

Adult Fiction



# OWNED AND OWNER

Anneke Jacob



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by

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# CHIMERA

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This novel is fiction – in real life practice safe sex

His giant penis was in front of me, so frightening still. I couldn't believe that a few minutes ago it had been inside me. Surely I hadn't... I didn't have that much space inside... He pulled my head toward it, and said what I thought was 'lick' again. Tentatively I put out my tongue and ran it along the hard silken surface. He seemed to approve, so I washed it again and again, reaching as much of it as I could. Finally he pointed it at my mouth, and I began to suck on it. I tried to get the huge knob in further, but my teeth touched it. At once he yanked me back with a hand in my hair, and pulled me up over his lap. His hand crashed down on my ass. The pain of this on top of my welts was a terrible shock; I couldn't get my breath. When I finally did, I wailed. He spanked me twice more, holding me hard by the waist while I kicked and struggled. Then he placed me back down in front of him. Again his penis was at my lips. I breathed hard, swallowed a sob or two and opened my mouth, very wide this time, trying hard. My ass felt like it was on fire.

## Prologue

*I crawled across the floor and picked up the whip in my teeth, gently so as not to leave a mark. I was careful also not to get it wet; either of these mistakes would cost me. I crawled back to him, and he took the whip from my proffering mouth, replaced my bit, and arranged me on all fours in front of him.*

*Then he settled back to read, his feet heavy on my back. The tip of the whip rested lightly on my ass; it felt like a live thing vibrating, tickling me a little, flicking me whenever I breathed more deeply than usual through my bridle. Gradually his weight pushed me down, solidified me into a bundle of strain and endurance. He shifted occasionally, crossing one leg over the other, or putting one foot flat on the side of my ass.*

*I don't know how long I managed to stay completely still; time isn't something I'm ever in a position to track. But inevitably I failed; my elbows buckled. It was only a little, and I recovered immediately, but the whip's reaction was instantaneous, and quite painful. I didn't manage to contain the little whimper in the back of my throat, but I did manage to stay rigid and not flinch, not incur another stroke. That time, anyway.*

*After a while I was tired enough that it took several strokes before I could contain my reactions and stay still. My ass throbbed, and I put all my effort into being furniture. I tried to think like furniture: heavy, solid, without nerve-endings or an awareness of time. But after the fourth time I couldn't help it, my head drooped, and tears dripped to the floor. He switched hands and flicked my breasts, and I raised my head again obediently. I would endure this. I was glad I wasn't impervious. He was touching me; I could endure anything for that.*

## The Third Option

I sat on my bed, waiting.

‘I am going to men to be owned, to be owned, to be owned...’ The words drummed softly but insistently through my head. My need for drama amused me. Still, I had to find some way to convince myself. There had been years of fantasies, some of them so intense they felt much more real than this. ‘This’ was a small locked room, hanging in space, waiting. Not much different from the cell I’d lived in for months, or for that matter from my room at home.

So although my rational side – such as it was – told me I was really on my way, there was some level on which I simply didn’t believe it. I didn’t believe that the world outside of me was finally going to match what had been going on so violently inside my head all those years. I wasn’t sure exactly what I was going to, which didn’t help. All I had was some official information, meant to put me off, and the pictures they had shown me briefly, six weeks before.

I could have cried when they took them away. If only I could have had them all to myself for a day or two! Instead I had to look at them with that dour, gray woman standing over me, muttering her disgust. I sat there trying to conceal my excitement, feeling almost paralyzed by the throbbing between my legs, pressing myself helplessly against the hard bench while trying to seem casual about my movements, my hands trembling as I turned over the pages. I suppose they were hoping I’d be appalled. As soon as I’d glanced at them without a word, the woman snatched them away, not looking at me as she marched out, locking the door behind her with a clang. She wasn’t stupid. I’d proved myself once again to be beyond the pale. My shame made me long for the punishments I’d seen in the pictures.

I sat on my bed trying to remember details in those pictures. What did the man look like who held the leash? The woman’s expression – I’d not had time to read it. The surroundings, were they familiar or strange? What was I in for? What had I done?

The judge had been gray, but not dour, a perceptive woman. I knew she had seen me as sullen throughout my trial. That was my defense, at least in the psychological sense. In the

legal sense I didn't have any. I'd had such an attitude toward any authority figure that all of them – mothers, aunts, teachers – had given up in despair. I raised sullenness to an art form. I raised a lot of blood pressure, too. There had to be no chinks to my inner life. It was so habitual that the effort to drop it was wrenching, when that ultimate moment came in the courtroom.

'You have been determined to be incorrigibly irresponsible toward yourself and your community,' the judge pronounced. 'I cannot recall a worse case. You have made nothing but bad use of the privileges this society accords its members. At every opportunity you have demonstrated that you cannot be trusted with citizenship status. You know your three options: rehabilitation, exile or slavery on Henth. What is your decision?'

I hung suspended in a tight, strangling web of silence. After a life of concealment, three words were going to show everyone my dreadful colours. I had rehearsed my answer for months to prevent myself from chickening out at the last moment. I tried to say the words by rote, without letting myself think or give them meaning. But my answer had to be forced through my constricted throat, and was addressed in a hoarse whisper to the table in front of me.

'Slavery on Henth.'

There was a sharp murmur behind me in the courtroom. No one had chosen the Third Option from my community in living memory. After a few moments the initial disbelief gave way to a roar of indignation. I clenched my sweating hands together, eyes fixed in front of me, my back to the crowd, trying not to cower. This was even worse than I had imagined. I was afraid they were going to lynch me.

'Etrin Aboia, let me be sure the court is not mistaken. State your choice again clearly and fully.'

I swallowed, and looked down at my hands. They were clenched together, but the thumbs made a small upward gesture, as if to tell me to get on with it. I took a deep breath, raised my head and made my hunched shoulders drop. A kind of desperate calm came over me. For once I was going to say

the truth about myself and not be ashamed. I forced myself to look the judge right in the eye. The room went quiet.

I thought, *this is it. Do it right, Etrin.* I heard my voice ring low but clear across the court. 'I, Etrin Aboia, choose the Third Option, slavery on Henth, as punishment for my crimes of irresponsibility.' The voice sounded like it knew what it was talking about, and I was grateful. I could see by her expression that the judge, at least, knew the truth.

Still, I had to wait the required twenty-nine days before my choice was considered final. Twenty-nine days of hell. At first I was elated at my emergence. I felt buoyant, without that leaden weight of constant concealment. I actually thought it might be possible to be who I was and say so. But my family was let in to plead with me, and their horrified reactions shut me down pretty fast. I went from glee to defiance, through to anger and resentment, then down into guilt. Soon I had to resume my sullen front, my only defense against their outpourings of grief and fear and anger, and my intense shame. By then I felt horribly naked and exposed, like a calibspod out of its shell, and I did my pathetic best to get my shell back on in a hurry.

Radiating disapproval, the authorities made sure I knew exactly what the Third Option meant. Although I heard some interesting details that I had not been able to pick up before, and I was more scared than ever, I didn't change my mind. The warder brought the photographs, then took them away again. Doctors made me go through another battery of tests to assess my sanity, very short with me for fooling them the last time. Sorry, sorry, sorry. They kept commenting on my intelligence, as if that mattered.

My family would have tried round-the-clock brainwashing techniques if they'd been allowed. The ten hours they had each day were bad enough. They were losing me forever, and I should have been gratified that they found this so awful, in spite of everything I'd put them through. But at the time I attributed it to their embarrassment over my appalling choice. Then of course I could reject them for their conformity to

public opinion – a gibe that led to such a fight that the warders had to intervene.

Secretly, I suppose I wanted someone to understand and acknowledge my choice, someone to accept me as I was. Laughable when you think about it. Pathetically unrealistic, and far more than I deserved. I was bound to be disappointed on this one, because I was way too defended to convey just how long I had felt this way (forever), and how much I needed to go to Henth (indescribable). They thought it was just one of my self-destructive whims. The finality of it terrified them. Understandable; it terrified me, too. I spent a lot of time with my arms crossed over my chest, glaring at the ceiling while they railed and pleaded. If even one of them had sat down and listened, I might have been able to tell them the truth. At last, driven to desperation, I grabbed one of my sisters by the shoulders, looked her in the eye and shouted, ‘I’m doing what I must; let me be!’ Too little, too late. It didn’t help. No one really heard me. They didn’t leave me alone until the very last minute of the very last day.

At first the solitude on the spaceship was an unbelievable relief. I could put the guilt away and bask in the elation, having survived the ordeal. But the wait soon became boring, imprisoned alone in my little cabin, and at the same time brutal in the urgency of my waiting for the end of it. Finally, after those months in custody on Raniz, there was no peephole in the door, and no one demanding my attention. They brought me my food three times a day, that was all. I had nothing to read or screen. All I could do was think, try to imagine what was ahead, and relieve the pulsing demands between my legs, brought on by the memory of those photographs, and by the knowledge of what I had accomplished. The fear made my belly tighten with surges of excitement, the fear of what they would do to me, of whether I could stand it.

I spent hours looking at my body in the mirror. Was it pretty enough? I had no way of knowing what men would like in a woman. I felt oddly detached from myself, as though my body wasn’t mine at all. It occurred to me with a thrill of fear that soon it really wouldn’t be mine, in honest truth. I watched my hands hypnotically stroking the full, pointed breasts, the

slender ribcage, the smooth buttocks. I ran my palms over the silky skin of my inner thighs, and my breath came faster. I closed my eyes, thinking of whips. I had never been whipped, or even slapped. Opening my eyes, I examined my face. Pale skin, reddish curls to my shoulders, the gray eyes shadowed and fearful. I was smaller than average, and I knew men were tall. Helpless, I'd be helpless. The word made my belly contract with arousal. There was nothing I could do about it now. Still, now that I didn't have to convince other people, I could admit to myself that I was well and truly terrified.

I was going to men to be owned...

All my life I had known that what I needed was not where I was. Just where it was located wasn't clear to me for a long time, but I knew, in a gut level, primitive way, right from the beginning, that something was missing from what I saw around me. Maybe it was the fact that unlike us, animals came in male and female, but I think it was more than that. There was something – actually, the absence of something – a gap, a chasm. Something indefinable, because I had nothing to go on. Everyone else seemed to feel complete and whole. I felt an ache of loss, and I didn't know what was gone, a yearning for I knew not what. It kept me separate and alone; it turned me silent.

I began to hear about a planet full of monsters somewhere, that used to have some mysterious and awful connection with us. Then the lesson in history class that focused the monsters into something even more fascinating: Men. I'd always had vague fantasies, 'stories' I told myself each night before I fell asleep, or whenever I played alone. I knew enough to keep these to myself, that they were shameful. The new information fitted into the fantasies like a ship into its octagonal mooring – perfectly. Suddenly my imaginings had the right kind of hand on the whip, the right kind of body controlling and invading my own. My longings, now with an object, became the most agonizing of needs, but at least they were clear to me. And my need for secrecy became more urgent than ever.

I was an adolescent; desperately isolated by the split between the inner life I was living, and the ordinary one I

walked each day, when I heard about the Third Option.

I found myself starting to misbehave.

My outward life ceased to be so ordinary. First my high marks in school went to hell, and I stopped being where I was expected to be. Then I started taking things apart, usually literally. At first it was excruciatingly difficult, doing something other than what was expected. I had always been an inhibited, compliant child, so upset by disapproval that my tough womb-mother had worried about me. After a while I got better at it, began guiltily to enjoy the turmoil I caused. I had never really belonged to these people, that is what I felt, so why should I care if I hurt them? Sometimes I hated them for not being what I wanted so fervently. I made damned sure that no one could get close enough to make the task ahead of me any harder. The shame I felt for hurting people fed right into my need. After each incident I wished so hard for punishment, for someone to hold me immobile and hurt me. Why were they giving me all this freedom? I hated it.

Still, I didn't always know that I would follow the plan all the way through. I had a million ways to get off the path to Henth if I wanted to. Right up to the end of the twenty-ninth day...

All through those years I told myself I could back out at any time, become responsible, that this was just a game I was playing. A game of tension and risk, toying with the unthinkable. Change was too much to hope for; this life on Raniz, hopeless as it was, was the one I had. How could I imagine that I could accomplish anything different? Only at night, in the dark, with the belts tightened around my naked body, the rope pulled into my vulva and tied front and back, my hands stroking, pulling, my inadequate female hands punishing, did I know, deep in my very center, that I would put myself into a man's hands – a real man's.

I would not turn back.

**Garid**

One of his home staff sent the news to Garid, and adrenaline rushed and flooded through each part of him until he vibrated with it. He still had four hours of work to do, all of it physical, and that was a good thing; he couldn't have sat at a desk. It had been two years since the last opportunity, missed because he was off-planet; two long years of waiting for the next pet woman from Raniz. He'd had neither the money nor, really, the desire before that. He hadn't been ready. But he was ready now, more than ready, and he was damned if he would see her go to someone else at the auction.

Two years ago he'd still had some embarrassment about his strange tastes. The few men on Henth that would acknowledge themselves heterosexual usually went to two-sex planets if they could possibly afford it, for visits as he'd done, or forever. But to flaunt one's heterosexuality on Henth itself was hard for people to take. Garid would have to brazen out the shock of those around him, when they found out that he had bought himself a human female as a pet and slave.

He had dinner with his father that night, a dinner planned several days before. Garid chatted amiably. He asked his father about the cases he was working on, described his latest project, joked about the roboSERVER's manners. Finally Liaske asked, 'Where are you tonight, Garid? Somewhere else, I see.'

Garid looked up, smiling a little. 'You may not want to hear it, Dad.'

'But you would like to tell me.'

Garid laughed. 'You're right, I would. It's hard not to talk about it, but... well, I hate to spoil your pleasant dinner.'

'Well?'

The younger man's eyes glinted; just like his father not to tolerate evasion. He leaned back in his chair. 'Another woman is being sent here from Raniz.'

The words hung suspended between them. The silence lengthened. Garid kept an eye on his father's face, and waited.

Liaske finally stirred and spoke, his voice only slightly less firm than usual. ‘And you would like to buy her?’

Garid pushed his plate away a little and glanced up again. ‘Yes.’

Another lengthy silence.

‘Keep an uncontrollable criminal in your house? A female?’

‘I can control her.’ The glint was back in Garid’s eye.

‘Make a spectacle and a sensation whenever you walk her?’

‘They have to have some fresh air.’

‘Garid, be serious. What about your career? Woman owners are notorious perverts; how can you do that to yourself?’

Garid leaned back in his chair and sighed. ‘Dad, I’m sorry about the notoriety, but unusual sexual practices are more acceptable these days. I work for myself, and frankly I have enough money to get by now even if I never get another contract. Anyway, only the really educated people know it’s a perversion. The rest of the world thinks of them as unusual pets.’

As he listened, Liaske observed his son with care. The calm surface and casual words didn’t fool him; they were millimeters deep, over a depth of intensity that Liaske had never seen before. Garid had always been determined, but this went far beyond determination. The facts and impressions he already had sorted themselves into new configurations. ‘I suspected that you were – heterosexual – since you never seemed to have any partners.’ He looked away. ‘I was relieved that you didn’t decide to move permanently off-world. But this...’

‘You wish I would move off-world after all?’

‘No.’ The father looked surprised at his quick answer, then thought for a while, his eyes on his wine. ‘It would save me some embarrassment, but – no. Do what you must.’

Garid thought about his father’s words later. ‘Do what you must.’ This was no reluctant retraction to keep his only son’s company on Henth. The acceptance was genuine. His father

didn't use words like 'must' idly; he had somehow understood that this was at the level of need, not self-indulgence. Given how much both of them valued self-control and the concealment of emotion, Liaske's intuitiveness was uncanny. It was also characteristic of his father to refuse to make obstacles. Sometimes that attitude had irritated Garid, when he'd been up for a fight and found that no fight was forthcoming. But in recent years he'd found it restful.

A different part of Garid's mind was traveling from Raniz with the ship. A female on it ready to be owned. Weeks only till he would see her. That night, Garid lay between sleep and waking, seeing a woman in front of him, something he owned and controlled. A soft woman's body, with that beautiful, grasping wet orifice, designed for his cock. Breasts, breasts he could squeeze and pinch. Flaring woman's buttocks that would shudder and twist under a whip or beneath his hand. He saw the rounded thighs and arms, the slender neck, waist, wrists, ankles, and he clasped them in restraints.

He could not have accepted coercion. The history of the universe was full of forced servitude; it disgusted him. He would not, *could* not be that kind of tyrant. He had to have consent. And yet the dominance games he'd played off-world had been just that – games. It was pretense, as easily dropped as taken up. This would be different. This would be the real thing.

## **Henth and Raniz**

I suppose I should give you some background on how my society got to be the way it is. Despite my perversion, I still forget that men and women of the same species on separate planets is not the galactic norm. In fact, I don't think it's happened anywhere else, so I'd better give you a fast history lesson, like they gave me when I was a little girl in school. Plus a few of my own asides.

The planets Henth and Raniz were discovered around the same time, during what was called the Great Expansion – practically prehistory, unless you like to study that kind of thing. The planets are in twin systems, next door to each other by galactic standards, but pretty isolated from anyone else. The next habitable system is ninety-six light years away, and as it's only barely habitable, there's hardly anyone there to be neighborly. You'd have to go another twenty-seven light years to get more than stopgap repairs for a damaged spacecraft.

The original population was sent as colonists to Henth, the better resourced planet, easy to adapt for human habitation. There was no faster-than-light travel back then, so such journeys were forever, and colonists were more or less on their own. These particular colonists were happy with the isolation. Although they kept up a bare minimum of contact with Galactic Central on Eies 4, they had arrived on Henth with some grievances, which solidified into real xenophobia. I was fed some paranoia in school about galactic-level conspiracies. Reading between the lines, I suspect that in fact the colonists – a rather weird sect from Old Earth – had pulled a few fast ones with the original territorial contract, and were lucky not to have been hauled into court before they left. Going back would probably have seemed out of the question. Within a few generations they had pretty much written off the rest of the universe, and a few generations after that they hardly remembered it existed. They don't seem to have been a pleasant lot. I bet Galactic Central was glad to see the back of them.

The group was odd in ways well beyond a general suspicion of the universe. They belonged to a sect that preferred widely different male and female behaviors and approaches to life, virtually different cultures. They worked differently, played differently, entertained themselves differently. They even ate quite different foods. The sexes were more or less equal in status; mainstream culture had influenced them that far. Equal, but tending to eye each other warily from a distance. On Henth they were able to spread out, and their differences had more room to flower. Even the languages diverged. While the land was being developed for food production, they needed to keep

the population down. Perhaps this had something to do with an increasing homosexual population in both sexes, I don't know. Maybe there had been a strong genetic tendency in that direction. In any case, over time men and women lived more and more separately. Even the heterosexuals supposedly in partnerships didn't have much in common and began to live with their own sex. A lot of the antagonism was based on fear, according to the stories: women feared men's strength and domination; men feared women's power.

As time passed, understandably under the circumstances, artificial insemination became the norm. Children were raised by adults of their own sex. Then some women began to object to birthing sons and handing them over to the virtual strangers that were their biological fathers. Sperm separation allowed these women to bear only daughters. Male birthrates dropped, and men, alarmed, began to threaten. There were some ugly scenes, and peaceful coexistence began to look impossible. At last, to everyone's relief, Agime's team managed to develop a safe and reliable artificial uterus. The male birthrate went up, and tension went down, but any remaining trust was essentially gone. After a few years of uneasy peace – maintained by some careful geographic distance – efficient ways of combining the genetic material of two males or two females were developed, and the sexes were free of each other forever. The women celebrated by moving their entire population to the other nearby habitable planet, scarce in resources, but great in freedom.

Of course, on separate planets the two cultures really storm-tunneled off onto separate paths. The women deliberately reinvented their language to rid it of what they considered to be male-dominant constructions. They made it as different as possible, despite the years of confusion this created. Another change on the women's part was to save their scarce resources by selecting for smaller size. At the same time men were gaining in height, though I'm not sure whether this was deliberate or a side effect of reproducing without us smaller females. And both sides now had another reason for their xenophobia; the rest of the galaxy was full of people of the opposite sex. They stayed at home.

In my furtive researches into the matter, I caught hints that there were always a few people who weren't happy, who wanted the others. A few of them took advantage of the occasional trading ship (once faster-than-light travel had been invented), made the long, expensive journey to two-sex planets, and mostly stayed there. No one ever came out and said why. On Raniz, people who left were called 'bezikam'. The word described someone with an inexplicable and unfortunate wanderlust and implied disapproval over the abandoning of responsibilities. Heterosexuality was a whisper, a phantom, unmentionable.

Raniz didn't let any males past their own port boundaries, and after a couple of adventurous sightseers were almost killed by frightened mobs, kept any male landings there secret and extremely brief. Incidents at the Henth spaceport led to similar restrictions. After forty generations of this, the populations hardly remembered that the other gender existed at all. I can tell you that the Raniz history lessons skipped over that period pretty rapidly; an hour digging in the school garden and you'd miss it.

Gradually, over long periods, there came to be minimal amounts of trade between the two planets. But the suspicions continued, and interactions were restricted to an extremely small number of government officials or port authorities. Then something interesting happened at a rare trade talk between the two planets. The representative of Henth, a closet heterosexual dominant, but wealthy and powerful enough to make and break laws, made a suggestion to the Raniz envoy. His idea was that her government send incorrigible women as slaves to Henth. Oddly enough, the Raniz envoy took him up on it, thinking that just the mention of it as a possibility would shake up a few delinquent young women. She never expected that anyone would take the option.

The central tenet of Raniz social philosophy, drilled into me until I was sick, is that people take active responsibility, use initiative to improve the world around them. A world scarce in resources, that wants little to do with the rest of the universe, needs all the help from its population it can get. A girl who cannot demonstrate such responsible behavior by early

adulthood is pretty marginal in that society. If on top of that she is destructive or delinquent, steps are taken; she is brought to trial, and if convicted is given a choice: intensive rehabilitation, exile, or sale to the men on Henth who like such things. The first choice is not unkind. The second allows a woman to go to seed as she likes in some shabby spaceport town off-world. The third is used as a bogey to frighten irresponsible children. Only the rarest of the incorrigible, not only heterosexual but deeply, secretly submissive, ever choose the Third Option.

Those many years ago, the envoy of Raniz was astonished, and her counterpart on Henth delighted, when the first woman made her way to his bonds. He was not allowed to keep the ones that came after; other powers on Henth got into the act. By law the females from Raniz have to be auctioned to the highest bidder, the proceeds naturally being scooped by the State.

There was a certain amount of ferment on Raniz, of course, when the first woman went to Henth. A lot of shouting in the Eosad, the governing body, and a few crazies predicting an invasion of slave-hunting men, taking up old – by now, really old – hostilities. However, anyone informed about Henth knew that very few of them were interested in women at all. For most Ranizens, men had become practically a myth and were not believable as a threat. And another tenet of Raniz philosophy is keeping its word; there was loss of face in backing out of the agreement. The envoy resigned and ended her career right there. But the statute remained.

## **The Landing**

The last few days before we reached Henth I was crawling with nerves, could feel my heart jumping, could almost feel myself being handled. I started pacing restlessly, bumping myself deliberately against the walls in my agitation. When would we get there? I had been waiting so long. I had to know what would happen – had to. Then I started to worry that they

would notice what I was doing, think I had really gone crazy, and somehow cancel the whole thing. That calmed me down in a hurry. I tried to go still. I sat on my bed, and breathed slowly and went passive. It had worked for me in detention, but I had first learned to do it when I was forced to stay at home instead of wandering around getting into trouble.

Once we were finally inside Henth's atmosphere and cruising toward our destination, the door opened. Two warders stood there. One of them, a chunky blonde woman, I knew only in that she had wordlessly brought me my food. The other, a gray-haired muscular type, I barely recognized. They looked sternly away from me and told me to take off my clothes. Still gazing off into the middle distance they directed me to relieve myself, then took me out shivering to stand by the doorlock. I resisted the urge to mouth off at them; really, I felt too embarrassed to try it. They tied my hands behind my back, buckled a collar with a leash around my neck and hooked it to the wall, and then they fastened some kind of bit between my teeth. The gray-haired woman said, with evident irritation and a curled lip, 'The men expect you to be as naked as an animal, since to them you are one. And animals may bite or scratch or try to run away.' Then they went back to their work, leaving me standing there.

After all those weeks of privacy in my cabin this sudden exposure was intoxicating, terrifying. I pulled at the bonds on my wrists, at the collar and leash; nothing gave, and joy started to well up in me. It was starting. The crew went about the business of landing, indifferent to the cargo at the doorlock. I guess their disapproval had run its course, and now they were mostly interested in engine cool-down and what kind of cargo would make up my price. In any case they avoided looking at me any more than they had to. They started to pile some crates close by.

My humiliation was intense. I couldn't cover myself. Just being naked in front of all these people was the stuff of dreams – exciting, shame-filled dreams, especially with my hands unable to offer any protection. The collar, leash and bit made it clear I was not a human prisoner but an animal one. Worst of all was the bit, pulling at the corners of my mouth. I was afraid

it made me look ugly. Soon men would see me, the men I had been waiting for all these years. They would see me as a collared and bitted animal. As exciting as this was, I was very scared that they would laugh at me or be disgusted. ‘But you’re not here as Star Empress, stupid girl,’ I said to myself. ‘What did you expect, that they would fall down and worship you because you’ve made a gift of yourself?’ In the meantime my insides were melting, and my nipples weren’t hard only because of the chill. I stood staring at the doorlock, willing it to open.

I remember that the word going through my mind was Yes. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes to whatever was out there. I had also never been so scared in my life; my heart was slamming in my chest.

At last the ship landed, and the door was opened. I felt the warm alien breeze brush against my front, the chilly, stale air of the ship still at my back. I had to wait for the crates to be unloaded, with a slow deliberation that seemed provocative. If I hadn’t been leashed to the wall I might have made my own way out and to hell with them. Finally the gray-haired woman led me out of that dark metal cave into the sunlight. I blinked, unable to see for a moment. My skin was bathed in very warm, strangely scented air. The light seemed more yellow than I was used to, as if I was looking through colored glass. As I was tugged down the gangway the spaceport opened up around me.

And then I saw the men. A few were waiting at the foot of the gangplank to receive us, but activity in the spaceport seemed to have stopped everywhere, and all the eyes I could see were on me. I shrank back involuntarily, but the leash pulled and step by step I found myself following. The strange faces all looked curious, even fascinated – the kinds of faces you’d see around an odd exhibit at the zoo.

When I reached the bottom of the gangplank I was surrounded by giants. Nothing had prepared me for the size of them. It wasn’t just their height; there were broad shoulders under those clothes, hard, defined muscles in the forearm nearest me. I had never seen beards before – except on that old warder – and the deep voices seemed to vibrate through my

naked, vulnerable body. I was breathing too fast, I was hyperventilating, and the new world started to move and shift. I was blacking out, so I sank to my knees and put my head down. I was hoping that this tribute would be acceptable, as I couldn't for the moment stay upright.

I was ignored, I think, for the few minutes I needed to recover. Then the leash tugged on my throat and I sat up on my heels, trying to breathe slowly around the bit in my teeth. My warder still held the leash, her mouth wry with displeasure. She probably thought I had done it on purpose, the old bitch. I kept my eyes at the level of the knees around me; there was almost nothing I could see from down there anyway. I heard the hand-held computers translating the formalities. I was dimly aware of cargoes examined, receipts exchanged. Although I was no longer fainting, something was making me feel weirdly off-balance, primitive, excited. I traced it to the unfamiliar smell coming from the men, a male smell apparently, and realized it made me want to do things, things that didn't require words: touch, beg, open.

At last I felt another hard tug on my collar, and I got to my feet again. The leash was handed over to one of the men; this seemed to be the final formality. I looked up at him timidly, very conscious of the bit in my mouth. He was middle-aged, huge, with a calm, authoritative face. He took the leash up short, next to my neck, and walked me away from the ship. The crowd parted around us, like a canyon opening up. I looked back through the gap behind me with some difficulty, to see the women busy with the larger cargo, some already walking back into the ship. None spared me a glance.

My new keeper turned my collar so that the ring was on the side, then pulled upward, his enormous fist holding the leash tight next to the collar, below my ear. He walked me across the spaceport in this way, my hands still fastened behind my back, almost unbalanced by the pull, completely controlled by the choke of the collar and the tightness of his grasp. I had to half run awkwardly along next to him, up on my toes. My mind flashed on the image of big dogs controlled in this way. My thoughts were confirmed when we boarded a large airtruck, and I saw animals in cages. Within moments I was pushed

down on my knees in front of a small cage. My hands were released from behind me and I was shoved, crawling, into the enclosure. Straw rustled under my hands and knees. I heard the door lock behind me. A hand reached in and unbuckled my collar, then replaced it with a heavier one, which locked with a snap. The bit stayed in place; I felt a lock snap on that also. It was very wet with saliva by this time, and with my head down I couldn't help drooling.

Looking through the bars I saw the other cages occupied by dogs, clearly pedigreed, beautifully groomed. There were also two ocelots and a capuchin monkey, a plumed vulture, and a pig-like sireuch. These were the only cages I could see from my position. The smells and the noise of animals invaded my consciousness in a wave, my own smell among them. The keeper was gone. I crouched in my small prison, unable to sit up fully or stretch out at all. I was so scared I had to breathe deeply and slowly to keep from losing it.

While I slowed my breathing I guessed at what was going on. The keeper was, as I had thought, an animal handler; evidently I was one of a cargo of exotic animals, probably being transported for sale. He didn't wait to see if I would be docile, he just made sure I had no opportunity to misbehave; it probably saved him time. Or maybe my reputation had preceded me? I curled up in the straw, my back pushed up against the solid bars. Even if I had been able to speak intelligibly, no one here knew my language, and the Henthen language is, believe me, not on the curriculum in Raniz schools. I had known this, of course, but it really began to hit home.

For an appalling moment I felt sick for what I had lost. I closed my eyes, and for an instant I was back there. The animal noises were the scolding of my mothers, my aunts and sisters. I was silent by choice, not gagged and dumb.

I had been in control on Raniz; frustrating the elders, committing the misbehaviors, forcing the trial, choosing the punishment. Now I controlled nothing. Well, of course I had arranged that; that's what I wanted, wasn't it? No one to plead with me here, no one to offer me wise choices. Homesickness

was followed by waves of dread. I lay there shivering and weeping, my wet mouth clenched on the bit. My other wet mouth responded instantly to the touch of my hand. I worked myself with small movements, coming so violently and fast that I whimpered through my tears.

As I opened my eyes the keeper was passing my cage with an indifferent glance. Instantly my face was flaming. No one had ever, ever seen me do that before. I curled myself up and covered my burning face, smelling my heady juices on my hand. In all my fantasies I had never imagined such humiliation.

Just being caught in such an act was not the worst of it, but in my initial confusion I couldn't think why. I buried my head and closed my eyes tightly. But I kept seeing the keeper's expression, or lack of it. His reaction was about what it would have been to a dog licking its cock. Animals masturbate in public; he was used to it. I moaned against my hands.

The doors to the airtruck were shut, and the craft took off. The animals in the cages just like mine barked, hissed, growled, settled into the straw.

A man came through the aisle between the cages, not the keeper but a younger man, who stopped and looked at me curiously. Cautiously he reached through the bars to stroke my hair and then my flank. I looked up at him for a moment, pleased by his touch, and fascinated by his maleness, then thought of how the bit must look, and dropped my eyes. He gently grasped one breast and weighed it in his big hand, kneading it lightly.

Then he pulled one leg away from the other and stared between them. My thighs were slick with moisture, and I knew my cunt was swollen and red. I hardly breathed. Then with a little shrug he let me go, gave me a pat and walked up to the cockpit. I let out my breath and watched him all the way up the aisle.

It took an hour or so to reach our destination. I kept shifting positions, testing what was possible in my small kennel. I thought I had no dignity left, but I was wrong. I lost some

more when we got there; I was walked on a leash in a courtyard and had to relieve myself, squatting, my hands fastened behind my back.

They pulled me through a big doorway. There was a tug at my head, and the bit was pulled from my mouth. One keeper held the leash in one hand, and my bound wrists up high behind my back with the other. The other swabbed my face with a cloth, brushed my hair and swept the straw from my skin. I was crimson when the impersonal hands touched me in intimate areas. I wanted to pull away, or to press myself against them. I did neither, but held myself still, trembling with the effort.

I was being held and handled by men, of course, and although I managed not to faint again, I still found their presence shattering. They were talking as they worked, about something unrelated to the chore at hand; try as I might I could make no sense of it. I shook my head in confusion.

They drew me into the middle of a cylindrical framework, which looked for a moment like a new kind of cage; one I could stand up in. But there were gaps big enough for me to slip through. Confused, I turned to look at the keepers. One was outside. The other firmly pulled my shoulders back, making me thrust out my chest, and angled my head upward with his fingers.

He pulled the leash through the framework at the top, so that the collar held me in place, almost in a choke hold. Then, keeping the tension on the leash, he slid himself out of the framework. Red lights all around me flashed once. Was this some kind of decontamination? They drew me out and away. When I looked back a few minutes later they had an ocelot in there, restless, its leash also stretched upward, and the lights flashed again. A tiny ocelot floated outside the frame. A holograph. I'd been holographed. Naked. Leashed. With my hands tied behind my back. I felt a helpless urge to hide.

They left my hands fastened when they fed me in the small cage. The food tasted unfamiliar but not inedible; I suspect it was monkey chow. I was so new at eating with my hands tied behind my back that I had to take frequent rests, looking

covertly at the handlers to see if they were watching my humiliating performance. They barely glanced at me. When they took the bowl away they untied me at last, and I did my best to make myself comfortable, trying to wipe my food-covered face with bits of straw.

I slept fitfully, amazed each time I woke to be where I was. I touched and grasped the solid bars of the cage, and fingered the firm leather collar around my neck that I could not remove. I squirmed in discomfort on the prickly straw, and felt that I deserved it all.

## **Auction**

The kennel courtyard boiled with activity the next day, with animals being exercised, washed and groomed. Dogs were being combed and clipped, the ocelots arching their backs like housecats as they were brushed. I was tied with my hands stretched out to each side, and was brushed down again and washed all over. I found myself panting, as if I'd been running. The bondage and all the touching were making me so agitated and excited that I couldn't help pulling a bit on the ropes. A whimper kept rising in my throat. They rinsed me with a hose, pulled my head back to sluice down my hair, then combed and toweled me a little and left me to dry in the warm sunlight. I calmed down a little. There were several handlers now that I hadn't seen the night before. But after their initial curiosity they barely looked at me. I began having catastrophic fantasies of no one wanting me at all.

The air was still, and the sky was an odd shade of deep, cloudless blue, changing to green as it approached the horizon. I could feel my hair rippling around my shoulders as it dried. I watched as a man walked around the rows of tethered animals, checking a computer and tagging collars. When he reached me he did the same, reached down to snap a dangling tag on my collar and checked his watch. I realized with a jolt that all the preparation was probably for the auction, that I was about to

be sold. Suddenly my head seemed to be floating well above the rest of me. None of this was real.

Someone fastened my unresisting hands behind my back again, leashed me and led me around the outside of the next building. I seemed to be about ten meters up as I watched myself follow.

I caught a glimpse through a wide side entrance of a large empty barn of a room, with rows of seats in front of a long platform. Then they led me in through a back door and fastened my leash to a ring in the wall. My brain, detached, was mechanically analyzing the setup. I couldn't see the large room I had glimpsed, though there were stairs with big double doors at the top that must lead out onto the platform.

For a long time I knelt back, tethered in the holding area with the other animals. Gradually I rejoined myself, and fear seeped in, not swamping me yet, but trickling audibly beneath the floorboards. The *vraag* was near me, ruffling its scaly feathers and eyeing me in a beady sort of way. I hoped its leash was short; I heard they bit. What would the men see when they looked at me? I was intensely thankful they hadn't gagged me.

I heard the auction starting, the cadences unmistakable even in the unknown language, and in voices so deep that they seemed to make aching vibrations in my belly. The leashed animals were led or carried up the steps and through the door to the back of the platform, one by one, in the order in which they were lined up at the walls or in cages down the middle. There was an empty feeling somewhere behind my breastbone that made it hard to breathe. Some man must be out there who was going to buy me. Own me. Very soon now, I hoped. This couldn't be happening; could it? Perhaps I would wake up in my bed at home. I pulled my head away from the wall and felt the collar press very realistically against my throat. I had a small semi-arc in which I could move my head.

I looked around. The room was half empty now. I wondered where the animals went that were auctioned. Where would I go, afterwards? Would a new owner just walk off with me, the

way the keeper had walked me away from the ship? And then...? What then? And what if no one bid on me...?

A big, bizarrely patterned cat padded by me, quite close, making me shrink back. That sale seemed to go on for a long time, with the next creature, something long, furry and impatient, winding itself around the keeper's arms as it waited by the door. Then a pair of birds in a large cage was wheeled past. One of the wheels squeaked. They laid out a ramp and pushed the cage up to the doors and through. Two dogs were growling at each other close by; chains rattled. A man pulled one of them away and up to the platform. Claws scabbled on the floor. I waited. I breathed a little, gently, behind the balloon that had lodged in my chest. Then the *vraag*, hissing, allowed itself to be dragged to the platform. It took two handlers, and yes, it tried to bite one of them. Once it was at the door, one of the handlers walked back towards me.

*This is it*, I thought again, just as I had in the courtroom. Now I felt that *this* was the moment, the real start of it all. It was one of the events I had envisioned again and again – being sold. This scene, and the moment I saw men for the first time, and the moment in the courtroom – all had been icons of my inner world for years. I could assign this moment to my imagination if I just blurred my eyes a little.

Obviously I had lived in a fantasy world far too long. My room, and my cell, too, had teemed with the figments of my fervid imagination. I could make them so real that when intruders had walked in, painfully ordinary and insensible, I felt uneasy, surprised that they couldn't sense what shared the room. What they were displacing.

But when I opened my eyes wide again the details jumped out at me, details I couldn't have imagined: the odd height of the ceiling, the *vraag*'s elaborate tail feathers as they whisked through the door, the solid pull of the cuffs and the smell of my fear. I could hear the auctioneer's renewed up and down cadence. The man unfastened me from the wall. Then he was walking me toward the platform. I couldn't remember having stood up, but I must have. My knees felt weak, and I wondered what would happen if they failed me. My cunt lips slid wetly

against each other as I was walked up the steps to the platform. The steps were too high for me; I had to stretch for each one, difficult without hands to balance. A big hand steadied me on the last step. The sounds of selling stopped; the auctioneer was talking to the crowd in normal tones.

The handler steered me through the door, and I was on the platform. The big room opened up before me, men everywhere. There was a rumble in the crowd; once again my naked body was the focus for all the eyes I could see. I could hardly breathe. I closed my eyes for a moment to slow what was accelerating toward me: a hurricane of outrageous joy and humiliation.

When I opened my eyes again I sensed a movement in the crowd. Most of the men were focused on conversations and were no longer looking at me, but a smaller group had moved in around the platform. They were hardly speaking, their rigid tension suggesting competition rather than friendliness, and every single eye was riveted on me.

I figured someone would want me after all.

The men beside me rapidly moved my wrists to the front, linking them with about a foot of chain on heavy leather cuffs. Then they fastened the links to a hook they let down above my head and tightened it until I was up on my toes. The auctioneer began talking, his huge hands on my body, jiggling my breasts to show them off, drawing his fingers down my belly and squeezing my legs, tugging a little on my pubic hair. He turned me around to show me from behind, all the time taking bids, running his hands over the curve of my hips and ass. Then he turned me back again. There was so much to take in: the men's faces so intent on me; the auctioneer's booming voice, and his huge hands all over me; my body stretched and helpless. I couldn't process it all. The bids were coming fast and furious. I clenched my fists above the cuffs, trying to contain the intense fear that occupied me, feeling so stupefied that I didn't realize just how aroused I was, until I felt my cunt juices seeping down my thighs. I swayed on the chain, nudged this way and that by the man beside me.

Then in response to voices from the crowd, the auctioneer consulted with the handler. They each took one of my ankles and pulled them up toward the crowd and wide apart. My weight was now heavily on my wrists, and I was sure it was impossible to bear so much humiliation. My naked, wet cunt was being exposed so lewdly, so publicly; there was a roaring in my ears, but I thought I heard laughter in the crowd. Suddenly rebellious, I twisted helplessly in the chains and the men's grasp, like a scrap of silk caught in an iron gate. Hopeless. The men in front of me enjoyed it, however.

When my feet were touching the platform again, I was panting, and scarlet. The slickness of my inner thighs reminded me – and probably told the buyers in front of me – how excited I was as well. There was another series of bids, and then things slowed down. I think the price must have been getting high; several men looked disappointed and stopped bidding.

One man who was still involved was not seated but was standing near the platform to my left, a lean, young-looking man with black hair and a close-cropped beard, tall even in this room full of giants. His intent light green eyes were fastened on me. Those eyes looked electric, in a motionless face, lightning behind basalt cliffs. His face was almost at the same level as mine, despite the height of the platform. Once our eyes touched he seemed to pull me into him. I was caught and snared by the male energy he focused on me. In spite of the bonds stretching me so tightly, I almost felt I would be pulled across the platform to him. His eyes held me as he signaled his bids.

Suddenly I felt the chain slacken and I was pulled away. The bidding had ended. He was gone, I couldn't see him. Had he bought me? Who had bought me, was it him? I felt frantic, helpless, an animal owned but unsure of its owner.

## **Home**

Garid's hands moved automatically on the controls of his aircar. He was traveling northwest over the ocean, the two huge islands that were his home region just beyond the horizon. The sun was glittering on the waves below, the afternoon sky its most perfect turquoise. But Garid was oblivious. It was a good thing the autopilot did most of the work of avoiding other vehicles...

His mind moved through the last few hours. He had been early for the auction, and for a while had talked to the other men who were there for the same purpose. There were a few friends among them, met through a network that was pleasant and supportive, except at times like these. He'd known that the competition would be intense, but knew he could handle it. His last few projects had put him beyond the fear of running out of money.

His friend Therin had greeted him with a wry look, which Garid understood very well. They had known they would be in contention, though of course this wouldn't interfere with their bids.

'I haven't seen you on the net,' Therin had said.

'Busy realizing my assets.'

'Bugger.' Therin, a wiry young man with a mop of brown curls and a wicked eye, had sat next to Garid and flicked him a glance, both friendly and sardonic.

Garid looked away with a half smile. 'There's Donshod.'

'Do you think he'd share her if he got her? Unlike you?' In their intense, sometimes obsessive conversations, Garid had expressed some ambivalence about letting anyone else use his hypothetical possession.

'I think he'd show a new vid of her nightly so he could lecture us on how to use women.'

Therin snickered. 'Do you ever wonder why he left Algomet 7 if he had so many women there?' Naturally the group was more off-world aware than most of Henth's population.

'Maybe we could find out. Then we could blackmail him into going back.'

‘At least back to Algomet 8.’ This was a mining planet they had heard of for male convicts; both the men snorted at the vision of elegant Donshod in a prison uniform.

‘To be fair, didn’t he find that binder that makes them so small in the waist? He’s not bad at that kind of research.’

‘What, corsets? No, one of the owners has been using them on his woman for years. Donshod just wanted us to think he’d discovered it.’

They had discussed where to have such equipment made, talking as if both of them would be woman owners by the end of the day. But Garid was restless, and had gotten up to see if he could have a look at the real woman, not just the catalogue holo. Although the vendors knew of the special interest in the woman pet, they tended to be casual about displaying their actual merchandise. A few animals had been visible through the doorway into the back area, but she had not been among them. Garid paced. The beauty of the holo had been enough to convince him, had convincing been necessary. He forced himself to stand quietly while the dogs, vraags and agexts were auctioned. He could not make himself sit down.

At last the woman had been brought into view. The auctioneer was surprisingly salacious in his handling of her; he knew his audience, the sly bugger. She had been a small fleshy jewel of excitement up on that platform. As he piloted his aircar, Garid could see the rounded naked flesh, the full, firm, animal breasts, the swollen folds between the legs struggling to free themselves. Her face had seemed childlike in its smoothness, the fear and excitement so easy to read on it. The eyes, caught in his own, giving up so readily to him. His hands, his whole body ached to feel that soft flesh, and his groin throbbed, wanting to take possession.

But he could wait. She was safe in the crate behind him. He suppressed his urge to yell aloud, a triumphant yell only held back because control was more satisfying. Waiting was a pleasure now that there was certainty at the end of it.

He heard her from time to time, stirring in the straw. His own pet woman! He had taken the congratulations and envy of

the others patiently and quietly made arrangements. The metal collar he had brought was around her neck, hung with the license and holo tag. Her description, holograph, hand and footprints were on file in the government's computer, with his name entered as owner. In the auction offices she had been strapped to a table, given a last medical exam, had all her scans done and her health and (most rare for a human) contraception certificates checked. While all of this was taking place, and while she was being roughly fed, the little creature had been compliant, but her eyes had kept straying to him.

There was enough information in her file to show that she was not capable of reasonable behavior when treated reasonably. She had to be controlled, or she created havoc. He could understand his father's fears, really. But he had no intention of allowing her any latitude.

I huddled in the crate, in deep straw, holding myself in the dimness. There were a few air holes in the top, but little light came through them. I thought about the man who'd bought me, the green-eyed man, and realized I was almost forgetting to breathe. From the platform he had looked thin, but up close I saw this was an illusion based on his height. He was lean, but incredibly tall, and his shoulders seemed to give him the breadth more of a house or an auto-harvester than a person. It was hard to believe that men, that this man, could be so large; he was on an entirely different scale than I was used to. Those huge hands could crush me. I was a young, healthy woman; I'd always been reasonably strong, at least on Raniz. Here I was a puny little bird in a snare.

I was scared. I was entranced. I was aroused. The movement of those great limbs had been clean and definite, no motion wasted. His face was unreadable. This man quietly controlled everything around him. Soon he'd be controlling me.

My excitement warred with the humiliation of knowing that I was going to have to empty my bladder like an animal in the straw. Would he beat me for it, or was that what the straw was for? Would that be better than being unable to control myself when I was brought out? Beads of sweat were forming on my

forehead, and the pain was becoming intense. If we didn't land soon... At last I gave up and let it go. I stayed as high as I could on my knees in the little space, in order to keep the urine from touching my skin. I was crimson with embarrassment, but stronger than embarrassment was the deep fear that I was doing something wrong, displeasing, that my owner – my owner! – would be angry with me. I shook a little, holding my face in my hands. I realized that more than anything I wanted him to be pleased with me; at least, I was hoping not to make him angry. This was a new one, after years of more or less deliberate misbehavior, directed at authority figures everywhere. Still, it was not entirely new, now that I thought of it. I remembered my childhood fears, and they were all that someone would be angry with me. That's what I felt like now, a small child, completely dependent on the slightest whim of the very large person to whom I belonged. Except that now the thought of obedience carried with it a complex, adult-sized burden of lust.

Garid brought the aircar into its port and rose from the seat, stretching. His housekeeper, Arleben, met him at the door with a cautious look, saying, 'Well, sir?'

'Yes.' Garid's face was impassive.

Arleben's face lit up. 'Wonderful, sir! Is it – I mean she...?'

'In the back.' Garid finally permitted himself a quick grin at his friend and subordinate. 'Bring the crate into the view room.'

The view room was called that not for the viewing they were about to do, but for its great windows, curtained now against the sun and the day's heat, looking out onto the city; the house and grounds were on the side of a hill. The room had couches in deep green-blue, touches of black and rust and gray on the walls. Garid pushed back a chair or two to make room for Arleben and Pav the cook, who were carrying the crate between them. Pav had insisted he could carry it by himself, but Arleben pointed out that it was an awkward size for one man, and they couldn't risk dropping it. So they both got to see

the woman. They set the crate down gently on the floor. Arleben made as if to turn away, but one eye remained on the crate. Pav stared openly. Garid was about to dismiss them, but saw the curiosity on their faces, and decided to satisfy it.

‘Open the crate, Arleben.’ The housekeeper undid the latches on the side of the crate, and swung the door wide. The woman was on her knees in there, blinking in the sudden light. Garid bent a bit, clicked his tongue at her and held out one hand, and she obeyed the gesture, crawling out of the box toward his hand. He checked the lock on her collar, and tugged on the license and ownership tag. Then he straightened up and took a step back. The woman glanced up a little, but they were too far above her to see, and she looked back at the floor.

Pav and Arleben stared. They looked at each other, eyebrows raised, then gazed again. ‘Um...’ Pav hesitated, ‘...very pretty.’ He sniffed audibly toward the container and had a look. ‘We’ll have to wash out this crate.’

Garid could see the woman tense up. Her arms were trembling, pushing rigid against the floor. ‘Yes, all right, later,’ he said casually, and noted that she sagged a little with relief. She was moving to sit back on her heels. He nudged her sharply with his foot, under her hip, and she shifted forward quickly onto her hands and knees again. He nudged her again, hard, this time on the inside of each knee, and she obeyed, spreading her knees apart. Garid let his men have a good look, then took hold of her collar and pulled her up to stand. They stared down at her breasts for a moment. Then he sent them out.

He stood there examining his little prize, then walked around to savor her from all sides. He had barely touched her so far; he wanted to prolong this exquisite moment of acquaintanceship as far as possible. Her skin was pale, smooth and elastic, the curves supple and sweet. Her breasts, softly trembling as he watched, looked large against her slender ribcage. His hands almost moved of their own accord to touch and squeeze them, but he pushed back the impulse. Instead he took her by the wrists, made her raise her arms, and examined how her breasts changed their shape. Her arms in the air, she

was watching his face watching her. He made her bend forward from the waist and examined the breasts, their soft weight falling like inverted teardrops. He gazed at her rounded ass from behind. Two beautiful ovals. Her light reddish-brown pubic hair was dark with her juices, the opening just visible, swollen and glistening. She held the position without moving, except for a trembling which communicated itself from her hands to her thighs and soon seemed to have all her body vibrating. He could hear her quick, uneven breathing.

Her excitement tinged the air, a tangy musk that brought back every woman he'd ever had. His own arousal was barely in check. It had been two years since his off-world trip, two years since he'd had a woman. His perverse preferences made ordinary sex, sex with a man, distasteful, and he had only given in once or twice for relief. But more than the sexual pressure, the mere physical frustration of celibacy, there had been the frustration of his need to possess, to own, to exert control over a small body like this. Here she was at last, and his control held, but just barely. Her female scent alone was intoxicating enough to destroy his defenses; his whole body wanted to grab her up and use her, invade her body and take over, mark her as his.

Garid straightened the woman up by the shoulders and circled around to look again at her breasts as they heaved in time with her rapid breathing. At last he reached out and stroked one of the pliant mounds, weighing it in his hand. His cock threatened to burst from the confines of his clothes. He rolled the nipple tightly between his fingers, then stroked down her belly until he held her cunt in his hand. She was breathing in gasps now. She looked up at him and they locked gazes for a long moment, their eyes bright and feverish. Her soft fur, the slippery flesh behind it, the female smell of her like a drug in the air, at last was too much, even for him. He stepped back and shed his clothes, his gaze never leaving her. Her eyes widened at the sight of his chest and shoulders, and when she saw his erect cock her mouth dropped open and she cried out, backing away a step or two. He grabbed her and smacked her ass twice, hard. She stood still, crying a little. He picked her up, lifted her to him, his mouth kissing her neck,

her face, his tongue pushing into her mouth, and she responded with passionate intensity, her closed eyes spilling tears. He let himself cast aside control now; he moved in a frenzy, his hands everywhere, handling her roughly, trying to cram years of touching into moments. She was clutching his back and moaning continuously against his mouth, the sound rising to little whimpers as he squeezed her flesh, a sound so exciting he squeezed her harder to hear it again. The legs around his waist trembled and splayed against him. Garid would wait no longer; he found her opening with his fingers, spread her wide and lowered her onto his cock, gripping her hard and thrusting. She cried out in pain, and he felt something give way inside her. Then he was deep in that soft, tight chasm, exulting, in possession. He pushed her up against a wall and fucked her, hard, ravenous, his heat mounting with each thrust. He couldn't hold back long; within a minute he exploded inside her, his hands gripping her breasts, his shout reverberating through both their bodies.

Slowly he let me slide down between him and the wall, until I was on the floor. I felt riven, as if an earthquake had changed my topography. As if I could never be closed again. I was slumped down, staring at my open cunt; the fluid that seeped out was pinkish. His feet were still next to me; I suppose it had been only a few moments since he had let me down, but everything seemed to be moving as if we were under water. I wasn't thinking when I turned slowly onto my knees and put my head down to his feet. My arms were trembling as they wrapped around him, and I kissed him. I kissed each foot several times, and felt his hand stroking my hair. I was still shaking.

I felt a great hand slip into my mouth, and I tried to suck on his finger, but he gave a little pinch with the other hand; when I opened my mouth to yelp, he tapped my tongue and pushed my head down, saying a word, and pointing at a few drops of fluid on the floor. Tentatively I began licking them up, and was rewarded with a pat. I felt gorgeously abject, and was shakily proud of his approval. I was trying to remember the word that probably meant 'lick.' Hoping to please him I looked up –

god, his face seemed miles above me – and said my best approximation of the word. Immediately he walked off, and came back with something long in his hand. I heard a hissing sound and a crack, and my ass felt pain like nothing I'd ever felt before, an intense burning pain, followed by three more of the same. By the last one he was holding me down with a hand on my neck, and I was struggling and crying. When he stopped beating me he took me by the hair and directed my head back to the floor, where I groveled and licked between sobs and sniffs, this time without saying a word. I licked up the tears as well, without being told. My ass throbbed; I could feel the welts swelling. Then he said another word and pulled me away by the hair. I was too distraught to try to remember that one.

My master (I was thinking in those terms now; perhaps it was the beating that did it) stood me up in front of him, as he seated himself in a chair. My eyes were around the same level as his, and I blinked the tears away so that I could drink in the sight of him. He was bizarrely beautiful to me; all the hair on the broad, muscular chest and limbs, the beard that darkly shadowed his face, the lit up green eyes, the penis, frighteningly thick and hardening, veins meandering across the dusky reddish skin, still wet. He had leather cuffs in his hand; where had they come from? He fastened them on my wrists and ankles. They had locks built into the leather; I heard them snap. He fastened my hands behind my back. The combination of the restraint and the pain in my ass, now down to a dull burn, had me squirming around my sore cunt. He stilled me with a big hand closed on my hip and a warning look, and I froze. His long fingers pressed against my welts, and I whimpered a little. No, I whimpered a lot. He began playing with my breasts, using fingers, tongue and teeth, while I tried to stand still for him, still arching and moaning uncontrollably. When he squeezed both my nipples at the same time, there seemed to be a direct line from both of them to my cunt. I couldn't think; had nothing coherent left inside me, just sensation, one heavy layer folded over another, weighing me down till I could hardly stand.

Finally he let me sink down between his legs. His giant penis was in front of me, so frightening still. I couldn't believe that a

few minutes ago it had been inside me. Surely I hadn't... I didn't have that much space inside... He pulled my head toward it, and said what I thought was 'lick' again. Tentatively I put out my tongue and ran it along the hard silken surface. He seemed to approve, so I washed it again and again, reaching as much of it as I could. Finally he pointed it at my mouth, and I began to suck on it. I tried to get the huge knob in further, but my teeth touched it. At once he yanked me back with a hand in my hair, and pulled me up over his lap. His hand crashed down on my ass. The pain of this on top of my welts was a terrible shock; I couldn't get my breath. When I finally did, I wailed. He spanked me twice more, holding me hard by the waist while I kicked and struggled. Then he placed me back down in front of him. Again his penis was at my lips. I breathed hard, swallowed a sob or two and opened my mouth, very wide this time, trying hard. My ass felt like it was on fire.

I did my best to learn what he wanted, but of course I made mistakes, and he punished me again. And again. Since the situation was almost wordless, all I could do was learn by trial and error, and oh, god the errors hurt. He didn't always put me over his lap; sometimes he just pulled my face away and slapped my breast hard, then pointed to my lips or tongue or throat, and had me start again. I choked and gagged several times, and he punished me for that, too. He was calm, and relentless, and I was scared. I suppose I should have been resentful; instead I felt frantic to please him and frustrated with my own stupidity. I was terrified that he'd give up in disgust. I struggled on. Eventually I must have made some progress because he got even more enormous and harder still, and came in my throat, almost drowning me. I had known theoretically about what happened when a man had an orgasm, but the reality was a lesson I hadn't quite prepared for. I gulped it down anyway, and didn't take my mouth from around his penis until it softened and fell away.

I leaned against his leg then, tasting his come in the back of my throat, grateful for the hand stroking my hair. After a while he took a short leash from his box, passed it through an eye bolt recessed into the base of a wooden pillar, looped the hook

end through the handle and clipped it to my collar. My hands were still fastened behind my back, so I couldn't undo it. Simple and effective. He went off and I heard water running.

The leash was short enough to keep my head bowed when I was sitting on my heels, as I was. I toyed with the idea of lying down on my side, but I wasn't quite prepared to risk another beating. I didn't know what the rules were, but I suspected that not breaking position might be one of them. And I did *not* want to sit on my ass.

Eventually he came back into the room, clean and redressed, and unfastened me from the pillar. He led me down the hall into a bathroom, let me use the toilet (I had to wriggle myself backwards onto it like a child), then stood me in a tub the size of a small pond, and washed me gently all over. My hands were still locked behind my back, but the water didn't seem to affect the leather cuffs at all. Treated, I suppose.

The washing became a smooth soapy stroking, and my skin began to wait for him. Each part of me wanted to be the next to be touched. The part he was touching felt like a different sort of surface, raised and hypersensitive and sleepy and wide awake. My breasts in his soapy hands felt wonderful, silky and slippery, each nipple a point of indefinable bliss. Even my sore ass, especially my sore ass, wanted his touch like nothing before. His huge hands slid fairly painfully over the welts. He was touching my cunt and a painful place just behind it on my ass at the same time. I groaned with pain, or whatever it was, and leaned toward him, wanting more.

Then he showered me off, and dried me, and it was over. I whined a little and he stroked my hair, looking amused. He led me on the leash along a corridor, very austere looking, white walls and a dark wood floor, and down some stairs to a room with food laid out for one. This room looked neat but lived in, with at least two vidcom screens, a corner holo display and tidy piles of books. It would have felt fairly homelike if it hadn't been half again as big in all its dimensions and furniture as my eye expected. The room looked too informal to be a dining room, but perhaps this was where he ate when he didn't have company. I wasn't company. My bowl was on the floor a

few feet from his chair. I was glad when he released my arms from behind my back. However, my wrists were immediately locked again to the sides of the heavy, squarish bowl, which seemed to be bolted to the floor. Someone scraped some food into it, and there I was. I was grateful, and I was humiliated. I was grateful because he wasn't making me eat with my hands behind my back, which I had found hard. I was humiliated, because not only my master but two others could see me eating like a dog on the floor. I closed my eyes for a moment, put my head down and began to eat.

Again the food was unfamiliar; it was very plain. Some kind of porridge and a few vegetables. I could tell he had something different by the smells in the air. Whatever it was, it wasn't for me. I wasn't very hungry (too horny), and I was trying to eat without getting food on my face or in my hair. He was finished long before me; I could feel him eyeing me for a while. When I straightened my arms and sat back on my heels I caught his expression, and I froze again. He took a few steps across the room and came back with a thonged whip. He pushed my face down into the bowl and began to beat me. I choked, my face so far into the bowl that I couldn't see the food I began trying frantically to lick up. My painful keening was muffled by wet, embarrassing sounds of inefficient chewing and desperate swallowing. Tears were trickling down my messy face and into the bowl by the time I licked it clean and he stopped whipping me.

He left me there on my hands and knees for at least a half an hour, wrists fastened to the bowl, face covered with drying, flaky food. There was even some in my eyelashes. My ass felt hot and swollen; I couldn't count the beatings it had taken so far that day. I cried a little, partly because of the pain and humiliation, of course, and partly because of the fear of what was coming next. I was hoping that once I knew the rules I wouldn't get beaten quite so much. I was feeling very stupid; it had never occurred to me, in all my fantasies, that I would have to be trained. I guess I thought my master would put me where he wanted me, do what he liked with me, that I could be the passive – orgasmic – object. I knew I'd be beaten, for pleasure or as a punishment. I had just never thought I'd have

to make the effort to learn something. I hadn't made an effort to please anyone at home, naturally. And look at the mess that had been. Now I didn't really have a choice about it; I made an effort or else. This was terrifying – what if I couldn't learn? But also comforting. Making choices wasn't exactly my strong point.

The room was starting to get dark; night was falling. One of the other men came in and cleaned me up, then unlocked my wrists from the bowl. He locked a short chain onto my collar and led me up the stairs to a bedroom. The furnishings were simple, but had a lot of color, ruby shades and dark blues. Some primitive-looking art on the walls. The floor was slightly soft and resilient. I didn't get much chance to look around; the man locked my chain low down at the foot of the bed and left. This time I couldn't even consider lying down; the short chain was mostly taken up by having circled the bedpost. I couldn't straighten up either. The most comfortable position – well, the least uncomfortable, anyway – was back on my hands and knees, sitting on my haunches with my head low. I was thinking that there was a breed of dog that sat like that, but I couldn't think of the name of it. Some hound, I think. One of the ancient breeds.

I could hear sounds in other parts of the house, voices (those deep rumbles), things being moved, etcetera. I thought over what I'd learned that day. Rule One: Don't speak. That seemed to be critical, given the severity of the punishment. I wondered how I was ever going to learn the language if I couldn't try it out. Rule Two: Hard to define – a big composite bunch of barely acquired skills: Don't let my teeth touch his penis; don't gag; use my tongue along the ridge... Rule 3: Eat all my food whether I want it or not, and don't take too long about it. Rule 4 was probably Stay in the position you're placed in, but I hadn't dared to test that yet.

At last I heard footsteps coming along the hall. My master came in with some straps in his hand; I could catch that from peripheral vision. My breathing was suddenly shallow again; whether from his presence or from the sight of the straps I'm not sure. Probably both. He threw the straps on the bed and ignored me as he opened and closed drawers, rifled through

papers, went to the bathroom. I caught a glimpse of his naked back, a long, lithe, muscular triangle. I was suddenly so aroused I could hardly bear it.

Finally he was standing over me. I found myself almost whimpering from fear and eagerness. He unlocked my collar from the chain and stood me up. My head didn't even reach his chest. I cast covert glances at him as he went efficiently to work. The muscles in his arms... those shoulders... the smell of him... I wanted to rub myself against that body, open myself... He clipped a strap to my right wrist cuff and pulled my hand up behind my back, as high as it would go. I could see him watching my face for pain and adjusting the pull just short of that point. He passed the strap over my left shoulder, then diagonally down between my breasts to the right side of my waist. He kept it very taut as it went around the small of my back, crossed up from the left between my breasts again, and over my right shoulder. Then he slid it through the ring on my left wrist cuff, pulled that one up high behind my back, and clipped it. My arms were so firm to my back that they had virtually no movement at all. I felt my heart pounding and my insides swell, warm and wet and needy. I looked down. My breasts looked lovely, barbaric, with black leather crossed between them. And so vulnerable and exposed by the bondage.

Then my master sat me on his lap and made good use of their exposure. He spent a long, long time playing with my breasts, stroking, squeezing, pinching, pulling. Now there were nerves leading from them to every part of my body and back again, tugging, interweaving, vibrating. My mouth was open and I was breathing in guttural groans. I lost control and moved against his leg, and was rewarded by several painful slaps to my breasts, rather than caresses. He took his hand away until he was sure I was going to sit still, and then he continued. He began kissing me deeply. I responded with everything I had; at least he let me use my mouth. Then he turned me face down over his lap and ran his fingers across the welts he'd given me. He slapped them, not too hard, but enough to revive the pain of all the day's beatings, while he went back to pinching my nipples with the other hand. I began to think I might come from this alone, but I couldn't; all it did

was hold me dangling over the cliff, without letting me fall. I had been too overwhelmed in that first tumultuous encounter to try for an orgasm, but my arousal had accumulated, was now deeper and more profound, and I was being played and teased, teased and manipulated... He began carefully pinching and stretching my cunt lips, slowly, never staying in close so I could satisfy myself against his hand. I was moving uncontrollably now, for which I got some harder slaps.

At last he sat me on his lap with my back to him, lifted my hips and slowly worked me down over his huge cock. I was still sore and it hurt, but I was so deep, so in thrall to all the other sensations that pain only intensified them. His hands twisted my nipples and slid over my clitoris, and I screamed and came, and came, and came. It was a full minute of fireworks, exploding from my cunt outward, while he squeezed me tightly in his hand. I felt lit up; I think I would have glowed in the dark. You sure as hell could have heard me, anyway. Then he stood up, still inside me, and carried me to the bed where he arranged me on my face, ass high, still moaning and whimpering and clutching him with my wet cunt. He got his hand into the strap around my waist, and used it to keep me steady while he fucked me, hard, his body punishing my red ass as he thrust. Another intense spasm shook me and I screamed again. By the time he came I was so full of joy that tears leaked from my eyes. In that moment I knew it was all justified, it was worth it; everything I'd been through and put others through, the fear and the terrible risk. I had done what I had to do, and it was right.

My bed that night was in a little space under the stairs on the ground floor. It had probably just been cleared out for me. He chained my collar to a new ringbolt in the back wall, and gave me a blanket. I felt a little wistful that he didn't want me in his bed, or even at the foot of it. I crouched, holding the blanket, looking up at him, hoping to convey my longing with my eyes. I wanted to put my hand out to touch him, but I was afraid. That face was too foreign still, to guess what he might be thinking. Then he gestured with one hand, pushing my head down with the other. I kissed his feet. He patted me, and then he was gone in the dimness.

I didn't sleep for a long time, not surprisingly. The blanket didn't cushion the hard floor much. More important, I had huge amounts of experience to process, too much for one exhausted and overwhelmed slave to handle. My tired brain would not turn off. I relived the intense pain and pleasure of the day; both still lingered, imprinted on my nerves, my flesh. My owner's touch, his glance, seemed branded on me. What had really happened between us? What did that mean for tomorrow, and the next day, and the day after that? What would he expect next from me? How should I act? Where did the other two men fit in? My grasp on the possibilities was frustratingly tenuous, which made me all the more anxious to impose some order on it all. If I could just anticipate, maybe I could handle it better... once I picked up the language...

Garid lay sleepless in his bed. Details surfaced in his mind that he had not been aware of at the time: his slave's slight shake of the head when afraid, the way her buttocks shuddered and clenched under the whip, her helpless little hands and feet. He could see her slender forearm, like a doll's in his fist. She had reacted intensely when both nipples were squeezed, seeming to go into a trance. He remembered her slow upward glance as she stood before him, her eyes finally raised to his and locked, trying to drop her gaze but held helpless. With time he wanted to control her slightest movement, without even touching her, without ever using language more sophisticated than he would use on a dog.

That night he dreamed that he was starting out for somewhere; he didn't know where, but there was a sense of great significance about the trip. He was preparing for the journey, gathering supplies, packing containers, all with one hand. The other was held against him, closed around something very small. At last he looked down and opened his hand. She was there, curled up in his palm, looking up at him.

## **Toys**

I remember every minute of that first day with my master. After that, it's harder to sort out what happened when. It seems to me I spent the first few weeks on the point of fainting from fear and excitement. And from pain, sometimes. I know that there were hours every day when my master taught me exactly what he expected from me in the way of obedient behavior, with plenty of beatings to reinforce the learning. He did this with very few words, none of which I was allowed to say. I obeyed as well as I could; I had to, though it was a terrible struggle sometimes. I wanted to open my legs for him, present my breasts to him, even present my ass to be whipped – a little. That kind of obedience was relatively easy. It was much harder to open myself to real pain: to open my thighs to his whip, to hold up my breasts for the cane. Much harder to obey when it meant I got less attention rather than more, which was frequently the case.

And I was so clumsy at first, as I changed positions or presented myself for him to use. The lack of language slowed down my learning in a lot of areas – often I had no idea what I was being punished for – but I knew right away that I was unacceptably awkward. I often got the timing wrong and made the leash pull, or staggered as I rose from my knees, because my hands were behind my back and I didn't have the knack of balancing without them. He made me try moves like that over and over until I improved. Gradually I got better, but his requirements became more and more demanding and subtle as time went on. It was very hard to read his expression, or lack of it. Still, when a faint line appeared between his eyebrows my heart went into high gear. Punishment followed on that expression, like the crack of thunder follows a lightning flash.

He spent a lot of time with me in the first few weeks, and I became more accustomed to his incredible size and shape, his face outlined by darkness, the light eyes capturing me daily the way they had on the auction platform. His expression was generally impassive, unless he was very pleased, when he might break into a rare and heart-stopping smile. He didn't reward me in that way when I managed to perform properly; a nod and pat and less punishment was the most I could expect. No, the smile was reserved for the moments when he had most

discomfited or humiliated me, and he was watching the experience hit home. It was a smile of purest pleasure. It was not a sadistic smile, oddly enough, but something else, something I was too ignorant to understand. But even as I writhed, somehow I wanted more of it.

Within a day or two of my arrival I had been holographed in detail. New restraints kept appearing. One might be favored for a while, then another. Not that the old ones had lost their charms. I mean, all he had to do was fasten my arms behind me and I was gone. Given our respective sizes, just being handled by him was a bondage in itself. One huge hand around my arm was as implacable, as inescapable as the cuffs and chains that I lived in.

Still, there were new restraints. One day I was standing on tiptoe with my arms pulled taut above my head, and my master approached me with something in his hands that I recognized, with a thrill of excitement, as a corset. I had seen pictures of these in the articles on ancient costumes that I used to screen. I loved to look at the restrictive garments, try to imagine what they felt like, transport myself into a time when I was forced to wear one. And now here it was, a corset and harness combination that literally took my breath away. As my ribs struggled to expand against the hard leather I found out what they felt like, discovered the deep sexual flush that this kind of restriction brought me. It was as if all the heat in the squeezed areas was flowing down to make me open and swell, in waves of thick, slippery heat. My master pulled straps up on either side of my cunt and tightened the thigh bands; he paused to stroke my wide open slickness, so tightly framed with leather. I pulled so hard on my wrists that I lifted myself off my feet, my toes curling. I groaned and gasped, hungry, begging him with my vaguely thrusting hips to touch me again.

The corset curved closely underneath and between my breasts, like a pair of hands pushing up from below. He began tightening the heavy straps that fitted above them, restricting my breathing further, and squeezing my breasts so hard they jutted out firm and smooth as marble. Then he brought out a wide-fingered whip and began beating them, gently at first, and then harder and harder. When the tip of a strap caught my

nipple the intense pain caught me by surprise; I screamed, 'Please...!' Big mistake. Within seconds I had a fat gag in my mouth and I was being caned, several times on the ass and twice on the breasts. I hung there, weeping and gasping through the gag's air hole. Pain suffused my whole body, stretched and restrained as I was. The agonizing throb in my ass and breasts interwove with my cunt's seething, touched every part of me till I was lost again in that confused web of sensation. Shame intensified all of this, shame at having to be punished again, and disgust at myself for forgetting the rules.

When he finally let me down I crawled to him with my head down, hoping for a sign of forgiveness, still whimpering with pain and need. I don't know if what he gave me was forgiveness or not. He took me hard and fast from behind, making sure not just to pound against the welts on my rear, but also to squeeze those on my harnessed breasts, rubbing large fingers across them in deliberate torment. When I came it was with screams, still muffled by the gag.

After it was over he sat in a chair for a while, and let me lean against his leg. When he did not stroke my hair I finally got courage to look up at him, my head on his knee. He looked at me, his face impassive, unresponsive to my pleading look.

I didn't know what to do. He wasn't guiding me, and I found it scarier than his most stringent demands. Had I messed up permanently? Had he decided that my speaking meant I wasn't suitable to be his slave? Even worse, was he right? I touched the gag, using my fingers to settle it more firmly in my mouth. I hoped he would understand the gesture. Then I lay face down at his feet. Eventually he picked up a book, put his foot on my back and began to rock me a little. I lay passively, my sore, distended breasts pressed painfully into the floor, grateful for the touch of the foot that pushed me rhythmically back and forth.

Every morning when he woke there was a momentary suspension of belief, a pause, before Garid smiled, his eyes still closed, and remembered that it was true. He was really living what he wanted most. He felt as if he was doing a VR

brainwave tube, with his own needs and fantasies to guide the program. Only it was even better than fantasy, because he had never imagined the sweet subtleties of her trembling body, the pulse in her throat, the complex sounds of fear and submission and ecstasy coming from behind her gags. He had known he would be possessive, but never imagined being himself possessed by such a fierce sense of ownership, the jealous ruler of this small kingdom, this one subject.

Apart from his friend, Therin, whose exuberant good nature was hard to resist, he fended off most of the calls from his associates on the would-be masters' network, all of them eager to hear how he was doing, eager to visit, eager to grab a chunk of his prize. And though the real owners would probably make him welcome now, Garid stayed away. There was a driven quality to his feelings that he had never cared to dilute, and he did not want to lessen that intensity now. He owned this woman. That one incredible fact kept surprising him, kept him aching with lust, kept electrifying him every time he looked at her.

He did talk to Therin sometimes, even though his friend's inevitable wistfulness made him feel a little awkward.

'How's your little creature?' Therin asked by vidcam one day. 'What are you calling her, anyway?'

'Just "jeedy".' This was the diminutive of the word 'hajedy', meaning female animal. 'Jeedy' was one of the terms men used on Henth to call female pets or farm animals – 'Here, jeedy!' There were other such diminutives, from various parts of the planet, all of which, like 'jeedy', were more or less equivalent to 'girl', except that, since on Henth nothing female was human, the words had no human connotation.

'Do you want to see her?'

'Sure.'

Garid adjusted some controls, and the image of the woman, up on her toes with her hands fastened high overhead, appeared on Therin's screen. She was gagged, and a corset reduced her waist to something like the width of her head,

making the curved little body even more tiny and vulnerable looking. Garid appeared next to her.

‘Let me just tighten this.’ He twisted an instrument in several locations down the back fastening of the corset, making little ratcheting sounds that Therin could just hear. The slave was panting in short shallow breaths. Therin watched her breasts heave, or try to heave, squeezed between the corset below them and tight straps above. He was so hypnotized by this sight that he didn’t notice Garid letting her down. Then the woman was on the floor face down. Garid fastened her arms together and strapped ankles to elbows. The confined breasts were now pressed against the floor as well, a fascinating sight in itself. Garid pulled the woman’s head back, and fastened it with a strap from the back of her gag to the bonds on her ankles, increasing the straining arc of her spine. He glanced over at the screen. ‘Are you sure you want to watch, Ther? I don’t know how much of this I could take if I were you.’

‘If I can’t get my hands on her, this is better than nothing.’ Therin caught a flicker of regret in his friend’s composed face, but no change of mind. ‘She’s yours, you great bugger. I know it, you know it. What are you afraid of?’

‘I want to make sure she knows it.’

‘If she doesn’t know it by now... Look, I know you want her all to yourself, that’s no surprise.’

‘That’s most of it. But there is some reason to it. This is a process, and I don’t want it disturbed. She’s going deeper all the time. I won’t even think about sharing her till I’ve got her myself, all of her.’

Therin stared at the tightly bound figure for a long time in silence. He would have put up everything he owned to buy a woman, but it hadn’t been enough in this case. ‘All right, tell me when you think she’s all the way down.’

Therin saw the glint that generally served his friend for a smile. ‘You’ll be the first to know.’

That day it occurred to Garid that he had been just a little afraid that he would not be tough enough to own another

human being for real, too humane to inflict pain and humiliation on someone who couldn't walk away. He was able to admit this to himself now, because weeks had gone by, weeks of total immersion in his slave's use and discipline and care, before he had even remembered his fear. With an inward laugh he realized that it hadn't been a problem at all.

Day followed day. Something of a routine developed. I woke up each morning chained in the little space under the stairs, went to sleep there every night longing to be in my master's bed, or even on the floor at its foot. It made me rather sad, sometimes, but I had to accept that I didn't deserve it. The frequent punishments made that clear. Still, I lay there each night cogitating on what I should be doing differently. I couldn't help it, though it seemed to do no good.

They continued to give me all my meals in the bowl fastened to the floor. I never quite got used to the humiliation of it, even though the staff seemed quite casual about this method of feeding me. It was no big deal to them, as far as I could see; unlike my master they were getting no particular kick out of making me eat like a dog. On the other hand, it never seemed to occur to them that I should eat any other way. Fastening my wrists to the sides of the bowl was just part of the routine, and one they never forgot, although they often did forget to unfasten me for some time afterwards. There was a fair amount of scolding and disgust about the mess I made, and even though I couldn't help it, mealtime was a shaming process.

I was sometimes allowed to use a toilet when it was convenient for them, but usually it was walks – or rather crawls – on a leash in the garden to relieve myself. I was intensely grateful that the walls around the grounds were high, but visitors often saw me walked in this way, and didn't seem to take it as anything out of the ordinary. Then there was exercise on machines they could lock me into, which were re-jigged to be small enough for me. I was forced into exercise, as a diversion from the usual forced immobility. It seems like a

hell of a contrast, but in fact the similarity was more obvious to me: I had absolutely no choice about either.

If all this made me helpless and dependent, it was nothing to the times he kept me in a hood. This was a fitted leather thing that covered my head closely down past my neck. It had a gag inside it, pads over the ears, and a blindfold that could be on or off. He mostly kept it on. I spent hours sitting on my heels in that thing, blind and deaf, my arms fastened together to the elbow behind my back, and then to my ankles, presumably decorating rooms for his amusement. The contrast between my completely and tightly covered head and the nakedness of my defenseless body was powerfully strange and erotic. I remember the first time very well; I nearly jumped out of my skin at the slightest touch because of course I couldn't see it coming. I strained with all my might to hear through the hood, thinking I was tracking noises that were masked by my heart pounding in my ears.

When at last I accepted that I was accomplishing nothing, I gave up, to the darkness and near silence, to the loss of control through the loss of those most important senses. I had no hands available to feel with, either, and all I could smell or taste was leather and the rubbery substance of my gag. All I had to sense with was the soft skin of my body, up against the cool air, waiting, waiting, waiting for a touch.

When the touch finally came it was hands stroking my breasts, pulling on my nipples, and then my first experience of nipple clips. I remember bowing my hooded head in pain, bowing my body around my painful breasts, and then feeling my head pulled tightly back and fastened by something to my ankles. My thrust-out nipples felt another tug as weights were added to the clips, and I groaned into the gag. Big hands parted my knees, and then I felt pinching there, too, painful pinches that stayed on my labia. The hands left me but the clips did not, seeming to increase their pressure as I waited and throbbed.

I shivered after a while as I felt a subtle sensation, so subtle I had trouble identifying where it was coming from against all the pain and restraint. I knew it was making me clench and

tremble. I finally realized it was a light stroking across the tips of my clamped nipples, almost feather light, but it went on for several minutes, turning my level of arousal up and up. Then a prickling sensation, as if a stiff brush was being used in the same place, going back and forth over that border between stimulation and pain. Then the almost imperceptible stroking began on my labia, swollen against their clamps, and then light but painful prickling. Back and forth, nipples and labia, without ever touching my clit. Most of me was so tightly tied I could hardly even squirm, but my breath was hoarse under the hood.

After what felt like hours of torment with no release, in the darkness and the silence I lost my bearings. I was so disoriented that when something hurt my cunt more than usual I tried to close my legs. Quickly a strap slashed down on my thighs, making me squeal and open them wider than before. I took the additional punishment on my inner thighs, my legs shaking with tension. Then the tiny stimulation continued, only both areas at once, with an occasional brush over the welts nearest to my cunt. I was way past the point where I thought I couldn't stand anymore, when a cold metallic clamp suddenly closed on my clit. This bundle of nerves seemed to swell and burst. Within a moment I was shrieking my release into my gag, the fierce spasms stabbing my cunt like knives. I kept screaming, my gagged voice shrill in my ears, and kept coming as the clamp was yanked off and then replaced, again and again.

That night they had to carry me to my little kennel under the stairs; I was so shaky and exhausted I could hardly crawl. I lay there, curled up on my side, my hand closed as usual around the chain that linked my collar to the wall. My bruises hurt against the floor. My clit was an aching awareness between my thighs, themselves painfully pressed together, welt against welt. I couldn't sleep. My mind was for once shying away from what had happened, and this was so unusual that I began to wonder why. Reluctantly I took the experience out and touched it gingerly around the edges.

My subjection that day had been unnerving, had left me shaky and off-balance, far more than could be accounted for

by the physical experience alone. But why? I'd been confined for long periods before. For that matter, I'd been quite helpless from the moment I landed on this planet. They could do whatever they wanted to me; I couldn't stop them.

The hood. I winced. I had sometimes been able to see it coming – up to now. I'd had the sense of preparedness that goes with seeing it coming. Not this time. It was so simple to take that away from me, so stupid of me to count on that illusory control. I had my senses when he wanted me to have them – when he was training me to obey hand signals, for instance, or when he wanted me to hear a reprimand. Or when he held me with his gaze, a roadside mammal caught in the headlights, too mesmerized to step aside and save herself.

In the language of Raniz the word 'intelligence' is a variation on the words 'to see'. My eyes were the direct route to my brain, the place where I anticipated and tried to control my own responses, even if I could control nothing else. If even that was taken away, what was I?

Garid looked down on the little creature at his feet, his cock jumping at the sight, even after weeks of playing with her. The delicious curve of her haunches, the sweetness of her breasts, the delicate neck in its collar... He pushed her to her hands and knees. She was quicker now to understand what he wanted. He squatted down next to her on the floor, and fitted the heavy knee pads carefully in place. They locked tightly above and below each knee. Each fastened to itself at the back and prevented her from straightening her legs, but allowed her the normal range for crawling. He took each little hand and enclosed it in a snug, thumbless leather mitt, padded on the palm side and locked around her wrist. He muzzled her, her jaws held tightly around a bit gag. Then he walked around behind her and contemplated her pretty ass for a while. He got out the last piece of equipment, a thick tail held in its place at the end of her spine by almost invisible cords. There was a plug with a short rod that climbed up between her cheeks and helped support the tail. He greased the plug and slowly inserted it into her virgin asshole. He'd chosen a small one to

begin, but she still gasped and clenched involuntarily at the first touch. He was patient with her, letting her adjust to it, but he moved it inexorably up and in, bit by bit, pulling out a little, pushing in some more, twisting, tilting, while she groaned and trembled and held her muzzled head in her arms. At last he was able to fasten the cords and adjust the tail to his satisfaction. Then he sat back to admire his beautiful little dog slave.

She looked perfect once he had her leashed, the leash looped over a hook on the back of his door. She was very flushed and shamefaced, and could not help shaking and clenching around the dildo.

He left her there while he dressed for the party. Well, not a party, really, but a small gathering of colleagues, getting together to celebrate a contract. Several had asked about his new woman pet, and he had promised to bring her along. Others had been careful not to mention his strange acquisition; they had to work with Garid and didn't want to alienate him. These men happened to be aware of the reason for acquiring human females and found Garid's open heterosexuality very embarrassing. They projected the same embarrassment onto him, which embarrassed them still more. Clearly, the whole subject was better avoided. On Henth, compared to heterosexuality, slave ownership faded into insignificance.

Garid stood on the doorstep, feeling his pet tremble a little against his leg. It was a warm and humid evening, so she wasn't cold. He led her by the leash into the half-filled room. Despite her fear she crawled after him, docile, while the room went silent and everyone stared. A moment later Garid was approached by welcoming friends, and his pet was being patted and examined. There was some amusement over the tail, particularly when one elderly guest said he hadn't known that women actually had tails. He laughed loudest when the dildo was discovered, and could be seen surreptitiously tweaking the tail from time to time. Garid had no difficulty observing his pet's humiliation, and enjoyed it so much that he had some difficulty managing his erection.

He had worried there would be protests from someone in the room. Sooner or later there would be someone to lecture him about women being, in fact, human, and therefore needing emancipation. But this group contained few people so progressive or off-world aware. The only women that ever came past the ports at Henth were exotic pets, and without giving it much thought, that was how these men saw them. Sex was something you did with men, whether you preferred just one partner or a cluster of three or more.

So the woman was patted, her strange physiology exclaimed over. Her tiny size was in keeping with expectations; she was about average for certain popular dog breeds. Garid kept her close on the leash, sitting or lying at his feet the whole time.

He went into the kitchen and took off the muzzle to let her slurp some water from a bowl. His friend Deymir came in behind him.

‘Hey, Garid, does she bite?’

‘Not so far, but if enough people pull her tail, who knows?’ said Garid.

‘I won’t pull your tail, you little cutie. What’s her name?’

‘I don’t use her Ranizen name; “jeedy” is good enough.’

‘Okay. Here, does she eat these? Here, jeedy.’ Deymir offered the woman an hors d’oeuvre. She looked up at her owner and he nodded, so she took the morsel in her mouth.

‘Oh, can I try?’ said the host. He gave her a choice bit of salik meat, which she obviously enjoyed, and then persuaded Garid to leave her muzzle off. The guests had a good time feeding her tidbits, and the evening was more of a success than it would have been otherwise.

Sitting quietly in an alcove next to an open fire with an old friend, his pet at his feet, Garid listened to the questions he had been expecting all evening.

‘I know you, Garid. You’re a good man, a humane man. How can you derive pleasure from this – this degradation?’

‘As far as I can tell I was born this way. I can’t tell you which chromosome it’s on, but it’s there somewhere.’

‘But she is human, after all, she’s intelligent. She’s not really an animal.’

‘She’s made the way she is also. We’re both anomalies, but we match, you see. And she made a choice, back there on Raniz.’

His friend looked baffled. ‘Well, all right, I know she chose this. Still, I don’t understand. Why aren’t you teaching her to speak?’

‘My choice. It intensifies her position.’

‘But how do you know if she’s all right? What if something is hurting too much, and she can’t tell you?’

‘I check her restraints very carefully. And she can convey a lot without words. In fact, she couldn’t be easier to read.’

The man gave his last shot. ‘Garid, I hate to say this, but what if she’s unhappy? Would you keep her anyway? What if she changed her mind, and couldn’t speak and say so?’

Garid grimaced and looked away. ‘You would ask the killer questions.’ He thought for a moment. ‘No, I wouldn’t keep her if I really thought she was unhappy; I’d take her off-planet and let her go. But she’s not unhappy, believe me.’

‘How do you know?’

‘It may be unappealing to you, but look at this.’ He lifted his pet’s tail, and ran gentle fingers down the inside of her thigh. They glistened with juices. Avir caught sight of the swollen vagina.

‘She’s in heat!’ he exclaimed.

Garid laughed quietly. ‘She’s always in heat. Women don’t go in and out of season. This one is aroused all the time. The more I restrain and beat her, the more aroused she gets.’ She was clenching and wriggling in response to the light touch, raising her moist hind parts slightly toward her master. He put a restraining hand on her hip, squeezed, and growled, ‘Behave!’ She held herself still at once, only her breathing

betraying her excitement. Her inner thighs glimmered in the firelight.

Garid looked at his friend seriously. 'She can't help being what she is. And since this is what she is, she's property...' his hand tightened its grip, '...and she's mine.'

That night Garid played with his pet's anus, experimenting to see what reactions he could get from her. Her beautiful juicy vagina was more interesting to him. He'd seen enough assholes in the days when he felt he had to get it somewhere. Still, he enjoyed seeing her fastened over his bedrail, her feet tied apart, helpless as he tried various dildos and his fingers in her exposed rear. He heard the yelps and squeaks of discomfort turn to panting and the occasional throaty moan. He left her there for a long time with a dildo fastened in, which was a little bigger than the one she had worn that evening. When he slowly entered her sopping cunt and shifted the dildo gently around inside her ass, she shuddered and began a series of orgasms which wrenched her restraints. She squeezed Garid so hard he had trouble holding back his own powerful climax, the one that had been building all evening. Afterwards he got onto the bed in front of her and, holding her by the hair, had her lick him clean. She was still shuddering, and he could tell she had another couple of orgasms in her. He gently slid another dildo between her swollen nether lips and fastened it to the same straps as the other. Then he used a flogger on her until her ass glowed pink, purely for the extra arousal it would give her.

He untied her, and then retied her arms tightly behind her back. He set her on her knees before him. She arched her back even further than the restraints dictated, holding her breasts out toward him, a pleading look on her face. He laughed, and stroked her little face instead. It was flushed and hot, and she was panting. She fervently kissed and licked his hand. When he did touch her breasts it was to crush the hard nipples between his fingers, and pull on them cruelly. She whined and gasped hoarsely, her small body begging for more with every thrust and shudder. Garid stopped, however, when he saw that

she was clenching her thighs together around the two dildos. He found a spreader bar to fasten between her knees, tied her wrists to her ankles, and put clips on her nipples. Then he went off to watch a late night holo. There was one he liked on the scenery of Henth's torrid moon, starkly beautiful images that stayed with him.

It was late when he returned and made use of his woman's mouth. She was tremulous, fervent as she sucked on him, his big hands controlling her head. He sat back and took his time, and eventually his eyes closed and he governed her completely through his fingers. He was half asleep, the space holo still wheeling through his head. He let the current of his pleasure move slowly, visualizing glittering mercury flowing through a moon valley.

When he was done he left her in her little kennel beneath the stairs, her hands chained to her collar, her knees still separated by the spreader bar. He took off the nipple clips, but left the dildos in all night. Her eyes, trapped, glittering pools, were the last thing he saw in the dim light as he closed the kennel door. In the morning they were dark circled, deep with pleading. Garid enjoyed that very much, and did not satisfy her.

## **Therin**

'You're visiting Lave this time?'

'I'm not a recluse like you. And I have to take opportunities as I find them. I've got days to finish that design.' Therin's eyes were dancing. Garid shrugged. His friend had an uncomplicated approach to pleasure. Garid dwelt in his own sense of difference, of seriously odd sexuality, and noted, not for the first time, that none of this cut deep with Therin. The man's high spirits rarely failed him, despite the frustration of wanting something very much that he really couldn't afford.

'I thought you said you were taking on extra jobs to make money.'

‘Well, I admit it’s a hard decision sometimes – play with another man’s sweet pussy now, or work hard for some hypothetical, rare, extremely expensive female later, when I’m too old to enjoy her. Which would you choose? No, don’t answer that; I don’t need to hear about your talents for delayed gratification. Especially since you don’t have to delay it anymore.’

‘Just don’t lose the contract, okay? I’d hate to think of you having no chance at all, you lazy sod.’

‘You think I don’t take anything seriously, but actually this woman owning ambition of mine has done great things for my career. I work a hell of a lot harder than I would otherwise. It’s not natural for me. Don’t begrudge me a little fun. I only do it when I can freeload on someone for a lift – completely shamelessly, I might add – so I don’t waste the aircar fuel.’

Garid had to admit that this was a good compromise. It was a big planet. ‘Don’t tell me that everyone but me shares their slaves around; I don’t believe it.’

‘No, you’re right; there are different degrees of possessiveness.’ Therin placed a long finger on his temple in a parody of contemplation. ‘Let me see. At one end of the continuum are the jealous ogres like you who won’t let anyone near their treasure. Not very many of them, but they do exist. Then there are the ones who’ll let you look but not touch, or fondle but not fuck. A lot will only share with other owners; guys like me are the rogue males being warned away from the herd. But some of them – the good guys! – have a great time sharing. They get a kick out of making the woman service their friends. And of course they like to give their friends a treat.’ He raised a sardonic eyebrow and wiggled it.

‘All right, all right. I told you I’d let you know. Don’t rush me, or I’ll throw you out of the herd for good.’

Therin laughed soundlessly, stood back from the screen, lowered his head and prepared to charge.

Garid took no notice. ‘What I don’t understand is how you can leave again afterwards.’

Therin stopped pawing the floor and looked up at the screen. 'Without a woman on a leash?' He found something to look at off-screen. 'Yes. Very depressing.' He glinted at the screen again. 'But it's worth it. Pleasure now, that's my credo and I'll stand by it. If I didn't want my own woman so much, I wouldn't dream of planning ahead in this pompous way.'

Therin had been working non-stop for weeks, with only glimpses of Garid's pet on the vidcam to lighten his existence, when he had received the message to call Lave. He'd returned the call instantly, his heart quickening.

'Therin, you horny extruding machine, what are you doing tomorrow?' Lave was a manufacturer with a range of such metaphors.

'Nothing I can't get out of, my kind friend.'

'I'm going to be out your way for a meeting. Do you want to come back with me? I can get you back as far as Maisk the next day.'

The next day? He'd never been offered an overnight stay before. 'Yes, I can get back from there. Thanks!' He ruthlessly rearranged his schedule, and made the gleeful call to Garid. The rest of the day he sang with anticipation.

The next day he sat on a terrace with the cooling breeze of late afternoon on his face, the light turning from lemon to a pale orange-yellow in the sky, taking a drink from the hands of Lave's slave Merti. The woman had soft and generous curves, a handsome face and long, wavy dark hair. She was tall for a Ranizen, being all of 160 cm. Lave had allowed Merti to wear a diaphanous silvery skirt that slithered down her thighs in long triangles. This concealed very little of her darkly curled pubic mound, and through the material Therin examined the long marks decorating her thighs and buttocks. He wished he had put them there. The lush round breasts were bare, the big nipples wide and soft at the moment; Therin looked forward to making them stiffen under his lips and teeth. Merti, her eyes down, turned back to the kitchen, the tags on her collar jingling softly, the thin short chain that linked her ankles chiming a little louder. Her shortened steps made her hips

dance invitingly under the diaphanous skirt, and Therin caught his lower lip in his teeth and groaned softly, his cock already rigid.

He heard Lave's voice in the kitchen, and a soft reply. Lave's tone grew louder, and Therin heard Merti whimpering in a pleading tone. Then a sharp smack. Therin was already on his way when Lave called him in. The man had Merti by the ear, half bent over.

'She didn't prepare the seasonings like I told her. Hand me those cuffs, will you?'

They were of thin metal, but wide, fitting tightly and covering half of each forearm. Therin brought them over and watched Lave lock the woman's arms behind her back and pull her face down over his lap. Her husky Ranizen-accented voice was pleading low, 'Please, master, I'm sorry I forgot, please don't punish me, please?'

'You don't think you deserve it, you lazy girl?' Lave used the word 'ruzu' for girl, a rural diminutive for a female herd animal. He was calling her a cow, and she knew it.

'No – yes – I won't forget again, I'm sorry, please don't hurt me today. Please?' she begged. She was clenching her buttocks fearfully and half crying. 'I promise I'll be good.' She gave a tense but suggestive wriggle as she lay over his lap. Her silky skirt was tangled around and under her, but Lave had pulled it up over her back and her ass was bare. Her ankle chain jingled as she writhed her legs over his thighs.

Lave laughed. 'You'll be better than good.' He grasped both her arms firmly with his left hand and brought his right down hard, covering most of her ass with one blow. She gasped. 'You're a bad, lazy little girl, aren't you, Merti?'

'Nooo, no more, no?' her cry was cut off by another explosive smack. 'Ow, please, plea?' another blow took her breath away, and only wordless wails were forced from her by the next few blows. Lave slowed down a little and she tried begging again, with no noticeable effect. The next blow tipped her over into tears. She sobbed incoherently through the next series of smacks, kicking helplessly.

Therin watched with the deepest sort of delight, the kind of enjoyment that anticipates even greater pleasures to come. Lave had entertained him before, but scenes such as this never grew stale. The blows were not so much raining down as sleeting, the kind of sleet that strikes the ground in huge spreading smacks.

When her ass was a bright crimson Lave stopped and let Therin feel the heat coming off her skin. Merti lay limp and sobbing, her head hanging low. Tears were dripping down her long hair and onto the floor. ‘Tell us what you are now, Merti,’ Lave said. His voice was deceptively quiet.

She swallowed, panted a moment, and shuddered. ‘I’m a bad, lazy girl, master,’ she whispered thickly.

‘Now you’ll count for Therin.’ She stiffened in his lap and wailed. He set her on her knees in front of him. ‘Fetch the strap, Merti.’ She shook her head so hard the drops flew off from side to side, but looked up at her master’s face, gulped down some tears, and shuffled off at once on her knees toward the other side of the room.

‘Hold your skirt up so we can see your ass, Merti,’ said Lave.

She choked out, ‘Yes, master,’ half a sob, and used her bound hands to pull the skirt up under her arms. Her buttocks emerged a painful red instead of the pink they had appeared through the folds of the material. She shuffled on, her knees taking each little step less far than the restriction of the ankle chain allowed. The men watched, mesmerized by the shimmying of the pretty red mounds of sore flesh. On the far side of the room was a low bench with several implements laid out. Merti bent from the waist, displaying the dusky red of her glistening cunt surrounded by dark curls, and picked up a strap in her teeth. Then she turned and made her way back toward them, her wet eyes downcast. The occasional sob still shook her.

She brought the strap to her master’s feet, and then looked up at him, her eyes pleading. ‘Take it to Therin, you naughty girl!’ She dropped her eyes and looked as if she were about to

burst into fresh tears. Then she sighed shakily and shuffled over to Therin, who took the strap from her mouth and sat down on the chair that Lave had been using.

‘What was that about?’ he asked Lave.

‘Nothing, she’s just trying it on. She likes to pretend I’m the only one that can punish her.’

Therin looked at Merti on the floor in front of him, and took the opportunity to fondle the nipples that stood out so firmly now. The woman sighed with pleasure and thanked him in a tiny whisper, letting out a yelp and a wail when he switched to yanking, pinching and twisting them hard. Therin prolonged this until he was sure she was experiencing more pain than pleasure. Then he pulled her bottom up over his lap and examined the wet cunt, so swollen that the inner lips were visible and the clit was peeking from between the folds.

‘Don’t touch her there, yet,’ said Lave. ‘She’ll come, and she doesn’t deserve to until her punishment is over.’

‘All right. How many?’

‘I think twenty will do. Good ones. Merti, you’re going to count each one and thank Therin, or you’ll get another.’

‘No...’ she moaned. ‘Don’t make me, master, please?’

‘Yes. Didn’t you say you were a bad, lazy girl?’

She writhed. ‘Yes, master.’ It was half a breathless creak from her position.

‘What do you need, then, ruzu?’

‘Punishment, master...’ she wept.

‘That’s right. So you’ll count, and you’ll thank Therin.’

Her body shook briefly, and then went slack. A long moment passed. She nodded abjectly. Then she seemed to gather herself together.

Therin gripped the slender forearms locked together on her back, raised the flexible strap over his head, and brought it down fast on one cheek. The required words seemed to be forced out of Merti in a gasp by the weight of the blow.

Therin brought the next one down on the other cheek, and Merti groaned hard and rushed out her answer. She was breathing fast to contain the pain.

Another blow. And another, and yet another, biting and burning across the already crimson ass cheeks, while the slave stumbled through the number and her thanks. Purplish swollen marks were appearing over the red skin. Therin aimed the eighth blow at one of these, and the woman shrieked and lost control, failing to say anything intelligible. Therin hit her twice more in the crease of each thigh before she forced out a cry of, 'Eight! Thank you, master!' Therin noted that she knew better than to skip any. She managed to sob out the required words steadily for several blows after that, and then lost it again over a very hard snap just above her swollen vulva. Howling and thrashing helplessly through three more uncounted blows, she then wailed an impromptu pleading through the next five. Therin pressed the squirming body hard against his crotch, took a fresh grip on her forearms, and hit her again, carefully and without mercy. Merti finally picked up the count again at fifteen, managing to finish the twenty with only about ten extra stripes on her bottom; a record, Lave said.

He picked her up off Therin's lap and put her back on her knees in front of them, her face tear-soaked and pitiful. 'Well?' he asked. 'What do you say now?'

Merti pushed down an anguished sob or two. 'Thank you – for the punishment, masters,' she choked out. 'I deserved it. I – I'm sorry I was a – a bad girl...' Her voice rose and cracked on 'bad girl', and she cringed. Then she took another shuddering breath. '...And I promise to try harder to do as I'm tol – told.' She broke down and cried again, hanging her head. Lave wiped her eyes and helped her blow her nose.

'That's right. Now show us how grateful you are.'

In moments she was satisfying them one after the other with her mouth. Her eagerness, despite her tears, bespoke her intense arousal, and the frantic suction gave Therin an excruciatingly powerful orgasm. Lave, too, came in her throat, and after he caught his breath, looked at her pleading face for a minute. 'No, not yet,' he decided. He lifted her skirt out of the

way and circled her waist with a slim cord, knotted at the front. Then he pulled the line down between the lips of her cunt and tied it tightly to her wrist cuffs, pushing her skirt up again at the back in the process. She moaned and gasped as the thin cord cut into her swollen, hungry flesh, but at the first thrust of her hips Lave stopped her.

‘Go stand in the corner. And don’t you dare come until I tell you to.’ Merti walked with her restricted steps, very slowly in the direction he indicated, her hands tight and unmoving in the middle of her striped and swollen bottom. Reaching the corner, she adjusted herself until her breasts pressed against the two walls and her head was bowed into the corner.

Lave smiled at Therin. ‘We’ll leave her there for a little while. The cord’s too thin and smooth for her to get much friction, and she won’t want the beating she’ll get if she tries to come without permission.’ They sipped their drinks and talked, watching the line of the slave’s thighs tremble from time to time.

Therin mused, ‘Something happened there when she gave in about counting.’

‘Mmm. Counting humiliates her.’

‘I thought so.’

‘I make her participate in – even ask for – punishment and humiliation. If that’s not humiliating, what is?’

Therin stored this away for future reference. ‘Does she do a lot for you around the house?’ he asked.

‘Oh yes, she’s not a bad housekeeper, really. I didn’t put in much automation when I built the place, because I was saving to buy a female. So I make her scrub floors and so on. Naked. It’s a very pretty sight.’

Therin grinned. ‘You know, I never considered what it’s like day to day. Living with them, looking after them.’ He closed his eyes a moment, visualizing a pet woman on her knees, chained by the front door, waiting for him to come home.

‘You’ve just been thinking about the sex, boy. Fully charged and no outlet. I give you a place for your piston and then a few

minutes downtime, and suddenly the rest of life occurs to you.'

Therin laughed, lazy in the afterglow from Merti's superb blowjob. 'All right, tell me about it while my piston cools off. What do you do with her when you're at work?'

Lave stretched his arms over his head, cracked his knuckles, and glanced at the woman standing in the corner. 'I leave her on a chain that'll reach whatever chores she has to do.' He gestured at a corner-mounted spy vid. 'And I monitor from time to time from elsewhere, unpredictably, so she knows she has to behave.'

'And does she behave?'

'Mostly. She's lazy sometimes. That's what got her into trouble on Raniz; she kept taking the money for jobs and not doing them. The one time it looked like she was actually working, she was in fact embezzling about ten years' worth of someone's funds.'

‘How did she keep getting hired if she didn’t do any work?’

‘Smart. She’s quite well-educated, you know.’

‘Not smart enough not to get caught,’ Therin said dryly.

‘Oh yes. She knew what she was doing. How else could she have gotten here?’

‘She planned it then?’

‘Maybe it planned her. I don’t know. Anyway, here she is, and I do all the planning now.’

‘And what about vacations? And long work trips?’ Therin had a sudden vision of a boarding kennel for women pets whose masters were on vacation, with himself as glad proprietor.

Sadly, the vision was dispelled the next moment. ‘Take her with me,’ Lave said. ‘As long as they’re on a chain they’re safe enough. Hotel staff will come in and feed them if you pay a little extra.’

They discussed Lave’s plans for a rigid transparent plastic suit for Merti to wear for punishment when she misbehaved. It would leave her breasts and ass cheeks free, but impale her cunt and asshole on hard plugs. ‘I can’t wait to see her scrub floors in it.’

‘All right, Merti,’ her master said after half an hour, ‘come here.’ She turned herself away from the corner and walked carefully toward him, her body shuddering with the effort to keep her hands still. Lave removed the crumpled skirt and examined the cord. He untied it from her cuffs and pulled it tighter, until the woman squeaked with pain. He tied it off, turned her around to face him, and said, ‘On your knees.’ Merti sank gingerly, the discomfort on her face now almost overcoming the signs of arousal. ‘Make yourself come, now.’

She winced, but obediently began pulling on the cord, arching her back to try to get a little slack. She hissed with pain a few times, but also groaned and sighed, then closed her eyes. ‘Eyes open, girl!’ She obeyed, and kept her eyes on her

master as she tried to manipulate the cord back and forth against her swollen folds. 'It hurts, doesn't it, Merti?'

'Yes, master, thank you,' she whimpered.

'Bad girls don't get to come unless it hurts, do they, Merti?'

'No, master.'

Just then she managed to slide the tight cord over her clit and back again, and she shook all over. She yanked convulsively and cried out in pain as the cord bit into her flesh, then staring into Lave's face, moved her arms sideways again and slid into a hot orgasmic rush.

He caught her before she hit the floor, and eased her down. Within moments he had clipped the cord and was soothing the hurt flesh with his tongue. He put her legs with their chained ankles over his shoulders so he could reach all of her. Merti's cries reverberated off the walls. Therin knelt down next to her and began to suck and fondle her nipples, and she arched her back and thrashed wildly, so that Lave had to hold her down to keep his mouth where he wanted it.

Finally Lave arranged her over the back of a couch, and he and Therin plunged in alternately from behind. They took turns, and they took their time. When it was his turn Therin suggested removing her ankle chain, and Lave took the opportunity to tie each ankle at a wide stretch to the couch's legs. For good measure they fastened her collar to the middle front leg, leaving her hands cuffed in the small of her back as before. Then they spent a long time enjoying her.

At the end Therin was slowly pumping her from behind, his hands on her hot, welted ass, while Lave, his fist in her hair, was using her mouth. They hastened their movements at the same time and came, first Therin, then Lave.

Then they lay, gasping and laughing, half draped in different directions over the couch and the woman.

When they had pulled themselves back together again, Lave released his slave, chained her ankles together again, and sent her off to the kitchen with a smack that made her shriek. 'Prepare the seasoning,' he said.

The next day Therin and Lave were on their way to Maisk by aircar. Therin was silent, thinking of the silky feel of the slave between his legs all night in the guest bedroom. He felt like something had grown into him and been torn away.

Lave glanced at his face, and then back out the screen. 'You'll get one someday.'

Therin snorted, then sighed. 'Maybe. I convinced myself to try for that latest one, the one Garid bought, even though I knew I didn't have enough. I didn't even come close.'

'There's time. Do you know how he's doing with her, by the way? Does he still talk to anyone? He must be doing something besides fucking; I keep seeing his name in the eco-bulletins.'

'He's doing fine. On his own. Won't let anyone near the creature, but he lets me look sometimes on the vidcam.'

'It takes some that way. When it's something you want this much, it takes over for a while. He'll ease up.'

'Were you like that when you bought yours?'

'Oh, my friend, I didn't go out of the house for weeks. Had to remember to eat. Hardly slept. I've never been such a sex machine. Years of waiting, it does it to you.'

## **Handles**

My master put me back in the crate one day for an aircar ride, and I was scared. It was the first time I had been in an aircar since the party, and I had been dressed up that time. What was he going to do with me? My imagination, always overactive, began to conceive of disasters. Fantasies about the good stuff were now way outdone by reality, so my imaginings could only go the other way. Had I been too bad, too stupid? Surely he wouldn't sell me? I sat in the straw in almost complete darkness and tried to turn off this line of thought. Life without

him... No. My mind blanked this out as too awful to contemplate. To be touched by him, or hurt by him, in whatever way he deigned, to be the focus of his attention, that was what I lived on. I touched the collar around my neck, trying to reassure myself. I ran my finger back and forth over one of the tags, over the smooth part that was probably the holo with his name.

When the crate opened I crawled out into the car, which was in a dim garage. He leashed me, fastened my hands behind my back, and led me, first into an elevator that took us down to street level, then through the pedways. I was hardly able to look about me, as the usual staring male giants surrounded me; I couldn't bear to risk anyone catching my eye. I was not yet used to the sound of their exclamations and laughter, and I tried to shrink into my master's shadow. He quickly made me heel, however, with my back straight and head up, yanking on the leash to reinforce this. I was acutely aware of my nakedness. I had hardly been among people at all since the auction, except my master's household and friends, and that party, which felt like an extension of my master's living room, but was humiliating enough. Now I was being exposed to streets full of strangers, a partially trained animal on the end of a leash. Although my head had to be up, my eyes were down as I half ran to keep the leash from pulling. My breasts bounced awkwardly, out of my control.

Then to my relief we went into a storefront. Familiar odors hit me – animals, and disinfectant, and I looked around the waiting room to see men sitting with various burdens on their laps – little yapping dogs, small cages full of hissing bundles of indignation. There were larger creatures on leashes eyeing each other from across the room.

I was at the vet.

My master spoke to someone, sat down and settled me next to him on the hard floor. I tried to shrink even smaller than I was, but everyone was staring and the comments and questions were unmistakable. Involuntarily I turned my face against my master's leg, and let out a tiny whimper. He stroked my hair soothingly, and I heard his deep voice

answering. I tried not to look at all the eyes staring at me. Why was this so frightening? I was an animal on a leash out in public, that's all. A naked animal with her hands fastened behind her back, helplessly displaying her highly unusual sexual characteristics to huge strangers who had never seen them before. What was so scary about that?

All my awareness seemed to be focused on my breasts; there were so many eyes on them they felt hot. Can tits blush? I could clench my legs together, but my breasts were too big to conceal. I wanted to turn around and bury myself in my master's arms and hide, but I didn't want them looking at my rear view, either. Anyway, my master had put me in this position and I knew better than to alter it without permission. He must have sensed my inclination, and not trusted my obedience in this strange place; I felt his hand holding tightly to the ring on the back of my collar.

The animals, thankfully, lost interest in me very quickly, and turned back to the matter of whose territory the waiting room was. There was one exotic looking creature who kept reaching the end of its leash with a start, as if surprised, returning to its owner and then prowling forward again. By the end of half an hour it was looking only slightly less surprised when the leash stopped it. Not the brightest star in the galaxy.

I had calmed down by the time we were finally called in. I was quite cheerful, actually. My catastrophic fears from the aircar were obviously unjustified. I decided I was there for a checkup of some sort. It's always a mistake to anticipate. In the examining room there was a youngish man with dark skin and close-cropped hair, dealing with something metallic over at a sink. My master lifted me to a high table and to my surprise began to fasten me down tightly. He even strapped my head down to the table, using a blindfold and heavy gag. I couldn't move at all, barely a twitch. My limbs were tight and trembling now, and I could hear my heart thumping. The two men talked a little, and fingers examined and pinched me here and there. I felt my nipple being swabbed and clamped, and then a very sharp pain and a pull, making me sob with fear and confusion. A big hand was stroking me gently, calming me

down, before the next nipple was subjected to the same painful treatment.

While my labia were being pierced, my master continued stroking me and speaking soothingly in my ear. I knew what was happening by that time, but I couldn't help crying into the gag, it hurt so much. Worst of all was the tiny nose ring, however, right through the septum. The others were mostly sexy, if painful. That one, in addition to stinging like hell, was simply humiliating. The nose is not an erogenous zone, as far as I'm concerned.

But I lie. Not about my nose not being an erogenous zone; it's not. I mean about anything being 'simply' humiliating. Being led through the streets by that ring is awful, degrading and often painful, and there is nothing in that pain that excites me and thus alters the experience. Pain – in the right places – is like the yeast that ferments the moment, transforms it into the heady intoxicant of arousal. But humiliation, for creatures like me, has the same effect, without the need for direct contact with erogenous zones. I hate being led by my nose ring; I cry and whimper every time he clips the leash to it. I would resist if I could, but of course that's impossible – it just hurts too damned much to do anything but follow. Nothing makes me feel lower than being led by the nose ring. Nothing makes me wetter, either.

He didn't lead me back to the aircar by the nose ring that day, of course – just by my collar. I was shaky with pain and the shock of it all, and walking nudged the labia rings. I felt literally pinned, like a lab specimen, for the edification of gigantic crowds. Still, the leash tugged and I followed, responding to the occasional upward jerk by straightening my back and thrusting out my glinting, bouncing nipples, trying not to look at the heads all swiveling to stare at me. It was a great relief to be locked back up in my crate for the ride home.

The piercings all healed remarkably quickly. For a week they were treated with a cream and the rings were turned, and then they were fine. I think the cream was some kind of healing accelerator. We had just begun to hear about such things on Raniz before I left. I once saw Pav get a bad burn on his arm.

A few days later there was barely a mark, so I think I'm right about what they used.

As a result, the rings rapidly became part of the usable equipment. My master often fastened me to the wall by my nipples. If I had fallen there was always a strap to catch me, but I would have had to hurt my nipples a fair amount to lean on it. He particularly liked me kneeling face down and bottom up, with my nipple rings chained tightly to my labia rings, and my labia rings chained to the bedpost. If I was very lucky, while he was whipping my ass he would let me rub my chained labia against the post. One of his favorite ideas was a thin chain tight around each thigh and through each labia ring, pulling my cunt lips wide, making me even more unprotected and exposed than usual.

The rings became part of me, little handles to hold or tie me. They had an effect on my psyche out of all proportion to their size. Bits of metal, integrated with my flesh, making it incredibly easy to hurt me with the slightest tug or twist. That was so scary, especially in that period, relatively early in my slavery, when my confidence that I would not be cut into little pieces was largely based on some reading I had been given on the subject, on another planet, millions of kilometers away. My brain could say whatever it wanted about how safe I was from serious damage; my body was afraid. My body was naked and utterly defenseless, at the mercy of the huge beings around me.

The hard rings made me feel more acutely the tenderness and vulnerability of the flesh they pierced. And the little metal handles made me a thing, almost a piece of furniture. The rings were now part of my slave's body, offering simple attachment points for the convenient use of the object that I was.

Liaske talked to his son by vidcam one day. 'When am I going to see this new acquisition of yours?'

'I didn't know you'd care to.' Garid studied his father's face. 'Do you want to come here? Or do you just want a look at her?'

‘Anything that’s obsessing you this much is worth a visit. I called your office. They said you were working from home.’

‘I’m not goofing off entirely. The next proposal’s half done.’ Then he laughed. ‘One look at your face and I’m trying to prove I haven’t forgotten my homework.’

Liaske smiled, but there was no diverting him. ‘When?’

‘Come tomorrow.’

The next day Liaske sat down with Garid in the view room, and looked at the female sitting on her heels in front of him. She wore a leash and collar, and rings in her flesh. Garid had chosen not to push the situation too far; he had applied the healing accelerator to her welts, and although not invisible, they could reasonably be overlooked by anyone who didn’t want to examine her too closely.

‘She’s rather a cute little thing. Smaller than I expected from pictures.’

‘Yes, they breed quite small, apparently.’

‘She’s very attached to you.’

‘You’ve a quick eye.’

‘It’s apparent enough. Follows you with her eyes, and she leans toward you even though she stays where she’s put.’ Liaske watched the slave as he spoke. ‘I see she doesn’t understand Henthen. But she certainly can’t conceal her feelings, can she?’

‘No, she’s quite transparent.’

‘Very animal-like in that way. Odd how that makes her seem less than human. Just a hajedy,’ said Liaske, using the term for female animal.

‘Interesting that you should say that, because “jeedy” is what I call her.’

Liaske nodded, and continued to contemplate the smooth-skinned, childish-looking face. ‘She doesn’t look like a criminal.’

Garid's eyes crinkled at the corners. 'Not on this planet. No opportunity.'

'You're careful to give her none, I take it. What did she do?'

'General mayhem and destructiveness. About forty incidents, from the record. Also, she didn't do anything useful, which really seems to have annoyed them.'

'Sounds like the Wulbish clan.'

Garid laughed. 'They're of some use! They provide gossip for everyone else and an income for lawyers.'

'Speaking of which, Avignar Wulbish was in my office the other day...'

Garid listened to his father's story with amusement and relief. If Liaske could chat comfortably with his son's pet woman six feet away, it was going to be all right.

Before he left, Liaske stroked the creature's hair and, holding her chin, once again examined her eyes and brows, the planes of her little face, the set of her mouth. She gazed back from all fours, looking perplexed, and shifted her weight a little from side to side. Liaske had the feeling that if she had a tail she'd be wagging it.

He looked into the gray eyes, and squeezed her jaw firmly, giving her head a little shake. 'Behave yourself, jeedy,' he said.

Garid was working from home a good deal as his father had said, and focusing as much time as he could on his slave. But soon he would have to get back out there. Even now there were occasional meetings elsewhere that couldn't be avoided. The day after Liaske's visit, Garid was booked to spend the morning at a local planning meeting in the rural Lower Archipelago, thirty minutes by aircar from Therin's neighborhood. He called to see if Therin wanted to meet him in EberiCity and go out to lunch.

'Great! Are you paying? I'll tell you all about my visit to Lave's,' Therin offered in a confidential tone. 'In full and

salacious detail...?’

Garid lowered his eyelids to conceal his amusement. He always paid. He looked up, deadpan. ‘Since Lave’s been treating you, you probably aren’t interested in seeing my girl today. See you there at one,’ he said, reaching for the shutoff. He laughed silently at Therin’s protests, and adjusted the screen to show his jeedy, who sat on her heels, in a hood, with her nose ring chained to the arm of his chair. Her arms were confined behind her in a long leather arm binder, as smooth and supple as her own skin, but much stronger. Therin stared at the anonymous little creature, the bagging of her head making her even less human than usual, a pure female body, nothing else. He liked the rings piercing her nipples, hung with weights, the labia rings he could see peeking out between her thighs, and decided that he would do that with his own slave when he had one. But probably he would add more rings.

The restaurant was buzzing quietly with conversations that could be heard but not understood through the privacy fields around each table. A typical businessman’s retreat, but the food was very good. They gave their orders to the robo-server and settled back. It wasn’t often they met face to face.

Therin made a good story of his visit with Lave, bawdy and full of the promised lascivious detail, and Garid listened with pleasure. Their food arrived in the middle of it, and Therin started in with the gusto that he always applied to free food of such quality, waving his implements for emphasis as he talked. He called up four different sauces and applied them extravagantly. The story ended with the final morning blowjob; Therin deliberately avoided the depressing part at the end. ‘Not bad, eh?’ he exulted.

‘Not bad at all.’ Garid sipped his wine. ‘Lave is too easygoing with that woman, though.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Tidbits at the table – loose with only an ankle hobble – free to wander around the house when he’s out?’

‘She’s not free to wander, she’s on a chain.’ Therin licked hot sauce off his fingers. ‘Anyway, not everyone has staff or

automation at home; it makes sense to have her do the housework.'

'I know. I'm lucky I can keep mine the way I want her.'

'He's not slack. Just a different – what shall I say? – paradigm from yours.'

'Meaning what?'

'Human slave, not animal, I suppose.'

Garid nodded. He was pleased for Therin, whatever he felt about Lave's paradigm, and glad that someone other than himself had done the favor. He was more than sure of his current need to keep his own woman to himself.

He told his friend about Liaske's visit.

'How did he like your jeedy?' Therin asked.

'Surprisingly, he thought she was rather cute. He's taking this remarkably well.'

'It's not as if he has other sons to disown you for.'

'True.' Liaske had raised Garid on his own by choice, when most boys were raised in good-sized families of fathers and uncles and brothers.

'My dad doesn't even know women exist,' Therin said indistinctly around a mouthful. 'And I'm not going to tell him.'

'My father's the one who told me about women, back when I was a kid. Part of his wide-ranging educational methods; I knew a lot more about the universe out there than most children.'

Therin swallowed. 'Most adults, too, probably. I heard about women in university, and I almost lost my scholarship just thinking about them. You were just a kid? What was that like?'

Garid thought about this for a minute, eyes in the distance. 'I always knew I wasn't going to be interested in men's bodies. But I hadn't really started to worry about it – too young – when he told me about women. Do you think sexuality is identity?' he asked suddenly.

Therin looked taken aback. ‘I don’t know – yes – a big chunk of it, I guess.’

‘Well, I knew what I was then. I decided I was a throwback to ancient times. Really ancient; before we even left Old Earth. Some primitive slave owning civilization.’ He began evenly slicing his meat.

‘I used to play games like that, with my brothers and cousins,’ Therin said, grinning. ‘Always trying to tie them up.’

‘I wouldn’t have taken a risk like that. I never even hinted at it. Even when I knew that there were women on this planet who were property, it felt too private to talk about. I saw one once as a kid, did I ever tell you?’

Therin leaned forward, his face rapt. ‘No! Really? How young a kid?’

‘Adolescent. We were visiting friends in Gaweja. I was coming out of a store in

### *Tasit Street*

, and they walked right by me. A small woman on a leash. I’d never even seen any pictures, hardly knew what they looked like, but I knew what she was all right.’

‘Did you follow them?’

Garid’s mouth twitched. ‘I wanted to, but I had such a hard on I thought I’d come if I moved at all. So I stayed put and tried to be inconspicuous. I was hoping they’d come back, but no.’ He thought back, remembering the woman’s rear view as she was led away from him, how shaken and aroused he had been. He couldn’t describe his feelings, even to Therin, who knew. He looked up and smiled slightly. ‘I had to lie to my father about why I was late for dinner.’

‘Which slave was it, do you know? What did she look like?’

‘I have no idea. I suppose it might have been Bereneff’s, though of course I didn’t look at *him*; I’m figuring it out in

retrospect. He's had his slave for a long time, and he lives in that area. She had very light hair, high, small round breasts; that's all I can tell you.'

'If it was Bereneff's, they're not so high now,' said Therin. 'But she's still pretty cute.'

'She turned up in my dreams for years.'

'I can imagine. I managed to hack into the Oris Auction system and look at slave holos all through my first year at university. Almost losing my scholarship. I was all excited when they held one of their auctions close enough for me to get to, but of course it was only the usual exotic pets. The disappointment just about killed me. It wasn't until I got to know a few owners that I got to see a woman for real. It was Lave's Merti, actually. Right in front of me. On her knees...' Therin was lost in reverie. They went back to their food, both of them thinking back and not talking.

At last Therin asked, 'When was the next time you saw a real one?'

'On Soichior.'

'Not till then?' Therin said, surprised. 'But you'd just come back from there when we met on the network.'

Garid grimaced a little ruefully. 'I wasn't comfortable letting anyone know what I wanted, back then. I wasn't ashamed of it, you know, just private.' In fact, as a very young man, the thought of having his sexuality exposed was anathema to him. Far better to go to a two-sex planet, with some kind of privacy for one's proclivities.

'Oh, and you're not private now!' Therin had mopped up his food and was now playing with the sauce bottles.

'I'm the star of some worldwide pervert-net now compared to what I was like then. On Soichior I was a stranger, and it didn't matter so much what people knew about me.'

Garid had gone to Soichior, the sector capital planet, on a trip ostensibly for learning new reclamation methods. His research had shown that of the planets that were reasonably accessible to him, this one was most likely to provide a variety

of sexual behavior. As usual, his research was impeccable. Everything he'd ever heard of was practiced openly on Soichior, as well as many things he'd never heard of at all. He was dazzled by the women, fascinated by their bodies, and had to use all his patience and control to keep from making a fool of himself with them before he learned some of the language and social behaviors, and knew appropriate ways to approach them. Fortunately his great height and his looks made him stand out even in that cosmopolitan capital, and the women found him.

‘Women everywhere... wow...’ Therin had never had the money to go off-planet.

‘They walked around free, and they wore clothes, you know. It took a while to figure out where to find the submissive ones.’

Garid had reveled in simple sex for a time, sex with someone with the right body parts, though he was careful to avoid any behavior that might suggest commitment. He asked the woman who was most friendly and open where he could find female submissives.

He could have found the information on nets and elsewhere, but was afraid his limited vocabulary would lead him astray. The woman directed him first to virtual holo nets, and then when she saw he was serious, to clubs with real people, that for him seemed a cornucopia of wonders. He hardly knew where to start, there seemed to be so many dazzling possibilities.

But he wasted very little time; soon he was in a room full of people who had discarded clothing for fetish gear, surrounded by fascinating bondage equipment, first watching and then learning and participating. Suddenly it was happening. Any study of reclamation methods went to hell.

Therin dipped his finger in one of the puddles on his plate, licked it, and said, ‘You told me about Soichior when we first talked. Can you imagine how much I envied you? I could never figure out why you left. Was it money?’

‘No, I could have worked there after a while, if I’d spent more time on the language. It was, I don’t know if I can explain this, but it wasn’t what I wanted. It sounds amazing, all those people wanting the same things I wanted, rooms full of racks and whips. Women who called themselves slaves. I couldn’t get enough at first.’

‘Not very private.’

Garid shrugged. ‘Light years away from Henth. No one knew me. Proud perverts all around me. And I was so caught up that I didn’t care. There were women who needed and loved to be dominated, and I bound them and beat them and made them crawl, and I couldn’t have been happier.’

‘So what happened?’

The robo-server showed up and they ordered desserts without paying much attention. Absently Garid watched the machine glide away.

‘Once the first – what shall I call it? – intoxication was over, I began to run up against the limitations.’ He looked down at his hands, thinking about how to explain, then his light eyes met Therin’s across the table. ‘It was play, Ther, that’s all. I could tie a woman to a frame and beat her, expose her wet cunt to the crowd, have her crawl across the room to suck me off. Afterwards she’d thank me and go home.’ Garid had begun to find the scenes empty, the game playing farcical. ‘Each scene left me more and more dissatisfied. Things that had given me an instant hard-on began to bore me. This sexuality I thought I had, this strangeness I had thought was at my core – I began to wonder if it was real at all, whether I was mistaken.’

Therin gave him a skeptical look.

‘I mean it. But no, I didn’t have doubts for long. Away from the clubs, I knew what I was. But I needed something longer-term, something with more substance to it.’

Therin stabbed his baraze cake. ‘The place sounds like paradise. Just being there would have been enough for me.’ His look of frustration faded. ‘Except that the women weren’t really slaves, were they?’

‘That’s it,’ said Garid. ‘They weren’t.’ He spooned up a little cream, looking thoughtful. ‘I felt the same way as you, a few years ago. You know, when you’re young and horny and deprived, all you think about is equipment, human and otherwise. Body parts intersecting with each other. Bondage intersecting with body parts. Not that I didn’t have some idea of how I wanted the power differential to play out. But it was hard to imagine anything beyond scenes. I thought I’d do these things, and everything else would fall into place.’

‘You’d have the power, and she wouldn’t.’

Garid smiled in appreciation. ‘And it would go on that way. Yes. You understand more than you say you do. I tried to find women who wanted a real master-slave relationship. I came across a few, even lived with one for a while. But?’

‘But what?’

‘But all of the so-called slaves I found took it as a given that our relationship would be negotiated. Worked out to our mutual satisfaction. “I’ll do this, you do that”. Sometimes practically moment by moment. Damn, that was irritating. And they all had lives outside of what we were doing that had to be respected.’

‘Even the one you lived with?’

‘Sure. She had a family, friends, a job. She submitted to me at home. No where else. Oh, we played some games in restaurants.’ Garid looked around the room. ‘The kicker for me was that even if she had wanted to give me possession of her, she couldn’t. No contract would have been binding; slavery’s not legal there. No matter how much a woman seemed to want real slavery, on Soichior she could walk away whenever she changed her mind.’

Therin, stuck on a practically womanless planet, thought his friend impossibly picky; he could imagine himself quite happy with a part-time slave. On the other hand, he could see the importance of getting the power differential sorted out. Who really had the control? Over what? What was game playing and what was real?

He also began to see why Garid was spending such a long time alone with his slave. His friend, intense and serious, wanted a relationship, utterly unbalanced as to power, but meaningful, even profound. It was typical of Garid to want something so specific, and to refuse all compromise until he got it. Evidently he wanted no distractions that could weaken the bond. Once that bond was formed to his satisfaction, then perhaps he would share his woman. Therin hoped.

Garid spoke again. ‘I went back to researching, kept looking for the woman, the situation, the location that would be the key. Now that I knew more about what I needed there was a lot less in the way of possibilities, so I began a really wide, completely inclusive search. Of course the keyword “slavery” meant that Henth kept coming up, but I ignored those entries.’

‘Why?’

‘I wasn’t thinking about Henth at all back then; I was sure there was some other place that would have what I needed. There were a number of other planets to comb through where slavery existed in some form.’

‘It exists in other places? That’s interesting. Like here?’

‘No, not like here. The longer I looked, the worse it got. Ther, I was looking at planets with power divided along gender lines with women as an underclass, or planets where prisoners had been taken in wars and used for slave labor or for prostitution. Mostly these planets were being ostracized; what I was screening were indignant speeches, calls for liberation. I was feeling disgusted; this wasn’t the company I wanted to keep.’

‘No, I can see that. If the women from Raniz were here against their will – you’re right, I never really thought about it.’

‘Would you want one if they were?’

‘No.’ The word was uttered with finality. Therin seemed to surprise himself. ‘No, I’d play with the idea, but I’d never be able to stand it.’

Garid looked faintly relieved. ‘I was getting pretty indignant myself at some of the material I was reading.’ He leaned forward and put his elbows on the table, his brows furrowed a little. ‘In most of the universe women are people – you realize that, right? They’re entitled to respect, with freedom and choices to make like everyone else. And rightly so. Why shouldn’t they run their own lives, like men do? They want to and they’re capable. Look how few Ranizens choose to come here. That shows how few want to give up human status.’

‘The women who aren’t free out there are victims of real oppression. I started to feel that the only way I could relate to them would be as some kind of liberation fighter.’ He shrugged and sat back, a little embarrassed.

Therin laughed. ‘Commander Universe and his legions.’

‘Absolutely. I used to have the costume in my toy cupboard. No, I wasn’t going to play out that fantasy. But I wasn’t going to become the Evil Overlord either.’

The roboSERVER came in and offered more coffee. Therin fiddled with cream and sugar, drank a little, looking meditative, and said, ‘Ironic, isn’t it, that off-world you could have all the women you wanted, even submissive ones, but not the way you wanted them. Here, practically no women, but?’

‘Yes. I started to think about Henth again. I don’t know what took me so long.’ The bill appeared on the table screen, and Garid thumbed the total. ‘A woman living on Henth is here voluntarily, but once she comes she’s legally non-human chattel. I checked every possible lead; believe me: Apart from Henth, there’s no other jurisdiction in the known universe that will uphold ownership of a human being, except the planets that base enslavement on coercion.’

‘That’s intriguing. I didn’t know we were that unique. But I do know what took you so long: that privacy you’re so fond of.’

‘That was probably the hardest part. It took me that long to accept that I was going to have to come out. I decided I’d take the risk of being known as what I was, and get a real slave if I could. The hell with world opinion.’

‘All the same, I bet you missed Soichior women, slaves or not.’

‘Oh, man. Yes. Worse and worse. But after that experience, I decided I’d rather live without women forever than go back to playing games.’

## Housepet

I remember some of the specifics from the early months, but when I try to think about what happened, the memories seem to overlap and run into each other, sequence gone, as if time itself needed a language to proceed in an orderly fashion, a language I didn’t have. I had a language inside my head, Ranize, of course. But with no one to speak it to, nothing to read, my language seemed to lose its tether line, as it were, and drift through my head, like space debris in a trajectory that led nowhere.

They never did let me speak. They never even allowed me to learn what they were saying. Of course I picked up a few words and phrases, by watching what happened: ‘Shut the door,’ things like that. I learned the commands they used on me, like ‘kneel’, ‘stay’, and ‘spread’. Maybe twenty words in all. I also learned the word they generally used when they talked to me, ‘jeedy’, which I thought at first was a new name my master had given me. After a while it seemed to me that it was less a name than some kind of demeaning descriptor. I tried for a while to decipher the language, but it was too different, they spoke too fast, and I was never allowed the verbal interaction that would have helped me to learn. Quite the contrary; I was punished severely for the slightest attempts at speech.

As a result I felt gradually less and less human. After all, language is one of the things that makes us feel different from animals, isn’t that right? These giants were moving freely around while I was tethered, my huge owner was walking me on a leash, and I could neither understand nor speak. I

remember sitting on my heels, naked at my master's knee one day, my leash in his hand, while he had an incomprehensible conversation with a visitor sitting opposite. All I knew was that for a while they were talking about me. The visitor, a graying man as tall as my master, seemed rather remote, but kind, and when he touched my face I felt very tempted to lick his hand.

At such times there was a moment of being whole, just a pet, an animal that obeyed and didn't question. Then I would pull back into my head and begin to separate myself, to think and analyze again. But there came a point, I don't know how long after it all began, when I no longer thought very much in words when I was near my master. Thinking in words seemed to make me more anxious, less pliable, and I got punished more. I was trying to figure out what might happen, guessing wrong, and messing up.

Bit by bit I gave up trying to think ahead. Actually, at the best of times I gave up trying to think at all, and just followed, docile, the tugs and slaps, the wordless gestures. I became very good at reading expressions, at obeying nonverbal signals without a thought. My mouth was for pleasuring my master's body, for licking his shoes, for fetching, for gags, bits and occasional deep kisses. It was for licking up the food in my dish, or messes on the floor. It was not for speaking.

Still, communication without words was a long learning curve. One day I remember I was staring so hard into my master's eyes, trying to read his expression, that I missed his gestures and had to be spanked into position. I suffered agonies when my bladder was full, trying to signal my need. I was caught in the genteel fear of making a mess. I finally gave up and resigned myself to waiting until I was walked, or peeing on the floor. Of course I was punished, but since that was clearly what he wanted, I had no choice. They would understand my signals or not, act on them or not. I would learn what was expected by trial and error, as an animal does. If what I wanted to understand or express required more than this, I was out of luck.

My loss of control created constant fear, especially early on when I didn't know my master well enough to trust him. But it created the most profound excitement, and it felt *right*. As if the ship had reached her mooring.

I still struggled against it. No matter how much I wanted this, I couldn't make myself give up any attempts to do my own navigating, not all at once. Trying to do things of my own volition, however, was a lot like coming up against the end of my chain, over and over. Like that creature in the vet's waiting room, I had to learn that I wasn't going anywhere.

One day it came to me that this might be just as well. I was in my master's study, a chain between my nipple rings passed loosely through a ring on the side of his desk. It was a bit like being chained to the side of a house. He'd been working there for a while, and I'd been able to watch him, the perspective from the floor making him seem monumental in size, like a live statue in the park. I loved looking at him. His calm face generally changed very little, but I was becoming aware of slight changes around his eyes or mouth that signaled pleasure or amusement, or more frighteningly, disapproval. I watched his irises flick as they moved rapidly from one display to another. The light of the displays played over the bones of his face, making colored shadows below his eyes and along his throat. His hands moved quickly and with precision, never a wasted motion, no tapping, no hesitation. Just watching the long-boned fingers at their work made my breath come faster.

I tried to concentrate on his hands and face mostly, and ration my glances at the rest of him. Henth has a warm climate, and the men don't wear a lot – shorts or light trousers, loose tunic shirts, sometimes less. At home, working, my master might wear little more than a light robe. And if I looked too long at the incredibly long and muscled thigh nearest me, or the chest and shoulder in the colored shadows of the display, I did more than breathe faster. I wasn't able to contain myself.

I did my best to keep still while he worked, as when he was busy any of my fidgeting or bids for attention got me into trouble. The chain between my nipples was a dead giveaway,

because it made noise at my tiniest move. Too many disturbances and I ended up in solitary confinement. I was already quite familiar with the interior of a nearby cupboard. Just the other day he'd locked my hands behind my back, shoved me onto a shelf and closed the door. And it was an awfully long time before he took me out. Who knows how much time I'd missed in his proximity? So I tried to keep still while he was working.

Anyway, as I was saying, I was alone in his study, still chained to the desk. He'd been gone for a while, and I'd stopped watching the door for his return. I was looking around at the room instead. The holo above his desk still glowed: a russet field of plants, wet and dripping. From my angle, I was down among the roots looking up at a deep turquoise sky through the stalks; a pleasant illusion. I could see a few of the controls; they reminded me of the time I had sabotaged the holo net for an entire sector. I'd done it twice, actually, before they figured out it was me. That created a fruitful amount of chaos. On a more mundane level, there was a sink in the room that reminded me of some magnificent flooding I had caused in the town hall. They'd had to replace half the meeting room ceiling. And all I had needed to do was open up the water valves...

A yank on my nipples brought me back to myself with a start. I had gotten halfway up to my knees before the pain stopped me.

I sat back and interrogated myself fiercely. What was the matter with me? What did I think I was doing?

That irresponsible girl had certainly not been the real me; I'd invented her. An elaborate charade of the complete young delinquent. Prior to that I'd been a mouse of a child – self-effacing and compliant, too cowardly to put a foot out of place. Living entirely in my head. I suppose I thought of this as the 'real me', whatever that meant.

But was it? That delinquent act took up a third of my life, my whole adolescence. Every criminal stunt saturated in raging hormones. Could that be enough to imprint the behaviors on my brain? Had the role invented me a little?

They'd called me impulsive, which made me laugh. If anything I had ruminated endlessly on every course of action, every thought and meaning and emotion, driving myself crazy. When I decided to change my persona it took an enormous effort of will to act rather than analyze. I got paralyzed at the planning stages; once I stopped to think I was stuck; game over.

So I began to act first, think later. I acted reflexively, doing whatever my brain conceived. And it had worked. I suppose I'd also found out how much fun impulsive behavior could be, especially when you quite literally hate the world you live on.

The adults had pleaded with me to think about consequences, and I had dug in and been sullen. I knew the long-term result I was aiming for, and refused to care about what happened in the short term. I did what I had to do. But that was all over, now that I was where I belonged.

Well. Not really over, because my shipment to this place was supposed to be my punishment for all that, and a way to make sure I couldn't do it again. And that move toward the sink made me wonder. I suddenly recalled a therapist they had dragged me to, rather a nice person, really, if she hadn't been such a threat.

'Tell me, what goes through your mind before you do these things, Etrin?'

'I think of a good prank and I do it,' I'd answered tonelessly.

'So you never stop and think.'

'No.'

'But you used to think before you did things; why not now?'

'I don't know.' I did know, but she was a professional therapist who would understand sexual perversion if anyone would. She'd probably want to cure me.

'Etrin, let me tell you something about the brain. Any normal brain has ways to control impulses, to say "no" to things that will have bad consequences. You obviously have this ability; you used to use it. But if a person stops using that mechanism, after a while the brain can lose the capacity. It

may be a question of “use it or lose it”. You might want to think about that.’ I had, of course, been staring sullenly past her at the time, plotting my next calamity, but for some reason I had actually thought about that; briefly, anyway.

I looked down. My nipples were still stinging. I suddenly visualized myself at the sink, opening taps over blocked drains, and adrenaline leapt in my veins. My heart started beating like a monkey’s.

Ow! Damn. Nipples again.

I soothed the twice-yanked nubs with my fingers and pleasure surged. I ran my fingers along the chain, which was small but very solid, and touched the rings in my nipples, which didn’t open. The sink was across the room, and I was here. My heart calmed down. Excitement and a strong thin undercurrent of fear slowly seeped away. My thoughts began to revolve.

I tried to sort out my two personas, the brainy mouse and the destructive brat. All the contradictions made my mind whirl. Which part was real? How could I tell? I had to arrange them safely into the slave I needed to be. How could that happen? I had to work on this...

A last slanting glimmer of sun edged the books with orange light. The room darkened, and the field in the holo display brightened in contrast. The words revolving through my head were swinging through longer and more erratic orbits, until I hardly knew their meaning. Gradually, leaning on the desk, I let my eyes lose focus and my mind also. I was at the bottom of a field of plants. A bright and incongruous chain held me safe.

Arleben walked into the kitchen and stopped dead.

‘Pav, are you feeding that female again?’

Pav straightened up, looking sheepish. ‘Just a taste. See? She likes it.’ The slave settled down on her mat by the wall, licking her lips. ‘Who’s a good jeedy, then?’ Pav said in a cajoling tone.

‘Of course she likes it,’ Arleben said, nettled. ‘She’s not supposed to have it.’

Pav went back to the stove. ‘It won’t do her any harm to have something with some flavor occasionally.’

‘Her diet is perfectly nutritious. If it’s plain, that’s the way Garid wants it.’ Pav was humming as he stirred, and didn’t answer. ‘You’re spoiling her, you know,’ Arleben said grimly. ‘She’ll get out of hand if you let her stay in the kitchen all the time.’ The woman curled up on her mat, her chain jingling softly.

Pav opened the oven door and tested something. The smells in the kitchen became richer and more complicated. ‘Garid said she shouldn’t be left alone all day. She keeps me company. Much handier than a cat; they’re always getting under my feet.’ He eased the door closed, and adjusted a control. ‘And when she needs to be walked I get a chance to get outside for a change.’ He looked over his shoulder at the little creature. ‘Don’t I, little one?’

Arleben eyed the woman sharply. She responded to Pav’s words with bright eyes and a pleased wriggle, but didn’t make any attempt to verbalize. Pav looked at Arleben, and sighed with exasperation.

‘Don’t worry, I haven’t taught her to speak.’

‘I hope not,’ Arleben said repressively. ‘She can’t be trusted not to use Ranize either, remember.’

‘Yes, I know.’ Pav stirred. ‘When I was plugging her yesterday she let out a squawk that sounded like one of her words. So I muzzled her and told Garid when he got home. I know what’s what, you don’t have to lecture me.’

‘You should have punished her. She’ll never learn otherwise.’

‘Garid took care of it. I leave it to him; you know he enjoys it.’ Pav began grinding a supply of takt meal for the woman’s porridge, and said above the machine’s hiss, ‘Look, I’ll take care of any harnessing, plugging or hobbling you like. But I’m not going to hit her.’

‘You cannot train an animal without striking it.’

Arleben had looked after both dogs and jonthes – he had even helped train a very rare horse – and used corporal reminders as necessary when training them. When the woman misbehaved he had no compunction about giving her some carefully placed blows. He left the more severe punishments to his employer, of course, who tended to do the job all over again when he got home.

But he knew Pav’s stubborn look, even from behind. Remembering his errand, Arleben found the solar screen repair file he had left on the sideboard, and went back to work.

An hour later he was back with a package in his hand. The woman was on her hands and knees, sniffing the air and looking at Pav, who was paging through holos of a variety of appetizers, all in reddish hues. There was a party coming up, and Pav liked to color-coordinate his dishes. The holos each had their own aroma, and the air was a wild confusion of garlic, redfish, cinnamon and chili peppers. Pav went to check ingredients and absently patted the slave’s head as he passed her. Arleben frowned thoughtfully, and decided to have another go. He was a persistent man.

‘Pav, have you read the file on her?’

Pav emerged from the storage cupboard. ‘What? Why? No, not as such. I know what’s in it, more or less.’

‘She’s a criminal, Pav. She’s very destructive. We simply cannot let her get out of hand.’

Pav sat down at the holo controls again. ‘She’s on a chain practically all the time; how can she get out of hand?’

‘She’s just biding her time.’

Pav snorted, and moved on to another display. Horseradish. Arleben sneezed. ‘If you indulge her she’ll think she can get away with anything,’ he insisted.

Pav shook his head. ‘Honestly, man, you’re paranoid.’

‘You’re not taking this seriously enough. Garid knows what he’s doing.’

Pav hitched his chair forward a little, and didn't answer. There was a rigid set to his shoulders. Arleben pursed his lips, and then shrugged. It wasn't their first disagreement; they'd been at odds many times over the years.

He pulled a chair up next to the slave, the mitts in his hand, and said, 'Paw.' She held out her right hand at once, and he tried the new mitt on her. He made sure all her fingers were neatly and separately slotted, adjusted the brown leather around her wrist, and locked it on. Then he began with the other mitt, while she turned her hand around and tried to wiggle her fingers.

'What's that?' Pav asked. 'New mitts?'

Arleben glanced around. Pav was coming out of the pantry again. 'Garid and I have been designing them for her. I've just got them from the fabricator.' He took off the second mitt and handed it to Pav, who peered up inside it.

'I see. A glove inside, fastened to the palm.'

'And the palm very stiff leather. She won't be able to touch her fingers together at all, even inside the mitt. "No opposable thumbs", that's what Garid said.'

Pav bent down and felt the hand that was already confined in its mitt. 'That's what he's getting, all right. This ought to make you feel safer from the Ranizen terror.'

'It does indeed.' Arleben accepted the teasing with good grace. 'And the mitts will protect her hands when she crawls. Which will be most of the time, if Garid keeps these kneepads on her as much as he has been.'

Pav frowned. 'Surely it's not healthy for her knees to be kept bent all the time?'

'That depends on what sense you mean,' said Arleben. His voice took on a pedantic tone, and Pav smiled wryly. 'On a physical level, no, it wouldn't be healthy all the time. But we put her joints through the full range of motion every day when she's exercised. And we're scanning her body on a regular basis to make sure there are no problems.' He began installing the other mitt. The woman was on her knees holding her hand

out submissively, her eyes following the conversation, but with no light of comprehension on her face, Arleben was glad to see.

He continued, 'On the other hand, yes, I think it is healthy for her to be kept down on the floor. She's an animal on this planet, and the sooner she understands her status, the less likely she will be to create trouble and disrupt the household.' He had fumed when he read of the woman's wanton destructiveness on Raniz, the blatant disregard for property and good order. Punishment was important; control was vital.

Pav was back at his pots, and Arleben could tell that any further efforts would be wasted. He made a final check on the mitts, got up and put the chair back where it belonged. 'After you walk her, bring her into the view room, will you? Garid will be home in an hour.' Pav nodded.

It was easy to see that the woman did crawl more readily now that both knees and hands were protected. She used the area reserved for her, and obediently kicked dirt over the wet patch. Pav noted that it was about time to till the area and bring in fresh soil. The garden was doing well from the manure she was providing.

Later the two men stood back and inspected the creature fastened spread-eagled against the wall in the view room, her toes just off the floor. They'd followed Garid's instructions to the letter. She was tightly harnessed. This included a narrow crotch strap that held dildos in both orifices. Her labia, opened up by the strap, were hung with weights, as were her nipple rings. A snug bridle encased her head, and held a ball gag in her mouth; dark straps framed her feverish eyes.

'There,' said Arleben, running an eye down his list, 'we've taken care of everything.' He examined her engorged nipples and labia closely. 'That's quite a reaction.'

Pav smiled. 'She loves it, no question. You know, I'm glad Garid's found what he wanted. I used to wonder...'

'You used to have your eye on him; don't tell me.'

‘Don’t tell my cluster, either.’ They laughed. Pav pulled the waist strap another notch tighter, smoothed it out and said in a different tone, ‘I don’t mind doing this for him, do you?’

Arleben said thoughtfully, ‘No. It’s a little bizarre, of course. I don’t think I would do it for an employer I didn’t know well.’

‘Me neither. But we know he’s a good man, no harm.’ Pav looked the woman over from head to foot, and shook his head. ‘I still don’t get the attraction.’

Arleben shrugged. ‘I know. Why people like what they like. I knew a man who was aroused by the machines at building sites...’ They left the room. The woman attempted to wriggle against the straps that held her; her chest heaved. She tried to move her hips but they were fixed too tightly to the wall. A whispery moan escaped her, and vanished into the empty room.

Garid was right that she was always in heat. The level of arousal ranged from mild to volcanic, but was never wholly absent. And increasingly Garid did not allow her release. In fact, he had begun teasing her for longer and longer periods, delighting in her helpless urgency. That evening he kept her close to the edge for hours, till she was crying and only the gag could keep her from pleading with real words. In these states she often became frantic enough to disobey him, or to scream through her gag if she was too restrained for disobedience. The stripes he applied then were even more fuel to her fire. He satisfied himself as frequently as he liked in her mouth, and watched her simmer. That night again she knelt, tightly bound between his legs, labia and nipples still hung with weights. Her flesh was marked and red, tears of hunger and frustration traveling down her face, her mouth full of him.

## **The Sound of the Lock**

As time went on, my master seemed to focus more and more on arousing me, and less and less on satisfying me. It was torture, exquisite and unbearable. The first few nights that he

chained me up in my kennel without making me come I stayed awake for hours, sure he would come back.

So it was not surprising that I began to play with myself, when I thought no one was looking. Mind you, after an intense session I was always prevented from touching myself; my hands were chained to my collar, my knees spread, sometimes my nipple rings tied to the ceiling of my kennel, I suppose to torment me further, and to keep me from turning over and humping the floor. They didn't try to keep me immobilized all day, however. I did get a terrible whipping the day my master noticed my juices soaked into one of my mitts. After that I knew he was looking for evidence, and I began trying to be careful. I could sometimes manage it against my forearm, if my mouth was free to lick the evidence off afterwards. But Arleben or Pav caught me more and more frequently as they began watching for the infraction. The result was always immediate immobilization, sometimes some painful swats from Arleben, and angry scolding that I imagine consisted of something along the lines of, 'Just wait till your master gets home!' When he did get home the punishment generally included the offending area, and was very unpleasant. The beatings were enough to make me very, very sorry, and to make me decide that the pleasure was simply not worth the punishment. When he applied hot sauces to my cunt, however, and left me writhing in torment for hours, and burning afterwards for a day and a half, I was truly convinced.

Until the next time.

Really, he left me no choice. You can't drive a poor girl to the edge over and over, and never let her fly. And it wasn't as if I was expected to be *self*-controlled. No one gave me a parental lecture and told me to use my willpower. We're not talking rational persuasion here. We're talking animal training, cause and effect, operant conditioning. I was supposed to learn that certain activities got me punished, so that I wouldn't do them anymore. Well, I guess I did them less, so maybe a psychologist would say it worked. I don't think my master or his staff were satisfied, however. Because the behavior involved so much pleasure, so much potential release, that there was no way they could completely extinguish it.

At least, so I thought at the time.

My master spent all of one evening teasing me almost out of my mind. My hands were tied up behind my back with the strap that crossed between my breasts. He spent what seemed like hours, sucking and pulling on my nipples, both of them at once; of course he knew what that did to me. I remember he had me face down over his lap for a long time, playing with the labia rings, before he began inserting objects into my ass. I could never control my hot humiliation when he did that. The whipping came later, when I was so deep that pain meant profound, out-of-control arousal. He kept a dildo in my ass as he whipped it, and I got so close, so close... When he stopped I cried, writhed in my restraints, begged him with every kind of body language I knew and some kinds I didn't know I knew. He laughed at me.

He fucked my mouth in a leisurely way, pulling on my nipple rings, then for the first time used my ass to come. He was huge, and it hurt, but the worst part was that I couldn't come. A touch would have done it, one touch to my clit, I was so filled up, so swollen. Every part of me was quivering on the edge, every pore filled with sex, nothing but that, no mind, no thought, just screaming desire centering in my cunt, my empty cunt, and my swollen, abandoned clit, the rest of me stimulated past bearing.

He came inside me, hurting my breasts with his big hands, emptying himself in my welted ass. Then he laid me on my back, my ankles tied to bedposts. I was still crying and clenching, but I couldn't come that way. He went away for half an hour or so, and gradually I calmed down. The juices that covered my cunt and thighs cooled against the air, like lava drying on a mountainside. Inside I was still molten and shaken with tremors. Then he came back with something metallic in his hands.

There was a belt that went tightly around my waist. It felt cold and I shivered. There was another band that came up between my legs. This time I shuddered with pleasure as it pressed tightly to my still-swollen cunt, but there was no actual contact with my clit; an inside edge pressed all around

the area instead. I felt my master fiddling with my labia rings, and then there were some metallic clicks.

He released my ankles, and pushed me down to my knees on the floor to give him my usual tribute of kissing his feet. I felt the new restraint with every move. He stood me up, and examined the belt closely. He pushed me into different positions and checked it again. Then he chained my collar to a ring on the wall, released my arms from behind my back, and left.

I couldn't believe my luck. I wasn't wearing mitts. Surely I could get past this new thing and stroke myself. I was still virtually as excited as I had been before, and the tight metal bands were oddly arousing. I could think of nothing but coming; punishment was immaterial. The shield over my pubic bone came up only a little over my fur, where the waist belt attached to it on a diagonal from both sides. I tried to slide my hand down under the shield, but it was too tightly curved over my pubic bone; there wouldn't have been room for a piece of paper, much less a hand. I felt round the band between my legs. It was weird to feel the hardness there, instead of my soft cunt. There were little openings, but none that I could feel myself through. The band continued up between my ass cheeks, but it was just a smooth, narrow rounded rod there, and not quite so tight. I opened my legs and tried to slide a finger under the band, but was stopped by the inside edge. I tried harder, and was stopped more thoroughly by a painful pull. My labia ring was caught, I thought – I'd just have to wiggle it loose – but no. I realized with a jolt that both the rings were inserted through slots in the metal band, and were locked there. There was no way to pry my cunt away from that band. I spent twenty frustrated minutes trying, going at it from every angle, and then I gave up, crying.

When I looked up, there was my master, looking thoughtfully down at me. I stuffed my fingers in my mouth in a pathetic attempt to hide the evidence, sobbing even harder. When I finally looked up at him again through my tears, his eyes were glinting with sardonic amusement and delight. He saw my expression, gave me one of his rare smiles, and cupped my cheek in his hand. Then he whipped me hard, all

over, front and back, actually raising my level of arousal if you can believe it, and making me so sore the next day that I could hardly move.

In the next little while I tried every way I could think of to come with that belt on. I tried to use the belt itself, pressing myself against the floor in my kennel, or attempting to shift it back and forth against me when I thought no one was looking. It fit too tightly, though. It was so well constructed and cleverly designed that nothing gave me enough stimulation to orgasm. Even when he tormented me further by using the belt to lock dildos into me, I was helpless. I squirmed, I wriggled, I pushed up against things. I rubbed my nipples until they were sore, hoping to get off. I couldn't do it.

One night Garid led his slave crawling on a leash into his screenroom, where he made her sit on the floor in front of his chair. He did not usually let her watch the screen, but this time he wanted her to see the show.

It was a medley of clips of her trying to masturbate while wearing the belt. He had to force her to watch and not turn away; he felt her tears dripping on his fingers as he held her head. There she was, shiny metal round her loins, squeezing and writhing, squirming and humping, in one vain attempt after another. She was even making noise in one of them, banging her metal covered pubis against the floor in her frustration.

By the time the tape was finished she was heaving with sobs. The moment he let go of her she threw herself face down on the floor at his feet. Garid let her lie there for a while. He was grimly amused at her distress, aroused by her humiliation, and a little surprised at her level of shock. Had she really thought he wouldn't notice? Apparently she still thought she could disobey and get away with it.

Or perhaps the little creature was so desperate to come that she had stopped thinking of consequences. Since he had discouraged her from thinking at all, she could simply be acting on instinct. Which would certainly account for her

recklessness. He enjoyed the frustrated frenzy he had captured on tape, and he doubted that punishment would really make her stop, at least not for quite a while. Punishment was fun, but often unsuccessful with this bad creature; she misbehaved every chance she got.

He leaned forward to look at her, and she cringed; of course she knew she deserved a beating. Garid had plenty of evidence now that the belt prevented orgasm; his control wasn't in question. Still, her disobedience could not be ignored, however cute.

So he strung her up by her wrists and punished her pretty thoroughly, with flogger, whip, and cane, while playing the tape on a loop in front of her. Whenever her eyes were open, between blows, she could watch as she debased herself. Some of the marks from that punishment lasted for weeks, and he made her sleep for three nights with huge dildos in her cunt and ass. Since she was humiliated by anything up her ass, he made sure he spent a long time on that one. He fastened her down on her hands and knees and greased it and pushed it in and out and around, shoved it in deep, watched her face redden and tears form. When he was done he spoke the phrase she knew so well: 'Bad jeedy!' and watched her weep and hang her head.

The first long period with the chastity belt was rough. The constant arousal had been present anyway, but now I had to get used to having no hope at all of satisfying myself. After the episode where he showed me the tape, I was afraid even to wriggle when I was alone, for fear of more punishment. After a while the rules got clearer: helpless wriggling and ineffectual pawing at my crotch were indulged (with evident amusement), whereas any more serious attempts to get past the belt were treated with severity. It wasn't often that I was in any position to make a real attempt, of course. I did try poking a bit of straw into the urine hole once when I thought no one was looking. That was when I found out that the hole didn't lead directly to me, but went through the complicated shield on an angle, preventing any access with objects that I was likely to

get hold of. Unfortunately a piece of the straw broke off, and was discovered the next time the belt was removed. I remember being suspended upside down for that beating, which seemed to last, off and on, for hours. And I was almost never allowed out of my mitts after that when my hands weren't tied. Generally speaking, however, I was able to exhibit my frustration without earning more than sniggers.

Although there were strategic openings for washing, and it was designed to allow the usual toilet functions (at least without the butt plug), they took it off most days to clean me. If it was my master who did this, the procedure amounted to serious erotic torture. My hands were tied above my head in the shower while he removed the belt, soaped and rubbed me all over, stroked my soapy cunt, rinsed me thoroughly with the shower head, dried me off, and then lovingly oiled the bits held captive by the belt. With a touch here and a stroke there he would slowly bring me to the brink of orgasm. I would be breathing fast, but trying to restrain my moans, in the hope that this time he wouldn't stop. Still, of course I was unmistakably trembling, nerves stretched, begging. Then, smiling, he'd reach over for the cleaned belt, close it tightly around me, and lock it firmly once again. The sound of the lock snapping shut was almost guaranteed to make me sob or wail. Sometimes I cried, sometimes I screamed, sometimes I even kicked (and spent the next few weeks dragging around heavy ankle weights). Mostly I learned just to hang there and whimper while he locked the belt and then played with my nipples.

After a while constant arousal became the norm for me. I almost forgot what coming felt like. More than ever I needed any touch, no matter what kind. The endless teasing was my master's right. My orgasms, I finally began to realize, did not belong to me. I had no right to them. I belonged to him, all of me, including my responses, including any pleasures I might have. My body wasn't mine – why had I thought my orgasms were mine? They were his, and they were denied.

Garid could see his pet relaxing her hold. She stopped struggling when the belt went on, accepting the inevitable with

shudders as the metal touched her, hanging her head and relaxing her thighs. Sometimes she still cried a little, but she was all the more eager to take him in her mouth. She would lean against his thighs afterwards, and rest her head on his lap. If her hands were free she clung to him, her arms around his hips, while he stroked her hair.

One evening he looked down between his thighs at her. She was pressing her cheek to his damp and semi-flaccid cock, giving his thigh little kisses, her arms locked together behind her back. The tight leather harness she wore restricted her breathing almost as much as a corset, and the straps circling her breasts thrust them forward, twin tight goblet-shaped mounds, the skin smooth and shiny. The chastity belt disappeared between her legs, where it locked to her wet and needy cunt, and held dildos in both her holes. He leaned over and stroked her buttocks, bisected by the thin rod up the back of her belt. There were plenty of marks, some recent and some older, he stroked the rounded beauty of them. She sighed and snuggled closer to him. He straightened up, pulled up on her breasts and began playing with them, pushing the swollen mounds together and flicking the rings up and down. She closed her eyes and then opened them again. She looked at his stiffening cock and opened her mouth almost involuntarily, moaning, her tongue reaching for it slightly. The dildos had been locked inside her all day, and she had accumulated a heavy weight of arousal, deep and multi-layered, complex in the crosscurrents of sensation, from breasts to cunt, from filled mouth to filled ass. He could sense that this was no longer something she expected to have resolved.

He picked her up and laid her supine on the bed. He took a key from his pocket and unlocked her. This usually meant that he intended to use her asshole, but occasionally he used her cunt without letting her come, by numbing her first with an anesthetic. This time he drew the belt and both dildos out of her and toyed with her for some time, stroking her inside and out, watching her carefully for any attempt to take control. He saw none. She lay passively, accepting everything he did with moans and gasps, but no thrusting, no reaching for more. She was trembling, and he slowed his stroking for a while, then

sank his mouth to her nether lips, gently tonguing her anywhere but her clit, moving his tongue and then not moving, then moving again and listening to the rising sound of her voice. Then he rose over her, gathered her up and shoved his cock into her soaked, slippery opening. Her eyes opened wide in shock. The surprise was almost instantly overtaken by the first convulsive orgasm. She screamed as the orgasms racked her, one following another so quickly she could hardly get her breath. He gripped her body like a vice, like an owner. When he finally accelerated his thrusting and reached his climax she peaked, lost her voice, and passed out.

Garid watched his pet carefully over the next weeks and months. At times he could still sense manipulation, resistance: the subtle drive of muscles under her own command, the guerrilla flash of eyes half hidden behind their lids. Her voice would carry a barely perceptible undertone, an urge to accomplish her own secret will and not his own. Gradually, though, this slipped away. More and more often her trembling flesh fit perfectly in his hands, malleable and yielding.

Mostly he would just accept her acceptance, let her surrender and suffer. Once in a while he would surprise her.

It was hard enough just getting used to moving in the belt, especially when they exercised me. They had always forced me into some form of physical activity, anything from fancy treadmills and exercise machines to locking me to a long bar on a post and whipping me around in circles. Well, actually, they whipped me on the machines, too. I had been sedentary for a long time in prison and on the ship, and at first it was pretty easy to exhaust me. They always seemed to push me further, get a little more out of me than I thought I could possibly endure. The whip was a fair motivator, of course. And sometimes they would reward me with pats, even the occasional nice rubdown.

I noticed that they were careful to put my joints through the full range of motion every day and to make me stretch. They came up with some fairly ingenious racks and pulleys for the purpose. The difference from longer-term bondage was that I was only kept in the positions long enough to stretch the

muscles, and not long enough to cramp and tense. They'd hang me from my hands on tiptoe, pull my arms up high behind my back, pull my legs wide apart, force me to stretch my hamstrings, and all slowly and inexorably, without undue force. Then would come the real exercise.

I can't describe the sensation, my body locked and forced and punished into activity. Fastened by the wrists and neck into the treadmill, my mouth stuffed with an air hole gag, I struggled with my restraints and my weak muscles, each sting of the whip producing a little shot of adrenaline. The frustration and strain in my thighs conveyed a tension to my cunt, often teased with a small dildo and tightly pressed by the metal belt. The dildo in my rear was almost always there also, making me feel dirty and bad and hot and invaded. Inevitably the friction and stress made me achingly aroused. There was a frantic quality to each session, a rising and overwhelming helplessness as I struggled until I was exhausted, worked up and sweating and desperate, and then struggled some more. The whip would become more and more insistent, driving me on, the whole region from my waist to my knees feeling congested, heavy and hurt, suffering with strain and need. I was beyond thought; I was part of the machine, a cog built into it, forced to motivate the mechanism, my lack of choice not relieving me of one frantic instant of exertion.

There were more playful times, too. Sometimes they just chained my collar to a long cable on posts that ran the length of the yard, and encouraged me to trot back and forth. Given the distance I was able to tease a bit, stop out of their reach, and then dance away again. I only did this when it was Pav or Arleben, of course; I tried it once with my master, and the consequences weren't worth it. But the others, especially Pav, would indulge me a little in my naughtiness. In the end they always pursued me until I got a good run out of it. There was no escaping them when they really wanted to catch me, naturally, and if I was too bad, Arleben at least would punish me.

It's odd, but Arleben's punishments were more likely to make me ashamed of myself than were the much more severe ones from my master. I think it was because they were simply

another chore for him. Arleben administered beatings disinterestedly and almost mechanically, and his cock didn't press against his clothes while he did it. His slight frown conveyed that I was a bad and stupid animal who was wasting people's valuable time with her misbehavior. After such punishments, if I could, I would whine and push my head low against his leg, to try to show him that I was sorry. His disapproval sometimes took a while to abate, particularly when he was busy. He would always forgive me in the end, but he never got fond of me the way Pav did.

## **Disaster**

I had been a slave for a long time, half a Raniz year, perhaps. I was feeling more secure and safe, even protected, certainly cared for. I missed my master when he went away, sometimes for days, missed him so much it made my belly ache, but he always came back. And when he did he used and punished me, let me pleasure him and allowed me to lie at his feet.

Pav and Arleben took care of me, but my master seemed galaxies bigger. When he was in the room he took up all the space: his size, his hands, his eyes, his cock, all of him. And his will, especially his will, which had such a presence in that house that I could feel it pinning me down, even when he wasn't there. I was unequivocally his belonging. Every touch or blow from his hands was an acknowledgement of my existence. His seed in my mouth felt like grace.

But then he wasn't there for longer periods than usual. And when he was there, he didn't want me. He was in meetings, or alone in his office. Strangers came through the house to see him, and he didn't show me to them. He hardly glanced at me on my mat by the wall, when he strode through the kitchen looking for his staff. I didn't even get to kiss his feet at night before they chained me up in my cupboard under the stairs, much less worship his cock. Although I continued to live in my chastity belt, there were no dildos, no nipple clips, no tortures or torments. I felt I was dying for a touch. I was adrift,

no point to me. Only my chain anchored me, leashing me to the wall, day after day. That felt real.

At first Pav was sympathetic when he saw me despondent, and gave me extra pats and soothing words. But then he and Arleben got busy also. A lot of the activity was centered on the house, and they both began to have a lot to do. Arleben spent hours on the com screen and seemed to be dealing with massive lists. Pav cooked and fixed and rarely sat down. They barely had time to clean or exercise me, and I puddled on the floor more than once because Pav forgot to walk me. I began crying myself to sleep.

The activity reached a crescendo one beautiful day, when the sun shone warm instead of hot, and streamed through the windows with a cheerful look that didn't reach me. By that time there were several important looking men staying in the house, being catered to by Pav, Arleben and some additional staff. Everyone looked dressed up. In the middle of the morning Pav, looking a little harried, hauled me out of my listless position on the mat and walked me in the garden, jerking my short leash to hurry me. As we returned to the house, one of the new staff put their head out the kitchen door and spoke in urgent tones. Pav handed my leash to him and ran for the oven, unmistakably cursing as he wrenched it open in a cloud of smoke. The new man pushed me over to my mat, hurriedly unclipped the leash, and hooked the wall chain onto my collar. He ran to help Pav, and others joined in.

It wasn't until half an hour later, after all the excitement was over, that I felt my collar and noticed he had neglected to snap the lock shut.

My world turned over.

As if at a great distance I heard the constant arrivals and noise. A luncheon meeting got underway without further mishap, tray after tray of food traveling out of the kitchen. The clink of cutlery and the murmur of deep voices dominated the house, rising and falling, my master's voice clearly discernable. I felt a pang knife through my fog every time I heard him. I felt abandoned. No matter how abject I was, there was meaning to my existence when he made use of me. I had

given away every particle of autonomy, every atom of freedom, to belong to him. He had to replace that with his attention, to shape me with his hands and blows, or I was nothing.

And now I wasn't even locked up properly. No one cared enough to make sure I was safe. I began crying again out of self-pity. No restraints but my collar, chastity belt, and the usual cuffs on my wrists and ankles, useless, not even attached to anything. If they had even bothered to put on my mitts, the unlocked chain would probably have held me.

I had freedom. I hadn't had any in half a year. I could get up and move around on my own, if I was careful. If I was sneaky about it. Would I? Did I want to? What could I do? I began in a bitter way to get excited at the prospect.

A moment later a wave of panic swept over me and I cowered. I clenched my hands between my knees to keep them away from my collar. What was I thinking of? I'd be terribly punished. Arleben would be outraged, and even Pav would be horrified. My master would... my master would... what would he do? He would do *something*. He would have to.

That decided me there and then. But...

But uncharacteristically, I hesitated. I knew it was wrong to take advantage of their mistake. They were busy; they forgot to check on me. I could tell there were a lot of important people in the house – to make a scene now would be awful – couldn't I be responsible about this? I shut my eyes tight and clenched my fists.

Uh-uh. No. I couldn't.

These restraints were not intended to teach me responsibility. They were meant – among other things – to control my impulses. And they weren't doing their job. How dared they leave me free?

It was time for me to cause some trouble.

Everyone was out of the kitchen serving dessert when I slipped the chain off my collar, laid it down gently, and got to my feet. I sidled carefully out a side door into the back hall,

away from all the fuss. I felt oddly clumsy and had to make a conscious effort to direct my limbs, so unused to doing anything on my own initiative. I didn't know how long it would take before they would notice I was missing. It might be a very short time. Or it might be quite a while, if everyone assumed that someone else had taken me somewhere. I felt I had to work fast, in any case. The passage had a couple of doors on each side, which turned out to be uninviting – storage cupboards, which were nothing but dead ends. The open door at the end turned out to lead down to the basement, however, which was far more interesting.

First there was a workshop. There was plenty to spill in there; rivets, magnetic fasteners, vats of liquid stoneform. The tubes of fixative were good for decorating the walls. The ball bearings made a beautiful mess all over the floor. I considered the paint, but decided that the fumes would hit the ventilators and call attention to me too soon. I tiptoed as best I could around the ball bearings, picked a few out from between my toes, and slipped into the next room, which turned out to contain laundry equipment and piles of clothes. I was just considering whether I should go back for the liquid stoneform, or look for something new, when I heard footsteps coming down the stairs. Diving behind a machine I huddled in a dark corner, biting my knuckles and trying not to whimper with fear. The monumental stupidity of what I was doing hit me, and it began to feel like I was in some kind of a nightmare. How could this be happening?

Maybe I could sneak back upstairs and lock the chain myself – a perfect alibi. Yes, that's what I would do, if only no one found me...

Whoever it was went into the room opposite the laundry. I heard the clinking of bottles, and then the footsteps moving smartly back up the stairs. Without further thought I jumped out from my hiding place and ran into the room opposite. A wine cellar. Perfect. I grabbed two bottles that were off by themselves and took them across to the laundry room. Opening them took some nerve, as in the end all I could do was break the necks. I muffled the noise as best I could with

laundry, and ended up wielding both sharp glass and red wine on the clothes.

Looking back from the laundry room door, I felt satisfied with my accomplishments so far. Still no outcry from upstairs. Of course, they would probably search for me quietly so as not to disturb the guests. I looked around for more opportunities for mischief. There was an area near the front of the basement with transformers and ceramic conduits. I didn't recognize most of it, and I was afraid to touch it. But there was a screen with characters moving across it. I couldn't read them, but I began tentatively to tap at the keyboard. Suddenly the display went black. I waited, breathless, for any reaction, an alarm, anything. Something in the house felt different, but I couldn't identify what. Had the voices stopped?

There were a few switches near me, and suddenly reckless (in contrast to the wonderful judgment I'd shown so far), I pushed them all over. All hell broke loose. Alarms started beeping, voices were raised in consternation above my head, footsteps started moving rapidly. There was nowhere to hide where I was. I ran to a side passage I hadn't explored, and found it led up some steps to a door into the garden. I struggled frantically with the stiff locks, made for someone much bigger and stronger than myself.

At last I pried the door open and slid through it, then sidled along the wall close to the house. It was very odd being outside without a leash, even odder than it had been in the house. I wanted to cry. I wanted my master. I wanted to run. I wanted to be punished. I wanted to throw myself at his feet and let them fasten me so tightly I couldn't move. But I was still free, and part of me was still looking for trouble. I was just kneeling down and examining at the plants to see if there was anything I could pull up, when I heard voices right in front of me. A couple of men were strolling out into the garden. They were familiar – friends of my master. I had miscalculated; I was too near the meeting room, which had a door to the outside. In the moment before they saw me I sensed their enjoyment of the chance to take a break; evidently I hadn't spoiled everyone's day.

They looked at me, kneeling among the greenery and glanced meaningfully at each other. Then they both made pet-soothing noises and started to close in, one from either side. I tried to slide out between them, but one caught and held my upper arm in an inescapable grip. A finger hooked through the ring in my collar and stayed there. They stroked my hair and talked me over for a minute or two, their big bodies hiding me from the increasing numbers of men out enjoying the sunshine. Then they called to one of the staff crossing the lawn with drinks, and sent him into the house. He came back with Arleben, who blanched at the sight of me and immediately hustled me into the house through the basement door. There were ball bearings in the hall outside the workroom; his eyes followed a trail of them and he gasped. He grabbed me around the ribs, jerked me off my feet and carted me up the stairs under one arm, my legs dangling behind. Within moments I had at least one of my wishes: he rapidly used heavy straps to immobilize me, then gagged and bridled me and pushed me into my kennel under the stairs, hooking the straps on my feet and head to ringbolts in the wall so I couldn't move at all. I had never seen him look like that, and I closed my eyes against his anger. If he looked that way, what would my master's reaction be? What had I done?

Still, for all my terror and guilt, I sighed with relief. I was safe again.

'You did what?!'

'I got the pastry out of the oven; it was burning.'

'And what did you do with the woman?'

'I don't remember, I'm sorry. It was chaos in there. I think I handed her leash to Yrin, that dark-haired one. He would have locked her up, he's seen me do it.'

'Pav...' Garid raised his hands in exasperation. Pav looked at him, upset and feeling guilty. Arleben was almost as distressed.

‘I know,’ said Pav. ‘I know. I’m so sorry, sir. I meant to put her in her kennel during the meeting. In all the rush I completely forgot. She’s always been so docile, I never expected her to behave this way. She’s never done it before.’

‘She’s never been left to roam free around the house and garden before.’

Pav winced. He thought reluctantly about what Arleben had said, and about the slave’s teasing propensities when he let her out on the cable for a run, the way she pushed any freedom to the limit. He had been spoiling her.

‘We were lucky this time,’ said Garid. ‘She was found quickly. Nothing important was damaged, and the meeting went better for the break. But do you realize how close I came to losing all my credibility with that crowd? My whole presentation was based on my ability to control the variables on the project. If they realized that my house was in chaos because I couldn’t control my own pet woman... Incredibly lucky it was a couple of friends who found her, and they kept their heads.’ Garid rubbed his weary face. ‘A pervert in control is one thing. A pervert made ridiculous by his own possession would be a laughingstock. *This mustn’t happen again.*’

Both the men miserably agreed. Arleben spoke up. ‘Sir, I think you’re right that she needs careful watching. Really, she needs more attention than we’ve had time to give her lately. She’s been low for weeks since you’ve gotten so busy. If this goes on I’d suggest either hiring someone to look after her, or letting one of your friends have her for a while.’

Garid looked grim. ‘Things will ease up shortly; I’m not giving her away.’ Pangs of conscience struck him. ‘She’s been low, has she? I haven’t dared to go near her; I didn’t have time to take a break with this new development, and I wouldn’t have been able to keep my hands off her...’

Arleben watched the dawning gleam in Garid’s eyes with some alarm. ‘This may not be the time, sir,’ he said hastily. ‘She’d see any attention as a reward for bad behavior.’

His employer’s sigh was half a groan, and was followed by a long silence. ‘You’re right,’ Garid said finally. He considered a

minute longer. ‘And we still have guests in the house. You’re on to something, Arleben – she was certainly trying to provoke some attention. She has to be punished, and she has to be isolated. She’s obviously up to her old tricks; we’ve got to be severe, and not give her what she wants. Now, you can be quite dispassionate; I’d suggest you discipline her, and use methods that don’t excite her. This needs to be pure punishment. I’ll show up so she knows I’m still around, but then I’ll leave her to you.’

‘What doesn’t excite her?’

‘Good question,’ Garid said wryly. ‘To start with, a beating on the soles of her feet and the palms of her hands. Shoulders and back. And dip her gag in something harmless but foul-tasting.’

‘What about the noise? Our guests?’

‘Use the screen room. It’s soundproof. Then I want her isolated. Leave her in the screen room closet for tonight. Lock her hands behind her back, and make her stand on those feet. That should teach her.’

Arleben turned to Pav. ‘You’ll have to move some equipment out of that closet. Can you install a bolt in the wall for me?’ Pav nodded. ‘Then, sir, I’d like you to check my work when I’ve finished.’ Garid agreed, seeing Arleben’s reluctance to take final responsibility for this punishment. He couldn’t blame him.

Garid considered. ‘The worst loss is the wine. Those two bottles were the last of the Barithet ‘22, and they were worth about a quarter of what I paid for her, believe it or not. The clothes will repair themselves in the machines. Fortunately Raniz is a bit backward in that way; she doesn’t seem to have realized the pointlessness of that bit of vandalism. We’ll have to reprogram the ventilators and the photoelectric cells, but that won’t take too long.’

‘What about the workroom?’ Pav asked quietly.

‘Let me think about that. You don’t need it right away, do you? She should help with the cleanup, so leave it the way it is

for now.'

Pav still looked upset. 'Never mind, Pav,' said Garid, his eyes suddenly gleaming. 'Just think what we missed. She could have walked straight into the meeting and sat on the Under-Secretary's lap.' A vivid image of this flashed across Pav's mind in all its horrifying detail, and he covered his eyes. Then he burst out laughing. Garid began also, and finally Arleben snorted and gave in to silent laughter, so intense tears rolled down his cheeks.

'I suppose we should be grateful she didn't,' wheezed Arleben, catching his breath. 'Do you think she knew what she was doing?'

This punishment wasn't funny at all, I decided. I tried to distract myself from the pain by thinking about my master, my little free run, sex, almost anything. Nothing worked. I hurt so much I kept letting out little involuntary moans. My feet throbbed unbearably. I leaned this way and that, but my ankles were locked together and I had very little freedom of movement. My hands were curled around themselves protectively behind my back. A huge gag made my jaws ache and filled my mouth with a filthy taste. It was locked directly to the wall in front of me.

Time in the closet had taken on a physical presence that had no endpoint, no boundaries. I had the confused sense in the darkness that the closet had another dimension to it, had morphed somehow into a corridor stretching off into infinity. An end to my stay there seemed a remote and theoretical possibility; an infinite series of agonies was the reality.

After my escapade I had been tied up under the stairs, immovably for hours, suffering on the hard floor, before Arleben came for me. He had been in a surprisingly good mood. He had slung me over his shoulder, still bound up in straps, and carried me off to the screen room. It was late; I saw no one else, though I could hear people moving around in the kitchen.

I had never been punished so thoroughly and methodically. At the beginning I felt almost tearfully eager to accept

whatever was dished out, especially when my master looked in on us. I would gladly have taken anything from him, anything at all, if only he had deigned to hold the cane. But he only looked at me for a moment, one penetrating glance that I couldn't read. He exchanged a few words with Arleben, and then he left. I knew I didn't merit anything after what I had done. I also knew it was my master who had ordered the punishment, and that was some comfort.

By the time the punishment had progressed a little further I was grateful for the straps that held me so tightly, because I would certainly have tried to get away. At least they were punishing me, and not ignoring me anymore. Very soon, however, I would have done anything to be ignored again; the pain was simply beyond belief. I knew I deserved it; that was all I could cling to in the claws of the outrageous agony. But oh, how I wished myself back on my quiet mat in the kitchen! Please, please, please, I wanted to scream through my gag, please, I'm sorry, I swear I'll never do it again, please, no more! But Arleben went on systematically covering my skin with welts, each, I imagine, a precisely equal distance from the previous one. He took care, however, to cross them all with a couple more on each target area, and the resulting excruciating pain almost made me pass out.

Leaving me standing all night on my welted feet was cruel. Oddly enough, I would never have applied that word to my master's treatment of me before, and I puzzled about this in a confused sort of way; it offered me some distraction. Toward morning, the dividing line emerged for me. For the first time in all these months, arousal wasn't transforming the pain. Oh, he had given me some severe punishments before. But somehow even in those cases, the whole experience, the restraint, the helplessness, the subjection to my master, had transmuted the pain into something else, something nearly ecstatic. Not this time. This time he forced me to experience only suffering, and it was cruel.

Toward the end, through the haze of anguish and exhaustion, a revelation started small within me, a feeling that gradually expanded till I could get hold of its meaning. Not a very startling revelation, thinking about it now, but it was

something that had never occurred to me before. I understood that I deserved this punishment, not only because I had misbehaved so outrageously, but because I had thought I had the right to my master's attention. What was I, to think I had such rights? I had forgotten that I was just a thing for his enjoyment. I finally understood, with a tired inward sigh of resignation, that he had no obligation to reciprocate. As long as he kept me safe, fed and healthy, he could do, or not do, whatever he wanted with me.

The closet door opened at last, the light blinding me. Big hands unfastened and lifted me, finally taking my weight off my poor feet. I would have wept with relief, if I'd any tears left. One of them – it was Pav – carried me over his shoulder through the house, down the stairs, and out into the cool of the very early morning. Behind the tool shed, he sat me down and made it clear this was my chance to empty my bladder. I had a lot of difficulty; I was pretty dehydrated, and that was not a position I was used to, but in the end I managed. He wiped off my belt with a bit of cloth, carted me into the shed, and chained my collar into a far corner near the floor. Arleben appeared with something for me to drink. I could barely taste it after the dreadfulness that had been in my mouth all night, but the coolness and moisture were very sweet. They released my hands from behind my back, and holding my wrists, made me flex my sore shoulders; the stiffness and the welts hurt dreadfully. Within moments they had fastened my wrists immovably to the front of my thighs, and replaced the gag with my usual bridle, the gag thankfully clean and tasteless.

I was desperate to lie down and rest. The length and position of my chain, and the way my wrists were fastened, made me think that this was the intention. They weren't done with me yet, however. Pav arranged me on my knees with my head down, and Arleben laid two careful, searing strokes of the cane across my ass, and two more across each hip. The purpose of this became clear as soon as they left; I could not sit or lie in any position without it hurting.

They left me in that tool shed for three days. At least, I think it was three days; I lost track at some points, and against the evidence of the daylight and darkness, I felt I had been there for weeks. It was hot in the middle of the day, cool at night. They arranged some sort of heating, gave me the bare minimum of attention to keep me fed, watered and clean, and other than that they left me. I hurt all over, and my master didn't come. He didn't come. I didn't know if he ever would again. Every painful welt could be the sign of his caring, or it might just be a lesson for an unruly slave who would be passed on some day when he had the time to arrange it. Or maybe I'd never leave the shed; I'd been here for weeks, hadn't I? No, only two days...

My miserable thoughts revolved endlessly, relentlessly. But inside that pointless whirling there was a central place, soft and dark. If I could let go I might find it, find it and rest there. If my insistent brain would only shut off... A beating helped me get there, pressure to perform, helpless and intense sexual frustration, anything to push me past the point of thinking, calculating, anticipating, weighing the odds.

My exhausted mind tumbled around, falling from one wordless fear to another, occasionally landing on something solid. And usually painful. The workroom, and the look in Arleben's eyes. The remorseless cane on my hands and feet. Cringing before my master, his smile like an exquisite knife, flaying me down to the core.

Curled up in that dark shed one night I looked up at the stars through the one window. My welts hurting against the hard floor, the gag roundly filling my mouth, the weariness, sent me falling somehow, into that dark place where I was peaceful and

safe, and was not at my own mercy. The place where I floated gradually expanded, until I was adrift in a globe the size of the universe, with his huge hands enclosing and cradling the darkness.

Garid saw the last of the functionaries off into the night with a smile and an inward sigh. The decisions were made, the contracts signed. He'd even hired some of the project staff, who could hire the rest. The environmental restoration projects that he did had rarely been so complicated, involving four ministries and seven quasi-official agencies, not to mention the frequently splintering public action conglomerates. To pull it all together had been almost miraculous. But this was the kind of thing he was known for. Not without cost, however; he was nothing but a grounded aircar at this point.

Still, he could not rest without a look at his little pet. She had been in the tool shed for two and a half days now. He could have looked at the portable monitor in the kitchen; it was always on, but he wanted some privacy, away from Pav's eye. He went into the screen room, opened the monitor panel and pressed a couple of buttons.

There she was. She was sleeping. The curling hair glinted slightly, a lock that spilled forward trembling with her breath. He turned up the sound to hear her soft breathing. The bridle and ball gag looked so natural on her little face that he hardly noticed the pleasure they gave him, like a satisfying bass line in a piece of music. His hands moved without thought on the controls; he zoomed in to examine her, the infrared picking up details in the dim light. The unaccustomed roughness on her curved back and shoulders would take a while to heal; he planned to let it take its course. And he would need to decide whether to make her move on her welted feet, or make her crawl and let the even more tender hands take the brunt. He'd leave the mitts off for a while. He smiled a little. The chastity belt pressed firmly into her flesh; he could see the lock, as solid as ever. Her beautiful, animal breasts with their glinting nipple rings – how he longed to get his hands on them. Despite his weariness, at the sight of the bound woman his erection

was throbbing, and even more at the knowledge that the keys were in his pocket.

Still, he had said three days, and three days it would be. He had practiced restraint for years; restraint was not difficult. He went to bed. In the first dream he heard, too late, about a crucial splinter group that meant he had to start the process all over again. But the rest of the long night he dreamed about completion and the promise of pleasure.

The next day he got up late, relaxed and happy, climbed into casual clothes (rescued from his silly slave's predations by the machine's repair program), and went out to the tool shed. His pet was sitting back on her heels, leaning against the wall, the low chain pulling her head down, her eyes riveted on the door. The face under its bridle lit up at the sight of him; the eyes immediately filled. Her body opened toward him, despite the bonds that held her, opened and presented as far as it could. He looked at her for a long moment, then walked across the shed in two strides and crouched down in front of her. He touched her face with his fingertips for a moment, then grasped both her nipple rings and pulled down hard. She gasped and followed the pull, putting her face to the floor. Garid examined her closely, yanking her roughly this way and that. Then he took her jaw in one hand, then in his deep voice he said, 'Bad jeedy!' and slapped her face. Her downcast eyes spilled over and she turned her face toward his hand.

He left then, and organized the workshop cleanup with Pav. The room was a sorry mess. He described a new appliance for the man to make in the space that was left. Being no more than a modified dustpan, Pav rigged it up quickly enough. On Garid's orders he fetched the slave out of her isolation and made her crawl, without mitts or kneepads, along the brick path and down through the basement door to the workshop. Pav ignored her obvious attempts to favor her painful hands. He was motivated by some residual anger about the trouble she had caused, and some serious anger about his workshop. He was perfectly aware that he would not be so angry if he did not feel himself to have been at fault for misjudging and indulging her. The self-awareness did not soften him, however; his new attitude communicated itself through the

leash, and the slave bowed her head and scurried along beside him, wincing as much from his anger as from the pain.

The sight of the workshop made her turn her head away and whimper. Pav, exasperated, found he was finally able to hit her. He pushed her nose into every mess, scolded and smacked her while she groveled, squirmed and yelped. He sensed her real repentance, but thought he wouldn't put it past her to do the same again, given the opportunity.

He found himself a little surprised that there was no shame attached to what he was doing. He felt he wasn't abusing a helpless creature, but correctly punishing a naughty one, who not only deserved but craved the retribution. His sense of the rightness of the whole thing clicked into place; he felt satisfied.

Humming, he removed the slave's bridle and fitted another to her head; this one had a wide strap covering her gagged mouth. He had reinforced the bridle with metal and brackets, and attached a wide flat pan that jutted forward from the gag. Once it was on she looked a bit like she had a duck's bill. Then he fastened her hands behind her back, and set her to scooping up the mess on the floor. He crossed his arms and watched her strain; it was very inefficient, but perhaps it would teach her something. Getting the pan low enough to the floor without the use of her hands was extremely difficult, and several times she fell forward on her breasts before she got anything. Then the bits and pieces tended to roll out of the pan before she could lift it. When she did manage to pick up something she had to shuffle on her knees, her head tipped back, over to the low container he'd provided. It wasn't long before she had ball bearings, rivets and other debris under her knees, and was flinching with almost every move. The scoop blocked her forward vision, and several times she missed the container with her load altogether. Pav provided himself with a thin rod, and made sure to whip her with this when she did poorly, or when she stopped for more than a moment to rest. He was busy injecting oil underneath the spilled stoneform, to more or less float it off the floor's surface. He looked up at the place where the line of fixative across the walls had adhered to some of his tools, and he gave the woman an extra swat.

Pav looked up to find Garid leaning in the doorway, looking at him approvingly.

‘I thought you said you couldn’t hit her.’

Pav gestured around. ‘Can you blame me?’

Garid smiled. ‘Let me show you a few things. If you’re going to use that, here are the most sensitive spots...’ He demonstrated a variety of techniques, and Pav took the opportunity to practice, the slave squealing and twitching under the repeated experiments. Garid took care also to teach Pav how to avoid real damage. Then he watched the cleanup for another few minutes.

‘In another half hour, put the knee pads on her; she’ll be all in by then, but that will keep her going a bit longer. Push her as far as she can go; I’d suggest punishing her with several more strokes when she has to stop, like we do when we exercise her.’

‘All right, sir.’

‘And Pav... once the workshop’s functional again, I think we need a cage for her. Can you make one?’

‘Metal?’

‘Yes, and small; dog kennel size. See if you can find some plans on the web base.’

‘Sure, I can make something like that. I’ll have to get the materials. You’re – you’re planning a tighter lock-up, I take it.’ He busied himself with the stoneform.

‘I know what you’re thinking,’ said Garid, and Pav’s head swiveled round again. ‘The lock still has to be closed. Pav, we never had a problem with security before we got distracted; I don’t think it’ll be a problem again. I just think it’s a good idea to keep reminding her of what happens when she misbehaves, and besides...’

He looked at the straining little creature on her knees in the middle of the room, her head pushing against the debris with the humiliating pan strapped to her face. He took a quick

breath. Pav watched Garid's face, as motionless as usual, the eyes alight.

'You'd like to see her in a cage, wouldn't you?' Pav looked down to hide his smile, hoping he hadn't overstepped anything.

'You dead wurlegh! You know me way too well.' Garid laughed. Pav took the insult with equanimity. It was one Garid used only with affection, although it referred to a weed that clogged sewage systems in most of the southern hemisphere.

For the first three nights back from the shed I had to sleep chained under the workbench, wrists locked again to my thighs. The floor was cold, and those cursed ball bearings homed in on me like I had a magnet up my butt. Hell, maybe my belt was magnetized for the occasion; I wouldn't put it past my master. I spent the days miserably trying to shovel the demonic things off the floor, and the nights wretchedly trying to wriggle them out from under me. Despite my history, I know I'm capable of learning from my mistakes, because no matter what mischief I get up to in the future, I'll definitely never dump ball bearings on the floor again; I mean it.

I didn't get up off my knees for three days. They let me use a litter box down the corridor, and I ate from a bowl under the workbench. They put pads on my knees when I got too sore. Apart from that I did my humiliating scooping with only Pav's rod for assistance.

Initially Pav's uncompromising and painful discipline felt like a betrayal. Where was the special relationship we had: cute pet, getting tidbits with a pleading look, being indulged and forgiven?

It was gone. There was force behind those blows, each one signifying Pav's lack of forgiveness, *his* sense of betrayal. I began to feel guilty for pushing this gentle man so far. But in the end I was grateful for real punishment, and for the end to the last fragment of undeserved control. Whenever I was at the end of my strength during those days, I would crawl shakily to

him over the debris, press the side of my head trembling against his ankle, and lift my ass for the rod.

## **Tighter**

When they finally let me upstairs they kept me in incredibly stringent bondage. I spent a long time one day on my feet (thankfully healed by then) in the front hall, bent double, my arms pulled up vertically behind my back and fastened from elbow to wrist to a post behind my head. They left a flogger and a whip dangling from hooks on my nipple rings, for the convenience of whoever was passing. It seemed to be a goal to make me squeal as loud as possible under my hood and heavy gag. My pendent breasts took as much punishment as my ass that day. The hood had gone on first, but to my joy I had known my master's hand at last, tightening the straps. I knew his hand on the whip, and his fingers on the welts. After he left I could still feel those hands on me, shaping me, outlining me with the attention of his blows. And the elation expanded until my restricted body could hardly contain it all. I wanted to dance for joy; all I could do was shake and shimmer enough to set the flogger and whip dancing.

I was not allowed to kneel between his legs during that period, and service him with all the delicate devotion of my mouth and tongue and breath. To my shame, he would instead force a ring gag into my mouth big enough for his cock, immobilize me with straps, and fuck my face. I needn't tell you that the chastity belt came off only for cleaning, and the occasional rough ass fucking. Gradually the sexual torments increased up to their old level, but orgasm became a distant memory.

One day I spent hours hanging by my wrists and ankles, my back roughly parallel to the floor. After some time like this I began to feel disoriented, as if I was a quadruped trying to drop to the ceiling above me, but prevented by some weird anti-grav. My master spent a lot of time that day punishing my ass with various implements. He took off my belt and

tormented me, hurting my clit, poking things up my ass and cunt. I could flex my arms and legs, lifting myself a little up and down, and twist and struggle helplessly. The effort exhausted me pretty fast, and there was nothing I could do to get out of the way of his torments. He let me down for a while to rest some of my weight on my reddened ass, my hands and feet still suspended. Then he hoisted me up again for more fun and games. My legs were widely spread; he chained my labia rings tightly to my thighs, and tried various substances on the exposed flesh: stinging sauces, ice, not-quite-burning oil. Eventually the residue was washed off – carefully, to avoid letting me come – and he lowered me a bit, and used my position to fuck my ass for a long, long time, while my breasts bounced and undulated painfully under his whip.

Another day, out in the garden, instead of leashing me to a little post like they had done in the past, they tied my breasts firmly and painfully around a thick pole, so tightly that my nipple rings could be linked together on the other side. At the level of my mouth a ball gag protruded from the pole, part of it as far as I could tell; it didn't shift at all when I moved my head. My nose ring and collar were fastened to the pole as well, and kept me from pulling my mouth away. Of course my arms were rigidly locked behind my back. I had to stay in that position, up on my knees, face to the pole, for what must have been hours. I was out of the way, in the shade where the roof overhung. The day was warm and breezy. My master, his staff and his friends passed from time to time, or sat out in chairs. Pav trimmed some hedges. Arleben brought a screen outside and worked on it. I watched from behind the pole, unable even to drop my head, my breasts hurting, my shoulders and knees getting sore. The link between my nipples was just tight enough to pull. But I suppose they wanted me to get some fresh air.

They kept me so tightly bound all the time that it was actually a relief when the cage appeared, because I was allowed a little bit of movement inside it. It was about the same size as the one the animal handlers had used to transport me to the sale. I even felt a little nostalgic; it reminded me of

my first day on Henth, and the auction, and going home with my master. Orgasms, I remembered those...

Amazing to think of how much had happened since then, especially how much I'd adapted to the lack of language. Gag or no gag, I hadn't tried to speak in ages. I had a new, restricted vocabulary of non-verbal signals, and I guess my need to communicate had reduced itself down to the forms available. What I wanted didn't matter much anyway. It was what he wanted that had to be understood. So I was hyperaware of his signals, of everyone's signals, and obeyed gestures and single word commands without a thought, as conditioned as one of Pavlov's dogs.

And I had long since given up on attempting to understand people's conversations. Not only had I been unable to learn my master's language, I was forgetting my own; I could no longer remember the words for many things in Ranize. My thinking was full of images and feelings and remembered or anticipated sensations.

Sometimes my daydreams were like my dreams at night: colorful, inchoate, primitive. Mind you, there was still language of a sort in my dreams. One typical one was of Ranizens talking to me, mothers, sisters, officers of the court, angrier and angrier because I didn't answer. At home this had been seen as provocative sullenness, which wasn't far off the mark. In the dream I really couldn't understand them; I recognized some individual words ('bad girl' was in there a lot) and the emotional content, but any detail of what was being said eluded me.

Garid looked over the cage and its contents. Pav had done a good, solid, professional job as always. The size was perfect. Sitting up straight wasn't possible, but there was just enough room in there for crouching to eat, and even for using a pot if necessary. There were slots that would accommodate these containers and hold them fixed.

His slave lay curled up in the small space, motionless and relaxed, but following his every move with her eyes. She

seemed content enough in the cage, which was good, as she would be spending a lot of time in there.

Garid squatted down next to the cage and reached through the bars to stroke her warm flank, and the metal band between her thighs. She caught a ragged breath as his fingers in their passage slightly disturbed the labia rings fixed to the band. His eyes warmed as he looked at her. He pinched one nipple, then another, then spread his hand to catch her nipple rings in first and fourth fingers, and tugged. She moaned her gratitude. Still tugging, he reached in with the other hand and used her nose ring to turn her head from side to side. She kissed his hand.

Then he firmly arranged bridle and ball gag on her face and around her head, and snapped the lock. She spent so much time in this that the leather had conformed to her head; she looked as if her face came that way. The straps that crossed over her head from ear to ear, and from the bridge of her nose back, had even trained her hair, so that when she was not bridled the tresses on top of her head tended to divide into four quadrants. The ball gag was more of an oval, shaped to her mouth, filling it without undue strain on her jaw. He checked the locks on her mitts and belt and on the cage itself, a routine he had stepped up since her escape, and which was now habitual.

Garid stood up and took a last look, then walked away toward his aircar and his day's work. Satisfaction filled up in him like clear wine: the pleasure of seeing her so thoroughly locked up, the devotion of her eyes and small gestures, and the lightness he felt as he walked freely away from her little prison. A current flowed along his nerves and through his veins.

He felt himself thrumming with this energy all day, carrying with him the image of his caged female, eyes framed by bridle straps, gazing up at him through bars. He tried not to think of the feel of her, the soft breast in his hand, the welt near the nipple, because that made the energy dissipate into daydreams. He did his work and more, talked another group into another land scheme, directed a perplexed researcher toward the

evidence that would be needed for the next round, and went home.

There she was, as he had left her. She pressed herself against the bars, eager, and he stroked the breast that she presented, the breast and the welt that he had wanted to fondle all day. Arleben, precise as always, gave him a rundown on her day: exercise, feeding, walked on hands and knees outside, but otherwise locked in her cage according to instructions, seven hours out of the last nine. Time to take her out.

A little later Pav stepped into the open door of the view room to tell Garid that his dinner was ready. Garid was standing with his arms crossed, looking down at his pet. She was doubled over kneeling compactly in front of him, looking quite tiny, her arms fastened high and tight behind her back, her head moving rhythmically as she licked his shoes. Her leash disappeared up into Garid's folded arms; it was swaying rhythmically too. The slave looked as if she had been doing this for a long time. She flicked a tiny glance as Pav came in; this was enough for Garid to growl a warning, in response to which she reapplied her tongue assiduously to the leather, lapping faster than before. Pav saw a tiny bead of sweat break out at her hairline. Garid looked amused, waited a moment or two, and then pulled up on the leash.

She rose gracefully to her feet, her little head hardly reaching his chest, and followed. Pav settled her in front of her bowl, leaving her arms where they were, at Garid's request. Despite the intense restriction of the position, Garid knew she would eat everything quickly. A few experiences eating with her face pushed into the bowl while being flogged had had their effect. She ate much more neatly than she had at first, but there was nevertheless food where it shouldn't be when she was done. Pav scolded her over her messy face, and when she hung her head, pulled it back by the hair to wipe her.

## **Going Halves**

Garid continued to indulge Therin with views of his pet, and thought that he might bear to have his friend touch her now – he might even enjoy it – while he himself held tightly to her leash at all times. But one night Therin called looking jittery and feverish, his mind elsewhere.

‘Gar, you won’t believe it. Miseko, remember him?’

‘Oh, yes, got his slave four or five years back.’

‘Well, he’s had some losses, not doing so well, and – get this – he offered me a half share in his slave! We’ve been meeting for years, off and on. He wants someone he knows well and trusts, not the Donshods of the world.’

‘I take it you want to buy,’ said Garid, his face unrevealing as ever. Therin looked up at the ceiling and waved his arms around in mock exasperation.

Garid began calling up the holos that had been in the catalogue when Miseko’s slave was auctioned. ‘She’s very pretty – have you seen her?’

‘Of course! I’ve had her – she’s gorgeous. The tits on her...’ Therin went into a reverie. ‘Miseko uses her as a pony around his grounds. Something to see.’

‘Can you pull the money together?’

Therin came back to Henth with a bump. ‘I have to. I *have* to, Garid. It’s got to be possible. I’ve got a lot saved.’

Garid looked at him for a minute. ‘Need a loan?’

Garid thought hard about that conversation. His friend had broken the connection looking happier than he had ever seen him. It was going to work out. The money, the sharing, everything. He knew Therin would pay him back; the amount wouldn’t break him if he didn’t. And new ideas were crowding fast.

Garid spent the evening harnessing his slave very tightly, fastening her arms back, and then running her in circles outside on a line as the light faded. She was actually not a bad runner; her feet were well aligned, her thighs long for her

height. He had built up her endurance over time, and was pleased to see how long she could go. The harness cut her wind, of course, but she would have to get used to that. He began designing a harness in his head that would be suitable for what he had in mind. Low friction wheels and super-light construction... he did some mental calculations. She should be able to pull him, small as she was, though she would have to work hard. Motivating her would be enjoyable. He flicked the whip at her legs to remind her to raise her knees; she was getting tired. When she stumbled he drove her around one more time, and then let her stop, her chest heaving upward from her restricted torso, her mouth gulping air around the bit he had substituted for the usual ball gag. Even from a distance he could see the moisture slipping past her chastity belt, darkening the dust on the inside of her thighs.

The next day he was on the vidcam to Miseko, and the day after that he went to see him. The man was of medium height (for Henth), strongly built with a barrel chest. He had straight hair the color of straw and a lined, pleasant face. Miseko, relieved that the solution to his troubles was in the works, happily showed off his slave, who was sleek and olive-skinned, with a river of smooth dark hair and exotic thick-fringed eyes. He harnessed her up and took Garid for a short ride; it was all the woman could handle, pulling two of them. Garid sat up on the edge of the backrest as the little vehicle was made for only one. The female buttocks framed in harness, winking back and forth before him were so utterly charming that he made up his mind. Now he had a firm grasp on his own slave, it would be delightful to have a look at others. The half supportive, half bitter competitive network of would-be masters had put him off. But maybe it was time to join the small society of genuine slave owners.

‘She can go a lot faster with just me in the cart,’ Miseko said. ‘But I wanted you to see this view as well; it’s my favorite.’ He grinned. ‘Now, we meet once every few weeks. Train the slaves to go in harness, race them, other things you might imagine. You’d be welcome. We’ve been expecting you for a while, actually.’ He smiled, then turned back to his straining pony slave and lashed her hard. ‘Faster, Vizay!’ Her

thigh muscles stood out, her hands clenched in their cuffs in the small of her back, and she leaned forward into the harness as she tried to increase her pace, with little success.

Garid's cock swelled almost painfully as he watched the helpless female struggling between the shafts. He took a deep breath, refocused, and said, 'I wasn't ready to share my woman – and I'd still want to control any access to her.'

'Oh, yes, you'd have control; that's understood. Some men find a lot of pleasure in making their slaves service anyone who wants them – the test of ownership being, can you give it away? But others are more possessive. It's not a problem.'

'If anyone understands the need for control, it should be these people, right?'

Miseko grinned. 'That's right. A bunch of real control 'crats. We used to have trouble making decisions; everyone wanted to be in charge.'

'What happened?'

'We got it sorted out eventually into a kind of consensus based anarchy. No one tells anyone else what to do, we just get together and share the fun.'

'Sounds right.'

'Anyway, as to how women are used, even the owners who give their females to anyone have to give permission in some fashion.'

'My slave's going to be pretty unavailable.' Garid explained about the chastity belt. Miseko, having heard about it from Therin, listened with interest to the details.

'Now, that is unusual. So you don't let her come at all?'

'Rarely, and only if she's very, very good. And she's been a very bad little jeedy lately.'

Miseko obviously did not choose to deny his slave orgasms, judging from her harness. In fact, he forced her to come while she was running, by pulling on the strap between her legs and whipping her on. She ended up pulling almost entirely with

her cunt, her stride faltering and starting again, her legs trembling under her.

‘There’s a knot in the crotch strap right over her clit.’ Miseko forced her to keep moving right through her first orgasm, though Garid thought she would fall, and she was clearly building for a second one when she did fall to her knees in exhaustion at the unaccustomed double weight. Miseko got down, pushed her flat onto the ground, and put a foot on her buttocks to hold her down while he yanked cruelly and expertly on the crotch strap. She cried out muffled moans of pain and gratitude around her bit, as the second orgasm shook her.

‘Would you like to use her now?’ Miseko offered.

Garid deferred to the woman’s owner, wanting to watch first. He observed her oral technique, and thought that Therin had made a good deal. Then he found out for himself just how good.

Early one morning, Therin and Miseko traveled to the Bureau of Animal Welfare with Vizay to begin the necessary formalities; the official transfer had to include a thorough medical scan of the property. Naturally the building was hard to find; they were almost late, and then they were transferred from office to office until they finally fetched up at one that had a ragged ‘Back in 5’ note on the door. There they waited for three quarters of an hour. When the man returned at last, however, he proved to be the authorized veterinarian on duty. He examined, probed, scanned and inspected Vizay with great efficiency and thoroughness, without, it seemed to Therin, ever actually looking at her. Therin was so enamored of women that it always came as a surprise how distasteful many men found them. But the necessary authorizations were soon on file, and it was off to the Title Bureau.

‘We could do this from home, you know,’ said Therin. ‘We’re only here in person because she had to be examined. No one does property transfers in person.’

‘They do at auctions.’

‘Not at private sales.’

‘They said it’s just across that quadrangle there,’ said Miseko. ‘Why wait? Anyway, it’s fun taking her through all these stuffy offices and watching people stare, don’t you think?’

‘I’d rather be doing a few things in private,’ grumbled Therin. But he went along, not wanting to spoil Miseko’s fun.

Vizay trotted along quickly at Miseko’s side, heeling perfectly. Miseko had not let Therin take the leash. ‘When it’s done, boy; you’ll get her soon enough.’

At the Title Bureau they were something of a surprise. Therin was right; no one did this kind of thing in person anymore. Thumbprint signature pads and retinal recognition cameras were linked to virtually every terminal on the planetary network, making electronically registered property easy to transfer. The bureau’s two staff were involved in the transfer of vast corporations or planets full of metal ore. One small slave, expensive though she was, was not on the scale to which they were accustomed. The man near the door was annoyed, but his junior, an animal lover, considered this a welcome break and looked forward to telling the story when he got home. He hunkered down in front of Vizay, fascinated, and stroked her long black hair.

‘She looks almost human!’ he exclaimed. ‘Look at those eyes! Aren’t you a cute one, eh?’ Vizay lowered her lashes demurely, but didn’t avoid his hand. He hesitated over her breasts and looked at Miseko, who nodded. ‘What odd swellings; is that normal?’ he asked, poking them gently. Vizay arched her back a very little, making them more available.

‘Quite normal, though they vary in size and shape.’ Miseko’s eyes were gleaming.

The other bureaucrat gave an irritated cough, and the younger man straightened up. ‘Straightforward sale?’ he asked.

‘No, I’m selling a half share in her to my friend here.’ Miseko punched up his ownership data on the counter terminal, and the transfer got underway. Therin transferred the money over to Miseko, everyone pressed the thumbprint pad when required, and in five minutes they were done. His colleague safely at the back of the room, the young man petted the creature one more time before he saw them to the door. Then suddenly he remembered rumors he’d heard about woman owners, and he blushed deeply. Sex with a helpless creature like that? Brutal bestiality. He could still feel the pliant, elastic texture of the creature’s mammaries, and felt a faint stirring he couldn’t identify. Had she pressed them forward to him?

He looked out the window, and saw the two men walking away across the quadrangle, the small creature’s leash now in the hand of the new second owner. The woman’s long curtain of hair swung back and forth over her round buttocks. The hips as they swayed seemed to wink at him.

His colleague blew his nose noisily, and the man turned back to his work. He wasn’t so sure now that he’d be telling this story at home.

Miseko piloted the aircar while Therin sat back in the passenger seat, Vizay on the floor between his legs. Therin held her head firmly in place, gently rubbing her cheeks against his inner thighs, her face against his crotch. It was a longish trip, and when this tantalizing stimulus became too much Therin opened his trousers and thrust himself into the hot mouth that opened for him. Traffic was getting heavier, and Miseko, glancing over, switched the windows to opaque. Vizay sucked expertly, with exquisite pressure and flicks of tongue to make Therin groan. He held himself back, wanting to see just how intense he could stand it. There was an undertow stirring, wanting to boil up to the surface, but still he hung on. Then an unexpected swirl of sensation over the base of his cock caught him off-guard, and took him past the point of no return. Hot sweetness rushed through him and he

erupted, filling her mouth so that she could barely hang on to it all.

Miseko, grinning, gave him some time to bathe in the glow before he spoke. Vizay curled up on the floor.

‘She used her hands on you without permission.’ Vizay ducked her head and made herself a little smaller.

‘I’m glad she did,’ Therin sighed, his eyes still half closed.

‘We’d better get the rules straight. She’ll be messing you about like wind in a hoversail.’

‘No, she won’t.’ Therin stretched, gave a deep, satisfied smile, and tucked himself away. ‘You’ve got her too well-trained for that.’

‘Damned right. Long straps in the forward bin.’

Therin prodded the little figure with his foot, and she knelt up and faced away from him, clasping her hands together behind her back. He linked her wrist cuffs, and then pulled a long, neatly folded strap from the bin. This he wound from her wrists up above her elbows and back again, pulling them tightly together. He tied the strap from her wrists firmly around her waist, forcing her elbows out at an angle, increasing the strain on her shoulders. She whimpered a little.

‘Vizay?’

‘Slave – sorry, masters,’ she whispered in her broken Henthen, still facing away from them, barely audible over the quiet drone of the aircar.

‘You’ll remember to obey the rules next time, right Vizay?’ said Therin, smoothing the straps and squeezing her arms tighter together in the process. Her breath caught and she agreed. Her hands, little and pale under the black straps, squirmed slightly where they were forced against her back, and she tried to flex her shoulders, but otherwise she stayed put while the two men talked.

Miseko said, ‘I don’t know that there’s anything that says we each have to keep her to the same rules. She’s capable of

learning to please us both. But you have to have some, or she'll have you wound and tangled like an old piece of string.'

'Am I a stray hoversail or old string?' Therin laughed. 'How many metaphors do you have for spineless?' Miseko smiled and said nothing. Therin's eyes followed the contours of the figure in the shadows at his feet. 'It's not easy to punish her for giving me that much pleasure. But I did it. And Vizay knows what my real punishments feel like, don't you, girl?' Vizay, still facing away, nodded emphatically. Therin considered. 'I'll start with your rules and see later if I want to modify anything. Do you want to go over them?'

Miseko stared out the screen. 'It all seems so obvious now I hardly think about it. For one thing I don't let her get up off the floor without permission, or speak without being spoken to. You already knew that. She gets her meals from my hand mostly, on a tray on the floor if I'm busy.'

'Using her hands?'

'If I'm busy she probably uses her hands to eat, yes. I'm not bothered. It's not as if she gets to use a fork.' The image of a woman wielding utensils was incongruous; they laughed. 'Let's see, can't use the furniture at all, unless I'm using it to fasten her, and that's me using it on her, isn't it?'

'When you punish her you like to make it fit the crime, right?'

'That's right. That's an example, there.' He nodded toward the tightly bound arms. 'Also hobbling for unauthorized moving about. If she speaks without being spoken to, I have a pretty uncomfortable gag I use on her.'

'I've never seen that.'

'I haven't had to use it in a long time, come to think of it.' He smiled over at the patient figure facing into the dark below the windscreen. She couldn't see the smile, but raised her head slightly at the warmth of his tone. He went on. 'And then there are blindfolds for any impudent glances. I find I need to do that for long periods, half a day at least, to have any effect. A hood is even better, when she's feeling too full of herself.'

They discussed a typical day's routine. Vizay was allowed to wash herself each morning and use a toilet, but was allowed no privacy, and Miseko strongly discouraged Therin from allowing any. 'She'll think she owns her body if she gets to look after it without anyone watching.'

'Oh, I'll watch, don't worry!'

'She has to be exercised every day, of course.' Therin nodded. He was almost as expert as Miseko now at keeping the woman balanced and sweating, working at her limit without over-straining herself. His spent penis stirred at the thought.

'I chain her to the bed at night; don't want her to have free run of the place while I'm sleeping.' Miseko glanced at the little figure again, and his eyes had a brief look of loss about them. His bed would be empty that night.

An hour later they were in Miseko's living room, looking down at their mutual possession, on her knees in front of them. They had released her arms, which were covered with horizontal red lines from the pressure of the straps.

'How does it feel to be half owner of this little toy?' asked Miseko.

'Hmmm.' Therin considered the smooth flesh before him. He pulled Vizay to her feet and squeezed both breasts, looking from one to the other. Then he turned to Miseko, one hand still firmly around her left breast. 'I like this half.' He glinted at his friend, pulled out a marking instrument and began making dotted lines down Vizay's chest.

Miseko laughed. But when Therin's lines descended to her belly Miseko said, 'No, I like that navel! And how do we divide up her cunt? The best part's in the middle!'

Vizay was giggling at the tickling of the pen. Miseko found a little marker and began distinguishing areas for himself, and soon they had her covered with dotted lines, like the diagrams dividing a cow for butchering. They tugged her back and forth by breast and buttock, laid claim to tongue and toes, then finally had her by cunt and asshole, pulling them apart just

enough to make her gasp. The mock battle dissolved in urgent and indiscriminate use of all the identified areas by both men simultaneously.

After they recovered, Miseko looked up from Vizay's smeared skin, which he was wiping. 'You really ought to take her home, you know.'

'But?'

'I can live without her, it's all right. And we've done this before.' He washed off the circle someone had drawn around Vizay's nipple. 'Well, not this exactly, but close enough. If you want her to understand that things have changed, you'll have to spend time with her on your own.'

'You don't think she understands?'

'Up here.' Miseko touched her between her dark eyes. 'Not here yet.' He rubbed his hand across her damp belly.

'I'm not set up like you are,' Therin hesitated. 'No equipment, nothing.'

'I'll lend you a few things – some cuffs, a whip. What more do you need? You've got an imagination; I'm sure you'll think of something.'

'I have a whip. I've been saving it up.' Therin's eyes glinted. 'What about her pony training?' he asked, serious again. 'They're coming to race next week.'

'Exercise her indoors, an hour a day, just like you have here. Or in your yard. We'll work her on the track here the last few days.' Miseko turned the woman over and wiped the last lines off her backside. 'Here you're just a guest, taking advantage of my hospitality. Go home, and take your creature with you.'

He scooped up the damp woman and dumped her into Therin's lap. The momentum sent her sprawling, and then she pulled in her limbs so as to curl up. Therin looked down at her, nonplussed, and she looked back. He wondered if he saw a little challenge in her eyes. Slowly he put his arms around her, then his hold tightened and he jumped up, buoyant.

‘All right! Home we go! She’ll just have to get used to the fact that one of her owners is a poor man with four rooms and no pony track. Better lend me a good gag; the neighbors are close.’

‘Keep her for a few days,’ said Miseko. ‘Don’t spoil her.’

Therin loaded his new woman and a small bag of toys into his aircar. It was dark now. Vizay went into the space in front of the passenger seat by habit, but there was no ring there to fasten her to, and Therin added this to a list of new slave owner tasks he was compiling in his head. He patted his lap and pulled her over it face down; there was plenty of room around the seat for her head and legs to hang down. He tucked her in close to his belly to keep her out of the way of the controls, and looked out his window at Miseko.

‘I’ll call you tomorrow.’

Miseko looked in, saw Vizay over his lap and snorted. ‘Better make it the next day. Drive safely,’ he said, smothering a laugh.

Therin piloted his car without a word, the soft weight of the female warm across his lap. She lay still, but he could feel the rhythmic movement of her breathing against his thigh. He was alone with her. And he would have her to himself for days. He owned this female, and had rights to do what he liked with her, short of harm. It was remarkable how different it was, being alone with her, not just for an hour or a night in another man’s house, but really alone and in charge. It wasn’t just Vizay who needed to know she had two masters. And of course Miseko had seen that.

Therin looked down at the shadowy body, the panel lights reflecting dimly off the smooth skin of her back, more brokenly off the skin of her buttocks, which had weals that roughened the smooth curves. Her hair fell forward, leaving her neck uncovered; the edge of her metal collar glowed a faint arc in the darkness. Therin visualized the new holotag with its two names. He had what he wanted, what he had worked so hard for, thanks to the generosity of friends. He felt a warmth that wasn’t just from the little body over his lap.

Miseko could have gotten more money for the half share if he'd tried. Garid, beneath that deadpan exterior, was the kindest of men. Therin was at a loss to explain his friends' generosity, quite unaware of the effects of his own rampant good nature.

He shifted slightly in his seat to feel the woman more firmly against him. He sensed her adjust and lay passive again. His hand began a long, slow stroking, from shoulder to knee, the other hand firmly on the controls.

When he landed he sat her up in his lap and looked her in the eye, smiling down at her. Her eyes were in shadow in the near darkness, but he could see a tiny reflected light in each as they searched his face. He reached for the bag on the other seat. 'I thought I saw a naughty look in your eye back there, little one,' he said. She lowered her head at once, not quite able to hide the sparkle that echoed his own. 'I think we'll do something about that.' He locked her arms behind her back, and then pulled out the hood he'd borrowed from Miseko. Delicately, his long fingers closed the leather covering over her head, and then positioned the gag. He was pleased to see that her eyes looked distressed, just before he lowered the blindfold.

He lifted her down to the ground, and took her leash to lead her into the house. He had to tug more than once as she followed hesitantly, barefoot over unfamiliar ground. Once in the door, in the flood of light she stood uncertainly in darkness, without even sound to give her the sense of the room she occupied. She obeyed the leash's pull, knelt down at a push on her shoulders, and sat on her heels on the floor near his chair. Therin fastened the leash from the back of her collar to her ankles, and went about making some dinner. Every minute or so he feasted his eyes upon her.

He took out the gag to feed her, but didn't remove anything else. When a bit of food fell from her mouth onto her thigh he slapped her breast. He slapped the other one harder when she slobbered over her leather-covered chin. After that she made no more mess. He had her lick dessert from his cock, and then made her suck him for a while, his hand holding her down by

the leather-encased head. But he wasn't ready yet. He replaced the gag.

Therin unfastened her ankles and snapped the leash to the front of her collar again. At an upward pull she rose to her feet. 'Shall I give you a tour?' he enquired ironically. He knew she could just hear his voice through the padding, though probably not the words. He took her leash up short under her chin, and began to lead her through the house, allowing her to feel the living room rug with her feet, and nudging her up against a rough wall-hung sculpture in the courtyard he'd made himself. There was no way she would be able to guess what it was, feeling it only with the side of an arm and her breasts. It gave him an idea for a project, and he tucked the thought away for future consideration. Right now he was reveling in the moment, introducing her presence into every corner of his house.

He prodded her up the stairs, step by step, controlling her with the leash with one hand while he pinched her ass with the other. Halfway up she stumbled and went down on one knee. Unable to resist, he pushed her face forward onto the steps and plunged his hand into the inviting cunt that opened up before him. It was soft and very wet, and she moaned behind her gag, her face against the step. He wiped his hand on her ass and pulled her up again. Continuing the tour, he walked her through the two bedrooms and the bath, turning her around in corners until she staggered in confusion. He stood her over the drain in the bathroom and hosed her down, making her clean and his own for the night, tightening her nipples and sweet vulva with jets of cool water. She was trembling with the chill, and angling her pelvis and breasts as far as she could toward him. He towed her off, then took a step back and took off his clothes, watching her for a long minute as she stood, lost, unable to locate him.

At last he pulled her to him and held her off the floor by the ass, parting it and plunging a finger into her, and she shrieked in an indistinct way, wriggling her body against him. He tucked her against his hip, reached out and found some lubricant to squeeze out of its bottle and into her. Then he carried her out onto the landing and turned her over the

banister with her bottom up. The lubricant shone around her little rear entry; his fingers slipped on it as he parted her ass as far as it would go. He rubbed his big member around in the lubricant between her cheeks, and then slid the head past the tight sphincter. She shivered beneath his body and tried to raise her head, and he felt her muscles contract around him. Then her head dropped and she opened for him, opened and opened until he could feel himself parting her insides, like a piston through heavy oil. He took her slowly at first, making space for himself inside her, restraining his own ragged breathing to hear her groans and whimpers through the gag. He reached down with his slippery hands and squeezed each breast, sliding toward the nipple with each stroke, ending each with a hard tweak made less painful by the lack of friction. Her whimpers grew higher and her thighs parted, trembling. Close to coming, Therin straightened up and pulled out almost completely, giving himself room to smack Vizay's ass hard, twice on each side. The impact of his hands striking the resilient flesh, the sight of her round buttocks flaming red, impaled by his thick cock, and the sound of her obstructed cries all took him over the edge; he plunged back into her and came, his own harsh gasps now all he could hear.

He left her where she was while he washed, and then he came back and looked her over. Her leather-covered head hung down passively, but her ass and cunt contracted a little from one moment to another, and her thighs were not quite still. He stood her up and brought her into the bathroom again, and covered the skin that was exposed with warm water and suds. He soaped her cunt gently, his fingers soothing and circling, then squeezing, then manipulating in tiny strokes against her clit. His arm moved around her slippery waist and held her tight as her thighs went rigid and she shuddered and spasmed against his fingers. Her moans came from her throat, almost against his ear.

He rinsed them both off one more time and dried them, set her on the toilet to pee, and then put her to bed. He released her hands and attached them to the headboard, but left the hood on.

Therin woke many times throughout the night, responding to the novelty of a woman's body against him in his familiar bed. Toward morning, half asleep, he slipped his erection into her from behind and rocked back and forth in a dream for a long time. After he came he slept deeply, and only woke up in full sunlight, still holding her spoon fashion, his damp cock nestled between her thighs.

The hood stayed on well into the day. He fed and exercised Vizay without removing it, the latter an experience she'd not had before. The courtyard at the back of the house was enclosed on three sides by the L-shaped house and the aircar port. He shifted the furniture out of the way, and prodded her around in circles on a long lead, forcing her to keep her knees high. Therin was utterly pleased with her dependence on him, and with his own confidence as the man in charge.

When he finally took off the hood at midday she blinked painfully, her hair plastered to her head with sweat and her face flushed. Her glance up at him was for information only, to ascertain his wishes, and then she looked down at the floor. He stroked her hair back from her face, and she ran her cheek over his hand and quickly kissed it, then lowered her head again. She'd never done that before. He looked at her in wonder, and knew he had her.

## **In Harness**

It seemed I now spent most of my time either in my cage, or running in harness on a line. The cage had become the default, so to speak. I was put there if there wasn't a use for me.

I was out on the lawn one morning after a grueling run, motionless on my hands and knees. My head was down, and I was watching wisps of steam come off my hot skin; they had washed me down a moment before. The air was crisp and dry, and my body was so heated that I dried in minutes. Then I shivered. I felt straps against my face again and opened my mouth for the gag; Arleben was fastening the bridle back on

my head, the one I wore when I wasn't in harness. He led me back into the kitchen, took off my leash, and snapped his fingers in a gesture toward the cage door. I crawled in, and watched him close the lock and turn away.

I spent hours that day as usual, in this little kennel of an enclosure, watching the free ones going about their business. I was mostly ignored. The kitchen tended to be a hub, but even Pav didn't spend all his time there, so there were long stretches when I was not only locked up but left alone. I knew when they locked me up it was unnecessary; they put me in there to keep me out of the way and out of trouble. Still, by the middle of the day I wanted out. I wanted to stretch my legs, sit up straight, get to be walked on my feet rather than crawling. What I wanted and what I merited were, of course, two very different things. Bad girls didn't deserve to be anywhere but a little cage. After a while they did take me out to feed and walk me – crawling – but they put me right back in again.

I obeyed now as perfectly as I could. Consequences for anything else were swifter and more severe than I could handle; I guess they'd upped the ante. Pav had become especially strict; he didn't let me get away with anything. That rod of his swished down at the slightest provocation. And the words 'Bad jeedy!' snapped at me and made contact, like a cane's surge and crack, and made me cringe.

A couple of weeks before, lonely and looking for attention, I had whined and held back at the door of the cage, begging with my eyes for a reprieve, trying my old tricks. Pav and Arleben had instantly yanked me, not in, but over the hard metal, fastened me down and beat me hard, both of them, the same small strip of ass flesh, over and over until I shrieked and blubbered. Then I was shoved inside the cage and forced to stay on my hands and knees for hours, with metal rods slid through, under my armpits and hips, so thin and hard that leaning on them was instantly painful. They'd locked my nose ring to the bars also, and shoved the foul-tasting gag in my mouth. A thick dildo locked to the bars had impaled my sore ass from behind, making me want to cringe with humiliation, had I been able to move enough to cringe. Oh yes, now I did what I was told.

I spent that day looking through the bars, shifting from one cramped position to another, hoping for a look, a word, a touch, a scolding, a blow. My mitt pawed at the metal imprisoning my sex, and the peripheral touching of my inner thighs excited me. Inner muscles clenched, hips wriggled. I managed to clink the belt against a bar and make a noise. I toyed with the thought of incurring some displeasure and a whipping, just to get some attention. A tidal wave of conditioned fear swamped me, and I curled up and shook, feeling for a moment as if I had really done something bad. Gradually the tide receded. I remembered that it was safer to be ignored, settled down, and tried to ease my muscles, sore from the morning's training.

Workouts on the machines had continued, but running in harness was taking up most of my exercise time. Arleben did a lot of the training; he seemed to be experienced at it. He'd start out by taking off my chastity belt, and then compressing me into a harness tighter than a corset. Corsets inevitably press harder on some areas than on others, depending on where the body conforms more or less to the corset's shape. But harness straps can be adjusted to each location. Arleben did adjust them, hard. The chastity belt went back on, the waist fixed a lot smaller, and became in effect part of the harness. Some straps fastened to the waist of the belt, and some outlined my cunt, pulling my lips wide and swollen under their imprisoning metal cover. Straps circled my breasts tightly, making them jut out. The thin metal bar between my cheeks was fastened both to an anal plug and, up next to my tailbone, to a lovely thick horsetail, reddish like my hair. The harness included fastening for my arms up high behind my back. My bridle and bit were thick and sturdy, and pulled my head back with a tight strap running from the back of my head to a spot down between my shoulder blades. Sturdy boots completed the ensemble; they took very good care of my feet.

It took time to learn how to move in all of this, much less to run well. I was taken through the same moves again and again, walking, slow runs, fast runs, with my knees well up and my head high. I think with horses and jonthes they call it dressage. It felt like my early training all over again. I had no way to

understand what was wanted, except by trial and error. I had become good at responding to non-verbal signals, but most of the time I couldn't see whoever was training me very well, through a haze of sweat, tears in my eyes, my head fixed forward in the bridle. The only things I had to go on were shouted reprimands, yanks on the reins, and the whip. The whip flicked the backs of my thighs when I wasn't raising my knees high enough. It smacked my ass hard when I wasn't going fast enough. It caught the underside of my breasts to make me straighten up even higher than my harness already held me. These things I could figure out.

What I couldn't get at first were the subtleties of pace and action, the ways to run more efficiently and beautifully. I know that's what they wanted, because I seemed to be beaten less as I got more graceful and efficient. I don't know how it happened. I had to let go of my reasoning powers and my confusion and just let the whip teach me. I still had to strain every nerve to do what was expected of me, but only through mute physical response to conditioning. If I tried deliberately to examine what worked and what didn't, tried to take the initiative, inevitably I tensed up, reached too far with my foot, spoiled the rhythm, lost the symmetry, messed up somehow. When I surrendered my body to the demands of the reins and harness and lash, somehow, sweating, crying, gasping, I found myself performing properly.

Eventually I displeased them less, and was back in my cage with fewer stripes and weals on my aching body. The occasional 'Good jeedy!' was so precious it made me weep. It was only when I'd done well that my master let me lick the dust off his boots.

There began to be one or two men who would join my master to watch my training. I saw them as I came around the circle, their heads together but their eyes on me, exchanging comments. I had the feeling these were not the usual visitors; the way they looked at me reminded me of the group that had moved in toward the platform at the auction. I began to be rather nervous about what was coming. My master allowed them to stroke my breasts after the sessions, and at first I was scared; these men wanted me, it was plain; did this mean my

master might sell me? I turned to him as far as the harness allowed me. But he held my reins hard and short while I was fondled, and I found this reassuring.

Then one day after a warm up trot, there was something new. A contraption of struts and two large, very thin wheels with a seat in the middle; a kind of sulky. So this was the idea... They harnessed me up, arranging the heavy bridle, bit and reins so that the slightest twitch would convey their demands to my vulnerable mouth. Then for the first time blinkers were added, and I could only see straight ahead. It was surprising how frightening this was. I felt like one of those animals sent home from the vet with a cone on its head to prevent it from licking its wounds. I kept moving my head uneasily in an attempt to increase my range of vision.

Then they backed me between the shafts and fastened them to my hips. I could feel the extra weight, but it was slight, until my master climbed into the seat. Then I could feel it all right. How could I pull anything so heavy? How much would he hurt me before he realized I couldn't do it? Still, the heaviness of him, weighing me down by the hips, felt good. How can I describe it? I was his animal. He couldn't ride me, and suddenly I felt sad about that. But I could carry him in a fashion. He could use me, I could serve the master I worshipped, in this new way.

Adjustments were being made behind me. I leaned forward a little, taking the weight of the shafts. Then my master chirruped, the reins slapped my shoulders and my backside stung. I stepped forward, almost folded in the middle with the weight I was pulling, but leaned my hips into it and managed to get the vehicle moving. The flicks of pain on my ass and thighs kept me moving forward; I tried not to let myself jump with the sting and upset my gait. Soon, to my surprise, I managed a slow trot. With the momentum the shafts felt a little lighter on my hips, and in response to the whip's encouragement and some clicking speed up sounds from my master I moved into a faster trot. The pull of the bit steered me onto a smooth track they had made around the grounds. On this I was really able to run. I was doing it!

My initial elation carried me through some of the grueling training that followed. Once again I felt like I was starting all over. All my gaits had to be adjusted for the weight behind me. My center of gravity was suddenly a whole lot heavier than it had been before.

It felt very odd, using my hips to pull a heavy weight. On Raniz if I'd had to pull something, I'd have used my arms and shoulders, put my upper body's weight into it. In fact the harness on my upper torso wasn't just for show; it transferred some of the pull to my shoulders and chest. Still, without hands or arms to use or swing, without even the ability to throw my head forward, I was operating under some remarkable handicaps.

Turning corners was a new experience. In a sense I was now a quadruped with no ability to bend sideways, or a little biped with a huge rigid tail. During later trainings my master – who seemed to be learning himself – steered me into tighter and tighter turns at different speeds, until we reached the limits of what I could manage without capsizing.

That first day, though, he mostly worked on different speeds, smooth starts, and instant obedience to the orders conveyed by the reins, the whip and his voice. I had a lot of signals by rote now and could rely on some of the mind-free responses I had been conditioned into. But it was a constant struggle to meet the new demands. As I tired, my legs dragged a little on the track and I had more trouble holding the rhythm when the whip stung me. I gasped and yelped more as my chest heaved against the confining harness. Sweat rolled down my forehead, ran stinging into my eyes, and joined the tears already rolling down my face.

I could see the point of keeping my feet high, because I was afraid of stumbling and falling on my face, no arms to protect me. When, at the end of that exhausting first day I did finally lose my footing, though, I didn't fall. The weight behind me was so great that I hung suspended from the shafts long enough to get my feet under me again. But my relief was cut short when my master made up for the lack of frontal injury by thoroughly punishing the back of me.

After that, every day of training included the sulky. Arleben drove me if my master wasn't around. He was meticulous about my form, demanding perfect symmetry in my movements, precise placement of my feet. Every day they worked me relentlessly, to exhaustion, but as time went on I could run faster and longer. I became better at this bizarre method of movement, my upper body so tightly confined, harnessed to immobility, only my breasts bobbing a little in their restraints. My legs, of course, were free and unimpeded once they released the hobble, though allowed to do only what stern discipline demanded. Between them my imprisoned, soft and needy cunt opened and yearned. The plug in my ass shifted back and forth as I ran, its intrusion sending waves of disturbing signals and the continuous, endless message that I was a very bad jeedy indeed.

My master tried me with a vaginal dildo along with the anal one. Though I could normally wriggle endlessly with this in my belt without being able to come, somehow the heavy weight I was pulling made it different. The excitement almost drove me out of my mind. I made several errors and ended up jerking the sulky almost off the track as I shook with my first orgasm since my almost forgotten disastrous free run. I was very thoroughly punished for this transgression (it was worth it). He tried again a while later with a much slimmer dildo. This gave me less helpless excitement as I ran, but enough that I ran harder to feel its smooth pressure. My excitement built, but the utmost crest of it wasn't going to be orgasm. I kept hoping, however, and I think it gave an edge to my performance, a floating feeling that transmuted the lashes' pain into a half-ecstatic, focused kind of energy.

My days were mostly spent either harnessed tightly to the sulky or confined in a metal cage. All that touched me was hard or restrictive or painful, sometimes all three. When in the evenings he touched me gently, stroked my belly above the belt or fondled my soft breasts, the contrasting sweetness turned my grateful body liquid and weak. Most evenings I spent on the floor at my master's feet, intensely thankful for any contact. But pure pleasure was a rare and brief experience, all the more valuable for that. Some nights he blindfolded me,

and chained my elbows back so that my mitts could reach just under my breasts. Then he would make me arch my back and offer up the vulnerable mounds to him again and again, without knowing which I would get, his warm mouth or the hard sting of leather.

If I had done well that day I got to suck him, sometimes for hours. If I did poorly he just immobilized me and fucked my face through the ring gag. When he wanted to read I was a footstool, ass conveniently oriented to his right so he could whip me whenever I moved. I tried so hard to keep still for him, but to my shame I always failed in the end. The warm weight of his legs on my back was something I felt with gratitude; still, they were very heavy. But it was contact, and I craved it.

If he liked his book, my life as furniture became very hard. I trembled and ached under him, and found it harder and harder to keep my position when the whip struck. When he took his legs down my relief was often short-lived; he would take out my bit or gag and send me to fetch a long thin cane with a terrible bite. When I crawled back with this implement in my mouth he would replace the gag and put his feet back up for another few chapters. The brief respite, and a fear of the acid-tipped cane would strengthen me for a little while. But punishment, once resumed, would inevitably accelerate until he finished reading, or I collapsed.

## **Village Maiden**

Therin's house was in the small village of Butter Hill in the Lower Archipelago, overlooking a long river valley, just within sight of the sea. The house was on permanent loan from an older cousin who was living happily in a city in the North Continent now, part of a five-man cluster. Therin, too, would have preferred city life, particularly with the price of aircar fuel, but the house was free, most of his work was done from home, and he managed. And Butter Hill was just across the valley from the village he'd grown up in, so he felt at home.

Most of his brothers were still over there, in partnerships or clusters now, too busy to visit. They were puzzled by their gregarious sibling's solitary living arrangements, and still sometimes tried to set him up with a nice man or two. Bote, his next oldest brother, had recently remarked that he was glad Therin had gotten a pet to keep him company.

Therin was sitting in the shade under the deep overhang at the side of the house, working at his screen with Vizay at his feet, when his neighbor leaned over the fence. Yegra was a man in late middle age with only one lifelong partner and a mind that ran on gem roses and their pests. The fact that Therin wasn't vigilant about weeds irked him sometimes, and he'd make sideways comments and look hurt. He was a nice guy at heart.

'Yegra, where've you been? Did you go away?'

'We were in Somis getting Chem's knee looked at. Decided to stay and make a holiday of it. What's this?' he asked, looking askance at Vizay.

'A pet woman.'

'Really? Where did you get that?'

'I bought her from a friend. Well, part-time. What do you think?'

'Um, fine,' Yegra muttered, his voice flat. 'Strange looking animal, though.' She looked too close to human but not close enough, which made him uncomfortable. 'Some kind of primate, isn't she? What do you feed her?'

'People food. She eats anything, really.' Therin smiled, thinking back to that morning, when he fed her the sour orrta he knew she disliked, but would not have dared to refuse.

'Well, she's odd-looking, but I haven't heard anything out of her, I'm glad to say. Unlike that dog of Pratchet's. Barked half the night last night.'

Therin tried to look sympathetic, but he hadn't noticed. Yegra was one of the reasons he couldn't enjoy Vizay's screams in their pure state. He patted his pet's dark head, and

she rubbed against him like a cat. Yegra took a last, sidelong look and went back to trimming gem rose bushes.

‘Reghia’s got the wood in,’ he called over his shoulder.

‘Thanks.’ Therin kept working for a few minutes, but he was getting restless. A stroll to the depot would be just the thing. ‘C’mon, girl,’ he said to Vizay, and tugged on the leash. ‘Let’s go for a walk.’ She trotted by his side, the leash neither too taut nor too loose, her head up, wearing nothing but her wide metal collar and bands upon her wrists and ankles.

In five minutes they were among the village’s few stores, shaded by huge trees and the deep eaves of the houses, and then they were in the depot examining the wood shipment. Reghia watched bemused as Therin stood Vizay up against the large blocks and arranged lights just so. Finally he picked out several big slabs for delivery.

When he came out the sun was overhead, and he was hungry. The grocery store was right in front of him. Most people just transmitted their orders, but Therin liked to pick out the fresh stuff himself. He fastened Vizay’s leash around a post in the shade of the awning of the grocery store; Urbeis didn’t allow pets inside. She settled down to wait for him, sitting on her heels as she was told. The leash fastened to itself using the same technology as the bands on her wrists and ankles. The material didn’t so much link as completely fuse on the molecular level, with the press of the correct thumb. The same thumb could undo it. Therin couldn’t have afforded this level of technology, but Vizay had been wearing them when he picked her up from Miseko’s the day before. He’d been in such a hurry to get home and fuck her that he hadn’t noticed the new hardware. Luckily Miseko remembered when he was on the way out, and had added his friend’s thumbprint to the program.

Therin finished with the impulse fresh food buys and started on staples. When he glanced out the shop window two people were petting Vizay, neighbors from a couple of streets over. One leaned down and began chucking her under the breasts, making them bounce; both men laughed. They patted her head again and moved on.

‘Everyone’s taken with that creature of yours,’ said Urbeis. ‘She’s such a peaceful little thing. You never know with these exotic animals, some of them are nasty. Can’t imagine why anyone would have vraags for pets, for instance.’

‘Nice plumage,’ Therin said abstractedly. He was trying to remember what was in his pantry.

‘Buy the plumage then! And that stupid monkey of Paodine’s! It almost took my store apart that time it snuck in. I swore I’d never have pets in here again. I heard that Paodine had to practically rebuild his place when he got rid of the wretched animal – let me tell you...’ Therin had heard Urbeis tell this story many times before. The tale was twenty years old, and Therin knew it well enough to nod and exclaim in all the right places with his mind elsewhere. He kept an eye on Vizay as Urbeis prepared the bill for thumbing. Several more people had greeted her as they passed with a, ‘Hello, girl!’ and a friendly pat. She was looking relaxed, though she kept her eye on the door through which he would emerge, as any good pet in her position would. When Therin came out of the store, a chill box of groceries under his arm, an elderly man was holding Vizay’s hand in both of his and exclaiming over how tiny and how like a human’s hand it was.

‘Ah, Therin, what a sweet little creature this is! And so smart! She almost looks like she could speak.’ Vizay was forbidden to speak in public and knew this very well. She gazed at the men standing above her, raising her brows and craning her neck to look up so far, looking innocent and a little wistful. The old man instantly began rummaging in his bag and brought out a biscuit, which he fed her. Therin saw her tongue dart out in a tiny little lick of the man’s fingers when they were down to crumbs. When the man began rummaging again, Therin stopped him.

‘That’s enough for now, thanks so much, Ozid.’ He chuckled at Vizay’s wide-eyed, plaintive look. ‘You’re too kind.’ He unfastened the leash from the post, and bid the old man goodbye. He was about to turn for home, but his stomach rumbled and despite the groceries, he didn’t feel like cooking. Now that he had lots of time alone with her, he loved being out

and about with Vizay. The woman trotted next to him down the street to *Teig's Café*. The weather had been very hot for the last few days, but today the temperature was down to a pleasant level, and everyone was outdoors taking advantage of it. Therin joined a small group that called out to him. One of them told him that Reghia had got the wood in. Vizay knelt beside his chair, and he looped her leash over his wrist while he looked at the menu. Teig liked to surprise his customers with some rather odd innovations. The results ranged from disastrous to splendid, depending on the level of alcohol in his system. Therin took a chance on the clear honey-dipped vega, and fed Vizay a bread roll. She was tiny enough that he hardly noticed the loss when she ate from his plate.

They had to negotiate three more animal lovers in the course of the meal. Therin was sure he had never gotten so much attention in a month in the village as Vizay was getting in one hour. She'd be the village's pet before long. He smiled, thinking how indignant the population would be if they knew what he did with her behind closed doors. Fortunately he had never neglected to use skin masker to conceal the marks before he took her out. He had visions of what would happen if he forgot. The villagers coming in the night with torches to storm his little house and rescue the maiden from the Evil Overlord... He imagined himself skulking on the roof in a black cape, and had to turn his snicker into a cough.

Therin now reveled in playing with Vizay at his own house and Miseko's, both enjoyable for different reasons. There was plenty of domestic charm in time spent alone with Vizay; it was simpler and more intimate. But Miseko's space and equipment were a powerful draw, and even more powerful was Miseko himself, and the electricity that the triangle gave them. So they had fallen into a pattern of having equal time alone with Vizay, but weekends together. The racing forays were almost always done together, and Therin was learning to drive.

One day they were both harnessing her up, preparatory to a good hard run. Miseko pulled the crotch strap deep into her cleft and buckled it tightly, while Therin clipped on the first

bell. Vizay was breathing hard, though the workout was yet to come. Miseko lifted the sulky shafts and settled them into place on the slave's hips.

'I trimmed her hair a bit; do you like it?' asked Therin.

'Hair or fur?'

'Both, actually.' Therin had trimmed Vizay's thick pubic thatch to a narrow triangle. 'I oiled her skin a little also, and I've taken care of her nails.'

'Thanks. Yes, the trim's very cute.' Miseko rubbed his hand over the short, dense fur, bisected so tightly by the strap that it bulged out a little on either side. He flicked the bell that the other man had just attached.

Therin still gripped the other nipple tightly in his fingers. He drew it out, and examined the harnessed creature who stood motionless between the shafts. 'What would you say to getting her pierced?' he asked Miseko. 'Garid's slave is very compelling, don't you think?'

Miseko stood back a minute and considered the female. 'I don't know. Maybe. Not the nose ring, I don't think. Nipples might be fun...' He examined Vizay for another minute in silence, and then squatted in front of her and parted her cunt, prying back the dark strap that bisected it. 'I've been thinking more about rings here, actually. A few in her labia. Maybe even one in her clit.'

Vizay's lack of movement took on a frozen quality. Her eyes showed the whites all around. A tiny, panicky sound, just audible, came from the back of her throat; Therin doubted he would have heard it at all if her mouth had not been open around her bit.

'How about both?' asked Therin. He glanced at Vizay and helped her kneel down; she looked rather white. 'We can hang the bells from the nipple rings once she's healed. And that's apparently only a week or so with the healing accelerator.'

'We could hang a bell from the clit ring, too,' Miseko said, and cocked an eye at the woman. The whimpery breathing became more audible. 'Unfortunately, not when she's

running.’ Vizay’s look of panic faded, but she had broken out into a sweat. ‘Well, let’s get her mind off her troubles. Up!’ he said, and pulled Vizay up by the bridle. He held her steady while Therin took the reins. ‘Wait, where’s her other bell?’ Therin still had it in his hand. Miseko clipped it on tight, and stood to one side while Therin whipped Vizay onto the track. She took some time to warm up; Therin had to give her an unusual number of hard strokes before she got into her stride. By the end of an hour she was in her old form, fleet and almost seeming to float over the ground.

The next weekend they took her to the same vet Garid had used. Since her head wasn’t strapped down like the rest of her, Vizay got to watch as the needles went through her flesh and the rings were inserted. They had gagged her, but in fact the vet used a sound absorption field, to avoid scaring the waiting room. Vizay tensed and her eyes filled with tears as her nipples were pierced, and leaked even more tears at each successive needle through her labia; three on each side and two more through the inner lips. Therin dried her eyes and stroked her belly while her clit was examined.

‘This is the area you want, here?’ the vet asked, and gently pressed away the surrounding flesh. ‘Oh, I see.’ He pushed at the exposed nodule, and Vizay yelped. ‘Hmm, it’s very pain-sensitive. And there’s really not enough of it to pierce.’ Both owners looked disappointed; he glanced at them and continued with his examination, pinching up bits of slippery flesh here and there.

The three heads hovered and consulted over the bound woman’s genitals, and fingers pointed and manipulated the flesh. Vizay squirmed against her bonds at the painful pinches, her big eyes watching anxiously. Therin was pretty sure that her Henthen wasn’t good enough to follow the technicalities.

The vet was speaking. ‘I could try to put a ring deep through the tissue behind it, but it seems to me I could hit important nerves; I don’t recommend it. Or we could pierce the tissue above it – kind of like a foreskin, really, isn’t it? I suppose it corresponds. I’d do it vertically rather than horizontally; then the ring will be up against the – what’s it called, clitoris? – but

not through it. If stimulation's what you're looking for, that might work, though I don't know what level of pain it will cause.'

They agreed. The vet disinfected the area, and with some difficulty clamped it. Vizay whimpered loudly and her trembling increased, her inner thighs rigid with tension. She pulled hard against the tight straps that fastened her to the table, and a sound of protest made its way past the gag as the vet raised the needle, and her scream turned into a confused sounding yelp when it went through.

Therin laughed. 'Not what she was expecting.'

'No,' Miseko agreed. 'She thought it was going to be her clit. You got off easy, didn't you, little one?' he crooned, turning to Vizay and stroking her. She closed her eyes, dislodging tears that ran down her cheeks, and dissolved limply into the table.

## **Trying Her Paces**

One day I was packaged up in my crate and taken for a long ride. Perhaps because the ride was so long they laid the crate on its side, and I was able to curl up in the straw. It was dim in there when they put me in, even dimmer when they closed the lid and I heard the bolts shoot home. I was wearing what I thought of as the basics: collar, cuffs and mitts, chastity belt and my usual light bridle and ball gag. My wrists were connected by a short chain, as were my ankles. The straw was rather hard on all my welts. I sighed around my bridle, and resigned myself to discomfort. I was, of course, very experienced at this.

The aircar landed. My master took me out and snapped a leash on my collar; I was blinking as my eyes adjusted to the light. I followed where he led, taking quick little steps because of the ankle hobble. And for a moment I thought I was looking in a mirror. There we were, big master leading small bridled slave – but no, her hair was too long and straight, she was

wearing more harness, and that wasn't my master. Then I saw another woman on her knees, leashed to a post. More slaves! More Ranizens! Where was I? What was going on?

I hadn't seen another female in a very long time. My eyes widened as I took in the scene. There were about half a dozen slaves being harnessed or groomed or confined in some way. There were two kneeling at a trough and drinking. The pair I'd thought were mirror images walked toward me, and I saw that the man was one of those who had visited us most often. He greeted my master but kept walking, continuing to talk over his shoulder. His slave had long straight black hair, and the dark-fringed eyes of South Xanszey on Raniz. She was wearing leather boots and was in full harness. Her breasts were confined in concentric strips of red leather. She had nipple clips too, hung with little bells. Our eyes met for only a brief moment before her blinkers blocked her side vision. Sisters... someone like me... then I was flooded with a wave of embarrassment. I had forgotten that I wasn't the only slave on this planet. And I was shocked at seeing another female so debased, so objectified. Like me. I was used to it for myself, but it made me cringe to see someone else in the same position. Oh no, the same as me; I realized what I looked like, what I *was*, and the shame flooded over me, red as the marks of my master's whip. I looked away, and then I looked back, fascinated. How beautiful she was! I hope I looked half as beautiful.

The sound of wheels made me turn my head. There were three little vehicles being pulled out of a nearby building by three harnessed slaves. They all had their arms fastened behind their backs, and reins controlling them. They wore a variety of harness, but all had belts of some sort around them, to which the vehicles' shafts were attached. Again I felt like I was looking in a mirror, although I found myself examining their form with an appraising eye. Each of the drivers was low in the vehicle with his legs forward on footrests. Even so, they bulked huge in comparison to their tiny steeds. I was amazed all over again that I could pull anything so big myself, especially since I was particularly small and my master particularly large. There was a lot of joking and laughter,

shouts of what sounded like encouragement and advice from the other men, who dispersed along a track. My master went to the rail, still holding my leash. I strained to see beyond the big bodies to the race that had begun. I saw legs and wheels flash by, heard whips crack and cheering and groaning from the crowd, now augmented by a few new arrivals.

Garid harnessed up his woman with loving care, and backed her between the sulky shafts. He had every notch in place, each strap and band tense around her frame, making its mark on her flesh. His hand closed on the reins beneath her chin, and he tipped her head back and looked down between the blinkers into her eyes. She was motionless, waiting for his slightest signal, her eyes somehow conveying such devotion that he touched her cheek for a moment before he pulled the reins back over her head and sat down in the sulky. He looked at the beautiful little ass in front of him, bordered by straps and metal, bisected by a tail, and flicked it with his whip, simultaneously slapping her shoulders with the reins and clicking his tongue. She strained forward in the shafts and he flicked her harder, once low on each buttock. He could see her flesh jump, but she held her motion steady as she gained momentum step by step. He guided her to the right toward the track.

Garid had been so intent on all this that he had forgotten the dozen or so men watching this new bit of livestock. Once he had her on the track he looked up to find a crowd around the sulky, commenting mostly favorably on his rig and turnout, and more than appreciatively on his pretty filly. Several were asking permission to feel her over. Garid got out and held her reins close before he would permit this.

‘Is she skittish?’

‘She’s not used to it.’

‘Another owner.’ A laugh of self-recognition from the crowd. Garid felt his slave’s tension through the reins as her tits and ass and legs were squeezed, her nipple bells flicked. Fingers slid along her harness, but were stopped by her chastity belt, to slight but perceptible grumbling.

‘All right, let me try her paces.’ Garid felt her tiny release of tension as the strange hands left her. He stroked one breast soothingly, and she let out a long breath. He relaxed a little also, climbed back into the seat, and got her moving once again.

This time he whipped her up to a trot rather quickly, her yelps of pain a pleasant accompaniment to the creak of harness and the jingle of bells. In the strange place, with all the fearful new stimulation, she forgot her training a little. Garid’s stinging reminders soon had her lifting her knees and placing her feet with precision. Her mitts, held high on her back, twitched at each blow, but she kept her rhythm steady. As always the sight of her running under such restraints exhilarated Garid, her confined shoulders shifting forward and back in an attenuated motion as she ran, her hips weighed down by the shafts.

As Garid came around the track for the second time he could see two other vehicles taking their place at the starting line, and he pulled his slave to a stop next to them. She wasn’t even winded, just warmed up. He ignored the others’ fussing over traces, the jokes and admonitions from the crowd, just held her steady with his whip resting its long proprietary finger against the side of her ass, his bulk weighing her down. He could feel her nervousness through the reins. She’d never been raced before. He stroked her flank gently with the whip while the others got themselves settled. She chewed on the bit, moved her neck as far as she could against the checkrein, and shifted her shoulders slightly; she was relaxing her muscles as far as possible in her harness.

Then they were off. She would have strained herself too much if he’d let her, trying to get going quickly. As it was she got momentum going only a second or two behind the others vehicles, pulled by women somewhat larger than herself. Once they were going well he stung her hard, right, left, right, left, and she took off, slim rounded thighs flashing. They were gaining on the other two. He guided her round every step of the turn. He knew from experience that she couldn’t see much through tears and blinders, which was the way he liked it. Her tail swung, and Garid was pleurably aware of the dildo

holding it in place, and the thin rod in her cunt, just thick enough to torment her, not enough to make her come, no matter how hard he whipped her or how fast she ran.

He was pushing her to the limit now, placing precise strikes on the back of each thigh, forcing her past one of the other vehicles, just as they passed the finish line. The other was well ahead. But at least they hadn't been last.

Head pulled back by his hand on the reins she slowed, panting heavily, stumbled a little sideways as she stopped. He flicked her breast hard on that side, and she straightened out, gasping for air. He gave her two more careful, searing strokes to teach her. The bell on that breast gave a sharp jingle with each blow. He could hear her crying as she stood precisely forward, feet together, chest heaving but otherwise motionless. Good.

I was raced twice more that day. I didn't win either of them, but I was in there with the others, so I guess I didn't disgrace myself. My master seemed pleased. I was very grateful to be wiped down and chained in a little stall with some straw to rest on, and I dozed exhaustedly for a while. Everything hurt, especially my right breast. I recalled vaguely that he hit me there when I stumbled after the first race. I had to try harder not to make mistakes. I shifted a little to protect the breast from the straw. My cunt was wet and soft inside the hard hand of the belt. I clenched my internal muscles around the dildos still inside me, and wriggled.

After a while they brought some food and put it in troughs. The slaves all ate together, me along with the rest, and I could hear high voices murmuring low, which confused me for a minute. Something weirdly familiar...

Panic! It was Ranize the slaves were talking! Oh, god, I understood them! Oh no, I wasn't allowed – Ranize meant pain... I put my head down and starting lapping my food hastily. I was so upset it was hard to eat, but I couldn't help understanding a word or two, something about tonight, a

question about what someone would demand... then the sound of voices stopped abruptly.

It was with huge relief and a little edge of disappointment that I felt my master's hands from behind. He pulled my head back and turned it toward him, crouching next to me, looking from one eye to the other, searching for something. Then he slapped my face, hard. He reached back, picked up a hood from the floor, and pulled it over my head. It had heavy padding over the ears, and a blindfold, but no gag. He locked it, and gave my head a push when he was done to indicate that I should return my face to the trough.

I licked up my food blindly, still shaky. Another disastrous bit of freedom had just been averted. I had heard language I understood, words from my past. The commands he'd taught me were verbal leashes, not language. I still cringed as the sounds repeated themselves in my muffled ears. Slaves didn't talk! Did they? Evidently other slaves were allowed to talk, at least to each other, maybe even to men! What did this mean? Did they get to have orgasms too? I hadn't seen another chastity belt, not a single one. Did other slaves get to sleep with their masters, held in their arms?

My eyes wet the blindfold a little and I sniffled, and felt round with my tongue for what I had missed. I knew I couldn't possibly deserve these things. If I deserved them, my master would have given them to me. I was a bad jeedy, I was told that all the time, obviously a very bad slave. Worse than other slaves. Other slaves, maybe, were human. I cringed where I was, my head still in the trough which was licked as clean as I could make it, trying not to think about them looking at me, maybe with pity or contempt.

I was chained up in the yard by the collar, kneeling at a post, for a long time after that, still in the hood, blind and deaf and gagged. It was fortunate that my hands were tied behind me, because I might have tried to cover myself, which would have gotten me into trouble. I had never been hooded out in the open before, surrounded by eyes, where strangers' hands could be a breath away without my knowing it. There was plenty of movement in the yard, I could tell by the vibrations and

muffled sounds, but I couldn't tell whether any of it related to me. I found myself shivering with fear despite the heat, wishing my master would come and lock me away somewhere.

But when I visualized myself tied naked at a post I relaxed a little. There were plenty of other slaves to look at; there was no need to assume that I was the center of attention. In fact, I was absolutely insignificant. And I had no control over anything anyway, so why worry? I settled back on my heels and waited for my master.

Garid and Therin stood watching the motionless, hooded slave from across the yard.

'There, did you see?' said Garid.

'What?'

'She's stopped fighting it.'

'Fighting what? Her chain? I didn't see that.'

'No, she wouldn't do that, she wouldn't dare. I don't even think she'd want to. But she was fighting having her senses blocked. It scares her. I'll have to use it more often.'

'It's good on Vizay, too. Did you enjoy her?'

'Very much. That was a good buy.'

Therin looked toward the house and saw Miseko approaching with Vizay on a lead. Therin's eyes lovingly caressed the woman's shape, and euphoria filled him till he felt he could have floated. He turned to Garid. 'I'm in your debt for life, you great bugger, and I don't just mean money. Look at that little beauty! You're welcome to use her whenever you like when she's with me. I won't even ask to use yours; that's how grateful I am.'

'Soon, I think. But thanks, I may take you up on that.' Garid didn't say so, but the severe chastity he imposed on his slave sometimes rebounded on him. Her mouth and ass were very exciting, and he could always anaesthetize her cunt when he wanted it, but a good uncomplicated romp – with a properly

restrained female – was something he wanted a little more frequently than his slave deserved the pleasure.

Miseko came up to join them, Vizay following at a precise distance so that the leash didn't pull or go slack. She stopped between her two masters and glanced up at both of them in turn. Both immediately fondled her, and she managed to press herself against all the hands at once, her eyes half closed. Miseko said, 'You're staying, Garid, aren't you?'

'No, I have to get back, sorry.'

'You're missing a hell of a party,' said Therin.

'Maybe next time. But I might see you sooner than you think. Have you ever been to the Shadowside races?'

'Occasionally. Why?'

'I was there last week. They were racing vraags, believe it or not.'

'You're kidding. Did they go in a straight line?' More men were drifting up to listen.

'No, they were all over the track. And off it. Two of them tangled up and started fighting. The crowd was pretty pissed off – they had to scratch the race and some of those guys are serious bettors. But apparently jonthe racing is in decline because they're getting expensive to raise.'

'Are you suggesting what I think you're suggesting?' asked Therin, a grin spreading across his face.

'I talked to the Shadowside director. He's willing to give woman racing a shot. Why not? It's a novelty to them. Might bring in some customers.' The conversation around them began to buzz.

Miseko laughed and shook his head. 'That crowd isn't going to want to look at women! They think they're ugly. Don't they, my pretty girl?' He squeezed Vizay's breast. 'We're known as perverts; they're not going to want to see us having that kind of fun.'

'Well, obviously you'd have to keep your cock in your trousers. They don't care what the animals look like. They just

want a good race.'

'With beasts that stay on the track,' said Lave.

'Exactly. And ours certainly do that. That crowd has never seen anything so well trained.' He looked around for a minute. The idea obviously appealed to them. A lot. 'Just wear something loose,' he said, his eyes dancing, 'and save the sex for after.'

'But what's the point, then?' asked Zleid. His filly was required to service him immediately after every race.

'Prize money!' said Therin. 'I'll bet Vizay beats your little foot draggers!'

A storm of good-natured teasing made conversation impossible for a while.

'If this works out,' Lave said finally, 'we might want to consider other tracks. There are races at Hasker's Field in a couple of weeks, a kind of fair in my neighborhood. It's mostly for fun, pretty casual, but I think they give out prizes.'

'Why not?' said Garid. 'Anywhere that might be interested. If Shadowside likes the woman races, the director will probably help us get the word out to other jonthe tracks. If it doesn't get out without help.'

## **Woman Races**

As it turned out they raced at Hasker's Field before Shadowside, which required a number of formalities. While Miseko filled out forms and gave the bookmakers what they needed to determine the odds, and let strangers come to training sessions and feel the ponies' legs, Lave was arranging a day out for everyone at Hasker's Field. Garid arrived with Arleben and his pet in the morning, the clouds chasing each other across a bright sky. The air was still cool enough to be refreshing against his skin, but he saw his slave shiver a little as Arleben led her toward him. 'Tie her up next to the aircar vent for a few minutes till it warms up,' he said. 'I don't want

her muscles to get chilled. We can run her on a line a little later.'

Lave came over, met Arleben, and chucked the woman under her bridled chin. 'Can I have a look at her?' he asked. Garid stood her up and had her display herself. Lave examined the belt closely. 'What a pretty cunt she must have. A pity to hide it in metal.'

'Necessary, though. It's the only thing that keeps her fingers out of that pretty cunt.'

'What a bad jeedy!' Everyone could see the slave flinch at these words, and they laughed. The eyes framed by the bridle looked anxiously from face to face. 'Wait a minute,' said Lave, 'is that all she understood?'

'Spread!' Garid directed his slave. Her feet moved apart. 'Kneel!' She dropped instantly to her widely spread knees. Garid looked at Lave. 'She knows a few other words.'

Lave laughed. 'I'll bet one of them is "suck". She really can't understand Henthen?'

'I'm going to hang her up by the tits along with the banners as advertisement for the races,' he said conversationally to Lave, at the same time stroking his kneeling pet soothingly. She looked up at him with gratitude, and rubbed her head against his leg. 'See? We just taught her the vocabulary she needs to know.'

'I have to gag mine to shut her up. But listen, have you thought about a transparent belt? I could make one for you easily if you give me the pattern; I work in plastics.'

Garid was struck by the idea. 'Could it do whatever the metal does?'

'Sure. As thin as you like, stronger than metal, easy to clean, shape it any way you want.'

More friends were approaching with slaves on leads. 'Yes, let's talk later.'

By mid-morning all the women were being exercised near the fairground. Curious people looked at them over their iced

sweets, and then moved on. A young man hung around for a while and watched. He had a dog on a lead, which jumped up on him from time to time, when it wasn't straining anxiously toward the meatstick stands.

'Do they make good pets?' the boy asked. 'They seem awfully well behaved. Where do they come from? Yarf, sit!' An explanation seemed to bring back his primary school history lessons, which were clearly a long time ago in his mind, if not in fact. 'Female people? How weird. I – oh, wait a minute, I've heard of them... Down, Yarf!' He shoved his pet's hindquarters down unceremoniously. 'Aren't they supposed to be dangerous or something? I suppose that's why they're all muzzled up.' He looked down and rubbed his dog's head fondly. 'Yarf wouldn't bite anyone, would you, Yarf?' He watched for another minute or two.

Another young man came up and put an arm around him, and they both stared for a while. 'Choji,' the first one said at last, 'I'm betting on the one with the short light hair and the smallest chest things. She looks like she really wants to run.'

'Nah, look at the one with the nose ring. She's real smooth, the way she moves.'

'Too small, she'll never keep up. And her chest things will weigh her down.' They giggled. 'Yeah, mister, what are those things, anyway?'

They directed this at Garid, who had taken hold of his slave's reins next to the bridle and was walking her in their direction. She was just warmed up and glowing with exercise, and was placing her feet with grace and precision, despite the close control of her head.

'Sit, jeedy!' he told her. She was on the ground sitting on her heels instantly. The dog sniffed her.

'What are what things?' Garid asked. They pointed. 'Oh, those. Haven't you seen hajedies nurse their young? But these aren't nursing,' he said, forestalling the next question. 'They're always like that.'

‘And don’t they use their forelimbs? Why do you keep them tied back like that?’

His friend nudged him. ‘They’re dangerous, stupid!’ Yarf was beginning to circle to sniff from the other side, and his owner yanked on his leash. ‘Get back, Yarf!’ he said, casting a wary eye on the female.

‘We had a watchdog like that – remember, Desh? We had to keep it in a pen. Do you keep her penned up when she’s not racing?’

‘Yes, in a cage or on a chain.’

‘What are the rings for?’

‘To chain her up when she’s naughty.’ Garid smiled.

‘I bet she won’t move when you’ve got her tied by one of those!’ The young men laughed. ‘What’s her name?’ asked Choji. ‘I’m betting on her.’

‘Jeedy.’

‘Okay. Good luck.’

‘See you, boys.’ His slave obeyed his signal to rise, and walked with her restricted, graceful step at his side, moving so that her face never pulled away from the controlling hand at her bridle. And a slaverling Yarf finally managed to pull his owner to the meatstick stands.

Garid handed his slave over to Arleben for watering and a quick rub down. He broke the sterilization seal on one of the wooden stalls usually used for jonthes, and Arleben led the slave toward the stall by the bridle. ‘Hang on,’ said Garid, ‘I’m going to hood her. There’ll be other slaves nearby.’ He removed the bridle and fitted the leather hood with its gag, blindfold and ear padding over her head, and locked it on. Arleben nodded approvingly.

‘Have you spoken to the other owners about their slaves’ talking?’ he asked.

‘Mm-hmm.’ Garid adjusted the hood a little more, smoothing it back so that the nose ring was more accessible. It just peeked out through the breathing hole. ‘A couple of them

were a bit lit-up about it. It's a great excuse for punishment. The others didn't much care.'

'Couldn't be bothered, you mean.' Arleben looked vexed. 'They're making a real mistake, letting these rascals talk to each other. Can't you convince them?'

'It's not my job to tell them how to discipline their females. But I'm damned if I'll let mine hear Ranize spoken.' He fastened her nose ring on a short chain, down low at the back of the stall. Making her stand would be more appropriate, but he didn't want her tired out before the races. She settled down on her heels facing the wall, blind and deaf and patient. Garid locked the bottom half of the stall's door, leaving her visible through the open top half. He made sure that Miseko's staff was on guard as planned. Then he and Arleben went off to stroll through the fair.

The races started in early afternoon with a glider competition and a remote control miniature aircar meet. Some local jonthes were raced across country, starting and ending on the Hasker's Field track. Then it was time to prepare for the woman races.

Spectators watched as the females were harnessed up. There were nine women entered. The track wasn't that wide, so they did heats of three. The crowd gathered curiously for the first race, and Garid, who was waiting for the second, spotted several men taking bets. The announcer checked on the filly's names, stumbling over unfamiliar Ranize consonants in one case, but having no trouble with the one named *Shimmer* in Henthen. Miseko won that heat with Vizay, as the owner group had expected. The spectators, not having seen her run full out, lost some money.

The crowd was bigger for the second heat, wrestling having finished in the next field. Garid, settled in place in his sulky, directed his small steed with reins and whip to the starting line. The announcer, practicing 'Ikstha, Ikstha,' and looking irritable, was pleased to hear that the next animal was simply called Jeedy. 'Very sensible,' he commented, 'as long as none of the others start calling their animals what they are; then we'll have a confusion.' He stepped up onto his podium.

‘Second heat in the woman races, folks. Three likely looking animals at the start. Teats on the far side – and aren’t they big ones? Is-ketha... sorry, *Ikstha*, in the middle, and Jeedy on the nearside. And what cute little critters they are.

‘And they’re off! Teats takes a short lead – Iketha right behind her. Little Jeedy’s struggling to get up to speed. Iska moving up – will she pass Teats? No, they’re even, but now Teats has the advantage on the curve and stays in the lead. Jeedy up to speed but well back. Here we go round and into the stretch – they’re going full out now – drivers using their whips – Jeedy’s moving up. Teats is falling back a little, it’s Iktha ahead, it’s Iktha, now Jeedy’s moving up fast, look at that! Jeedy’s in second place, Iktha going full out, not enough, here she comes, it’s Jeedy by a – by a...!’

Garid’s filly won her heat – by a nipple ring, according to Therin. The crowd enjoyed the tight race and exciting finish, and was buzzing loudly. Choji came by and offered congratulations, flashing his winnings on his way to the drink stands. Garid tried to keep something between him and spectators until his erection subsided. The sight of his pet’s harnessed buttocks still flashed before him. He let Arleben wipe her down and walk her round to cool off. Garid had been dismissive of the idea that they couldn’t race the women without using them for sex, but it turned out to be no easy task. The number of spectators watching the performance made it far less than any of them realized.

And his Jeedy? Arleben had wiped down the slave’s thighs, but Garid could already see the juices starting to seep out around the crotch band. He thought of the dildos hidden in her flesh. Her face and body like an open book, he could sense her extreme humiliation and excitement at her exposure in a crowd of this size.

I came third out of three in the last race. I put everything I had into it, but not enough, obviously. When my master got out of his seat and came round to me, I lowered my eyes and wept, I was so ashamed of failing him. Of course, the tears might have had something to do with the whip marks engraved in my

flesh, and the utter humiliation of being raced in public like this. He stroked me soothingly, and by the time they had me unhitched and wiped down I was calmer. I hadn't been able to see his expression through my tears and the blinders. I would just have to wait for my punishment; I supposed he wouldn't punish me in front of this crowd.

He didn't, but the stall with the door closed top and bottom was available to punish me in. Whenever I had lost a practice race recently he used a static electricity wand on me, running it along my welts, buzzing my nipple and labia rings with it, and worst of all, the ring in my nose. He had to hold me down because I jerked all over the place when he did so. This time he strapped a bar between my ankles and held me back by the hair while he used the wand on me. I cried around my gag as my nose ring zapped and buzzed. My nipples tingled and stung and hurt as he turned up the charge. Then he turned me around, tucked my head firmly under his arm, and began on the welts on my ass and thighs, while I struggled and squealed. He finished with a few good shocks to my labia rings where they were fixed in my belt. Then, businesslike, he returned me to Arleben to be packed up in my crate.

## **A Bunch of Grapes**

Therin, full of mysteries and looking pleased with himself, asked Garid to come and visit him at home. Garid hadn't been to his friend's house more than a couple of times before, felt in fact far more familiar with it by vidcam than in real life. The house had a brighter air than he remembered, as if there was more light than usual. His friend was no longer a solitary man. Therin met him at the door, and ushered him through and out the back.

The courtyard they entered was shaded, the light greenish air dappled and rustling. There were a number of crossbeams overhead, covered with grapevines and green leaves. Fruit hung down in bunches, scenting the air with a sweet tang. One bunch hung near the head of Vizay, who hung a little above eye level, her back parallel to the beams above their heads. Her waist, chest, and hips were circled and crossed with straps, and several chains attached the straps to one central ring. This was suspended from a single pulley fixed in a broad beam overhead. Garid's eyes followed the rope over the pulley to a ring in the wall near the door, then turned back to the form above his head. As he watched, a breeze pushed through the vines, making the grapes sway slightly. There was a tiny tinkling noise somewhere.

Vizay's big eyes looked at him over her gag. The gag itself helped support her head; Garid could see the chain pulling it up from the back. Her arms were raised behind her, and their joined wrists had their own chain up to the ring. Her legs, well spread, were bent at the knees, and each ankle was suspended from a separate chain. Most of her weight was on broad straps under her hips and chest.

Garid circled round to take in the full effect of this arrangement. He had often suspended his own Jeedy, but that was by the wrists or ankles, or both. He relished the way Vizay's flesh pressed itself around the straps that took most of her weight, and how the weight of her head drove the thick gag deep into her mouth. Her breasts hung sweetly, round, flecked with shifting green shadows.

A stronger breeze gusted through the courtyard, and the leaves rustled. The strapped body swayed along with the

grapes, and Garid, puzzled, heard the tinkling noise again. Vizay, who had been hanging very still, now shifted and pulled her arms in a little, and as a result rocked back and forth above their heads. Garid tracked the resulting tinkling to little bells suspended on fine, almost invisible silky threads. Focused on the suspended female flesh, he had missed the slim cords and tiny bells in the shifting patches of shade and sunlight beneath the vines. One cord fell from each nipple ring. Several more from her crotch. Fascinated, he moved round and examined that area more closely. Two gossamer threads fell from her outer labia. Each branched into three near the top, and each branch was tied to a ring. He couldn't quite see where the others came from, so he reached up and gently parted her cunt. One hung from the ring that pierced her clit hood. Two more were fastened to the rings in her inner labia. The soft flesh was swollen and glistening.

He looked over at Therin, who had been standing quietly, letting him take it in. Now the man laughed. 'Not bad, eh?'

Garid let out a breath. 'That's very nice,' he said quietly.

'Would you like a drink?'

'Out here? Sure.'

Therin went inside, and Garid arranged a chair next to one already set up at the far wall, where it would be easy to observe the lovely thing hanging there. Obviously Therin had already been doing so. They sat back and enjoyed the scenery, and the anticipation.

'How long has she been up there?'

'Thirty minutes or so. She can last for hours, though.'

'You have to be careful with the weight distribution, or you'll cut off circulation.'

'I know. It's very scientifically done, I promise. Check the temperature of her hands and feet if you're worried.'

The doorbell rang, and he went in. Garid contemplated the little figure for a moment, and then did check her hands and feet. They were warm. Therin came out again. 'Wood delivery. I'm still carving.' They sat back and watched the bound

woman sway in the rustling greenish light. Therin told Garid about Vizay's growing status as village pet. She watched them out of the corner of her eye, and from time to time wriggled a little and flexed, always returning to the position dictated by bondage and gravity. Garid felt almost hypnotized by the swaying and tiny tinkling of the cords, just audible over the whisper of the leaves. Her breasts, helplessly inviting, shifted softly between the heavy crossed straps. Her hips pushed against the bands that held them, each diagonal strap going under her hipbone from the side of her waist down between her legs, her center of gravity suspended. The two men fell silent, unable to make any more conversation, unable to take their eyes off her. At last Therin got up.

'Watch this.' He stroked the back of his hand across all the cords. The little bells lifted and fell and swung, and Vizay moaned. Therin took the nipple filaments, one in each hand, and tugged them gently toward him. The woman swung a little forward and then back, forward and back, as he pulled and slackened the cords. The brown nipples visibly stretched and thickened.

'Look at this now.' He took hold of the labia cords and walked in a wide circle, setting the bound body circling also. He tugged hard enough to make Vizay yelp; the outer labia were tougher. He stopped next to Garid and let go, and the two men stood and watched the woman rotate in slowing circles above them. 'You have to be very careful, of course. The clit hood and inner labia are easy to tear.' He grinned. 'You should have seen her face when she realized I was tying strings to them.'

'May I?' Garid gestured toward the silky threads that caught the light like spiders webs.

'Be my guest.'

Garid ran his finger up and down one string, his expression thoughtful. Then he plucked the strings one by one as if trying a harp. He tried this with the ends hanging free, and then he tried it holding the ends to give a little tension. All the time he watched Vizay's expression. Plucking the clit hood string got the most reaction, naturally. He tried raising the bells to

different heights and dropping them. The tiny weights of the bells were just enough to make her catch her breath a little when they dropped.

The two men each took one side of her labia, inner and outer, two threads each, and stepped back from each other, pulling gently but steadily. Vizay's labia were spread wide, revealing the dusky wet membranes beneath. She moaned. Therin put the two strings in one hand, and reached for the clit hood ring. He flicked it toward Garid, who caught it and swung it in a wide circle back to Therin. Both of them kept up the pressure on the labia rings as they sent the cord back and forth, tugging, dropping, now fast, now slow. Vizay was whimpering and giving whispering sighs, and her limbs quivered in their fastenings.

'Stop for a little,' said Garid. 'Make her wait.'

'I can keep her hanging,' Therin said, and they both laughed at the bad joke, releasing some of the gathering tension. Then Therin took a deep breath, and took charge of all five of the cords depending from the woman's crotch. Garid, sober again, took the nipple cords, and they swung her back and forth between them, Therin doing subtle things to the different cords, Garid pulling harder now. Both of them had rock-hard cocks straining upward toward her. Vizay's eyes were closed, and she was moaning and trembling. The men were mainly pulling her back now from the little arcs she created as her movements made her sway and turn. Garid noted that Therin kept the clit hood cord slack mostly, flicking it only at irregular intervals. Vizay left off her low moaning; she was whimpering loudly now, thrashing around in an attenuated way, her body tight as a bowstring. Garid had the impression she was close to coming but unable quite to achieve it. He looked at Therin's intent face. The man looked as if he was playing an instrument and was coming up to the grand finale.

At last Therin said, 'Now, girl,' and tugged the strings one last time. The clit hood string was taut in one hand and he pulled it at a new angle, to himself rather than down, and then from side to side. Garid flicked the nipple strings painfully. Vizay cried out and convulsed. They kept the strings steady

against the writhing of her body, and listened to her shriek and sob and moan, and then voicelessly sigh. Therin released the threads and let them swing. The woman hung limp, her breath coming hard.

Therin reached up and plucked several large grapes from a bunch over his head. His friend watched, mesmerized, as they were thrust one by one into the woman's dripping cunt. Vizay's limp limbs shuddered, and her head came up. Garid moved around to watch as Therin gently sucked one grape after another from the juicy orifice. He broke them in his teeth, nipping and savoring her flesh as he did so, and let the juices mix before he mopped them up with lavish strokes of his tongue. He had to hold hard to her thighs as she squirmed. He took care to flick all the rings back and forth, and tug on them lightly with his teeth. His hands pulled on the strings on the outer labia, while he sucked her inner flesh, rings and all, into his mouth, and Vizay screamed herself into another gigantic orgasm, shuddering so strenuously the beams shook.

Therin, breathing hard, flashed a pained grin at Garid. 'Got to get into her quick, or I'm going to come where I stand,' he said, and released the rope from the ring on the wall. Garid was afraid he was going to release her, but she was only lowered to crotch level. Therin's hand stroked the curve of the beautiful ass by his side. 'What's your pleasure?' he asked Garid.

'Have you got a ring gag?'

Therin was in and out of the house in a flash, and held Vizay's head up by the hair while Garid replaced the bit in her mouth with a ring gag. The woman whimpered in protest and before the gag went in, seemed to be reaching for his crotch with her mouth.

'I only use it for punishment normally,' said Therin. 'She wants to take care of you without it. Your choice, though.'

'Oh, if she wants to do things her way, she's wearing it for sure.' Garid's eyes glinted at his friend as he fixed the gag firmly behind her teeth. Therin, having taken care of his obligations as a host, had no more thought for the other end of

the body in front of him. He took out his straining cock, carefully pulled aside the cords tied to his woman's crotch, opened her wide, and plunged in.

Garid watched for a moment, then looked at Vizay's face. The ring stretched her lips wide, and straps pulled the corners of her mouth back. Her head came up with some effort to look at him with eyes that were glazed over and half closed, then sank back down. He brought out his rigid cock and wiped the pre-come onto her face. Then he grabbed her by both ears and slid himself through the ring and down her throat. She controlled her gag reflex by long practice, and Garid could feel her trying her best to please him with her tongue and the muscles of her throat. But she was mere receptacle in this game. He and Therin got into a rhythm, pulling her back and forth, a swaying pendulum with an orifice at either end. They kept this up, even moved back slightly so she would have further to travel, back and forth the full length of their cocks, impaled at both ends like a piece of meat on a skewer.

When they couldn't stand it anymore, one at a time they shoved hard, burying themselves to the balls and coming deep inside her.

They had lunch at a small table in the courtyard. This was arranged close enough to Vizay's head that Therin could feed her little bites, taking out the ring gag for the purpose. The bells at the end of the thin cords hung close to the ground, and Therin amused himself by stretching out a leg and knocking them around with his foot. Vizay's head hung; she took her tidbits obediently and without sound. Garid checked her hands and feet again. Then he pulled her nipple cords toward the table and tied them there, just tight enough that she didn't hang straight anymore. He sat down to finish his meal. Vizay's nipples stretched toward him, the tiny holes in them visible because of the ring's pull. She whimpered, looked apprehensively at her chest, and hung even more motionless than before.

'Can she hold still while you whip her?' Garid asked.

Therin examined the taut brown buds and flicked a grin. 'She'll have to, won't she?'

They gagged her again, and hooked the head harness back to the central ring, raising her head so that she could no longer look at her chest. She was whimpering in earnest now.

‘Didn’t you say the neighbors would be upset if they knew you beat her?’ Garid asked.

Therin pointed to a small box in the corner. ‘Lave got hold of a used absorption field for me.’

Garid looked at it appreciatively. ‘What range?’

‘Room size, no more. But it’s portable.’

‘That could be handy.’

‘I have to remember to cart it from room to room, which in the heat of the moment is sometimes a chore. But for the moment...’ he turned to Vizay, rubbed his hands with an exaggerated malicious glee, and hissed, ‘...no one can hear your screams,’ Garid snorted. Therin went in and brought out a medium-length, flexible single-tailed whip. ‘This one cost me a lot, but it makes a beautiful whistle and smack.’ His grin answered Garid’s look, and he said, ‘Yes, I’m enjoying being able to make noise for a change.’

‘Let’s hear, then.’

Therin stood behind Vizay’s rounded buttocks, and ran the whip over their curves and along some existing marks. Vizay seemed to be holding her breath. At the first blow she let it out with a little cry. The sound of the whip forgotten, Garid watched her face clench with the effort to remain still. The force of the blow pushed her body forward a little, and then it swung back to equilibrium, stretching her nipples to the end of their tethers. There was another, smaller sway forward and back, the nipples extending and contracting before her body came to rest, at the point where the nipples were pulled forward just to the edge of pain. The next blow was harder, and the one after that. Therin paused and stood back a moment to consider the effect, then moved in to strike again, an artist painting her in painful colors. Vizay winced and cried more than once at each blow, as the cords pulled on her captive flesh. She was forcing her body not to respond to the lash.

Garid watched the sweat bead and run down her sides. Her thighs were rigid, the pony girl muscles standing out tensely.

After a few more blows Therin gave the whip to his friend. Garid noticed it did indeed make a nice whistling smack. He took up the five cords depending from Vizay's vulva, and held them firmly as he whipped her. She was crying hard now, gasping with the effort it took to hold still. Finally, at the fourth stripe in the crease above her thighs, she lost control and flailed helplessly, twisting her ass away in an instinctive movement of self-protection. She howled immediately at the resultant yank on her nipples and tender cunt flesh as she swung sideways. Garid held the cords firmly and waited until the side-to-side motion was dampened and she was brought back into position. Then he hit her again.

Vizay seemed to have learned her lesson as she kept almost completely still for another six blows, though tears were dripping onto the tiles and she was keening steadily. At last Therin stopped Garid and went into the house for one more item. He came back with a short rubber whip, and replaced Garid between his slave's legs. He ran his hand over the welts decorating her round ass, then tucked the little whip under his arm and used both hands to part her trembling cheeks as far as they could go. But her asshole was fully exposed even when he released them. He pulled one cheek away from the other with one hand, took aim, and then struck between them. She shrieked, convulsed, and then shrieked again. After two more blows Therin could wait no longer. He lubricated her hole and buggered her without mercy. Then he sucked her sore nipples while Garid made use of her ass in his turn.

After that they took Vizay down and let her nap, curled up in a basket in a corner of the courtyard. The two men reclined on lounging chairs and dozed a little themselves in the heat. Then as Garid wanted to see it, they took a stroll down to the village. Vizay on her leash, covered discreetly in skin masker, was petted and made much of. Garid watched, hooding his eyes to conceal the spark that danced there.

Then they went home. Therin immediately stripped away the skin masker. 'I like to see where I've been,' he said. He sat

down and examined Vizay minutely, inch by inch and welt by welt, Vizay moving smoothly at his command. Therin appeared hypnotized by the flesh before his eyes, and Vizay looked like she was purring. Garid enjoyed this show for a while, but he was regretfully aware of the passage of time. At last he had to break it up.

‘Where’s this woodworking project you were hinting about?’ he asked. ‘I have to go soon; let’s see it.’

Therin leaped up out of his trance. ‘Thought you’d never ask.’ He ushered his friend into the living room to a wooden half wall separating that room from the entryway. It was deeper than one would expect, but was otherwise nondescript on the living room side. Then Therin slid a panel aside. Garid’s first impression of the large surface beneath was of curving, swirling wood, with so many raised and indented shapes in it as to confuse the eye. The wood tones were soft and liquid, in multiple shades of ochre and amber and chestnut. Havsá wood, a favorite of artisans for the rich curving grain, though it took a lot of polishing to bring it out.

Light from the hall came through in a couple of spots, but Garid couldn’t discern the pattern. Then his eye fell on the largest depression, and he sidestepped to look at it. The front half of a woman in reverse relief emerged from the confusion. There were parts that were convex instead of concave: a knob where the mouth would be, what must be a thick dildo at the crotch. The effect was bizarre and beautiful: as if the creature had fallen into wood as soft as sand, with the incongruous penis thrusting up, claiming the space left empty. Garid slid his hand along the curves of breast and belly. The wood was cool and sensuous, sanded to a silky finish, a delight against his hand. It was strange to recognize Vizay’s shape in reverse.

Therin fetched a soft, flesh-toned leather sleeve, called the slave to him, and fastened her forearms tightly together behind her. At his gesture, obediently she stepped up and fitted herself over the dildo, sliding her pubic bone carefully down between it and the wall. As her face moved forward her eyes closed and her lips opened, like a long-lashed baby doll. Her mouth conformed itself around the hollow, shaped knob that served as

a gag. Therin, his hand firmly on the back of her head, fitted her face the last few millimeters into its wooden mask. He held her head there with a formed, U-shaped piece of wood high behind her neck; this latched into little holes in the panel with a downward push. Then he pressed the rest of her body in. Naturally the woman-shaped depression fit her perfectly.

Therin walked around to the other side of the panel and motioned Garid to follow him. At first Garid could see nothing but the swirling wood grain. But as he calculated the woman's location he discovered first one slight variation, then another, spots of pinkish brown amidst the soft wood tones.

Therin was watching him. 'See them?'

'Mm-hmm. Nicely camouflaged.'

'They'll be slightly more visible in a moment.' Therin worked the nipples toward him gently, pulling them further through the holes. Small wooden latches concealed below the openings clipped tightly to the nipple rings. The only other evidence that a woman was confined there was a breathing hole, hidden in a knot of wood and visible only if you were looking for it.

Back on the other side, Therin removed two fitted blocks of wood from beneath her feet. Now her legs, half spread, were up on their toes, with plenty of weight resting on her dildoed cunt. Garid glanced down to look for the ankle restraints he knew would be there, and sure enough, Therin leaned down to latch wooden straps around her ankles.

'That's a lovely piece,' said Garid. 'And the finish looks almost like her skin.' In fact, the woman looked as if she was merged into the wood, half swallowed by it. She became part of the sculpture, a lighter woman-shaped piece of wood within the darker contours, the weals on her flesh like wood grain.

Garid moved from one side to the other to take in the effect from different angles. 'How did you get the shape so exact?'

'Holographic woodcarving; it's quite easy with the right equipment. I did the finish by hand, though.'

‘I can tell. Never knew what an artist you are. It’s a very decorative room divider. I’d ask you to make one for me...’ Garid looked covetously at the beautiful wall.

‘I’d be happy to, but the dildo is out, presumably. Have to design something that teased her instead, right? Support under the juncture of thigh and cunt, emptiness in between? Or just a little something?’ Garid’s face developed slowly into a smile. ‘I showed it to Lave; he wants one for Merti that hurts her when she tries to come.’

Vizay’s buttocks were thrusting ever so slightly forward. Therin slapped them. ‘Did I give you permission, naughty girl?’ There was a tiny negative shake of the immobilized head, and the buttocks relaxed.

Garid sighed regretfully. ‘I must go. Just tell me what you’ll do next so I can imagine it on the ride home.’

‘Me? I’m going to get some work done. What a boring trip home that will be.’

Garid laughed. ‘Not if I can imagine Vizay stuck here while you’re doing it.’

‘Would you like to imagine her humping the sculpture, or would you rather visualize her trembling on the brink and punished for the slightest twitch? I assume it’s the latter.’

‘I doubt you could stop her unless you watched her every moment, and you’re supposed to be working and paying me back, you dead wurlegh. Better let her have her fun.’

So Garid traveled home with the vision of Vizay’s rounded ass delicately grinding itself into the sculpture’s embrace.

## **Joy**

I was spending so much time in harness now that my self-perception began shifting deeper into the animal range. I began to think like a beast that pulls a vehicle, in non-language images of weight, balance and strain, straight tracks and

curved. I dreamed of that, too, night after night of the strip of track moving towards me, framed between blinkers, the sound of my breathing loud in my ears, pain and my owner looming huge and invisible behind me.

My master began racing me pretty often. I won a few small races but lost more frequently, though I was getting faster all the time. There were a few women that I would never beat, and I knew when I saw them on the track that I would have to be punished later. Not that I was able to stop trying. It wasn't possible not to try.

A few days after the first public race, life in a chastity belt became a little crueler when a new one imprisoned me, made of a very strong transparent plastic. In some lights it was almost invisible. It served the same purposes and with the same implacability, but now I could see what I was missing. The shaving of my pubic hair enhanced the effect; now I was smooth and naked under the belt, and it was easy to see the humid flesh trapped there. During the hours in my cage I couldn't help staring at my cunt, running my mitts over the smooth surface, my needy flesh just millimeters and light years away.

I should have been able to just accept this. I wasn't allowed to come; I knew this. I had no right to orgasm. The belt was evidence of it. My master forbade it. So why was I staring at those soft, fleshy lips, at the clit just visible between them? Why did I curl around my inaccessible center and weep with frustration? I could just see the rings, fixing my flesh to the band. My master had arranged it that way, because he knew I would resist no opportunity to be wicked. I couldn't be trusted. The belt in itself was a sign that I couldn't be trusted. A good girl wouldn't need to wear the belt. She'd either be allowed to come, or she'd obey when she was told not to touch herself.

I'd not had an orgasm since that accidental one when I was being driven. How long ago had that been, months? A long, long time. I had adjusted to it, more or less, almost forgotten what I looked like, until the new belt forced me to see myself again.

Even the dildos were transparent, and hollow. Sometimes my master would thrust his finger into the one in my cunt, look me in the eye and smile. I could just feel the heat of his hand as he stroked in and out of the hard plastic, pleasuring the unfeeling belt, showing me what I would have felt if I had been a good girl who deserved it.

My master seemed to enjoy looking at my flesh squeezing around the dildos, while he flicked my inner thighs with whips, or lashed my ass. The suspension equipment was ratcheted up higher now, I'm sure so he could get a better view. And when he brought me to the edge of orgasm and let me writhe, he would sometimes leave me hanging upside down, the hollow dildos full of ice.

But I got used to it, more or less. I had worn a chastity belt for so long that it quickly became part of me, as the old one had. I was familiar with its pressures, the way it stimulated and prevented sensation at the same time. I knew how to sit and lie in it fairly comfortably, how to avoid the twisting motion that might pull on the labia rings and hurt me. I had a very clear understanding of where the locks were, for some reason. I had always been terribly aware of my cunt in the old belt, but from the inside, you might say, since I never touched it from the outside myself. The new belt added a tantalizing view, an extra layer of enjoyment for my master and frustration for me, and more humiliating exposure when we went among people. My needy cunt was that much more sensitive when it was exposed, cleaned, tormented, teased, inflamed, and abandoned, one spark short of a conflagration. That agonizing moment was preserved daily, pressed in glass like a museum exhibit, the subject more than alive inside.

The belt was rarely off for more than half an hour or so, for that washing and torment, or the use of my asshole. Although I was unceasingly, constantly aroused, my helpless body desperately wanting to climax, I was well beyond expecting or even hoping for it. What I longed for was to feel my master's touch, and to give him pleasure. By this time I understood that the body I occupied didn't belong to me. I understood this from the inside out, from the bottom up and every way you can think of.

My body, though often stiff and sore from punishments and close confinement, was also flexible and resilient from all the forced exercise. But even though I had the feeling of inhabitation that goes with the racing of nerves and the feedback of sensation, I had lost any proprietary sense about the flesh I lived in. Someone else owned it, owned what my body did, and was made to feel; all but the most minor movements and sensations were governed from outside. I had become the apparatus of someone else's will.

I lay thinking about this in my cage one day. When I had run away into the basement and then the garden, I had been awkward and clumsy, very out of practice at doing things for myself. Since then I'd been confined much more thoroughly, and it was hard to imagine how I'd managed to act on that opportunity. How did I direct myself without a leash, or reins, or a huge hand telling me where to go? How did I take hold of objects with my mitts? No, they'd left my mitts off. Still, how did my eyes and hands coordinate well enough that I could pick up the wine bottles? Most important, how did I manage to make a decision on my own? I didn't know anymore.

I looked at the smooth, undifferentiated forms at the end of my arms. I walked on them, or shifted myself around in my cage with them. I often rubbed at my nipples with them. I might plead a little by putting one through the bars when someone came by. I could use them to push the hair out of my face, or keep bits of food from rolling away in my cage, or rub at an itchy spot. But that was about it. The mitts created a serious sort of sensory deprivation. I couldn't touch my fingers together at all, even inside the mitts, and though I could feel pressure through the padding, I couldn't feel much else. They left the mitts on even when they tied my hands behind my back. Only when I was bathed could I count on feeling the nerves in my fingers, and you'd be surprised how exquisite it was. I liked it. I also started to use my feet to touch the bars of my cage or the walls of my kennel. I liked that, too.

Pav was baking, and the rich aroma drifted in through the bars and curled up alongside me. I breathed it in with pleasure, my mouth watering around my gag. The smell was all I'd get, so I made the most of it.

I had endless time to think in the cage. I thought about all sorts of things. I thought back to what I had been like on Raniz, that bad girl sneaking out at night. The time I unbolted an entire wind generator at its base, and watched the storm capsize it. Hard to remember my hands doing things like that.

Wearing clothes, going to school – being expelled. I remembered lying in bed and masturbating, imagining myself as a slave. My leather paw rubbed across my hard plastic crotch at the thought. Was this what I had imagined? I could still remember the images that had so intensely crowded my room, those naïve creations of mine. Far more vivid was every moment and impression of that first day with my master. That first orgasm. Feeling it had all been worth it, all the shame and the pain and the struggle, to feel like that.

It was different now. My master kept me very aroused but never allowed me to come. He played with me and let me suck him, but he had never let me sleep in his arms. I was treated like a dumb animal, and I had become one, one that was worked every day until she collapsed in exhaustion. And a lot of the time I was simply locked up and ignored.

There was one particular very small circle of thought that I often turned around in, like the space I had available to me inside my cage. My master treated me this way, therefore I deserved it. I deserved it, therefore he treated me this way. I know the logic sounds astoundingly stupid, but I knew it was true. He was right, and I was happy. Sore, lonely, helpless, tormented, and happy.

My master's rare smile, that had puzzled me long ago, I now understood very well. He smiled that way when I was at my most abject and humiliated. It was a smile of deep satisfaction at something accomplished well and thoroughly. Another milestone, another piece in the construct locked home, another lesson he had imposed on me that I had taken in with every cell in my body. And while I writhed, I felt the same sense of fitness, and I was glad.

My master had taught me a great deal, far beyond my childish imagination. One thing he taught me was that I had been completely wrong about what I'd wanted. I didn't really

want my Ranizen fantasies. Behind every one of those was a mind and an imagination – mine. Every one had a star, bound, abused, and brought to ecstasy – me. I was the center of those fantasies; I controlled them. I controlled the outcomes. I made them safe and sexy and orgasmic even while I made them scary.

I had fantasized about losing control, giving up autonomy, always to a man who would want what I wanted and give it to me. It wasn't losing control at all; it was choosing the plot by inventing my own cast of characters. Playing at helplessness. But my master didn't give me what I wanted; he took what he wanted. And I was utterly, completely grateful and happy that it was so. All I needed to know was what he wanted from me. All I had to do was try as hard as I could to please him.

How many times had I been like that stupid animal at the vet, coming to the end of its chain and looking surprised? I didn't choose. I was an animal – less than that – a slave of an animal that had less than an animal's autonomy and less than an animal's rights. Even pets get off the leash from time to time. I had no rights to attention, no rights to orgasm, no rights to anything at all. My master had bought every privilege I ever possessed.

I had been halfway there, that night in the tool shed. I had reached the point of resignation. But now I think I'd reached the point of joy.

## **Going Visiting**

'I'm going to Drelbe this afternoon; do you want to come?'

'Drelbe? Oh, you mean Cerivar's place. Why?'

'Just visiting. I like to see what the other owners are doing with their slaves; it gives me ideas.'

'And some nice scenery.'

'Sure.'

Garid had been working long hours, reworking an old agreement that was falling apart and threatening a crucial piece of reclamation. This time, despite his workload he'd been careful not to neglect his pet, and she had continued bright-eyed and eager. But he could use a break.

'All right. Are you taking Vizay?'

'No, she's with Miseko this week. Why do you think I'm looking for alternative entertainment? What about your little jeedy?'

'She's better off where she is.'

'Where is she?'

'In her cage where she belongs.'

'Can I see?'

'Sure.' Garid switched the video feed to the kitchen monitor, which was aimed at his jeedy in her little cage. She was wearing the usual belt, bridle and mitts, and was lying on her back with her feet up, flexing one foot so as to stroke a bar gently with her toes. Pav walked through without looking at her, and her eyes followed him. Garid zoomed in to give his friend a better view, and Therin noticed the fine chain running between her nipple rings and up to her bridle, tight enough to make any movement of her upper body uncomfortable.

'Are you punishing her for something?'

'No. The cage is where I keep her during the day. I told you. Unless I want to use her, or she's being walked or exercised.' He looked her over. 'Oh, you mean the nipple chain? Just a reminder; she was trying to rub her nipples on the bars.'

'What a bad jeedy!'

'Incorrigible.' They laughed.

When they got to Drelbe, they flew over what appeared to be a hobby farm. There wasn't enough acreage to make a living, but there was a small herd of cows and a big garden. Therin murmured his envy over the nice long pony track, winding through trees and along a picturesque stream, and said he'd have to bring Vizay there for a drive some day. Cerivar was a

doctor and had made a lot of money over some new medications he'd developed, but the farm was obviously his major hobby – apart from his slave, of course.

Cerivar was waiting for them at the door. 'Hello! Hello! You're just in time.'

'For what?'

'Come out to the shed, I'll show you.' The shed was a long one for milking, with dividers all along it, and tubes and shining canisters. Cerivar's farm manager was just herding the cows in for milking, and they were taking their places with bovine calm and without hurry. 'I'll get the other one,' Cerivar called to the manager, and the man nodded. Inviting his two visitors to follow him, Cerivar went to a stable nearby, passed some stalls, and opened a box. His slave Teats was haltered there and was looking up with apprehension. She was a little blonde woman with a lush body and lightly freckled skin.

'Is this where you keep her?'

'Sometimes. Sometimes I want her in the house. More comfortable there, if you know what I mean.' He unlocked her collar and led her out of the stable and into the milking shed. She hung her head and held back, looking over her shoulder at the two men, and Cerivar urged her along, pulling inexorably on her leash. Step by reluctant step she followed him, passing all the cows with their udders being wiped and attached to apparatus. At the last stall she balked, turned her head and dug her heels in. The manager, finished with the cows by that time, came over to help, and he and Cerivar each took an arm and hauled the slave up onto a pair of raised narrow platforms which were about the men's thigh height, one supporting her left leg and hand, a parallel one supporting her right, so that she was spread on all fours with a space below her middle. There was straw on the floor beneath her. Each platform had a high inside edge, which delayed the woman's escape attempts long enough for the men to quickly lock her flailing hands into raised cuffs fixed into the platforms, and push her head forward, face angled down into a metal frame. She balked again, but the manager expertly forced her mouth open around

a bar, and Cerivar closed another one behind her head so that she couldn't pull back.

'Aah! Aaah! Aaah!' she yelled around the obstruction in her mouth, and she struggled so determinedly she shook the platforms.

'There!' panted Cerivar. 'Always a fight when there are visitors. And half the time when there aren't. Stupid cow.' He grinned, and more relaxed he strapped down Teats' ankles and her legs right below the knee. 'She even kicks sometimes.' The manager began wiping her breasts off with a cold cloth. Teats was completely unable to move, but yelled her incoherent protests and shook all over.

'Come around this side,' said Cerivar, and introduced them to the manager, Kolyrik, who could now take a moment to greet them.

'She's a fighter, all right,' the man said. 'Doesn't seem to stop her milk letting down, though. Put the cups on them and out it comes.' He laid a casual hand on one of Teats' large breasts, hanging pendulous over empty space, and gave it a pull and a squeeze. Milk streamed out in straight lines, and hissed into the straw. Teats complained loudly again, and the men laughed.

Kolyrik picked up a tube with a suction cup at the end and pushed it over one engorged nipple. The suction took over. The other nipple was dripping when the man covered it with a cup also. Teats groaned, more quietly now. White milk was flowing down the tubes and into a small can at one side of the stall. Kolyrik went off to look at the computer display at the other end of the shed. The large pumps were working on all the animals' udders in the same rhythm. The slave was drooling uncontrollably around the bar in her mouth, her saliva dripping onto the floor. Garid took a step back, and looked along the line of stalls. The rest of the cows were placidly chewing the hay in front of them, their heads between the metal rails that spaced them. Teats' head was at their level, angled toward the floor like theirs, and her lips were moving helplessly around the bar that held her mouth open. Her

breasts looked udder-like with the tubes depending from them. There was only one thing she was missing.

‘Have you thought about a tail?’ he asked.

‘A tail!’ exclaimed Cerivar. ‘I knew something was missing! Of course! You’ll have to forgive me, I’ve only just gotten her milk going properly and I’ve been getting this all set up. Just a minute.’ He went off to the stable.

‘What do you think?’ Therin asked Garid quietly, his eyes sparkling. He was stroking the tense buttocks before him, fingering marks that looked a day or two old. ‘I wasn’t expecting the entertainment to be quite so – agricultural.’

‘Interesting. I’ve got my jeedy pretty far down to animal level, but this is a new approach.’

‘Would you do this with yours?’

‘No. Not interested in all this lactation. And I like her tits the way they are. But I can see the attraction.’ In fact his groin was throbbing. The woman’s cruel predicament was enchanting, and he found the wide open orifice surprisingly hard to resist. He hadn’t used his jeedy’s cunt in a while. Fortunately their host was a hospitable man.

Needing to distract himself, he carefully examined the square frame around the slave’s head. ‘Hmm.’

‘What?’

‘Just wondering if this bar is metal. Risky for her teeth.’ He felt the rod that parted her jaws and pressed her cheeks back. The color was the same as the metal, but there was some give.

‘Is it?’ Therin asked.

‘No, some kind of polymer.’

‘What a relief,’ Therin said, and ignored Garid’s narrowed look. ‘Better tell Cerivar you’ll check all her teeth, just in case.’

‘Malicious bugger.’

Cerivar came back with a horsetail on a greased dildo, and a bit of harness. ‘The tail I usually use attaches to her pony

harness; I've found a butt plug slows her down. But that's not likely to be a factor here,' he smiled, then went behind Teats, who was wide-eyed and moaning again, and who tried fruitlessly to wriggle her rear end away from her master as he strapped the belt around her waist and pulled the two side straps up between her thighs and vulva. Her legs were too widely separated and too firmly strapped down for much wriggling. He slapped some lubricant on her anus and twirled the dildo in it. She clenched, able only momentarily to delay the advance of the big intruder. He pushed it in and slid it deep while she yelled and strained. Then he buckled the last strap firmly in the small of her back.

Garid watched with curiosity the slave's crimson face during this process, tears dripping down to join the drops of saliva on the floor. Her milk still flowed to the pump's rhythmic pulse, white washes through the transparent tubes. Therin had watched the process from the rear, and noted that her cunt was swelling visibly, wet and dusky-red between the straps.

'How did you get her milk started?' Garid asked.

'Just a matter of feeding her hormones and pulsating the teats, but it took a while to research the proper balance for this species. Once the milk starts it keeps going, as long as you keep up the milking.'

'How often do you milk her?'

'Three times a day.'

'You go through that three times a day? Is she always that uncooperative?' Garid was a little scandalized at this degree of rebellion.

Cerivar laughed. 'I like a bit of a fight, you know. She gave me some around the pony training, but I soon saw I wouldn't win races that way, so I put a stop to it. She's accepted being a pony now, but being a cow is new. Always takes her a while to adjust.'

'A good whipping might help her adjust quicker.'

'That might stop the milk flow. I'll whip her in a few minutes when she's empty.'

‘What do you do with the milk?’ Therin asked.

‘I’m doing some experiments on it; it looks like it may have some useful medicinal properties.’ He went on about this for a few minutes, losing them among the enzymes, and then turned to his manager, who was labeling the small canister. ‘Kolyrik, is she done?’

‘She’s been done for a couple of minutes, but you said you wanted her to have extra time to stimulate production.’

‘Good, well, that’s enough, I think. Take the cups off.’ Kolyrik slid a finger in along each teat to break the suction, removed the cups and walked away with the can. His employer took a single-tailed whip from a wall nearby, and took up a position behind quivering haunches.

Teats was snuffling and groaning around the bar in her mouth, and flexing her limbs as much as she was able. It was humid in the shed and her skin shone with sweat. Garid, increasingly warm also, shifted his shoulders to get some air under his shirt, and watched the woman’s muscles flex and quiver with tension.

Briskly, Cerivar began applying the whip to the damp rounded hindquarters that were bisected by tail and harness. He chatted with his guests as he inflicted the punishment, glancing at the helpless female in front of him just long enough to aim. Almost immobilized the slave yelled her pain and protest. Her haunches glistened, and tiny drops of sweat flew away from the lash. The ponytail churned several times as the whip caught the long hairs and flung them around.

Cerivar looked at Therin over the sweating, noisy female. ‘What do you think of that new sulky of Zleid’s?’

‘What, the one with the glide wheels? I don’t think it’ll have enough traction.’ Therin, entranced, watched the damp cheeks shudder under another hard blow.

‘I liked it,’ Cerivar said, applying a good undercut and talking over his slave’s howls. ‘On country tracks it practically floats.’ The next lash whistled down with a wet smack, sending the tail flying. ‘I tried it the other day; once you get

used to the feel it's very nice.' He laid another blow down one quivering thigh.

'On smooth professional tracks I think it's hard to control,' said Therin. He had to raise his voice to be heard over the noise.

Cerivar looked closely at his slave's trembling thighs. 'She needs to pee. Come on, girl, get on with it.' He entered her vagina roughly with his fingers and pressed down on her bladder from the inside. She sobbed as a trickle of urine escaped her. Cerivar stepped back and gave her another hard crack across both cheeks, and she screamed and lost control of her bladder. The urine hissed down into the straw. Her face was a study in utter humiliation. Cerivar wiped her off, then gave her another stripe.

Kolyrik came down the shed, looking irritated. 'The autofreight's out of order again, sir. We've got to get it looked at.'

'What, again? I thought I'd solved the problem.' He lowered the whip. Teats was blubbering.

'It's a cable disrupt, I'm convinced, and that's a day's work for the repairman. I don't have any extra men today, and I was going to get the marligers in. I'd rather not leave them any longer.

'No,' he said, turning to Garid and Therin. 'It's not a big crop, but it's a nice lucrative one. It needs to go into storage as soon as it's picked or it spoils. Normally the autofreight handles the transport.' He cursed. 'It's at the far end, too.'

'Can you get an aircar anywhere near?' asked Therin.

'Not close enough.' Aircars couldn't be landed in agricultural land; the backwash killed the soil.

'What's the autofreight?' asked Garid.

'Small bins on a track, basically, but it won't run without the cable.' Cerivar pondered, his eyes on the striped haunches before him. Then he brightened up. 'Kolyrik, can you take the poles off the sulky and hitch this one to the bins?'

The manager looked hopeful. ‘That’s easy, sir. Nulir can do the picking, and I can take care of the storage at the other end. But how do we keep her moving?’

‘There’s a speedometer on the front car. Program it so it produces a light shock if she goes below, say, four kilometer an hour. Except at the end points.’

‘No problem, sir. Where do you want the contact?’

‘I’ll find the right kind of anal plug. Let us just finish with her here, and then we’ll harness her up.’ The man went off. Cerivar offered the striped hindquarters to his guests.

Garid flipped the horsetail over the woman’s back, out of the way. He fingered the swollen nipples as he slid his shaft into her. She was soft and hot, so wet that his cock made sucking noises as he thrust. Teats, so noisy under the whip, began a quiet gasping, her voice whispering around the obstruction. By the time he reached his climax she was breathing in an intense, staccato moan, spasms shaking her body. Therin took Garid’s place, and leaning over the small form, smacked her pendulous breasts from side to side as he stroked in and out of her. Then he straightened up, grabbed the horsetail, and twisted the dildo as far as he could each way. By the time he finished with her she had shuddered through so many spasms that she sagged in her restraints.

The men were discussing the costs of running the farm by the time Cerivar began releasing the bars and straps, holding Teats up against his side as he did so. Sure enough she collapsed into the straw. Therin wiped her down, including several hard swipes between the legs with a cold cloth that made her squeal but woke her up. Cerivar removed the ponytail dildo and strapped on her harness, then led her out by the bridle.

They stopped for a moment at the stable, then had a pleasant walk to the distant marliger orchard. Part of their route was along the pony track that Therin had admired so much from the air. The breeze was cool through the overhanging trees, flowering, some of them, in bright blues and yellows. The stream was playful, and the air was a complex of the clear

scents of foliage, water, and the soft duff beneath their feet. Therin talked his host into an owners' picnic, at least in principle, but couldn't pin him down on a date. Garid asked about erosion and the amphibious species in the stream. The small female drawn along by the bridle trotted quickly to keep up with the big men, arms fastened in the small of her back, large breasts bobbling in their straps, nipple bells softly jingling.

At last they reached the marliger field. An elderly man was already there, moving slowly under a broad-brimmed hat that kept the sun off, gently removing the fruits from the diminutive trees. 'These are ready to go,' he told Cerivar. 'Can't wait no longer.'

'All right, Nulir. Are the bins rigged up and on the track?'

'Kolyrik's on it. Almost done. I got the three bins full almost. I can put some in nets while the bins is elsewhere.'

They strolled across the corner of the orchard, and found Kolyrik just straightening up from the little autofreight bins. 'Ah, there you are, sir. All ready except the shocker terminal. Thanks.' He wired the plug to a thick cord coming from the front bin. This was a bit different from the other two, with a few dials and switches and a pair of shafts newly bolted on. The bins were about sixty centimeters high, on thin metal tracks that could be seen running along the edges of the fields toward the barn.

Cerivar examined the silvery metal cord lining one of the tracks. 'Have you disconnected the cable? I don't want it coming on unexpectedly.'

'Yes, it's out. The repairman's booked for next week.'

'Not till then?'

'Soonest he could make it.'

'Well, we'll see if this'll work out for the time being. Let's hitch her up.'

They backed the woman between the shafts and fastened them to her harness at the hips. Cerivar took up the plug on its cord, and made his slave bend over at the waist. There was still

plenty of lubrication visible from the previous butt plug. 'Here, hold her bridle, would you?' he asked Garid. Garid thought it was as well that he was holding the slave's head, as otherwise she might have made the cars jump the track to escape the new plug. As it was she squirmed and bucked, attempted to jump and then tried to sink between the tracks with her ass down. She managed this even with her bridle in Garid's grip and the autofreight cars attached behind. Cerivar laughed and smacked her, hauled her bottom up, shoved the plug in and fastened it to her harness, ignoring her outraged screams.

'All right, you stupid animal, just for that.' He held down a button on the front bin. Teats jumped and howled, shook her bottom and when he released the button, turned her head to look indignantly at her master. 'That's what you'll get whenever you slow down. So you just keep yourself moving at a good fast walk, you hear me?' Teats took a breath to scream again, but froze with her mouth wide as Cerivar's hand moved back toward the button. She closed her teeth on the bit, dropped her head and nodded miserably. Garid could see her straining her ass helplessly around the plug.

Cerivar tied the reins back to the first bin, making Teats raise her head. By this time the little red fruits filled the bins completely, and Kolyrik could be seen walking back rapidly along the track toward the barn. The woman's owner gave her a smack, and she leaned into the harness, the shafts drawing the three bins in her wake. The load wasn't light, and her movements were restricted by all the straps and, of course, the butt plug. But she walked steadily into the distance, her blinkered head pulled back by the bridle. She couldn't see well just in front of her, and she stumbled a little when the track curved around the corner of a field. The men watched her stiffen, yelp, and hurry the bins around the curve and out of sight.

They grinned at each other as they turned away. Cerivar invited them back to the house for a drink. 'I'll need to get some lab work done shortly, so I'll have to leave you for a while,' he said. 'Stay and see how the marligers turn out.' So by and by Garid and Therin strolled down without their host,

cold drinks in hand, and watched Teats being unloaded, watered, and sent back again. She kept up an easy pace with the empty cars, but on the way back half an hour later, with the cars heaped high, she was clearly tiring.

‘Is she testing to see how slowly she can go, do you think?’ Therin asked, as they watched her steps begin to lag, a field away from the barn.

‘I think so, though she is tired,’ Garid said. ‘Any second now.’

Garid was right; the shock came a few seconds later. They saw her knees buckle and heard her little shriek. She picked up her pace, struggling to get the load to the safety zone of the barn. They followed her in and watched Kolyrik push a water tube past her bit. She gulped the water down and then sagged between the shafts as the manager began to unload the marligers.

Kolyrik looked up. ‘Mr Cerivar said you could use the female if you wanted, sirs. Now’s a good time, but if you wouldn’t mind being quick...?’ Therin happily released the woman from the shafts, and she sank to her knees, looking grateful for the respite. Therin took out her bit and used her mouth, controlling her head with the bridle straps. He pushed for her throat, keeping one eye on the unloading process, came when it was about half done, and gave place to Garid. But Garid was thinking of his own little jeedy in her cage, and how eager she would be to be let out, to kneel between his legs and suck him for as long as he wanted.

‘Do you use the woman yourself at all, Kolyrik?’ he asked.

‘Oh, sometimes, sir, when I’m not busy. I don’t much like the look of her, but it’s hard to see all this randiness going on without getting a rod up. My partner left half a year ago, and it’s a long way to town.’

‘Well then, let me unload that last bin for you, and you unload yourself.’

The man smiled, then looked doubtful. ‘You have to treat these gently or they bruise.’

‘I’ll be careful. Watch.’ Garid shifted some fruits with a delicate hand. Kolyrik, satisfied, made hasty and rough use of the woman’s mouth while Garid completed the unloading. Then Therin hitched her up again, and sent her on her way with the empty bins.

They thanked the manager, who thanked them also, and went by the house to look in on Cerivar. He was just finishing up in the lab, and they settled down for a last cold drink in the shade on his terrace, where they could see Teats when she returned.

They sat in contented silence for a while, and then Garid said, ‘I’m curious about something you said, Cerivar, that you like a bit of a fight.’

Cerivar’s eyes glinted. ‘Well, I always win, you know. I just get to conquer her over and over again.’

‘Why do you think she fights if she never wins?’ asked Therin. ‘More punishment? I think Vizay likes to provoke me sometimes, but she’s subtler about it. Just a little slow to obey, a look in her eye, that sort of thing. She steps it up if I don’t punish her right away.’

‘My slave wouldn’t dare try that, not anymore,’ Garid said grimly. He told Cerivar about the escape attempt and the subsequent regime.

‘Teats has tried to get away a few times,’ Cerivar said. ‘Therin’s right, it’s just provocation. After all, where would she go? And she’s never hotter than after she’s been punished.’

‘There’s punishment and punishment,’ said Garid. He watched Teats in the distance, pulling her load toward the barn. ‘Or shall we say it’s on a continuum? Anywhere from a light sexy flogging that gets them hot and hardly hurts, through a hard whipping that punishes but makes them hot afterwards, to a really severe punishment that gives them no pleasure at all and gets something through to them that they need to learn.’

‘And all points in between, yes,’ said Cerivar. ‘I did have to use the last kind when she fought being a pony. I quite enjoyed her struggling, up to the point where it started losing me races.’

Cold water, lots of it, works every time. Five minutes under the hose and you wouldn't know her.'

'You have to draw the line somewhere,' Therin agreed. 'Mind you, Miseko had Vizay so well trained that I've hardly had to worry about it, once I made sure she knew who was boss. Miseko showed me her routines, and the rules he keeps her to; it was straightforward enough.'

'No differences in how you treat her?' Garid asked.

'Well, I'm a bit restricted by location, except on the weekend when I play with her at Miseko's. I do have to work sometime. After all, I have debts to pay, right?' He bowed toward Garid. 'And all because of her, I might add! So I don't get a chance to do much pony training. I've found that when I have Vizay at my place she needs to be kept locked up pretty firmly or she distracts me; she's like a cat, always rubbing up against me. Which is fun, but I was getting behind.'

'You've got that panel to lock her into. Cerivar, have you seen that?'

'Only by vidcam; I'll have to get over there someday. It looked gorgeous.'

'Wood Nymph from the Rear,' said Garid, motioning a large rectangle with one hand and curves with the other.

'Mm-hmm, that's fun, but I've made something simpler when I just want her out of the way for a few minutes. I've made a little seat for her.' He laughed.

'A seat?'

'It's about a meter off the floor. It's just a thick, smooth, wooden bar sticking out of the wall, curving up, attached...' his hands outlined a 'T' shape with the arms of the 'T' curving back, '...to another curved bar that holds her round the waist. Tight. That one attaches to the wall on either side. When I don't need her I sit her in that and lock it. She has quite a good time, but it gets uncomfortable after a while.'

Garid thought he'd enjoy seeing this method of storage. He watched Teats pulling her load, almost at the barn now, and Kolyrik bringing her in by the bridle.

Cerivar asked, ‘Did you see her get shocked on that run?’ The others shook their heads. ‘She’s learning. But Garid, to get back to the obedience question, do you never want the fun of dealing with resistance? I’d get bored.’

Garid thought about this. ‘I’m never bored with my slave.’ He lay back in his chair and looked at the horizon, where turquoise was darkening to teal. Pale orange shreds of cloud drifted low. ‘I suppose what I’m dealing with is another kind of resistance. I’m talking about her will, rather than her body. She still has a will, and it’s still a struggle, but it’s quite a subtle one. She’s very docile, she does exactly as she’s told, but I can still see her sometimes, trying to anticipate, or second-guess an order, trying to use her intelligence, trying to be something other than what she is. I like to see her let go of that, give herself up completely. Then mind, body, everything becomes whatever I want it to be. It’s ironic, because in fact she has to use whatever she’s got in order to let go as well as she does.’

‘It probably helps that she can’t speak Henthen,’ said Therin. ‘Much harder to take control when she doesn’t understand what’s going on.’

‘I heard you won’t let her talk at all,’ said Cerivar.

‘She can’t understand or speak. She’s never been allowed to learn Henthen, and she lost any urge to speak a long time ago.’

‘The more severe punishments we were speaking of, I take it?’

‘Yes. I beat it out of her. As far as I’m concerned, women on this planet are animals and shouldn’t be allowed language. But – each to his own.’ He shrugged to show he meant no offense.

‘Too late now in Teats’ case.’ Teats was leaving the barn again, the empty cars at her tail. They watched her slowly recede into the distance. The setting sun hit the rails, fiery orange lines glinting through green that was suddenly marked with shadows.

‘Vizay’s also; she doesn’t know a lot of Henthen, but probably more than we think. Anyway, I like listening to her

begging to be taken out of her wall seat, in that soft, pleading little voice.'

'But should you let them speak among themselves?' Garid enquired. 'Especially Ranize?'

Both men shook their heads. 'Of course not; who knows what they'd be plotting!' said Cerivar.

'Hmm. All right, I'll suggest a rule that when stables are shared the women are gagged.'

'That's no good if they're sharing a trough,' said Therin. 'They'd have to be watched all the time then. I'll volunteer,' he grinned slyly. 'Did you see how Arageda stopped his slave's mouth after you complained at Miseko's? The next time she was there he had her in a tongue press.' He explained to Garid, who hadn't seen it. 'Just two little rectangles of wood held together at the ends with bolts, squeezing her tongue. They go across her mouth like a bit. He had it strapped behind her head so she couldn't slide it off; apparently she worked it off once.'

'He was the one who was most interested in the fact that his slave had been talking,' Garid commented. 'Good for him.'

'He's planning to put a stud in her tongue so she won't be able to slide it off.'

'Then he won't have to use the strap. Nice. More elegant that way.'

Cerivar returned to Garid's disciplinary methods. 'Your slave is the one in the chastity belt, right? I bet she'd do anything to get that off.'

Therin laughed. 'She gave up on that one ages ago, eh, Garid?' For a while he had observed, fascinated, as Garid drew out the punishment for his slave's outrageous misbehavior. He knew that his friend had not yet seen fit to end the punishment. 'Garid doesn't think short-term,' he told Cerivar. 'I hold back on Vizay sometimes, just for fun, or make her do things to get the treat. But in the end she always gets to come, a lot. Garid's pet can't do anything to earn an orgasm; she's got no hope at all as far as I can see.'

Garid shook his head. 'She can't earn one; as a slave she has no right to have orgasms.'

'Not ever?'

'Slaves have no rights. If I feel like giving her one, arbitrarily, that's my choice. All she can do is never, ever try for one. If she tried to make herself come, or to manipulate me into making her come, she'd still be thinking it was something she had some control over. I won't ever let her have one if she thinks that. And she's learned not to.'

'So are you ever going to let her come again?' Therin asked.

'Once I'm sure she understands, understands deep down, that orgasms are completely at my whim and have nothing whatsoever to do with what she wants, she might get one occasionally.'

'But you tease her all the time, don't you?' said Cerivar. 'I've seen the dildos in that belt.'

'Oh yes, but it's not just the dildos; I take her right to the brink, and then stop.' The other two men looked appalled and aroused by this level of cruelty.

'How often?'

'Most days.'

'Are you saying that she can take all that and still not try to come?' asked Cerivar, incredulous.

'She can now. As I said, she's learning. The lesson wouldn't mean much if it wasn't difficult. I think it's the one thing that's done more than anything else to teach her what she is.'

'I think pony training does that,' Therin said. 'They need to know that they're animals, and on the track they learn that they can't think for themselves.'

'That helps,' Garid agreed. 'But it excites them, just as it does us, you know. All of this does; the beatings, the bondage. If we always resolve that excitement, let them have their pleasure, it's – I don't know, for me the relationship becomes mutual, it evens out. It's an unwritten contract, a game.'

‘I don’t think so,’ said Therin. ‘I guess I could agree that it’s up to me arbitrarily to let Vizay come or not. I just choose to let her, even if I delay it a bit, because I enjoy it.’

‘Sure, that’s a valid point of view,’ agreed Garid. ‘But does Vizay know that you could choose not to let her? Or does she think she has the right to come – because she always does?’ Therin sat back to think about this. Garid went on. ‘When I first got my slave I made her come a lot, and I enjoyed that. I controlled when and how, so it felt right enough.’ He considered a little. ‘It strengthened her bond to me, too.’ Teats had been out of sight, but now the three men could see the harnessed figure hauling the heavy load behind her. They watched in silence for a minute, and then Garid went on. ‘But I started to see how much enjoyment there was in frustrating her, and how much more powerful that was. No one but me can or will satisfy that need, including herself. I have the keys. She’s utterly dependent on me. And I make sure that the need is continual, and intense.’

Cerivar mused, ‘I’ve watched some owners go in the other direction, force their slaves to come over and over until it hurts.’

‘Well, at least that’s an indication of power,’ said Garid. ‘Doesn’t appeal to me at all, but it makes some sense.’

Therin, having given more thought to the matter, spoke up. ‘What works may depend on the female, and on what the owner likes as well. Some women are humiliated by being forced to come. So it’s fun to do that, especially in public. Some of us – like Cerivar here – enjoy giving their slaves a bit of slack, so they can have the fun of reining them in and showing them who’s boss, over and over again. Isn’t that right?’ Cerivar nodded. ‘And some of us, like me, get a kick out of giving a woman pleasure, just as much as we do from hurting them. As long as we get what we want, and the slaves are under control, what does it matter?’

Garid was silent for a while, looking at the clouds moving across the cooling sky, gathering more color as they went. Then he nodded. ‘You’re right. There’s no one way to do this.’

After all, what's the point of being an owner if you can't do it your own way?'

Still, each of the men had some new thoughts. Therin and Cerivar were both planning a little more teasing and denial with their slaves, just to see where it led. And Garid was musing about the uses of a butt plug shocker in pony training.

It was dusk by the time the visitors said their goodbyes. As he guided the aircar upward, Garid looked back down at the house. Cerivar was sitting on his veranda, the small woman on his lap. Her face was hidden against him; one hand just visible against his chest. She seemed to have given up her tired body without reserve. Cerivar was stroking her with one hand while he waved cheerily at them with the other.

## **Party**

One day after a race, I noticed that the ride home was longer than the ride out had been. Where were we going? The car stopped, and I was left to ponder this for quite a long time in the crate.

I had lost the race, and was still sniffing and rubbing my stinging nose with my mitt. I couldn't rub the other place that was stinging. My master had been pushing me harder lately, giving me shocks through a butt plug to speed me up, or in response to any hesitation on my part. The first time I'd been frightened almost out of my wits, but I think I'd gone a little faster. If I'd had any consciousness left when I was racing, any existence beyond that of a dumb, conditioned animal, that first shock did away with it. With that thing in my ass, the threat or the actual sensation, I had no mind left at all. I hardly knew if I was ahead or behind. My eyes were so completely blinded by tears and the blinkers that I could barely see anyway, and with blurred vision there was that much less to stimulate the higher brain regions. I just obeyed the reins and the whip and my master's voice, fearfully and without the slightest hesitation.

My master finally opened the crate and brought me out by the bridle. I knew at once where I was: the first place we had raced, where we had been many times since. But we had never gone there after racing somewhere else. This time, instead of a competitive, teasing atmosphere, I could sense the beginnings of a party. The women were all over the place, over men's knees, kneeling on their thighs with hands behind their backs, having their breasts toyed with. The men were laughing their deep laughs. They moved from the stable and garage yards to the terrace, carrying or leading slaves. My master led me by a leash on my degrading nose ring, on all fours, having locked the kneepads on that kept me down. Hardly any of the other women had nose rings, much less got led by them. And very few of them ever wore mitts like I did; I'd seen them use their hands, even to eat!

I could sense a difference in my master. His hand on the leash was not so tight, nor did he keep it quite so short. Was he just relaxed, or did this mean something?

He sat down on the terrace and arranged me on all fours in front of him to be his footstool. I braced myself to accept this honor, and tried very hard not to move. I caught glimpses of slaves tied on their backs on a table, their legs stretched wide to the ceiling, serving all comers. I heard their screams of pleasure, and thought about being pounded hard, and I wished, and wished that I deserved it... I had to be careful not to move a muscle; at the slightest twitch my master whipped me. My wet, locked-away cunt contracted around its plug, sending tremors throughout my body.

Garid sat back and enjoyed the scenes playing out before him. He could feel the smallest quiver of the little body under his feet, and he hardly had to look down to flick her with his whip. He knew she was suffering more from deprivation than from pain, and that was enjoyable also.

Therin sat down next to him. 'What do you think, now that you've joined us at last?'

'I think it's time I shared my toy with my friend.'

Therin stared at Garid, then at his slave, and then he laughed. 'You finally have her all the way down, do you? About time. Think she knows who owns her yet?'

'You dead wurlegh! Do you want to play with her or not?' Garid put his feet down, sat up and picked up her leash. 'Kneel.' The woman raised herself to her knees, and presented her breasts to Therin at his signal. Garid could feel her slight tension through the leash, but she did not hesitate.

'You're sure? Not going to want to kill me afterwards?'

'I thought you liked risks.'

'Don't tell me you're going to unlock that belt for me.'

'No. But you can use her mouth. Just let me know when.' He unclipped the leash from her nose ring.

Therin looked thoughtfully at the woman kneeling in front of him. He reached out and gently swirled one finger around her right nipple, then her left, back and forth, watching her face.

He took both breasts in his hands and squeezed. 'I've been wanting to spend some time on these for a long while. What a pair of beauties.'

'They color up nicely,' Garid said. 'Especially with a flogger.'

'I've got a good one – hold on.' It took him more than a few minutes, as the article was in use; he had to find another suitable whip to trade before he could get the one he wanted. Garid held the woman's arms behind her, and made her arch her back and present her breasts. Therin struck a moderate blow, first right, then left, and examined the marks. 'You're right; she marks easily. Vizay's skin is darker.'

'A little harder now.' Garid tightened his hold, and enjoyed the sensation of his pet jerking at each blow. Therin placed each stroke fastidiously. He was careful to catch her nipples from time to time, which wrung muffled squeals from her. When she was mewling steadily around her gag, and tears were running in a steady stream down her face, they stopped. Her tits were blushing in bright pink and stripes of red.

‘Where are her pony bells? This is sheer artistry; we should call attention to it.’

Garid was happy to add bells.

‘You know,’ said Therin, ‘I never had a dog as a kid. My brother was allergic to them. I always wanted to play with a sweet little doggie who would fetch things when I threw them.’ Garid smiled, and unfastened the ball gag from the slave’s bridle. She swallowed a last sob and flexed her jaw.

They fastened the leash from her collar to a long raised line that was used for Vizay’s training. At the side of the lawn Therin found a stick, and threw it for her to fetch. She scrambled after it, brown mitts and kneepads sinking in the thick grass. Her face pushed down unhesitatingly after the stick, in her hurry coming up sometimes with a mouthful of grass as well. Soon there were bits of grass on her face and under her bridle, and she was panting around the stick as she scurried back with it. The striped pink and red breasts were crosshatched with strands and flecks of green.

Therin sent the stick close to a frame mounted by a saddle, where Lave was making his woman ride. She was making a lot of noise about it. When the whip flashed down her thighs clung to the saddle, but each time Lave raised the whip she raised her hips, and Therin could see the big dildo between her thighs. She was moaning and crying in Henthen: ‘Please master, don’t... ahh! Don’t hit me anymore, please... eee! Oh – oh I can’t – I’m going to – ah...!’

Therin looked down at Garid’s pet. Distracted by the woman in the saddle, she had lost track of the stick. When she finally crawled back to him with it in her mouth, Therin used it to give her a few good smacks on the hindquarters to punish her for being slow. ‘Bad jeedy!’ She yelped with pain and hung her head.

Therin crouched down behind her, and examined her soft inner thighs. He called to Garid. ‘I’d like to punish her a little here, if you don’t mind.’

‘Sure,’ said Garid. ‘Let’s use a chair; I’ll hold her for you.’ Garid fastened her wrists behind her back, sat down in a big

lawn chair with her in his lap, and pulled her legs wide, his hands gripping her thighs tightly above the kneepads. He tipped her back a little to make her more accessible. ‘How’s your aim?’ he asked, glancing at his lap.

Therin had no problem landing blows on target, and by the time he was done the slave’s inner thighs were as red and striped as her breasts. This time Garid got to feel her squirming against the whole front of his body; each blow made delicious by her pained writhing. Therin concentrated on marking her evenly, especially up near her belted cunt. He enjoyed seeing the humid flesh through the clear band between her legs, clenching around plugs as she struggled, and the taut shuddering muscles of her thighs. Her distress was louder and more visible without the gag. She was crying with pain again when they stopped.

Therin looked down at her for a long moment. ‘Okay,’ he said to Garid. ‘Now.’

‘It’s time, is it?’ Garid pushed the woman to her knees, and gave Therin his chair. Therin took out his rigid cock, and gave himself over to the pleasure of an unfamiliar mouth surrounding it. Garid had taught her a lot. Therin used the woman’s mouth in a leisurely way, holding her firmly by the head and taking his time, before he abandoned himself to the first orgasm of the day.

I was still on my knees in the grass when a man’s voice called, and people on the lawn began to move toward the house. The woman in the saddle and her master were long gone. My master ran his hands roughly over my red breasts and thighs, and talked and laughed with his friend. He clipped my leash back to my nose ring, always a painful experience, but even so I was very happy that he was the one holding it. If my master wanted to share me, I would do my absolute best to please. But I knew who owned me.

He replaced my ball gag – it was in my mouth before I knew I had opened up for it – and led me through the veranda and into the house. As I crawled the welts on my thighs rubbed

against each other, and my breasts were brushing painfully against my arms. I tried to ignore this, but I must have been a little slow, because I got some hard and painful tugs on my nose. We went into a large, warmly lit room. There was a big dining table near one wall, partially set. My master picked up a large bag by the handles and pushed me off into an alcove.

The room was full of people walking around, and slaves on leashes, but we were out of the way of the bustle. In a moment the kneepads were off and I was fastened by the wrists on tiptoe to a hook in the alcove ceiling. I stretched my legs gratefully. He brushed off remaining bits of grass with a warm hand. Then he removed my belt. He was very quick at this, though unlocking my labia rings was a bit complicated. He'd had a lot of practice. I shuddered when the plugs were drawn out with the belt. I could hear the hiss of the sana box cleaning them, while he drew more equipment from the bag.

He stood behind me, talking with men in a nearby corner who were working on their slaves, or watching each other's work. I watched one man who was tying his slave's breasts together; he kept looking at my naked, shaven cunt. His hand dropped the rope and slid down the woman's belly, and then he plunged it into her cunt, watching me intently all the while. My face burned.

My master began to tighten a black leather corset around me, squeezing me tighter and tighter, until I was breathing in little shallow gasps around my gag and groaning out my incredible arousal. The woman with breasts tied was moaning too, her cunt full of hand. He was whispering in her ear, holding her hard. I whimpered. My multi-colored breasts were embraced and pushed up on three sides by the corset. Then the belt went back on over my swollen pussy, plugs and all. The cries of the other woman's climax were punctuated by the sound of a lock snapping shut, and the sound of my own breathing.

My master joined my ankles with a short hobble. Then he took my arms down and secured them into a single sleeve from mitts to elbows. Then an odd, crescent-shaped tray was fastened round my waist and supported at each front corner by a chain that hooked to my nipple rings. Fortunately the waist

fastening took most of the weight; I was loaded with hors d'oeuvres and sent round the room.

With the short hobble, and with my arms locked behind me, I had to move with great care and deliberation so as not to spill anything, or trip myself up. But for me this was relative freedom; I was on my feet and I wasn't actually tethered to anything. Oddly enough, this was a new humiliation, in that it made what I did feel almost voluntary. Theoretically, walking away was a possibility. That meant I was choosing to offer my bound body and foolish tray for the men's enjoyment. As I circulated with my tray I had to endure constant tweaks and pinches, and the weight on my nipples was painful. As I wasn't tethered I was actually starting to think of looking around for exits – just in case. It was a terrifying thought, quite irresistible. Fortunately I saw my master's eye on me, and knew with relief that escape wasn't on the agenda.

The other slaves were providing entertainment as well. One was fastened upside down with her legs wide, her juices being used for dip. The woman I'd seen earlier, hands tied back, was offering some kind of pâté warmed in the hollow between her bound-together breasts. Some slaves were kneeling next to their masters and being fed by hand. One was lying supine across her master's lap; he was eating off her belly as if it were a plate, and resting his wineglass on her breast.

The oddest was Teats, the slave against whom I sometimes won a race. She was placed behind the side table with the drinks and hors-d'oeuvres. Her arms were pulled up behind her back, so that she was bent over the table at a right angle. Her chest was resting on a kind of wooden shelf fastened parallel to the table by two vertical supports, her big breasts forced down through round holes in the shelf. I was puzzled until I noticed that milk was dripping from her long nipples. How had that gotten started? She wasn't having any babies here, that was for sure. A man came over, took hold of her breasts and started pulling and squeezing them rhythmically, milking her into a cup he'd placed there, ignoring her whimpers of discomfort. Large as they were, her breasts, enveloped by those big hands, looked like the udders they

resembled. It seemed to me the man had spent some time on a farm, for he looked like he knew what he was doing.

‘Here, jeedy!’ my master called from across the room. I tore my eyes away and shuffled carefully to him, feeling very vertical and precarious in my restraints. My tray was almost empty, and people had begun to move to the table.

On my right was a slave with her arms and legs extended like an ‘X’, being decorated with long, narrow, multi-colored translucent tubes wrapping all around her body, not quite touching her but being bent to follow her shape. I was impressed that she was able to hold so still, until I noticed that she was fixed to an inconspicuous light frame. Two men made final swirls with the tubes around each breast, ending past their tips with tight spirals of the same material, and what looked like odd-shaped bulbs. I was almost across the room to my master when I saw them hoist her over the table, face down, and hang her from the ceiling. My master took me by the collar and let me watch. Suddenly all the colored tubes and the two hanging bulbs lit up with a soft glow. She was a chandelier – very pretty. I hoped she’d had something to eat first.

My master had brought my bowl from home, and I sighed. I watched enviously out of the corner of my eye at lucky slaves being fed tidbits at the table. I wanted to kneel prettily and beg, too, but I was locked securely in my mitts to my bowl in the corner. The food they gave me was almost as bland as what I was normally fed, but at least it was a different flavor of bland. Fortunately they didn’t give me much, as the corset didn’t leave a lot of space.

I did get to see the woman brought in on her back on a big platter. I thought for a moment that I was looking at a cake in the shape of a woman, but it was a real slave covered in confectionery, with fruit and nuts and icing arranged decoratively in strategic places. This seems to have been a surprise; there was a roar of laughter from the men when she was set down on the table. They immediately began tucking in with spoons, and soon fingers, and eventually tongues.

After dinner, wiped off, the ball gag fastened into my bridle again, I crawled over to the couch at my master's bidding. I felt a big weight descend across my back, and a clear, heavy, horizontal slab of plastic was being fastened to me. There was a convex curve in its outline for my head, which was pulled into the curve and fastened back by the bridle. I could see men from the corner of my eye, on the couch at my side, and before long I heard the clink of glasses on the slab. I was a coffee table. Again, I did my best not to move.

Off to my left I could see a slave hanging upside down by her widely spread ankles. Two men were comparing whips and began experimenting, pausing to examine the results before getting down to work more seriously. I felt sorry for the woman, as she had it from both directions. Her long dark hair hung several feet off the floor. She was gagged, but eventually I recognized her: the woman with the South Xanszey eyes. My master's friend owned her, the one who had used me before dinner. He and the other man talked as they worked her over, apparently commenting on each other's work or giving each other advice. Her muffled screams increased in volume, and several people stopped what they were doing to watch.

One man was whipping her breasts with a flogger, slowly and steadily, and gradually they reddened as they bounced and rebounded. Occasionally she gave a louder shriek, and I knew that this was when her nipples were struck. My own nipples, sore themselves, tingled in sympathy. The other man was concentrating at first on her ass and then her thighs. Then he moved to the inside of her thighs, and at last to her cunt, lashing her there with a smacking sound that made me wince.

Two women were kneeling between men's thighs, their heads moving rhythmically up and down. The men, through half-closed eyes, watched the slaves being whipped. I couldn't see my master. The room seemed full of people, naked or semi-naked or clothed.

Then the men took the dark-haired woman down, but only momentarily. Soon she was suspended between them by the wrists, still gagged. They began to fondle and lick her body. Her voice, hoarse with screaming, now purred in a choked way

under the gag. Soon they were standing with her sandwiched between them. The purrs changed to moans. One lifted her up and held her above his rigid cock. The other man exposed his cock also and rubbed it with lubricant. Then he assisted his partner to support her. Both of them held her by the thighs or ass, high up between them. The two cocks touched for a moment as the three of them swayed together, rubbed, gasped. Then the men lowered the slave's body, cunt and asshole, onto their two cocks, and she let out a groan that went on and on. It increased in volume as they worked her down over their two erect rods. It was evidently a tight fit. They began a slow, coordinated pumping, holding her and each other, a confusion of arms and hands, sweating torsos, squirming flesh.

A whip burned over my ass cheeks, and I realized I had let my rigid posture buckle at the sight of the trio. I tried again to stay still as I watched the three of them writhe together. The men's tongues were entwined above the woman's dark head. Each of them held her up with one hand, and with the other they twisted her nipples or squeezed her ass. Their hands were all over her, leaving marks. Then she was crying out, wailing her pleasure. The men lost their slow rhythm, accelerating their movements, thrusting her to and fro, growling. One exploded, then the other, jerking their hips with great groans. The woman almost disappeared for a moment or two between the two big men. But their movements seemed to trigger another series of cries from her, higher than the first.

When at last they separated, panting, the woman was left hanging there, fluid dripping down her legs, while the men sat and laughed and got their breath, arms across each other's shoulders. Eventually someone took her down, and she collapsed on the floor in a puddle of semen.

I don't know much about what happened next, because they took the tabletop off my back, and I spent the next hour or so in the dark, in a full hood. I was kneeling, my ankles clamped to the floor, my wrists attached wide apart to chains hung from the ceiling, well forward from my center of gravity so that I strained forward as I hung, my back arched as far as the tight corset allowed, my tits thrust out. My ass must have presented a perfect target, for it was certainly used as one. There were

hands everywhere, squeezing and striking me, smacking my tits and ass and thighs. The cords of an unfamiliar whip scorched a path across my ass, while hands fondled my breasts. Then clamps closed on my nipples, and I could do nothing but cry my pain against the gag and hood. Chains and weights were soon hanging from the clamps, and someone began deliberately swinging and smacking them. I could hear little but my own shrill voice inside my ears.

Then my gag was yanked out and a cock took its place, then another, and another. My master was letting me be used for other men's pleasure, and he wanted this, so it was right. I thought I recognized his hand on the flogger still punishing my sore ass. I was glad he was nearby, but I wanted him in my mouth so much...

Then my chastity belt was removed. I felt the air on my swollen cunt, so swollen and hot that a touch would have set off a firestorm. I was terribly afraid that someone would touch it by accident and make me come. I was one moment from the edge, as I had been hundreds of times; it could happen so fast; a breath could do it. But it was forbidden; I didn't deserve it, and I knew my master would be terribly angry. The breath was suddenly pushed out of me with a whimpering groan as the corset was tightened, hard. I was relieved that he was behind me; I knew there'd be no accident with him there. Then I felt him up my ass, and I moaned intensely around the cock I was sucking. He owned me, no one else could own me like this, no matter what they did to me. Oh, yes... hands were pulling on clamps, making my nipples ache and sting, my master smacked my ass and thrust deeper. I sucked the cock in front of me, blind and deaf, gorged and stuffed full. Except my cunt, of course, which was burning, swollen, dripping, unused, in this orgiastic pile of female flesh. Undeserving.

When everyone was finished with me my ankles were released, but my arms remained at a painful stretch above my head. Someone took off my hood, and when my eyes adjusted to the light I could see my master approaching with the chastity belt. He made me kiss it in front of everyone, and lick the place where my cunt belonged. I could hear the moans and laughter surging around me. I bowed my head between my up-

stretched arms. Large hands grasped my thighs and hips and held them rigid. His fingers behind me were positioning the belt, the plugs at my openings. Eyes everywhere were watching my face as he pushed the plugs into me, very slowly and with great care. I was panting hard, unable to control the sound of my breathing. I saw the pity on the women's faces till I hung my head again and gasped and wept. I couldn't help a convulsive shudder as the belt was closed. The snap of the lock was loud in the quiet room.

Then there was movement and noise again and I was on my hands and knees, my nipple decorations scraping the floor. Instead of a leash there was a long rod fastened to my collar, which my master used to direct me to where he wanted me to go. I was surrounded by female flesh, striped, harnessed, bound, but free enough to wriggle and crawl. Torsos pressed against each other, breasts rubbed, tongues intertwined. The rod forced me over to small breasts with painful looking stripes and erect nipples. I took a deep breath, and began to suck.

I was back for a moment on Raniz, having sex with Morat. She had loved her nipples sucked, and her cunt licked, and all I wanted was to have her take me, my eyes closed, her hip shoving into my crotch. My few sex partners couldn't understand how such a wicked girl could be so uselessly passive in bed. I hadn't even bothered after a while; it had been nothing but mutual disappointment.

But now, of course, I had no choice. My head was pushed to the next woman's crotch, and I licked for all I was worth. All around me slaves were gasping and purring and screaming with pleasure. Bound women were rolling, sweating, writhing around each other, trying without hands to get the hair out of their faces by rubbing against the nearest body, so they could dive in with their tongues again. The little clit I was looking after was red and slick, retreating under its hood. Thighs locked around my head, rigid and shaking. My clit swelled helplessly under its transparent prison, visible to all, out of bounds. I licked the woman till she came, so in thrall to the voluptuous sensations all around that I almost inhabited the body under my tongue, felt a phantom tongue on my own clit.

I transferred my attentions to another as directed, and then another after that. I think every one of the women there got my tongue at least once, and that of several others.

Finally, I lay exhausted on the floor, the rod on my collar gone. Six women licked me all over. Two of them slowly pulled the nipple clamps off with their teeth. I screamed as the blood returned. The women sucked the pain away, flicked my rings with their tongues, stroked the tender insides of my thighs, licked the welts on my ass, licked the juices from between my belt and legs, and even licked the unfeeling belt itself. I thought I would die. Everything was touched, everything done to give me pleasure, but the one touch I needed to come. My clit, locked high in a keep, watched in despair from her lonely window. I sobbed quietly, writhing against their bodies and tongues, watching them begin to giggle as their torments increased. When one of them slid her tongue theatrically all the way along the belt between my legs, the whole room began laughing. I wept and squirmed with humiliation and agony, balanced excruciatingly on a knife's edge.

Then all at once the hands and mouths fell away from me, wet leaves falling from a trembling tree. Everyone was looking in one direction, and my eyes followed. My master was speaking. He held me with his eyes, and moved his head slightly in a gesture I knew well. I raised myself to my hands and knees and crawled to him through the crowd, over tangled legs, around bodies shining with sweat and sticky with sex. I began to kiss his feet. The room went quiet. I kissed up his legs, slowly, reverently, and moaned with gratitude as he let me take him in my mouth. This familiar posture felt calming, although in my center was still a star about to go nova. I took all of that fusion heat and focused it into the finest, most exquisite blowjob of all time. With every touch to every nerve I tried to convey that I knew what we each deserved. He deserved anything, everything. I deserved whatever pain, shame or frustration he wanted to give me. I deserved nothing more, and I trusted him not to give it.

And he didn't.

## Home Again

Garid piloted the aircar home, his jeedy safe in the crate behind him. It felt late. The deep midnight blue of the sky was clear and full of stars. The party had still been in full swing when he hoisted up his pet and said his farewells. The experience had been exciting, but his essentially solitary nature reached its limit.

He wanted to be alone with his possession.

The extent to which she'd been used had exhausted her temporarily, and he sensed that she was asleep in her crate. But she had been unable to control her movements as he had settled her in there, soft, squirming, her breasts seeming to offer themselves without her volition, her eyes closing over dilated and luminous pupils. She was begging for contact, even though she had been saturated with it in the course of the evening. Saturated with touching of every kind, but of course never reaching fulfillment, so she could not stop, could not help needing more. Needing him. He had touched her with his hands very little in the course of the day. He had restrained her, whipped her, used her ass and her mouth, but he had let others caress her. He enjoyed watching this, seeing her from a distance, writhing under their hands and mouths, unfulfilled. Their hands were an extension of his. The key to her fulfillment was literally in his pocket.

Her pliant, trembling flesh as she settled into the straw, hands fastened behind her, her helplessness, moved him that night more than ever before. He stroked her breasts, her hips and legs, her soft skin where the corset left its mark, soothing her down, letting her kiss his hand. He held her face in his hand for a moment, and saw her eyes shine with gratitude before he closed the lid.

Scenes from the party re-enacted themselves in his mind. Therin and Miseko with Vizay pressed between them. That

was something to see. And that cake... what an amazing, perverted triumph...!

He had felt no jealousy when his slave was in Therin's hands or anyone else's. He owned her now; every spark of her being, and the fact that he could give her away was the sign that this was true. The sense of relaxation, only partly fatigue, began to seep through him.

The houseport door opened for him, and cocooned his landing. Garid sat for a moment staring at nothing. Then he got out and lifted the cargo hatch. Her eyes opened when he unlatched the crate. Lifting her easily over his shoulder he checked on the house sensors, powered everything down for the night, and carried her up to his bedroom. He left her kneeling on the floor as he undressed, and then he walked her into the bathroom, took off her mitts and started the shower. The sight of her exposed hands, so tiny and helpless, stirred him. He fastened the hands above her head and began washing off the party – the body fluids of a dozen semi-strangers. She moaned at the back of her throat as he stroked her. He washed the others off himself as well, aware of her trembling fascination at the sight of the water cascading down his body, over his cock, semi-erect and reddened. He removed the plug from her ass, and she cast her eyes down and flushed. 'Bad jeedy,' he murmured, and she hung her head, humiliated by the plug as always. He used the strategically placed openings to wash her beneath the belt, and then he dried himself and her and loosened her hands from the ceiling hook, leaving them locked in front of her. She submitted, utterly pliant and placid. Only the occasional heaving breath, the almost soundless whimper, conveyed her deep arousal. But he didn't need to see it; he knew.

At last he laid her on his bed, and stood for a while looking down at her. Her fair skin looked pearly in the dim light. The transparent belt glistened a little against her hips. One arm partly hid her face, and he took her bound wrists and fastened them with a short strap to the headboard, out of the way. Then he lay down beside her and took her in his arms.

He stroked the petit body all over, gently, then harder, giving her the touch she craved. She kissed his chest and shoulders with passionate gratitude, ready with her tongue to give him any pleasure he wanted. He laid her back and kissed her, long and searching, and then began licking her neck and sucking her breasts. They were still pink, and the nipples were still sore and sensitive from the clamps and weights that had adorned them earlier. He used his teeth and tongue and pinching fingers on them and on their rings, making her gasp and mew. She began to writhe helplessly in his grasp, her mouth and legs open. He felt the concentrated heat of his own arousal, rising by increments at each touch, at every breath that held her scent.

He turned her over and pulled her knees under her. He caressed the many welts, making her wince and clench, but she kept her position, offering herself for more punishment if he chose. Instead he licked the marks, making her shudder. Then he turned her over again. She was shaking all over, her experiences of the day re-ignited, consuming her. But the trembling and the heaving of her chest were her only movements. Her flushed face was turned against one of her arms.

He turned her face to him, and put his thumb to her lips. Obediently she opened her mouth. With both thumbs he pushed back the corners of her mouth, and pressed down on her tongue. She looked into his eyes over this temporary gag. They understood each other. He replaced his thumbs with his mouth and tongue, feeling the vibrations of her involuntary, almost soundless moaning.

Then he reached for the key he had placed by his bed, and unlocked her belt. As he drew it away the dildo slid wetly from her cunt, and she cried out in a descending scale, ending with a pained 'ah!' as it left her. Her knees were up and wide, and he carefully examined the soft petals of her naked cunt. The lips curved outward, so swollen and engorged that they did not meet, but revealed the dusky color within. He could feel her heat without touching her. He lowered his head and tasted her gently. She gasped and almost screamed. At the next touch of his lips she did scream, and then as he ran his tongue

over the central ridge of flesh she went rigid, her body wracked with pleasure so extreme it was agony. He held her down and sucked on her inner flesh, making the current surge through her, making her howl and shriek and convulse, as jolt after jolt hit her. Finally he pulled back and looked at her. Her back was still arched, her mouth wide and gasping, her limbs shuddering. He knew she wasn't done.

He entered her in one stroke, his mouth covering hers and muffling her cries. So sweet and hot inside her. She began another series of frenzied climaxes. With no need for caution he slammed into her again and again, then raised himself up and slid his knees forward and under her. He released her hands from their strap and gathered her up. Her bound wrists went behind his neck, her body still jerking as the lightning dazzled and wracked her. His arms went around her and squeezed, and he thrust and thrust; within him a glowing wire coiled, tensed, gained heat, was almost at trigger point. Finally the radiant thing that was his body unleashed itself, erupting white-hot and molten inside her.

He was still breathing heavily and holding her against him as his muscles began to relax, and he sagged onto the bed with her in his arms. She was making small sounds into his chest, and then her chest heaved and she burst into tears. He moved down to face her and began kissing away the tears, and when she buried her face in his shoulder he rocked her.

He had never loved her so much.

At last the storm was over and she was calm, peaceful, half asleep. He reached out and fastened her wrists to the headboard again. She looked at him, incredulous, her eyes shining. He gave her a slow smile. Then he pulled the blanket up, wrapped himself around her and closed his eyes. He stroked her a little, gently, slowly, luxuriously, liking her in his bed. She could sleep under the stairs just for punishment from now on.

Tangled together as they lay, Garid could feel her soft wetness against his leg. He shifted, and sensed the warm lips of her cunt parting and closing slightly, like a mollusk in the

tide. He was sleepy and tempted to leave her till morning, but he knew what was necessary.

He roused himself, leaned over the side of the bed and picked up the belt from the floor. He looked at her thighs, gesturing toward them with a minimal movement of his head that she obeyed instantly, lifting her knees and parting them. Her face, her body showed not a flicker of regret or resistance. He slid the belt under and around her, at the last moment taking the dildo out for the night, locking her up tightly. For good measure he found another strap and fastened her ankles to the foot of the bed. Then he curled around her once more, the cool material of the belt warming between them. He could hear her joyful, inarticulate sounds as she snuggled against him.

And they slept.

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