

# African Captive

By  
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# Introduction

It was the whipping that the white woman remembered now, as she gazed out over the vast empty chasm below her. That was what his question brought to mind. The beginning.

She was seated on a precipice of weathered stone, overlooking a lush, but rugged river canyon. The sun was setting and a pale, thin sliver of moon still hung in the western sky. The heat of the day clung to the rock, turning the evening air balmy.

She felt a rustle and heard the man sit on the rock behind her. He had been made curious but not angry by her failure to immediately answer his question.

“Tell me,” he breathed.

She was puzzled. Most of it he already knew. Even so, she realized without shame, she wanted to tell him the tale. She had known loneliness, but not now. Not with him. Always he demanded that they share every intimacy and her story bespoke of who she was at the deepest levels of her being, then and now.

It was the whipping, she thought again, nodding to herself. A horrible, barbaric sight that had stunned the sheltered and proper, young Victorian woman who had witnessed it. Being in truth one of her first real encounters with Africa, it seemed to mark the day her life turned from the course of a normal, chaste, settler’s wife of devout Calvinist faith, to the extraordinary fate that lay ahead. In the years that came she had come to worship different gods and believe in their signs and destinies. The whipping at that colonial port had been an omen.

The woman drew a heavy sigh and shifted her weight on the rock, trying to get comfortable. She was surprised he was asking her now to relate the events of her stained past. Like all men he seemed paradoxically absorbed and disinterested with female musings. Yet he was a man. And the world belonged to men. She sometimes thought he considered her unimportant, her life and feelings a mere triviality too insignificant to share.

But now they were alone and close. He was asking, not demanding. That was compelling in itself.

“It started with the whipping...” she said softly, repeating her thoughts. But her voice trailed off. She fell silent with sudden doubt. Had she turned to him, the face of her beloved was still visible in the gathering darkness. But she kept her gaze forward, looking back across the gorge and listening to the distant roar of the river below.

“Tell,” he whispered. Still asking.

She closed her eyes briefly and nodded. It was no longer in her spirit to deny him anything.

The moon at last fell behind the cliffs beyond the river and traces of blue fled the sky. And as the stars began to wink into life she told him the tale that spoke of who she was.

Perhaps her story could only be judged in the telling-

# African Captive

## Chapter 1

Ironically, she really had no reason to be there. Had they been back home in England she, an upstanding but delicate young woman would never have been in a place like that courtyard. Nor would such a scene have occurred in front of her. It was 1842 and Queen Victoria had been on the throne only five years. It was a time when young women in the Western world, of genteel social class, were looked upon as the “fairer sex.” The sex to be led and guided. Treated with mixed paternalism and respect but sheltered from the vulgarities of life. She had been an innocent young lady then, in the most refined sense.

Emily and her husband Jon were settlers; prospective farmers newly arrived in the colony. They had left their homeland, but unlike many of their day, were not criminals or refugees. They were part of a religious company of families whose faith had led them to abandon comfortable lives in lovely southern England. They had come to colonize- and build.

Eagerly they sought both freedom and order in the wilds of a far off continent, paradoxically to create another England, extending her culture and dominion even as they fled from its religious constraints.

But then, they saw no incongruity in this. They were British. What other culture worthy of God’s elect was there, but England’s? What other civilization save that of the Christian West? They were the new elect, called to live holy lives in a community set apart, spotless and cleansed of secular unrighteousness. But a community of English men and women, nonetheless, who would create a new Britannia on the sun drenched African highlands.

As well there were temporal considerations. The great lands of the interior were said to be the rich and fertile, waiting for the hands of the chosen to extract a bounty. The Almighty had given this vastness as their inheritance, populated it only with black savages who were little more advanced than screeching baboons. They could of course be converted to the true faith, and be used as servants and laborers- or pushed aside and eliminated by righteous might. In any case, they were no threat to the superior white man. The new Albion was theirs to claim.

This day the settlers had come ashore. Emily’s husband was a representative of the company, and had urgent business to conduct at the government house. She had come along, not wanting to be away from her husband in such a strange new land. They were troubled by the rumor of war, and the news that Her Majesty’s government had closed the lands they had intended to take in the north.

“Oh, Jon, we really haven’t come all this way for nothing, have we?” asked Emily as they picked their way along the bustling, filthy street. The bright African sun was oppressive and Emily, a typical Englishwoman was dressed for a mild day in London. Dark colored, long cotton dress; blouse buttoned up to her neckline and a full ensemble of feminine underthings all conspired to make the heat unbearable. Yet Emily did bear it. There was no other way for a modest young Christian wife to dress. Her fair face flushed some from the humidity and heat, but she tried to appear stoic for her husband. She did wrinkle her nose however, at the street mud on her polished leather shoes.

“Do you think we’ll be allowed to trek to the interior?” she asked.

“I... I don’t know,” replied Jon nervously. “We’ll see what the commander has to say, then we’ll talk to the other brethren and see what they want to do, I guess.”

Emily sighed. It was her husband’s usual indecisive manner. She had no idea why the other settlers had elected him as their spokesman. She suspected it was because he was young and of a constitution easily controlled by some of the more assertive men of the group. But in any case she loved Jon dearly and was glad to see his pride in assuming an important position within the elect.

Their party of settlers had arrived at the African port only the day before, to be told the shocking and unwelcome news that the frontier had been closed. There was unrest among the tribes of the interior, particularly the formidable Ndebele and Zulu, who were warring with each other, as well as the Boers and other smaller black tribes. The colonial government simply did not have the manpower to protect the immigrants.

But Jon and Emily had few options. They and the other settlers in their group had only just disembarked from a six-month voyage. They had no money for a return passage and their provisions were limited. They had expected to claim land soon after arriving in Africa and had no other means of support. The small purse that their settler’s party had pooled was needed to buy wagons and a little more food. Beyond that they had to live off the land.

Jon turned down another street, searching more or less aimlessly for the government building that administered the colony. The town they were walking through was not only dirty, it was rough, intimidating in the way of towns that bordered wild lands. The people here were mostly white, British, but this was not England. That fair, green isle was a world away, in more senses than one.

Nearly naked black natives also roamed the streets. Mostly young women wearing little more than bead drops around their waists which covered only their sexes- and that imperfectly. They seemed utterly unconcerned about their near nudity and Emily, who had seen few blacks in her sheltered life was fascinated by their jet, ebony skin and Negroid faces. She was repulsed by their immodesty, but was also struck by the savage dignity about them. Their dark, bare breasts sprang and bounced proudly on their chests as they walked, chattering with one another in their heathen language. A strange feeling came over Emily. Inexplicably, she suddenly wondered what it would be like to be one of those women. So free and uninhibited with her body. It was shocking, so unlike her own culture and mores. Yet the unashamed exposure of skin seemed strangely appropriate in this exotic land.

The black men were even more impressive to the young English wife. They wore little more covering than the women, though they were often richly adorned with trinkets and regalia that Emily supposed was some indication of rank. All of them, even the older men were handsomely muscled and physically well built. They seemed so savage and wild, so utterly alien to her own genteel society and experience. Yet, there was a dignity about them as well, a bearing that was hard to reconcile with her previous impression of blacks as ape-like sub humans. She wondered what life was like for them. Did they think as she did? Did they have families? Did they have marriage, culture, institutions? Or were they the primitive throwbacks that the European men said they were.

Emily quailed slightly and drew near Jon as a fearsome looking warrior strode by, accompanied by a black woman who walked a step or two behind him. The young white wife could see the power in his frame; his bulging shoulder muscles, his sinuous limbs and superbly toned loins. She wondered if he and his woman had relations the same

awkward and tentative way she and Jon did. Or was he as wild and passionate as his persona?

Emily caught her breath, suddenly shocked at her own thoughts. This was not the sort of thing a young woman of quality thought about. She closed her eyes and tried to dismiss such ideas from her mind. The heat must be affecting her, she reasoned.

At last at the end of the dusty thoroughfare they saw the low walled compound and the Union Jack, hanging listlessly from a pole in the still, humid air. A sentry was posted at the gate and directed them to the administration building.

“Bugger the bloody niggers,” shouted an irate man who was leaving the office just as Jon and Emily entered. “We’ll take into the interior anyway, we will. With or without the Queen’s bloody gentleman army. We’ve got guns and men for it...”

Jon turned to see his wife flush at such course language. During the voyage from Portsmouth he’d cringed whenever Emily overheard the sailors and their salty talk.

The administration building was stone and retained some of the morning’s coolness. It was a welcome relief from the street and Emily took a seat on a rough-hewn wooden bench in the lobby. The colony clerk’s office was busy and crowded. Several more hard-bitten characters with foul mouths were vocally protesting the official ban on moving into native lands. Even now, Emily was surprised to hear such language in an office of Her Majesty’s government and sat blushing in the corner, unconsciously moving closer to her young husband.

Jon took her hand in his and tried to smile reassuringly. Once again he tried to force down the resentment and distrust that he felt when Emily was around other men.

At eighteen, she was the epitome of an English Rose; chaste and modest, poised, religious and very loyal to her husband. Fair haired and gray eyed, she was petite, yet stunningly proportioned. And still, even after a year of marriage he was rather... well, rather afraid of her beauty. She was so dignified, so pure, that he sometimes felt he was sullyng her with his presence. A ridiculous notion for a husband, he knew- and he had expected the feeling to wear off after they had been married and become intimate. It hadn’t.

Jon continued to be, if the truth were told, more than a little intimidated by Emily’s charms. His own sexually repressive upbringing didn’t help. Incredibly, he still had not really seen her naked. He had felt her soft inviting body of course, in their married bed, but her modesty and his inhibition were such that lovemaking, when it infrequently occurred, was done in the dark. A secret thing that they like many of their contemporaries were ashamed of. Sex among the religiously proper was veiled with shame; an ugly, groping thing to be performed blindly and stoically to facilitate procreation, but certainly not to be discussed between husband and wife. There was something frustratingly missing in the tentative relations of their marriage bed, but neither Jon nor Emily would dream of speaking of it.

The repression ingrained into Jon had another unfortunate effect. He could manage an erection only rarely. Emily was far too inhibited to touch his penis, and he was ashamed to stroke it while she was beside him. His shame and embarrassment would overcome the feelings that her beauty had inspired and he would remain flaccid, becoming even more ashamed.

Compounding everything was Emily’s habit of never talking while performing the chore. Jon also never spoke. Yet his basic drives seethed away unabated, and away from their shared bed his passions burned.

Jon's insecurity had also made him paranoid about his wife. Emily was chaste and totally loyal and he knew it. But his unreasoned doubts literally ate him from the inside. His guilt became yet another barrier to performance.

Now, standing literally at Africa's door, he had the strangest foreboding- a premonition that the woman he loved could not survive here and that the die was cast. In bringing Emily here he would lose her, but how he did not know. A moment later he smiled grimly and dismissed the ridiculous thought.

At length a colored servant called them and they both stepped into an office. A uniformed white man rose from behind an ornate desk and extended his hand.

"How do you do, I'm Captain Oliver Teal. I'm the Queen's authority in this colony, pending the assignment of a Consul. Please, have a seat."

"Jon Robinson. And this is my wife, Emily. We've only just arrived."

The officer nodded and frowned. "Yes. At the worst possible time I'm afraid."

"Captain, I represent a group of settlers. We have charter papers from London, but now we've been told the interior had been closed," said Jon. "Some kind of nonsense with the blacks?"

"Not nonsense, Mr. Robinson, a war. And a very serious one. Some of my men have just returned from a reconnaissance along the river. The conflict is spreading to other clans and to the farmers as well. Several white settlements have been attacked. And all of the tribes are very restless."

"Why... why don't you punish them?" asked the young man. "Clear out the filthy wretches."

"They are very numerous and fierce, Mr. Robinson."

"But they're only savages. Surely British arms..."

The captain smiled faintly and shook his head. "Mr. Robinson, have you ever been in the army?"

"Why, no... I..."

"No, indeed," said the officer softly. "If you had, you would know it is not a simple matter to track a cunning and determined enemy who greatly outnumbers you and roams over a vast wilderness that only he is familiar with."

"They're still savages, Captain. They don't have the white man's intellect or ingenuity."

"They are intelligent enough to keep us on this side of the river," said the captain. "And no one who meets them in battle ever afterward questions their bravery. You and your company would do well not to underestimate them." Teal frowned again. He could see the arrogance in the young man's face. Arrogance in Africa could kill. "I have explicit instructions," continued the captain. "Under no circumstances am I to risk any force beyond the river boundary. Settlers are restricted to mapped sectors of the valley."

"But captain, the good land has already been settled there, by the Boers," burst Jon, indignantly. "We're well armed and in a party of eleven men..."

"Mr. Robinson I know that once you leave here, ban or no ban I cannot stop you from heading into the interior like the other fools. But I'm telling you that to do so would be a mistake," he glanced at Emily, "especially with women. Your eleven men are not sufficient and Her Majesty's forces cannot help you past the river."

"These black monkeys," scoffed Jon. "We will shoot them down long before they can throw their spears at us."

There was a knock at the door and an aide appeared. He saluted and handed a dispatch to the commanding officer.

The captain sighed and sat back in his chair. "Well... things do seem to be cooling a bit. The captain of my sortie reports no encounters with war parties or hostile groups."

"Then we can proceed," said Jon confidently.

"This could be merely a ruse to draw us out. Or perhaps they're gathering their strength."

"Or perhaps they've been cowed by British arms and have retreated to swing in the trees where they belong," said Jon.

"The ban is still in effect," snapped the captain.

"But you say things have calmed down..."

"If you'll excuse me, I have to perform the morning inspection," said the captain.

"Sir," said Jon formally. "As an Englishman, can you at least tell me which of the closed areas would be the safest for families?"

The captain stood silent for a moment, then sighed. "Very well, come with me and we'll go over it. Unofficially, you understand."

"Yes, of course," said Jon.

"Your wife may want to stay in the compound until we return," said the captain. "Much cooler here than on the parade field, you know."

The two men headed out the rear door, while Emily was shuffled off by a friendly aide down to a courtyard, near a small garden by a fountain where she could sit for short time.

She was waiting patiently and unobtrusively among the cool greenery when the soldiers brought the victim in.

At the far end of the courtyard she heard a commotion, a scuffle followed by female shouts and male curses. A black woman, freshly captured on a sortie into the bush, was being dragged into the yard by several white soldiers.

Emily thought she was the most wretched person she had ever beheld. The woman, almost a girl really, no more than Emily's age, appeared to be totally wild. She screamed and struggled, fighting and biting with incredible strength. It took three large white men, each more than twice her weight to restrain her and stretch her out, standing within a stout wooden frame. After more struggle, they secured her arms over her head to a spar, then kicked her legs apart.

Emily watched with fascinated horror. She had never heard of a woman being whipped. The prospect seemed barbaric, but she had to remind herself that this was Africa and the woman was just a black.

Now safely chained, the native girl suddenly slumped quietly. She seemed to realize that she had lost for the moment and remained still enough for Emily to observe her closely. She was naked, except for the very brief little strings of beads that hung over her sex. These were supported by a thin leather cord around her waist. She wore no covering over her dark buttocks, a fact very convenient for the soldiers who were about to punish her.

The black girl turned and looked at Emily, her dark eyes flashing with contempt. An ugly white sergeant, brandishing a whip approached the prisoner. "Now, my little lampblack slut. We'll see if we can put a more agreeable spirit into you."

The black girl sneered at him defiantly, but the sergeant only smiled.

The first lash landed square on her back. The black girl took it stoically. It was Emily who cried out with the savage impact of the blow. She wondered what crime the girl had committed to warrant such severe punishment.

The next stroke licked at her left rear cheek, leaving a thin line of blood. Still the girl said nothing.

When the third lash curled around her thighs, the black girl finally caught her breath with a sob. She screamed out a long curse in her own language, which was cut short by the next lash.

Emily watched, riveted with morbid captivation as the flogging continued. The black girl was crying out now, but not with the shrill screams or pathetic pleadings of most victims. She shouted with each lash, a guttural cry of pure hate and defiance mixed with agony. There was courage in her cries, but it meant nothing to the white man who was whipping her.

“You’ll spread those black legs when the men want it now!” shouted the sergeant. “You nigger bitch!”

The lashes began to draw tiny lines of blood as they fell on the woman’s rear cheeks, back and thighs. Still she emitted nothing but the defiant grunts at each blow. Once again she looked at Emily and the white girl sensed the iron will behind her gaze. It was Emily who felt fear. Fear of such courage and fortitude in someone she regarded as a savage and an enemy.

Deep inside she knew she would not have the strength to face such punishment and remain undaunted. A strange realization that this unhappy native girl was far braver than she, gnawed at Emily’s mind. She realized that any civilized Englishwoman she knew, including herself, would make any compromise or capitulation under that whip. She could not endure such pain without surrender, but fortunately, she told herself, she would never have to. No one, of course, would ever whip a proper, white Christian woman that way.

The black girl was rasping and spitting now, but her face still betrayed resistance and solidarity. Still the whipping continued.

The young blond wife grimaced. The sergeant too seemed frustrated by the girl’s stubborn refusal to beg for mercy. He laid into her even harder, but she only shouted louder, with more vehemence.

Emily now had tears in her eyes and had to turn away. Immediately she heard a shout.

“That will do, sergeant,” snapped the captain, who had just returned from the parade grounds. Jon stood behind him and Emily ran quickly to his side.

“No more of this. Cut her down,” ordered the captain.

“But sir,” protested the sergeant. “She’s dangerous... she’s got to be broken.”

“So does a horse,” said the captain. “But you don’t whip it half to death to do so.”

“Yes... yes sir,” growled the sergeant, with little contrition. The girl was cut down and Emily was astonished to see she had the strength to walk as they led her away.

“I’m sorry you had to see that ma’am,” said the captain to the shaken Emily. “These native wenches are wild. They have to be whipped like that to keep them in line and get them to work. Though this man went beyond what I normally allow. You understand.”

“Yes captain, we understand,” said Jon. He had to hold his shaking wife. “They’re savages after all, my dear.”

“But why... why doesn’t someone give her something to wear?” asked Emily. “Even a rag at the least.”

“They’re like animals ma’am,” said the captain. “Clothing’s a waste on them.”

“Still, said Emily. “A decent regard for propriety would require...”

“As I said ma’am, no one gives the dark women a second thought. Except the fellows who keep the girl. And they’d just as soon see her naked as not, if you know what I mean.”

“Uuhumm, Captain,” said Jon. “My wife is quite religious and... well, naive about such matters. Please forgive us, I think she has seen and heard enough of the natives for today.”

“Yes, of course,” said the captain. Then by way of apology he added, “You must remember, this is a difficult post for the men. We’re on the far side of the moon here and if I must give the men an occasional diversion in the form of a dusky-skinned native woman... well there it is.”

“Of course,” said Jon. “As I said, they’re just savages. Good day, captain.”

“Good day, sir...” said the captain, then remembering his manners in front of a lady. He tipped his hat, “Again, your pardon ma’am.”

The captain showed the couple politely out of the compound and watched them go. He knew from the way the boy was talking that he and his party were determined to trek inland, regardless of the ban.

“Fool,” he muttered to himself. The boy was too young to have a wife like that.

If that fair-skinned, lithe creature was his... Well he certainly wouldn’t drag her to a land like this. Emily belonged in a quaint village, in green and idyllic England, sitting in front of a cozy hearth with toe headed children at her side.

He shook his head and turned back to his office. This could be a hard country for a woman so lovely, so delicate and pure. Even the captain could not know just how hard.

## Chapter 2

“Don’t you think they’re human though, Jon?” asked Emily sincerely. “Or at least partly?” She gazed out across the vast open landscape that they were crossing.

“The natives?” asked her husband in surprise. “Why do you ask?”

“That girl that was whipped back at Government House,” said Emily. “She seemed so hateful and yet so brave. They say the people of these tribes are very cruel.”

“Yes, I’m sure that’s true,” said Jon. “You must remember they are utterly uncivilized and primitive, almost animals. As to whether they are human in the same sense as we are, I guess no one really knows.”

The wagon jostled violently beneath them, causing pots and pans and other goods to clang against each other noisily. They were nearly two weeks out of the last colony outpost, deep inside what was recognized as black African territory. It was a disputed area, claimed by both the Zulu and the smaller, even more warlike Ahulu tribe. Their course had skirted the river for several days.

Jon looked to the horizon nervously, trying to hide his own fear from his wife. The best land was here on the green veld that stretched before them. But this was also the most dangerous place they could be. He had argued with the other settlers that the captain had specifically warned them about this sector, adjacent as it was to the river and much nearer to the Zulu and Ahulu kraals than white settlements. But no one had listened. They were convinced the blacks had given up and retired to their dirty little villages in fear of the superior white man. The land was open for the taking and if they did not act, other settlers would beat them to it.

“I wonder what they’re truly like. Are they as brutal as they seem? Do they have souls?” asked Emily.

“Wha...?” asked Jon, startled from his thoughts.

“Perhaps no one knows if they are human because no one has taken the time to study them or learn their ways,” she said.

“Who would want to learn their ways?” said Jon, looking at her with surprise. “They’re savages. They need to be pushed off our land before we can prosper and live in safety.”

“But are you sure we’re doing the right thing, Jon?” she asked. “The captain did refuse to give permission to go into the interior. He said it was too dangerous.”

Jon shook his head. “The captain is just following orders from London. Since we combined with the others there are over thirty men in the company now and we’ve all got muskets; more than a match for the native’s primitive weapons. Besides, we can’t stay in the colony town and we don’t have the money to go back to England.”

Emily nodded. She knew her husband was right. It was just that the blacks unnerved her. But it was not all fear. Ever since witnessing that whipping back at the post she’d had vivid and troubling dreams. And not only about the woman. She had awoken several times in sheer terror of a recurring nightmare.

She would be sleeping peacefully, dreaming sweetly about the life Jon had promised and the family they would have. She would snuggle to him and smile in her slumber, content and secure beside her husband. Soon their long journey would be over and they would find a home where they would be together and live out their lives.

As Emily lay placidly dreaming, she could feel Jon rouse and sit beside her. Then the bed would move and she could sense his manly presence above her. She would smile

and sigh, and part her legs in the darkness, a demure welcome to her furtive young husband. Then she would open her eyes, expecting to see him in the moonlight.

But all was not as it seemed. Her eyes would widen in shock and her smile would become a rictus of horror and disbelief, as instead of her husband there loomed above her a dark void, featureless and menacing in the gloom. She was no longer beside Jon in their wagon, but lying on animal skins on the hard ground. She would gasp and try to rise, but the shape had overwhelming strength and would keep her pinned helplessly to the earth.

Then the faint gleam of a lamp shone on the dark mass above her. The phantom would resolve and an instant of sheer terror would clutch at her heart.

It was a man! Not Jon, but a huge native man, very black and naked, save for a few brutish ornaments. He would loom over her, looking down into her face with a leering, possessive smile. She would try to move again and realize to her horror that she too was naked and totally vulnerable. He was between her splayed legs and she would feel a rigid pole of turgid flesh pressing at the cleft of her vulva, trying to enter her in a carnal way. And his manhood was huge.

Within the remnants of her waking mind, Emily felt profoundly violated and shamed. She had never committed this intimate act with anyone but her husband. Yet despite her shock and revulsion the dream was the same each time, quite beyond her control or volition. The black man's bare chest would descend onto hers and his warm breath would wash over her. She was unable even to turn her head away as he gazed down into her eyes, only inches away. She beheld his flat, Negroid face, and mesmerizing black eyes- eyes so intense they seemed to burn into her soul. Then he would part his thick lips and crush his mouth to hers. And most troubling of all, she would kiss back! As though... dare she even think it! As though she accepted and welcomed what he was doing! As though she- loved him.

The horrible, ugly savage would then grasp her by the shoulders and she would feel the strength of his muscular form. She was suddenly aware that she was wrapping her own arms and legs about him, as if clinging and returning the embrace. Most terrifying of all was the sensation of his massive male organ pushing aside the folds of her labia, entering, penetrating to her innermost depths- and the utterly confusing sense of joy and surrender that she felt.

It was as if she were in someone else's body, or in another time or place. Her mind would scream with horror as he began to rut and thrust in and out, quickly building to a savage pounding. But her own violated will exerted no control and she would feel her hips begin to churn and buck beneath him, goading him, reveling in her own capitulation. He would bring his lips to hers again and she would meet them this time with an open mouth and swirling tongue. She was building fast, and his massive frame and oppressive weight held her captive, defenseless beneath him. Yet the very feeling of helplessness drove the masochistic flames that erupted within her. Her orgasm was ready to break, as a cry of pure lust and need tore from her lungs.

Then she would awaken with the same scream on her lips and she would find herself sitting bolt upright on the bed, hands working feverishly between her legs, trying in vain to complete her fulfillment as her sleeping husband snored beside her.

The black apparition was gone and all was silent and still. Her conscious, chaste mind would return slowly and Emily experienced a strange sense of emptiness. It was always the same desolate feeling, sobbing quietly lest she awaken Jon, her face flushed with shame and exertion- her sex drenched and steaming.

Sitting now on the sunlit wagon, Emily closed her eyes and tried to drive the memory of the recurring dream from her unsettled mind. It was so wicked, so unlike the

proper, decorous, Victorian woman she really was, that she could scarcely acknowledge it. Curiously, she realized that while she was living each dream there was no memory of the last, until she awakened. Each violation had seemed while dreaming, to be the first. Consciously however, she could remember the nightmare occurring over and over, always ending just before she and her black lover climaxed.

But what made it even more upsetting was the loss of control. The feeling lingered into her waking thoughts and haunted her musings during the day, as if some bizarre fate were taking over her life. Somehow she had the conviction that she was headed into a destiny she could neither shape nor resist. She was losing herself, and her personality little by little each night, as they trekked deeper into the black lands. A foreshadowing of life to come, Africa was taking her identity. And she was powerless to stop it.

“...Emily?”

Jon was looking at her, puzzled.

“What... I... I’m sorry,” she said, chiding herself and trying to steady her voice.

Her husband eyed her suspiciously. She had been gazing in the direction of another wagon, driven by the handsome young husband of her best friend. It had been pure coincidence, since she had not been thinking of him at all. But Jon frowned, misinterpreting her expression and her stare.

Emily looked up and smiled dutifully at her husband, trying to reassure him.

Jon was a good man, she thought. He was a good provider for his wife. But he had some serious faults. He was very liable to jealousy, and became angry if he saw Emily conversing with male friends or acquaintances. It was totally unnecessary. Emily was outgoing and had many friends among the settlers. But the relationships were totally platonic and innocent. Emily would never even consider being unfaithful to her husband and tried to tell him that. But Jon would not listen, forbidding her to speak with any man unless he was present.

Like many marriages in the 1840’s, Jon and Emily’s had been arraigned by the parents. The two had been very young, and scarcely knew each other when the pact was made. They were married in a modest ceremony in England. Jon was seventeen and Emily was a year younger. Both Jon and Emily were from respected families, but Emily’s had fallen on hard financial times in recent years. Jon was the fourth son and stood to inherit little from his family’s fortune.

Then a religious movement had swept their little corner of England. Led by a charismatic preacher that rejected the staid trappings of the official church. They and other young families had answered the call. Jon decided that they would seek their future abroad as part of that company, and claim a new land from the wild.

The elders had debated for some time. Their first choice was America, but they wanted to remain British. Some among them had relatives who had visited southern Africa and persuaded them the greenest pastures were there. That was two years ago. Now the die was cast and they were in Africa. Here was where Jon and his young bride would carve out a life and raise a family on land that was free for the taking. At least that was how he saw it. His wife had dutifully followed.

Emily looked back at the wagon beside them. She would have liked to be ridding on it, so she could visit with her friend Anne. Jon was in a skittish mood and besides, she really wanted some female company. But it was just those moody times when he insisted she remain close to him. And Jon was very suspicious about Anne’s tall, good-looking husband, the reverend preacher of the group. Emily shook her head. Such nonsense!

The settler’s leader rode up to their wagon followed by a cloud of choking dust.

“Milady,” he said to Emily, tipping his hat. “Perhaps you’d be so good as to ride in the preacher’s wain and prepare a modest meal for the men. We will stop only briefly for lunch.”

Emily looked at Jon. He seemed a bit reluctant, but not alarmed. Anne’s husband was in full view in the front of the wagon and the women would be in the back. He nodded, tight lipped.

Emily bounded from the board and raced energetically to her friend’s wagon, lifting her ankle-length skirts daintily as she flew over the dusty ground. Anne peeked her head from behind the canvas cover to greet her.

“Matthew says this is it!” gushed the fresh-faced Anne when she saw her friend approach. “Oh Emily, I’m so glad. We’ve almost made it!”

Emily smiled back. Anne was so exuberant and bubbly, so able to adapt and make the best of every situation.

“Tomorrow we’ll be on the best land and begin stepping off land boundaries,” continued Anne.

“Wonderful,” said Emily. She was looking back at Jon. He was scowling and looking straight ahead at the horizon. Emily felt a tinge. She knew she should be obedient to her husband’s wishes, but she was committed now and anyway, she had a job to perform. But this time it was Emily who had misjudged the meaning of her husband’s expression. Jon’s lip biting had nothing to do with his wife. He was in fact terrified. He could see by the landmarks that they had halted in precisely the area the captain had warned them the most to avoid.

“Let’s get something prepared for the men,” said Emily to Anne. “They don’t want to stop long for eating.”

Anne nodded and helped her onboard. The two women opened a large trunk with the communal provisions. The responsibility of preparing mid-day meals for the riders and drivers was rotated among the wives of the group. Today it was Emily and Anne’s. They cut small strips of dried meat and wrapped them in slices of bread. Then they sliced generous chunks of cheese from one of the big blocks the company had purchased in the colony town. All the while the two girls chatted, happy to be in each other’s company.

“I can’t believe we’re finally here!” said Anne. “Matthew says the first thing we must do is select high ground for the new church. It must be the highest ground in the community.”

“Oh... yes of course,” agreed Emily. She regarded her friend with amusement. Anne was always so enthusiastic and so glowingly proud of all her young husband did and said. Emily envied her. Anne had no doubts about her mate, in contrast with Emily’s relationship with Jon.

Anne was slightly younger than Emily, but had been married a little longer. She was stunningly attractive, but in a cute, nubile way. Her heart-shaped face and creamy skin bore a slight flush in the African heat and were offset by her rich, chestnut hair. But her stunning, dark brown eyes seemed to survey all around her with wonder and innocent eagerness. She was at times giddy as a child, but was also the kind of woman a man enjoys most as a wife. Vivacious and full of energy, yet overflowing with mellow warmth. There was something about her that told with certainty that she would always be loyal to one man, as long as he lived. Emily was puzzled yet again why Jon would act so jealous when Matthew already had such a comely and utterly devoted wife.

“Let’s spread a little butter on the bread,” said Anne.

Emily laughed once more at her friend’s enthusiasm. “Should we waste the butter on lunches?” she asked.

“Let’s celebrate,” said Anne, her eyes sparkling. “We’re here! This is going to be the day our lives change forever!”

## Chapter 3

Kotatu, war leader of his Ahulu clan stood on a massive boulder near the top of the ridgeline, well concealed from the enemy in the valley below. Behind him were several hundred Ahulu warriors from his own and neighboring villages. They had come here to the borders of their lands to raid the Zulu villages and were eager for loot.

He stood six foot four and surveyed the field before him with keen, black eyes, displaying the utmost confidence in himself and his men. That confidence was well placed. The Ahulu were brave and indefatigable warriors. Their clans were feared throughout their sphere of influence. But they were cunning military tacticians as well. They rarely engaged in battle unless they were confident of victory and never until they had studied the enemy thoroughly and probed for weakness.

Kotatu had watched the little group of settlers since long before they had stopped earlier that morning. His assessment was that the whites would prove easy to destroy. But there were dynamics in the situation that demanded caution.

“How many?” he asked simply of the boy he had sent to creep up to the wagons and spy out the settlers.

“About thirty men, lord. I think many of the smaller ones are children, but it is hard to tell since they are all wearing the strange clothing that the white-skins wear. Even those very young.”

“They have firesticks?” It was a stupid question, Kotatu knew, because the whites always carried them. But he wanted as much information as possible and he needed to train the boy to be observant.

“Yes, my lord. Many of them.”

Kotatu frowned. He had planned to do battle with the Zulu, not the enigmatic whites. But these were already deep inside Ahulu territory and their incursion could not be ignored. Moreover, they did have cattle with them- and other, even more interesting stock.

Kotatu sat on the rock alone for a few moments, thinking in silence. He knew the whites better than any other leader of the Ahulu. As a younger man he had befriended a Christian missionary who had wandered into the land of the Ahulu. He had learned some of their language and a little of their custom, though he was disinterested in their God.

Most importantly he had learned about their weapons. The firesticks were devastating. Their one weakness was the time it took to prepare them to work again once their fire had been used. The other Ahulu leaders were also aware of the white’s firesticks, though as yet understood little about how they worked. They did however, have some experience fighting the Arabs and the Portuguese, who also possessed guns. They knew that the attack would have to employ both quickness and stealth to avoid unnecessary casualties, but they trusted their commander.

Kotatu’s other considerations were the cattle and the white women, in that order. They were very valuable and care needed to be taken in order not damage or scatter the prizes. But that was not what concerned him the most. He had a duty to defend the boundaries of the Ahulu. But he knew the leaders of the clans expected compensation. The whites had cattle, the main form of Ahulu wealth, but the clans also needed women and he was unsure about the quantity and quality of the white females. It was a major gamble, but the Ahulu were used to risk and high stakes.

For centuries the Ahulu had existed alongside their powerful neighbors the Zulu. Other tribes near them had been exterminated or assimilated, but the Ahulu were the most advanced culturally and militarily. Their survival had been predicated on a higher order of technology- and an explosive birth rate.

Ahulu warriors kept women, all of whom were expected to bear many children each, to sustain the clans. Unlike some other nations, the Ahulu valued their women almost as much as their warriors. They were needed to maintain the high birth rate to replace braves lost in battle.

Most of the Ahulu women were born into their clans, but a sizable minority was from other tribes. The Ahulu took many captives in raids and were so adept at stealing the best women from their enemies that they were regarded kin by many of them. There was scarcely a clan bordering Ahulu lands who was not bereft of numerous daughters or former wives, taken by the Ahulu. But the mysterious tribe was hated and feared all the more for it. Unless they were rescued or ransomed quickly, women captured by the Ahulu were invariably inured and indoctrinated into their customs and became Ahulu themselves. Not only did they resist leaving, they would fight their former husbands or families in order to remain with the Ahulu. No other nation had such expertise at turning women's hearts and minds.

They were a strong people, tall and well built. The diversity of their genes, imparted by the constant influx of captured females from rival groups resulted in healthier and more robust offspring. In essence they were the best bred of all peoples in that region.

Kotatu now considered the intriguing prospect of taking the white settler women, but the idea was risky. He had never seen one up close and had no idea what they were like. Were they fertile? Were they comely? As alien as they were, would they bear strong sons? He was confident that they could be assimilated, but there were many unanswered questions. If he did battle here and the white women proved unacceptable he would still have to raid the Zulu villages. They by then would be alerted to the presence of the Ahulu and would put up stiff resistance.

On the other hand, he was very curious about the white women. And there was still the question of defending Ahulu territory. He heard his lieutenant approach him quietly, respectfully awaiting orders. As usual, Kotatu made his decision quickly and decisively.

"Shuba," he snapped to his second in command. "Pass the word. We will waylay the whites while they still have themselves trapped in the ravine. Let each man make his peace with the gods. We fight before the shadows are underfoot."

"Yes, lord," said Shuba. He hurried to deploy and position the men. Noon was not long off.

The wagon train had stopped and the other women of the group came to help Emily and Anne distribute the food. The entire company sat in a loose circle and ate, conversing among themselves. Everyone was in a festive mood, but Emily was sitting close to Jon and sensed his unease. She sighed at her husband's insecurity.

Soon the meal was finished and they were climbing back on the wagons, preparing to drive the few remaining miles to the green belt along the river.

While Emily pulled herself up, into the seat, Jon was stern-faced and looking toward the preacher's wagon with narrowing eyes. "I don't like the way he looks at you Em. I can tell what's in his eyes."

“Oh Jon, he did not even talk to me. Besides, don’t you trust your wife? Nothing could make me unfaithful to you.”

Her husband seemed to relax a bit. “I know. But... It’s just, you’re so beautiful... I just...”

Emily looked searchingly at his face. For an instant she could see the vulnerability and need within his being, and wanted to reach out to him. Then the façade of masculine arrogance went back up and he snapped at her.

“Just do what I tell you, woman. Stay away from the other men... You’re my wife.”

Emily was hurt and confused at her husband’s attitude. She had never looked upon another man in an illicit way. She was totally devoted to her husband and was a chaste and virtuous wife. That was why the dreams were so troubling to her.

Jon turned to her with his doubtful look. Emily tried to smile back reassuringly, but his face clouded with dark pride and he turned to tend the mules and adjust their harness.

“The scout’s riding back,” shouted one of the men, gesturing to the ridge. They looked up and could see the lone outrider descending into the valley. He seemed to be in some haste.

Moments later Jon returned to stand beside the wagon and his expression had softened. Emily reached down to caress his face. “Don’t be out of sorts,” she said softly. “We’ve made it. This is where we’ll be happy and together for the rest of our lives.”

Jon smiled up at her. At that instant he believed and understood her. For the first time since he had been married he felt totally at ease with his beautiful wife. For the first time the two shared a mutual understanding- and genuine love. It was the beginning of their future together, at last.

Emily was bending down to kiss him, when the moment was shattered by terrified shouting.

The scout had reached the wagon train and was raising the alarm.

“AHULU...! The blacks are here! AHULU ARE MASSING OVER THE RIDGE!”

Jon pushed Emily away and reached for his musket. Already the others were circling the wagons again to form a defense line and he leapt down to join the other men who were assembling, each with their firearms.

Emily ran to join Anne and the other women at a wagon in the center of the circle.

“We’ve got to get out of here!” yelled the scout, his voice edged with panic.

“Steady on,” said one of the settlers. “We just need to circle up to show them we mean business.”

“No,” said the scout. “There’s far too many of them! We’ve got to get out of here! Now!”

Emily saw Jon and the other men looking up at the ridge apprehensively.

“If they do attack, we’re better off in a defensive circle than running,” said another of the men. “I think we should wait and see their intentions.”

“You don’t understand,” said the scout, nearly hysterically. “There’s too many of them! Leave everything and mount the horses!”

“How many did you see?” asked Jon.

“Hundreds...” gasped the scout. “Many hundreds.”

Now the men were looking at each other uncertainly.

“Hundreds?” scoffed one man, nervously. “They’re not intelligent enough to assemble in the hundreds...”

“Maybe they’ll parley,” said another man, more constructively.

“These are Ahulu,” said the scout. “They won’t negotiate. Not while we’re on their land.”

“Then we’ll just have to kill a few of them,” said Jon, trying to sound confident. “We’ve got guns. They’ve only got spears.”

“That’s right,” said another settler. “Meet them here and hammer them good. We’ll have fewer problems in the future.”

“You’re all insane,” said the scout. “I’m getting out of here!” With that he spurred his horse and took off with a gallop.

The settlers watched in stupefied silence for a few moments, as their guide deserted them.

“There’s a fine, brave scout,” quipped Jon.

The others laughed nervously. “At least we won’t have to pay him his fee.”

The men deployed themselves to the parameter wagons. The women and children watched fearfully from the hub of the circle. They waited... and waited.

They sat for over an hour and watched as a dry, gentle wind blew over a quiet land. There was no sign of natives, or anything else on the horizon.

Finally the men assembled again at the center wagon. Some wondered if the Ahulu had passed them by. Others thought that the scout might have cracked. It was decided to send two of the men to the ridge to reconnoiter the land and establish the position of the Ahulu. They drew lots and Emily’s breath caught in her throat when he husband was one of the men selected.

“Please, Jon, it’s too dangerous,” said Emily.

“We’re just going up to have a look around,” he said. “We’ll be back in a few minutes. Don’t worry and don’t talk to any of the men while I’m gone.” They took two of the horses and rode off, up to the hill where the scout had come from. Emily watched as they disappeared beyond the crest.

The minutes went by. Half an hour, then an hour. By now it was mid day and clouds were rolling in, offering welcome relief from the heat. But Emily grew more fearful, as every second crawled by and there was still no sign of Jon.

One of the younger women, Martha, tried to reassure her friend Emily. “They’re just being thorough, Em. You know how Jon is. The natives are probably gone. Or were never there to begin with.”

Emily nodded, but continued to watch for her husband with growing concern.

The little band of whites looked on, wondering about the overdue men, but hopeful that the Ahulu had passed by. Then, moments later, the Ahulu finally appeared. Panic spread through the settlers as the natives suddenly broke the crests of hills all around them. It was obvious, even to Emily, who had no military training, that such a large force of warriors, if determined, was capable of overrunning the little group in a matter of minutes. They seemed however, to be holding back, though Emily could not imagine why.

The young wife was suddenly terrified for her husband. She watched the narrow draw anxiously, but Jon did not appear. With a shudder she suddenly realized, that it made no difference. They were surrounded. The Ahulu could kill them all at will.

Then there was a terrifying shout. A unison cry and the pounding of spear against shield by the natives. Emily looked about at the quailing fear on the faces of the white men and nearly despaired. But the shouting of the blacks was only a ruse. While the settlers were watching the warriors on the hilltops, dozens of Ahulu had crept up close to the wagon circle, hidden in the low brush. At a signal from their leader they struck. A

wave of fierce young black men charged the wagon circle. A few were cut down by musket fire, but most managed to gain a close crop of trees offering cover. At their next charge they would have little ground to traverse. Emily could see them forming for the next assault.

Now the settlers finally awoke to terrible realization. Victory for the Ahulu was inevitable, despite their seeming caution. Help for the whites was days distant and the small camp was now tightly surrounded. There was another shouted order from the native leader and another wave. The white men fought well but could not reload their guns fast enough. Emily watched with horror as one by one they were killed. She and the other women huddled close in the center wagon, hoping for a miracle that would save the company. It never came.

Minutes later, the few remaining settler men formed a line in front of the wagon holding the women. The Ahulu crept forward on all sides now like cats playing with a crippled mouse. Muskets blazed and several natives fell dead. But there were not enough men left among the whites to mass firepower, and they needed time to reload. The enemy did not give it. While the settlers were still ramroding their guns another party of Ahulu attacked from the opposite direction. The savages tore into the camp and slaughtered the white males. A few of them broke free and tried to run, but native spears found easy marks.

The rout was complete. The last of the settler men were mercilessly dispatched as their disbelieving and horrified families looked on. Warriors encircled the center wagons and approached warily, spears poised. The women and children crowded inside were crying, clinging to each other in terror, expecting to be killed outright now that their men were dead.

The canvas wagon coverings were cut away, exposing the helpless families inside. Then the warriors shouted with triumph. Some of the huge, muscular savages began to celebrate, dancing and hooting with unrestrained glee. All of the black men howled in reply and the sound of the victory chant terrified the white women and children even as the Ahulu methodically mutilated the bodies of the white males. Other warriors immediately began pilfering the wagons of food, clothing and small items.

The settler women and children huddled, crying softly. All about them lay their men, dead in the African dust. Waves of desolation swept over Emily and she steeled herself for the end. But nothing happened.

The blacks paid little attention to the white women at first. The settler's livestock were the first priority, since they were faster and more numerous. The raiders left a few warriors to watch the white females, then the bulk of the party rounded up the cattle and oxen. Minutes that seemed like eternity went by while the women were seemingly ignored in favor of other loot. They were not truly forgotten however.

Thinking they were waiting to die, two of the women lost their heads and bolted, trying to escape. But they were pursued and quickly run down. The Ahulu dragged them screaming back to the other women, but not before taking one of the settler's riding whips and beating them severely. This discouraged the other women from repeating the attempt.

Finally, when the cattle had been claimed, the warrior's attention turned to the captives.

The women had calmed a bit in the preceding lull, but now the menacing presence of dozens of large savages, all crowding around the wagon engendered more tears and pathetic weeping.

A few of the women were braver. Two or three of the wives, having seen their husbands cut down before their eyes, tried to set an example, by sitting stoic and dignified. The younger girls however, clutched each other and whimpered with mortal fear.

Now one of the powerfully muscular Ahulu who had made the victory dance appeared. Emily now noticed he was heavily bedecked with jewelry and exotic furs. The way he commanded the others made it clear he was in charge.

He gave a loud shout and the white women and children were seized and dragged roughly from the cart. All of them were placed in a line. Anne clung tightly to Emily, sobbing and burying her head in the older girl's sleeve.

The leader inspected each of them closely in turn, examining them as if he buying a piece of livestock. Emily nearly swooned when he reached her. It was not so much the fear he engendered as the simple overwhelming power of his presence. She realized with mixed astonishment and disgust that this man was very much like the savage who haunted her dreams. She had a sudden vision of his face hovering above her and she had to turn away, as if afraid to look into his eyes.

"Aggghh!" she cried. The man delivered a sharp slap on her face in response to her insolence. She held herself still as he looked her over, then moved on to Anne.

When finished, he barked another order to his subordinates. As he did, the men came and led the women off one by one, along with the children. There was much weeping and begging as they were separated. Emily too was afraid of leaving the psychological comfort of the group. But the warriors seemed to be breaking up, with factions leading away cattle and captives. The spoils were being divided.

Five of the women, including Emily and Anne, were kept where they were.

The remaining Ahulu were now actively pillaging the wagons, for anything of value. Favorite items being cloth and leather goods. The firearms were also picked up. Their leader obviously knew their value and retained them all. One of the Ahulu found a long rope among the spoils, and used it to cuffle the remaining women, looping it about their necks and tying it securely. Next a water barrel was pulled from the wagons. After drinking their fill the blacks allowed the white women to drink as well.

The natives ransacked everything they could carry from the wagons, then set them ablaze. Emily could feel the heat of the fire on her face, watching helplessly as all her possessions perished in the flames. It had been perhaps little more than two hours since the panicked scout had ridden down to warn them. But those momentous hours had changed the white women's lives forever.

The African sun was still high in the sky, the loot had been claimed and the leader shouted to the others it was time to move out. Two massive blacks took hold of either ends of the rope that held the women and led them away.

They headed off at a brisk pace, traveling north. But Emily turned as they crested the hill, gazing back at the site of the calamity that had overtaken them. Beyond lay the land they had intended to take, the veld and the river, placid and oblivious to all human drama. Thick black columns of smoke belched from the burning wagons, into the bright African sky, contrasting sharply with the billowing white storm clouds now drifting to the south. The smoke rose slowly, dissipating in silence with wind and distance.

Emily was oddly struck by how small and insignificant the circle of burning wagons looked from the hilltop. The little cluster had been like a bubble, inclosing a bit of her homeland and culture. It seemed so tiny and transitory in the expanse of wild Africa. Now that bubble had been pricked and would evaporate without a trace. In mere days, the grass would cover the ashes and debris, obliterating all signs of the settlers

goods and dreams, erasing their existence- along with the women's sheltered lives as chaste, Victorian Englishwomen.

## Chapter 4

Kotatu at the moment, was a very busy man. As both leader and navigator of the warriors, it was his duty to travel alongside the column and guide its pace and movement. He had led them into battle, and defeated the whites. Now it was time to return to village with their hard won spoils and bask in the acclaim of victory.

Among the strengths of the Ahulu was the fact that they chose their generals from the ranks of the most able. To lead an Ahulu column was an honor of extraordinary prestige.

It was not an easy task by any means. There were many younger braves who thought that the totality of a warrior was courage in battle. They did not realize that ability to move quickly and efficiently over the land, to control and organize the movement of forces was also a key to survival. As was the capacity to gain and hold the respect of the men.

Kotatu did allow himself the unusual luxury of a smile. He was very pleased with the success of the raid. They had repelled a group of invaders and the cattle alone were well worth the effort, though he had been less satisfied with the loss of twelve warriors. They had only killed about thirty of the enemy and the Ahulu were used to better ratios.

The firesticks concerned him. They had always been used by the whites, but now the Zulu, and the Xhoso, their traditional enemies in the south were acquiring them also.

For that reason and others, he considered them the most interesting, if not the most valuable of the spoils. Though he kept that thought to himself. He ordered his men to recover all the firesticks, along with the odd kits that went with them so they could be examined after they had returned to the Kraal. There was much to be discussed and decided, but that would have to wait.

He stood for a moment to study the captive women as they passed. Most of his men were pleased too with these particular prizes, looking forward to the sport that they could indulge in with them upon their return. That was the traditional due of the victorious Ahulu warrior.

More than any of the others, Kotatu understood the white women's real value. He had impressed the men of the other clans with his generosity by handing over most of the white women and children. They were to take the captives as gifts to the chiefs of vassal and allied villages. He was careful however, to keep the five who seemed the youngest, healthiest and most comely for his own village.

Flush from the successful raid, the Ahulu moved at a leisurely walk, trotting along in three loose lines. They totaled perhaps 60 men, plus an additional twenty who drove the cattle. They laughed and joked, often eyeing the women, as soldiers of all races were wont to do. For the white women however, the pace was quite fast, almost a jog. They were soon panting and winded.

Kotatu shouted some orders, gesturing at the whites. Two of the warriors broke from the column and circled back. As the white women passed they drew whips from their shoulders and began to target the backside of any girl who appeared to be lagging. Amid squeals and cries the women stepped up the pace to keep up with the men.

After about two hours they stopped at a grove of trees near a small creek. The five white women collapsed, exhausted.

"Emily," gasped Anne. "I... Can't make... I can't go any further. They've got... to slow down."

Emily shook her head. "They don't seem... tired at all."

"But we've... we've gone so far... Where are they taking us?"

"Back to their village, I suppose."

Emily could see the preacher's wife was trembling, despite the heat and the fact that she was soaked with sweat through her conservative dress.

"I... I thought they were going to kill us," said Anne.

"So did I," said Emily. "But I doubt they're going to kill us now. They wouldn't go to the trouble of dragging us along if they were going to do that."

"But what are they going to do with us?" asked one of the younger girls, looking at Emily with doe-like brown eyes.

Emily had suspicions. It had not escaped her notice that the leader of this group of savages had retained the most attractive of the women. Besides Emily and Anne, there were Martha, Hannah and Sara. Sara was twenty-three years old and newlywed. She was a fiery red head in appearance and temperament. Hannah and Martha were unmarried sisters, eighteen and sixteen respectively, and came from affluent families. They like Emily were used to the comfortable life of the English gentry, but had been displaced by recent financial losses incurred by their father. The family had come to Africa, chasing the dream of acquiring vast tracts of land, which would restore them to the privileged class.

The white women sat talking in low, frightened tones, still trying to catch their breath. Emily felt somewhat responsible for them. Sara was the oldest, but she appeared to be in shock and had said nothing since their capture. She was in no condition to offer leadership.

Emily had never thought of herself as a tower of strength. It was somewhat like the blind leading the blind, but they were all looking to her for comfort and reassurance. She decided to keep the worst of her suspicions to herself for the moment, mostly to avoid terrifying the younger girls even more. They all had enough to deal with emotionally with the loss of their families and their freedom.

"They're probably going to ransom us," said Emily, trying to sound calm and sure. "I saw many black women at Capetown. They were probably captured by our soldiers and it makes sense they would want to trade us for them."

The others brightened a bit at this suggestion. Yes, that did make sense. Surely the British Army would be coming to rescue them any moment, or at least to negotiate for their release.

Also welcome was the fact that the Ahulu seemed to have decided to proceed no further that day. Fortunately for the white women the natives were in no hurry. The little shady grove they were in would serve as an overnight campsite.

As the sun began to set, the women were tethered fast and left alone under the tree, although a guard was set over them. A fire was started and the black men moved off to their own circle for conversation, as well as some raucous retelling of the battle.

Soon the discussion turned to the white women. In particular to their odd and very heavy clothing. All marveled that none of the women removed or loosened any of it, despite the heat and their exertion. In addition they seemed to tire very quickly and were unable to keep even a casual pace. Ahulu women could keep up with their men in all but the most grueling treks. It was decided that the whites must be nobility of very high rank to be dressed so copiously. They must have been waited on hand and foot to be so weak and out of shape. Not that that mattered now. Their previous stations meant nothing to the Ahulu. But the women must be proud indeed to endure the heat in such confining clothing.

After dark, three of the exhausted women fell quickly asleep, huddled together for warmth. But Emily lay awake, talking in whispers with Anne.

“What do you really think they’ll... do to us, Em?” asked Anne.

Emily hesitated, but decided her friend needed honesty. “I think they’re going to... to abuse us before ransoming us.” Emily could hear the gasp from her friend. “I hope I’m wrong... but have you seen how they look at us?”

“No,” whispered Anne. “I’ve been too frightened to pay attention. Oh Em, you can’t think that they’d... they’d do... *that* to us! Even savages wouldn’t... we’re white!”

“I... I don’t know,” said Emily. “But I think we had better prepare ourselves.”

“Ohhh... no. Nooo...” said Anne. “I couldn’t live through that... not with these... blacks. I could never break my vows. I’d... I’d rather die, Em.”

Emily looked into the round, brown eyes of her friend. There was sincerity there and virtue. But the older girl wondered if any woman, even the wife of a clergyman could keep such innocence through what might be in store.

Anne began to weep quietly and Emily held her close before they too succumbed to fatigue and slept under the winking stars.

But they were not alone. Someone had crept up to observe them. Kotatu stood in the shadows, studying the women with a confident, practiced eye. There was one of them he was particularly interested in. The one who appeared to be the leader. He sensed something about her, an odd combination of strength and vulnerability. The kind of woman who might produce great warriors.

She was rather petite, and had the strange flaxen hair and sky gray eyes he had seen of some of the whites. But she was full breasted and wide hipped and seemed well suited to bearing offspring. He wondered how she would look when properly dressed as an Ahulu woman and decided he would try to claim her after they had been presented to the chief. He was sure the chief would grant his request after so successful a raid.

Emily stirred and opened her eyes. Instinctively she could feel presence of someone watching her. It was a few seconds before she saw him, staring silently at her reclining form. She emitted a hushed sigh, but said nothing, staring back with fearful but helpless lassitude. After a few moments more he turned and disappeared soundlessly into the night.

At first light the women were roused, kicked awake by one of the guards who motioned them to get on their feet. Stiff and sore, the whites groaned as they rose slowly. But soon the column had re-formed and they were traveling again.

This time the pace was even faster than the day before and the whips were applied liberally. Emily was concerned that they were headed so far north. The direction was ever deeper into the interior and not what she would have expected if they were to be ransomed. Again she decided not to share this with her exhausted friends.

As the day wore on, the speed of the column did slacken a bit, but they did not stop until nightfall.

Once again the women were left together, tied to a tree a little way from men. This night however, small groups of warriors would come over to stare at them and comment to each other in Ahulu. It was obvious from their expressions that most of what was said was lewd and anticipatory in nature. Emily shuddered and pulled herself into a ball. The others quailed and whimpered. They could sense what the men were about.

The following day was the same. But the countryside became a little greener. They were ascending a high plateau now. Emily looked back with growing concern. Every mile they progressed further into Ahululand made rescue or ransom less likely. If

their captors really intended to trade them for native women they should be taking them in the opposite direction. But the white women were played out and weary, and Emily did not want to dash what little hope they had left.

The next day they were passing through more arid territory again, land that no settler would be interested in. Emily's mood grew even more depressed. It would be a long time before any whites ventured this far into the interior, to explore land of little farming value. They might never be found this far out.

On the fifth day however, they arrived in the late afternoon at the rim of a grand, river valley. Emily marveled at its serpentine greenery, lush indeed for southern Africa, but hidden in the far more desolate surrounding territory of Ahululand. They continued down a narrow trail onto the wide canyon floor and began to encounter other natives traveling in the valley. All stared with amazement at the strange, tethered white women.

After another hour, they came to a large village of thatch and mud huts, enclosed by a type of low palisade.

On their arrival at the Kraal, the warriors were greeted with joyous hoots and shouts. The entire clan of hundreds hurried out to welcome them and stare at the captives. Emily saw the spectrum of emotions evident in the faces and reactions of the Ahulu people. Many warriors were already telling tales of battles to the younger boys. A few native women were crying and wailing, apparently at the news that their husbands or men had been killed. Some of the old men were ogling the captives with obvious lust.

The white women were pawed and poked, especially by the Ahulu women, most of whom had never seen a human of European descent. They bantered noisily among themselves; speculating, gesturing, laughing. Their savage appearance was frightening and intimidating to the whites. They were marked, all of them, with copious tattoos and ritual, patterned scarring. And they were bedecked with piercings and jewelry of bone and copper. A few of them wore skins and covered their mamaries, but most were bare breasted and wore only the vertical lengths of beads hung from a strip of leather over their sexes. Their Negroid hair was short cropped and their black hands and manners were none to gentle. They seemed to be studying the whites much as one would inspect an animal that would soon be for sale.

One of the younger white girls broke down and began to cry, clinging to Emily and trembling. Emily tried to sooth her, but the leader of the warriors gave a shout, and the black women moved away, bowing their heads with respect.

Several strong warriors approached and led the cringing captives directly before the chief. He sat, corpulent and pompous on a small, throne-like chair decorated resplendently with feathers and exotic animal hides. Attendants veiled him from the sun with large shades fashioned from bird plumage, and he was surrounded by slaves and members of his household.

The white women were forced to kneel, and Kotatu stepped before the chief and bowed. There followed a long briefing in Ahulu, which none of the whites could understand. There was much questioning from the chief, but mostly he was smiling at the answers. Finally, Kotatu made a wide gesture to the bound white women and when the chief laughed with delight, the rest of the clan laughed with him.

Then another man stepped forward, and the crowd stilled. He was also heavily adorned with beads and gold. The bound captives whimpered audibly when they saw him, with an almost innate fear and disgust. He was the most grotesquely mal-formed man any of them had ever seen and they were instinctively repelled by his presence.

From the waist up he appeared to almost normal, though more powerfully built even than the muscular warriors. His face was very wide and flat, almost simian. His

close-set eyes and oversized ears gave him a visage of surpassing ugliness, but it was below the waist where his deformity was the most profound.

Instead of legs, nature's error had given him another set of arms, longer, heavier and even more formidable than his upper arms. In place of feet, he had hands, huge and callused, but fully functional. They allowed him to stand as steady as anyone else, and though he could not run, he was astonishingly quick and agile in a fight. He was said to match the most skilled warriors in close hand to hand battle and surpassed all in his prowess with the dagger- and the whip.

Despite his horrible malformity though, no one laughed or ridiculed him as he stood before them. In fact, it was obvious that he was held in extreme deference by the tribe, who had hushed with reverence at his appearance. Even Kotatu made room for him at the chief's side.

The deformed man also made gesture toward the white women. The chief nodded and conversed with the two men for several minutes, then he arose.

The chief walked down to the bound whites, followed by the other two men. The chief closely inspected each of the white women, cutting their bonds one by one. He motioned for them to open their mouths and checked their teeth, hair, and eyes, as if wanting to make sure they carried no diseases.

During the half-hour the women were before the chief, a large crowd of native women had gathered around them. They seemed anxious, as if they were awaiting a signal or a sign. Their close presence made Emily nervous. There seemed to be an underlying hostility in their faces, though they weren't making any threatening moves as yet.

"What are they going to do to us?" whispered Hannah.

"I don't know," said Emily. "I wish we could speak to them. Make them understand that our people will be looking for us."

The warrior next to her jabbed Emily with the butt of his spear. Obviously they were forbidden to talk.

When the chief and the other two men came to Emily, she too was subjected to the inspection. She held herself still with stoic dignity until the chief began squeezing one of her breasts. Purely from outraged instinct she pulled away and slapped the ruler on the face.

There was a hush of astonishment among the crowd, echoed by Emily herself. Two warriors brought spears to her chest, awaiting the order from the chief to kill her. But a moment later, the chief began to laugh and shout, pointing at the terrified women. In a few seconds the deadly tension was dissipated and the entire clan began to laugh. Emily did not know whether to be relieved, or paralyzed with fear.

The chief finished inspecting them, smiling and laughing, as if pleased at what he saw. He went back to his throne and sat, issuing a command to the crowd of black women who tensed, listening. Then he dropped his hand- and pandemonium ensued.

Upwards of a hundred native women suddenly fell on the hapless whites and began stripping everything from them. Emily and the others screamed and struggled, but to no avail. There were simply too many Ahulu women to fight and they seemed incredibly strong.

Shoes and dresses were the most prized, but bonnets and scarves, underthings and jewelry were taken as well. Within minutes the five white beauties were naked and sobbing with fear and mortification, desperately clutching themselves, trying to hide their exposed bodies with their hands and arms. They huddled together, squatting on the ground, wailing and shielding their charms from the hundreds of laughing savages who

surrounded them. Once they had been totally stripped, the black women hurried away with the articles they had taken.

Then there was another shout and more savages appeared, rushing in on the white women from the large ring of people around them. These were adolescent boys who brandished the short whips they used on pigs. They began striking each of the whites, driving them apart.

The girls cried and squealed anew with the sharp, stinging pain, running as if trying to evade an attacking nest of hornets. But the boys were too numerous and too fast. The crowd roared with approval and amusement. Each of the white women were begging for mercy and trying to cover themselves. The boys laughed and whipped them all the harder.

At last there was another shout. The women, now hysterical and filthy from rolling about in the dust were dragged before the chief once more by the boys. They took rawhide strips and tied each woman's hands behind her back. Then they forced them to kneel and stood at attention behind them as if for an inspection, holding them fast by their long hair.

Emily and the others continued to sob and whimper. They were totally cowed now and there was no more thought of defiance. They knelt there quietly, crying pathetically aching to hold their arms across their breasts and pubes. Bright pink stripes were visible all over their pale white skins.

Finally, the leader of the raiding party, which had captured them, stepped forward. "I Kotatu, chief Makwetu's aid," said the man who had led the warriors. "I learn your language from man who came worshipping white man's god."

The white women quieted a bit. They were startled at the savage who spoke English, but too petrified to answer immediately. It was Emily who spoke first.

"Please... What are you going to do to us?"

"You not be hurt or killed. You be given to the warriors who killed most white men. You must obey them as Ahulu women obey their men. You belong to Ahulu now."

"Please give us our clothes back!" bleated Anne. "We are white and it is shameful to denude us so!"

"You not need white woman's clothes. Not go back to live with whites. You Ahulu women now. Lowest women in village."

The white women looked at each other, confused.

"Please," said Emily. "We are no threat to you. Please release us, let us go home."

The man laughed and repeated. "You Ahulu women now. You home."

"Mister... Mister, Kot... tatu," continued Emily. "Three of us are married, another is betrothed. We cannot stay among your men."

"Most your men dead, but make no difference. You belong to Ahulu men now and you learn place. Work like other women. Learn Ahulu ways."

A leather lasso was placed around each white woman's neck. They hung their heads, sobbing with shame as they were led individually, naked, before the seated chief and all his people.

Flame haired Sara was taken first, red faced with shame to be so exposed. The chief's aide stood beside her, playing with her long red tresses.

"M'Kunta," shouted the fat chief.

A large, well built warrior stepped before the throne, making complex motions with a short thrusting spear, which were apparently a salute.

The chief gestured to the crowd, then to the aide who handed the warrior Sara's lead. The warrior bowed to the chief and led the naked; fair skinned white woman away.

She did little to resist; being too shocked and terrified to do more than meekly follow him to his hut.

The chief continued, calling two more warriors. Hannah and Martha were dragged before the chief, crying hysterically and clinging tightly to each other. Two big black warriors took the ropes binding the young women and they too began to lead their new chattel away.

Next it was Anne who was pulled before the ruler. She became very agitated. She did not know exactly what was happening, but it was clear that each of them was being claimed and given to the strongest black men of the village. Knowing instinctively what the savages intended to do to her, she pulled with panicked desperation at the coarse rope about her neck. Unimpressed, the warrior yanked brutally at the cord and drew a leather whip from his belt.

The Ahulu man applied three forceful lashes across the delicate skin of the girl's rear cheeks and pulled the petite woman effortlessly along, to where she too stood before the chief.

Then a curious thing happened. The priest stepped in front of the ruler and shouted something forcefully. Kotatu seemed angered and shouted back. But the chief lifted his hand diplomatically. Emily suddenly realized that mal-formed priest was claiming Anne.

There was something in his eye or his expressions that Emily feared and disliked. An arrogance that was evident in his grotesque bearing. This was an evil man.

The chief spoke again and the shaman took hold of Anne's leash, leering openly at her. He smiled cruelly and grasped her slender, pale neck with one hand. Then he reached down with dark, probing fingers to her bare sex.

The pretty white woman gasped and tried to pull away, but the black man's reaction was swift. As Emily looked on anxiously, he proceeded to strike her across the face and chest with his open palm, while holding her fast by the neck. Anne writhed and screeched fruitlessly while he flailed away and the natives all laughed uproariously. Emily saw that the priest was laughing too and realized that he had deliberately goaded Anne to resist, so that he could punish her in front of the clan. Emily shuddered. The man's cruelty was amply demonstrated now and Emily was very afraid for her friend.

In a few moments, the dark haired woman was reduced to a kneeling, sobbing wretch, her face and breasts glowing pink from his wicked slaps. The priest yelled at two black women who approached, bowed, and led the now chastened Anne staggering slowly off to his hut.

Finally it was Emily who was taken before the chief. This time her hands were tied behind her back and she closed her eyes with humiliation as the black ruler fondled her naked chest.

The chief smiled and turned to Kotatu, who bowed and took Emily's neck rope. Then the audience seemed over. Emily did not resist as the big black man led her to his dwelling.

## Chapter 5

“The chief pleased with my attack on white men’s wagons. He give you to me as gift,” said the big black man.

Emily gasped with outrage and anger. “We are free, white women... wives.” said Emily. “We cannot be given away!”

Kotatu simply smiled, and continued to pull her along by the neck.

When they entered his hut, Kotatu clapped his hands. Two black women scurried to the doorway and knelt, their heads bowed submissively.

“Please... sir,” Emily asked, trying to keep a steady voice, even as her face and neck flushed with shame at her nakedness. “You seem to be a man of some authority. May we be given some of our clothing back? We are not like your women...”

Kotatu issued a command to the other women and they quickly scurried to prepare a sleeping mat near the door of the hut.

“Chief give you to me,” said Kotatu, ignoring her request. “I must bind you to me the first time you enter my house. You lay on mat now. I claim you.”

It was obvious what he was demanding and Emily’s eyes widened. She had anticipated that this savage would demand sex from her, but did not expect the assault to occur so quickly. She had thought she would have time to negotiate, or perhaps threaten him with reprisals from the white settlers or the British Army. Now she knew that was an illusion. This man was not going to be impressed with her idle bluffs. Faced with the imminent loss of her chastity, a sudden panic engulfed her.

“I... Please, mister... Kotatu. I’m married... You must respect that I cannot...”

“You must learn proper behavior,” he said, ignoring her. “Woman kneel when she enter Kotatu’s house.” He said it quietly and firmly, as if it were a minor point which did not merit debate.

Still in shock, Emily drew her breath and silently shook her head. She was not sure why she refused to kneel, or where she found the courage to do so. It just seemed somehow, in the context of his intention to rape her, like a betrayal of her vows to Jon.

Emily could hear the muted gasps and cries, from the other white women in the huts of their new masters. The fearful, helpless pleading, the outraged female cries and the slapping of flesh made her even more aware of her own plight. Just as her own captor seemed completely unperturbed by her objections, the protests of the other white women were similarly sounded similarly ineffectual. Their new men were introducing them as well, almost effortlessly, to their respective new duties.

Calmly, and without even looking at her, The black man reached for a long, broad leather whip, which dangled from the low roof. “Woman kneel now, keep eyes down. Show respect for Ahulu warrior who own her.”

“Nooo,” shouted Emily. “I’m a respectable, married Englishwoman... and I’m not a piece of property!”

The broad whip sang through the air and landed with a sharp snap on the white woman’s bare thigh.

“AAAAAGGGGGHHH...” she screamed. Again his arm swung with lightening quickness and again she heard the swoosh of the leather. And once more the searing pain erupted on her flesh.

“AAAAAAGGGGGHHH... Stop it... how dare you! I’m a British woman!” she shouted with desperate shrillness. The whip descended again with a blur.

“AAAAAAAggggghh, AAAAAAGGGHH...”

“Woman go to her knees and keep quiet in man’s hut. Woman lay on mat and spread legs for her man. Woman learn or feel punishment.”

“Please... please... AAAAAIIIIIIIIII... AAAAAHHHHHH... HHHHHHAAAAAAA... AAAAAAGGGHHHHH...”

The blows rained down now in rapid succession. His arm moved with uncanny speed as the leather struck Emily in the most sensitive places, front and back. She writhed and pulled frantically at the rope about her neck, all the while screaming with each new searing lash.

Emily broke away from him and tried to escape within the confines of the hut. But he followed her with long strides, meting out blow after blow on her back, legs and chest.

“Kneel now,” he said evenly, as if bored. “Kneel and keep eyes down.”

“Noooo...” she shrilled. “Aaahhhgggghh... I can’t... AAAAIIIIIIIIII, please!”

“Woman slow learner,” sighed Kotatu. “Even pigs and cattle not as stubborn.”

The two black women in the hut looked on impassively as Emily was thrashed by the big warrior. The snap of the lashes and her subsequent screams took on a curious cadence, as they descended quickly now on the naked white girl, who scrambled and twisted on the dirt floor in a vain attempt to escape the agony of Kotatu’s leather.

Somehow, Emily’s loyalty to her marriage endured. She was kicking and flailing now, throwing all dignity and propriety to the wind. The black warrior responded by seizing her hair and bending her over, methodically slashing at her bare legs and rear cheeks. The Ahulu women became more animated, hooting and chanting with approval.

The pain was too much. He seemed to know exactly where to strike to maximize the searing bite of the lash. Finally, she could take no more. A kind of eclipse of pride occurred inside of Emily. Her knees folded and she knelt with a wrenching groan before Kotatu.

He nodded with satisfaction, hung the whip up and fastened the sturdy door of his hut. Then he turned to the frightened, kneeling white woman who stared at up at him, panting with exertion, mixed with rage and terror.

“Woman put arms at her side and thrust out teats,” said Kotatu. “Woman offer herself and sit properly in Kotatu’s hut.

Her arms remained instinctively crossed over her chest as she sank away from him, whimpering with shame. But the black man reached again for the whip. Emily groaned and lowered her arms. Breath catching in her throat, she pushed her naked chest out as tears of mortification rolled down her cheeks.

Kotatu’s expressionless face gave no warning of what he did next. As Emily knelt, sobbing but looking about the hut, he applied a brutal slap to her face. The impact knocked the white woman over and in shock she tried to scramble back to her feet.

“White woman stay on knees,” he shouted, kicking her back down with the sole of his foot. “Keep eyes down, show respect.”

This time Emily obeyed, dreading to look him in the eye anyway and hating her own weakness.

Kotatu studied her for a moment. He would have been angrier at her affront of entering his hut on her feet, but he sensed she was ignorant rather than rebellious. It was incredible, but it really did seem that she did not understand proper social behavior. A woman of her station should go to her knees when she entered a man’s house, or when

her man entered the home she was in. It was of little consequence however. He would teach the white barbarian woman basic etiquette soon enough.

He nodded to one of the black women who came and squatted directly behind Emily's kneeling form. She reached around the white girl and palmed her breasts, kneading them with her sinuous fingers. She felt along Emily's belly, massaging her fingertips back and forth as if feeling for something. Emily gasped with disgust when the woman pulled at her sex lips and lightly stroked her clitoris. The black continued until she felt Emily stiffen then she returned her hands to her soft white breasts.

Lastly, the black woman pulled roughly at the nipples and commented at length in Ahulu.

Kotatu smiled. "Negana says you not had child. Your breasts not yet filled. But they will. She is midwife of the clan and can tell the worth of a woman with her touch. She says for me not to worry. When you become ripe with my child your breasts will swell with sweet milk and your teats will enlarge and darken. She thinks you have good instincts and will suckle my sons well. Your belly and hips are small, but will become more generous when filled with growing Ahulu seed. You will bear many Ahulu warriors."

Emily stared blankly at the dirt floor, unable to take in the full meaning of his words. She was a loyal English wife. Chaste and upright. How could she allow the import of what he was saying into her conscious mind?

Kotatu was puzzled that she did not acknowledge the generous complements. Again, she seemed devoid of civilized manner. It was high time, he decided, to begin teaching her.

He grasped a handful of her strange flaxen hair and pitched her forward. He pulled her, crawling and bent over to the mat where he intended to bind her to himself and his hut by claiming her sexually. It was the first step to consummating his ownership of her in accordance with prescribed tribal law and custom.

He threw her onto the mat where she sprawled awkwardly, still whimpering. "Lay on back and spread legs," he ordered, annoyed that she curled up into a protective ball instead of assuming the proper position. He knew she couldn't be that ignorant.

"Please... Oh please don't do this!" She sobbed with despair. "I'm a married woman... I can't... With a man of color!"

Kotatu frowned. He was beginning to understand her a little now. He had assumed that her resistance was due to her resentment at having lost her rank and station. That explained the women's agitation at the loss of their clothing. He had also assumed she was lying about being married since she had no child and he had seen no male at her side when the fighting was going on. Now it appeared that this woman really was the wife of one of the white settlers.

He needed to think for a moment. It complicated matters. The claiming and binding would require more intricate ritual and harder work on his part, but it was fortuitous. It was far more prestigious to take the wife of an enemy than one who was simply bound to his household. It was all becoming clear now. She was the wife of a high official, perhaps even a chief. That was why she was so perturbed about being deprived of her clothing and so reluctant to allow the ties of her marriage to be broken.

He must act quickly, he knew, to claim her. There would be very powerful spells binding her to her white husband and he must break them immediately. He must take her without further delay.

"Spread legs!" he shouted. "You belong to Kotatu now. He fill your belly in his hut now!"

“Nooooo... Aaaiiiiiieeeee,” she wailed at his brutal slap. He raised his hand and one of the other women quickly brought the short whip and presented it on her knees.

Kotatu took the whip and snapped it authoritatively. “I claim you now.”

Emily groaned her eyes wide with terror. But still she could not bring herself to comply with the mortifying demand that she spread her legs. He brought the whip down hard on her exposed flank.

“AAAAIIIIIEEEEE,” she screamed.

He began whipping her harder than before, landing the lash in more vulnerable places. Emily screeched and gasped at the ferocity of his blows. But he was not motivated by cruelty. He was claiming a woman. She made such treatment necessary by her resistance.

“Ahhhhh... AAaiiiiiieeee... Ahhhh... Ahhhh... Ahhhhhh... Stop please... Ahhhhh, please... Please!”

Again she noticed he was not even winded, he simply stood there, calmly and methodically raining chastisement on her naked body. For Emily, the most devastating realization was that while the pain was intolerable for her, he could go on inflicting it indefinitely.

Bitterly she felt the frailty and weakness of her sex and cursed the instinctive female voice within her that was even now begging her to capitulate. She closed her eyes and sobbed, but at that moment she knew she would surrender to his will. The only question was whether she would do it before or after he had covered her with welts.

Emily groaned and opened her eyes. She realized that the blows had stopped and she was on her back, nearly hysterical and staring up at his savage black face. She could take no more and lay still as the man once again studied her. He watched impassively as her legs parted. Crying pathetically, she had to turn her face from his hot stare and screw her eyes shut yet again.

“Please... don’t hurt me... Don’t hurt me... anymore...” she muttered.

Kotatu removed his loincloth and knelt between her ivory legs to claim his prize. Beaten, literally and figuratively, Emily awaited the horrible moment when she would cease to be an innocent, loyal wife, assuming instead the shameful mark of a fallen woman.

But fall she had. Her chest heaved and panted with exertion, jostling her exposed breasts. Her thighs twitched as she fought the urge to close them. And her pink, glistening sex was now proffered, as if in sacrifice to save the rest of her body from intolerable pain.

She had looked away, trying to shut down her mind to the obscenity that lay in her immediate future. But she could not help but bring her eyes back to him as she felt movement- the hard muscles of his legs contacting the softness of her inner thighs.

His big hand seized her chin and directed it forward, once again capturing her gaze, as she looked at him in sheer sexual terror. Then she felt *IT!* She lowered her wide eyes down his muscular chest, down to the juncture of his heroic legs, to his organ. Her eyes widened further at its unbelievable size.

His penis hung, stiff and proud. Now throbbing and fully erect, it seemed to swagger like the savage himself. His immense testicles swayed, black and full, charged to the brim with potent seed. His maleness was perhaps three times the size of Jon’s. Emily could not believe that a man could be thusly endowed. With renewed trepidation she realized there was no way she could take such an object inside her. He would tear asunder her flesh as well as her chastity.

The shock of seeing his manhood, so physically and emotionally threatening at the same time renewed Emily's panic. Despite her fear of the whip, she drew a sharp intake of breath and tried to push him away and slide from beneath him. But again, he held her fast.

Emily groaned finally. Her arms fell back and her parted legs went limp with surrender. She awaited the terrible moment when the great brute would penetrate her with his huge thing and consummate his rape of her innocent body.

But, strangely, Kotatu now paused. Now there was time; time to relax, time to savor, time to survey the expanse of milk-white female flesh that lay so helplessly beneath him, supine and open in utter vulnerability.

He had never seen a white, particularly a woman, so close. She was white as death, he thought. But not cold and pallid. Her delicate skin was suffused with the faintest flush, making her appear vibrant and lush despite her alien fairness. Her finely shaped Caucasian face seemed to him exotic. Curiously repellent and alluring, at once wild and unknown, while at the same time delicate and fragile. He could not judge her age exactly, but could tell from the puffiness of her breasts and the slight retention of juvenile fat that she was young. Past the age of betrothal for an Ahulu woman, but still capable of giving many years of pleasure on his mat. Yes she was alien, but her very strangeness merely added to his desire.

She groaned again, looking back to his face. He could look into those eyes, dark gray like an angry sky in the lamplight, and revel in his possession of her- his savage, white, slave girl.

"Now we do the puana," he said intensely. "Break all bonds and spells of you white man." He remembered the word used by two of the white doctors when their party had visited an Ahulu village. They had availed themselves of women offered in hospitality. Fuck... fucking they had called it. "We must do the puana- I fuck you," he said audaciously. "You belong to Kotatu now!"

As Emily's face grimaced, he grasped his rampant member and dragged it along the slit of her vagina. She felt the spongy head and whined with tiny, helpless sobs. As he pushed forward she could feel firm pressure of the knob dividing the lips of her sex gently but insistently. Emily groaned a rasp of utter shame and desolation as he probed the cleft of her vulva slowly.

She screwed her eyes tight shut and her face became a mask of pain and degradation. This was the most singularly abominable moment of her life. Great heaves of psychic revulsion seemed to well up from her very soul. She was about to be taken carnally by a man who was not her husband. A man she scarcely regarded as a man. A dark, alien savage who days before had murdered the men of her settler's group and possibly her husband as well. Now he claimed her as chattel. Never in her previous life had she dreamt that such incredible shame was possible.

His black hips pushed her legs even further apart as he held himself poised. Then, oh the unspeakable obscenity of it! She felt his hard, prodigious length enter, pressing, spreading, opening, moving ever deeper... slowly deeper. And she was utterly powerless to stop it!

Emily turned her head. She wanted to vomit, wanted to swoon and die, as she was sure a virtuous, Christian white woman should when faced with such a fate. But no help came from her body.

The opposite was true in fact. There seemed to be a strange blend of exhaustion and elation that flowed from her spine and permeated her brain. And into her mind now

spilled a new horror, the realization, forgotten until now in the terror of the past few days, that this was exact setting and circumstances of her dream!

Violation! Her vows trampled by this savage, her chastity in mortal sacrifice, she could not suppress a sob of pure desolation. Yet just as in the dream, the spark kindling in her loins flared to life.

At first it was barely perceptible. She looked up at him, her jaw slack and her heaving breath whispering pathetically, “no... no... no...” But he continued to push himself in, little by little. He was already deeper than her husband had ever been and she began to feel pain as her tissues stretched.

He was about halfway in when she looked up at his coal-black face. He was smiling in triumph and satisfaction and his eyes fixed on hers.

“Please... oh, please,” she whimpered. “You’re too big... too big... please, I’m white. I can’t take you...”

“You take all,” he said, his voice a hoarse whisper. “You belong to Ahulu and Kotatu now. You learn to take all.”

“AAAagggggghhhh,” she groaned inelegantly as he began an insistent rhythm of thrusts with his hips. “Aaaagggghhhh... ahhhhgggghhh... aaaauuuugggghhh... AAAAGGHHHHHH.” Each movement drove his manhood deeper into her belly and ratcheted up her pain a little at a time. “Pleeeese! It hurts! Oh it hurts!” Kotatu ignored her protests and continued his quest.

Suddenly she felt his blunt head kiss a wall inside her. His prodigious glans was resting against her cervix. She opened her eyes and saw with amazement that his entire twelve-inch penis had disappeared inside her. She could feel his wiry pubic hair rubbing against her tightly stretched nether lips, and at last he was still.

Emily was still also, afraid to move or even breathe, lest her stressed tissues rupture. She dug her toes into the animal hide beneath them and put her hands on his powerful shoulders, seeking to draw strength from his solid form. But her hands on his flesh opened the trickle of arousal a bit more and there was definitely a warm, pleasurable glow between her legs.

Kotatu held himself still for several minutes. Then, still staring into her eyes he reached down to the juncture of their bodies and began to stroke her clitoris with his thumb.

The tiny trickle became an open flow now, figuratively and literally as Emily felt the dew of her desire forming inside her and coating his organ. A sense of shame mixed with creeping lust charged through her as his thumb stoked her fire.

His face descended to hers and he kissed her open-mouthed, swirling his long tongue between her teeth. He crushed her lips passionately with his and ground his face onto hers, even as he began to ease himself from her.

Emily had never really felt anything when Jon had made love to her. She wondered momentarily if the black man was finished and would release her. But just as his manhood was almost fully withdrawn, he reversed to movement of his loins and began to bore into her again. Emily caught her breath as the pressure built. But the pain was substantially less this time. Her body had adjusted to his enormous size.

In went the bulbous head, seeming to slither into her living guts in one smooth movement. When hilted again he gave her a little thrust that grazed the top of his stalk against her clit. A thin whoosh of excitement escaped her lips and she gasped from the unwanted joy. Again he crushed his muscular torso to hers, flattening her breasts to his chest. Despite herself, Emily groaned as her dormant libido sprang to life. The black man was moving now, slowly pumping his full length in and out of her love sheath. She was

clutching him, quite unconsciously, just as in her dream and her legs had lifted from the floor to entwine about him.

Emily began to churn beneath her Ahulu master with the fervor of a lover. Kotatu had established a rhythm, thrusting faster and harder with each passing second. Like a dazzling light the bright pleasure radiating from her sex blinded and washed out all inhibition. All thoughts of Jon and marriage and faithfulness fled from her mind as she gave in to the dream, surrendering to it for the first time. Yet this was no dream. It was red hot, wicked reality.

“Ahh... Kotatu fuck you... fuck you...” he panted.

“Yes,” she gasped. “Oh yes, it’s so big...”

Faster now their rutting bodies raced as they hurtled forward to climax. Emily sobbed and thrust her sex onto his as her mind and soul were finally overtaken with the surging thrill of orgasm.

She had rarely achieved an orgasm with Jon and had never experienced one anywhere near as intense as the climax she had felt with the black savage who held her captive. She knew a boundary had been crossed. Never in her dream had she reached fulfillment- until now.

Suddenly he gave a great shout and his body stiffened. He ground his huge organ into her with all his weight and held the blunt head fast against her cervix. Emily felt an instant eruption of liquid fire in the depths of her belly as gush after gush of his essence splashed into her stretched guts. She had never felt Jon’s flow, never known that such a sensation could exist. It was as if he were pouring his entire being into her womb!

“AAAAGggghh... aaaahhhhhh, AAAAAAHHHHH,” she screamed as her body exploded once more. She was convulsing wildly beneath him, trying vainly to pump her pelvis even as he held her pinned. With pure instinct her vaginal muscles clamped onto him and it seemed to last an eternity as he spurted and filled, and she rasped and clung.

Then he stopped, breathing in great heaving gasps as he relaxed, still covering her and filling her to the core.

Emily’s whole spiritual and emotional being was in flux. She lay panting but inert beneath him, the fear and shame returning with a vengeance. His weight settled onto her and her own frame went limp.

It was over. He pulled himself from her and left without the slightest ceremony. The older of Kotatu’s two black women led the dazed and weak Emily out the doorway to the hut, to the side yard where a small enclosure held the pigs. There she bound Emily to a stake with a heavy leather cord, near an old sow who squealed in protest at having to share her pen.

The black woman then hurried to the master’s mat to join him and the other black woman. Emily was left in the mud with the swine, cold and naked, to ponder in silence what had just happened.

She knew she should feel relief now that the horrible raping savage had abandoned her, at least for the moment. But all she felt was degradation. A dull ache in her stretched vagina seemed to throb and she brought her hand to her sex lips. She was relieved to find she wasn’t torn by his huge size, but the pain now echoed and reverberated with a feeling of loss.

She felt lonely and empty. There was a tinge of jealousy in her chaotic thoughts as the lamps were extinguished within the hut and she heard a soft rustling. Kotatu and his women were cuddling and cooing, warm and comfortable together. She tried to suppress the thought. She should be glad to be gone from his presence! But there was no remedy for the hollow, cold malaise that filled her troubled mind. She was a woman of shame

now, torn from her husband and bereft even of the attentions of a black, native rapist. Curled up on the dirt she began to cry in the darkness, comforted only by the warm, liquid piece of a man seeping potently into her womb.

## Chapter 6

They next day, the white women were taken early in the morning to a large communal hut. They sat legs together and folded beneath them, bedraggled and haggard in a small circle. They were too ashamed to meet each other's eyes.

Each of them had taken small strips of cloth, torn from one of their own garments. It had been Sara's underslip and had soaked up blood from her menstrual discharge. The villagers had discarded it as being unclean and it stank from her unwashed body. There was nothing else for the white women to wear however, so they wrapped pieces of it around their hips and were able to hide their sexes and posteriors. They were unable to cover their breasts or upper bodies however.

Martha and Hannah exchanged grim greetings with Emily. The marks on their bodies confirmed what she already had surmised. They too had been sexually assaulted the night before. Sara appeared enraged, almost murderous, though she was as helpless as the others. She too had obviously been raped, but Emily felt certain she had fought for a long time. An inner hatred fairly seethed behind her narrowed eyes.

It was Anne though, whose look gave Emily some concern. She was unresponsive, almost zombie like. There were more marks on her skin than any of the others and her eyes were wild and darting.

Emily could see the shame in the faces of each of them. Added to their near nudity was the obvious evidence of their now maculate conditions; fallen women who had engaged in carnal relations with black savages. Even though they had been forced, this truth ate at their souls, brought up as they were to regard such victim status as somehow partly the woman's fault; the source of deep, personal humiliation.

Filled with compassion for her friends, Emily tried to comfort them and give them something to hold onto.

"We must resist them," she whispered. "The army will be looking for us. We have to hang on until we're found. We're English women. We can survive adversity."

Though shaken, the other girls nodded with agreement. Even Anne smiled grimly. But in her own heart Emily doubted. She knew they were so far out into the bush that help might not arrive for years, if it came at all.

The tall and powerfully built Kotatu entered the hut and spoke to an older matronly woman, who eyed the white girls sternly. He strode over to the English women who cowered in his presence.

"This woman named Namri," he said, gesturing to the black women. "She teach you how to work and behave like Ahulu woman. You obey or she whip hard." Then without further statement, he turned and left.

"Today you learn to scrape hides," said Namri, gruffly.

The white women looked at each other in surprise. "You speak English also!" exclaimed Emily. She was overjoyed. At last there was someone of the Ahulu, a woman like them, to reason with and make their needs known.

"Yes," said the woman. "When I was child, powerful magician of your people came to my village, healing the sick. He kept me as slave for his bed and taught me your language and some your customs."

"Can you help us?" asked Emily. "Please... help us get back to..."

"I here to help you," said Namri. "I here to help you learn to be good Ahulu women."

“Ahu... Ahulu women?” asked Martha. “But we’re English, white. How can we be Ahulu?”

“You captured women. You learn Ahulu ways. Men make sure you bear Ahulu children. Ahulu warriors, so clan always powerful.”

The whites gasped at this and began chattering among themselves with outrage.

“Be silent,” snapped the older black woman. “You learn respect. You submit to clan’s unity. You all low women. You all on bottom like mud between toes. You learn place someday you children come out of mud. Maybe even lead Ahulu clan.”

Emily’s heart fell. It was obvious they would get no help from this woman.

Namri snapped something in Bantu, the language of the Ahulu. Motioning the girls to follow her, she took each one to a different hut. In each case there seemed to be several women working at a specific task, overseen by an older woman. Namri said something to the woman in charge and gave each a white woman, who was quickly set to work. She took Emily to a mud hut near the edge of the camp. The stench emanating from the shelter was almost unbearable. When Emily was pushed roughly inside she could see this was a place where hides were cleaned and prepared. The woman in charge frowned at the white girl, and spoke briefly with Namri.

“This woman named Kogama,” said Namri. “She mistress of this hut. You obey her and work hard or you feel whip.”

When Namri had left, Kogama looked Emily over carefully, pushing and probing her arms to determine her musculature and strength. Her stern expression told Emily she was less than pleased with her physic. She gestured to Emily to get her attention, then took a stone knife. She picked up one of the hides and stretched it over a large wooden rack. Then she deftly used the knife to scrape the backside of the hide, cleaning the fat and flesh from the skin. She worked quickly with the skill and strength of many years of practice, demonstrating exactly how the task was to be done.

She handed the knife to Emily and motioned for her to continue to scrape the hide as she had been shown. Emily nodded but the black woman scowled. She watched for several moments to make sure Emily was working hard and correctly, then returned to her own rack to work.

Emily did the best she could, knowing that the threat of the whip was not an idle one. But the labor was hard and she could not keep the pace Kogama thought she should sustain.

“Hhhhaaaahh,” she cried as a switch landed unexpected and hard on her naked back. “Please... I’m trying...” she bleated. She sped up the scraping action as fast as she could and the black woman went back to her work, apparently satisfied at the moment yet still watchful lest Emily slack.

Poor Emily received a lash from the switch five more times that day, though she strained her utmost to scrape the hides thoroughly and quickly. The blows were no softer delivered by a woman. If anything, Emily felt them even more acutely than the lashes that Kotatu had given her. The lesson was the same; learn, do as you’re told, work hard. Finally, several hours later, covered with sweat, fat and dried blood, she was given a little break.

Kogama took her outside and allowed her to drink water from a skin. After Emily had drunk her fill she showed her the next step in the process. The work of tanning the hides was a little easier and was done outside. The skins were stretched over the hot sand where a paste made from the animal’s brain mixed with salt, was spread onto the surface of the flesh side. The hides desiccated and cured quickly in the oppressive heat.

Stretching the hides was a two-woman job, and Emily was taught how to assist Kogama.

At first it was difficult working almost naked outdoors, kneeling on the hard packed ground on her bare legs and self-conscious about every passer by. But Kogama was adept at keeping Emily from distraction, landing the switch across her bare breasts whenever she thought the white girl needed it.

Finally, Kogama demonstrated the last task in the process. To soften and stabilize the hide, it was chewed over its entire area, then soaked in brine. Emily was somewhat reticent to place the recently worked hide in her mouth, but once again Kogama's switch provided the motivation. By the end of the day Emily was well on her way to learning the secondary skills of an Ahulu woman.

That night the horror of violation was repeated, but with a new twist. As she knelt before him he thrust his erected male member into her face.

"Suckle like child," he demanded.

The demure Victorian wife gasped, thinking she could not possibly have understood him correctly. She attempted to pull away but he seized her blond hair and slapped her face.

"Slave girl meet her master properly when he enter," he said. "Open mouth."

Emily, cognizant of the thrashing she had undergone the previous day complied. The ridged staff of black flesh slid into her mouth, though she gagged and sputtered, earning another slap.

"Woman bite, we feed her to jackals."

Emily groaned, but allowed him to work his huge penis back and forth in her mouth. He began coaching her, directing her to close her lips about the shaft and work her tongue under and against it.

The white woman wanted to die with revulsion and shame, and several times she almost vomited. But she knew the big native man would not hesitate to whip or beat her severely. Cursing her own recreant surrender, she obeyed his every command. Soon her mouth was filled with his viscous essence and he held her head in place until he felt her swallow. Then he released her and watched expressionless as she retched and sputtered on the dirt floor.

Without any preamble, Emily was taken sexually once more by Kotatu and returned to the swine pen when he was finished with her. The next day she worked and the next night he raped her mouth and vagina again in his hut. When he was done, he methodically dragged her outside and tied to the stake in the pen. There, once again she spent the night, tied off like a beast. It became a routeen, a shameful cycle of servile work, adulterous sex, and sleeping in filth. Each time she resolved beforehand to resist his advances, at least passively. She told herself that she would refuse to open her mouth, or perhaps, she would lay rigid and unmoving beneath the big black man. But each time the threat of his superior strength would win out. Then he would work his carnal devilry and to her utter horror and self-contempt, her body would betray her, clutching, moving, reveling, joining- as though she loved.

But he did not sleep with her. At the end of each act of lewd fornication he had the white woman dragged outside, sullen and ashamed, to the pigsty. Emily considered it sheer cruelty that they hobbled her every night by lashing one of her wrists to an ankle, and secured the other ankle to the stake. She could hear the voices and cries of the other white women as well, especially Anne's. Long into the night the sound of the whip slashing against flesh was echoed by the fair-skinned girl's screams and pleadings. Anne

was being tormented, and her most abject begging for mercy seemed to have no effect on her black shaman master. Emily wept for her here to fore sheltered friend and imagined how she must hate her captor. Anne was so small in stature, so delicate and chaste. Yet now she had been given to the most brutal man of the clan. Emily closed her eyes and shuddered.

There was a restless movement beside her. Always the old sow would grunt angrily at having to share her shelter, but Emily simply sprawled spent and exhausted on the wet, smelly dirt. Sleep would come then, alloyed with fear and resentment at their treatment at the hands of the savage and cruel Ahulu.

In fact, Kotatu was not being cruel at all. The white girl was thought of as an animal, at least until she could be taught the proper, civilized ways of the Ahulu. She was being treated in exactly the prescribed way for a newly captured female of an enemy tribe. It was all part of the method and ritual in which captive women were slowly assimilated into the clans. And Emily *was* changing- slowly.

Each night, as she lay in cold, clammy exile in the sty, she could see into the hut through a hole in the thatch. Emily told herself emphatically that it was not envy she felt while watching Kotatu's black women cuddle him warmly with him on the mat. She was thankful that she did not have to share a bed with this man; to endure through the night this black savage's intimate and affectionate caresses, his possessive embrace, and his huge, dark presence. She *was* thankful to be spared that- wasn't she?

By rights she should hate him, as Sara hated her captor. He and his heathen tribe had sundered her from her husband and her people. And the treatment she received every day was brutal. Any slacking in the work she was assigned to do was punished with a quick whip at the hands of one of the African women. Kotatu also did not refrain from disciplining her for any infraction.

If she forgot to go to her knees when he entered his hut, or did not move with enthusiasm when they had sex, or was guilty of any other shortcoming, his whip was sure and practiced.

Without explanation he would seize her brutally by the hair and lead her, doubled over to a stake driven in the ground in front of his hut. There he would fasten one of Emily's legs to the stake with a short cord. Then he would proceed to thrash her painfully while she yelped and scrambled helplessly to and fro at the limits of the line. It was deeply humiliating, for it was carried out in the midst of the kraal, in full view of the entire village. Emily always tried to have courage, resolving beforehand to bear the punishment with the same stoic dignity she had seen in the girl at the colony post. But the pain was too much. In seconds she would invariably be on the ground, screeching and trying in vain to cover herself. Expressionless black faces looked on and heads nodded approvingly at the lesson being dealt out to the strange and disobedient white girl. It never ended until she was reduced to the most abject pleading, crawling to him and clutching at his feet.

There were other, more public punishments, which seemed to ceremonial and not connected to any specific infraction that the white women may have committed. Often, all five of the white women were taken to the center open area of the Kraal. Their meager garments were stripped from them and they were tethered with rawhide straps approximately six feet long, to stakes driven into the ground. The tethers gave the women some freedom of movement, but this availed them little when the ritual began. This was not a discipline used only on the white women. Occasionally a young black woman received the same treatment. Because of their newness however, it was the whites who were its primary victims for several weeks.

After a woman was secured to the stake, she would remain there, naked and fearful until dark, often this would be for hours. She was not allowed any food or water, nor would anyone talk to her. After the evening meal, several of the older women gather around the restrained woman, each carrying a short, stout whip. On a command from the chief they would begin to thrash the bound woman mercilessly, striking with all their strength as the victim screamed and ran about at the limits of her tether, cringing, sobbing, and trying in vain to shield herself with her bound arms. She was never successful. There were simply too many arms swinging; too many whips flying.

Only when the woman knelt contritely, clasped her arms behind her head and thrust out her chest for a thorough breast whipping, did the older women relent. The unfortunate woman, covered with glowing pink wheals, was finally obliged to beg to be taught the ways of the Ahulu, and swear her devotion to the tribe. Then they were then allowed to crawl back to their master's huts.

They were breaking the white women, body and spirit, and Emily knew why. It was in order to remove any habits, thoughts, or behaviors not compatible with their new lives as an Ahulu woman. That much was easy to understand, since it was happening to all of them. But more puzzling and revolting for Emily was the feeling she was developing for Kotatu. The way, even in her own thoughts she was beginning to regard herself as his woman. She was a captive, and she had to learn the ways of these people in order to survive. But she could never, never allow herself to accept that she was falling in love with a savage black male!

There was one fact however, that she simply could not deny. With each successive night that same black savage was becoming more and more attractive and more and more desirable. At night, alone with her thoughts on the cold, unforgiving ground she lay still and pondered. She realized with quiet horror that each evening, her life as a white, English settler seemed to become more unreal and remote. This place, the world of the Ahulu seemed to encompass the universe, rendering the family and land of her birth mere shadows. The huge black man who owned her and took her carnally every night was beginning to dominate her soul- and the awful, stimulating dreams were coming true with razor-sharp vibrancy.

## Chapter 7

A few days later, Emily's work routine was abruptly interrupted. As she sat down with the other white women to work the hides, Negana, Kotatu's younger woman, entered the hut and spoke briefly to Namri.

"Negana says she has been sent by your master to improve your appearance and make you presentable," said Namri. "He has gone with a party of warriors to the south and will return in a few days. You are to obey her as you would him."

Emily was excused from her scrapping job and got up to follow Negana. The black woman led her down to the river, off some distance from the village. After a short hike they came to a shaded clearing in the brush. In a bit from the shoreline, a tiny flow of fresh, clean water from the main stream was ducted into a little pool lined with smooth rocks and moss. Negana seated herself on one of the many large boulders and opened the sizable leather pack she had brought with her. She regarded Emily thoughtfully for a moment.

The white woman was filthy and stunk horribly. She had not bathed since nearly a week before her capture and her body was foul from working hides and sleeping among the pigs. Her hair hung in greasy, dank clumps, flat on her head, and dried blood and fat from her scraping job coated her skin and attracted dirt. She seemed fidgety, nervous because she did not know what was happening.

Negana produced a skin flask and made Emily drink some sweet tasting liquid from it. Then she pointed at the water, ordered the white girl into the pool.

A little apprehensive, Emily obeyed. She could not swim and had suffered from a terrible fear of drowning since her childhood. But the water was no more than waist deep and pleasantly cool as she waded tentatively into the stream. Negana followed her in and motioned for her to immerse herself.

The black woman noticed Emily's look of fear. Perhaps, like some clans of the Xhoso, the backward white savages did not take baths and were unfamiliar with the water. Negana decided that she would have to demonstrate. She shrugged and dunked under the surface herself, standing sputtering and sighing to convey how good it felt. She smiled disarmingly at Emily and once again motioned her to immerse.

This time Emily obeyed, eager in fact to enjoy the first chance to bathe in weeks. She dunked herself several times and scrubbed her body with her hands. The refreshing and intimate moment brought back Emily's modesty. Instinctively she turned her back to the black woman and continued to bathe.

After a few minutes she felt Negana's firm grasp on her shoulder, turning her face to face. The black woman studied Emily's face intently for a moment, then smiled and handed her some moss with some bubbly substance on it. Emily realized she was supposed to use it to wash herself and nodded to the black woman.

After Emily had scrubbed the grime and grease from her skin, Negana pulled her over to a large rock that jutted into the pool. There, she had prepared some things from her pack. She poured some oil, and a liquid that looked like milk from two small bowls, onto Emily's head and began to rub the mixture in, thoughtfully at first. The white girl's straight, blond hair was something of a curiosity to Negana and for a moment, she seemed puzzled as how to proceed. At length however, she took great handfuls of it and began to massage the liquids vigorously into the Emily's scalp. When the concoction

began to foam, Emily realized it was another kind of soap, and smiled at Negana in gratitude.

The black woman nodded in return. The soap had a medicinal property. It killed the lice that had begun to infest the white girl's hair. Lice were not prevalent among the Ahulu, who took care of their hair. But Negana had noticed that the white women were too ignorant even to groom each other. The first order of business was to rid the girl of the vermin, then perhaps she could be taught some rudiments of civilized grooming.

Negana began to work the lather past Emily's neck and further down her body, into her naked skin. For several minutes, Emily relaxed and allowed Negana to bathe her entire body. When she had been thoroughly rinsed, Negana led her out of the pool and over to a smooth, bench-like outcropping, nestled in the thick, green grass. The large trees lining the river shaded it.

Emily felt woozy, and oddly complacent, as if she had gone into a trance that was pleasant and calm, but none the less unbreakable. She could think slowly, but awareness was blunted. She felt as if all motivation had been drained from her and she could not act except as directed. There was no resisting the feeling. Tiny sparks of alarm at her own helplessness died in her brain. But then Negana was so gentle and so solicitous, there seemed to be no reason to resist. It was easier to just sit on the lovely, warm stone and dangle her bare feet into the soft grass. She trusted the black woman. Emily felt fine.

Negana sat beside the white girl and began to open again the pack she had brought down with her. As she laid out her tools and waited for the narcotic she had given Emily to take affect, she hummed the powerful incantations of cleansing needed to purify the white female and make her fit to be around other members of the clan on an intimate basis. It was a daunting task, for who knew what corruption abounded among the primitive, animal-like whites. What filth had clung to this woman's body, or where she had been, Negana could not imagine. It was said that the stench wafting from the compounds and camps of the whites could be smelt for miles and their places were rife with pestilence. That they lived like animals, unwashed and unkempt.

Negana wrinkled her nose. Bathing was supposedly unknown to these backward people and smelling Emily before her bath, she believed it. She had been worried for her lover/master, Kotatu, touching and joining with this strange woman the nights before. But she also understood why the white woman had to be taken on her first nights in the hut. The tradition and ritual of breaking the bonds to her former mate demanded it.

Now however, she was charged with cleaning this woman up and making her as attractive as possible. And being Kotatu's obedient woman, that was exactly what she was going to do. At least the white woman was clean enough on the outside now to begin.

Negana had used the drug to render Emily docile and avoid the bother of the white woman's struggles through certain parts of the ritual. Many of the operations were delicate and she needed to be sure the girl would remain quiet and still.

Emily's skin dried quickly in the warm breeze. She sat placidly, eyes glassy but head turning slowly on occasion to follow a bird or dragonfly. Her breathing was even and she watched Negana impassively, initiative smothered, as the black woman began to work.

She started with Emily's hair. It was drying now and just as Negana had intended, was coming to life. It was springy and lustrous but with the color of dried grass. Negana wondered why it was so unnaturally straight. Perhaps it was because it had not been cared for. She was relieved to see it was not matted and could be combed out.

Now the soap and plant extract she had massaged into it made it curl and flair with wildness. Negana took a knife and cut the girl's formerly free-flowing tresses to neck length. She saved the severed tresses for fetishes. Then she laboriously braided the remaining lengths into dozens of tight, thin twines, sealing the ends with waterproof resin so that they could not unravel. She considered dying it darker, but Kotatu seemed to be amused by the exotic color of the girl's hair. So Negana smoothed the flaxen braids with aromatic oil, to make them lay flatter on the Emily's scalp and stepped back to inspect her work.

Credible. More than credible, she decided. The girl's hair was much prettier than it had been spilling dead and straight from her head. It would be easier for her too. She would no longer need to push it continually out of her face, as Negana has seen her do as she worked. The black girl shook her head and wondered at a tribe so primitive, they did not know how to clean, cut, or groom their hair. It would be wonderful for these women, despite their loss of rank, to now live among advanced, cultured people like the Ahulu.

Satisfied at last with Emily's hair, Negana moved onto the next step. She took a curious scapula shaped implement and applied a clear liquid to the flat portion of it. The liquid was a crude, traditional antiseptic, distilled in gourds from beer.

She grasped Emily's facial lips and carefully pulled them back with a thumb and forefinger. She spread the clear liquid on the lining of girl's mouth. Then she took the scapula and pressed it slowly onto Emily's lips. Hundreds of tiny points of blood appeared. The scapula was a secret tool of Negana's craft. A coating of crushed obsidian glass, fixed with pitch created a surface like a microscopic bed of nails. When pressed to the skin it prepared it to accept permanent color pigments, decorative scars and swelling compounds.

After applying the treatment evenly and delicately to Emily's lips, inside and out, Negana took three more flasks from her pack and mixed a small portion of their contents on a silver plate. A deep red pigment she swilled with an extract from one of the valley's succulents. The pigment would darken Emily's lips. The extract would cause the subcutaneous flesh to swell, making her lips thicker and fuller. The third paste was intended to speed healing and preserve the desired effects with a maximum of swelling and a minimum of surface scaring. It would appear natural and be permanent. It was a form of tattooing, but much advanced by thousands of years of traditional art, medicine and technique.

Once finished, Negana once again inspected her work and grunted with approval. She had now to consider about what to do with the girl's breasts. She liked their shape and firmness, but the nipples were far too small for a woman of her age and lush body build. She decided to darken Emily's light pink areolas with the same method she'd used on her lips. Her nipples could be enlarged with another technique.

She cleaned the scapula and applied more of the clear liquid to Emily's breasts. Then she pressed the implement to the white girl's flesh, meticulously following the area and borders of her areolas. There could be no mistake on such a public body part, Negana knew. The work must appear totally natural, even on this strange white woman. Such was the shamaness' integrity to her art.

Negana studied the mammary for a moment, then mixed a little brown dye into the coloring paste. The girl's lips she had made a brighter red, but the areolas would look better with a darker, more subdued color. She worked the pigment into Emily's prepared flesh with her nimble fingers, then began work on her nipples.

The older black woman felt sorry for the girl. She knew that the little points of her nipples would grow with her first pregnancy, but in the mean time she had to suffer with

their small, unattractive size. No one regarded well a woman who could not adequately suckle a child, so it was also a matter of social expedience. Among her own crude tribe, which wore the strange enveloping clothing, perhaps the girl's underdeveloped teats were no detriment. But now that she was living in an advanced, civilized culture however, physical appearance was more important. Negana had helped many young women of the village with the same problem and she knew exactly what to do.

Using her thumb and forefinger she grasped both of Emily's nipples and firmly pulled and kneaded until the nubs erected and elongated. She chaffed the erected nubbin with the rough edge of a stone, an even finer version of the scapula. She then selected a very dark, almost black color and worked the pigment thoroughly into the skin. Finally, she tied off the base of each nipple with fine thread, so that the swelling would not go down.

All the while Emily looked on with docile placidity. Occasionally she started at quick jabs of pain but voluntary movement was impossible. It was hard now to remember what had happened more than a few seconds back and Emily no longer knew where she was or how she had gotten there. But the black woman was smiling with genuine benevolence and the drug continued to sooth.

Negana had the entranced Emily move down on the flat stone and lay flat on her back. The white girl's nether lips were the next project. With her obsidian knife, Negana cut away the filthy, lousy remnants of the slip that Emily had wrapped about her waist. Negana turned up her nose with disgust. She should have made the girl remove it before she entered the water, but she had been in a hurry to get her washed. It was amazing that any human being would want to touch such a fouled rag, let alone don it as a garment. The village's good nature had indulged the white women, knowing them to be savages. But tolerance had its limits. Now that she was being assimilated and at least made up as a civilized woman, the girl's smelly, infested rag had to go. Once it was free of Emily's loins, Negana weighted it with a stone and hurled it into the river.

Negana gently pushed Emily's legs apart and sighed. This part of her work was going to require patience, labor and above all, time. Since it was likely that the white woman would awaken, at least partially from her state, she bound the girl's wrists to her ankles. She then went and cut two stout saplings from the brush and tied one to the cords binding her hands and feet. The other she lashed to the backs of the girl's knees. Now Emily was immobilized, unable to close her legs. Negana gave her more to drink from her flask and the obliging girl swallowed the liquid without protest, her gray eyes still dull and lazy.

Once again, Negana thoughtfully considered her work. She decided that the first thing she must do was eliminate the white woman's body hair. Shockingly uncouth in both its texture and its prodigious abundance, it covered her sex, almost obscuring it. To the black woman's dismay and disgust, she also found it smaller clumps under the girl's arms. Negana had never seen anything like it. Native black girls naturally had far less body hair and what little they had was removed in the interest of hygiene and grooming. It was becoming apparent that this woman had never experienced proper decorum. Negana ran her fingers through the thick pubic hair and wondered if the girl's blood were mixed somehow with that of some hairy beast. She could not fathom how humans could mate successfully with animals, but the whites were very strange and the notion would explain much about them. No matter, the bestial fur had to go- permanently.

Negana reached into her pack and found another prized implement. A set of silver tweezers obtained by her mother's mother, long ago from an Arab trader. For over an hour, she laboriously plucked all of Emily's pubic and body hairs, then rubbed into her

skin a depilation cream made from boiled tree sap. The cream would prevent any of the ugly hair from growing back.

The skilled Shamaness did not forget to periodically loosen Emily's nipple threads, allowing the blood flow to temporarily resume, but then kneading them once more to ever-larger erections and tying the threads back in place.

The sex lips were a vital part of a woman's anatomy, both reproductively and socially. But Kotatu had told her that while the white girl's vagina was very tight, the strange white girl did not seem to have much of an ability or skill to work her internal muscles, or clamp down and bite with her sex lips. It was very odd. Ahulu girls acquired the basic technique while still very young. It was another indication of how primitive these white creatures really were.

Such sexual incompetence suggested that the woman had remained a virgin until adulthood, but Negana dismissed the idea. No tribe of people, even the white savages, could possibly be so primitive and backward as to deny young females sexual training. But she wondered how the woman had managed to marry and attain rank without such skills.

This too, Negana could help with, as she had for many of the clan's younger women. At least she could make Emily's labia fuller and more able to close lovingly around a man's shaft. And the white girl could be taught to use her internal vaginal muscles to cling and massage. That training, however, would have to wait for another day.

For now, Negana decided to work the tattooing method on her subject's vulva, changing the outer lips from a light pink tinge to a dark, vibrant black. This would at least soften the woman's strangeness in this vital area of her appearance and make her more attractive.

The inner labia were more delicate and Negana decided not to tattoo them. She knew Kotatu wanted to preserve some of the woman's alien qualities, and the contrast between her darkened outer lips and the light pink interior would lend itself to this.

However, both the inner and outer labia were chafed with the stone and a liberal amount of the swelling agent was applied to the prepared area.

Next, Negana took succulent needles, soaked in the swelling agent. They were hollow, like natural syringes. She worked each of them into Emily's inner labia. When squeezed they delivered their contents deep into the tissue. In minutes, the reaction had caused the girl's genitalia to swell with the desired effect. Finally, the area was smoothed with the antiseptic.

The final work of the day was the most important and the most delicate. But for Negana, also the most routine. Emily's nose bar. Because of the girl's narrow, Caucasoid face and low rank, the Shamaness considered a smaller bar for a more subdued presentation.

Negana chose a cylinder of polished ivory, about two centimeters long from her pack and placed it in the little dish with the magic cleansing liquid. She took a hook-like tool and pierced the girl's septum with practiced ease, and pushed the disinfected adornment into place, centering it under her nostrils. Even under the powerful drug, Emily felt some pain and gasped. But Negana worked as quickly and gently as she could and the deed was done in minutes.

At last, the sun was setting and the work was complete. At least as much as could be done that day. Negana led an unprotesting, barely conscious Emily slowly back to the village and into her master's hut, where she gave the girl some water and tied a leather hood over her head. Then she secured her ankle to the post and left her to sleep.

The next day, Emily awoke in utter bewilderment. She could see nothing but a little defuse light through the hood. She would have been frightened, but some of the drug lingered; enough to calm her initial fear of blindness. She brought her hands to her head. It was only a leather cover that obscured her vision and she breathed a sigh of relief. She could remember nothing of the day before, save for some dreamlike memories of bathing with Negana. Her whole body seemed to ache with dull pain radiating from her face, breasts and sex. Tentatively feeling these areas on her body revealed them to be sore and swollen, sensitive to touch. Emily groaned and heard someone approach.

It was Negana. The black woman removed Emily's hood and held her face up so she could not see her body. She gave the girl more liquid from her flask and Emily, consumed with thirst, drank deeply.

Emily was quickly back in a zombie-like state, and Negana led her back to the same spot by the river.

Once again Negana studied her intently. There was more work to be done on Emily's face and the shamaness began.

A subdued darkening of the girl's eyelids with the gentle tattooing method seemed to enlarge her eyes and make them even more striking. A small amount of the swelling compound applied to her cheeks made the white girl's face rounder, less narrow and more heart shaped.

Directly above Emily's pudenda, Negana applied the fist-sized tattoo that mirrored the one on her own belly. The image of the crouching lion and the red spear were painted boldly and proudly on the white girl's skin and raised to even greater prominence with the scaring liquid. It was the symbol of Kotatu's house and all his women bore it. It evoked virility and strength, the two greatest virtues of the Ahulu male. Another tattoo was added, just below her navel. The black phallus and testicles were pointed directly toward the girl's sex. It was a powerful fertility symbol and Negana placed it for the greatest magical effect- directly above Emily's womb.

Finally, it was time to apply the last modification to Emily's flesh. Negana once again hobbled the incapacitated girl and spread her legs. She took a tiny piece of ivory from her kit and disinfected it. The little carving was hammer shaped with a small hook at one end. She took a needle and pierced the top of the white girl's clitoral hood. Deftly the ivory piece was inserted, hook first into the flesh, oriented so that the hard surface pressed against and covered her clitoral bud. This addition was not cosmetic but rather for training purposes. It was considered a talisman, driving and goading the sexual spirit of the female. Negana had placed it many times on women who had been less than enthusiastic with their men.

When Emily moved it would constantly stimulate her, making her hotter, faster and generally a happier girl. It had been demonstrated to work in the coldest of women, turning them generous, wet and warm, eager to respond to the male touch.

Negana had now only to consider how to dress the girl. It was time for her to put aside the bizarre, uncouth, and (so Negana felt) horribly confining and hot garments she had been wearing when captured. She would now have the advantage of assuming the garb typical of a young but low ranking Ahulu female, ready to adapt and fit into a civilized society.

The black girl stood the pliant but unsteady Emily up and tied a thin leather cord around her waist. But having been recently captured, the poor girl had yet to earn any beads. Ever generous and compassionate, Negana selected three short strings of beads

from her own loin cover and attached them to Emily's. They dangled prettily in front of her denuded sex, now the only covering on her body.

At last it was done, just as the sun began to set. Oblivious and still drugged, Emily was led back to Kotatu's hut and tied to the doorpost. There she slept soundly, untroubled by dreams or reality.

## Chapter 8

The next day, Emily awoke, fully alert for the first time since Negana had begun her work. She was conscious of having missed some time and felt lightheaded when she rose to her feet, but the narcotic had mostly worn off.

She was sore. Her face felt puffy and oddly stretched, and instinctively she brought her hand to her face. Shock and panic immediately vied for dominance in her mind.

There was something in her nose! Something stuck... imbedded... no... securely ensconced into the fleshy sebum. It stung terribly when she tried to get it out and she realized with unspeakable horror an instant later that her nose had been pierced with bone, just like the native women of the tribe!

She whimpered and once again tried to dislodge it. But the pain was too much and she stopped. There were other places that hurt as well. Looking down she discovered the tattoos below her navel, and her dramatically darkened, elongated nipples. With breath bated in absolute disgust she found that the color could not be wiped off and was permanently set under her skin. But it was not until she took her first halting step that the real soul quenching humiliation made itself known. There was tingle between her legs and a tentative probe with her fingers revealed that the skin above her clitoris had been pierced with a tiny ivory bar. It rested on the sensitive bud and with each step moved and tapped ever so lightly on the nub. Involuntary and unwanted sparks of arousal laced through her belly and she grew red-faced with shame.

"You move now!" said Namri. Emily started. She had not heard Kotatu's matronly first wife approach, but she cringed when she saw the black woman was uncoiling the whip she carried with her.

"Lazy white girl work with other girls to grind flour today. Not hang around hut and finger herself. You move. You master back tonight!"

Emily moved. She managed to escape the hut with only a few bites from the whip and scurried off to the granary.

Martha, Hannah and Sara were already hard at work; on their knees moving the mortar stones with both hands, grinding the grain into flour. When Emily entered, they stopped and stared at each other with wide-eyed astonishment.

"Em... Emily?" asked Martha.

She looked back at them, puzzled by their expressions.

"What did they do to you!" gasped Hannah.

"They tattooed me," said Emily. "And some other things."

"No... I mean... your face!" said Hannah.

"What... what do you mean?" Emily brought her hand to her face and felt the soreness and swelling. She could not see what it looked like but her blood ran cold.

Sara glared at Emily. "How could you let them do that to you?"

"I... I didn't have a choice. They made me drink something that dulled my wits and senses... I... what did they do?" replied Emily, crying.

"It's all right, Emily," said Hannah. "Perhaps it will heal."

"Yes," added Martha, "I'm sure the swelling will go down and you won't look so... ah... so puffy."

Emily whimpered. She tried to be brave in front of the other girls, but couldn't keep the misery from her voice. "I didn't have any choice! We have to cooperate with them to survive until the rescue party comes."

The two younger girls nodded tearfully, but Sara's eyes flashed with defiance. "I would die first," she said. "Now you want to cooperate with them? You're all becoming more like them every day," she hissed. "You look just like them now, Emily. Your Negro lover should be pleased!"

Emily was taken aback by Sara's vehemence and the two other girls pouted at the comment and looked away.

"You're doing the... the puana with your man as well..." said Hannah bitterly to Sara.

"Because I am forced to. But he feels nothing from me. I am limp in his filthy grasp and though he beats me I am true to my people. I will never be one of them. But I hear each of your voices each night as the savages take you and you cry out for more!"

"We are forced to live among these people. Our husbands and families are dead," said Emily quietly.

"Yes," said Sara. "And you all dishonor their memory by joining carnally with the very savages who murdered them! Voluntarily! At least for me it is still rape."

Hannah and Martha were silent. Emily stared down at her bare legs, crossed in the dirt where she sat. She could not look Sara in the face, knowing she was right.

But was she right? Sara had courage and an iron will. But was she right in resisting their captives. Was she throwing away any life she might have and risking an even more horrible fate than assimilation with the clan? Emily did not know. She knew only that she could not bear the nightly sting of his whip that she would taste if she did not move and receive him as he wished. Whether Sara was right or wrong made no difference. Emily would give in and she knew it. And there was the odd feeling that the big black man engendered in her loins whenever he was near; or whenever she thought about him- something that was occurring with increasing frequency.

She could stand it no more. She had to change the subject. "Where... where's Anne?" she asked. Emily had not seen her friend in several days.

The other women looked at each other, but no one spoke. They knew, but none wanted to tell Emily.

Anne had been kept inside the hut of the shaman since the same day Negana had begun to work on Emily. Her torment had been taken to new heights and she had shrilled and screamed with the lash until her voice was utterly spent. They had heard more hoarse throated gasps of pain and outrage for a couple of days, then nothing.

Emily frowned, wondering why her friend's voice had been stilled.

That night the chief held a sumptuous feast. There was much dancing in the Ahulu style and the white women were expected to join. Despite their earlier conversation about cooperating to save their skins, however, none of the white women could bring themselves to join the dance.

They watched, seated in the shadows as the natives arranged themselves in three large concentric circles, older and higher ranking women on the inside. The participants followed each other around the circle half way round, using a slow springy step. Then they would turn to the outside of the circle and oscillate up and down on their feet, not quite jumping. The effect was very suggestive. As the women leapt their breasts would bounce provocatively and their legs and arms would move sensuously. From the perspective of the European women, the dance was unspeakably licentious, even if the participants had been fully clothed. Wearing only the bead drops it was outright lewd. It

was not however, strenuous and was designed to be a dance that could be performed for an hour or more without the dancers becoming tired.

As the white women looked on aloof and disgusted, Kotatu suddenly appeared before them. His face betrayed his rage. As his woman, Emily's refusal to dance in an expected and enthusiastic way reflected negatively on him. He was responsible to see that she was properly punished for her rebellion.

"You dance," he said simply, pulling her roughly up by the neck.

"Ple... please. Oh please, Kotatu... I can't..." babbled Emily.

He ignored her anguished pleadings and dragged her over to the circle.

"You not dance properly. You show disrespect for clan and for Kotatu. Now Kotatu teach you as clan watch!"

He took a long, thin leather cord and tied it to her bare ankle, holding the other end in his hand. Then he took the whip from his belt and proceeded to lash the white girl viciously. He made no attempt to restrain her. She was free to move within the limits of the tether, but Emily soon discovered that this freedom was illusory. In fact, it was strangely the most demeaning part of the torment. When a victim is tied or securely held to an object, at least there is the comfort and security of a pole or wall or stake with which to psychologically cling to. Just as a piece of leather to bite on when undergoing some painful injury.

At the end of his cord but otherwise free, Emily had nothing solid provide a sense of external strength. Moreover the girl was quite unable to keep herself from scampering about pathetically, cringing and trying in vain to shield herself from his blows.

"You dance!" he bellowed. "You dance now like Ahulu woman!"

"AAAAAgggghhhhhh oh god... please... please stop. AAAAAGGGGGHHHH, PLEASE!"

"Dance," he shouted. "Show Kotatu you wish to dance for him!"

"AAAAAHHH... AAAAGGGGGG... AAAAAHHHHHH, please, Kotatu, I'll dance... I'll dance. I will..." Emily began to emulate the steps of the dance as best she could while still moving to try to avoid the lash.

"You Ahulu woman. You show clan how you dance! Kotatu whip you because you not obey!"

"AAAAAAAAGGGGGHHHH, please... I didn't mean it... I didn't mean to insult you...AAAIIIEEEEE." She was dancing with alacrity now, moving and gyrating in the most lubricious way.

"You learn," he shouted. "You Ahulu woman now! Kotatu's woman! Never shame Kotatu again, or he not be so easy on you."

"Aaaahhh Ahhhhhgggg Aaaaiiee, Oh please, Kotatu I swear I'll never refuse to dance again!"

He did not stop punishing her for several minutes, until the dance ended. At last it was mercifully over and Emily sank to her knees. With the groveling, sobbing white girl clinging to his legs, the black warrior threw the whip over his shoulder.

"White women learn," repeated Kotatu, panting. "Act like all other women in clan. You no learn you feel whip on backside again."

"Yes... yes Kotatu... yes... yes..." sobbed Emily, as the fire from the lashes continued to burn.

The other white women received the same treatment from their native masters. There were more dances and this time they joined the movements enthusiastically, even if they were somewhat ungainly from lack of practice.

Later they were allowed to rest. There was new entertainment afoot and the chief and all the village sat down to enjoy the spectacle.

The mal-formed Shaman appeared. Emily knew him now as Kahini, the maker of dances and the greatest priest of the clan. He stepped before the chief to bow low. He announced that he had created another new dance, this one to commemorate the capture of the white women. The old, fat chief smiled and the shaman waved his hand.

Emily saw her friend Anne burst from the mysterious Shaman's hut, running forward to kneel beside him.

She was naked and her still pale flesh shone in the torchlight. Her long, dark hair had been worked into a single braid, which was tied about her neck like a collar, fastened tightly at the end with a thin strip of hide. As the other white women looked on with the rest of the clan, the shaman placed one of his deformed hand/feet on her back and she brought her face down to kiss the other. Then he barked an order. The warrior's drums began a fast cadence and Anne leapt to her feet.

She ran to the area in front of the chief and began to dance, but not with the bovine, unsure steps of the other whites. She moved with a practiced mixture of grace and licentiousness and it was evident that she had practiced for many days.

Emily watched with growing wonder. This was her reserved and innocent friend, the wife of the preacher. Now she was dancing naked before the whole village, in the most obscene manner imaginable.

It was almost hypnotic. Anne gasped and her eyes rolled, but she danced on, as if oblivious to the exhibition she was performing. The rhythm quickened and Anne began to gyrate like a belly dancer. She held her arms above her head and bucked her hips in mid-air in a blatant parody of sex. Emily could hear only her labored breath and the soft slap of her bare feet on the packed dirt.

It went on for some time and Anne worked herself into a frenzy, as if controlled by some demon of lust. Only when her flesh gleamed with a sheen of sweat did the drums stop. Anne returned to her master's feet and collapsed in a heap of spent, dripping white flesh.

Thereafter an orgy ensued. Anne was led around the circle of seated warriors. She straddled their legs and faced them in their laps as they watched the dance continue, taking them deep inside her belly and writhing on them until they released within her belly.

Emily watched her friend but had no chance to talk to her. She and the other white girls danced until the feast was over. The last she saw of Anne, a huge warrior named Mugabu had mounted her. He lifted the petite girl, standing erect with the clinging Anne still impaled on his manhood. He ran with her to a nearby hut and they disappeared inside.

When the last dance was done, Kotatu seized Emily, dragged her by the hair to his hut. He threw her on her punished back and mounted her immediately. She eagerly received him with a surrendering cry of mixed fear and sexual hunger. The cry of a woman with an empty sex. She was screaming with lust moments later, bucking back to him with unrestrained ravidity- an ecstasy and enthusiasm she had never known with her white husband.

The next day the four white women were together, working on a hide. They were silent for some time. Once again the younger girls could not meet Emily's eyes. In desperation she turned to Sara.

"What happened to Anne?" asked Emily "How did they force her to..."

“She’s gone over to them,” said the red-hair girl with disgust. “She’s one of them now. Totally devoted to those black studs of hers.”

Emily gasped. “How can that be? She loved Matthew... she was a ministers wife...”

“She loves her nigger masters now!” snapped Sara. Then she rose and stormed out of the hut.

The three remaining girls said nothing to each other. Until Hannah spoke weakly. “We’re all doing the puana with them... We have no choice.”

Emily nodded. That much was true.

When she had finished her work for the day, Emily strode down to the river to bathe in the brief time before dark. It was there, in the reflection of the still water that she got the first good look at her own face. What she saw nearly made her faint with mortification.

The shock and shame of the tattoo, added to her continual and now even nearer nudity had been bad enough. Now the full realization of what had been done to her struck like a kick from a bull. She struggled to stifle a scream.

She scarcely believed that the strange face that stared up from the surface of the water was indeed her own and considered herself at that moment horribly and permanently disfigured. Though the honest and talented Negana had truly worked a miracle in preserving her beauty without a trace of surface scarring, Emily’s mind brimmed over with despair. She would have flung herself into the swift flowing water that she feared so much, but to her even deeper shame she found she lacked the courage to do so. She broke down, sobbing, holding her now alien face in her hands as she realized she still wanted to live. Even disfigured and a prisoner she wanted to survive. The thought crossed her mind that now she could never go back.

Jon would never want her now, even if he were alive. And she knew she could never face white society again, even if she lied about the fact she’d had carnal relations with a black savage. They would know. They would see her changed features and know she had capitulated to become one of them. It would make no difference that she had been forced. She would become like an old spinster, rejected and reviled- a permanent outcast among her own people.

Now the true enormity of hopeless loneliness engulfed her. She was truly alone. She could not go home to the world of her birth and she was terrified of the strange and seemingly hostile society of the Ahulu. She had no home and there was no escape from her fate now. Emily wept bitterly as the African sunset blazed bright and promising overhead. She felt an overwhelming self hatred- and loneliness.

Kotatu sat on a low chair in his hut, being tended by Namri and Negana. He had just returned from a reconnaissance trip to the south and was relaxing. Before him knelt Emily, silent and sullen.

He was astonished how beautiful she was, properly dressed and adorned as an Ahulu woman. Shorn now of the barbaric and unnatural rag clothing she had worn since capture, she seemed almost civilized, truly human in the same sense as a member of the clan. It was indeed a transformation, and though she sat rigid, eyes dull and hopeless, she now gave him at least the impression of a domesticated female, a real member of his household. He looked over to Negana and smiled, conveying his thanks and approval. Then he turned to study the white woman more intently.

The cumulative affect of close, braided hair; the thicker lips; the flattened, widened nose; and the slightly rounder and flatter face was to subtly change Emily’s

visage to a more Negroid appearance. To African eyes, this was a vast improvement. It did not impair her beauty or her strange, exotic quality, but it softened her sharp, alien, Caucasoid features and rendered her face more comely and familiar. The changes to her breasts and sex would further enhance her value and allure.

“You beautiful woman now,” said Kotatu to Emily.

She looked up at him uncomprehendingly. Her beauty was gone, she thought to herself, forever marred by the hand of a savage witch-woman.

Kotatu lay down on his side next to Emily and reached out to stroke her bare thigh, idly caressing her skin as if running his hands appreciatively over an exceptionally wrought spear or shield.

She stiffened at his touch. Not because he was black and savage, and not her husband, but because she felt herself ugly, defiled.

“What name you?” he asked, gently.

Oddly she recalled that he had not yet asked her that. It was as if she had possessed no identity in the weeks she had lived in his house. He’d had simple, mechanical sex with her before banishing her to swine pen, that was all. Now it seemed she was moving into the next step of her assimilation. But in her current state of mind she could not comprehend or consider what that meant.

“Em... Emily, she gasped. “Emily Robinson.”

He nodded. “Em MAHHH-lee,” he repeated, pronouncing it as two words. “Mah-lee,” he repeated. It was a fine name, similar to a common female name of his clan. He had no idea what the “Em” meant. Probably a prefix or title, denoting her old rank. He would drop it of course. Her previous station no longer applied. He did know, from his time with the missionary, that the last name “Rahh Been-son,” was a family name. It was given to a white wife by the white husband and was shared by them. There were undoubtedly binding spells and great power in it, so it was important to forbid her to speak it. Especially in his hut.

“Mah-lee only now,” he said waving his finger in warning. “No other name. You forget old husband. You belong Kotatu now. Say it.”

When she remained silent, but for a whimper of protest, he seized one of her nipples, pinching it agonizingly. He could brook no rebellion on this point.

“Say now. You belong- to Kotatu!”

“I... I belong to... to Kotatu...” she gasped.

He released her nipple, satisfied for the moment.

That night, Emily was not taken to sleep with the pigs. Released from her domestic exile she was allowed to share the communal hut with Kotatu and his two other women. But he did not make love to his new white woman. Emily’s period had started rendering her unclean for an Ahulu man. Noble-hearted and generous, Kotatu instead rewarded Negana for her magnificent work on his new slave girl Mahlee, plying the black woman slowly and exquisitely with his massive maleness, long into the night.

The white woman, confused and unsure now, even of her own name and identity, lay on the comfortable bed of skins beside them. She watched as the dark man of her dreams drove his great manhood into his second wife and saw how the young black woman melted in his embrace. She gazed at the power of his rut, the flexing of his buttocks and back as he plunged into her. Yet she blushed at her own need as it oozed into her vitals. And cursed herself bitterly for the depth of her own jealous arousal.

For the next week, Kotatu didn't touch her. But the eighth day dawned bright and clear, a break from the recent overcast of the rainy season. Emily, still confused and unsure about everything that was happening to her, made her way to the millet hut to grind the grain with the other women. She worked hard and efficiently, as she was learning to do day by day with the help of the mistress' switch.

Around mid-morning, she was told to go outside near the large water urns and help mixing the flour with water. Namri went with her.

The white girl was on her knees, kneading the dough when she looked into the adjacent courtyard. It was the home of the great Shaman, surrounded by panels of reeds to obscure the mysteries within. One of the panels had fallen however, and Emily could see inside.

In the shade of the hut, a huge black warrior was reclining on his back, his sinuous arms folded idly behind his head. He was naked and his ebony skin glistened with oil.

Kneeling between his legs was a small, pale-skinned woman, also naked but covered with numerous colorful and vivid tattoos. She was licking his proud manhood, running her tongue and lips avidly over the jet-black shaft and cupping his large testicles in her tiny white hands.

Emily had to stare for a few moments to comprehend the sight. It was Anne, but she was hardly recognizable. The girl Emily remembered as a chaste and loyal wife to a white, Christian minister was preparing to pleasure a man orally, a black savage who grinned down at her lewdly. She took the object into her mouth and Emily gasped as the shaft disappeared down her sheltered friend's throat.

Wide eye, she turned to Namri. "What... what have they done to her?"

Namri smiled. "She Kahini's slave girl now. He make her into fertility fetish, object of men's lust. He paint her body with symbols of power. Many men of the village come to get Shaman's power from her body. They pay Kahini well. He take their seed from her for potions."

As Emily watched, her previously innocent friend released the man from her mouth and slithered up the man's body. She squatted over him, straddled his hips, moved her crotch to his and raised her loins, taking his organ in her hands. She pumped him with her fist a few times, smiling into his face. Then she centered the head at her opening and slowly impaled herself, sinking onto the massive shaft.

Emily heard her gasp. "Puana!" she breathed urgently. "Puana miye kine, haware!"

Emily slowly shook her head with mixed horror and disbelief. "Fuck me!" Anne had said in Bantu. "Fuck me deep, lover."

"Kahini train her well, no?" said Namri, laughing. "She learn many Ahulu words, now. As you all learn."

Emily continued to knead the dough, but watched the provocative act as it unfolded before her. The former minister's wife seemed to have no reservation or inhibition about what she was doing. Her pelvis and abdomen swiveled and undulated, her hands clutching needfully at the man's chest. Anne was rushing to complete it now, bouncing up and down obscenely. She dug her toes into the mat beneath them and levered herself, rising and falling on her bare feet with a fast, hot cadence. Emily heard her babbling in blended English and Bantu, using obscene words in both languages.

Finally the man spasmed and bellowed. He seized her below the ribs and guided her movements, pulling her, slamming her onto his organ. At last he held her motionless and pushed himself up into her belly. Anne sighed and gurgled. Emily could tell she was

being filled with his essence. Then she collapsed onto his chest, clasping his body and kissing his face, whispering in his ear as though they were lovers.

Sara had been right, thought Emily, dolefully. But when she looked closer she could see heavy scars of the whip on her friend's back. Emily realized that Anne had been subjected to far more severe coercion than any of the other women.

"AAAhhhhgggg," Emily gasped. Namri had laced her breasts with the switch.

"Stop dreaming... work," she hissed. "Dough go to ovens at noon."

Emily went to draw more water. When she returned the couple were no longer visible through the hole.

A little later, Kotatu appeared. Now well trained and driven by fear of his whip, Emily was instantly on her knees before him, eyes down and head bowed in submission. He spoke with the woman in charge, she in turn spoke to Namri, who was working beside the white girl.

"Get up," she said abruptly. "Go with master."

"But where are we..."

"Not for you to ask," snapped the older black woman. "Go with master and obey him- like good Ahulu woman."

Emily left her work and padded over to Kotatu.

"You come," he gestured.

He took off without looking back, as if the white girl's obedience was not in question. He walked briskly and at his own pace, without the slightest regard to the white woman, who had to run at times to keep up. She had no doubt that he would not hesitate to use the short hide whip at his side if she straggled behind.

Emily considered the confident, dismissive way he treated her. To her western mind it seemed arrogant, yet there was no denying he was her master in deed and action. He had no self-doubts and no questions about his rightful ownership of her. He was so unlike Jon and the profound contrast invited her stressed mind to compare them once again.

For the first time she could think about the subject of their characters honestly, and Jon did not compare well. Beside Kotatu, he appeared indecisive, foolish and weak. And a new thought occurred to her- one that she had not dared to consider before now. She doubted whether Kotatu would have led his women into a place where they could be so easily captured and taken by another man.

"Ahhhhh..." she gasped at the sudden bite of the big black man's leather on her naked rear cheeks.

"Mah-lee keep up," he said firmly but evenly. The white girl whimpered and nodded, hurrying along behind. In seconds however, she was daydreaming again.

Why did she accept so meekly the name he called her? Certainly she was afraid to correct him, yet she found she liked to be called by the name he had given her and even accepted it in her own mind. "Mah-lee," she whispered, with self-indulgence. That's my name now. My Ahulu name. I am Mah-lee, Kotatu's woman.

She stopped herself, appalled by her own thoughts. But there was a definite tingle in her loins when she thought of herself dressed and treated as she was, walking submissively behind her black prince. But this was no masochistic, secret girlish fantasy. She was his woman, in his world. Here her marriage vows and upbringing, indeed her very pre-capture personality meant nothing.

"Mah-lee" she gasped to herself. She looked at the muscular black man who strode so confidently ahead of her, master of all he surveyed. She belonged to him now and she knew he would require her absolute surrender. The thought filled her with mixed

horror and arousal. And reminded her somehow of one more contrast between Jon and Kotatu. The black man's penis was much larger.

They went on for some ways upriver, past the areas commonly frequented by the tribe. At length Kotatu stopped along the shoreline, across from a small, rocky island. The river was swift here, spinning and eddying in turbulent convolutions over boulders and outcroppings in its path.

Kotatu took Emily by the hand.

"You come," he said gently, but firmly. He led her down to a stretch of open bank along the river. There was evidence of Ahulu civilization there; pottery, a fire pit and a few small, abandoned huts. But they were alone. It was a ritual cleansing area, upriver from where the cattle drank and the women washed clothing.

Kotatu shed his leopard skin cloak and his loin cloth. It was apparent that he wished to bathe with her so Emily removed her scant bead covering. Again he took her by the hand and led her out into stream.

She had thought he only intended to wade in the waist-deep shallows, but suddenly became alarmed when he started to lead her into the deep channel. Again, her unreasoning fear of water and drowning caused panic.

She began to try and pull back. "Please... master... I don't want to go in over my head... PLEASE!"

He gripped her tightly by the wrist. "We swim together to the rock," he said. "Perform ritual there."

"I can't... I can't swim!"

Kotatu looked at her incredulously. Ahulu learned to swim before they could walk and it was inconceivable that a woman her age would not have this basic skill, yet her trepidation seemed genuine. The whites must be backward indeed.

"You come," he insisted. "Kotatu help you."

Emily followed but the current became too powerful and her fear threatened to overpower her. "Please... master Kotatu... I... Ahhh... Please... I can't do it!"

He seized her shoulder and yanked her forward. Suddenly her footing was gone and she could not feel the bottom. She panicked again, thrashing and screaming in fear, on the verge of slipping under.

Then she felt his big, black hands on her arms, holding her, supporting her head above the surface.

"Please..." she gasped. "I'm afraid... Please... Go to the shore!"

"You hold onto Kotatu," he said calmly.

He swam out to the island with Emily desperately clinging to his sinuous neck, but he did not climb out of the water. Instead he floated to the downstream end of the rock, where the speeding current swirled and gurgled dangerously.

"Please... We'll drown in this!" cried Emily.

Despite his exertions, Kotatu smiled broadly, and the white girl lost a little of her fear. He was always so confident and calm, she thought.

The water, while not oppressively cold was still frigid enough to make her shiver. Just beyond the rock the two swimmers abruptly stopped in the stream and the young white woman was swung around, facing him. He was standing on the point of a submerged boulder, but Emily's legs could not reach it. She still floated free and had to cling to him in order to keep her head above the surface and avoid being swept away. So anxious and fearful of the water was she, that Emily failed to notice that the big black man had pushed his body between her legs and she had wrapped them about him. But the

tip of his prodigious manhood found the entrance to her sex and slipped slowly past her labia and into her depths.

UUUhhhhh... UUUhhhhhhh... she grunted huskily with the unexpected intrusion. He pumped his hips gently and worked the shaft all the way, until it bottomed out, kissing her cervix with its spongy glans.

Aside from being put off guard by the sudden penetration, the young white woman was also surprised when he smiled broadly, took her in his arms and pulled her tightly to his body. He brought his mouth to hers and crushed her lips with a feverish passion, inserting his tongue into her mouth with the same confidence and self-possession with which he had entered her vagina.

Emily whimpered, momentarily overwhelmed by both his presence and her fear of the water. But she did not dare to try to push him away. He had never shown the slightest animation while having intercourse with her. Despite the fact that she was always reduced, against her conscious will, to orgasmic ecstasy and exhaustion, he had always looked on with utter detachment. He had been interested only in the mere ritual of taking and possessing her. But now all that seemed to have changed.

She saw now had clever he had been in bringing her into the water. Here she had to cling to his body for safety and warmth and security. It was he alone who saved her from the deep water she so feared. Presently, he confirmed her thoughts by removing his comforting his supporting arms. She immediately brought up her own to cling submissively at his shoulders. She would drown if they were parted.

He laughed and she felt him flex his huge phallus. It was as if she were dangling from it as a lifeline, dependent on its rigid strength for her very next breath.

She watched his smoldering black eyes as he placed his hands behind his head as if relaxing. She held him tighter, contracting her vaginal muscles around him instinctively and locking her ankles behind his buttocks. She gasped in terror when he took hold of her slender neck and began to push her away.

What was he doing! Would he let her go? Pry her loose to be swept off by the current and die? Then she caught the glint of lust in his eyes and knew. This was a sexual act. She was being given the choice of life impaled on his black penis, and a lonely elemental death beneath the river's frigid waves. But would he really push her away if she did not perform, if she failed to please him? Suddenly something snapped within her mind. The very terror of drowning, the dread of death and suffocation in the cold, swirling depths of this African river seemed to lend its power to her need. A stab of bright pleasure shot through her loins and a powerful orgasm rippled through her guts. The mere realization of her absolute dependence on him filled her brain and belly with a masochistic tempest and sent her over the edge.

“Aaahh uuugghh uugghhhh UUUUHHHHH AAAHHHHHHH!  
AAHHHHGGGGGGGGG!”

Seconds later she came back to reality. The sharp, unexpected orgasm reverberating in her gut, she still clutched to him and his penis remained rock hard in her belly. He was laughing at her again but was now grasping her possessively by the hips.

“Please...” she gasped. “Don't let me go... Take me... Take me- master.”

“You're a beautiful woman now,” he said in Ahulu. “Fit to be among us. But you must learn your place. You must learn devotion to me and all the Ahulu people. You are Ahulu now- you must practice our civilized ways.”

The white girl understood only a few words of what he said. But his tone told her that she was safe. Yet there was a debt to pay, a carnal price for the protection of his strength. Even now she was summoning her will to pay it.

She clung to him even stronger, driving her bare heels into him even as she felt his hands on her hips pull her tighter onto his organ. Now he began to rut rhythmically into her, gently at first, but slowly building in speed and intensity.

He was kissing her once again and this time she was returning it. She wondered if he could get enough friction. They were in the water and there was nothing to push her against. But he was so strong that his arms held her fast as he thrust himself into her.

“HHHHHHHGGGGGGG,” He was bellowing now as his passion broke. Emily nearly swooned again with a feeling of total helplessness and vulnerability. It culminated with the hot splash of his sperm, straight into her womb, contrasting acutely with the cool water that swirled about her. Emily fell headlong into her own orgasm, even more powerful than the one moments before. Lost in time and space she seemed to float through eternal joy, held to temporal existence only by his mouth, his body, and his mind-numbing, satisfying penis.

When she had caught her breath he was climbing out of the water, still holding her impaled on his manhood. His strength allowed him to carry her easily and her took her up onto the island. There, in a soft bed of moss he laid her back and pressed his great form onto her. He had not lost his erection and Emily accepted him eagerly as once again his stiff maleness plunged into her belly.

It took a long time. Kotatu was an Ahulu male and they were renown for their potency and stamina. Emily endured the sweet torment of orgasm after orgasm, yet he never seemed to tire. When he flooded himself into her again it was to Emily as though her very spirit lay in her belly, drenched with his copious seed. She had never felt anything like this with her white husband.

Kotatu finally turned them both on their sides, spent for the moment. He rested for several minutes, but he held his slave woman in place, not allowing her loins to separate from his or his member to be drawn from her. He dozed a little relaxing on the warm moss.

Emily’s thoughts turned inward. She knew her heart was captive now, not just her body. As the days and nights had passed the memory of her former life and culture, even her will to escape was fading utterly. The anticipation and hope of rescue which had sustained her troubled mind had proved to be in vain.

Emily felt her old identity dying. He was killing it slowly, vanquishing it with the most formidable weapon of all. The magnificent ebony spear between his legs. The will to withstand assimilation into the Ahulu society and customs was succumbing also. Indeed, she felt futility, almost shame in the idea of further resistance.

Emily gazed at his sleeping form, the black body that she was still connected to. She realized for the first time just how handsome and desirable he was. He was truly built like a god.

She felt him stir, his eyes fluttered and the huge black member began swelling inside her once more. Still on their sides he plied her again, slowly and languidly now. There were no words spoken, but a kind of communion subsisted between them until Emily could stand it no more. She rolled onto him, her strength charged with female instinct. Straddling his hips with his length still inside her, she placed her arms at his chest and began to rut.

Something had been freed in Emily. Something buried and hidden all her life under the façade of a chaste, Victorian girl. It gained a voice for the first time as she began grunting and crying with carnal lust. She worked herself to a frenzy, thrashing and humping, building to convulsive a climax. Kotatu watched, holding himself still and amused as she screamed and bucked with her bestial need.

Her master smiled. He had surmised that the white women would be sexually wild and animalistic because of their barbaric, primitive breed. He was not disappointed in this woman, who despite now being dressed and inculcated into the civilized life and culture of the Ahulu, still retained her feral, white proclivities. She was still an animal at her core, as were all the whites. But he was man enough to tame her.

He did not ejaculate, but let her work herself to exhaustion on his stiff cock. When she at last fell limp on his torso he pulled himself from her and placed her on her knees. Then he re-entered her from behind and continued to work her slowly with long, deep thrusts of his lance. The cycle started again. Emily would build and release with orgasmic radiance, then calm and relax and settle again. She screamed out more climaxes as she bit into the moss, pressing herself back on his rock hard manhood.

More than three hours later as the sun sank low, he picked her up and pushed her back into the warm, hard surface, higher on the rock. It was slanted at about 45 degrees and seemed perfectly shaped. It held her, unyieldingly and solid while he bore into her with fitting violence to finish their all-consuming mating. His powerful strength and weight almost crushed her, yet even this added to the maniacal ecstasy that swirled through her body and mind.

Emily begged, conveying her craving for his seed with her clasping hands and heels, and a muffled scream into his open mouth. She felt him stiffen, felt his lust bloated testicles jerk, then the torrential flood of his semen as he poured his liquid essence into her desperately receptive womb. The white woman went rigid with sensation as each successive spurt triggered and sustained the most powerful orgasmic waves she had yet felt. She cried and churned and clutched- and fell headlong into an abyss of eternal light.

When her consciousness returned they were lying in the moss bed. She was sighing, her head lay inertly on his chest and his thickness was gone from her. In its place a pool of his fecund seed trickled and simmered in her belly, a comforting reminder of his presence.

It was after dark. They swam back with Emily clinging to Kotatu's neck. Kotatu started a small fire and they curled beneath another protective formation of river carved stone. Kotatu placed his cloak on them and they slept.

In the early morning her took her again. Fast and simple this time, but nonetheless thrilling for Emily. When they were finished she closed her stretched labia with her fingers, trying not to lose even a drop of his precious seed.

On the long walk to the village he traveled slower, often turning back to kiss her, or stroke her breasts or vulva, Ahulu tokens of affection. Emily craved his attentions and sighed with each caress.

All thoughts of Jon and England, white religion and culture, indeed her very identity had been driven from her mind and soul on that little island. When she returned to the kraal with Kotatu the next morning she was Mahlee, his obedient and loyal Ahulu woman. Proud to be seen with him- and wondering with mixed joy and apprehension whether she was carrying his child.

## Chapter 9

Weeks and months are fleeting moments to an ancient culture. The Ahulu, unlike the comparatively young and transient societies of the West, were mature. Their mores, traditions and cultural consciousness were the product of thousands of years of slow development.

For the white women however, the ensuing weeks and months of their lives within the Ahulu society brought comparatively rapid changes in attitude, outlook and behavior.

Kotatu continued to enjoy Mahlee carnally on a regular basis, as the other black masters enjoyed their white slaves. Her heart changed, turning a little with each night of sexual joy that she shared with her master. Gradually the expectation of rescue by white men and return to their world faded. Then hope failed and finally even the desire to return died.

Mahlee had lived with the Ahulu for nearly three months when she missed her period. Negana examined her and informed Kotatu that his white slave girl was with child.

When Kotatu learned of Mahlee's condition, he brought her out of the hut and performed a symbolic ritual that at first baffled and frightened her.

He took her to the open area near the center of the Kraal. Many men of the tribe surrounded them, some sitting on logs about the communal fire. Their faces were expressionless, as if they were witnessing some solemn event.

Kotatu took Mahlee's only covering, the little leather cord and bead drop that hung in front of her sex. He ordered her to kneel with her rear cheeks high in the air and her face in the dust. Mahlee did so without question. Partially because she had learned obedience over the previous weeks- and because of the short pig-whip he held.

"This woman was of another tribe," he recited in Bantu, as if making a proscribed speech. "I have taken her from her mate among our enemies. She is mine and I have broken her to my hut according to our sacred rites. She now bears an Ahulu child and is now henceforth and forever Ahulu."

There was loud shouting and agitating from the assembled men, as if celebrating victory after a battle. Then Kotatu spoke again.

"I share this woman with my brother Ahulu. Let her now learn submission to all in the village. This is the fate of the enemies of the Ahulu. The corpses of their men will fertilize our pastures even as we fertilize their women."

There was another shout of acclamation from the men. Then Kotatu put his foot on Mahlee's neck, pinning her face to the ground. She heard the swish of the whip as he brought it down hard her back and she screamed with shock and pain.

"AAAAHHHHGGG... please, I'll do what you want!" she shouted in English. He delivered several more blows, each causing the white woman to scream and beg for mercy. When Mahlee's back was crossed with red stripes he took firm hold of her neck and pulled her up on her knees. She reacted as compliant as she could, hoping to convey her submission and so escape further punishment. She knew however, that this was a mandatory ritual and that Kotatu was not striking her as hard as he could.

Nonetheless, the white girl was whimpering and pleading softly as he led her, crawling on her knees to one of the assembled warriors. Kotatu held her head back by the

hair and proceeded to deliver three sharp lashes to her chest. She squealed in agony, as her breasts were swollen and sensitive with her pregnancy.

“This man has killed the most white men. This woman will worship him to show her devotion to the Ahulu man.”

He thrust Mahlee’s face between the man’s spread legs. She knew what was required and dared not show the slightest resistance. She took the man’s hard length into her mouth, sucking and swirling her tongue just as her master had taught her. The man responded, growing throbbing and erect in her mouth and throat as she fought to breathe.

He was not as gentle as Kotatu, holding her head in his hands pumping himself onto her face. But he did not hurt her and soon rewarded the slave girl with several prodigious spurts of semen, which she struggled to swallow.

When he was finished, anxious to show her pliancy, she cleaned him carefully with her lips and tongue then leaned back on her heels and sighed. Kotatu grasped her by the neck and led her to the next man, watching as she performed for him as well. By the time the ceremony was over she had pleased over twenty men with her mouth and her belly was full of their raw seed.

It was the start of new facet to Mahlee’s life among the Ahulu. From that day forward she was available sexually and physically to every male in the village until she was ready to deliver her child. She was very frequently used by young boys and older men who did not have women of their own, at least three or four times a day and often many more. But she was still recognized as Kotatu’s woman and spent each night in his hut.

At first the white girl was miserable. Her Western morality was deeply ashamed by such profligate use of her body. Moreover, she now thought of herself as Kotatu’s woman and couldn’t understand why he would share her. But the inhibitions evaporated quickly, like clouds in the African summer sky. Kotatu obviously approved, and Mahlee began to relax. To her surprise, she found she liked being a whore to other men of the village. Kotatu heard the reports of her performance with his friends and was pleased. Her lusty warmth made her a favorite among males of all ages. She was happy, and after a few weeks Mahlee had to admit that Ahulu had a superior society, at least in terms of sexual mores.

In other ways also, Mahlee was struck by the depth and sophistication of the Ahulu way of life, and its superiority to the culture of her birth. She had been astonished at Negana’s skill and knowledge at being able to confirm her pregnancy at such an early stage. As the months progressed, She would learn about the vast medical and herbal lore of the Ahulu. Few of the clan were ever sick. They had treatments and remedies that stopped infections, alleviated pain, and helped heal injuries. Their care for pregnant women and infants was far advanced of any to be found in the surrounding tribes or in Europe. The Ahulu had more advanced medicine, land navigation and survival skills, and better societal organization. They lived in harmony with the land and with their own bodies.

Mahlee learned more about the Ahulu every day. She grew used to bathing once or even twice daily- with cleansing and soothing spells, enhanced with soaps and lotions, something unheard of to Europeans. The white girl quickly learned to enjoy being clean.

She ate better and fresher food, exercised and spent time in the sun and open air. As she grew used to the work she was required to perform she found it was not a burden. The Ahulu were lovers of life and there were many hours of leisure, even for the lowest slave girls of the village.

Mahlee at last became convinced of the superiority of the Ahulu over the stiff, repressive European society she had grown up in. Ahulu society was more open and friendly. People were not ashamed of their bodies, and Mahlee grew comfortable with her near nudity. It felt so natural to go about daily with only the little bead drop to hide her sex. In time it seemed strange that she had once covered her breasts and legs and rear cheeks from others. She felt the trust and security of belonging to the Ahulu and displaying her physical charms. Among these enlightened people, relationships were far healthier and deeper than those she had known in England. This was especially true in the area of sexual activity.

There was no guilt connected to sex and the free expression of it made the Ahulu people happier and more open. Women were subject to the wishes of their husbands or masters, but Ahulu men were generous and passionate beneath their warrior-like exteriors. The Ahulu had rejected the notion of sexual sin, observing only a few traditions to govern sexual expression.

Males could not marry until they were 30, and had killed at least ten enemy warriors in battle. This did not mean they had no sexual outlet. They could own captured women or slaves. They often also shared the wives or slave girls owned by another man, provided that she was already expecting a child.

Tradition held that a woman who was not pregnant was kept closely by her men, so that the paternity of the baby was known. After a woman was confirmed with child however, she was shared liberally with the other males of the village and even at times with neighboring friendly clans or traders.

There were two tiers of relationship for women. Every adult female in the clan was owned or married. All were subject to the sexual authority of their men. Any disobedience to him was considered infidelity. Thus a woman who refused sex to her man, or another male of his designation was guilty of a sexual offense and would be punished, usually with a severe whipping.

Once an Ahulu woman was married, she was bound to her husband for life. He could divorce her at any time or share her with anyone he chose. Married females however, did possess some rights, while slaves had none.

As the months passed, Mahlee assimilated with less and less resistance. Her very identity was evolving and she was beginning to change not only her attitudes, but her core beliefs and views as well.

Mahlee could see the transformation in the other white women also. Martha and Hannah had also become pregnant and had gone through the same bizarre ritual of being offered to the rest of the tribe. They were learning to work, live- and love, as Ahulu women. They never saw Anne anymore, though they would often hear her voice ringing from the Shaman's hut with the sounds of passion or punishment.

Only Sara stubbornly declined to respond to her man or learn anything of the Ahulu ways. She refused to wear proper clothing, clinging to the filthy rag for many weeks. Her exasperated warrior had finally to beat her and strip it from her. She still attempted to cover her breasts, even in her man's hut. She was whipped continually for this unseemly habit and embarrassment to her man, but the disobedience continued. She refused to practice speaking the language of her captors.

Each day Sara sullenly sat down to work with the other white women, her fiery red hair matched by the teaming red welts on her skin. She was not yet pregnant, and this too was a source of embarrassment to her man.

Then it was discovered that Sara had been taking a contraceptive made from a local root. One of the black wives was jealous of her red hair and did not want her to conceive. She gave Sara the drug and the red haired woman eagerly took it.

When her master found out her was enraged by the barbaric and rebellious act against his good seed. He whipped Sara almost unconscious and took her on her hands and knees, brutally and often. But still, somehow, she failed to conceive.

Emily and the other white girls felt sorry for Sara and tried to get her to face reality, but her disdain for them grew until they rarely talked. Finally she was estranged, even from them. She spent her days alone, working relentlessly grinding the millet. At night she returned to the hut to lay cold and unresponding beneath a man she hated.

Maa-Thaa, Haa-Nah, and Mahlee, however, (as they were called now, even, increasingly, by each other) continued assimilating fully into the Ahulu society. They were learning Ahulu-Bantu, though they still sounded strange and foreign with their English accents. Their masters however, seemed charmed by their stilted tongues and often mocked them in a good-natured way.

The whites were becoming increasingly competent in the work Ahulu women of low rank were expected to perform. They rarely needed to be whipped for poor performance now.

With the exception of Sara, all the white girls had almost entirely lost any modesty or shame in their near nudity. It was less strange all the time to be wearing only a few strings of beads over one's sex. Their bare breasts and rear cheeks had ceased to bother them.

Mahlee noted that it was the two younger girls who appeared to be making the fastest progress. Because of their tender ages they were more adaptable. They had been virgins, having never known the carnal touch of a white man. Their black masters had delighted in teaching them to respond sexually to a man. They were learning eagerly now and did not have to unlearn any sexually repressive ideas or inhibitions they would have been subjected to in a white, Christian culture.

They also appeared to be the happiest, giggling and smiling constantly. Mahlee observed that they hurried home to their master's huts each night and returned bubbly and radiant each day.

But even though life was turning out far better than she could ever have hoped, Mahlee was still worried about one thing. She had not seen or heard of Anne since she had watched her friend through the gap in the Shaman's fence months before.

## Chapter 10

Mahlee closed her eyes and sighed, reaching down to caress her bloated abdomen below the navel. The baby kicked at that moment, causing Mahlee to catch her breath. Kotatu's child, she thought! Once the prospect filled her with dread and shame, but as the time for birth approached, Mahlee thought about how all that had changed.

She loved the great black man now, of that she was sure. Perhaps she had first loved him when he had appeared in her dreams as she slept in Jon's bed. Or maybe after the first night in his hut. But he owned her now; mind and soul as well as body. He had taken her from her white husband and her old life, just as the Ahulu took whatever they needed from the lessor, black tribes around them. In his savage way, Kotatu had made her love him, searing away her marriage to a white male and any desire to escape in the fire of his lust. Now he claimed her totally with a binding tie far stronger than any ring or wedding vows exchanged with Jon. A baby!

It had finally changed everything. As Kotatu's seed grew and filled Mahlee's belly, so her love of him grew and filled her heart. Her black master would be with her always now as his flesh and blood thrived in her belly; and she would hold it to her breast after she had delivered. Now the time was short.

That evening, after Mahlee had finished grinding the maize for the night's meal, she felt her labor begin. She was taken to a corner of the hut where Kotatu's other women had prepared an odd assortment of implements and herbs.

Mahlee was going to birth her child in the traditional position for Ahulu women. She was stripped of her beads and made to kneel. Then she was pushed forward until her belly rested on a polished leather hammock and her shoulders were suspended comfortably. Her ankles were bound with hide ropes and her legs spread and fastened securely to two of the hut's posts. Then she was helped into a squat. She was a little frightened, but Negana was there to soothe her. So were Haa-Nah and Maa-Thaa, who were roundly pregnant themselves.

The white woman gasped as the contractions overtook her, but Negana silenced her by placing a hand gently over her mouth. Mahlee understood and went silent. She trusted the black shamaness.

Negana mixed one of her concoctions in a wooden bowl and gave it to Mahlee to drink. It eased the pain of her contractions and seemed to ease the passage of the child. But still the pangs made the young white woman cry out, grunting inelegantly.

"Uuuunnnngggggg."

"You strong woman with good Ahulu seed," said Namri sternly. She disapproved of weakness, but took some oily salve and spread it onto Mahlee's soon to be stretched labia.

"UUUUNNNGGG... UUUUNNNGGGGHHHH," cried Mahlee. The baby was moving into in the birth canal and she could feel Negana's practiced hands gently spreading her vulva.

"Be brave, Mahlee," said Haa-Nah.

The minutes went by as the white girl grunted and moaned, digging her toes into reed mat on the floor. All the while the child was slowly moving downward. Finally, Mahlee's dark, red vaginal lips parted and the baby's dark head appeared.

"UUUUGGGGG... AAAGGGGGHHHH... Oh god! UUUUUUGGGGGHHHH!" Somehow she knew it was a boy. He was big, thought

Mahlee. And like his father he pushed aside the walls of her vagina, caring nothing for her gasps of pain and fullness. Inexplicably, she thought about her black master and when he had taken her from behind in this exact position. Now that potent essence from his testicles was about to spew forth, a living, throbbing proof of her capitulation and new identity. She was an Ahulu mother now.

“Push,” yelled Namri firmly.

“AAAAAGGGHHH.”

“PUSH... It is your master’s child! PUSH, YOU SOW!”

“AAAAAAAAAAUUUUUUUGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHHH...” screamed Mahlee through clinched teeth.

The infant’s head cleared and its shoulders appeared. Mahlee gave another agonizing heave and the deed was done. The seed of Kotatu she had carried for nine months oozed out onto Negana’s waiting hands.

One last contraction and the afterbirth gushed out as well. Mahlee pitched forward, sobbing with exhaustion. She listened as the baby’s shrill squalling announced his first breath. Namri took him, still drenched in his mother’s water, to Kotatu who stood outside. He gave a shout of triumph, echoed by scores in the surrounding huts.

Mahlee panted softly, still squatting on her haunches. Her breasts were full and bloated, uncomfortable against the leather birthing rack. Namri came and cleaned her, saving parts of the afterbirth for fetishes.

She released Mahlee from her ankle bonds and Namri returned with the child. Mother lay down on the sleeping mat and Negana placed the squalling black-skinned baby at her breast. It quieted and began to suckle immediately and Mahlee saw that she had indeed borne a boy.

“A fine Ahulu warrior,” said Negana proudly in Bantu. “The first of many Kotatu fill you with!”

The once a chaste, white Christian wife sighed. The circle was complete. This little black child was of her flesh, joining her forever to Kotatu. She was wholly Ahulu now. She drifted off to sleep knowing that Negana was right. This was the first of many sons that her master would plant in her womb.

## Chapter 11

Kotatu named the boy Kota-Ammi. Mahlee called him Ammi. He was healthy and strong and grew fast on his mother's milk. After a few months Negana also had a child. Ammi was given to her to nurse while Mahlee returned to sleep with Kotatu. The sounds of their joy and passion filled the hut as the Mahlee worked hard to conceive another son.

Haa-Nah and Maa-Thaa had their babies as well. They were completely adjusted to life among the Ahulu now and were distinguishable only by their light eyes, Caucasian faces and golden skins. Only Sara continued alienated and miserable, to resist her captors.

One day there was great excitement in the kraal. An Arab caravan was headed to the village and the chief ordered a feast to be held. Mahlee and the two younger girls were ecstatic. They loved the dances and festivities. Helping to prepare the food they giggled and played with the other women, gleefully anticipating the night's revelry.

The Arab traders arrived at dusk and soon the drums of celebration had begun. The joyous shouts and hoots that Mahlee had once found so savage and barbaric she now understood. She chanted with the other women the shaman's spells that accompanied the dance, and the rhythmic, pounding beat of the drums seemed to bludgeon its way into her sexual soul.

Mahlee watched Haa-Nah and Maa-Thaa dance among the rest of the women. Over the preceding months, the lithe young white girls had mastered the complicated moves of the dance, now moved as skillfully as the Ahulu girls. This part of the dance was not blatantly sexual, but the liquid grace of their slender, nearly naked bodies turned the thoughts of all who watched them to mysteries of carnal power.

The girls moved from side to side with steps matched to the heathen rhythm, shuffling their bare feet in the dust and undulating their nubile hips and arms. Breasts jiggled provocatively, though not with the coital bounce of the mating dance. Mahlee admired the toning of the girl's muscles, conditioned by the dancing and the work of the clan. Mahlee looked just inside the door of one of the huts and saw Sara. She had wondered if the red-haired girl would finally loosen her foolish Western morality and join the fun. But alas, the lonely girl saw sullen and sulking in the shadows.

The next dance was sexual, and because of the exceptional beauty of the girls, black and white, the visiting Arabs gazed on with drooling lust. They seemed to be ogling the white girls in particular.

Bolstered by a superior diet and rigorous exercise, they had become sleek and fit, their bodies trim and hard. Their skins turned golden under Africa's sovereign sun, free of tan lines, save for the tiny, depilated pubic area under their beads. This patch of soft pale flesh they presented to their masters every night as a token of their modest English past. It was seen and pierced and possessed, by a rampant, black manhood.

Once delicate, Victorian young women, now earthy and bucolic; like the Ahulu themselves, free in life and in love.

Mahlee also watched the dancers with rapt attention. She envied the relative ease in which the younger, unmarried girls had adapted to the culture and ways of the Ahulu, becoming in so short a time fully integrated into their new culture. It had been harder for Mahlee and Sara. They were older and more ingrained in the ways of their European origins. But Mahlee herself was now almost totally adapted to her new life. Because of

her baby and her devotion to Kotatu she was nearly sundered from her old identity- the woman who had once been Emily Robinson.

The realization no longer frightened or repelled her. She respected, even loved the Ahulu culture and people now, even as she had accepted herself as Kotatu's woman. She had lost any resistance to the complete change of identity, save ironically a feeling that she was unworthy of the magnificent African people.

Suddenly the drum beat ended and the great shaman stepped before the chief. He bowed, then made an announcement in Bantu. Mahlee was becoming more fluent in the language of her new people and could understand what he was saying now. Kneeling at her place beside Kotatu, she could see close up what was about to happen.

"Great chief," boomed the shaman. "You and all the village know that I have taken one of the white sows to my hut. You all know that I, your mediator with the gods, do not take a wife. But I have trained this human-like animal to please the gods and myself. I have fixed the most powerful pleasure and fertility spells onto her flesh and created her as a fetish of our deities. They are pleased and wish me to present her to you."

The chief nodded his assent and the priest clapped his hands. Instantly a small female figure burst from the shaman's hut. She ran fleetingly to her master's feet and squatted beside him like an obedient, trained monkey. She was strange. At first glance it was hard to tell if she was clothed or painted. As soon as she was still, Mahlee could see that she was indeed naked, but that nearly her entire body had been tattooed. Her flesh gleamed; coated with oil it gave scintillation and depth to the tattoos and seemed to bring them to life.

Mahlee could see that only the hands and feet, as well as the face of the woman had been left untouched by the tattooist's art. Her unpainted flesh was almost snow-white and her face was heart-shaped and lovely, in an alien way. She was white! With extreme shock, Mahlee realized that the artfully defiled creature must of course be her friend Anne, whom she had not seen in nearly a year. The transformation of the girl's flesh and demeanor had been so complete that she had for a moment, failed to recognize her.

The shaman clapped his hands once again and the drums began a wild, heated beat. Mahlee drew a sharp breath. Anne was going to dance again! Her mind raced back to the first time she had seen the girl dance. At that time, Mahlee had been appalled. Now she was excited to the core. Anne, her once sweet and innocent friend was tattooed from neck to ankle with pagan art- and she was going to dance!

This time there was not a shred of hesitancy or modesty about the girl. She danced as the Ahulu, but with far more skill than the other women. She jumped and swiveled, fast yet with incredible grace and fluidity right from the start. Mahlee looked on in wonder, remembering the shy, demure girl who had been the faithful wife a minister so seemingly long ago.

The drums continued relentlessly and the girl danced. Mahlee watched the faces of the Ahulu men and saw the lust in their grins. The women of the village stared as well; some in awe of the girl's perfect movement and others jealous of her radiant eroticism.

Mahlee tried to catch Anne's eye, but she seemed almost oblivious to the throng surrounding her. She moved and writhed, holding her hands above her head now like a belly dancer. This was not in the Ahulu style but obviously calculated to appeal to the Arab guests who would trade with the natives the next day. They too were leering and licking their lips.

The exhibition went on for over a half-hour with Anne stepping and churning tirelessly. Mahlee marveled at her stamina. She must have been trained for months to dance at such length with such perfection. The beat became faster and Mahlee watched as

the girl's bare feet kicked up little plumes of dust. She was gasping and groaning as if working herself into an orgasmic state. The drum cadence became frenzied and Anne stood, her legs fixed wide apart. She humped her hips into the warm evening air, mimicking the motions of intercourse and plunged both hands to her crotch. Her fingers spread her lips and delved deeply as she screamed with autoerotic fever. Suddenly the drums stopped and she bent over, panting.

The shaman whistled, just as the Ahulu called their pigs. The white woman ran and squatted beside him, awash with sweat and drooling copiously between her legs.

The festivities continued and another communal dance ensued. Both Kotatu and the shaman had gone to the chief's hut to discuss some matter of policy. Anne rested and breathed heavily, trying to catch her wind. Mahlee saw a chance to talk to her.

She walked over and squatted beside her. Oddly Anne did not greet her, but gazed straight ahead.

"A... Anne?" she whispered, in English.

Mahlee's voice seemed to break the trance and Anne turned to look at her. Mahlee was relieved to see the recognition and the old, friendly smile on her friend's face. Perhaps there was something of her pre-capture personality left.

"Emily? Emily, I'm so glad to see you!" Anne gushed in Bantu. She was obviously gratified to see her old friend, yet when Mahlee made to embrace her she shrunk back.

"Anne... Won't you talk to me?" asked Mahlee in English.

"I must not speak in that profane language," whispered Anne in perfect Bantu. "It will desecrate the spells my master has placed on me and anger the gods."

"I speak the civilized language as well," replied Mahlee in Bantu, though she still had the English accent.

"I... I can touch no one without my master's permission," said Anne. "I must obey his very thoughts. I am called Inglube, not Anne."

"Can you talk with me for a while?" asked Mahlee.

"If the gods do not disapprove, and I sense no displeasure from my master."

"Why... why have you been kept apart from us?"

"I've been made into a fetish," said Inglube proudly. "My master is the greatest priest of the gods. He has trained me as his fetish/whore."

"A... a fetish whore?"

"My body is now a sexual fetish of the Ahulu gods. I exist to delight their worshippers." She stood and drew her hands behind her head, spreading herself to display the intricate work on her flesh. It was colorfully and masterfully done. There were lines and geometric designs, all African motifs and done in traditional style. There were also very life-like human images, all of which were engaged in some form of sexual activity. The artist seemed to abhor a vacuum, and had tattooed every square inch of the girl's skin, save her hands, feet and face, which were fair as the day she was captured. Her skin had been particularly prized by the shaman because the whiteness of her skin showed the color of the tattoos so well.

Inglube turned and Mahlee caught her breath. There were long scars laced up and down the length of her back, placed there by multiple whippings of unspeakable brutality. Mahlee remembered the girl's screams and wondered how any woman could live through such pain.

Inglube seemed to read her thoughts and said, "That is how my master showed his love for me, his need to bend me to his will. He knew I had been married. I was rebellious at first and would not say the incantations to divorce myself from Matthew,

because I did not know if he was alive. Such a little fool I was,” she whispered. “Later I begged my master to teach me the incantations, but I had to earn every word with lashes from his hippo-hide whip. The spells are long.”

Mahlee could see that the scars had been tattooed with colors, red, yellow and blue, to outline and accentuate them. Now the girl regarded them as marks of penance. “I belong to my master and no other man. My marriage to a white man was an abomination to the gods and I had to be cleansed of it.”

“Do you... do you ever think of Matthew now?” asked Mahlee with curiosity.

“Only to curse him before the gods. The great priest is the lord and master of my body now.”

“What... What else did the shaman do to you?” asked Mahlee, breathlessly.

The girl answered, her voice full of love and reverence. “He is my master and my god. He taught me to think and dance and worship his gods. The men of the Ahulu fill me to the brim with their offerings, and he uses their seed in his medicines. He is my master and I obey him with all my heart and mind!”

As Inglube talked with Mahlee, she shared the details of her life as the shaman’s slave. “My master takes the seed from my belly with a long spoon,” she giggled. “It used to hurt, but I’ve grown used to it now. A man’s seed is powerful with his essence. My master can make it into many potions.”

“I have done the puana many times with every man of the clan,” said Inglube with an impish smile. Tonight I will do the puana with the Arab men, and capture their essence for my master. He will have power over them!”

Inglube went on to describe to Mahlee the year she had spent in the shaman’s hut. Through nightly whippings, horrendous physical discipline and mind-altering drugs he had broken her completely. Mahlee had though long ago that Anne would forever hate the huge black priest who had tormented her for endless nights- but he had stripped the freedom of hate from her- she was now devoted to him utterly.

“I love him!” said Inglube. “It’s true, he forced me to love him. But I love him all the more for it! Oh Emily, I could never live without him; his touch... His strength... His whip! I love him so much!”

Inglube brought her hands to her labia and began to masturbate openly. Mahlee could see the girl had been so ingrained and indoctrinated with the being and power of the shaman that simply to think about him caused her to roil with sexual heat and desire. In seconds she was climaxing.

“Ahh, aahhhh, ahhhhhh, ahhhhhhhh... Master... Hhhhaaaaaaa...”

Once again the girl was in a trance, and Mahlee could speak no more to her. She quietly slipped away.

Before her own assimilation, Mahlee would have been horrified by the fate of her friend. But now, having herself become Ahulu, she understood what a great honor had been bestowed on the girl. She was a sexual tool of the Ahulu religion, at once sacred and profane, defiled and adorned. And she was happy.

Mahlee stood. It was time for her to join the dance and her vagina was dripping with thoughts of Anne, and the knowledge that Kotatu would be watching. She ran to the circle and began to jump and dance as lubricously as the other women, reveling in the freedom of being female- and Ahulu!

Early the next morning, as Mahlee knelt, happily suckling her infant in her master’s hut, she was astonished to hear female screaming and hysterical pounding at the door. Mahlee went to open it, still holding the hungry child to her breast.

It was Sara, in a state of panic. She and Mahlee had not talked for months, but the stubborn girl's eyes flashed with genuine terror and Mahlee felt a wave of compassion for her.

The red-haired girl was filthy and the stench of her body was overwhelming. She had refused to bathe, considering it a concession to the natives and even now wore only a tiny strip of cloth, discarded by one of the high ranking Ahulu women. It hung, fetid and foul at her hips, almost the same color as her tan flesh.

"Please Emily... You've got to help me... Speak to your master, please! Please ask him to talk to my master!"

"What's wrong... What's happened, Sara?"

"I'm to be sold!" she whimpered. "To that group of Arab traders. My master is selling me to them!"

"But... you don't like it here," interjected Mahlee. "You've said many times you'd give anything to escape."

"I want to go back to England!" whined Sara. "But I heard them talking. The Arabs are going to take me to a brothel on the coast. My master says it's the best thing for me since I'm so cold to him. Oh what a fool I've been!"

"Don't know how I can help," said Mahlee. "Kotatu won't interfere."

"Oh please, Emily. I'll do anything. I'll become Ahulu like you and the others. Please..." she added with a whisper. "Do you know what those Arabs do to women in those houses? They castrate them! Oh god, Emily, please help me!"

Mahlee tried to calm the recalcitrant woman, but she knew she could do little for her.

Minutes later Sara's master found her, seized her by her matted red hair and dragged her off as she screamed.

"Oh please, master, please... Let me stay... I'll do whatever you want... Please don't sell me to them." The black man was having none of it and pulled her roughly along.

The last the Mahlee saw of her she was cuffed in chains to a group of black female slaves, still wailing and begging to stay. As the greasy-looking Arabs led her off they laughed, lashing her buttocks several times with their whips and making obscene gestures to indicate her fate. Mahlee listened to her disconsolate sobbing as it slowly faded with distance. Then she returned to her work, thankful that she'd had the sense to please her master and assimilate into the superior life of the Ahulu.

The final insult was that Sara's erstwhile master bought twelve pigs with the metal he had received in exchange for her. They were better company, he said.

## Chapter 12

After the Arab caravan left the village, life returned to normal. Days passed and the remaining white women lived and loved as Ahulu, under the splendor of the African sun.

Before the rainy season that year, Kotatu sent out more raiding parties. Settlers were beginning to encroach again and he was eager to capture more cattle, firearms and women.

One day, one of the parties returned. There was great excitement in the village and Mahlee saw many people gathered in the central courtyard before the chief's hut. Two white settlers, a man and a woman were being whipped into the kraal.

Mahlee gasped with delight. She had been hoping the Ahulu would capture more white women.

Mahlee saw that the couple were very young, the male little more than a boy. They were panting with exhaustion and shaking with terror. They fell to their knees without being told when the chief emerged from his residence.

M'Kunta, the mighty warrior who had sold the stubborn and ill-fated Sara, had led the raid. He approached the chief and bowed, then rose before the ruler to converse with him in private. The chief's advisors, Kotatu and the shaman, were also there. In a few moments Kotatu stood, addressing the crowd.

These whites have invaded the boundaries of our territory to claim it as their own. The chief will decide if the man will forfeit his cattle, his weapons and his woman.

Kotatu spoke to the white man in English.

"Warriors say they find you hiding in brush when they raid your camp. You not helping your own people, just hiding while they fight. The chief asks if this true?"

The boy nodded miserably, and Kotatu interpreted to the chief.

"This woman your wife?" asked Kotatu.

"Yes," sniveled the boy. "Please don't kill us. We've only been married a few weeks."

"Chief say you coward," said Kotatu, bluntly.

The boy said nothing, but Mahlee noted he could not look Kotatu in the eye.

"You coward!" Kotatu exclaimed. "You not deserve pretty wife. Chief say he think about what to do with you."

The two white captives were taken away to separate huts. That night, Kotatu and several other men interrogated the boy. Mahlee could hear his cries of anguish. She knew he was being subjected to rough treatment. The Ahulu hated cowards, and Mahlee feared what was in store for the boy. On the other hand though, she understood why the Ahulu had no tolerance for the weak. The African bush was a harsh environment. A coward in a group threatened the survival of all. This knowledge tempered her compassion for the boy. Indeed, she felt the instinctive female contempt for a timid, cowardly male. Her mind and soul, now Ahulu, wanted him punished and humiliated.

Finally the native men seemed satisfied. Both captives were fed, and were not molested further that night.

The next morning, the young couple were again taken before the chief. Mahlee could see that the boy had been crying during the night. There were also bruises where the men had beaten him.

“The chief says you coward,” said Kotatu. “But we not kill cowards. Bad luck. The chief give you a chance to save your honor. You have two choices. You fight M’Kunta. If you kill him or knock him out you go free with wife. If you coward, we let you go. But wife stay here. You give her to M’Kunta. Make choice now.”

The boy was crying with fear. He looked at the huge black warrior and quailed. “Please... he’ll kill me.”

“Yes, he try to kill you. But maybe you beat him,” said Kotatu.

When this was translated, the entire camp burst into laughter. The white boy’s eyes darted about, fear plastered on his face.

“Make choice now,” demanded Kotatu.

The white boy’s face was etched in agony. He looked at his beautiful young wife who stood crying. Mahlee could see the bitter humiliation in his face when he turned back to Kotatu and sobbed, “keep her... Let me go!”

The girl gasped and whimpered in disbelief.

Kotatu nodded to the boy but sneered with contempt. He spoke to the crowd.

“This boy be set free. No one is to kill him. But he not take wife. He give wife to M’Kunta.

With tears in his eyes and his face red with shame, the young white husband took his stunned wife by the hand, and led her directly before the chief. The large, muscular M’Kunta also approached. He towered over the white couple, and glowered at the boy.

“Speak,” ordered Kotatu to the white boy. “Speak the words I have given you, or you die!”

The young white male’s voice faltered at first, then he spoke, his keening voice shaking but clear. “I... I give this woman to a... a brave warrior... she is no longer my wife.”

The girl stood staring at the boy, eyes wide with shock and hurt. She had apparently been told nothing of the ritual. Mahlee knew now that the boy was not being spared because of mercy. His direct renunciation of his marriage to the girl was divorce by Ahulu law and would simplify the spells for her subsequent binding to M’Kunta. He was selling her- in exchange for his life.

The huge black warrior stepped forward, and the craven boy took her hand and guided her to him.

“No... NO,” she cried, pathetically trying to wrench her hand free. “No, William, please, save me please.”

The boy wouldn’t look at her, shame and humiliation masked his features. “Jenny...” he rasped, his throat dry. “I can’t... he’ll kill me!”

The young woman looked at her husband, an expression of horror and betrayal on her face.

The boy looked straight at the ground, continuing the shameful speech he had been coached to say.

“She will please you well, my lord and give you strong sons. Ahulu warriors. I give her now- make her Ahulu.”

The chief stood and bellowed an order, gesturing to the warrior and the white wife.

Kotatu spoke. “The Chief say this is done. Woman now belong to M’Kunta. She join Ahulu and he train or use her as he wish.”

The Chief gave a loud guttural shout. Several warriors seized the trembling white boy and stripped him. At the same time the powerful women in the village flung themselves on the white girl, stripping her and taking whatever garment they could grab.

Then the black men took whips, and drove the naked boy around the kraal. Screaming and crying like a child, he ran as fast as he could, but the warriors kept pace easily, wounding his denuded backside with excruciating lashes and making him jump and yelp outlandishly.

The white girl sobbed, sitting naked in the dust. She watched through dull eyes as the native men made sport with the boy she had loved. Her heart was dead, save for a feeling of unspeakable betrayal.

M’Kunta came. He pulled her roughly to her feet by her long, auburn hair. She was comely indeed, he thought, in the wild way of the barbarian whites. Her skin was pale and flawless and her figure superb. And she had the wide hips to birth large, healthy offspring, a trait most prized by Ahulu.

She was crying and pleading as he dragged her toward his hut. But she turned her head to see her erstwhile husband’s travail. The men had surrounded him in a wide circle and were lashing him sharply with pigwhips. He ran about before them, unable to escape and begging pathetically for mercy. “Please,” he whined. “I gave her to you... Please let me go... Take Jenny and let me go like you said!”

The white girl heard him and gave one last sob of anguish. Across the common the warriors were finally herding the terrified, debased white boy out of the kraal. He made it to the gate, gasping and trying to shield his wounded flesh from the laughing natives, who stopped whipping him for a moment.

He was concerned now only about his own hide and life, too consumed with fear and pain to care much about the lovely mate he had just given away. Even so, there was one last twinge of shame. He looked back from the gate of the stockade, getting a final glimpse of the wife he had lost. She was at the doorway of a hut, naked and sobbing, bent over on all fours. The huge Ahulu man, who now claimed her, had a fist full of her hair and held her there with his powerful arm. Once again, the boy moaned with an agony of loss and soul-consuming ignominy.

Then the whip cracked on his bare buttock, and the boy howled with pain. He took off running, thinking once more only of escape and saving himself. The laughing warriors landed blows at will and chased him far from the kraal before finally letting him go. The auburn-haired white beauty never saw him again.

M’Kunta’s hut was adjacent to Kotatu’s. All through the night Mahlee could hear the sounds of M’Kunta taking his new woman. At first there were cries and pleadings, some snaps of the whip and even a few blows. There were a great many screams of useless resistance and pain, then things quieted down.

Mahlee turned and embraced Kotatu. She felt his long black arm encircle her, draping across her back and shoulders in the universal possessive gesture. It was a quiet, peaceful moment- and potently erotic, driven by the sounds of the new white girl’s first night with her native master.

Kotatu and Mahlee had finished their shared meal with Namri and Negana, and Kotatu had chosen his white woman to lay with. Mahlee, already aroused by the events of the day had lain quietly until now, seething with need for him.

She felt him pull her even closer. He ran his other hand over her smooth, flat belly and Mahlee gasped as his mouth met hers. His tongue searching, probing, he gently pushed her unresisting form onto her back, moving to lie at her side.

She closed her eyes as his seeking hand slowly moved upwards to cup her breast. She turned her face to him and his leg folded over her abdomen.

“Kotatu,” she whispered, because she wanted to hear the sound of his name. “Kotatu.”

In the next hut, Mahlee could hear the rhythmic, soft slap of bare flesh in time with female gasps, which gradually gained intensity and lost outrage. She knew what the girl was experiencing; the surrender of her sex and soul to the power of an Ahulu male.

“Please!” Mahlee heard the faint gasp in the next hut. “You’re so big... Please go slow... UUUUgggaaaaahhhh!”

“You’re very wet tonight,” whispered Kotatu, urgently into Mahlee’s ear. “You need Kotatu badly.”

“Yessss,” she hissed, flushing warm at his intimate caresses. “I need you my love!”

“Uhhhh, uuuuuggg, uuuuhhhhh... So big! Uuuuggggg... Please! Ahhhh uuuggghh,” murmured the timid voice of the new girl in the next hut. It was punctuated with the manly grunts of M’Kunta.

Kotatu and Mahlee kissed deeply and he moved his hips between her open legs. He held her closely, tenderly as they lay together. He rested his head against her collarbone, and she ran her hands affectionately over his smooth black chest.

“M’Kunta is mastering her,” said Mahlee softly.

“There is no need to sever her from the white man,” said Kotatu. “M’Kunta will make her his tonight.”

“Her white mate was not a man,” whispered Mahlee. “He was a boy.”

“A very foolish boy, to come into Ahulu territory alone, with a pretty wife,” said Kotatu. “Now he’s a boy with no wife.”

“Now she’s a girl with a real man,” said Mahlee. “Are the Ahulu planning any more raids on the settlers?”

“We raid the whites all the time. Take cattle.”

“No, I mean to capture more white women.”

“Perhaps. Namri will say if more hands are needed to work in village. As long as every man has at least one woman, raids are not needed. Raids to capture women are much harder and more dangerous than taking cattle. Then again,” he added, “never too many women to do puana and make new warriors.”

“Please go and take more of them!” whispered Mahlee hotly. “Fill Ahulu huts with them! Even as you fill our bellies with your seed!”

Kotatu plunged his huge manhood into her with one stroke and fell into her ravenous embrace. They were now oblivious to the lewd acts in the next hut, indeed, to all things beyond themselves. Immediately the energy of their rut was unrestrained and he was moving in and out of her, thrusting deeply with all the power and sinew of his massive frame. She felt and looked utterly helpless under him, yet her body bucked and wriggled as she hurled herself back to him with abandon.

She realized at that moment how much the Ahulu loved their women. She had always frowned on men that seemed possessive, but now it felt glorious to be possessed.

The pretty new girl was being raped! And she would be raped every night until she grew to crave it, as the other white women. Once again the Ahulu had triumphed completely. Mahlee had never felt more fulfilled as a woman.

The next morning, Mahlee sought out the new white girl to speak with her. She wanted to spare her some of the pain that she and the others had experienced. She found the girl, languishing naked, on her knees grinding grain.

“Hello, can I talk to you?” asked Mahlee, lightly.

“You speak English? Please... Please help me,” the girl sniffled.

“What is your name?” asked Mahlee.

“Jen... Jenny,” replied the girl. “You’re English?”

“Yes,” said Mahlee. “I was English. I’m Ahulu now.”

The new girl looked at Mahlee, uncomprehending. “Please ask them to let me go.”

Mahlee shook her head. “That’s impossible, Jenny. You’re M’Kunta’s woman now. He owns you and your place is with him.”

“No... noooo...” said the white girl. “I can’t live with a black man! And... And do that... Every night!”

“Jenny, he will beat you if you don’t submit to him. Then he’ll do the puana with you anyway. You have no idea what a real beating is like.”

“Oh please, you’re white and you speak their language. Can’t you tell him I’m married?”

“He knows you *were* married Jenny. He also knows that boy who *was* your husband gave you to him. You know that too, don’t you?”

The young white girl nodded, sobbing with shame. “But... He was... Forced to...”

That doesn’t matter, Jenny. Most things are done by force in any culture. In the eyes of M’Kunta and everyone in this village, you belong to him. I’m sorry to put it so bluntly, but I can’t sugar coat it for you. You have no choice. You’re going to live in his hut and work for him. You’re going to make the puana with him and have his children. Resign yourself to his will and it will go much easier for you.”

Jenny looked horrified. But though she cried bitterly, Mahlee could tell that she was not one to resist as Sara had. Mahlee smiled, and felt a tingle in her own loins. She would guide Jenny, just as Negana had guided her. Everything would be all right for the new girl.

## Chapter 13

Five cycles of rain and summer passed, and life among the Ahulu continued its idyllic pace. Mahlee bore Kotatu another son, then a daughter. Haa-Nah and Maa-Thaa were fertile as well. Jenny, who came to be called Jeh-Nee, gave birth barely three seasons after her capture. Her baby was coal black, the very image of M'Kunta.

Mahlee had been right. The relationship between Jeh-Nee and her master flowered, and they became genuinely and totally devoted to one another. He did not need to punish her as he had Sara, for she capitulated quickly to his firm hand, and even firmer manhood. She grew to love him, and each night she proved it with the most enthusiastic couplings. Soon her belly had swelled with M'Kunta's child and she was accepted fully into the clan. The years to come would see her almost continuously pregnant.

All of the white women were happy; Inglobe in her role as sacred whore, the others thriving with the cycles of female existence. They worked, suckled their brown babies and made the puana, to please their men and enlarge the clan. They were healthy, content and joyful to be Ahulu women.

But no land was immune to change and war, not even that of the advanced and mighty Ahulu.

There came a season when incursions by the whites were more common than in years past. Kotatu, now assuming leadership from the ailing chief, determined they would need to acquire many more of the white's firesticks. He made arrangements to meet a group of traders near the river.

It was only three day's travel so he took Mahlee with him, along with a small group of warriors to carry the guns.

They arrived at the meeting place first, and set up camp, waiting for two days until the white traders arrived. Mahlee was kept busy attending the men, cooking for them and meeting their sexual needs.

On the third day the white traders arrived. It was not the same as when trade was conducted with the Arabs. Neither the whites or the natives trusted each other, and business was concluded quickly. The muskets were taken from mules and handed to the warriors. Gold was turned over to the whites.

All the while, Mahlee, following protocol, knelt quietly beside Kotatu's standard. She felt no shame in her near nudity, but was repulsed and contemptuous of the hot stares of the white men. They were a mangy looking crew, and Mahlee felt soiled by their eyes. All white men looked strange and ugly to her now, and they stank. One of them in particular however, made her skin crawl. And he looked oddly familiar.

The other white men were ready to leave. They were in dangerous territory and they knew it. Transactions had been completed and payment made. Still, one of their number, an uncouth, hulking man lingered. He was speaking with the natives yet darting his eyes furtively Mahlee.

Suddenly, with a flash of horror, she recognized him. Like a wraith from her long dead past the realization that he was alive and present filled her with revulsion. The man leering at her, was her former husband, Jon.

Now it was her turn to surreptitiously stare. It had been seven years since he had almost kissed her on that bright and terrible morning. The sands of time had apparently taken their toll. He was fatter, older, uglier, but still had that arrogant, jealous sneer.

Mahlee whispered a prayer to the gods that he did not perceive her. She could not tell if his seeming interest lay in lust or recognition- or, she shuddered, both.

She was greatly relieved when he left with his group. He had not known her, so she thought, and she was safe.

After the whites had been gone several hours, Kotatu and four men left the camp until the next day, to hunt. Mahlee and two adolescent boys were left behind so as not to slow them down.

It would have been a nice evening, a rare time for an Ahulu woman to relax alone. But the encounter with her former husband had unnerved her. She wondered with trepidation what might have happened if he had seen her and tried to take her back. She couldn't bear the thought of leaving her children and the Ahulu people, and Kotatu was her very life. She shuddered as she lay on the hide, but at last succumbed to sleep.

Just after midnight she was awakened by a gouty, rough hand clamped over her mouth. A dark figure loomed over her, and she was awash with his fetid breath.

"Emily? Emily! It's Jon! Help me get her up!"

The white woman saw torches, felt more hands pulling her to her feet. "Emily, get up. It's me, Jon."

She fought to remember her English. "I... Jon?"

"It's her," he said. "Let's get out of here before those buggers return."

"No... Jon, no... I can't..." she began to struggle and shout. "KOTATU!"

"Is she daft?" said one of the other white men. "Quiet down milady, were rescuing you!"

"I AM AHULU!" she screamed. "KOTATU!"

"Jon, are you sure this is your wife?" asked one of the whites. "She looks like a colored mulatto to me!"

"She's been held captive for seven years," said Jon. "Tie her up and gag her."

They tied a bandana over her mouth and bound her wrists and ankles. Then they slung her over a mule.

"She's a white woman? Shouldn't we put some clothes on her?" asked one of the men."

"Naw... I rather fancy her like this!" laughed the other.

"Shut up," shouted Jon, throwing a blanket over her. "She's my wife."

They headed for the river, but could not cross it by night. So they camped in a hidden draw near the water's edge. Jon untied Mahlee from the mule and she sat on the ground, cross-legged. He covered her with the blanket, though the night was quite warm.

The other two white men laid down a few paces away to sleep, but Jon sat down beside her. After a few awkward moments, Mahlee managed to force herself to talk to the man who had once been her husband.

On that fateful day seven years before, Jon had seen the wagons surrounded as he stood on the hill and knew the company was doomed. He had wanted to ride back to get her, but it was already too late. Several of the blacks tried to waylay them and he and the other rider had just escaped on horseback. He returned to Capetown with nothing but his horse and the clothes on his back. With no money and no possessions, he had scratched a pathetic existence living in storage rooms and back alleys. At times he found employment as a menial. At other times he lived literally as a beggar.

He did not tell her the worst of it. He had not had a woman since she had been captured. There were very few white women in the colony and none that were unmarried. Many, many times since that fateful day he had thought about her lovely form as he masturbated, wondering if she were alive or dead and seeing her face just as he came in

his hand. Always there was the torment that she might be alive and in the arms of another man.

He came to hope she was dead! Oh how he wished that she had been killed. Since he knew the alternative. And his jealous ego could not bear it.

Then he had seen her yesterday. He had smiled with unrestrained lust as he ogled the blond, golden skinned woman who squatted almost naked, in the dust beside one of the big male niggers. At first, he took her to be a mulatto, the unclean daughter of some white missionary and a black whore, spawned on some sultry African night. The idea amused him, for he had longed to taste the same fruit himself.

An instant later he had recognized her. And all the loneliness and sexual frustration of the past seven years had frothed up in his soul. He had to have her back! Even though he was a coward at heart he had to have her back. By whatever means necessary.

“We will go back to the colony town together and things will be good, you will see,” he said.

“Jon. I cannot go with you.”

“We can return to England. I have enough money now...”

“Jon,” she repeated. “I can’t go back. I have four children... and I belong to Kotatu. The man you dealt the guns to.”

Jon drew his breath and seethed. His worst fears had been confirmed. And when the truth was told, that his wife had lived with a black savage and borne his children, the old rage bubbled to the surface.

“You whore,” he spat. “You slept with a nigger!”

“Jon, I had no choice,” she said softly. “We have done the puana... he has fucked me countless times. I am his slave.”

He looked at her as though she had just admitted to the most heinous crime. “You’re my wife, damn it,” was all he could manage to say.

“Jon, you must let me return to my people. I will not leave my children- and I love my master.”

Mahlee could see the fury in his eyes. “I’ll show you who your master is, you naked wench.” He lost control and pounced on her, pushing her onto all fours on the dirt. With maniacal quickness he stripped off his shirt and freed his penis from the confines of his trousers, positioning it between her legs. But he was afraid of disease. She had been a harlot for savages and he would not take her vagina until she had proven clean. He placed the head of his phallus at her anal opening and pushed.

“UUUGGGGHHHHH, nooooo... Stop it! Jon!” She had learned how to relax her sphincter muscles to allow an easy entry, but contact with a white man disgusted her.

“What’s the matter, slut” he taunted, thrusting into her. “Afraid of a white man’s shank?”

She had thought to turn her mind off as she often did with the Arabs, and let him have his way. The foul stench of his unwashed, paste-colored body wafted to her nostrils, nauseating her. He grunted and wheezed like an old boar, driving his small manhood into her. And she could feel his hairy, bulging abdomen on her lower back. She closed her eyes and fought the urge to vomit. But suddenly there was nothing that she feared and loathed more than the thought of this ugly, pot bellied white man planting his seed within her, even in her rectum. A kind of panic set into her mind and she began twisting wildly and pushing Jon away. Grunting artlessly through the act, he didn’t realize she was trying to escape his embrace until it was too late. He was strong, but her taunted, tanned body was coated with their mutual sweat. She managed to wriggle from his grasp and his penis

slipped from her anus just as he began to ejaculate. He groaned with outrage as ropes of his pasty semen squirted onto her struggling form and down his legs. With a final push she broke from him entirely and rolled away.

Jon lay panting, cursing her hoarsely as the vilest bawd. Only the momentary weakness of his orgasm kept him from thrashing her mercilessly.

“Don’t touch me!” she warned. “I don’t belong to you anymore, white man. I am Ahulu now and an Ahulu man’s woman.”

“You bitch!” he snarled. “You’re my wife and I’ll take you whenever I please!” He looked down at his seed, dripping ignominiously into the dust. “You’ll pay for that, you lousy whore!”

“He’ll kill you Jon!” she shouted. Not with hate or gloating but with her last scrap of compassion for him. “My master will kill you for touching me! Run. Before he returns.”

“He’ll never find you once we cross the river,” said Jon cruelly. “And if you ever mention him again I’ll whip you... Just as I’m going to whip you now!”

With the help of the other white men, he seized her hands and tied her, bent over, to a nearby tree. Then he took a hide whip from one of the mules.

Mahlee was astonished by the ferocity of his blows. Seven years of frustration, created by his own poor judgement and cowardice, were now gushing from his blackened soul. He hated her for those years; the pleasure she had given her black man- and the children who should have been his! He wanted her to beg for mercy and forgiveness.

But Mahlee bore each stroke with stoic strength, imparted by her life with the Ahulu. She emitted only an earthy grunt with each lash.

This only angered Jon further, and her lay into her vengeance. Still she would not scream. Not for a white man’s whip. Fat and out of shape, he tired in a few minutes, dripping with sweat.

“Let’s get out of here,” said one of the other men. “Leave the bitch.”

“NO!” said Jon, shouting with frustration. “I’ll beat it out of her! She’s *my* wife!”

“I belong to Kotatu,” said Mahlee firmly and evenly despite her pain. “Run, Jon. Before it’s too late. Run from my black master!”

“AAAAGGGGGG,” he shrilled. “YOU’RE MINE... NOT A NIGGER’S... MINE! Her last sentence had provoked him to insane rage. He began lashing her again, wanting to cut her to ribbons.

But he only got in three blows. Mahlee heard a cry of pain and a commotion behind her. One of the white men had fallen, his throat cut. The other was running away with blind panic. Kotatu was there! With his four warriors!

The great black man took the whip from Jon and lashed him across the face with it. The ugly white man screamed and crumpled to the dust, holding his bleeding face. One of the warriors prepared to run him through with a spear thrust, but Kotatu stopped him.

“You Jon?” he asked Kotatu with uncanny calm, “her husband before?”

“Yes,” spat the white man. He had risen to his feet now and glared at the black leader with fear and virulent hate.

“The woman is mine now,” said Kotatu reverting to Bantu. “I have taken her to my hut, and she has bore me three sons. I have made her Ahulu.”

Jon stared with uncomprehending malice, until Mahlee translated.

“She’s my wife!” shouted Jon.

“I have taken her as my slave, according to Ahulu law. She is mine!”

“Ahulu law be damned!”

Mahlee's voice faltered now. I was the purest insanity, translating for two men who wanted to kill each other. She had hoped that Jon would submit and that Kotatu would allow him to leave in peace. But Jon's evil, misplaced pride would not let him give in.

Kotatu smiled. "Then we will fight for her!" He took two short thrusting spears from one of the warriors and tossed one to Jon.

"Jon no," cried Mahlee. "You're no match for him. I love him and will never be yours again anyway. Leave me and run!"

The white man sneered, and the two adversaries faced off. Kotatu circled him for a few seconds, toying with him. "The Ahulu are superior," he said. "Your women belong to us. Whenever we claim them!"

He made a quick thrust and pricked Jon's arm. The white man dropped the spear. Instantly Kotatu was on him, trapping his corpulent body against the tree. Jon finally quailed with the point of the spear at his throat. With a final heave of soul quenching humiliation he grimaced and rasped "Take her."

Kotatu seemed satisfied. He lowered his spear and turned to go. Suddenly Jon sprang on him. He had taken a dagger from his boot and was charging the big black man from behind.

"KOTATU!" Mahlee screamed.

Kotatu whirled, bringing up the spear that he still held. The two men crashed into each other and there was a terrible shriek. For a moment they stood motionless, locked in a deadly embrace. Then one man fell, his life oozing out in red spurts into the African dust.

## Finis

“Now I have told you,” she said. She felt vulnerable, having bared her mind and spirit, but she experienced the sensation as both a kind of fulfillment and a penance.

An arm circled around her from behind and a huge hand grasped her breast. A huge black hand. She lay back against his chest and sighed, now seething with need for him.

They had seen the shaman and prayed to Kotatu’s gods for cleansing, since she had been taken by a white man and made foul by contact with his seed. She was here, atop this cliff to perform the ceremony; confess all to her master and rid herself of the filth of Jon’s touch and essence. Not that had been accomplished, and she yearned deeply for her black lover.

“Take me, master,” she whispered in Bantu. “Fill me with your seed and your love and your child. Possess me completely.”

Kotatu stood and pulled her to her feet. He took the bead drop from her loins and pushed her back against the smooth, wind polished rock. She found the tie of his loincloth and released it. Then her legs parted and she discovered his heroic maleness, already rampant in her hands.

He smiled as she guided it to the cleft of her sex, and heard her urgent gasp as he pushed himself in- relentlessly in until his spongy glans kissed her cervix. She was held fast, crushed between his god-like form and the warm, hard solidity of the stone.

“Uuuunnnnggggg,” she grunted, as he began to thrust. “Uggghh, uuuggghhh, uuuggghhh, uuuuugggghhhaaiiee.” Mahlee’s arms and legs encircled him and he pulled her away from the cliff wall. She clung to him and he danced there to the cadence of her guttural cries, churning his loins into hers. She groaned and he felt her clasp his shaft with her internal muscles. She rode him; long and slow as the twilight deepened and the ugly memory of the white man named Jon faded. He flooded her while they were still erect, and Mahlee beat her head against his chest.

“Kotatu... Kotatu... Kotatu...” she whispered, over and over, marveling that he still held her, fully impaled. He was not at all fatigued.

Finally he laid her back onto some soft sand, hovering above her. She suddenly remembered the last night that she slept with Jon in the old wagon. It was Kotatu who had appeared in her dream. Her black god had called to her, across space and time- taking her in the very bed she had shared with her white husband. Taking her hence, in the way of Africa!

So it had been him after all, she thought; Kotatu, the dark void above her, black and mysterious against a starry sky. Just as she remembered, she was now grasping him, swooning with adoration and love. Now she would climax for him- and not wake as before.

“Take me!” she whispered urgently into his ear. “I have told you the story. Now... Take me!”

Their last union on the cliff was sublime. Mahlee writhed with devotion and ecstasy, offering herself to a pounding, black native god of flesh and phallus. Sexual submission, as an act of worship. When her fulfillment broke, the orgasm ripped through her very soul, with the realization that he was impregnating her once again with an Ahulu child.

“Fill me!” she screamed. “Fill me with your seed! I AM YOURS FOREVER!”  
Forever Ahulu, forever Kotatu’s, she thought.  
Forever, an African Captive.

**THE END**