**The Vow**

by[Cybotic](https://www.literotica.com/stories/memberpage.php?uid=129104&page=submissions)©

Mercy took the razor and removed the last bit of stubble the wax had missed. Her vulva was now smooth and soft. Kissable, according to La Femme magazine. Her sex had not been so visible since puberty.  
  
The lips were so naked, Mercy was embarrassed. She was the only one looking, but her face was red and she felt a strong urge to close her legs and shut her eyes.  
  
That was taking modesty much too far, she decided. If there was anything Mercy was really good at, it was neurotic behavior. Mercy's therapist was constantly advising her to break free of her inhibitions.  
  
She had once been thoroughly humiliated because she'd been caught talking to her cat. And it had been the cat who caught her. He was a very judgy cat, with definite opinions regarding women who talk to dumb animals. The inherent contradiction in that view is what had sent her to the therapist in the first place.  
  
She was making definite progress. The secret, as she figured it, was to take each inhibition one at a time, and force herself to do exactly what she was afraid of. She had spent three hours speaking to her cat, reading to him from The Great Gatsby. She had pulled her smartphone out of the drawer it had been in for six months and learned how to use it. She had even stood up to her boyfriend, now ex-boyfriend.  
  
Today, she would tackle this self-conscious discomfort with her own body. She didn't have to work today. No visitors were expected. She would spend the rest of this day completely nude. It was National Nude Day, according to her trivia calendar, so this was a good day for it.  
  
Mercy felt proud about her decision. And the timing was perfect. The apartment was becoming uncomfortably warm. The air conditioning had been struggling for weeks. Today, it had apparently given up entirely. It was as hot as an oven. Reducing the layers would increase the comfort.  
  
And it was a good day to stay inside. The city was being particularly aggressive. There seemed to be a lot of people on the street. And they were making a hell of a lot of noise. Mercy was on the fourth floor, but the shouts and yells were still reaching her. There were also more sirens than usual, uncomfortably close and loud. It almost sounded as if one of the ambulances or police cars had parked in the hallway right outside the apartment. Clearly, this was good time to be indoors.  
  
Which meant it was a perfect day for Mary to get comfortable with her own body. "I just might try masturbation," she said aloud. She would take this day to be her own. No phone, no television, no answering the door.  
  
Mercy spun in circles, enjoying the freedom of being naked in her own space, while avoiding looking at her reflection in the darkened television screen. "Solemn vow," she said to the cat. "I will not put on a single stitch of clothing until midnight at the very earliest."  
  
Mercy jumped in startled alarm as something struck the front door violently. A second thud actually cracked the wood. A glint of metal, shaped suspiciously like a murderer's axe, had poked through the door next to the knob.  
  
Mercy scolded herself for her fanciful imagination, as if there was some special feature that made an ordinary woodworking tool into an axe designed for murderers.  
  
However, she argued, the murderer himself, holding the axe and currently chopping through her front door, might qualify as the special feature.  
  
She was starting to scold herself again for having this silly debate rather than running and screaming, but then the now-weakened front door was kicked in.  
  
It wasn't a murderer after all, but a firefighter. Smoke and flames filled the hallway. One of those sirens had apparently been the hallway smoke alarm. "Oh, this is just perfect," Mercy said, as the firefighter ran toward her.  
  
She suddenly found herself thrown over his shoulder. Mercy was annoyed to feel his hand on her butt, but since he was saving her life, she supposed it was forgivable. He was holding her in place so he wouldn't drop her. The hand on her butt was saving her from falling on her ass.  
  
He kicked open the balcony door and started down the fire escape. The cat, she was relieved to see, was already on his way down. She should probably get around to naming that cat one of these days, she thought.  
  
As she rode the firefighter's shoulder, Mercy started listing the things she needed to tell her therapist. Her decision to shave and wax her pussy, just to see what it looked like. Her decision to stay naked all day in honor of National Nude Day. Her decision to name her cat, now that she'd been feeding him for two years. And probably something about the fire.  
  
She was carried down four flights and then through the crowd of first responders. Mercy was acutely aware that her bald sex was probably visible to anybody who wanted to look. Mercy's face was red with embarrassment. She hated people noticing when she was embarrassed, but she was fairly confident that nobody was looking at her face. Unless, it occurred to her, maybe her pussy was just not attractive. That was a mental journey she thought it best not to take.  
  
The firefighter set her down behind an ambulance. Two EMTs tried to cover her with a blanket, but she refused them. As much as she wanted that blanket, she could not accept. "I made a vow," she told them. "A solemn vow."  
  
"She's in shock," the firefighter said. He was being treated for a leg injury and a burn on his arm. "She doesn't know what she's saying."  
  
"I absolutely know what I'm saying. I am Mercy Alice Watkins. I live at 413 Monroe Avenue, which seems to be burning down right now. Apartment 17. Fourth floor. I am completely in my right mind. If anybody covers me without my consent, I will throw an hysterical fit and then sue you all to bits and pieces. My sort of a boyfriend is kind of a lawyer. He will drag you into court, kicking and screaming, to face my wrath. Probably. Eventually."  
  
The firefighter chuckled. "Quite a threat. Your ex-boyfriend, who is not exactly a lawyer, might get around to suing us one of these days."  
  
"He never officially broke up with me," Mercy said. He'd have to be speaking to her for that to happen.  
  
"Do you live with him?"  
  
"I keep my own apartment," she said. Then she looked up at the burning building. "Kept, I guess."  
  
"Does he keep any belongings at your apartment?"  
  
"Ye-ess," she said doubtfully. He hadn't picked up his things, anyway, but he probably wanted to.  
  
The firefighter looked her up and down, slowly, savouring her nude body. She blushed, but refused to reach for the blanket. "Stop that."  
  
"If you insist on standing there naked, men are going to look at you."  
  
Mercy scowled, but his words were undeniably true. "Shouldn't you be putting that out?" she pointed up at the inferno. She couldn't even make out her apartment behind the curtain of flame. "I just bought cookies. It took me two hours to pick them out. I'd prefer they not be burnt."  
  
"I'm afraid the building is a loss, ma'am. There is nothing we can do there. At this point, we're just trying to keep the fire from spreading. But I'm on the injured list now. I hurt my leg, kicking in your door. If I'm slow, or weak, or clumsy, I become a danger to my crew. I'm stuck here with you for now."  
  
"Stuck," she grumbled. She was totally naked and he hated being around her. Her charms obviously left something to be desired.  
  
"Tell me why your ex would only 'probably' file your lawsuit," the firefighter told her. "And why 'eventually'?" He looked her over once again and gave a low wolf whistle. "If I had a chance to do something for a girl who looks like you, I wouldn't hesitate."  
  
Okay. That was a decent compliment. He deserved a little honesty. "Howard is not entirely happy with me right now. He has some problems."  
  
"If I was in a blazing building, with second degree burns on my arm and splinters of wood embedded in my leg, I would risk my very life to save yours. What kind of problems does Howard have?"  
  
Mercy grinned at his wit. And he had literally saved her life. She gave him the truth. "Howard loves suing people. He would jump at the opportunity to take the fire department to court. But he'll have to wait until he gets out of jail. If he manages to beat the charges. And he'll need to get his law license back. And if he stops blaming me for the mess."  
  
"You got your boyfriend arrested and disbarred?"  
  
"No," Mercy corrected him. "I might have informed Aaron Cormichael that his grandmother's will was a forgery. And perhaps I called the DA and mentioned that my boyfriend had a secret bank account and a passport in a different name. But he committed those acts. I didn't. He got himself arrested and disbarred."  
  
"You're the secret weapon," the firefighter said in awe. "You brought down Howard Grimaldi."  
  
"He brought himself down."  
  
"He's the most notorious attorney in the city. His fingers were in every corrupt act for the past twenty years. Every organized crime figure in the country has him on speed dial." The firefighter looked at the raging fire. "You said he left some things at your apartment? What kind of things?"  
  
Mercy shrugged. "Clothes. Grooming stuff. 22 flash drives hidden in a box of cereal."  
  
"Somebody's destroying evidence."  
  
She nodded. "Someone's trying."  
  
"Trying? Not succeeding?"  
  
"It's possible that I made some copies of the flash drives."  
  
"Grimaldi probably has dirt on hundreds of very bad people. You're in a lot of danger," the firefighter observed.  
  
Mercy frowned. "I suppose that could be true. But it's temporary."  
  
"How do you figure?"  
  
"A reporter at the Times might have been given a copy of the flash drives. A reporter at the Journal could conceivably be in possession of another. It is likely that the FBI and DEA have copies. By tomorrow, maybe the next day, everyone will know what's on those drives. Hurting me won't make any difference. They would only make it worse for themselves."  
  
"You need to go into hiding in the meantime. Is there anyplace you can go where nobody could find you?"  
  
"I'm not very social," she admitted. "I don't know where any of my friends live."  
  
"Could you call or text them?"  
  
"Good idea. Maybe you could get my phone for me? I think I left it in the bathroom."  
  
He looked up at the blaze and sighed. "Do you have a car?"  
  
"I do! It's a purple Honda. It's in the underground garage beneath my apartment building. The keys are in my purse. It's on my kitchen counter. Could you pop up and grab it?"  
  
"This is looking pretty bad."  
  
"I'm pretty much wearing everything I own," Mercy said.  
  
"Well, I like your fashion sense. But I think you're in a lot of trouble."  
  
"I'll be fine," Mercy said, waving her hand at him in dismissal. "Just go do what you need to do. It's a big city. I'll wander around for awhile. I'll figure something out."  
  
"You're butt-ass naked on 34th Street. Blending in is not gonna happen."  
  
"I am pretending nobody notices I'm naked. It's rude of you to remind me."  
  
"Lady, you need a therapist."  
  
"I have a therapist," Mercy informed him. "She tells me it's important to set goals and, more importantly, to see them through. Today's goal was to stay naked until midnight. I did expect a bit more privacy than standing on the street at whatever time o'clock it is, but the whole point of setting goals is to not let adversity or obstacles stop you."  
  
"I don't think I've ever rescued the same person twice before," the firefighter mused.  
  
"Hey!" Mercy yelled indignantly. His hand was on her butt again and she was once more draped over his shoulder. He wasn't even wearing the gloves anymore. He'd taken off the coat, helmet, gloves, and heavy trousers so the EMTs could treat his arm and leg. He was dressed in cargo shorts and a t-shirt and his bare hand was on her naked ass.  
  
Mercy fumed as she dangled from his shoulder, but there was little she could do about it. Upside down, it was hard to be certain, but it seemed as though the firefighter had a pretty nice ass of his own. She tried not to think about it, but it was right there in front of her face.  
  
To distract herself, she carefully pulled his wallet from his back pocket. She'd look at that instead. His name was Benjamin Webster. No photos of kids or a wife, but some men weren't sentimental. Maybe he had a girlfriend.  
  
"Benjamin, what is your girlfriend's name?"  
  
"Why do you want to know?"  
  
"I should apologize to her," Mercy explained.  
  
"What the hell for?"  
  
"You're touching my butt. It's possible I'm starting to enjoy it."  
  
"No girlfriend." He set her down on the back of a motorcycle. "I don't have a helmet that will fit you, but if the police stop us, I suspect that won't be their top priority."  
  
"Are we stealing this?"  
  
"No. Give me my wallet. I was off-duty when I heard about the fire. I came on my own bike and put on some gear when I arrived."  
  
"They just happened to have extra gear on hand?" she asked skeptically.  
  
"Of course," Benjamin assured her. "Firefighters look out for one another. Off-duty firefighters regularly show up when there is a fire. There is always extra gear kept on the trucks."  
  
"Your last name starts with a 'W'," she remarked as he climbed on the bike in front of her.  
  
"You are correct. Well spotted."  
  
"So does mine. If we got married, my initials would stay the same."  
  
He shook his head and started the engine. Further conversation was impossible. As they pulled into traffic, Mercy was very conscious of the other drivers on the road. She held on tight to Benjamin and pressed her face to his back to avoid looking around, but she knew people were staring at her ass. There was an inordinate amount of honking, and she was sure it had something to do with her being naked at 40 miles an hour.  
  
She peeked out once and saw several expressions of admiration, shock, and anger looking back at her. Shutting her eyes tightly, she wondered if her therapist was in one of those cars.  
  
The sunlight was hot on her back. Mercy hoped she'd get a tan. She worried about getting a sunburn, though. But they weren't in the sun long enough for either. The motorcycle slowed after just a few miles and the light disappeared.  
  
She risked opening her eyes and found they were in a parking garage. Benjamin pulled up to a motorcycle area and killed the engine.  
  
He helped her dismount. "This is the Carlton Hotel. I'm going to get you a room, ok?" Mercy nodded.  
  
"If we got married, would you want me to take your name?" she asked.  
  
"Are we still on that subject? Does this matter right now? Keep your damn name. I'm trying to save your life."  
  
Mercy frowned at him, but she hid between two cars when he told her to. "Try to stay out of sight while I get the room."  
  
He entered the hotel. Mercy was alone. For the first time since she'd made her vow, there was nobody nearby. She was naked in a parking garage in the middle of the city, at the mercy of a rude firefighter, but for the moment, she was alone.  
  
An uncomfortable thought came into her head. She didn't want to masturbate in front of Benjamin. But once she was in a hotel room, he would probably try to stay and protect her. She wouldn't be alone anymore. And he might hear her if she hid in the bathroom to do it. The thought was mortifying.  
  
That meant she had to masturbate now, while she had the chance. It hadn't quite been a part of her solemn vow, but she had intended to try it out while she was so conveniently naked. The intervening events and current situation did not alleviate her responsibility to herself.  
  
Mercy carefully lay down on the concrete. She scooched in close to a Toyota so she could share the parking curb. It made for an overly firm pillow but was more comfortable than lying flat.  
  
She wasn't sure how this was supposed to go, but she started by cupping her breasts. Men often played with her breasts, and according to the things she read, women usually loved that. But it wasn't doing much for her.  
  
Maybe it only felt good when a man did it. She didn't seem to be enjoying this very much. Mercy was slightly embarrassed at touching herself like this, but that was part of the inhibition she was trying to get past.  
  
Perhaps the presence of a male was required to trigger the pleasure in females when their breasts were touched. But that didn't make sense, Mercy told herself. There were lesbians out there. As far as she was aware, they enjoyed touching each other. Her friend Jill was a lesbian. If she could get up the courage, maybe Mary could ask Jill to touch her breasts and see how that felt.  
  
The mere thought of that had an effect. Her own fingers suddenly felt a lot better when she imagined they were Jill's fingers. She started stroking her breasts and that felt good too. Mercy didn't think she was a lesbian, but the thought of lesbian touches had turned her on.  
  
Perhaps her own thoughts were the trigger, and the idea of somebody else touching her. Mercy experimented by imagining Benjamin's fingers caressing her. She closed her eyes and moaned with pleasure at the result.  
  
But they weren't breasts. Benjamin did not have her catalog of hangups. He probably didn't use a wimpy word like 'breasts' when he was seducing a woman. "'Tits'," she decided. "That's what he would say. "'Tits' and 'pussy'."  
  
Mercy moved one hand down between her legs. Her clitoris was suddenly very sensitive. Or so it seemed. She never actually touched herself here. There was always tissue paper or a pad or a washcloth as a barrier. Now she explored.  
  
She liked it better without the hair. It was less intimidating. Her pubic hair, when she had dared to sneak a peek at it, had always reminded her of her father's beard. Combined with her father's strict opinions regarding the value and role of females, that part of her body had always seemed fraught with disapproval. The beard was gone now. Her father was no longer between her legs. Her sex was newly born. Mercy should get to know her.  
  
The soft skin felt good under her fingers. And her fingers felt good, stroking that softness. The lips parted easily as she rubbed them. And they were wet. Moisture was leaking out from between them. She knew what that meant. She had succeeded in turning herself on. She was genuinely aroused. The wetness was her body preparing for a penis to penetrate. Mercy spread that welcoming oil around her sex, circling her clitoris and enjoying the zing of that lovely sensation.  
  
It used to offend her. The very idea that her body was designed to accommodate a man's penis and would even lubricate to make his occupation easier to accomplish. Mercy had reluctantly done her duty by her boyfriends, but the annoyance had always prevented arousal. Sex had always been more discomfort and duty than anything else. She was starting to reconsider that position.  
  
Mercy wondered if perhaps Benjamin would want to penetrate her. Not that she was going to invite him. But it was exciting to think about. Had he maybe thought about sticking his penis in her vagina?  
  
"No," she corrected herself, testing the ease of penetration with one finger. "He would say 'cock' or 'dick'. And he would stick it in my pussy. Maybe my cunt."  
  
She pushed the finger into herself. Never before had she touched herself inside. She liked the feeling. Soft, but snug. Like getting hugged. While she plumbed her own depths, she tried rubbing her clitoris with her thumb.  
  
"Hoo boy!" she cried, sitting up in alarm. A little too intense. Mercy opened her eyes to see if anybody had heard her. It didn't seem like anyone was coming to investigate. The parking garage was quiet. There were traffic noises, but they were yards away, on the other side of a wall.  
  
Mercy lay back, shut her eyes, and tried again, lightly stroking the side of her clitoris as she fingered her pussy. It felt better on the side. She imagined Benjamin above her, in his firefighter's coat and helmet. It might be rude to imagine him naked and she wasn't brave enough to do so anyway. But she could imagine his rough voice speaking to her as she masturbated. "I want to put my cock in your pussy. Cock in your pussy. Cock in your pussy."

Her imaginary Benjamin said it over and over again. Mercy could feel the orgasm building, her first ever. She'd never had one during sex, but maybe that's because she needed to practice first. Guys practiced all the time, didn't they? She wondered if Benjamin ever practiced. Would he let her watch? Do guys ever help girls masturbate? Mercy imagined it was Benjamin's finger in her pussy and Benjamin's thumb against her clit. And she could still hear his fantasy voice. "I want to fuck you, Mercy. My cock in your cunt. My cock in you, Mercy."  
  
The orgasm hit her like a lightning bolt, electrifying her. Her back arched. She rolled her head back and forth over the concrete curb. It was the most glorious thing she'd ever experienced. It was like a nuclear bomb had gone off and obliterated everything but the exquisite sensations in her pussy. She heard someone whimpering and dimly realized that it was her.  
  
Mercy suddenly revived from a sudden faint. The orgasm had actually caused her to pass out. Just for a moment, she was sure, but it had been most refreshing. She had successfully masturbated, she realized, proud of the accomplishment.  
  
Panting, achy, and sweaty, she opened one eye, anxious to see if the world had truly ended or if had just seemed that way. The word Goodyear appeared before her. Something hard and black was pressed against her cheek and there was a terrible taste in her mouth. Slowly, Mercy deduced that she was giving a an open-mouthed kiss to a tire.  
  
She rolled her head away from the Toyota and looked up into Benjamin's astonished face. He was standing by the car's bumper. She blushed a deep red. Realizing that her hand was still on her sex, she tried to casually move it to a neutral position, wiping her wet fingers on her thigh.  
  
"How long have you been standing there?" she demanded. Whatever answer he gave, it was too long.  
  
"You have a hotel room now. Perfect place for this kind of thing."  
  
Knowing it sounded ridiculous, she explained. "I wanted some privacy."  
  
He nodded as if this made perfect sense. "Your definition of 'privacy' might be a little different from mine."  
  
Mercy climbed to her feet. Scowling, she said, "I'm still mad at you. Show me to this room."  
  
"What the hell did I do?"  
  
"You told me I'd have to keep my name if we got married."  
  
"Are we getting married?" Benjamin asked in exasperation.  
  
"Not a chance of it."  
  
"Then what does it matter?"  
  
"It is insulting that you would not want to share your name with me," Mercy told him.  
  
"You want the name? It's yours! I don't care."  
  
She glared at him and started marching toward the entrance. He took hold of her shoulders, ignoring her irritated hiss, and steered her to the left.  
  
"Not the lobby. I propped open the fire door," he said. "My boss would have my head if he knew. We'll go up the emergency stairs."  
  
She stopped dead. "I can't do it."  
  
"Why not?"  
  
In a small voice, she said. "I'm afraid of stairwells."  
  
"Are you fucking kidding me?"  
  
"You never know what might be lurking up above or down below, waiting for you."  
  
He took a deep breath. "There are seven people in the hotel lobby. You're still naked. There is no way you'll make it to the elevator before someone stops you. Even if you did, the front desk can shut down the elevator."  
  
"How do you know that?"  
  
"I did the fire inspection here."  
  
"I can't go in the stairwell," she insisted, folding her arms in defiance. "You'll just have to find somewhere else."  
  
For the third time, Mercy found herself dangling over his shoulder with his hand on her butt. "This is not civilized behaviour," she yelled at him. But it was surprisingly comforting. Every time she rode this shoulder, she was moving from danger to safety. She shrieked in panic and beat at his back as he bolted up the steps, but she quieted the moment they arrived at their floor and exited the stairwell.  
  
"Is this a nice hotel?" she asked as they emerged in an empty corridor, pretending she hadn't just screamed her way up five flights. She wasn't really surprised when he didn't answer.  
  
The carpet was nice, she decided, looking down at her hair brushing the floor. Soft and blue. It would feel good on her feet.  
  
"You can put me down," she said.  
  
"Oh, hell, no. You'd see a spider or a shadow or a ghost and I'd just have to pick you up again."  
  
"Do you believe in ghosts? I used to see the ghost of my cousin Tim after he was executed. I was very frightened."  
  
"Why was he executed?" Benjamin asked.  
  
Mercy was silent for a long moment. Eventually, she said, "When I was sixteen, my parents sat me down and told me I never had a cousin Tim. I had a series of recurring nightmares. They put me on some pills for a while. Still, I am curious about ghosts."  
  
"I should have known." Benjamin unlocked the door and entered the room.  
  
"This is NOT how I want to be carried over the threshold," Mercy scolded. "If we get married."  
  
Benjamin set her down. "Are we back to that?"  
  
"We never left it. You have yet to satisfactorily explain why you wouldn't want me to have your last name."  
  
"I said you can have it," he reminded her.  
  
"'You can have it' is very different from 'I want you to have it.'"  
  
"Don't you want to keep your own name?"  
  
"I don't know. I haven't thought about it."  
  
"Excuse me?" Benjamin glared at her. "Doesn't this ridiculous debate constitute thinking about it?"  
  
Mercy rolled her eyes. "Of course not. When a man asks me to marry him, then I'll consider the matter. There will be lists of pros and cons. I will have to do some research. My therapist will be consulted. Hyphens will be seriously contemplated. Children's names will have to be brought into the equation, just in case the initials spell out rude words. But we're far from that point. We are discussing whether you would want me to take your name."  
  
"I would leave it up to you."  
  
"Of course you would. That's a given. That's the easy answer."  
  
"What's the right answer?"  
  
Mercy looked at him in pity. "If I decide to keep my own name, you're supposed to accept it manfully. You might argue a little, try to make me change my mind, but you'll give in. Your stoic expression will almost hide the hurt and disappointment in your eyes."  
  
"I don't believe this."  
  
"You're a man. You're supposed to be territorial, possessive, and dominant. You will accept my choice, but you should hope that I want your name. You want me to belong to you and you hope I want to belong to you."  
  
Benjamin sighed. "If we get married, it would be an honour and a privilege if you would take my name for your own."  
  
"Was that so hard?"  
  
"Let me remind you that it is an enormous IF. To tell the truth, and don't get mad, I seem to have forgotten your first name."  
  
In a tiny, crushed voice, she asked, "You forgot my name?"  
  
"I was distracted."  
  
"By what?"  
  
"First, the burning building. Second, painful injuries to my arm and leg. Third, the EMT treating said injuries, and Fourth, I was distracted by a beautiful woman standing naked in front of me, refusing the blanket she was offered."  
  
"Beautiful?" Mercy questioned.  
  
"Very."  
  
"Oh. Ok. You're forgiven."  
  
"If it makes you feel better, since I didn't remember your name, I booked us into the hotel as Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Webster. I very possessively gave you my name in the assumption you'd want it."  
  
Mercy fought it, but a grin broke out of her face, pleased with his manly arrogance. "You may not have noticed, but my social skills are close to nonexistent. When I told you before that I don't know where my friends live, it would be more accurate to say that I have no friends."  
  
"How did you ever get hooked up with Howard Grimaldi?"  
  
"My library card got cancelled. I wanted to hire an attorney to get it back. Someone mean, who knew all the dirty lawyer tricks. Howard was always on the news. He seemed like the viciousest, angriest lawyer in the city. So I went to see him. He took me to dinner. Things progressed."  
  
"Why did you turn him in?"  
  
"He had a passport in some other name. He was obviously prepared to flee."  
  
"And you wanted to see him pay for his crimes?" Benjamin was doubtful. She didn't seem like a law and order avenger.  
  
"No. Or maybe yes. But not the crimes the D.A. was interested in."  
  
"There was more? What did you want to see him punished for?"  
  
"He only had one passport," she said. "He should have had two."  
  
"Ah." Benjamin changed the subject. "You might want to take a shower. There are tire marks on your face."  
  
Blushing as she remembered why that was, Mercy nodded. Shyly, she asked, "Do you want to watch me shower?"  
  
"Do you want me to watch?"  
  
She shrugged. "Men like to look at naked women."  
  
"That," he said, "is an understatement."  
  
"And you've already seen everything."  
  
"And then some."  
  
"No man has ever seen me naked before today," Mercy said. "But I've kind of gotten used to you looking. And maybe it's possible I've come to enjoy your ogling."  
  
"Ogling?"  
  
"Yes. Don't deny it. You ogled, Benjamin."  
  
"I'm not denying the act. But nobody uses the word 'ogle' except the people who design crossword puzzles."  
  
"I like crossword puzzles. So, if you're not busy, and if you'd like to keep on looking at me, I don't mind."  
  
"I accept your offer. How is it that no man has seen you naked? Howard never took you to bed?"  
  
"He did," Mercy said. "And perhaps a few before him. But always under a blanket with the lights out. I wear a long t-shirt to bed. He would lift it up for access. I suppose that poor shirt is all burnt up now."  
  
"None of your exes wanted to see you naked?"  
  
"I suppose they probably did. But I wasn't going to marry them."  
  
"You think about marriage a lot."  
  
"Not so much. But I'm naked and we keep talking about me being naked. When I was a teenager, my mama told me over and over that the only man who should ever see me naked would be the man I was gonna marry. It's possible I'm superstitious. If I had no intention of marrying a man, I wouldn't let him see me without clothes. Then you barged in and saw stuff only my future husband had a right to look at."  
  
"Hence the kooky questions," Benjamin said in understanding.  
  
"Hence the perfectly reasonable questions," Mercy corrected.  
  
"My mistake. Shall I start your shower, my lady?"  
  
"Yes, please. Hot, please. And a bath, if you don't mind."  
  
She watched as he filled the tub, content with silence as the water level rose. It felt like the height of luxury to have someone caring for her like this.  
  
Mercy started wondering about other women in his life. Who were they? How did he meet them? "Benjamin, how many lives have you saved?"  
  
"Just by myself, seven."  
  
Mercy nodded. She liked it that he was able to answer. The lives he'd saved were important to him. "How many women have you seen naked?"  
  
"I do not know."  
  
She didn't like that answer at all. Did that mean the naked women were unimportant? Had there been so many that he'd lost count? "Why don't you remember?"  
  
"Several reasons. But here's one. When I was in France, some years ago, I was dragged to a nude beach. It didn't occur to me to count the females."  
  
Okay, she thought. That was an acceptable answer. And her bath was ready. It was an enormous tub, but it had filled quickly. Benjamin took her hand and helped her step into the water.  
  
The warmth was glorious. She liked hot baths at any time, but it was especially sweet today. The day had been pleasantly warm, but one does get used to the blanket effect from clothing. Mercy had been feeling a faint chill simply based on her exposure. But now she was literally bathed in heat.  
  
Mercy's eyes were closed as she lay back in the water and let it soothe her soul. She opened them for just a moment to make sure Benjamin really was looking at her. It seemed important somehow. Not just keeping her company or watching over her, but looking at her nudity.  
  
She had never released his hand once he'd helped her into the bath. He'd held on as she sank down into the water. And he held on still. The gentle press of his fingers was proof of his presence. But Mercy wanted to know that he was enjoying himself, lusting after her.  
  
In her brief glance, she saw him sitting beside the bathtub, facing her, his right hand in hers. And he was definitely looking at her. Benjamin's eyes were on her breasts, nipples poking up out of the water. It was comforting to feel his eyes on her, to share herself with him.  
  
"Benjamin?"  
  
"Yes?"  
  
"It's possible that I'm a bit flaky."  
  
"Hmm," he answered noncommittally.  
  
"You're not going to argue with me?"  
  
"Hard to argue with such an astute observation."  
  
Mercy smiled. She would have felt less comfortable if he'd pretended she was completely normal. She was an oddball. She knew it. Benjamin was okay with that.  
  
"Do you like looking at me?" she asked.  
  
"I'm ogling."  
  
"Why do men like looking at naked women?"  
  
"Are you kidding?" Benjamin asked.  
  
She waved her free hand in the air. "They want sex. Of course I know that. But men buy magazines or go to strip clubs. They won't have sex with those girls."  
  
"They jerk off."  
  
"Guys do that anyway. They don't need to look at girls for that."  
  
"Even if they can't see them in person or in pictures, they use their imagination to look at them in fantasy. They're still looking."  
  
Mercy considered that. "Have you ever gone to a strip club?"  
  
"I have, yes."  
  
"I assume that guys don't jerk off in the club. Do they just hold the image in mind until they get home?"  
  
"It's more than that," Benjamin explained. "You get aroused when looking at nude women. It feels good and it builds up. And the dancers give lap dances, which makes you even more excited. It's that intense arousal you carry with you."  
  
"What exactly is a lap dance? I've heard of them, but never asked for a definition."  
  
"A lap dance is when a naked woman grinds her ass against a man's crotch. I should take you to a strip club."  
  
"Would you really do that?" Mercy asked. "Do they even let women in?"  
  
"Wouldn't be much of a strip club without a few women. If you want to go, I'll take you. You're already dressed for it."  
  
Mercy pictured herself taking her clothes off on a stage in a room full of men. "A lot of people saw me naked today, didn't they?"  
  
"Hundreds."  
  
"Do you think some of the men will go home and...you know...while remembering what they saw?"  
  
"No," Benjamin said. "I don't think. I know for certain that a lot of men will be jerking off to thoughts of you for years to come."  
  
Smiling, she asked, "Did you like watching me masturbate?"  
  
"Lady, that's the image I'll be jerking off to."  
  
"For years?"  
  
"Decades," he assured her.  
  
"You still don't remember my name?"  
  
"Sure I do. You're Mrs. Benjamin Webster."  
  
Giggling, she said, "My name is Mercy."  
  
"Mercy Webster. Good to know."  
  
"Did you happen to notice that I'd shaved off my pubic hair?"  
  
"I am a very observant fellow," Benjamin said.  
  
"Did you like the way it looks?"  
  
"I think we've established that I like looking at naked women. That particular region of the female anatomy is an extra special favourite. You made it even more naked. I very much liked it."  
  
"I was reading a woman's magazine," Mercy explained. "It said that going bare down there would invite kisses. I thought I might see if that was accurate."  
  
"You've never had your pussy kissed?"  
  
"No," she said. Mercy peeked at him through her eyelashes. "Not yet."  
  
"That is a crime," he said. "I might have to correct that error."  
  
She blushed and smiled. "Do you have to pee?" she asked.  
  
"Not urgently."  
  
"But you will have to pee soon, right?"  
  
"I am human," Benjamin reminded her. "Eventually, yes, I will have to pee."  
  
"You can pee now if you want."  
  
"I can wait."  
  
"It won't bother me if you do it now," Mercy told him.  
  
"What is this conversation really about?"  
  
She sighed. "Ok. I suppose you figured me out. You probably remember that I had never let a man see me naked before you barged into my apartment."  
  
"I object to the term 'barged', but I do recall the conversation."  
  
"Well, it's possible that I have never seen a naked man for the same reasons. I was thinking that maybe if you had to pee, I might peek."  
  
"It's a big tub. You could have invited me to share the bath."  
  
"I was too shy for that."  
  
Benjamin hooted with laughter. "You roam around naked. You masturbate in a parking garage. You invite me to come watch you take a bath. Mrs. Mercy Webster, I don't think 'shy' describes you."  
  
"Watkins," she corrected.  
  
"How's that?"  
  
"My name is Mercy Watkins. Mercy Alice Watkins."  
  
"Nope. I reject that. We may not be really married, but for as long as we're pretending, then you have my last name. If you want to order room service or get extra linens, the hotel staff is going to be responding to Mrs. Webster."  
  
She thought about that and decided to accept the scenario. "Okay. I'm Mrs. Webster."  
  
"I think my wife would welcome her husband into her bath."  
  
Mrs. Webster, Mercy decided, was braver than Miss Watkins. In an attempt to live up to her new name, she pulled her knees up and scooched back in the tub, hoping Benjamin would take that for an invitation.  
  
He grinned in understanding and acceptance. He pulled off the t-shirt, and Mercy happily ogled him. She liked looking at men's chests, so long as the men didn't know she was doing so. But that was the most she'd ever done. As Benjamin's shorts dropped, revealing his firm erection, she blushed and turned away.  
  
Reminding herself that she was shedding her inhibitions, Mercy forced herself to face his cock. Scolding herself for cowardice, she even opened an eye.  
  
There it was, pointing straight at her. Most of the time, Mercy didn't appreciate it when people pointed things at her. This, she didn't mind so much. She may not have actually seen one of these before, but she was not a virgin. She knew that when a man's cock got pointy, he liked what he was looking at.  
  
Slowly, giving her plenty of time to look, Benjamin stepped into the tub. It was a nice, large bath. Plenty of room for two people. He stood in front of her for a long moment, his cock just inches from her face. She didn't have the courage to touch it, but she was pretty sure she wanted to.  
  
The women's magazines greatly encouraged handjobs and blowjobs. There were plenty of tips and personal accounts. Mercy could fantasize about taking him in her hand, but she could barely imagine taking it into her mouth. She hoped Benjamin didn't expect it of her. At the same time, she had a brief, attractive fantasy in which he forced her. She was going to have to discuss this with her therapist.  
  
But the moment passed. Benjamin sat down in the water. Mercy faced him, giving him a friendly smile, trying to cover her nervousness. "I have a confession to make," she said. "I'm not very good at seduction. You might have to give me some pointers."  
  
"Were you planning to seduce me?"  
  
"I think so. I'm trying to be bolder," Mercy said.  
  
"Tell me what you think seduction is," he asked.  
  
Frowning, she thought about it. "I'm pretty sure it's when one person tries to tempt the other into having sex. Is that not correct?"  
  
"By that definition, you have already succeeded. I've been sorely tempted by you since the moment I saw you. If you ask, I'm yours."  
  
Pleased, Mercy grinned at him. "If you were thinking about seducing me, it's possible I would let you."  
  
"I think I might try ravishing rather than seducing," Benjamin told her.  
  
She narrowed her eyes. "I'm not sure I like the sound of that. What does 'ravishing' mean? Isn't that a little like rape?"  
  
"A little, but there are key differences. Seduction is slow and subtle. Wine and candles, soft music and dim light, advancing a little, then retreating, then advancing again, each time bringing the subject closer to giving in. If she says No, I back off, but keep trying to persuade her.

"Ravishment is quicker, just passion unleashed. There is nothing subtle about it and no retreating. If she says No, then it stops completely and does not resume. If she's not swept up in the passion, then there is really no point in going any further."  
  
"Okay," she said. "That sounds all right. You may proceed."  
  
"I will begin with a kiss."  
  
Mercy nodded. That sounded reasonable. She closed her eyes and pursed her lips. And eagerly waited. But he didn't move. The water didn't even slosh as Benjamin remained still.  
  
She opened her eyes and frowned at him. This was rude behavior, she decided. But he was shaking his head. "You misunderstand," he told her.  
  
"You offered me a kiss," she said. "What is there to misunderstand about that?"  
  
"Why did you shave your pussy?" he asked, putting his hands on her knees and spreading them apart to look at her bare sex under the water.  
  
"The magazine. La Femme. It said that removing the hair would invite touches and...kisses."  
  
Benjamin plunged his head into the hot water and pressed his lips to her pussy. Mercy gasped at the sudden assault. She clamped her thighs around his head, protecting her vulnerable sex, but it was too late. He was already there.  
  
He was really doing it. He was kissing her pussy. La Femme had been right. And Mercy liked this activity a great deal. His lips were pressed to her and his tongue was searching inside her. Mercy's finger had felt wonderful when she'd probed herself and she would no doubt practice her masturbation in the future, but this was so much better.  
  
As he tasted her and tasted her, Benjamin's was sneakily sliding his arms under her legs and skating up her back. Mercy hoped his hands would find their way to her front and fondle her breasts, but he had another plan in mind.  
  
In a sudden flurry of activity that her mind was too foggy to follow or remember, Mercy found herself hoisted up, once more, onto Benjamin's shoulders. But this time, she wasn't hanging like a used beach towel. Benjamin was still sitting on the floor of the tub, holding her up. She was sitting upright, sitting on his shoulders, clutching his head, with Benjamin's face still pressed to her pussy.  
  
It was a little chilly, being suddenly removed from the hot water, but she strongly suspected that not all of her shivers were coming from the temperature.  
  
It was difficult to concentrate on what his tongue was doing when it was creating such incredible sensations. Her thoughts kept dissolving. She was losing all control of herself. Her muscles were tensing in response to the tongue, and her mind was drifting with the lovely vibrations. If Benjamin's hands were not firmly holding her, Mercy was pretty sure she'd fall.  
  
She gripped his wet hair and just rode his mouth, loving this experience, never wanting it to end. In the very back of her mind, she blessed the writers at La Femme Magazine and said a little prayer for her wonderful therapist. For one brief instant, she wondered if her therapist had ever had a man lick her pussy, and then the orgasm hit and her thoughts exploded into nothingness.  
  
Mercy wrapped her legs around Benjamin's head and pressed her pussy hard against his face, trying her very best to smother him between her thighs. His tongue dipped and stroked and circled and scrubbed, showing no mercy as he forced the orgasm to go on and on and on.  
  
She fainted again. As she'd done in the garage. Only this time, she woke up in Benjamin's arms. He was no longer in the bathtub, but standing in the hotel bedroom, holding her like a baby.  
  
"You spend a lot of time carrying me," Mercy observed in a mumble as her mind reassembled itself.  
  
"I'm getting used to it."  
  
"Where are we going?"  
  
"Right here." He put her down, then retreated quickly to the bathroom and returned with a towel. He vigorously dried her, rubbing the terrycloth over every inch of her.  
  
Mercy enjoyed the luxury of having a man tend to her like this. She closed her eyes and savored the sensations of the towel massaging her. He was gentle, but hurried. She sensed he was impatient with her. Peeking down, she saw his cock still standing erect, and she thought she understood why he was rushing.  
  
She smiled when he picked her up again and was not at all surprised to find herself essentially tossed onto the mattress. No longer shy, she opened her legs in welcome. She was very ready for him to penetrate her. Mercy didn't believe she'd ever been so ready.  
  
Benjamin crawled over her, kissing his way up her body, until he was poised over her. She had the impression of a lion standing over his kill. She thrilled to realize she was his prey, his conquest. Mercy was eager to be conquered.  
  
He dragged his cock over her, between her legs, wetting himself in her leaking fluids. Mercy wanted to touch him, guide him home, but she wasn't yet ready to take that step. Benjamin had some talents, however. He moved his hips over her, positioning the head of his dick right at her entrance.  
  
Slowly, he pushed forward, easing into her. Mercy sighed at the feeling. For once, this was not uncomfortable. It felt wonderful. He filled her up, somehow completing her, as no penis had ever done before. She even lifted her hips to meet him as he entered.  
  
Mercy felt his balls touch her butt. His cock was fully seated. It was a wonderful, exciting knowledge. Benjamin was actually inside her. This had always been an annoying experience with Howard or previous boyfriends. She was usually offended that Mother Nature had made her to be a dick receptacle. But with Benjamin, it seemed just perfect.  
  
"Benjamin?" she asked.  
  
"Yes?"  
  
"Does it feel good to be inside me?"  
  
He laughed. "It feels marvelous."  
  
"I'm glad I seduced you."  
  
He started moving in her, slowly pulling back, pushing forward, pulling back again. She imagined his cock, opening her pussy up, gliding inside. Mercy closed her eyes and concentrated on the feeling of his dick moving through her pussy lips, opening her up. She felt empty and bereft each time he backed away, and gloriously fulfilled when he pushed forward and filled her.  
  
"You're not wearing a condom," she said suddenly.  
  
Benjamin stilled immediately. "No. I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking. I'll run down to see if there's a shop that sells them."  
  
"No," Mercy said. "I wasn't complaining. I was just mentioning it. I've never had a penis in my vagina that wasn't wearing a condom. I think I like it."  
  
He was about to respond when she suddenly said, forcefully, "Dick. Cock. Pussy. Cunt. That's what they're called."  
  
"Um, yeah. Do you want me to stop?"  
  
"No, why?"  
  
Benjamin shook his head in confusion. "As you just pointed out, I'm not wearing a condom."  
  
"I don't want you to. I've never felt a naked cock in me before. I just thought it should be mentioned."  
  
"I might make you pregnant."  
  
Mercy smiled. "You might. I wouldn't mind."  
  
"Then I can keep going?"  
  
"Please do."  
  
Benjamin started moving again. Mercy moaned in delight as his cock slid easily in and out of her. "That's so nice," she said.  
  
'Nice' wasn't quite the word in Benjamin's mind, but he was too overwhelmed in sensation to start thinking about vocabulary. He fucked her hard and fast, enjoying the soft little grunts she made each time he drove deep inside her.  
  
"I'm about to come," he panted.  
  
"Yes," she said. "Do that. Do it inside me," Mercy hummed.  
  
Two, three more thrusts would do it, he thought, but Mercy reached her climax first. She screamed in ecstasy as her whole body tensed and shuddered. And the soft, sudden squeeze of her cunt sent him over the edge. He hollered his own joy and poured himself into her. "Oh God, oh God, oh God," he groaned as he pumped her full of cum.  
  
They clung fiercely to each other as they rode through the orgasm. It was the strongest Benjamin had ever experienced. His mind was completely erased, replaced by the sensations of sexual nirvana. Had an earthquake started, he would not have been aware of it.  
  
As it faded, he and Mercy lay in each other's arms, boneless and exhausted. Benjamin thought he should probably withdraw from her, but he didn't have the energy to move. Perhaps if someone yelled, "Fire!" he might have been able to respond, but otherwise, he wasn't going anywhere.  
  
"You shouldn't blaspheme," Mercy mumbled into his shoulder.  
  
"Pardon?"  
  
"You took the Lord's name in vain when you were ejaculating," she criticized. "You probably shouldn't."  
  
Benjamin laughed. "That's my girl," he said. "Always ready to surprise me. What do you say to putting on one of the hotel robes and we go down to the restaurant for a late lunch?"  
  
"I can't," she reminded him. "I made a solemn vow. It's National Nude Day. I have to stay naked until midnight."  
  
"Right. Is that a real day?"  
  
"It's very real. And I'm celebrating. I shaved my pussy. I named my cat. I masturbated. I even had sex. None of that's usual for me, Benjamin."  
  
"I thoroughly enjoyed helping you out with that last part."  
  
She blushed. "So did I."  
  
"So what do you say we order room service, then explore the hotel balcony? You can be naked out there, can't you?"  
  
"People might see me."  
  
"People all over the city have seen you," he told her. "Did you notice the reporters at your apartment fire? You're going to be on the news, my girl."  
  
She thought about that. Finally, she nodded. "Ok. I'll be your girl."  
  
"That wasn't exactly what I...Never mind. Balcony or no?"  
  
"All right. Balcony."  
  
"We'll have to start thinking about getting you clothing after midnight," he said.  
  
"Hours away," Mercy responded. "And I should probably not leave this place for a couple of days. I can go nude for a few days, no problem. I think I've gotten over that particular hangup. My therapist would be very proud. I should call her."  
  
"Is there anything you need for these few days?"  
  
"My cat. He's homeless now. He'll be worried about me."  
  
"I'll go look for the cat," Benjamin promised. "What's his name?"  
  
"He doesn't have one yet. I have to work on that."  
  
"At midnight, if you're willing to go out, we'll find you some clothes and go hunting."  
  
"Are you going to stay with me until then?"  
  
"I was planning on it," he said.  
  
"Good. I would probably enjoy it if you would fuck me again."