

THOMAS 4

Find out what you're made of, see if you really love her. Kind of a premarital fact-finding mission. Plus bank accounts, credit, and so on. I'm supposed to meet her at the hotel, do a full report. Beautiful body, by the way. Congratulations.

THOMAS. You are a magnificent creature.

VANDA. A man usually says that to a woman whose magnificence he's about to undermine.

THOMAS. Touché. Stacy doesn't shower at the gym.

VANDA. Doesn't she? She looked pretty wet the last time I saw her. So let's go to the end. You'll need your footman's uniform.

(She throws the servant's jacket at him. He puts it on. Then.)

Thomas! You've kept me waiting.

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *I'm sorry, madam. I was polishing the silver.*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *Don't you look dapper in that footman's jacket.*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *Thank you, madam.*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *Turn around. Show me.*

(He does so.)

Oh, yes. Quite irresistible. You could make me lose all sense of rank. You could make me forget that you're nothing but a lackey. But I think that something's still missing...

THOMAS. Where is that? That's not in the...

VANDA. I'm improvising.—*I think that something's still missing, Thomas.*

Start

(She takes off her dog collar and puts it on him.)

Oh, yes. The pièce de résistance. Very fetching. How does it feel?

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *It feels good, madam.*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *I might just fall in love with you, wearing that. What's the matter, why are you looking at me like that?*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *Does that mean that you don't love me?*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *Oh, you bore me. Whimpering all the time. You bore me.*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *Is it the Count? Are you in love with the Count?*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *(Throwing herself on the divan.)*

Can I help it that he followed me to Florence?

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *(Kneeling by her.)*

That man doesn't love you. He wants you the way he's wanted a thousand others.

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *So what if he doesn't love me. Console yourself with that when I take him into my bed.*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *Your heart is a vast stone desert.*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *(Kicking him away.)*

Insolent swine! How dare you speak to me in that tone? Bring me my other shoes!

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *(Rising and heading for the table.)*

Yes, madam.

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *Not over there. In the bag, you idiot.*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *Yes, madam.*

(He gets a pair of thigh-high, steeply heeled patent leather dominatrix boots from Vanda's bag.)

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *From now on, Thomas, I want you to call me "mistress." It's more degrading.*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *Yes, mistress.*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *Would you like to put my shoes on?*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *Yes, mistress.*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *I mean on me.*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *Yes, mistress.*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *You may.*

(He does so. When the boots are on her:)

Maybe tomorrow I'll tie you to that post in the yard and prick you with golden hairpins. Or harness you to a plow and drive you with a whip. Would you like that?

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *Yes, mistress.*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *You're doing very, very well, Thomas. I might take you on as my servant permanently.*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *Will there be anything else, mistress?*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *Yes. One more thing.*—Call Stacy and tell her you won't be coming home tonight.

THOMAS. I can't do that.

VANDA. Oh, no?

(Pulls hard on the dog collar.)

You can't?

(He takes out his phone and starts dialing.)

And you can't tell her why, either. No excuses, lame or otherwise.

THOMAS. *(Into cellphone.)*

Stacy, it's me.

VANDA. "I won't be coming home tonight."

THOMAS. *(Into phone.)*

I won't be coming home tonight.

VANDA. No excuses.

THOMAS. *(Into phone.)*

I can't tell you why.

VANDA. Say goodbye.

THOMAS. *(Into phone.)*

Goodbye.

VANDA. Now hang up and turn off your phone.

(He does so. She throws the phone across the room.)

Isn't it wonderful.

THOMAS. I'm sorry...?

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *Isn't it wonderful. Here, I mean. It's so much cozier than a hotel. Having this place all to ourselves. So nice and secluded.*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *I hardly know where I am, quite frankly...* **Stop**

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *Why, you've got a whole new life ahead of you now. We do. Minus all those other people. All that chaos. Here all alone where I can do what I want with you, undisturbed. Just the two of us.*

THOMAS/KUSHEMSKI. *The two of us—and your friend the Count.*

VANDA/DUNAYEV. *I do wish you would stop harping on him. I've been too nice to you, Thomas. That's the problem. I haven't disciplined*