

snatching a phrase and blowing it into another.

Kris never had to worry about her playing disturbing anyone, though, as a naturally thoughtful girl, she never put bow to strings before noon on the weekend.

The phone rang. Hmm. On a Sunday. Who could it be? Would she play russian roulette? Probably the 'rents. The ones who'd had her longest, ages 14 to 18 when she'd won her scholarship and taken flight. She took a deep breath and fortified herself with thoughts of duty.

"Hello?"

"Ah, hi, so you're awake and none the worse for wear. Thought you might like to do brunch. Didn't get the chance to finish talking to you last night and I was so enjoying our little...interaction."

"Uh...Calla. Hi. Yeah. I was just about to wander out and get something to eat. Where are you?"

"Soho. Prince St. Want to meet up?"

"Okay. I'm midtown. Half an hour?"

She could hear the woman grin. "Great. How about Cellos?"

"Alright. Meet you there." Kris hung up the phone and lay back to momentarily sink into double down pillows. Well, isn't that...interesting? And completely unexpected.

Throwing on her best beige cashmere sweater, a comfortable faded pair of jeans and white Rebocks, she grabbed her keys and cards and left for the Village.

She ran through the Variations in her head, moving her fingers in tempo, on the ride downtown. Freed her mind to range at will. And what was she thinking? The music had a relentless quality. An almost arrogant sweep and swirl. Enigma. She always invited the challenge of getting to the heart of those.

Calla waved to her from a table on the sidewalk. Well. Nice. She read me right on that one. Kris seated herself. "Hi. What are you having?"

"Blintzes with caviar sound okay? And a Mimosa?"

"Mm. Sounds good. I'll have the same."

Calla made a gesture to the waiter, flashing what looked like a victory sign. "So...where did you disappear to last night?" she asked casually enough, but her storm-dark eyes penetrated like a laser.

"Went home early." Kris smiled sweetly, but the woman would not be brushed aside so easily.

"You know, she is awfully thorny--for such a beauty. Not easily approachable."

And...you would know all about that? the younger woman thought. Kris tugged at her ear, "So I keep hearing."

"You don't believe it. Think you can sneak in under the radar, huh?"

"I don't sneak."

"Mm. A full frontal assault then. Dangerous. Wouldn't want to see you get hurt."

"Did you?" Kris asked, hitting below the belt, almost surprising herself.

Calla's eyes narrowed, but she smiled. "You're good at this. Like a tango adagio. Hadn't expected that."

"Hey, I just wanna play second fiddle."

"I doubt that." Their meal arrived and they entertained an