

Regime

Penny Birch



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Contents

Cover Page

Title Page

<u>Copyright Page</u>

Dedication

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Chapter Four

Chapter Five

Chapter Six

Chapter Seven

Chapter Eight

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This book is a work of fiction. In real life, make sure you practise safe sex.

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REGIME

Sophie reached in, picking up the most enormous wooden paddle, laughing as she skipped back to Annabelle and handed it to her.

'A good choice,' Annabelle said. 'Now, Penny, fill my glass, and Marcus's too. You shall be maid, but you may take some yourself if you wish.'

'Maid?'

'Don't question me, Penny.'

'No, Miss Annabelle.'

'That's Mistress Annabelle to you. Sophie, I think, had better call me Miss Yates for now, at least until after her punishment.'

'My punishment?' Sophie blurted out.

'Your punishment,' Annabelle said. 'Get up.'

'But I thought Penny . . .'

'You have just earned yourself an extra two cane strokes. Now do as you are told. Stand up and take off your panties.'

By the same author:

PENNY IN HARNESS
A TASTE OF AMBER
BAD PENNY
BRAT
IN FOR A PENNY
PLAYTHING
TIGHT WHITE COTTON
TIE AND TEASE
PENNY PIECES
TEMPER TANTRUMS

One

They had attended to my bottom, so it was only fair that I attend to their cocks.

I was glowing, my cheeks hot and bare behind me, tingling with that lovely fresh-spanked feeling. My little skirt was tucked up into its waistband, my panties rolled down, just to the top of my thighs. I could feel the heat in my pussy, along with a wet, tickling sensation around my bumhole. What I wanted to do was just spread my thighs, then and there on the grass, masturbating to orgasm in front of the men who'd punished me, the men who had given me a bare bottom spanking.

Both had their cocks out, and I do know my duty. It was nice to think they were both so excited, by having stripped my bottom, by having punished me, by me. I went to Anderson first, crawling, as a spanked girl should. He pushed his cock out towards my face and I took it in, sucking up that lovely male taste, mouthing on the firm, hot meat. Bart watched, stroking his own cock, his eyes flicking between my face and my bare bum.

I gave him a wiggle, inviting him in, up my pussy. He grinned, responding immediately, and a moment later he was on the grass behind me, taking my hips in his strong, smooth hands, his cock probing between my thighs. Up he went, deep inside me, filling my pussy with hard cock, just the way my mouth was filled. I let them take control,

fucking my head and rear end as I put my hand back to masturbate.

It was so good, just rocking to the motion of their cocks, my fingers busy with my pussy. I could feel everything, the prickling of my skin, my bare boobs swinging against the material of my top, the tight, expectant feeling in my tummy. All that was good, gorgeous in fact, but not so good as having a hot bottom, a hot, bare bottom, a hot, bare, spanked bottom.

Skirt up and panties down, that's the way to treat me. No warning, no elaborate ritual, no fancy clothes, just a good, firm spanking. It's what I deserve, what I need, what ought to be done to me, frequently and without a thought for when or where. My bum had come out of my panties, bare and pink in the summer sunlight, then pinker still, then red as I kicked and squirmed and wriggled my way through my punishment, squalling like the naughty little brat I am, my head full of pain and humiliation.

I came, feeling my pussy clamp on Bart's cock and hearing his answering groan. Anderson's cock jerked while I was still at orgasm, filling my mouth with hot, slimy spunk just at the right time. For a long moment I held it, one finger pressed to my clit, sperm dribbling out around my lips, sucking and swallowing in a frantic, instinctive rhythm. Then it was over and I was slumping down, my body going slowly limp. I stayed there, holding Anderson, while Bart finished off. He stayed inside until he was close, pulling out at the last moment to come all over my spanked cheeks and finish off by rubbing the head of his cock in the sweaty, sperm-soiled crease between them.

Ten minutes later we were sipping cold white wine on that same lawn, relaxed and happy. Both of them had that rare quality of being able to thoroughly abuse a girl when she wants it, yet to treat her as an equal when she doesn't. It is rare, and much appreciated. My girlfriend Amber has it, and a handful of others, but not many.

It was especially satisfying because I'd only called in on Anderson on the off chance. Amber and I had been driving down to a show near Petersfield. Not really in the mood for a day of horses and horsey people, I'd asked if she could drop me at Anderson's. She'd gone one better and swapped me for Vicky, Anderson's girlfriend, leaving me to the tender mercies of the two boys. My panties had been down before the sound of the car had even faded.

'Sorry not to see you at Morris Rathwell's club last night, Penny,' Bart said, filling his glass.

'I didn't even know it was on,' I admitted. 'Any good?'

'Noisy, smoky and irritating,' Anderson cut in. 'Vicky was in just a pair of rubber knickers and high heels, and on a lead. Male subs still kept pestering her to dominate them. I let Melody Rathwell put her on a cross in the end and use a dog whip on her. It didn't stop them.'

'The cabaret was good,' Bart said. 'They had Sophie Cherwell dressed up in a traffic warden's uniform. They did this little scene with Melody as an angry driver.'

'Melody put a mince and onion pie with chips down Sophie's knickers and spanked her,' Anderson added. 'That was worth seeing.'

'I dare say,' I answered, thinking of little blonde Sophie with her panties full of mess. It made an appealing picture.

'We made a good bet as well,' Anderson went on. 'There was a new couple there. Well, I suppose they've been around about a year, but they think they know everything, the girl especially.'

'Annabelle Yates,' Bart added, 'little Miss Dominant herself. Good looking, yes, but so far up herself you wouldn't believe it. Marcus is as bad; fancies himself as Sir Stephen from O.'

'They're both dominant?'

'Old school naturals, no switching, nothing. Annabelle even thinks it's submissive to have her boobs out. Pity.'

'That's what they say,' Anderson cut in. 'I don't believe a word of it, especially with Annabelle. The trouble is, looking the way she does, she gets every male sub in the place expecting her to act the perfect mistress. I don't suppose she'd dare admit she wanted to be on the receiving end.'

'Wishful thinking, Anderson,' Bart answered him. 'You just want to spank her.'

'And you don't?'

Bart just laughed.

'So what did you bet them?' I asked.

'Oh they were going on about how people are either naturally dominant or submissive; the usual crap,' Bart answered. 'Annabelle believes everything the male subs feed her, about being her eternally devoted slave and so forth. I said it was all just flattery, to get her attention, and that they'd say the same to any pretty girl in head-to-toe black leather.'

'Sure.'

'She answered by saying that there was this guy who's not just devoted to her, but actually dependent on her. He claims that to him she is the centre of existence, not himself, apparently. I said it was just bullshit and she got pretty pissed off. In the end we agreed to admit she was right if they could get a girl to have herself tattooed as their property, on her own accord. They went for it.'

'You're a bastard, Bart Pelham. What if some poor girl ends up with "Property of Mistress Annabelle" tattooed on her tummy or wherever?"

'Don't call me a bastard, Penny Birch. It was Annabelle's idea, she was really hot on it. Anyway, it has to be on the girl's pussy mound. We went through all that in detail. To win, they have to find a girl who'll go to a tattooist, on her own, with her pussy shaved. The tattoo has to be an unequivocal declaration, including her own name, like "I, Penny, declare myself the property of Mistress Annabelle Yates and Master Marcus Sowerby"."

'She'll need a good tattooist.'

'Well, whatever. She has to sign a contract too, in front of Anderson and me.'

'Why does it have to be a girl?'

'Well mainly because Marcus insisted on it. Anyway, knowing Annabelle, she could probably find a man. She's strong and looks really impressive. Our bet is she can't find a woman to do it.'

'What counts as failure?'

'They get three chances, and they're one down already. There was a guy doing piercing and tatts at the club. Annabelle spent an hour tormenting some girl I don't know, on a cross, feeding her shots of vodka and Red Bull as well, then asked her if she'd do it. The girl just freaked.'

'Doesn't mess around, does she, this Annabelle?'

'It was far too fast; she never really stood a chance.'

'That's not what I meant. Is this for money?'

'Not cash, no, a case of La Tâche.'

'That's expensive, isn't it?'

'A few hundred a bottle. They can afford it. He was a floor manager for one of the big Japanese banks. She was a broker, in commodities I think. Both of them were on silly money salaries. They quit to set up an organic farm somewhere near Buckingham.'

'And if you lose?'

'We don't intend to lose.'

Those of my friends who go to kinky clubs every week or two can be pretty blasé about it. I don't, and I'm not. Walking through the London streets with my coat clutched tight over a diminutive school uniform felt naughty, and slightly scary too. It was the right image, rude but not too knowing, and very English.

It was actually the real thing too, which I was pleased to be able to get into. All Amber had done was shorten the skirt so that my panties showed when I bent over. Other than that and the plain white blouse, I had the genuine tie, tight white panties, a plain sports bra, little white ankles socks and sensible shoes. Bunches in my hair and a lollipop completed the look.

People were looking at me and, however much I kept telling myself they'd just think I was going to a fancy dress party, it was hard to accept. Far easier was to imagine they knew exactly what I was doing: that I wasn't dressed to flirt, but to improve my chances of getting a spanking; that it wasn't just a bit of fun, but an image I'd chosen because it makes me feel sexy.

It was a lot easier inside the club, with everyone in rubber, leather, other uniforms, even stark naked. Morris Rathwell spotted me almost immediately, waving me past the queue and taking a leisurely grope of my bum in payment. I told him to pretend not to know me and to pass it on to Melody, Harmony and anyone else there who knew me. He nodded, grinning and I was sure he was going to demand his cock sucked for his compliance when Melody came over with some problem for him to sort out. I excused myself, moving on into the club.

It was typical - a big, gloomy cellar, with several rooms connected by low arches. The walls were painted black, with whipping stools and bondage equipment scattered

around. The music was deafening, the air hazy with smoke and thick with the smells of rubber, leather and sweat. It was already packed, mainly with submissive men, in collars and black leather pants, little else. Two offered their leads to me as I crossed the floor. Unable to be heard, I declined by shaking my head.

Morris had bothered to get a licence for once, so I managed to get a glass of brandy rather than the normal bottle of warm beer. I took it to a corner table, watching for people I knew and also for Annabelle and Marcus. She was supposed to be easy to spot: above average height, very slim, with blonde hair cropped short. What really marked her out was a solid silver ring and cross, the female symbol, which she apparently like to wear in her tummy button piercing. He was less easy: marginally taller, or the same height against her in heels, dark haired, but fairly nondescript. Together, they couldn't be hard to find.

They weren't. I'd hardly settled myself into the dark corner I'd chosen to watch from when a man stepped through an arch. He was in black leather, boots, trousers, jacket, with a black riding crop and handcuffs at his belt, a typical male dominant image. I looked, automatically wondering what it would be like to be spanked by him, only to have my attention taken away and my breath too.

It was Annabelle, it had to be, and Bart hadn't been joking when he said she was impressive. Just to look at her made me want to crawl to her feet and beg to be punished. She was in skintight rubber, a two-piece, hugging every contour of her slender body, black and shiny, with the gentle curves of her hips and breasts cleverly picked out in textured panels. Her midriff was bare, the silver symbol plain to see, also her face, immaculately made up in black and silver, nothing more. Shiny black leather boots reached to her knees, buckled at the sides and with at least five inches of spiky heel. A hood covered her head, leaving her

face exposed in an oval and with a tall platinum blonde ponytail sprouting from the top.

I saw that she was holding something and, as she stepped into the room, I realised that it was a cluster of leads. Each led back to a collar, and each collar was around the neck of a male slave, seven in all, crawling behind her with doglike servility. She had a whip hanging from one wrist and was holding a long black cigarette holder. As yet another man hastily positioned a chair for her without even having to be told, she drew on her cigarette, flicking the ash on to the back of one of her slaves with a casual motion. She certainly had the image, and with all the attention she was getting it was easy to imagine her falling for her own propaganda.

With her seated, the slaves formed a semicircle at her feet, kneeling with their heads bowed. This left their bottoms towards me, and I could see that they'd been whipped. Two others stood behind her, and at a click of her fingers one scurried away to the bar. I settled down to watch.

I felt sorry for Marcus. He was her boyfriend, and he'd been cut out completely. Nine men were paying court to her, eager for her slightest touch, and not one had the courtesy to ask him if he minded or even to address him. I suppose he was just irrelevant to them, with everything focused on the woman who had condescended to be their mistress. I know a lot of submissive men think of women as naturally dominant, so presumably to them he was just one more slave, despite his dress and attitude.

That attitude was very clear. He stayed close to Annabelle and her pack of slaves, but his eyes were elsewhere, glancing at those girls in cute outfits, submissive or otherwise. He was even watching Melody, who looked very good indeed, with her big, muscular bottom packed into torn leather trousers, her dark skin

showing through the gaps. If her image wasn't intended as spankable, then that wasn't what Marcus's eyes were saying. There were several other pretty girls too, all with plenty of attention on them, and I could see that he was trying to work out how to get the best out of the situation. I didn't want him fixing on me, in case it made her jealous, so I stayed back in the shadows.

I was so focused on Annabelle and Marcus that I nearly jumped out of my skin when a hand closed on my bottom. I turned, ready with a hot answer, only to find Sophie Cherwell grinning at me. Like me, she was in school uniform, with her blonde hair in a ponytail. The main difference was that her blouse was open and she had no bra, leaving her boobs half on show with her tie hanging down between them. They're quite big, bigger than mine anyway, and I could see red marks on what was showing. She was aroused too, her nipples making little hard bumps under the thin cotton.

'Hi,' I greeted her. 'Been punished?'

'Harmony gave me a titty whipping,' she answered. 'What's this we're not supposed to talk to you?'

'Oh you can talk to me, just don't give away that I'm not a novice.'

'Right. What are you up to?'

'Something complicated. Do you know the girl with the dogs?'

'Mistress Dominique, or Annabelle to you and me. Yeah, she's cute. A bit old school, maybe. She won't go sub, not for anyone.'

'So I hear.'

'Mel tried. I was there. I thought Annabelle was going to wet herself, she was that scared.'

'Scared? Why?'

'Search me. Maybe she thought Mel was going to get her out of her precious little knickers whether she liked it or not.'

'Melody wouldn't do that.'

'No, but she could. I'm not sure Annabelle understands how Mel is.'

'More likely she wants it done.'

'Could be. Look, anyway, I've promised Morris I'll go in the cage. Come in with me, it'll be more fun with two.'

'I hate dancing like that.'

'Who said anything about dancing? Come on, Penny, we're dressed the same, it'll look good!'

All the time we'd been talking she had been fondling my bottom, first through my panties and then with her hand down the back of them. She was hard to resist at the best of times, always bubbling with enthusiasm and full of dirty ideas. Now, with her fingers gently tickling the turn of my bottom and the promise of much more if I complied, it was impossible to resist.

I'd seen the cage, a cylinder of thick wire mesh with a massive iron ring set at the top, like a giant birdcage. Girls danced in it, often nude, and usually suspended above the audience, so that everyone could get a good look but they couldn't be touched. With two schoolgirls trapped in it, it was going to be pretty popular, which I didn't mind at all, especially with Sophie to take the lead.

She led me over by the hand, to where the thing was standing on the floor of one of the smaller rooms. A heavy chain had been padlocked to the ring and led up to a massive iron hook in the shadows of the ceiling. I got dragged in, Sophie giggling in delight as Harmony locked the door on us. Sophie's arms were around me, and we were kissing even as the cage was hauled clear of the floor.

It wasn't hard to let go, and I'd quickly let her unbutton my blouse and flip my bra up over my boobs. The thing with showing off in school uniform, or any sexy costume really, is to keep it on but let everything show, eventually. They could all see up our skirts anyway, but Sophie and I had a long snog before our panties came down, and by then I was getting genuinely turned on.

We were sitting, cross-legged and face to face, skirts rucked up so our panty-clad bottoms pressed to the mesh of the cage floor. Both of us had our boobs out and we were kissing and stroking each other's chests, with perhaps fifty people watching us from below. The mesh was wide, which left squares of panty-covered bottom sticking through, which people would occasionally pinch or flick at with whips and paddles.

I was hoping she'd take charge, but so was she, and it was me who eventually could hold back no longer. Our legs were locked together, with her thighs wide and the gusset of her panties stretched taut. She was wet, with the material clinging to the folds of her pussy. I could smell her, and I wanted to lick her, but there wasn't much room in the cage and there were just too many people watching.

Suddenly I just had to have the attention on her. I grabbed her around her bum, tugging at her panties. She squealed in mock protest, but lifted herself obligingly. Her panties came down in my hands, to cheers and claps as her bare pussy settled on the mesh. Someone smacked at her sex with a crop and she gave a squeal of pain, looking down. A man had done it, some muscle-bound oaf in a leather jacket, looking up and grinning at her, his shaved head directly beneath her pussy.

She had lifted up as he caught her, and he demanded that she sit back, ordering her so that he could continue with her whipping. In answer she gave a hangdog look, calling him master and promising to be good. He may not have heard, but he got the idea, grinning up and calling her a whore. She spread her pussy lips for him, an inch from the mesh, right over a hole, settling slowly, her belly tensing as he pulled back his crop to take another smack at her.

Her pee caught him full in the face, right up his nose, to leave him cursing and spluttering for an instant before ducking down. Not that it did him much good. The crowd were packed too tight, and she had emptied most of what was in her bladder on him, splashing on his bald dome and running down his neck before he managed to get away.

As he ran for it, Sophie was laughing so much that she couldn't keep herself steady, spraying her pee out over the men below us. One, a huge, tattooed man, came up close, his mouth wide, catching her stream as she steadied herself. He drank what he could, the rest trickling down around his face until she had finished, when she pressed her pussy to the mesh and let him kiss it as he strained up on tip-toe.

She was giggling crazily, and so was I. We went back to playing, Sophie rolling herself up with her panties around her knees to leave her pussy sticking out, right in front of me. She was shaved, her plump little mound guite bare, her lips puffy, the opening of her pussy glistening wet. I wanted to go down between her thighs, but it was so open, so exposed, with so many people watching us and egging us on. Their words were mainly drowned out by the music, but it was obvious what they wanted - us, with everything that schoolgirls mattered bare. two with their clothes disarranged, pleasuring each other.

I'm not sure I could have done it, but Sophie didn't leave me much option. She was tussling with me, trying to pull me down on top of her. With a sudden motion she had kicked her legs up, trapping my head under her panties. I was pulled down, my mouth open in surprise, then full of pussy flesh as she pulled me in.

Having another girl handle me like that is more than I can resist. Her lowered panties were pressing me down into her sex, and I just had to lick. It was a really awkward position too, with my own bum stuck up and pressed to the mesh, while the cage was swinging. I licked anyway, tasting her pussy, my inhibitions fading in my excitement. She held me there, licking, as somebody with a long whip began to smack my bottom through the wire.

It hurt, and I was soon squirming, but Sophie wouldn't let me go. She was going to come in my face, with everyone cheering and demanding ruder and ruder things. Somebody yelled at me to pull down my panties and I did it, reaching back and tugging them down, so that it was my bare flesh that was pressed to the wire. My pussy was showing, actually pressed to the wire, and I could just imagine the squares of plump, hairy flesh with the wet pink centre. My boobs were showing too, dangling under my chest, just touching the wire so that my nipples poked through.

Fortunately the cage was far too high for anyone to stick a cock up me, or I'm sure I'd have been fucked. There are always plenty of cocks out at Rathwell's club, and any girl who wants to show off the rear view of her pussy needs somebody to guard her or she'll get taken by surprise. As it was, I'm not sure I'd have minded, because Sophie was starting to come and I badly wanted the same.

I would have done as I was told, and masturbated, but Sophie was not in the mood to be selfish. No sooner had she come than she released my head and began to pull at me to get my body over hers. I obliged, swivelling around to let her get at my pussy. It was difficult and I had to get one leg out of my panties, which put me in some pretty ludicrous positions and drew laughter from the crowd. I

didn't care, I was too high, and as soon as I was properly bare I sat down squarely in Sophie's face, wiggling my bottom.

She began to lick and I was in ecstasy straight away. Her tongue was on my clit and I could feel her nose pressed to my bumhole, wriggling in my slimy wet. I had her ankles, holding her legs up so that everyone could see her pussy while she licked me. Both of us were really enjoying showing off; two rude, dirty little schoolgirls, dishevelled and sweaty, wet with sweat and each other's juice. I could see the expressions on the faces below me; lust and envy, delight and shock. I was bare, showing it all to a crowd, rude, naked, stripped, with pretty, sweet Sophie licking at my pussy, taking me higher and higher still.

I called out when I came, not that anybody could have heard, but it was good, so very good. As it hit me my mind was focused on the crowd, dozens of people, all focused on me in their lust, all wanting to fill my body with hard cock or to make me lick them to their own ecstasy. For a moment it was pure pleasure, only for the shame and confusion of being so dirty to well up inside me as my climax started to subside. Only for a moment though, until I had climbed off Sophie and we had our arms around each other, kissing and cuddling as we giggled together over what we'd done.

It was only when I felt the lurch of the cage that I realised we were being let down. The big guy who had drunk Sophie's pee was on the chain, along with Melody, but we still came down with a bump. The crowd had given back, but not far, and I crawled out of the cage to find myself looking at a pair of perfectly polished five-inch heels. I kissed one – just an automatic response to the way I felt, and because I was pretty sure whose they were.

Sure enough, it was Annabelle, looking down on me with an amused expression on her face and her cigarette holder between two fingers. Marcus was beside her, also looking down at me, Sophie too as she squeezed out of the cage door.

I looked up, expecting some gesture of dominance, a booted foot on my neck, ash flicked on me, even spit in my hair. Instead she squatted down to stroke my cheek, then Sophie's, looking into our faces and smiling. She reached out, putting a finger under my chin to tilt it up. I met her eyes, which were violet, the most beautiful colour, and very bright, sparkling with mischief.

'So pretty,' she said, 'both of you; small and pretty and a bit impudent. Not broken yet, I judge.'

Sophie gave a nervous giggle. I shook my head, uncertain what to say.

'You will come and sit with us,' she went on. 'Somewhere a little quieter. Slave, drinks.'

One of her attendant men responded immediately, pushing through the crowd. Annabelle took hold of us by our ties, pulling us to our feet. We followed her through one arch and then another, to a small room with a few chairs, a bench and a barrel at the centre. It was a mess, cluttered with glasses and bottles and awash with beer.

'Clean this up; I wish to sit here,' Annabelle instructed, waving vaguely to the barrel.

I watched as they did it. One was really servile, a fat guy in a badly made PVC pouch, actually licking up the spilt beer from the barrel top. Most were less enthusiastic, but they obeyed. I could see how it worked. They wanted attention, and with so many submissive males for every dominant female in the club, there was a lot of competition. If they displeased her they would be dismissed, and that would be the end of their chances. So they cleaned up, only to have Annabelle attach their leads to a piece of equipment in the next room and just leave them there.

The one she'd sent to get drinks returned, and knelt by the barrel until she told him to join the others. He went, but I could sense his reluctance. Annabelle seemed not to notice, but perched herself on the highest of the stools, gesturing to us to sit on the much lower bench. We went, Sophie cuddling up to me and sipping her drink.

The slave had bought vodka and orange, which I hate. My mother always said it was a tart's drink, and I thought for a moment of saying this and of having him punished, but I noticed that Annabelle was drinking the same and held back. I wasn't really in the mood for a whipping and something told me she wasn't the sort to go easy with the crop.

'You have probably heard me called Mistress Dominique,' she said, addressing me, 'but that's for the slaves. You may call me Annabelle. This is Marcus.'

Marcus nodded, grinning and raising his beer bottle to us before taking a drink from it.

'Penny,' I answered.

'Very Malory Towers.'

'It's my real name.'

'Then is suits you. Is this your first club?'

'Yes,' I lied, before Sophie could forget what she was supposed to say, or rather not say. 'I'm a friend of Sophie's; we go way back.'

'A very good friend, I see.'

'Well, yes, I got a bit carried away there. It's just the atmosphere. It's so ... so charged, so easy too. I thought I'd be scared, with guys in masks and carrying whips, but I'm not. In fact I feel really free. I mean, it's hard to feel embarrassed or inhibited when everyone else is being so open about their sexuality. I feel I can do things I've only dared to think about in my fantasies!'

'Submissive fantasies?'

'I suppose so. I've always like the idea of being spanked, but it's not just a physical thing.'

'Do you feel the need to be under somebody's discipline?'

'In a way, yes. To be cared for, and punished when I'm bad, that sort of thing. Sophie's been trying to explain, but I can't claim to really understand. It's all been in my head and, like she said, you've got to experience it first hand.'

'Well, yes and no. This is a good club, as they go, but not everybody takes it seriously.'

'No?'

'Far from it. A lot of the men are just here to gape. Others have no real understanding of what dominance and submission means.'

'Me for one.'

'The first thing to know is that it's not just a role you choose to play. It's who you are.'

'It's a part of me, yes.'

'No, Penny, it's who you are, a submissive woman, which is a very special, very privileged thing to be, but only if you can come to terms with what you are.'

'I see.'

'Do you? I think you are genuine, but you've got a lot of learning to do. A true submissive would never have sat on another woman's face; it would be against her nature.'

'I would rather it had been the opposite way around, really.'

'Naturally.'

She took a sip of her drink, with great care, never risking her lipstick. Watching her brilliant red lips, her burning eyes and the fine, chiselled form of her face, I