

think she did. Do you know...if..."

"Yes?"

"Were she and Diana ever...involved?"

"Well, now, that is an intriguing area of speculation. There exist several schools of thought. None predominate. Diana is the purest tabula rasa though, don't you agree? All things to all people. Like Garbo, you can inscribe on that beautiful face any and all emotions you keep hidden within yourself. As you desire her, so she is."

"Garbo was bisexual."

"So she was." He grinned. "Like the sphinx, male or female? Or simply the divine androgyne?"

"You're a philosopher."

"About sexuality? That I am. Now, show me what the fuck you were doin' with this quarter."

They took their places. Calla sat beside her tuning up as she went through the troubled passage. The woman kept striking a half note just above the one she was trying to hit--and--deliberately, it almost seemed--trying to throw her off.

Diana stepped to the podium, but was conversing with the concert master.

"You need help with that?" Calla murmured throatily into her ear. And before she could answer, the woman shifted to the still unoccupied seat just behind Kris and placed her arms around the younger woman's shoulders. "Your stroke is off. Harder. And when you bow don't be afraid to use it. Like this. What's the danger? You might snap a string--but that's preferable to being tentative."

Kris wanted to stroke her bow right into Calla's gimlet eye. But then she felt those other eyes, the painfully blue ones, looking her way.

"Anytime you ladies are ready." Diana's tone was very cool.

"Ms. Harrington, I believe Ms. Galloway does know her way around a violin. I doubt she either needs nor appreciates your tutelage."

"Just trying to help," Calla pouted and returned to her seat.

"Musician, know thyself," Ralph muttered behind Calla. "Strum your own instrument, dearie."

She turned slightly and gave him a forced grimace of a smile.

"Same to you."

"Now," Diana cleared her throat, "if we're ready. Once through."

Kris was still a bit rattled, her palms sweating. Damn. She kept her eyes on her music, her forehead beading, as each note was played, counting down to where she would come in alone, only a few bars worth, but... She tapped out the time with her foot and closed her eyes as she began to play. Didn't even dare to breathe. Concentrated only on the moment and let the music take her.

That felt good, she acknowledged to herself and felt a friendly squeeze on her shoulder from either Ralph or David. She forced one eye open and checked Diana. Fully composed and absorbed in the music. Must not have been too bad. The piece crescendoed, came to a thundering coda and there was a collective sigh, rustling of papers and instruments. Diana merely nodded. She must've been none too displeased. "Ten minute break," she decreed.

Kris stood, a wobbly rubber feeling behind her knees and slight