



FOUR TAMINGS
IMELDA STARK

Table of Contents

- [**Title Page**](#)
- [**Chapter One**](#)
- [**Chapter Two**](#)
- [**Chapter Three**](#)
- [**Chapter Four**](#)
- [**Chapter Five**](#)
- [**Chapter Six**](#)
- [**Chapter Seven**](#)
- [**Chapter Eight**](#)
- [**Chapter Nine**](#)
- [**Chapter Ten**](#)
- [**Chapter Eleven**](#)
- [**Chapter Twelve**](#)
- [**Chapter Thirteen**](#)
- [**Chapter Fourteen**](#)
- [**Chapter Fifteen**](#)
- [**Chapter Sixteen**](#)
- [**Chapter Seventeen**](#)
- [**Chapter Eighteen**](#)
- [**Chapter Nineteen**](#)
- [**Chapter Twenty**](#)

Four Tamings:
A Novel of Erotic Domination
by Imelda Stark

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For information contact:

Pink Flamingo Media

www.pinkflamingo.com

P.O. Box 632 Richland, MI 49083

USA

About the Author

Imelda Stark is the *nom de plume* of a teacher and practitioner of psychotherapy at a major East Coast medical school (hence the need for a pseudonym). She has been exploring the psychologically complex realm of BD/SM for twenty-four novels now. Imelda strives to combine the eroticism she feels around challenging things happening to willing bottoms with an exploration of how we aficionados of these painful pleasures got to be the way we are. She welcomes and will respond to email at imeldastark1@gmail.com. A complete listing of her works, all of which are available on electronic media, may be found in the Afterword.

Chapter One

Hidden Valley Ranch, also known as Rancho Arroyo Escondido to true initiates, was a unique place in many ways. It had been in the family of its current mistress, Estela Hidalgo Franklin, since nearly a century before the Mexican War whose settlement brought California into the United States around 1850. Back then, the ten-mile-long arroyo arising from a year-round spring producing a hundred gallons a minute of the sweetest water imaginable was a miraculous oasis in the otherwise dry Central California hills inland of the decaying mission of San Luis Obispo. The Hidalgo family had the land in grant from the Governor of Mexico since just before the American Revolution. This happened as a payback for the services of the original Patron against the local bandidos who had been haunting the nearby stretch of El Camino Real until subjected to frontier justice (ie, summary hangings) by the intrepid settler. He had accepted the grant with some reluctance, in that it was a good day's ride from the nearest outpost of civilization. But the unique quality of the land won him over, as it had every family member who had accepted the legacy over the next dozen generations.

It was called Rancho Arroyo Escondido for the first century of its existence, and for good reason. If a traveler didn't know exactly where to look, the narrow entrance to the mouth of the valley was all too easy to miss, even though it contained the only perpetually flowing creek within twenty miles. This hiddenness had everything to do with California geology, as the San Andreas Fault cut sharply across the mouth of the creek, forcing it into a narrow canyon between hundred foot cliffs of the rocky fault scarp. Once the Rio emerged into the broad sandy wash leading towards the Pacific, its waters rapidly disappeared into the gravel expanse to flow underground to the aquifer (or perhaps the sea itself nearly a hundred miles away). Thus, it was little wonder that no one realized what an earthly

paradise was contained in the nominally paltry grant of twenty square miles of apparently desolate territory to Hector Hidalgo for his yeomanlike decimation of the ragged highwaymen that had been plaguing the infrequent travelers up the Camino.

But once the narrow pathway through the gorge had been negotiated for a sometimes harrowing half mile (if the river was high), the astonished visitor would round a rocky corner to behold a verdant gently sloping mile-wide valley nearly ten miles long, with fertile meadows next to a meandering willow and laurel lined creek. The original Casa Grande had been built on a slight knoll overlooking the entrance from the East, where a musket-wielding sharp shooter with a spare rifle and a loader could hold off a small army indefinitely (and had, on more than one occasion). The great house's adobe construction mirrored that of the distant Mission, and was gradually added to as large Catholic families increased the census of their private shangri-la over the generations. There was ample land to grow many acres of corn and beans and vegetables, as well as forage for large herds of horses and cattle that also grazed the steep slopes up to the boundary of the grant at the top of the surrounding ridges. These remained unfenced until well into the twentieth century, when oil exploration of the surrounding land finally brought at least the vestiges of industrial activity to this heretofore largely desolate region.

The Hidalgo Family was one of only a handful of original Spanish land grantees who managed to hold on to their titles and property under the dominion of the victorious Americans after the Mexican War. This was in substantial part because the matriarch of the clan at that time, still revered as the first Mamacita, deftly instructed her dutiful grown sons in how to handle their tense and complicated circumstance. The result was a careful distribution of bribes to just the right officials and in just the right quantities to buy forbearance without attracting undue attention.

Thereby was preserved intact a substantial fortune accumulated in the hundred years of steady good husbandry of the land under Spanish colonial rule.

And when the Leland Stanford established his audaciously coed University a few hundred miles north, the sons and daughters of the Hidalgo Family were among its first enrollees, their admission ensured by their family's generous support of Governor Stanford's political campaigns. What was a closely held secret was that from Mamacita's day, the real power in the family always resided in the women. They just seemed to breed truer for the business skills and other leadership intangibles than the men, noteworthy primarily for their charm and good looks. Each generation, as the current Mamacita deemed appropriate, she would select one of her daughters to train to take her place as Mistress of their domain.

By the closing decades of the twentieth century, the Family had diversified and its center of power migrated north to Silicon Valley, where a grand estate had been built in the foothills above Palo Alto. And as our story begins, the role of Mamacita was occupied by the beautiful and imperious Estela Hidalgo. She was tall, slender, and pale skinned with huge brown eyes and long dark hair almost always pulled up into a practical peignoir under her signature broad-brimmed hats, straw in summer, felt in winter. These kept her skin safe from the powerful rays of the Western sun, and looking a decade younger than her 38 years. Her elegant beauty had attracted the attention of the most desirable BMOG at Stanford when she was a freshman.

James Franklin was a tall blonde fraternity boy three years older who had been washed out of a promising career as a wide receiver on the football team by a horrendous knee injury. Wooing and winning the most desirable coed in the freshman class was some consolation to the frustrated former athlete. But his (as Estela was later to discover) rather narcissistic nature showed up in various ways,

including preferring not to use a condom because it interfered with his sexual pleasure in her perfect young body. The result was an unplanned pregnancy that her Catholic family would not have considered aborting, and a quick and terribly ill-advised marriage.

And so Christina Franklin was brought into the world, as gorgeous as both of her parents and innocent (unlike them) of the complexities that were to come to dominate her later life. The unlimited wealth of the Hidalgo family meant that the beautiful baby girl, who had inherited her father's vivid blue eyes and wavy blonde hair and her mother's long lean body, would never want for anything. Estela and James moved into the caretaker's cottage of her parents' Woodside estate, the family adamant that this 'bump in the road' was not going to derail their daughter's education.

Jimmy rapidly became disillusioned with the reality of life with a pregnant wife who insisted on being a top student. Their sex life, which had been smoking hot for the first few months, rapidly lost its luster as guilt and growing dissatisfaction with each other cooled their youthful passions quite rudely. By the time Christina was born, her father had already embarked on the first of a long series of affairs. And by the time their delightful little girl was entering kindergarten, her parents had separated and her ne'er-do-well father had disappeared from her life save a few annual visits and unpredictable Christmas and birthday gifts.

Also by this time, Estela had finished her schooling and left Stanford with her BA in Psychology and MBA in international business. After all, if one's family has effectively infinite wealth, then there will be no shortage of well-paid minions on staff to prevent even the most demanding of children from interfering with one's studies. And Christina was anything but difficult. She was a sweet girl by nature, and quite naturally anxious to please the grownups that dominated her life on the family estates.

There were plenty of cousins of all ages and genders to roam around with, and over a hundred acres of prime Peninsula real estate to play on, all protected by high security fences and patrolled by vigilant guards. A more idyllic childhood could hardly be imagined, save for the absence of a father who became steadily more legendary in the mind of the lovely little girl.

Well, perhaps idyllic would be a bit of an exaggeration. For in spite of their generations of material comfort and world-class education, there was one little aspect of the Hidalgo family's approach to child rearing that was a bit, shall we say, out of the ordinary, at least by current day standards. And oddly, this applied only to females, which meant that it had been a feature (perhaps even a bug, Estela sometimes wondered very privately) of both her and her daughter's lives from earliest memory. It seemed that the original Mamacita had some mixed feelings about establishing a matriarchy in the Rancho Arroyo Escondido a century and a half ago. It was true that the women of their lineage seemed more fit to wield power, but the original Matriarch felt that those who would inherit that obligation needed to receive special training in self-discipline in order to exercise their dominion without self-indulgence.

Mamacita decided that her own girlhood was a good enough model. It had produced her, after all, and look how successful she had been! Her early rearing had been delegated by her own rather depressive Madre to a surrogate mother, a former nun who had been defrocked after a hushed up scandal involving naughty goings on with other novices in the convent. Madre Hidalgo had been a close confidant of the local Bishop at the Mission, and had agreed to take his embarrassing little problem off his hands. The perpetrator was whisked away to Rancho Arroyo Escondido, where she would never see the public eye again.

The former nun tasked with raising Mamacita was called Nana, and turned out to be the first in an unbroken chain of

convent rejects who were brought to the Arroyo and trained by their predecessor in the proper prescribed methods of taming spirited young girls. In that era, there was no dispute that only one answer sufficed for this problem, and that was corporal punishment. Nana had learned in the convent where she was raised from earliest memory that whenever a girl misbehaved in any way, she could expect a stern or angry grownup to bend her over, raise her skirt, lower her smallclothes, and administer a spanking. This was usually delivered by a bare hand to the squirming buttocks of younger girls, and by various implements (hairbrushes, rulers, belts, switches) to the equally discomfited bottom cheeks of older miscreants. Doses of painful corrective attention were carefully prescribed and scrupulously meted out, though girls who struggled too much or tried to interfere with their bared rear ends' fates found their quotas doubled or even redoubled.

Nana believed, and Mamacita concurred, that the restraint learned in this searing cauldron of hind-end distress would serve the recipient well the rest of her life. She would be enabled to withstand any normal aggravation while maintaining her composure, since no future torment could ever match the ones she had learned to endure without complaint on a regular basis her whole childhood. Spankings were administered in Nana's study, where classroom instruction also took place, and with the ex-nun seated on an armless chair pulled from its usual position behind her desk. Crying was permitted (and in fact, its absence could be taken as a sign that more punishment was warranted), but all other verbal expressions were rewarded by even more painful attention to already quite distressed buttocks. Girls were spanked until they began having periods, after which they were considered too old for such treatment. And indeed, by that age, better than a decade of intensive education and regular discipline had with few

exceptions done its work, producing the kind of teenager who would go on to become a formidable woman.

The same era in which this tradition was established also happened to foster a belief (later debunked) that dysfunctions of the bowels of children were a common culprit for all manner of ills, including peckish moods and sullenness. Thus, many generations of youngsters had been subjected to trips over their Mother's or Nanny's lap to receive an enema up their bottom holes, in order to regulate the function of that orifice according to the dictates of the administering authority. At the Rancho Arroyo Escondido, or later on the estate in Woodside, this method was used to potty train each of Nana's protégés for a dozen generations. The equipment would change as the technology of such devices matured, but the method was always the same.

The time for such interventions was just before the girl's nightly bath, and the nightgown-clad subject would be gently but firmly drawn over her Nana's lap, where the nighty would be raised and underpanties lowered to bare the target for its necessary invasion. The reservoir for the enema would have been pre-filled with warm soapy water, and its tubing would have been clamped and connected to the nozzle, of ivory until well into the 20th century, and then of plastic, though always white so any contamination could be immediately detected. Lard would have been used as a lubricant until the roaring twenties, when petroleum jelly would have made its appearance. The girl would have long since learned that any complaint or lack of cooperation would mean that the exposed region would be spanked as well as internally violated. So she would remain quiescent throughout the proceedings. In fact, each generation learned to rather enjoy this ritual, since it was the time of day in which she was treated most tenderly as long as she cooperated fully.

Once the rectal thermometer was invented and became widely available, this ritual was expanded to include the

taking of a girl's temperature in order to be meticulously recorded in her Nana's diary (along with any punishments she had received that day, including the misbehaviors that precipitated them). The ex-nun's gentle hand would cup the bottom cheeks it had belabored painfully so many times to hold first the thermometer and then the nozzle in place. This tender holding and subtle stroking combined with the complex but interesting sensations of the nozzle occupying her back passage and the warm fluids filling her bowels to transport each girl into a pleasant, if rather erotically charged, reverie. Eventually, the enema would have filled her down there, and her bowels would begin grumbling to be allowed to evacuate themselves. Nana would leave for this once her charge was old enough to be on her own, helping the girl onto the chamber pot before exiting during the expulsion.

Once the lid was on the results of this procedure (which Nana would examine later and note in her diary), the older woman would return and give her student her nightly bath. All of the girls learned to thoroughly enjoy this part of their evening, as the usually severe ex-nun would turn totally gentle. A soapy cloth would be deployed to wash every inch of them, paying especially careful attention to those parts that were particularly dirty, in the parlance of the Nanas. This of course especially included the bottom that had just been emptied, as well as all of the very sensitive structures nearby between each girl's legs. In addition, the Nanas seemed to pay very patient attention to washing their charges' nipples, even at a very young age. The perverted ex-nuns actually fostered (and passed down from generation to generation) the belief that this procedure caused the women of the Hidalgo family to develop early and grow robust breasts. Ironically, when a deeper understanding of the consequences of early erotic stimulation of girls were better understood, this superstition was in fact borne out to be true.

What also turned out to be true for successive generations almost without exception of Hidalgo matriarchs was that they had an exceedingly complicated relationship to their sexuality. The combination of regular painful attention to their buttocks with equally ritualized invasion of the secret orifice between them always followed by highly gratifying and arousing erogenous touch led to a uniform erotic charge in their relationship to their bottoms. The fact that these attentions came exclusively from women, and indeed from women whom the children almost always came to adore, ended up in fostering at least a covert bisexuality in most of Mamacita's successors. And the combination of strong Catholic education with implacable punishment of perceived sins meant that however powerful each family matriarch might be, she was secretly convinced of her need to be punished for her shortcomings, the vast number of which had been long drilled into her squirming buttocks as a girl.

In every generation, since Mamacita set the tone for all successors, open conversation about any topic was always encouraged between mothers and daughters. This was part of why all disciplinary tasks were delegated to the Nanas. No Hidalgo daughter ever had to fear painful consequences for any question or statement she might make to her mother. Therefore, Estela was hardly surprised when her precocious and adorable blonde angel of a daughter was cuddling in her lap one night and said: 'Nana takes me over her knee and spanks my heinie really hard when I'm naughty.' The Matriarch replied: 'I know, dear one. My Nana did the very same thing to my heinie, probably a lot more often than happens to you, since I was a much naughtier child than you are. It's how girls are brought up in our family, so you shouldn't worry about it, but you can talk to me about it whenever you want. But we don't talk about any of the things our Nanas do to our bottoms to anyone else but our Mommies, since other people might not understand.'

Think of it as a special family secret that we all have kept since long before you or I were born. It's part of what makes us different from other families, in the best possible way, I think. Our Nanas help to make us good and strong, even if they have to make our bottoms feel...uncomfortable from time to time.' Beautiful blonde Christina had no reason to do anything other than take her dear loving Mama at face value, and the subject was never again broached.

Chapter Two

After Christina's narcissistic father more or less disappeared from her life, her world settled into a routine of intensive schooling, both at selected private schools and by individual instructors. She lived on the Woodside estate during the weeks, and was flown with her Mama and Nana by the family helicopter down to Hidden Valley on the weekends. There, she was taught all that needed to be known to run the ranch, as well as receiving world-class instruction in all of the equestrian disciplines. This had become the usual rhythm for the Hidalgo family by the 1980's, since their primary business interests were in the burgeoning computer and biotech industries of Silicon Valley. The fact that all of the offspring for over a century had undergraduate degrees as well as MBAs from Stanford naturally put them at the center of the developing technologies that emerged from that institution. This meant that economically, at least, the Rancho Arroyo Escondido was financially irrelevant to the family fortunes, and in fact, was carried as a loss on the books. Indeed, many of the male offspring elected not to travel down to the ranch once they had the option. But anyone in line to be the Matriarch could expect to board the helicopter every Friday that weather permitted, returning on Sunday evening both exhausted and refreshed.

Their instructor in horsemanship was also a role that was carefully cultivated by the Matriarchs and passed down from generation to generation with painstaking instruction from each retiring teacher to his successor. This job was always assigned to a man, and never of the family, since from Mamacita onward the Hidalgo women secretly mistrusted the handsome but too often dissolute men of their lineage for any important roles. The Foreman, as he was always called, occupied a position of absolute authority over the Ranch, and was answerable only to the Matriarch. Hiring and firing decisions were his alone, as were purchases and

sales of livestock. As well, each Matriarch left the discipline of her daughters in his hands, at least as it involved any issues regarding horsemanship or the other Ranch duties that they were always assigned by him.

Mamacita had believed that her successors needed to know every job in their domain by first hand experience, so Christina found herself with at least one afternoon each weekend, and more in the summers, of chores assigned carefully to suit her age and maturity. These were often difficult and frustrating, chosen to stretch the limits of each future Matriarch as much as she could tolerate. And when the normally well-behaved blonde gave vent to her frustration in an uncharacteristic display of insolence, she discovered that Nana was not the only employee empowered to administer corporal punishment. The mortified young lady found herself bent over the Foreman's rock-hard knee so fast her head was swimming. In a flash her Levis and underpants were around her knees and she was sharply bent double, her bottom cheeks mortifyingly naked to his implacable gaze. His leathery palm then proceeded to administer a fearsome spanking to her naked buttocks, whose rosy color rapidly deepened to a near purple by the ferocity of his assault. The powerful old man spanked far harder than Nana, even though she always used an implement to deliver her own behavioral messages to the very same squirming rear end. As you can imagine, the need to sit a saddle the rest of the day drove home the lesson doubly. Not a minute went by during which the penitent girl was not reminded by her tender rear end's contact with the hard leather of the saddle, even through her panties and Levis.

When the chastened girl and her doting Mama were having their customary cuddle and story time that evening, Christina recounted her backside's adventures. Estela stroked her ashamed daughter tenderly, and replied: 'The Foreman knows his work very well, dear one, and only gives

us as much punishment as we need to help us be better people, just like your Nana. I'm sure you'll take his lesson to heart, and not repeat the same mistake.' And indeed, though the Foreman only chastised her naked buttocks this once when she was his student, the lesson drilled into her backside held steady until she was an adult. Then the further amendments that form part of our story turned out to be required.

The Foreman that administered Christina's only spanking by a man during her girlhood was nearing the end of his career at the time he turned our heroine over his knee. Several years later, a disturbingly handsome young man was selected by Estela to take over that key role. The transition involved a five-year apprenticeship under his predecessor during which the intricacies of this unique job were carefully passed on to yet another generation. Rafael Fernandez was a transplant from Texas where he had assistant managed a spread even larger than the Ranch with glowing reviews from all concerned. He arrived for his final interview with Estela with considerable doubts about how well his own ideas about the mastery of horses and people would play in what he imagined to be the liberal hotbed of California. But as it turned out, his disturbingly pretty new potential employer (whose husband seemed nowhere in sight) seemed to share his own rather old-fashioned ideas about such things. He was hired on the spot, and promoted when Christina was a teenager after his predecessor's retirement.

The Foreman of the Ranch was automatically slotted into the local equestrian community, which was no easy matter to break into for outsiders. But if he passed muster, this meant an officership in the local Mounted Patrol, an adjunct of the County Sheriff's Department that conducted search and rescue operations in the rugged back country. Of course, their wives contended that their real main purpose was demonstrating pretty horsemanship and showing off

their cowboy bling in local parades. Rafe was immediately welcomed by the Sheriff and local Judge, both of whom were leaders in the organization. They found the tall, well-built young man to be cut from the same cloth as themselves: conservative, hard-working men who respected authority and felt rather strongly about those who did not. The fact that his predecessor gave him high marks for his entire apprenticeship didn't hurt, and Rafe was proud to become a Lieutenant in the Patrol in tandem with becoming the Foreman. He was well aware that the two roles placed him in the very upper echelon of local power, and was secretly proud to have been affirmed in this way.

Rafe had been educated in modern agriculture at Texas A & M, after which he had served with distinction in the Special Forces in Iraq. There he had been an intelligence officer, using cutting edge IT techniques to try to stay one step ahead of the jihadis in the never ending cat and mouse game of counter-insurgency. His searching intelligence leant itself well to that work, and while in the service he also found an unexpected bonus that spectacularly enhanced his private life. It seemed that there was a coterie of women, some young and some approaching middle age, who greatly enjoyed subjecting their bent and bared bottoms to the punitive (and, of course, eventual erotic) attentions of handsome, dominant servicemen like Rafe.

A buddy sensed that the future Foreman might be the sort of man who would warm to such activities, and an introduction was made when he was home on leave. The young soldier was fascinated to discover that his darker side could find a totally consensual outlet with a surprisingly attractive and even more shockingly avid woman ten years older than him. She moaned in anticipatory pleasure as he raised her skirt and lowered her panties to reveal a fulsome feminine pair of dimpled nether moons. Their intriguing pallor his hard hand rapidly changed to a nice rosy cerise. The sex they had after her spanking was sizzling hot, and a

budding dom was born. She told her friends in the BDSM scene about her handsome new Green Beret find, and soon his leave time was delightfully spiced by more kinky sex than he knew what to do with.

Less fortunately, once Rafe left the service to take the assistant manager's job on the vast West Texas spread, he lost touch for a time with the BDSM world that was so accessible surrounding military bases. There was no shortage of attractive young women more than happy to spread their legs for a handsome young man who was clearly going places. But to his disappointment, our hero had lost his zest for what the BDSM scene termed 'vanilla' sex. When he hinted to several of his wilder partners that bad girls like them might benefit from a bit of intense attention to their bottoms, they looked at him like he was some kind of psycho, and he quickly dropped the issue.

But the bottom line, so to speak, for the new Foreman at Rancho Arroyo Escondido was that he hadn't had any sex that was more than perfunctorily enjoyable for a few years. Then the same buddy who had initiated him into BDSM mustered out of the service and took a security job less than a hundred miles away. Within weeks, Rafe was accompanying his oldest and closest friend Jack to San Francisco, where they both visited a very private club for aficionados of painful pleasures. There the gorgeous young Foreman and his even more massively muscled blonde friend became mainstays among the dominant males. It seemed that the two men shared an insistence that their submissive partners always experience the extremes of erotic pleasure as the climax (so to say) of any painful scene. This was quite endearing to the avid coterie of attractive women of all ages willing to subject their bottoms to just the sorts of painful attention the two men adored giving.

But down at the Ranch, it was bachelor living or vanilla sex alone for the handsome young Latino, who channeled

his erotic frustration into killer workouts that made him even more hunky. Then this state of affairs (or the lack thereof) changed in an almost unimaginable way, and totally unexpectedly. Rafe was just finishing up a Mounted Patrol meeting when the Sheriff and Judge drew him aside and asked him to wait around until the rest of the members had departed. The Sheriff looked uncomfortable for the first time in their six year friendship as he muttered: 'Rafe, I've got a god-damned mess on my hands, and I think you may be the man to help me out. You know Emily and I always wanted kids, but it never worked out for us. So her sister's kid, my niece Nicole, sort of became the daughter we never had...spent most summers with us growing up, that sort of thing. Well, as a teenager, she fell in with the wrong crowd, and one thing has led to another down a very dark pathway as she enters her twenties. She came to visit a month ago, and broke up with her girlfriend over the phone, since trying on the lesbian lifestyle is her latest little shenanigan. Then she got picked up by one of my deputies totally drunk and tweaked out on speed after totaling my wife's car. She's sobered up in jail, and is all contrite and willing to do anything not to go to prison, just as she has every other time when we've ponied up for rehab. I think she needs a different kind of rehabilitation, and I've watched you gentle the wildest horses in an almost magical way. She claims she'll go along with any kind of behavior modification program, and it seems to me that the Ranch might be isolated enough that she won't be able to make a connection with a pusher. The Judge here is ready to divert her sentence if you'd take this on, or else he's got to send her to State Prison since this is her fifth strike on DUI alone. What do you say?'

Rafe had often wondered if some of his ideas about corporal punishment might be usefully carried over to the treatment of wayward young people. He had never met Nicole, but had seen her pictures up on the wall at the

Sheriff's home, and she was an absolute knockout--a fiery redhead like her Uncle with the voluptuous body of an Irish country girl, fitting with her family heritage. Her father had apparently been from the old country, where he had learned to drink and charm pretty women in approximately equal measure, while never finding a way to prioritize actually holding a job. The thought of having carte blanche to try out his rather kinky theories on such a tempestuous beauty excited the handsome Foreman greatly, though he was careful not to show it.

Instead, he took a moment to ponder the request, and replied: 'Damn, I'm sorry to hear about this, Sheriff. I'd be happy to help, but I'd need to okay it with my Boss, and I'd need to meet Nicole and see if she's truly willing to go along with my program once she understands exactly what that entails.' The two older men gladly agreed with these conditions, and a meeting was arranged at the jail in the county seat. Rafe was led into an interview room, and soon a slender young woman who seemed to be in her mid twenties dressed in an orange prison jump suit was led into the room and took a seat across a small table. She was indeed a stunning beauty, with dark red hair shading into auburn, and enormous blue eyes in a pretty, overtly contrite Irish face. She looked far thinner in the jumpsuit than she had in the family portrait he'd seen, which made sense if she'd been tweaking. She looked at him imploringly and gabbled: 'Please, Sir, I'll do anything, submit to any discipline, do any work you want, if you'll give me a chance!'

Rafe looked at her squarely and replied: 'Well, we'll see about that, young lady. My understanding is that even the Betty Ford couldn't straighten you out. So I'd be employing far different methods than they did, and it would involve you submitting to a different sort of behavioral therapy. I've learned from many years of breaking horses that they need to be shown in no uncertain terms who's in control, and that

needs to happen physically. So if you chose to accept release into my custody, it would mean that you willingly agreed to submit to corporal punishment whenever and however I deemed it appropriate. What do you think about that?’

Nicole had some experience with being spanked, as her father had believed that sparing the rod spoiled the child. But he had been around for only the first eight years of her life, and it had been confusing to her that too often when he had perhaps had a few too many drinks she seemed to end up over his knee having her bottom painfully warmed. Her mother had stopped all such behaviors once her Dad had fled back to Ireland to escape a check kiting charge that he knew was about to be filed by the DA. Her memories of being spanked was that it hurt horribly but that there was also some kind of secret benefit in getting to be close to her Dad and getting his full attention (which rarely otherwise came her way).

And now this gorgeous man not all that much older than her was apparently offering to bust her out of jail if she let him spank her. Well, no matter how much that might hurt, it was hard for the desperate young addict to see a good reason to look this gift horse in the mouth. So she looked into Rafe’s ironic grey eyes and said with all the sincerity she could muster: ‘I’ll gladly let you do anything to me that you think I need to help me get better, Sir. I promise to be good and try really hard, and to take my medicine like a big girl if I fuck...I mean mess...up. Just please give me a chance, and I’ll prove that this time I’ll make it work!’

Chapter Three

Rafe didn't buy for a moment that any of this was really true, however deeply the obviously frantic young beauty before him might have meant what she was claiming. But her agreement was good enough, since he found her just as sizzling hot as she did him. He suspected that eros and discipline could be melded here in all manner of intriguing ways. So he merely extended his hand and shook the sweaty, trembling palm of his new submissive, saying: 'Then I guess we have us a deal. Let's call the Deputy in and see about getting you released so we can get on with our little mutual project.'

The Foreman had accumulated several months of unspent leave time over his years of service to the Hidalgos, and this was a good time to take a chunk of it. He and Estela had discussed the possibility of his taking Nicole under his wing, and she had agreed (though secretly feeling a surprising stab of jealousy at the thought of another woman getting so much attention from the young man whom she had steadily found more attractive in the decade they had worked together). But she was not a woman to allow herself to be ruled by such childish emotions, and in truth the time Rafe asked to take off coincided with a trip she had planned to the Far East and Europe to review business interests and close a couple of property deals. So when the very nervous young woman was handed into the Ranch's panel truck by the Foreman, he knew that for the next month he had no other obligations than to focus on her rehabilitation.

Rafe had another set of experiences that bore strongly on his decision to take up the rather daunting challenge of taming Nicole. While he was stationed in Iraq, his buddy Jack from the interrogation side of the Intelligence services (who had originally introduced him to the BDSM circles back in the states) called him in on a case. While the interrogation itself was a practiced art known only to the experts such as Rafe's friend, agents with IT and Arabic

skills were sometimes needed in real time to check information being revealed by the prisoners. The case involved a beautiful Shia woman suspected of Iranian ties, perhaps even a deep cover agent of the Mullahs. She had been captured while placing an IED in a crowded Sunni marketplace, and brought to their clandestine Intelligence base outside Bagram. Her name was Leyla.

A large dossier on her was completed by Rafe, arming his buddy with the information he needed to be most effective in breaking her. And then our hero watched over the video feed with an uncomfortable combination of fascination, discomfort, and sexual arousal as his BDSM friend lived out a sadist's dream. She was hooded and cuffed to a sturdy metal chair bolted to the floor of the soundproof interrogation room. And there she was subjected to an intricate dance of various kinds of humiliation and discomfort, alternating with periods when his friend would 'rescue' her with acts of kindness. Gradually, she was stripped of her clothes and her dignity, always punished when she lied or dissimulated, and always rewarded when she revealed new information (as confirmed by Rafe over the intercom from the next room). By the end, she had revealed a treasure trove of confirmed data about the inner workings of the insurgency, and her tormentor had never even broken her skin.

This experience formed one of the bases from which the Foreman planned to construct his rehabilitation of Nicole. He insisted on receiving copies of all legal and medical and family records pertaining to his unsuspecting new project, who expected him to be just as clueless and easily manipulated as all of her previous rehab counselors. But Iraq had taught Rafe that good intelligence was the key to any successful operation, and there was no reason to believe that principle didn't include his current project. So he was intimately familiar with her entire file by the time he took custody of her. The pretty young woman fidgeting in

the passenger seat of the panel truck openly studied her breathtakingly handsome captor, with whom she was already a little in love just from their discussions before he agreed to take on her case. She wished she was attired in something more appealing than the thrift store hand-me-downs the jail provided on her release. Her own clothes had been discarded on her arrest, being soaked in vomit past the redemption of the hoosegow's basic laundry capabilities. The dowdy house dress and utilitarian cotton underwear and sandals she wore were hardly designed to forward her plans to seduce him as soon as possible.

As they started on the long drive from the county seat to the Ranch, Rafe conducted a low-key interrogation of his nervous companion. He asked for her drug abuse history, and within about ten minutes she had already departed from the truth as confirmed in several of her records. He calmly pulled the van over to the shoulder of the lightly traveled country road, and turned to look penetratingly at his confused passenger. 'Why are we stopping?' she asked. He replied: 'One of the vital features of your recovery program is that you will be immediately punished for every lie (either of commission or omission), as well as any other infraction. Unbuckle your seat belt and climb in the back for your spanking.'

Nicole flushed brilliantly, as redheads were wont to do when embarrassed or upset, realizing that the first test of her promise to cooperate with Rafe's discipline without complaint was at hand. She had, as was her usual pattern, promptly put out of her mind the agreement she had made. Also as usual, she was as inclined towards cooperation as a newly captured feral cat, though she struggled in vain not to show this. Rafe remarked dryly: 'Seems like our penitent girl who was so anxious to pledge her undying obedience in order to get out of jail is having second thoughts. Your spanking will be doubled for not cooperating immediately, and I will be happy to double it again if your naughty little