

the fantasy--Kris came hard and had to lean against the cool tiles until the tremors stopped and her shaky legs were steady again. She exhaled raggedly and carefully stepped out of the tub.

The Melissa Etheridge CD she'd slipped into the machine was still playing. "Am I your passion, your promise, your end? I say I am, yes I am!"

Kris donned her short blue silk kimono and went to stand by the window, contemplating the city and the night. "Oh, Diana, what are you doing to me?" It was a question she never expected an answer to.

The bus had been chartered and they were on the road to Tanglewood. A weekend charity event. No one else had presumed to sit beside the conductor.

Kris relaxed back into her seat and watched Diana's slim fingers glide over the keys of her laptop. She wore headphones and was in the process of composing.

Calla had been unfashionably late to board and barely concealed her animosity when she saw where Kris was seated. Her eyes narrowed in a nasty expression that promised some forthcoming payback. After giving Kris a brief smile when the violinist took the seat beside her, Diana had settled into what she was now doing and Kris unabashedly watched the musical notation take form. She liked what she saw--what she could hear in her head. When Diana logged off and removed her headphones she was more than a little startled to hear the melody she had been composing humming from the smaller woman to her left.

"It's lovely," Kris said, "But what is it? Oratorio?"

"Maybe an opera. Maybe not."

The green eyes widened. "Ambitious."

"If I ever finish the damn thing." Diana smiled again, displaying perfect, very white teeth this time.

"You let me hear it sometime? However much you've done."

There was such a vivacious element in her voice that Diana merely nodded. "You look pleasantly surprised."

"Am. I'll remember that," she grinned.

"What?"

"If I want something--I should just ask for it."

"Worth a try. But you might get more than you'd bargain for."

"Worth the risk."

Diana appraised her. "You think so?"

"I think so."

"I like you, Kris. I wouldn't like to see you get burned though. Sometimes having is not so satisfying a thing as wanting."

"The Tao?"

"Spock." The dark haired woman grinned broadly.

Kris grinned right back. "So, you're a closet trekkie. What else don't I know about you?"

"I'm really a very simple, uncomplicated person."

"Sure you are." Kris obviously didn't believe it for a minute, so Diana shrugged.

"Believe what you want."

"Imagination will fill in the pieces that are not apparent to the eye," Kris intoned and then quickly admitted, "I just made that up. Never watched much TV. But...you know...hey, it's a given that if you don't tell me, then my lurid imaginings are going to make up a plausible story out of what I do know. Let me rephrase that--uh, Diana, maybe you