Safe Haven

By

Alice Liddell

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Chapter One: Homecoming

Cassandra Stevens fumbled in her backpack, searching for his key. She knew it was in there; she'd put it in there this morning. Damn it! Where was it? In frustration, she dumped everything out onto the doorstep. She found it, hidden in the jumble of notebooks, tampons and bits of papers, but her heart sank when she looked at the mess. She didn't want to deal with this. She didn't want to deal with anything right now but she could hardly leave everything strewn across his doorstep. So she knelt down, and handful by handful stuffed it back into her pack. She was worn out and just wanted to get inside.

Naturally, the lock wouldn't yield. This was the first time she'd needed to let herself in and she wasn't familiar with the lock. She felt tears well up. Nothing felt right about arriving when Roy wasn't there. Usually he was home first, but it was exam period so she was done earlier than usual for a Friday. Roy had given her a key and permission to come as soon as she was finished with her final. She shifted from one foot to the other on his doorstep as she jiggled the key in the lock, sure his neighbors were watching and getting suspicious.

Finally the lock gave way, and with a sigh of relief Cassandra slipped into the quiet haven of Roy's home. He'd left the air conditioner on for her. Everything was neat and tidy, as usual. It was so calming to be here, despite everything that she was put through in this house. Well, let's be honest; *because* of everything she was put through in this house.

Cassandra bolted the door behind her, and moved to the kitchen table where he had said she'd find a note. She sat down heavily on a chair, and dropped her pack onto the table. Before she did anything else, she fished out her wallet and car keys and put them on the table for him. That was part of the routine, part of their arrangement. On Friday afternoons, as soon as she arrived, she surrendered these and everything else that made her an adult in the eyes of the outside world. Without her keys and driver's license, she was that much more under his control. She couldn't drive off in a huff any more than a child can. Not that she would. Roy's home was a safe haven for her. She knew it was the only thing that gave her the strength to stay in school.

She picked up the note and read his neat script. "Dear Cassie," it began. "Welcome home. I put out a snack of your favorite cookies for you. You can get yourself a glass of milk from the fridge if you want, but be careful not to spill. Be a good girl until I get home (about six). I'll give you a nice warm bath before dinner. Love, Daddy."

Cassandra didn't get a glass of milk. She never drank it except when she was here, and then only because he insisted. She took a cookie from the plate, bit into it, and looked at her watch. 4:10. Then she remembered, and removed the watch and set it next to her wallet and keys. Little girls don't wear watches. While she chewed on the cookie, she flipped open her wallet and looked at her driver's license. Twenty-nine years old. Way too old to be a junior in college. Why was it taking her so long to get through the normal stages of life?

She knew why, but knowing didn't make it any easier. She had her reasons. A father who disappeared. A mother who drank. Too many siblings. The wrong sort of boyfriends. She took another cookie and reminded herself how much better she'd done in the last few years.

The tangible proof of her upward progress, of course, was that she'd been accepted at State. It was quite a feat to get in as a transfer student, especially from the mediocre junior college that had been the only place that would take her when she'd tried to make her fresh start. The first month at State had been very hard. From the moment she'd arrived, she felt like a fish out of water. She hated the noise and lack of privacy in the dorm. She longed for her own

apartment, but couldn't afford it. Not at the prices in this town. The coursework was much more demanding than she was used to, and the professors and other students intimidated her. She was older than everyone in her classes and too awkward to make friends. Every evening, the temptation to close her books had been almost too strong to resist. She didn't want to study; she felt like finding a bar, maybe even picking up some guy for something nice and anonymous. Anything to make her forget the insecurity that gnawed at her guts.

That was when she'd seen the ad in the personals section of the campus paper. She'd read it so many times before she'd screwed up the courage to respond, that she could still recall it, word for word. It had spoken directly to her. It had been in the third column, second ad from the top. It read: "Feeling lost? Father figure understands the little girl inside you. Will provide safe, supportive environment in return for your obedience and best behavior. You can expect strict but loving guidance. DaddyR@mailbox.com."

They had met in a quiet coffee shop a few blocks off campus. She liked him immediately, and felt soothed by his calm demeanor. He was nearly twenty years her senior, but trim, well dressed and a full head taller than her. They talked for a long time. He was experienced. He had done this before. A two-year relationship with a Canadian student until she left for graduate school. Another young woman before that.

She was surprised that she opened up and told him about her family. She didn't like to talk about her childhood and rarely did. Roy listened quietly as no one had ever listened to her before.

"Yeah, that's a tough way to grow up," he agreed. "Maybe that's part of why you feel the way you do, but I don't think that's all it is. Some women are submissive. It's just the way they are, like being tall or being a redhead. It's okay to be that way. There are a lot of men, including me, who think a submissive woman is the most precious thing in the world."

Cassandra was stunned. It was so hard for her to understand her fantasies and desires. And here was a man who not only understood, but valued this part of her. He watched a big tear slide down her cheek, then reached across the table and caught it with his finger. He smiled softly, and held her eyes with his. They were both silent for a few minutes.

"Cassandra is a beautiful name," he said at last. "It comes from Greek mythology. If I remember correctly, Kassandra was the daughter of Priam and Hecuba, and was said to have the gift of prophecy." He fell silent again. "Yes, it's a beautiful name but a bit of a mouthful, don't you think?" She did think. One of her mother's many affectations had been to give all her kids la-di-dah names. "Cassandra," he said softly, turning her name over on his tongue once more. "It's just too grown-up. I think I'd better call you 'Cassie.""

She was smitten. They came to an agreement right there in the coffee shop, at their first meeting. Cassie would spend every weekend at his house, coming Friday afternoon and returning to campus on Monday morning for her first class. He would provide her with a room and meals, and make sure she studied and got enough sleep. In return, she would follow his rules. He was quite clear about what kind of rules she could expect, as well as the consequences for failure to obey. She agreed to his terms. All of them.

Cassie took the last cookie on the plate, and looked at her watch on the table. She wanted to soak in a hot bath. She didn't want to wait. If she went now, she could be done long before he got home. It wouldn't hurt her to have another bath later if that's what he wanted, and she'd feel so much better now. She was half aware that she was resisting his authority, but she'd been on her own all week, making her own decisions. It wasn't like she could just flip a switch on

Fridays and go instantly from grown woman to obedient little girl. The transition wasn't always easy, and today she was too tired and dirty to wait for him to come home.

So she pulled herself out of the chair and went up the stairs to the bathroom. She stripped off her sweaty clothes and filled the tub with the hottest water she could stand. God, it felt so good. It had been a rough week. Frankly, the entire semester had been rough. She knew she'd never have made it through this first semester without the weekends here. She ran a bar of soap over her arms and chest, feeling the stress seep away as the hot water worked on her tense muscles. She slid her bottom down the tub until her shoulders were all the way under the water. I'll just rest for a few minutes, she promised herself.

The water had grown cold by the time she opened her eyes again. She pulled the plug but stayed where she was. She felt her body go heavy against the cold porcelain as the water swirled down the drain leaving her beached. She was shivering yet couldn't make herself move, but she'd better. Cassie hauled herself up, grabbed a towel and rubbed her wet hair between the folds of thick terry. She wrapped the towel around her torso, and reached for the doorknob. She would need to get dressed quickly, she realized, if she was going to tidy everything up before he came home.

Pulling open the bathroom door, Cassie gasped to find herself looking at Roy's chest.

"I see you finally decided to emerge. There's only one bathroom in this house and it's not yours to monopolize."

"I'm... I'm sorry," Cassie stammered, shocked to find him home. Was he early? How long had she been in the tub? "I didn't expect you yet."

"So I gather. Apparently you thought it was perfectly fine to disobey my instructions," he said icily. "It would seem you think you may do whatever you like as long as I'm not here to catch you at it."

Cassie's stomach lurched at the tone in his voice. She dropped her head in shame and her eyes fell upon the hairbrush in his hand. She looked up in fright. "Oh, no, please!"

"Oh, yes, Cassie. I thought we'd been through all this last weekend, but I can see you need another lesson in obedience. I would have thought you'd already learned what happens to young ladies who don't do as they are told. Well, the sooner you get a reminder, the sooner I can expect to see some improvement in your behavior. So we're going to take care of this immediately."

With that, he pulled the towel from her. She knew better, but the sudden exposure made her press one arm protectively across her small breasts while the other tried to shield her pubis from his view. Her resistance only served to annoy him.

"If you wish to preserve your modesty, I suggest you behave," he said sharply, as he took hold of one arm and pulled it away, looking at her body hard enough to raise a hot blush on her face. She pleaded, and then panicked as he put one foot up on the low bench in the hall, raising his knee to form a dais for her discipline.

"Oh, no, Roy! Please, not like that!" He ignored her; taking hold of her trembling, naked body and pushing her headfirst over his raised leg until her bottom was perched at the apex and her legs were hanging uselessly behind her. She hated this position. Even before the first fall of the hairbrush hot tears of shame and embarrassment welled up in her eyes. He started to punish her with the smooth back of the hairbrush.

"How long were you in there?" he demanded. "Have you any idea what time it is?"

Cassie had been biting her lip to keep from crying out, and wasn't able to answer quickly enough.

"I expect you to answer me when I ask you a question," he stated, increasing both the pace and the intensity of the blows, making it impossible for Cassie to do anything but cry out and flail under the harsh discipline. After half a minute of intense punishment, during which nothing more was said, he paused, and repeated the question.

Cassie gasped out that she'd gone in a little after four o'clock.

Roy exploded, taking his anger out on her raised posterior. "For god's sake! It's nearly six now! You must have fallen asleep in there! You might have drowned. At the very least, you've probably given yourself a cold. You're a bad, bad girl!"

The thought of her drowning seemed to have set his determination to teach her a particularly painful lesson, for he stopped the scolding and focused on covering every inch of her bottom with sharp raps with the back of the hairbrush. He continued until her rump was bright red, her cries were desperate and she was churning her legs in the air in agony.

Roy was tired of the position, but had no intention of ending the lesson yet. He pulled her upright and onto her shaky legs. She danced in distress, stamping her feet and rubbing her hands furiously on her burning, aching bottom cheeks.

"Stop that nonsense this minute, Cassie, or we'll go cut a switch from the backyard and I'll give you something to dance about." She stilled herself the best she could, watching in dread as he sat down on the bench. "Alright, bad girl. You get yourself over my knees this instant! Hands on the floor, and legs straight out. Hold the position or I'll give you double the dose you've got coming."

Cassie did her very best, really, pressing her thighs and knees together and balancing the weight of her legs on her toes. She bent her elbows and put both hands down on the carpet to brace herself for further chastisement, but she was frightened and worn out, and the muscles in her arms and legs were trembling from the strain of the position.

The hairbrush dropped onto the carpet in front of her, and she felt his strong arm press itself across her back and his hand rest on her burning, punished globes.

"I don't want you ever, ever to bathe when you are alone in the house," he said, as he smacked the roundest part of her little bottom hard with his big palm. "Is that understood?"

"Yes, yes. I'm sorry, Daddy. I'm sorry," she sobbed, as he spanked her again and again. She didn't notice that she had switched to calling him "Daddy" but she had. He had quite deliberately set the severity of the punishment to elicit the change.

"Do you make the rules around here?" Roy demanded, as he continued to slap her quivering bottom.

"No! No! I'm sorry! Please, no more. No more!"

"Who makes the rules in this house, Cassie?" he pressed.

"You do! Oh, please, no more! You do, Daddy! You make the rules! Please, stop! I can't take any more." Cassie was in agony now, her entire bottom and the back of her legs aflame, with pain she knew she couldn't bear much longer. She was desperately afraid the next smack would make her break the position.

"You'll take as much as I say, bad girl," he retorted, giving her two extra hard smacks.

"No, no! I can't take any more. I can't, I can't! I can't!" Her arms were shaking. Something had to give, and Cassie instinctively made the right choice. She began to cry. Really cry. A big, bawling cry. This was what Roy had been waiting for and he toned down the spanking immediately. He gave her a few more light slaps to encourage the tears, then held her over his lap as her body shook and heaved. All the tension of exams, the stress of trying to be an adult, seeped out of her. He let her cry for several minutes.

"Come on, now, Sweetie," he said gently, reaching for the hairbrush as he helped her up. "It's over. Let's get you into your nightie before you get chilled." He led her to her bedroom, dropping the hairbrush on the bed before taking a clean cotton nightgown from her dresser. He slipped it over the sobbing girl's head and arms, and then wrapped her in her bathrobe.

He sat in the chair by her bed and pulled her into his lap. She rested gratefully against his big, warm chest, trying to keep her weight off her throbbing bottom. She was still sobbing, her fingers toying with the material of his shirt.

"There, baby girl. It's all right now. Daddy loves you."

Roy reached over to the bed for the hairbrush, and began to pull the bristles gently through her wet, tangled hair, coaxing it back into order. It felt so good, so safe, to have Daddy brushing her hair. With that hairbrush, he had stripped her of two decades. He had taken her from 29 to 19 with the back of it, and now he was taking her from 19 to nine with the front of it. New tears started to run down her cheeks, and he pulled her against his chest and let her have another cry.

And while she wept, he spoke into her ear in a voice that was so soft she almost couldn't hear. "It's okay, baby girl. Daddy loves you. You are so beautiful and special to me. It's all right, Sweetheart. I'll take care of you. You're safe with me."

Down in the kitchen, Roy had Cassie set the table while he started on their dinner. When she finished, he inspected her work. He expected her to do it right, the fork on the left and the knife and spoon on the right. The knife had to be turned the right way, and the napkin under the fork had to be folded neatly, with the edges lined up just right.

"Looks good, baby girl. Now, while I broil the steaks I want you to go stand in the corner in the dining room and think about what obedience means, and you can hold up your clothes so I can see your well-spanked bottom."

Cassie's face went hot with shame, but she did as she was told. She hated corner time, but had to admit that it was instructive. She got into position, and then pulled the robe and nightie up over her legs and bottom, clutching the material at her waist. She was never allowed panties after a punishment, and standing there half naked, she couldn't help but think about the punishment she'd just received. Not with her poor, sore bottom exposed like this. Tears of humiliation and regret welled up in her eyes as she sniffed in her corner until he called her to the table for dinner.

Despite the discomfort of sitting on chastised cheeks, Cassie enjoyed the dinner. Unlike the rushed meals she grabbed at the Student Center during the week, meals at Roy's were always civilized and quiet. He was a good cook, and the food was always hot, delicious and wholesome. They talked quietly, but not as equals. Everything about meal times was intended to remind her of her position in his house. Roy had built a special chair for her, just high enough that her legs couldn't reach the ground. He was strict about manners, and she wasn't allowed to rise from the table unless she received his permission. Nor was she allowed to reach for things; if she wanted the salt or the butter, she had to ask him to pass it, and she had to be sure to say "Please, Daddy" and "Thank you, Daddy" each time she made a request.

When they'd finished their meal, Roy regarded her across the table as he enjoyed the last of his red wine. She looked longingly at his glass, but knew better than to ask for some. She wasn't allowed alcohol. She could drink milk or water. Nothing else.

"So, young lady," he began in a quiet, firm voice that told her she was in trouble. "Did you wash yourself properly when you took a bath?"

Cassie's tummy lurched. "I think so," she said, not at all sure that she had.

"Between your legs?"

Cassie blushed and shifted nervously. "I think so. Maybe. I'm not sure."

"Then here's what we're going to do, Cassie. After I clean up the kitchen, I'm going to make an inspection. If I'm not satisfied with the job you did, I'm going to wash you again. You may find it unpleasant but I expect you to lie still for the entire procedure. Is that understood?"

"Yes, Daddy," she answered in a small voice, fear and arousal rising in her belly.

"Good girl. Then go upstairs and brush your teeth. Make your last pee-pee before bed. Then I want you to go to your bedroom and take off your slippers and robe. You are to lie down on your bed and pull up your nightie so you are naked from the waist down. I'll be up in about twenty minutes. Wait just like that until I come. Is that understood?"

"Yes, Daddy. May I please be excused from the table?"

"Yes, Cassie. You may. Now go do as you've been told. Be sure you're ready when I come up. I don't think you want another spanking tonight, do you?"

"No, Daddy," she answered, her eyes down, and hurried from the kitchen, before he could say any more of those lines that made her squirm in embarrassment.

Cassie went upstairs to the bathroom. Her eyes fell on the little caddy of shaving supplies that he kept by the sink. She knew that part of the "procedure" tonight would be the careful denuding of every fold of skin between her legs. That was part of the routine on Friday evenings, and Roy always did it himself, slowly and methodically. Once, she had decided to surprise him by arriving cleanly shaved. She'd taken a disposable razor into the shower at the dorm and done it herself, thinking he'd be pleased not to have to see the stubble. But he hadn't been pleased. He hadn't been pleased at all. He'd given her the hardest punishment he'd ever given her, making it very clear to her that he was in charge of what happened, and what didn't happen, to her body.

As Cassie brushed her teeth with her right hand, she slipped her left hand under her nightie and ran her fingers over the light stubble that had grown back since last weekend. She thought about how he shaved her. It was so humiliating yet so exciting to have him work on her like that, all his attention focus right there between her legs. A tremor of excitement ran through her, but that only increased her dread. Daddy would discover the signs of her arousal and think she hadn't cleaned herself well.

Quickly, she tried to think of something else. She brushed her teeth carefully, concentrating on moving the toothbrush in the right way and working gently around the gum line the way Daddy had taught her. She rinsed and put her toothbrush back in the rack. Her eyes fell on the shaving caddy again, and she snapped off the light and hurried into her room.

Cassie's room was small and cozy, decorated as a nursery: with flowered wallpaper, cheerful pictures and a beautiful white chest of drawers with pretty porcelain knobs. Roy had modified the bed, putting it up on risers so she had to climb up to get into it. It was, by design, as high as a doctor's table, perfect for the frequent examinations Daddy made of his little girl's most intimate parts. She laid herself out as instructed, raised her nightie and began the obligatory wait. Daddy always made her wait for inspections. He said it helped her think about what it means to be a good, obedient girl.

At last, she heard Daddy's footsteps. She couldn't look at him because she was embarrassed to have to lie like this with everything exposed. She heard him move the rack and put it over the bed. Daddy had made that, too. It looked like a wooden coat rack when it was at the side of her bed, a smooth, round wooden bar supported by sturdy legs on each side, but when he set it over her bed, it became obvious that it had a different purpose.

Roy told Cassie to scoot down so her bottom was at the very end of the bed, her legs hanging down over the high edge. When she had complied, Daddy closed his hand around

Cassie's right ankle and pulled it up to one side of the bar, high across her bed. He secured her leg to the bar with a soft cloth sash. Then he took up her left ankle and fastened that to the other side of the bar. Her bottom was raised slightly off the bed and her legs were open as wide as they could go without too much discomfort. This was the required position for examinations. Cassie felt herself go hot with shame and reached for a throw pillow to hug to her chest.

"There," Roy said, bringing the floor lamp close to the end of the bed and turning it so the light fell between her legs. "I expect you to keep your hands away, no matter what happens or how much it hurts. Can you do that, or do you need me to tie your hands too?"

"No, Daddy. I'll keep my hands away," she answered in small voice, hugging the pillow closer to her chest.

Cassie shut her eyes and listened. She heard the sound of the rollers on the stool as Daddy reached for his seat. She heard the sound of the lamp being adjusted. And she heard the snap of latex gloves. Even so, she jumped when his gloved fingers touched the sensitive skin between her legs, and she let out a little moan of embarrassment and arousal as his fingers opened up the folds of skin, turning them this way and that in the light as he examined her. He pressed and probed, even pulling back the little hood at the top of her cleft to force her tiny bud out into the open. That was one place where he usually found her cleanliness lacking, and tonight was no exception. He didn't say anything, but she knew he disapproved when he punished her with a hard flick directly on the sensitive nub, making her buck in her restraints.

"You're not clean at all, young lady. That's why Daddy wants to be in charge of your bathing. I've told you before that little girls get infections if they don't keep themselves clean between their legs. Shame on you for going into the bath by yourself."

Cassie let out a tiny sob, and squeezed her eyes even tighter. She heard Roy go to the bathroom and run the water until it came out hot. Her legs were beginning to ache, but she knew it would be at least thirty minutes before she would be released from this humiliating position. Roy returned and set a steaming washcloth between her legs. She gritted her teeth at the heat, and squirmed unhappily in her bonds.

"Hold still, young lady. Unless you'd like to feel my strop across your thighs."

Cassie fell still immediately, and listened as he slapped his straight-edged razor against the strop to sharpen the blade. She was terrified of that open blade, and wished he would use safety razors like everyone else. But he was conservative about certain things, and he said fear of the razor was instructive for her. For one thing, she had learned not to fidget when he was shaving her.

The washcloth cooled to a bearable heat, and Cassie listened as Daddy lathered up his boars-hair brush by working it around and around in the mug of an old-fashioned shaving soap. Then he brushed the lather between her legs, working slowly and carefully to cover the entire area, from a few inches below her navel clear down to between her open cheeks. He set one hand on her belly, and then began: Cassie froze as the sharp blade moved in confident strokes across her most tender parts. She held her breath for as long as she could, only daring to breath when his hand moved away to wipe away the lather and stubble on a towel. At last he finished, and wiped her clean with a fresh, hot washcloth.

For a moment there was silence, and Cassie knew Daddy was looking at her there. Then he spoke:

"I'm sorry, Cassie, but you were so dirty I'm going to have to disinfect you with rubbing alcohol. It's going to burn and sting but perhaps that will teach you a lesson. I hope you

remember how this feels the next time you think about disobeying me and taking a bath by yourself."

Roy filled a small metal bowl with rubbing alcohol. He dipped a large cotton ball into the alcohol, and rubbed it slowly and deliberately over Cassie's freshly-shaven skin. The burning began immediately, making Cassie scream in pain.

"Oh, it stings!" she cried. "Oh, take it away!"

He didn't. He continued to swab every surface between her splayed legs. If she hadn't been tied, she would have certainly drawn her legs together and tried to twist away. Her cries grew more frantic as he worked the stinging solution into every tender crevice, even her little puckered bottom hole.

"There. That should kill all the germs and prevent infection. Keep your hands away."

Cassie continued to cry as Daddy untied her ankles and released her legs.

"That's enough of your howling, young lady. You deserved what you got, and you should be grateful that you have a Daddy who cares enough about your health to take care of your body. What do you say?"

"Thank you, Daddy. Thank you for cleaning me and punishing me when I'm bad."

"That's my girl," Roy said, more gently now. He gave her a little kiss on the forehead as he helped her pull her nightie down. "Now fetch your harness and let's get you tucked into bed."

Cassie slid down from her bed obediently and went to her dresser to get the harness Roy made her wear at night. He'd made that himself, too, from three of his old leather belts. He had shortened one belt so it would fit snugly around her little waist. He'd cut down the other belts, securing one to each side of the waist belt with grommets to form attached cuffs for her wrists. Roy took the harness and helped her into her, fastening it around her waist then closing the small straps snugly around her wrists to pin her arms to her sides. Roy put her into it every night so she couldn't touch herself where she shouldn't. It was a little uncomfortable and she had to sleep on her back. She'd hated it at first, especially because she had to call him if she needed to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night, but she'd gotten used to it. Now she liked knowing that Daddy was completely in charge of that part of her body, and that Daddy was the one who decided if, and when, she could feel pleasure there. Sometimes he'd allow her into his bed and she'd get all the pleasure a girl could want, but that never happened before Sunday evening, and some weekends it didn't happen at all.

"Goodnight, baby girl," Roy said as he pulled the covers up to her chin.

"Goodnight, Daddy," Cassie whispered as she settled into bed for the night, the skin between her legs still tingling from the alcohol. She wiggled her sore bottom against the bed a little, but she couldn't move her hands to do what she wanted to do so badly. She vowed to be a good girl this weekend so Daddy would take her to his room on Sunday, but she knew it wasn't easy to please him. Daddy had high expectations for his little girl. Cassie smiled, and closed her eyes, trying to fall asleep so she could rest up for Saturday.