, he has finally located the headquarters of Slave Lord, the world's most notorious human trafficker. Yes, faithful readers, that selfsame Slave Lord who kidnapped Maxine Manning, the woman C3 LOVES. (See last ish, natch.)

The epic adventure starts now.

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"Quite a welcome committee at the front door," C3 thought to himself, looking over the gang of heavily armed thugs gathered outside the warehouse. "Looks like I may want to use the servant's entrance."

With that he activated the super silent jet-propulsion system in his armor and launched himself into the air, gliding over the guards and landing silently on the roof. Carefully scanning the rooftop for any trips wires, sensors, traps-- or security systems of any kind, he paused. Nothing. He scanned it again. Nothing.

Impossible, he thought. This could only mean that Slave Lord wanted someone to enter through the roof. In other words, a trap.

Creeping to the back of the building, he saw three thugs standing in a circle, their faces intermittently lit by the red flares of their cigarettes and scanning further he spotted a stasis generator--which had he stumbled into it would have rendered him powerless.

Three stun darts launched from his wrist, and the thugs fell to the ground. At the same time, he launched a rocket that took out both the stasis generator and then dropped a concussion grenade that blew the back door to splinters.

Not even waiting to see the minions of the slave lord take the bait, he activated his jets as well as his force field and rising into the air about 500 feet, turned and launched himself down, down down to smash through the skylight in a shower of flashing splinters.

The men who'd rushed to the door collapsed in a cloud of knock out gas. An alarm sounded and a bank of elevator doors running along the side wall opened with a whoosh. A bolt of hot, blue lighting fired from each bank and crashed into C3 sending him hurling backwards and slamming him into the opposite wall. He found himself paralyzed as his systems strained to counter-act the massive power surge "Adjust shields to maximum efficacy against the threat," he said calmly, and as his systems adjusted to fully counter the electrically charged attack, he saw dozens of armored shock troops charging across the room. "Clever," he thought. The moment my shields maximize to counter the electricity, they launch a bunch of good old-fashioned projectiles at me--and I die." Death. He felt a jolt of adrenalin and smiled. He preferred an enemy that didn't fuck around, and the Slave Lord was earning more and more the brutal beating he had coming.

"Disperse. Disperse. Disperse." At that command, his defensive system shifted their polarity and instead of merely deflecting the lighting attacks now turned them around and sent them knifing back into the room in a

ferocious storm jagged death. Screams and howls of agony filled the room, and then suddenly stopped as the men collapsed into piles of trembling, smoking flesh.

"Filter," C3 said, crinkling his nose against the smell of burning hair and flesh.

"Well done, C3," a mechanical voice called out over the building's intercom system. "I did not know about the reflective capabilities of your magnificent apparatus." The voice paused as if waiting for a response, but C3 ignored him. He'd learned early on he had no interest in bantering with the sub-human scum he hunted. Meanwhile, his suit was restoring, recalibrating and most importantly using its sensors and probing apparatus to generate maps of the facility.

"Silent, eh? Not a surprise. I have studied you, and my profiles predicted you would not respond to me," Slave Lord said smugly. "Let's see how accurate the rest of information is?"

A section of the floor slid open, and a glittering metallic platform rose. "Join me?"

C3 paused. The facility far exceeded anything he'd seen in the world of human slaving. Slave Lord was the biggest player, but what he was seeing here was a billion-dollar criminal empire. He'd obviously been lured here, but by who? Why? The whole thing was a trap, but one he had to walk into whether he wanted to or not.

Crossing the room, he grabbed the platform and ripped it from the base, tossing it across the room and dropping into the elevator shaft under his

own power. "Exactly what my profile said you would do," Slave Lord chuckled. "Like most men, C3, you are laughably predictable."

C3 dropped to the floor. He found himself in a large room, opulent, like a movie sheik's harem, and all around the room women in thin, colorful silks lounged on pillows, looking at him with wide, fearful eyes. He saw they all wore chains, pretty, delicate chains that flashed at their wrists and ankles. Slave Lord stood boldly at one end of the room--he was tall, 6' 3", slender and wore a black silk suit. His face was hidden behind a wolf mask, and in one hand he held an old Luger. The other arm was around the waist of a terrified Maxine Manning. "Help." She screamed. "Don't let him hurt me."

"Silence," Slave Lord yelled, pressing the gun against her temple.

"Let her go," C3 said, watching Slave Lord, gauging the man's calm, his steel. One nervous twitch of the finger and Maxine Manning would die. "Let her go, unharmed, and I won't kill you."

"Power down your suit or the bitch dies," Slave Lord said.

C3 felt his temper rise at the use of the word bitch. His systems had targeted Slave Lord at five different points, but he was picking up some sort of force shield, and his system couldn't get a fix on it, couldn't find a sure-fire way to penetrate the shield. He needed time. "Surrender, Slave Lord."

"On the count of three."

"I could kill you where you stand with just a thought."

"If you could, you would."

"No. Unlike you, I don't kill for..."

"Three."

"... no reason, I..."

"Two. And just for your stubbornness, I will now kill all of these girls while you watch in addition to Miss Bitch here."

"This is your last chance."

All the women around the room began to move, some screamed, several crawled toward C3. "Don't let him hurt us." One of the girls said, wrapping her arms around his leg.

"Watch, fool, as the woman you love..."

"Don't do it."

And then, suddenly, C3 found himself wrapped in chains as the girls sprung into action, wrapping the chains around his arms and legs, one throwing a chain over his head and wrapping it around his neck, yanking him backward off his feet even as the chains activated and sent a surge of energy through his suit, frying his power systems and filling his body with agonizing pain. "No."



He struggled, but the now giggling girls pinned his arms and legs and quickly stripped off his helmet. He was powerless. Defeated. Slave Lord stepped forward, put a foot on his chest and looked down at him. "Good work, girls."

They squealed.

Slave Lord still had Maxine with him, and he slapped her across the face--once, twice, three times. She screamed and struggled to get away, but he slapped her again, then tossed her aside, out of C3's sight.

C3 strained helplessly, his face twisted in a mask of hate and rage. "I'll kill you."

"You are cute," Slave Lord said sadly. "It's a shame."

C3 just stared at his enemy, enraged, but trying to calm himself. To focus. "Maxine?" He managed to rasp.

"She's fine. You really are such a predictable little boy, C3. It was so easy to trap you. So easy to see that your whole act was a mask for the fact that you are really nothing but an old-fashioned sexist pig."

"Bullshit," C3 said, getting annoyed in spite of himself.

"Oh?" Slave Lord squatted down and fished something out of his pocket. "My data showed you would not see a female as a potential threat. That's why you were such an easy target for my girls."

"So?"

"So, you're a sexist. You don't respect women. You certainly never thought you'd be beaten by one."

"They're just following your orders, Slave Lord."

Slave Lord chuckled. "Oh? And so, you will probably be surprised to know one little thing about me." And with that, Slave Lord reached up and pulled off the wolf mask, her raven black hair tumbling down around her beautiful face, heart-shaped face.

"No..." C3 said. "No..."

"Oh sweetie," Slave Lord said, chuckling prettily. "We don't need you to save us. To protect us. That's what you don't understand." She opened the compact in her hand and began to rub pink blush onto C3's cheeks.

"What the hell?" He twisted his head, trying to stop her, but soon he had pretty, flush cheeks.

"There," Slave Lord said smiling. "Now you look pretty."

"Why are you doing this?"

"Because I am getting paid very well to break you."

Next, he found himself fighting as she tried to paint his lips with a tube of glossy pink lipstick. "Candy?"

"Yes, boss." He felt them jam a needle into his neck, and all his muscles turned to wet noodles. He lay, paralyzed, and unable to speak as Slave Lord painted his face.

"I know you are feeling humiliated right now," Slave Lord said as she worked. "Emasculated. I am doing you up just like a sexy girl--smoky eye shadow, thick lashes, big, wet lips..."

"He looks soooooooooo pretty." One of the girls said, and they all giggled.

"You're just a doll."

"Pictures," Slave Lord said, standing, and two girls came into his vision, snapping pictures.

C3 felt himself dying with shame, thinking about the pictures going public, about the shame, about the laughter. He was powerless. Defeated. Humiliated. Just kill me, he thought. Kill me.



"You're probably wishing I would just kill you, but I have much bigger plans for you. I am going to turn you, my pretty little thing, into a girl. It will be slow, and painful, and humiliating, but you will become a female."

No. No. No. He thought, looking up at Slave Lord and the two girls with their cameras, all three leering down at him now.

"You're going to have bigger tits than Brandy," Slave Lord said nodding toward the buxom blonde, "and wider hips than Jasmine," with a nod to the other, curvy girl. "You are going to be a hot little bitch, and a slave girl. There's nothing you can do to stop it."

And with that the room filled with the sound of female's laughing and giggling and snickering and they all started to crowd together, his eyes filling with all the mocking female faces as they laughed down at him, and laughed and laughed, and laughed.

"No," he struggled to whisper. "Don't... do... this..."

But they couldn't hear him over their own laughter. "A helpless little woman, C3. Helpless and pretty and weak."

"Please," he managed. And then, he fainted.

* * * *

Carter fell into a deep, empty sleep, a sleep like death. If he dreamt, he didn't remember the dreams. If he felt, he didn't remember the feelings. But then, gradually, floating in that formless world of non-being, he began to sense a feeling, a need--thirst.

He moved toward that feeling, gradually becoming aware of his body, the feeling of soft sheets against his back, then a tightness around his chest and hips, and he opened his eyes and looked up at a pink canopy. Confused, he found he couldn't move. He tried to lift an arm, but nothing happened. He could feel his arms and legs, his toes against the sheet, but he couldn't move.

Then, the memories flooded back to him. Slave Lord. The ambush. The paralysis.

Am I a woman? He wondered. He tried to look, but he couldn't move his head. He couldn't tell if he still had his manhood or not, couldn't tell if his chest was flat or hard or if he had, as Slave Lord had promised, huge breasts. What would it feel like to have breasts? He had wondered, in an off-hand way. But if he had them now, they felt the same as his old chest. Which didn't seem possible. Yet, the feeling across his chest and back--that felt the way he imagined a bra would feel. Straps on his shoulders? Yes. He could feel them.

Voices. He couldn't understand what they were saying, but he could hear them. Whispers at first, and then gradually they grew louder and more urgent, and he started to make out a word here and there... "weird"... "sick"... "unfortunate"... he could feel heat... intense heat on his face and body, and then he felt a hand on his shoulder, gently shaking him.

"Ummmmmm I guess...."

"Sir? Sir? What's your name?"

Carter opened his eyes. He saw a man looking down at him, a man with a blue police officer's hat on his head with a glittering brass badge that read NYPD.



Carter lifted his head and felt the world spin, struggled to speak... "I.... I...."

His voice was hoarse, his mouth dry.

"Okay. Just lay back down and relax. Help is on the way."

Carter glanced down and saw he was wearing a hot pink bikini top, but it was stretched across a flat, hairless chest, though the cups were slightly padded, giving his chest a rounded shape as if he had budding breasts . He saw he'd been given a tattoo—it read SLUT in pink letters. He wanted to take off the top, to get up, to run, but he was so weak, so dizzy, and he needed to say... something. So badly. There were words he needed to say, had to say... he struggled to push himself up onto his elbows, to get to his feet, a terrible sense of panic coming over him as he thought about Maxine and the Slave Lord, about his defeat, about being outside, wearing a bikini, and he saw that he had long, frosted pink fingernails, and the cop was pushing him back down saying, "just calm down. Relax."

"No. NO." Carter said, helpless and desperate. "I I... need..."

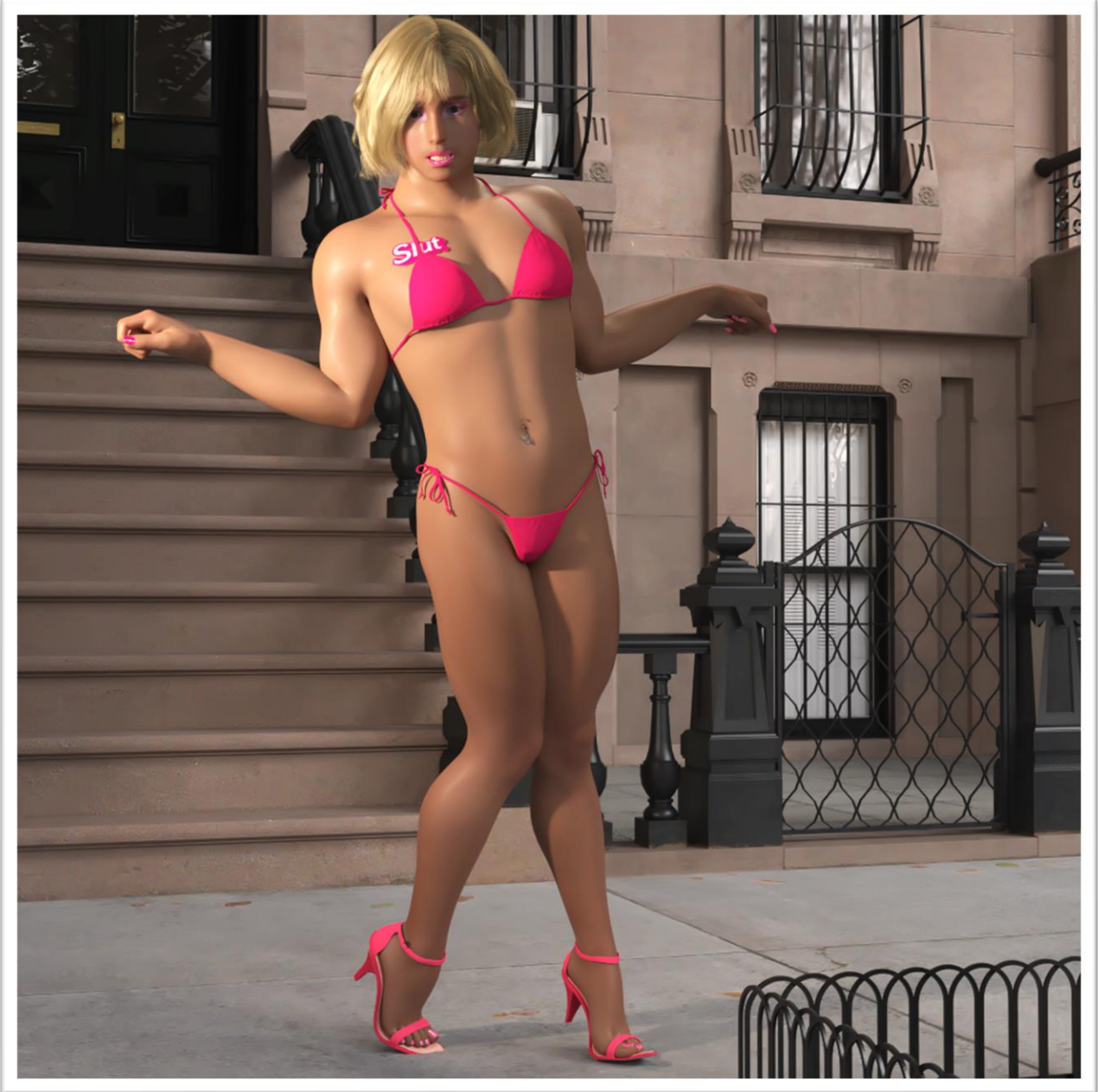
He was aware now of a murmuring crowd gathered around him, watching, talking, and more cops, and he heard someone say, "the ambulance is here."

"We're going to get you some help. Just relax." The cop smiled. "We'll take care of you."

Ambulance? They'd take him to a hospital or to Bellevue... he'd be locked up, put under watch, and he had to move, to find Maxine, and he had to say... something... he needed to say it, the words, they were there in his mind, fighting to get out... He grabbed the cop's arm with a pink taloned hand, pulled himself up into a seated position and finally, the words came out as he screamed, "I need DICK."

"What the fuck?" The cop said. The crowd suddenly grew silent.

No. No. No Carter thought, feeling his face flush, no. He shook his head and screamed even louder, "I NEED DICK. And now the words wouldn't stop, he couldn't control himself as he screamed, "I WANT DICK. I NEED DICK. I NEEEEEEEEED DICK SOOOOOO BAAAADDDD..."



"Christ," the cop said, shaking Carter's hand off and backing away. Carter, terrified at the words coming from his mouth, ashamed and scared,

struggled to stand, his legs shaking like a newborn fawn, and he realized he had pink high heels strapped to his feet. His vision blurred even as he faced the huge crowd that was gathering, phones up, snapping pictures, taking video, and he wanted to scream HELP ME, but instead he screamed, "I NEED DICK..." And he stumbled and fell, right into the arms of an EMT, who lifted him and carried him toward the gurney, and helpless in the man's arms, Carter began to cry, whispering, "I just need dick.... I need it so baaaaadddd."

The images flooded the Internet, the Cable News shows, joined by a set of earlier pictures of freelance APP designer Carter Blue, now revealed as the secret identity of the vigilante C3. The earlier pictures had shown him in full make-up and had purportedly been leaked by an employee at a bondage dungeon in the East Village who claimed that he liked to dress as a woman and then get spanked. Now pictures of him in a tiny little pink bikini laying out in Central Park and videos of him screaming about Dick joined those pictures, and the world got their first impressions of Carter Blue.

The EMTs pumped him full of sedatives and strapped him to a gurney, and he finally stopped yelling and murmuring and drifted into a fuzzy haze, staring at the ceiling of the ambulance unable to form any coherent thoughts. Fragments flashed through his mind... memories of his life, past and present... paddling in a boat in Central Park with Maxine... his first kiss, to a freckly-faced Sue Anne Watts, his first stakeout and first collar, a low level street pimp who lost his two front teeth in a fight that took less than 10 seconds... the first news story about the mysterious C3, and how he had sent the criminals of New York running and hiding for cover. It had made him feel good, strong, important. He loved it. Hunting down criminals. Beating them senseless. Breaking apart their little empires, showing the world that for all their tough talk and bravado, all their rap video posing and bullshit, they were all cowards. All of them. And they had learned to fear and respect C3. Word had gotten around in a hurry that he had a special thing about protecting women, and that any criminal who got a rep for using or abusing girls would get taken out.

He was strong. Fearless. Willing to die to protect the girls.

And now the whole world was laughing at him. He could feel the lines of his bikini tight against his body. The bracelet on his wrist. Remember some of the faces in the crowd coming into focus, coming clear, the looks--shock, horror, pity, contempt--as he screamed about dick.

Slave Lord. Somehow, she'd planted it in his mind, and now a new fear began to grow in him. What else had she done to him? What else had she changed?

She'd promised she was going to turn him into a woman, and he'd thought she meant just his body. But could she also turn his mind? He had to find a way to fight it. To fight it all. Whatever she was doing to him, he would find a way to stop it and stop her, to rescue Maxine.

"How are you doing?" The EMT asked, taking Carter's wrist in his hand, placing his fingers across his veins, checking his pulse. "Nice and calm now, right?"

"I'm thirsty," Carter said through parched lips.

"Sucking cock will do that to you," the man said.

"What?"

"Okay, Doll. Looks like you're ready. He took a syringe out of a case and raised it. "Estrogen and testosterone blockers."

"No," Carter said. "Don't."

The man put the syringe in Carter's arm and smiled as he pressed the plunger. "That'll put some boobs on your chest. Am I right?"



"Damnit. Let me go."

Then he raised a second syringe and smiled. "Of course, estrogen is nothing. Child's play. Slave Lord has tech, I mean, you'd be surprised at what she can do to a guy." He stuck the needle into Carter's arm and pressed down, and Carter immediately felt his body growing hot, feverish. "I should say, you will be surprised, because, well, you're about to find out little girl. Yes, you are. And now, for the final injection."

"Please," Carter said. "No. She has my girlfriend. I have to save her."

"Oh, you're not going to be saving anyone, little princess. Not anymore. You're going to be small and weak as a kitten. Just a little thing, really, not good for much other than looking pretty and having sex. A helpless little slave girl."

"Please... no..."

He plunged the needle into Carter's arm and said. "You're already getting so good at begging and pleading. We all can't wait to see how you turn out."

Carter spasmed and arched his back as it felt like every cell in his body caught fire and began to burn, he screamed and the man covered his mouth with an oxygen mask and laughed as Carter's vision blurred and he started to fade out, gratefully running from the pain and the terrible feeling of being so helpless.

"You broke my nose and shattered my jaw two years ago, asshole," the man said. "You're getting what you got coming."

Chapter 2

Darkness again. Blackness. No light. No sound. No feeling. Just a detached awareness of timeless non-being. Then, out of that soft velvet nothing, a voice said, "RUN."

Instantly, Carter felt PANIC. Terror. He had to run, to get away from that voice, that presence, something terrible that wanted to catch him, hurt him. And though he couldn't feel his body, he began to run, to feel, to race away from the voice as fast as he could, and he felt his heart pounding, a tightness around his chest, burning in his lungs as he labored for breath, and then he became aware of the world around him--red stone walls and white granite floor, iron sconces and the smell of burning incense... like an old church--and he was he was clutching a bouquet of white lilies in one hand, a hand encased in a white, lacey glove that came to his elbow, and with the other hand he was lifting the full skirt of his white silk dress, struggling to run, hair in his eyes, but he had no time to stop, to slow down, because SHE was behind him--Slave Lord.

"I'm coming for you," he heard the woman say in a high, mocking voice.

"No." He whispered, panicked, running, running blindly, having no idea where he was going, just running and running.

"Turn and face me like a man," he heard Slave Lord say.

"No." He whispered, and then he called out, "someone help me."

Was his voice higher? Like a woman's?

"Be a man."

"No," Carter whispered. "I can't anymore."



"Do it."

He saw an arch ahead. Golden sunlight pouring into the darkness, warming the red stone, motes dancing in the golden rays. He ran for it, finding some new strength. He would escape. He would be safe.

"Coward." Slave Lord said.

Carter reached the sunlight. Stopped. He stood in the sunlight, feeling its warmth, and he felt his courage returning. He turned, the sunlight lighting up his pure white dress, flashing in his golden curls and sparkling playfully in the diamonds of his tiara. "I'm going to beat you," he said in his new, slightly higher voice.

He heard voices from the courtyard. "What? Who's she? Is something wrong? Wait, is that the I Want Dick Dude?"

Glancing over he saw a crowd of people on a terrace, could see the palisades beyond. He realized he was at The Cloisters, a medieval monastery Rockefeller had moved to upper Manhattan and turned into a museum. Carter felt a surge of embarrassment as he realized he was standing there in a dress, but no matter. He had more important things to worry about right now.

Looking back, he saw Slave Lord standing at the other end of the hall in the shadows, tall and lean, wearing a man's suit. Her face lit as she drew in on her cigar and then blew a cloud of smoke into the air. She stared at him. Silent. Unmoving.

Carter tried to throw the bouquet he held to the side but found it had actually been tied around his fingers and wrist, so instead he twisted his arm behind him, hiding it. He squared his shoulders and stared back defiantly, his chest still heaving as he tried to catch his breath.



"Look," Slave Lord said, gesturing, and Carter glanced over to see he was standing next to a full-length mirror.

He saw--small. He'd lost so much muscle. Gotten so thin. The white dress he wore hugged a slender, girlish body, and the skirt flared out giving his hips a rounded, womanly shape. He wasn't as soft and fleshy as a woman, but there was

slender, rounded softness to his arms and shoulders that scanned more girl than man, and his face--it was his face still. Easily recognizable, but slightly softer. He wasn't sure if it was the full make-up--the pastel eye shadow and

pearly lip stick, the foundation and blush, or if his face had softened, but he definitely looked more feminine, a look that was enhanced by the flowing blonde curls that circled his face and tumbled down over his bare shoulders. Seeing himself dressed like this, looking so--- he didn't choose to say them, but the words tumbled out of his mouth effortlessly, words that Slave Lord had planted in him, forced him to say, his voice rising into a higher register, "I'm a princess."

He spun back to face Slave Lord, who still just stared at him silently.

"I'm a princess. You... you... turned me into a princess."

"Yes," Slave Lord. She started to walk calmly toward the slender, diminished form of Carter Blue, letting her eyes run up and down his body. "A pretty little princess. A little princess who is SCARED."

The fear and panic. It came back, and Carter found himself hyperventilating. He clutched the flowers to his chest and tried to regain his courage. No. No. Fight. Fight. His hands were shaking, his knees getting weak. He... couldn't and so he spun and ran out into the courtyard, one arm out wide, waving girlishly while the other clutched his flowers to his chest, and he screamed, "Save me. Help me. Someone save me." No. No. Be a man, he thought. Fight. But he had no choice. No control. He was a frightened little girl now, and he could only scream for help and look for protection.

The crowd backed away from the screaming girl, even as some of them recognized "her" as C3, whose escape in the park had been spread all over the world. Carter saw a tall, strong looking man and instantly ran toward him. "Help. Please."

The man stood, shocked, as the little man threw his arms around him and put his head against his chest. "Save me."

"Who are you running from?"

"A woman... she's the one who turned me into a princess. She's coming after me." He pointed fearfully back toward the archway he'd come from. The crowd turned and grew silent. They could hear footsteps. Laughter. "It's her. Don't let her take me." Carter begged, emasculated, terrified, hating himself for being so weak, so easily broken, but needing this big, strong man, needing his protection.

The footsteps grew louder. The voice clearer. "So, then, I was like, whatever, and she was like... whatever. So whatever, right?" And then a 12-year-old girl with red pigtails and an innocent face full of freckles walked out, saw everyone looking at her and said, "Whatever?"

The crowd began laughing, looking back at the cowering man in the white silk dress clinging to another man, and they laughed and laughed, snapping pictures and making their videos.

"Uh, I think you'll be safe," the man said pushing Carter away. "Okay, Princess?"

"No..." he said blushing with shame. "No... there was someone else... the Slave Lord.... She... she..." but no one was listening. They were all just laughing and smiling, taking pictures, and he felt the shame and humiliation, the utter hopelessness of his situation, and he stood there in his dress and cried, and cried, and he felt himself dying. He was beaten. Defeated. Humiliated. "I'm a princess," he said forlornly. "A princess."

And then he did the only thing that made sense to him, the only path he could see to end the mocking laughter, the shame, the nightmare that had become his life, and he started walking toward the balcony, and then he began to run as fast as he could in his dress, and when he reached the balcony he threw himself onto it, and he looked down at the East River, flowing so far below, and using his soft, weak arms he started to pull himself over, struggling, struggling, to throw himself down, down into the river, onto the jagged rocks, and end it all.

But then he felt strong arms grab him around the waist, and he was lifted into the air, and kicking and screaming he said, "Let me die."

And the man he'd run to earlier, the one who he'd begged for protection, carried him over to a bench, sat him down and said, "You just sit still. It's going to be okay."

"No." Carter struggled, but the man grabbed his wrists and forced his weak, shrunken arms to his sides, and Carter, feeling overpowered, began hyperventilating again, and then he screamed, a high-pitched, tea-kettle scream, and the man said, "hey, calm down..." looking frustrated and unsure of what to do with this screaming little princessed man, but then one of the women who'd been watching stepped forward and slapped Carter hard across the face.

"What? Ow." Carter said, stunned.

The woman looked down at him, shaking her head and said, "Enough hysterics, young lady. Now just sit there and be quiet, and someone will be here to help you soon."

Carter buried his face in his hands and cried.

When the men came to take him away, he didn't struggle or argue or care. He just passively went with them, clutching his flowers to his chest, and hanging his head in shame. He had little doubt that the men, despite their police uniforms, were more agents of the Slave Lord, and that they would soon be injecting him or chaining him to a radiator or some other madness.

They put him in the back of a patrol car. No one spoke. It was quiet. Just the crackle of the radio as the dispatcher called out for cars to go here, or there, or somewhere else. Carter calmed. He looked at the flowers that had been twined around his fingers and tried for a minute to untie them becoming more aware of the strange feeling of the dress tight against his upper body, the delicate straps over his bare shoulders, the gossamer material of his full skirt. He thought again of how he looked now--that slender body, his face looking so feminine, the flowing blonde curls.

He stopped toying with the flowers and reached up with his free hand, tugging on the hair. He felt is tug on his scalp. Was this his hair? Or had they just woven a wig onto his head? He looked at his hand in the lace glove, the pink frosted nails visible through the lacy mesh, tried for a moment to peel the long glove off, but found it impossible--the glove fit so tightly, and he couldn't manage to get it to slide down.

Of course, there were no handles on the doors in the back of the cop car. And if he did open the door and run, did he really want to be running around the Bronx alone--like this?

"I'm a princess." The words had just sprung to his lips unbidden. Just like in the park, but this time they had come even more easily. And the panic and fear? The tears?

I don't even know who I am anymore, he realized. Slave Lord is reprogramming me. Making me helpless and scared, making me--what did the EMT say? Fit for looking pretty and having sex and nothing more?

I can't just give in to this, he decided. I have to fight it. But how?

He looked at the backs of the cops' heads--if they were even cops. And raising an eyebrow, he shrugged. It was worth a try.

"Where are we going now?" He asked, letting his voice slide into a slightly higher register.

"Shut up," the one with a shaved head said.

"I just wonder where we're going. Can't you tell me?"

Shaved head turned around and looked at Carter. He smiled. "You remember me?"

Carter shook his head.

"Yeah. Well, you're the one who gave me this crink in my nose," the man said, pointing to his Z shaped nose. "Spent me a year in Ryker's Island thanks to you."

"You should thank her," the other cop said. "It's an improvement, you ask me."

"Har har. Well, I don't she'll be breaking any noses anymore. Looks like she's going to be spending more time sucking cock."

"Never," Carter said.

"Oh? Boss says you're going to be spending a LOT of time on your knees, Princess."

"I'll get my body back, and then I'll find you and break your neck." It was a tactic Carter had used before in a tight spot. Provoking guys, getting under their skin, using it to make an opening, but this time he was surprised by the man's reaction as Bald Head just started laughing.

"You? Break my neck? Hahahaha."

"Go ahead and laughed. I kicked your ass before. Even now, like this, I could kick the crap out of you."

The man just laughed some more and shook his head. "You're cute when you try to talk tough," he said.

Carter felt his cheeks flush. His new reality seemed to weight down on him, a shocking realization--he was sitting here in a white dress, holding flowers, and he was as skinny and small as a teenage girl, and no one would respect him as a man anymore, no one would take him seriously, no man would consider him even the slightest threat. Just as he wouldn't have--didn't even see himself as any kind threat, take himself seriously. He was not, he realized, a real man. Not anymore. "Maybe... maybe I'm more dangerous than I look," he tried, not wanting to give up, to accept that he would not be taken seriously anymore, but the man just laughed some

more, and not a forced laugh or even a mocking laugh, but the kind of laugh you here come out of someone when they see a kitten or a puppy trying to act ferocious.



"You remind me of my little sister," the other guy said. "It's like Betty Boop trying to talk trash."

"Oh my God," Bald Head said. "Oh my God, you're right. It's like getting threatened by Minnie Mouse... Hahahahaha."

And Carter crossed his slender arms and looked away as the men sat and laughed and laughed and laughed at him.

They drove down to the East Village, parked the car on the street. As soon as they opened the door, Carter kicked one of them in the knee and ran, but Baldy grabbed him by the arm, then threw him over his shoulder and carried him kicking and punching up a narrow set of stairs and to an upstairs apartment in an old Brownstone, where he plopped the little man down on a dirty cot, and Carter looked over to see Slave Lord standing there with a syringe, smiling.



Searching deep within and fighting the brainwashing and conditioning he'd been subjected to, Carter lunged at Slave Lord, hoping to somehow grab the syringe and stick it into HER, but Slave Lord easily stepped out of the way and Carter tripped over the hem of his dress and stumbled, falling onto his side and rolling on his back. Slave Lord straddled him, laughing, and the two thugs laughed. With her free hand, Slave Lord slapped Carter across the face. "From Princess," Slave Lord said, stabbing the needle into Carter's belly, "to prostitute."

Carter screamed in pain as the elixir flooded into his system, filling him once again with burning pain, but he did not pass out immediately. Slave Lord grabbed a fistful of his hair and yanked it, hard, forcing him to turn his head. "Look," Slave Lord commanded.

Carter opened his eyes, and he saw Maxine's face on a flickering old black and white television. Maxine was sleeping peacefully. "Turn the trick," Slave Lord says, "or I torture her."

"No."

Slave Lord slapped him and slapped him again. "The pain you're suffering now is nothing compared to what I'll do to her. NOTHING."

"Okay," he finally said, as much as anything else in the hopes she would let him pass out, run and hide from the agonizing pain in his body and the terrible agony he felt seeing Maxine on the screen, knowing she was still in danger, still a prisoner, still in the clutches of a depraved sadist. "Okay."

"Turn the trick," Slave Lord as Carter began to fade into the sweet, welcoming blanket of oblivion. "Turn the trick for Maxine."

Chapter 3



Again, our hapless hero found himself floating in a warm, safe place, a place where he felt nothing, needed nothing, but was merely calm and relaxed, where time didn't exist, and he was at peace. It lasted forever, and it lasted for only a moment, and then he became aware, again, of tremendous thirst. He was soooooo thirsty. And there was music... country

music.... Hank Williams singing "Honky Tonkin" and then he heard laughter and the sound of someone yelling, "Order's Up."

He opened his eyes. He saw a woman looking at him. She had curly red hair that spilled out from her little Taylor Swift cowboy hat, and she was wearing a tank top, her bright lime green bra straps slipping out from the tank top straps and so bright against her peachy skin. She was pretty, but really skinny, with no breasts. Big hoop earrings dangled delicately from her ears, and she had big, innocent eyes, and full lips, and he felt himself getting horny looking at her and thinking he would love to get a blow job, to feel those big, soft lips around his member. She smiled, and he saw she had dimples, and the whitest teeth, and God he wanted to fuck her so badly. He felt himself getting a little hard. Maybe he should say hi, because she was looking right at him, and he'd tell her she had a million-dollar smile... wearing all that make-up she was either looking for company anyway, either that, he thought, or else she's a... prostitute?

He looked down at his hand and saw long, lime green nails on a slender, delicate hand, and a bunch of delicate bracelets drawing attention to his tiny little wrist, and then he saw his green bra strap, and looking back up he saw his soft, pretty mouth dropped open into a cute little "O" as he realized that pretty red-head in the mirror he'd been wanting to fuck was actually him.

"Omigod," he whispered. He was sitting at a bar, looking into the mirror. Above the bar was a big pair of bull horns. Turning on his stool he saw people all wearing cowboy hats, country line dancing, and he was wearing a pair of tiny little Daisy Dukes that showed off slender, round, tone legs--a gorgeous pair of legs any girl would love and every guy would love to have wrapped around him. He could feel his dick hard, crushed inside those tiny shorts, and it made him both frustrated and relieved.... He was still a man at least down there, though he now had the face of an angel.

He took a deep breath and tried to calm himself, to let that deep hunger he'd been feeling to bang himself pass. He closed his eyes and breathed. Breathed. Opened his eyes and looked at the gorgeous female face, at his little nose, his big eyes, and he closed his eyes again.

"You want another drink?" He heard someone say.

He opened his eyes and looked up a tall, dark haired man in white t-shirt and a pair of tight jeans. "Um... okay? He said, his voice still the slightly higher, woman's voice he had the last time.

"Cosmo coming right up."

Looking down, Carter saw a napkin with the words, "Turn the Trick" written on it.

He remembered his last meeting with Slave Lord. Maxine. He'd seen her there on the screen. Could it have been fake? Maybe. But she could be alive, and he could still protect her, even as he was now, and all he had to do was... turn the trick?

He didn't like the sound of that. Didn't think it was likely to involve pulling any rabbits out of hats. Looking around, he spotted the exits. Didn't see anyone who seemed like one of Slave Lord's thugs, didn't see anyone who seemed to be watching him.

He could make a run for it. Stop running on Slave Lord's hamster wheel, stop playing the game by her rules. He had allies. Friends. People he could gather and then go after Slave Lord. He stood up, glancing at himself in the mirror, seeing his sway back, his tight, high round ass, like a ballerina. It

was so hard to accept this slender little girl boy was him now. He would run for it. Get help. Escape.

But no. Maxine. He couldn't risk harm coming to Maxine. Wouldn't. Even if it meant....

"This stool free, baby doll?"

He turned. A short older man with a huge belly and sleazy intention. "I'm John," the man said, licking his lips and letting his eyes caress Carter's face and body.

Carter crinkled his nose. It was the first time a man had leered at Carter, looked at him with a look of naked lust, looked at him like Carter was a piece of female meat. Carter's skin crawled. It was... gross to have another man look at him like that, and he recoiled at the feeling of disgust he felt as the fat, flabby man's eyes skim over his slender body.

John, oblivious to Carter's disgust, squatted on the next stool like a pregnant toad, his belly oozing out from under his greasy Miller Lite t-shirt. "What's your name, honey?"

"Dolly," Carter answered without thinking, knowing that was his name now, and the words of the Slave Lord echoed in his mind like a chant: turn the trick. Turn the trick. Turn the trick.

"Let me buy you a drink, Dolly," John said, reaching down and putting his hand on Carter's bare knee.

"Okay," Carter said quietly, forcing a smile onto his face.

John's hand slid up the inside of Carter's soft thigh, and Carter squeezed his legs together and slapped the hand away. "Stop."

John laughed. "Gotta pay first, right, babe?"

Feeling his face flush, Carter nodded. Swallowed.

"Relax," John said. He leaned in, his breath stinking of cigarettes and cheap beer, his Aqua Velva cologne mixing in to create a gag inducing odor of pure chemicalized sleaze. "This your first time, girly?"

Carter nodded. The man grinned, showing crooked, yellow little teeth. "I love breaking in new girls."

The bartender arrived with Carter's Cosmo, and John ordered another as well as a Miller Lite for himself. "Drink up, Dolly," John said.

Carter picked up his drink, and started to sip, and John shook his straw. "Work the straw, sweetie. I'll throw in an extra 10."

Carter sighed. Thought of Maxine. He had to do it. For her. He puckered up, thought of a woman going down on him, of scenes in movies where women had felled a banana or a lollipop, and let the straw slip into his soft lips, and then he started to bob up and down on the straw, sucking and then glancing up from beneath his red curls and meeting John's eyes.

John's mouth dropped open, his eyes hard and glassy, and he let his hand drop to his lap. "Yeah... yeah... that's good."



Carter went back to working the straw, closed his eyes and tried to think of nothing and no one, to block it all out of his mind, but instead he saw himself, like he was watching himself from an overhead camera, saw himself in his daisy dukes and tank top, his little cowgirl hat and red curls, going down on a straw like some dumb little slut, and he was sickened at what he was doing, what he'd become, what he was about to do.

Someone help me, he thought. Someone save me. Don't let this happen.

"Oh... baby..." John said. "You drive me wild."

Carter felt like throwing his drink in the pervert's face, but he had to do whatever it took to save Maxine, and so he decided to push the scene forward, to get it over with before he puked all over himself in disgust. He finished sucking down his drink, set the glass down and climbed onto John's lap, straddling him and instantly feeling John's stiff member throbbing against his thigh.

John slipped his arms around Carter's waist, and Carter fought against the urgent need to jump off the man's lap and get away from that THING. Instead, he leaned in close and whispered, "you want me to... turn a trick?"

"Yeah. Yeah. God, yeah, you sexy little bitch."

"Hey," the bartender yelled. "Take it to the parking lot."

John stood, trying to lift Carter like he would carry the pretty little man out of the bar, but he was fat and weak, and his flabby arms failed him, and he dropped Carter to the floor after taking only one step. "Ow." Carter squealed.

"Oh, shit," John said, laughing. "Ha hahahaha. Oh shit."

Carter struggled to get to his feet, and John just stood there laughing, but then a guy who'd been watching took Carter's soft little hand and helped him to his feet.

"Thanks," Carter said, glancing up at the man gratefully.

John threw a fat arm possessively around Carter's waist and bellowed, "Yeah, thanks. She's a clumsy little dame, right? But a great fuck."

Carter cringed, blushed, looked down at his little cowboy boots.

"You with this guy?" The man said, eager for a chance to punch the fat drunk in the face.

"Yes," Carter said without looking up, putting a hand on the man's chest, realizing "John" had bigger tits than he did. "We're... um... together."

"Yeah. See? Now me and this hot little piece of ass are heading out for a little fun, so excuse us."

John started to steer them toward the door, but the man grabbed Carter's slender little wrist and said, "you sure about that?"

Carter's heart skipped a beat, and he felt a rush of gratitude for the man who wanted to protect him, but he had to do what he had to do. "It's fine," Carter said softly. "But thanks."

"Well, you be careful."

"Okay."

"And don't forget your purse."

"Purse? I don't..." the man reached down and grabbed a little leather purse with a western fringe from the floor next to Carter's stool and handed it to him. "Oh," Carter said slinging the purse strap over his shoulder, feeling silly and feminine and absurd.

"Yeah, yeah. Let's go, baby." With his flabby arm around Carter's waist, John began to drag the fragile little man toward the door. Carter felt a rush of confused emotions--disgust as being manhandled by a fat old pervert, gratitude toward the man who'd offered to protect him--but then he heard, or thought he heard--the whispers---

"Is that HIM?" "No way. That's a chick." "No. He had his face done. That's HIM. It's the I need Dick Dude. I know it." Cameras flashed. His chin fell to his chest. He thought about that face he'd seen in the mirror--that pretty, big-eyed girl, the girl that didn't look anything like him, how did they know it was him? Was Slave Lord leaking the stuff out through social media?

John dragged Carter out of the bar, into the parking lot and into the back of a beat up, Bondo splattered VW microbus. Carter felt his heart race. The door to the van slammed shut. In the back--no seats. Old musty sleeping bags tossed about on the floor. Tattered black velvet posters glued to the walls and ceiling, and Carter crinkled his nose in disgust as he realized this was John's home--where he lived. It smelt like sweat, cheap beer, cigarettes and onions.

John slapped Carter on the ass. "You sure are a hot little piece of teenage ass, aren't you?"

Carter didn't know what to say or do. How he was supposed to respond. He wanted to kick the fat freak in the balls, but instead he forced himself to smile and managed a strangled little giggle.

"Let's get down to business," John said, licking his lips. "Do me."

"Do...? What...?"

"Do me. With your hand."

Turn the trick. Turn the trick. Turn the trick.

John sat back against the wall of the van, spread his chubby legs.

Carter crawled forward. He felt sick, felt his eyes burning, fought back the tears. He knelt there, his curly red hair in his eyes, on his hands and knees, frozen, and John just laughed and said, "come on now, girly. Get to it. Daddy's as hard as the rock of ages.'

Carter reached forward and pushing his slender hand under John's belly roll, undid the top button on his Levis and then found the zipper and began to pull it down. John closed his eyes and moaned. Carter soon had the pants pulled down, and closing his own eyes yanked down the top of John's underwear, the man's member popping free, hard and stiff.

He sighed. Do what you have to do, Carter. Be a man about it He'd never touched another man's dick, certainly had never even thought about giving another man a hand job, but now he reached out and wrapped his soft palm around the man's shaft and biting his lip, struggling against his tears and disgust, he began to slide his hand up and down, just the way he would do himself, and John moaned and said, "how much is this going to be, Dolly?"

"How much?"

"For the trick?"

Carter didn't know and didn't care, so he just blurted out the first number that came to his mind, "50 dollars."

As Carter kept working John, John fished in his pocket and threw a couple crumpled bills in Carter's face. Carter kept working, just wanting it all to be over with, ended, and John's moaning started to fall into rhythm with Carter's stroking, and they both got faster and faster, and finally John grunted, and Carter squeaked and jumped to the side as the man's jizz spurted into the air.

It was dirty and sordid and sad and disgusting, and Carter felt his skin crawl, and the tears finally poured free, rolling down his smooth cheeks, and he wiped his hand against one of the old dirty sleeping bags in disgust.

"Jesus, Dolly. You really know how to ruin the moment," John said with a chuckle. "You make me feel like a dirty old man."

"I'm sorry," Carter said. "It's my first time."

"Well, you got a lot to learn, baby doll. A lot. Take your money and get the fuck out of here."

"I don't..."

"Take your fucking money you nasty little bitch."

Carter didn't want the money, didn't care, but he reached out and grabbed the crumpled bills, and then as he started to turn and crawl out of the van, John reached out and slapped a cold steel handcuff around Carter's wrist. "You're under arrest for solicitation, sweetheart."

"What?"

"Like I said. You got a lot to learn, Dollface."

Carter found himself with his arms handcuffed behind him. John fished a walkie talkie out from among the sleeping bags and said, "the press ready?" An answer crackled back over the old-fashioned machine. "Oh yeah."

The double back doors to the van were flung open and Carter found himself blinded by flashing lights as a small group of photographers and camera men recorded him being helped out of the van and lead to a police cruiser. He heard one reporter, standing in front of the live camera for the local news: "So Carter Blue, also known as the superhero C3, continues his Charlie Sheen-esque meltdown as he is arrested for prostitution outside a country western bar in Poughkeepsie, New York. He is being led to the squad car behind us now."

Carter could practically feel the camera caressing his lithe body, taking in his long, soft, coltish legs, his round little but in those tight little daisy dukes, those slender little arms.

* * * *



Carter slipped into shock, barely aware of the drive to the police station, his processing, the shooting of his headshots, which would spread from Kiev to Kabul, from Saigon to Siam and all parts in between before morning. He heard nothing, just mumbled and did what he was told, right up until the point where the cop led him to a large holding cell. It was painted lime green and white, with dim, buzzing light bulbs behind metal grating, and long, filthy benches along the back wall opposite the bars. Five big, burly men looked up at Carter with hard, hungry eyes that started with his curly

red hair, lingered on his face, and then slid down his body as they mentally stripped him naked.

Carter instantly snapped out of his funk, the immediacy of the threat like a bucket of cold water in his face. He, standing there in his tiny little daisy dukes, showing off those long, smooth legs, his tight little top, his pretty face... so small and weak and vulnerable. His knees went together, and he put a gentle hand on the cop's arm. "Um... can't I... maybe? A different cell?"

"What? The girl's holding cell?"

"Yes? Please?"

"You ain't a girl," the cop said, and he put a hand on the small of Carter's back and pushed the frightened little man into the cell. "Though, you are prettier than any of the girls we've had in here in a long time."

"You're not a girl?" One of the men said, standing. He was wearing a black leather vest. On the left breast was the image of a zombie eagle with a bloody dagger in its mouth-- sign of The Dead Eagle Gang.

"Boss, that's C3."

"What?"

"Yeah. I saw it on the news. He's been turning hisself into a chick."

"That right?" Boss said, stepping toward Carter.

"No," Carter said. "My name's Dolly."

"Dolly? Who the hell names a kid Dolly? You're s shitty liar for a woman," Boss said, and now he was towering over Carter, forcing Carter to back up until Carter was against the wall, trapped. "You do look like a broad, 'cept for no tits."

Boss's buddy, who went by the name Freak, stood slightly behind his boss. "Naw. That's C3. I saw it on the news. "

"Are you C3?" Boss said, taking Carter's chin in his hand and tilting his head back.

Carter tried to slap Boss' hand away, but Boss grabbed Carter's wrist and then tightened his grip on Carter's chin. "Ow."

"I don't think I believe this little thing is or could ever have been a man. Nah. Not even possible."

"Look and see," Freak said.

"Yeah," Boss said grabbing the top of Carter's Daisy Dukes. "Maybe I should just yank down these little shorts a yours and see what you got between your legs."

Carter struggled, trying to get away from the man, but Boss had him pinned against the wall, and Carter was too weak now to even push the man back in the slightest way. "Let me go."



Boss unbuttoned Carter's shorts. Slipped his hand down inside the tight denim, cupped Carter's soft, round ass with his bare hands. "That's a nice little ass," he said. "Real nice."

"Let me go," Carter said again, frustrated. Scared.

"You heard her," someone said.

Freak turned and said, "You gonna do something about it?"

"Yeah," the man said, and he smashed his fist into Freak's face, spun kicked him on the temple and then

slammed his elbow into the back of Freak's head, sending him crashing to the ground, unconscious.

Carter's eyes lit up with hope. This was a serious fighter. Someone who could protect him.

Boss threw Carter to the ground, and he fell down on his hip with a yelp. Boss turned to face Carter's knight. "You just made a huge mistake, shithead."

The man didn't say anything. Carter noticed the man stood in a perfect hapkido fighter's stance, his weight back, hands forward, protecting his center, and he was breathing calmly, his face empty. The other inmates started making bets, but Carter felt his heart flutter with joy. He knew fighters, and as Boss lumbered forward, a street fighter, all brawn and bravado, Carter knew that he was about to see that JERK get taken down.

"Oooooooooohhhhhh, Kung fu? You gonna chop me or pull some other kind of martial arts shit?"

The man didn't speak. He only waited.

Boss lunged. In a graceful and fluid series of kicks and sweeps and strikes, the man effortlessly beat Boss to the ground. Then, he walked over to Carter and reached down. "Miss?"

Carter took the man's hand and smiled gratefully as the man helped him to his feet. "Thank you." Carter said. "I was so... well anyway, what's your, I mean, can you tell me your name?" Carter's heart was fluttering, he couldn't focus, he was aware that he sounded like an excited schoolgirl, and it annoyed him that he was getting so giddy and silly, especially given the other man's impressive, masculine calm.

"I am Malachy Midnight, Dolly." He put an arm around Carter's waist, just like John had, but this time Carter leaned in, put a man on Malachy's rock-hard chest, and he smiled up at the man, feeling safe and protected as

Malachy led him over to a narrow bench and helped him sit. Then, Malachy went over, picked up Carter's cowboy hat, walked back and plopped onto Carter's curly red head. "You look cute in that hat, miss."

Carter giggled and rolled his eyes. "I guess I'm supposed to be some kind of cowgirl???"

And then the wall exploded, and the cell filled with thick, grey gas. The gas blinded Carter, stung his lungs. Slave Lord. It had to be. He fell to his knees and tried to crawl away from the area of the explosion, but someone grabbed him and lifted him in the air. Squinting, Carter saw through the gas induced years that he was being carried over some man's shoulder. He screamed, "Malachy."

As he and his captor emerged from the cell, the man plopped Carter down on his butt and held something out to him. "Take this." He yelled.

Without thinking, Carter reached out and grabbed the blurry object, then bringing it closer saw that he was now holding a knife--a knife with a blood-smeared blade. He tossed it away, and then someone threw a hood over his head, his hands were quickly bound, and he felt a needle stab into his arm just before he faded out again, back to the soft, dark velvet world of painless existence.

