

# Balance Of Power

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*A short glimpse into the nature of power*

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The ruddy light in the cold stone room is dim, but it is enough to make out every detail of the cowering figure. He is nude save for a studded leather collar around his neck; slender and fragile, he is on his knees, enduring the wrath of his Mistress. Standing over him in a tight, black and blood-red corset, a tiny black skirt and high leather boots, her eyes snapping and crackling with barely-controlled savagery, her scarlet lips flickering between a sneer and a wicked smile, she resembles a Goddess of vengeance... And fury. "Fucking pitiful," she snarls, bringing the whip back for another lash. The slave's back is a mass of torn skin and hot blood, and the sight of his pain and misery only serves to heighten her blood-lust. A little more, and she will cum. She will never permit the slave to touch her, of course, but exercising her power over his worthless flesh is enough to make dark rivers of fire ooze through her body. Another lash of the whip; a gratifying droplet of blood bursts through his abused skin; a hiss of pleasure escapes her lips. The others that remain - and many have fled the savagery of the slave's beating - stand silently, making no judgment. They, she knows, are creatures of the darkness just as she is. They are hunters, or they are prey. Their approval, their desire, their fear... these things matter less to her than the cowering animal before her. They are nothing more than witnesses to her glory, and her final, incandescent ecstasy... Another lash; a feeble whimper. She snarls at the sound, a bitter anger robbing her of the dark joy of release. How dare he make a sound? He will pay for his disobedience. She raises the whip high, rage crackling through her body like an electricity, lending her an inhuman strength, and an unholy savagery. "I think he's had enough," says a male voice behind her. She turns with a roar, the whip cracking in the still air of this chapel of darkness. "You dare to interrupt my pleasure?" she growls, her eyes pits of blood-red fire. He is standing in the shadows by the door, and even in the darkness she can feel his eyes on her body. "I do," he replies evenly. "If you haven't found what you're looking for by now, you aren't going to find it before you kill him." He steps forward, revealing himself to be an average-looking man of middle years, an inch or two taller than she. Handsome, in a rough kind of way, but less than memorable. Her lip curls in disgust. He is nothing special. Just another man. Reaching her, standing well within arm's reach, he tilts his head to the side and regards with a gentle curiosity. "What are you looking for?" Her expression darkens. He is arrogant, this one. It will be a pleasure to destroy him. "Nothing

you could understand," she says, her tone silk and steel. "Nothing you could comprehend ." "Oh, I don't know," he replies casually, his gaze meeting hers, his eyes missing nothing. "You'd be surprised at the things I can understand." The impudence ! A surge of rage bursts through her. She does not have space to lash the whip against this wretched creature, so drops the heavy, studded leather hilt and slaps him across the face. Her strong hand connects with his jaw with a sharp crack. In the cold stillness that follows, he is silent; then, a small smile forms at the corners of his mouth. "Alright. It was rude of me to interrupt. I'll let that go, once." She doesn't hesitate, lashing out furiously with a second vicious blow. The slave at her feet is nothing but blood and bone. This one has a spirit she can break. But the slap never reaches him. His hand a blur, his fingers tighten on her wrist. The others in the room draw breath as one. " Once , I said," his voice neutral, but with an undeniable undercurrent of authority. She struggles against him, unbridled anger pounding through her body, blurring her vision, her cheeks burning with the shame of his strength, of his arrogance. Her eyes are hot with tears, for the first time that she can remember. She drops her gaze, marshaling her strength, drawing her anger around herself like a shield. She doesn't need to be stronger than he is to dominate him. She squares her shoulders and stands tall, meeting his gaze with the imperious, untouchable superiority that has served her so well in the past. Whatever challenge he offers, she will destroy it. Whatever strength of will he possesses, she will shatter it. But when their eyes meet, her lips part in an unspoken question. There is no fury here; there is no conflict. This is no battle of wills. She can rage and attack, growling with feral aggression, but there is no target for her to unleash her hatred against. He does not seek to attack her, nor to break her will; his eyes are filled with nothing but respect, and compassion. Her eyes widen. Confusion hits her in a dizzying rush. The potent, brooding darkness seems... shallow, somehow, insubstantial. This is trickery! The darkness gives her power, feeds her hate and her fury and her disdain. It nurtured her, gave her strength. Could... could she really leave it behind? Release it? Be free? Her stomach twists. No. It is foolish to hope. How could it be so simple? How could it be so hard ? She trembles. How, even now, a Goddess of this dark place, can she want so much to leave it behind? How, after so many broken trusts and shattered dreams, can she want to believe again? She lowers her eyes, drawing a shuddering breath that tastes clean, and new. Slowly, gently, he lifts her chin, and kisses her, softly and sweetly, on her scarlet lips. "You're too beautiful for this," he says softly, his voice touched by a deep, abiding sadness, then leans forward and brushes his lip across hers. It is a simple, honest kiss, and it reverberates through her body. "This is who I am," she says softly, and for the first time there is doubt in her voice. "It's not about who you are," he replies, gently taking her trembling hand in his own. "It's about who you want to be." She swallows. "I won't submit to you," she whispers, and he smiles a broad, warm grin that makes her skin prickle with pleasure. "I'm not asking you to. Come with me," he says, and she complies without hesitation, leaving the whip and the slave behind her. "Are we going for a walk?" she asks softly. "If you'd like to," he replies, opening the door for her. "It's a beautiful day outside." She hesitates, nods, and steps through the door.