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# CHAINS OF DECEIT



ERNEST GREENE

HIT-XXX Chains Of Deceit

By

Ernest Greene

# Chapter One

From the parapet where he stood, Alex could see from horizon to horizon, from the narrow strip of winding, black tarmac that snaked up through the sere, steep walls of the canyon to the front gate of the old Spanish fort. He could look past the arches and domes of the new wing to the brilliant blue of the ocean out back. It wasn't by chance that king's men had raised the massive walls of this redoubt at this particular spot. Built at the highest point of the rocky, coastal ridge upon which it sat, it commanded both the surrounding landscape and the ocean simultaneously.

Alex, who still thought like the soldier he was meant to have been from time to time, had often mused upon how useful this strategic location must have proved to the fort's various defenders over the centuries, who had at various times faced attack from either direction; occasionally from both.

All that had been long past by the time Alex and his friend and partner Stephanie had acquired the deed from the destitute heirs of the local grandees whose vast lands it had once protected. With the substantial (though not inexhaustible) resources of Stephanie's late husband Jack's estate, the entire structure had been gutted and refitted with all the latest refinements appropriate to its new, specialized function. The new wing, containing the luxurious suites for the guests, the senior staff quarters and the more lavish of the common spaces, had been painstakingly constructed to the most exacting of specifications the following year.

Virtually from the day they had opened for business, Alex and Stephanie's establishment had been booked solid. It was the kind of glittering success that attracted the desires, envies and ambitions of others. The invaders still came, both by land and by sea, but nowadays they made reservations. That was certainly an improvement, but as far as Alex was concerned, the basic tactical picture remained unchanged. Anything worth having in the world would always require protecting.

“Really, Alex, what harm can it do? She’s only going to be here for a few weeks.”

Stephanie’s voice was calm and soothing as always. She looked particularly vibrant, her tan skin nicely set off by the absolute whiteness of her simple, closely-tailored linen suit, her white-blond hair falling casually about her shoulders. Her skirt and jacket were cut to take full advantage of her Junoesque physique without vulgar display. The eye patch, made of the same material as the suit, lent a touch of mystery to the strong angles of Stephanie’s face that Alex always found charming, though it was a sad reminder of the plane crash that had made Stephanie a young widow. She leaned casually against the base of a once-mighty iron cannon, its barrel now purple with the rust of generations.

“That’s precisely the question I don’t care to have answered. I don’t like the idea of putting someone directly on staff who hasn’t been trained here, especially someone who happens to work for one of our competitors.”

“I thought Racine was your friend.”

“She is my friend. I know her well enough to know that she always has at least two reasons for everything she does. So far, I’ve only heard one.”

Stephanie shrugged.

“What can I do? I owe Racine a favor for straightening things out with the Swiss.

Anyway, she says this girl Liza ...”

“Lola.”

“Whatever her name is, Racine thinks she’s promising. She just wants us to polish off a few of the rough edges.”

Stephanie reached over and put her cool, dry hand to Alex’s face.

“And you’re so good at that, aren’t you, dear?” “Your confidence in me is truly inspiring. I hope it’s justified in this case.”

Both turned to look over the wall to the land side at the approaching sound of an automobile engine. The black Range Rover with the smoked windows was just coming into view at the bottom of the series of steep switch backs approaching the fort.

“I suppose I better get down there and greet this mystery woman,” Alex said with a sigh of resignation. Stephanie leaned forward to give him a peck on the cheek.

“I’m sure you’ll get along splendidly.”

Alex was waiting at the bottom of the stone steps leading from the parapet when the Rover pulled in through the massive, iron-bound gates, which now swung on electronically damped hinges instead of creaking iron gears. The driver, one of the house slave girls dressed in form-fitting leather livery to which her locking collar was a subtle accent, got out first, going around the back to remove a couple of travel-seasoned leather valises from the luggage compartment. Alex opened the passenger side door and extended a hand to the newly-arrived Mistress Lola, late of his friend Racine’s luxe operation in Berlin. The hand that took his was gloved to the elbow. She climbed out into the blazing afternoon sun and stretched like a big cat.

Lola was attractive, in a hard way. Lean and muscular, with blue-black hair worn in a Louise Brooks bob and a dramatic face made more so with theatrically made-up eyes and lips, she looked good in her tight leathers and high boots. But underneath all the trappings, Alex sensed weakness concealed with cruelty, a bad combination in a dominant. He could see it in the calculated arrogance with which she looked him up and down. This one had no choice but to challenge all comers, lest someone challenge her.

“You must be Alex,” she said, flashing a barracuda smile, “Racine has told me so much about you.”

“Then you have me at a disadvantage. If you’d care to go to your room and unpack ...”

“Actually, I’m rather anxious to have a look around, if you wouldn’t mind.”

Alex turned to the slave girl driver.

“Clair, take Mistress Lola’s bags down to the staff section. I believe there’s a suite open on level two.”

Clair, a pretty black-Irish girl with a pleasant, ingenuous face, couldn’t quite suppress a look of surprise at Alex’s order. Visiting mistresses were customarily housed with the guests. Something was up, but it wasn’t her business. She picked up the valises and started across the courtyard, hefting them easily. Like all the others here, she was strong and fit. The weak did not last long in this place of rigorous pleasures.

Nor did the foolish, as Lola quickly saw when Alex ushered her across the checkerboard flagging to the center of the yard, where a great marble obelisk studded around the base with heavy, iron ring bolts cast a shadow like the arc of a sundial. A girl of about twenty, naked but for her locked-on collar and high-heels, was shackled to one of the ring bolts with her arms over her head. Slender and petite, chestnut hair matted with sweat, her fair skin bore the traces of a recent whipping. From the nasty, welts laid across her firm little breasts and buttocks, Lola surmised that a dressage whip had been employed. A large sign reading “INDOLENT” had been hung on the obelisk above her head. Her face was streaked with dried tears and little trails of saliva ran down from the corners of her mouth, which was stretched wide with a fat, latex ball gag. She tried to avert her eyes as they approached, but Lola took the girl’s face in a vise-like grip and made her look up at them.

“Well,” Lola said briskly, “I’m glad to see things around here aren’t as lax as I’d been led to expect. How long will you keep her like this?”

“Just an hour or two.”

Lola looked scandalized.

“An hour or two? I always make my girls stand through an entire shift after receiving punishment.” “I’m out to make a point, not an example.”

Lola cocked an eyebrow at Alex. Glancing down, she saw a bucket of water with a long-handled ladle near her feet. Her face split in a nasty smile. She turned back to the captive girl.

“Poor darling. I’ll bet you’re terribly thirsty, standing out here in the hot sun.”

The naked girl tried her best to nod in the affirmative, which was difficult with Lola still holding her chin. With her free hand, Lola dipped out a ladle full of water and held it up in front of the slave’s face.

“Bet you’d do anything for me if I pulled the gag out and let you drink this.”

Sensing a trap, the girl’s eyes darted desperately over to Alex, where they found no clue. He watched impassively as Lola slowly, meanly poured the water over the sweating girl’s face, letting it run down over her dry lips stretched around the rubber packing. She whimpered miserably at the sound of the ladle splashing back down in the bucket, the wasted water streaming over her breasts.

Lola laughed meanly and strolled on through the courtyard, not looking back to see if Alex was following. So much for first impressions. As they entered the cool shade of the main portico, Alex took the staff mistress attending the door aside for a moment.

“Suzy needs a drink,” he said under his breath, “see that she gets it.”

The staff mistress slipped out to attend to the girl in the courtyard while Alex showed Lola inside. It would be a cursory tour, he explained, just to familiarize Lola with the basic layout of the place. Later, each of the

department heads would give her a more thorough briefing on their particular operations.

Alex always considered it appropriate for incoming staff members to see the operation from the beginning just as incoming slaves saw it. Skipping the grand stairway that led up from the marble foyer to the ballroom and down to the dungeons, he escorted Lola to the service lift, taking them down to the lowest of the subterranean levels with the punch of a button.

The induction area was a part of the well-equipped medical section, a dazzlingly pristine realm of gleaming white tile and stainless steel presided over by the staff's chief physician Carla, a handsome woman of early middle-age, her dark hair slightly streaked with gray at the temples. Like her assistants, who were part of the slave contingent, she wore tight, white latex from head to foot, adding to the somewhat futuristic air of the facility.

When Alex and Lola entered, Carla was in the middle of doing an initial work-up on a new admission, a tall, stunning, aristocratic beauty whose high, platformed training collar already bore a metal tag with the name "Lindsay" engraved on it. Carla had her completely stripped and strapped down to an examining table, feet up in high, steel stirrups that spread her open wide.

Lindsay panted heavily, eyes squeezed shut, pale nipples hard as buttons, while Carla probed between her legs with a slim, vibrating electric wand. After making the usual introductions, Alex asked Carla to explain what she was doing.

'Testing her inter-orgasmic refractory time. Standard for all the new girls. I've gotten six out of her in eleven minutes so far. Not a bad start.'

Lola looked puzzled.

"Seems sort frivolous," she observed. "I mean, who cares if slaves have orgasms?"

Carla looked up from her labors to give Lola a skeptical once over.

“Intermittent reinforcement with a mixture of pleasure and pain is the most effective method of conditioning. I thought everyone knew that.”

“We use a different method where I come from,” Lola said with a slight edge of disdain in her voice.

“Just don’t send me any extra business,” Carla warned, “Alex gets upset when anybody damages the merchandise.”

Lola promised unconvincingly to be careful. Alex led her down a short hallway from the examination room to the isolation chamber, where newcomers spent their first few days. It was a dimly-lit cubicle mostly taken up by a horizontal X-frame to which a naked, hooded female figure, and a rather voluptuous one at that, had been rigidly strapped from ankle to forehead. Tubes and wires trailed down from the openings in the hood as well as from the openings in the girl herself. Alex described the way in which the system automatically monitored and regulated every bodily function.

“Right from the beginning, they learn two things, that we control their bodies absolutely, and that we can be trusted to do so dependably,” Alex said with evident satisfaction. Lola casually took the girl’s erect nipple between her gloved fingers and gave it a hard pinch. A gurgling moan arose from inside the hood.

“Everything seems to be in working order,” she said. Then, with equal casualness, Lola wrapped her fingers around the air line into the hood’s mouth opening and pinched it shut. Instantly, the naked body went stiff in its bonds, moans giving way to sucking gasps. Without hesitation, Alex took hold of Lola’s wrist and twisted it none-too-gently away from the air hose.

“We don’t allow that kind of thing here,” he said firmly. Their eyes locked for a beat.

“Sorry, won’t happen again,” Lola offered blandly.

Then they were back on tour, passing through the slave's dining hall, with its long tables and benches, complete with ring bolts for the wrist and ankle cuffs worn, like the collars, by all slaves at all times. The communal dressing room, with its rows of lighted mirrors and stockpiles of luxurious toiletries, would have been the envy of any deluxe spa or salon. From there it was on to the recreational areas, each equipped for whatever sort of session the well-fed, well-groomed guests whose money paid the bills might desire.

The only time Lola seemed genuinely impressed was when Alex showed her, briefly, through the disciplinary block, with its round tier of holding cells and its forbidding central atrium where corrections were administered. Lola's dark eyes fairly lit up at the assortment of racks, hoists, posts, frames, horses and other devices provided for the infinite variety of punishments awaiting those who overstepped the rules. At that moment, the half-dozen or so girls in residence were confined to their cells and chained to their bunks, where they languished in their short, skimpy prison dresses.

"I could really feel at home in a place like this," Lola said.

"I'm sure we can find an extra cell someplace," a cheerful feminine voice said over her shoulder. She turned to come face-to-face, or thereabouts, with Astrid, the tall, Nordic ice-goddess who ruled in this underworld. In her crisp uniform and blond braids, she was certainly the most attractive warden Lola had ever met (she'd met a few, actually), and one of the more impressive. Seeing the angry look on Lola's face, Astrid smiled.

"Just joking. I hear you're going to be joining us for a while." Lola cooled herself right down.

"Who knows? Maybe I'll be here longer than expected. Looks like you could use another hand."

Astrid and Alex exchanged looks. Astrid had known Alex long enough to read right through his cultivated mask of inscrutability. She could see he wasn't happy with the situation.

“Excellent,” Astrid said brightly, “I won’t hesitate to call on your services if I get in trouble.” It was all Alex could do to keep from laughing out loud at that idea.

The initial tour at last completed, Alex conducted Lola to her quarters, which were in the new wing on the ocean side. The sun had already begun its descent toward the water, its light slanting in through the high windows of the corridor where the staff members in the various uniforms of their specialties came and went with relaxed elan. Well-paid, well-trained and well-attended, they were an elite unit in which morale problems were rare and, where Alex could help it, brief.

Opening the door to Lola’s room, Alex startled one of the serving maids, who was just turning down the covers on the bed where Lola’s bags had been laid. Dressed only in a few racy, lacy scraps, a sheer apron and sky-scraper heels, she dropped instantly to a kneeling position when they entered, rattling her chains.

Like all the serving maids, who were the most junior class of slaves, she wore full shackles, chained at collar, wrists and ankles with just enough slack to allow her to perform her duties, at all times. This one was called Pamela, a slender blond girl who Alex always thought looked disturbingly young, though he knew her real age. Her pale blue eyes regarded them with obvious apprehension. Pamela had a knack for getting herself in trouble, and she never knew when it was going to manifest itself.

“So,” Lola said merrily, looking down at the kneeling Pamela, “I guess this must be my personal slave.”

“No, Mistress,” Pamela began in a high, tremulous voice. “I’m only doing household duty ...”

She never got to finish her reply. Lola abruptly grabbed her by the chain dangling from her collar and dragged her to her feet. Spinning her around, she slammed Pamela up against the nearest wall and backhanded her across the face.

“Never speak to me without asking permission first!” Lola barked. She pulled up on the chain, forcing Pamela to stand, trembling, on tip-toe by lifting her collar.

“I believe what she meant to point out is the fact that she is already assigned to one of the senior slaves,” Alex interjected pointedly. “So you might as well put her down.”

After a deliberate pause, Lola let go of the chain, dropping Pamela to the floor in a clanking heap. The little blond quickly scrambled up onto her knees. Alex dismissed her, reminding her to close the door behind her. She gratefully fled, kicking the door shut after her with a thunk. Lola turned slowly to face Alex.

“I don’t understand. Slaves with their own slaves?”

“It’s like an apprenticeship. The new ones learn from the experienced ones.”

“My, my, you certainly do make it easy for them, don’t you?”

Lola’s tone was just short of open sarcasm. Enough was enough. Alex took a short step toward her, bringing his massive presence to bear ever so lightly, just enough to make her want to back away. His voice was quiet and controlled, but his gaze was cold and steady.

“Everyone here, slave, staff or guest, is here by contract. We have a waiting list in all three categories. The terms of your contract are very specific. You are here to learn.

You will learn, or you will fail. I know Racine very well. She is impatient with failure.

Staff mess is at eight. Be on time.”

He turned on his heel and left. Lola felt an involuntary shiver travel up her spine. It was as if he had lowered the temperature of the room merely by

passing through it.

Racine hadn't exaggerated. He was not to be underestimated, but then, neither was Lola.

A short time later, as everyone else paused to catch a breath before the evening's entertainment began, Alex could be found on the other side of the new wing, in the luxurious precincts reserved for the senior slaves. It was there, amid the silken splendor of the boudoir of the slave called Jessica, that he took his own secret, illicit pleasure.

Even in a world of extravagant beauty, Jessica was hard to miss. The piles of thick auburn hair had something to do with it. So did the sultry, sensual, slightly disturbing face. Then there was all that milky white skin wrapped around those almost-too-generous curves.

She was truly a prize, and he had taken her for his own, as he was busily reminding her at that moment. Just to make the point more emphatically, he had chained her on her knees on the bed with her wrists pulled back under her full breasts and locked to the center of the bar holding her ankles apart. Jessica supported her weight on her shoulders, face buried in the pillows, hair splayed wildly on the satin sheets. As he rode her hard from behind, he lashed her smartly across her upturned rump with the short, well-worn flogger he always wore on his belt, raising a hot, pink flush on her skin that would be gone in an hour.

Pamela knelt at her post next to them, her little hand insinuating itself in between her lady's thighs from underneath, playing with Jessica's clit just as she had been taught.

The sound of Jessica's heavy breathing, the sight of her long, sinuous back writhing with each in stroke and smack of the whip, excited Pamela uncontrollably, even though she feared the consequences of what they were doing.

Alex was permitted to use Jessica, just like any other slave.

But Pamela knew that he loved her, and that was forbidden. Even if it brought them to disaster, she could hardly blame him. She loved Jessica too.

## Chapter Two

It was a little after ten when Alex and Lola made their entrance into the circular ballroom, and the festivities had already begun. On various platforms around the room (all thoughtfully provided with whipping posts, suspension hoists and pallets ringed with eyebolts), guests and staff were thoroughly engaged.

On one platform, two male guests, both regulars, made simultaneous use of one of the house girls, instantly identifiable, of course, by the collar locked around her neck.

On another, a girl swung upside down from a hoist, arms shackled up at her waist, giving head to one of the mistresses, who reclined on the pallet, indolently flicking the hanging slave girl with a dressage whip from time to time.

Everywhere, the cracking of whips and cries of pleasure and pain rose above the intense murmur of conversation as the air grew heavy with the scent of sex, sweat, leather and exotic perfumes.

As always, Alex felt a momentary rush of intoxication from it all, but he had learned to control it. He had responsibilities here, some pleasant, some not so pleasant.

Take Lola for instance. She looked good in her tight leathers and high boots, but Alex found little else to like about her so far. He had been against hiring Lola, but Stephanie had made the decision. Making decisions was Stephanie's job. Making them work somehow was Alex's job. Anyway, mistresses came and went, but Alex stayed, so he could put up with Lola's arrogance for as long as he would have to.

"Well, I'm sure we'll find something to play with in here," she said, strolling into the ballroom as if she owned it. Alex followed along, wading

through the crowd of male and female guests, collared slaves already in service, maids, and other staff members in dress uniforms.

“So I am correct in understanding that I can have any of the slaves for my own use during off hours?,” Lola asked, scanning the row of as-yet-unclaimed slaves perched on their stools along the mirrored bar. On the stools that had already been vacated could be seen the double-dildo arrangement upon which the girls sat impaled between engagements.

“So long as she hasn’t been reserved by one of the guests. We do have to make a living here. And don’t get attached. If anything romantic develops between a staff member and a house slave, both their contracts are terminated immediately.”

“Don’t worry, I’m not the type that gets involved.”

Lola walked slowly along the bar, smacking her gloved hand with the heavy, silver-handled riding crop she carried. It was a nasty thing, with a thick spine that went all the way up into the flap, hard and unyielding.

Any of the girls might have been tempted to flinch at the sound of it behind their backs, but none of them did. They were Alex’s girls. He had trained them. They sat on their stools, heads slightly bowed, shoulders back, tits out, knees parted, feet touching the railings so as to provide a nice view in the bar’s mirrored front. He liked for the bases of the impaling plugs to be visible, front and rear. Though all were dressed slightly differently, in provocative little bits of costume that covered only enough to incite curiosity, each wore an identical locking leather collar with a nameplate on the right side.

Alex walked beside her as Lola checked out the nameplates. The girls were all attractive. They had to be to work there. They were all exceedingly well-schooled in the arts of giving pleasure, and thoroughly conditioned to the necessity of enduring some pain in the process. Any one of them would have provided plenty of amusement for a restless mistress, but somehow Alex knew who Lola would choose.

He could hardly blame her. Lots of people chose Jessica.

Jessica looked particularly striking that night. She wore a short, tight, black silk dress, cut low with big, convenient buttons down the front. The hem was short and scooped upward in the front, so it fell open across her thighs, which were bare above the tops of her black stockings. The look was smartly accented by a little, round black hat with a net veil just covering the eyes, long gloves and black patent pumps with excruciatingly high heels. Snazzy chrome shackles with fairly generous lengths of chain between them linked her wrists and ankles.

When Alex and Lola approached, Jessica was just getting her lips touched up -

bright red to make them even fuller - by her maid, the slender, blond Pamela. Lola checked out the name tag on the collar.

“Getting some action tonight, Jessica?”

“Nothing unusual, ma’am.”

Pamela withdrew as quickly as possible. Jessica calmly picked up her drink from the bar and took a sip, rattling her shackles musically. Lola took it from her hand and put it down.

She took Jessica’s face and turned it so their eyes met. Alex could feel Jessica’s penetrating gaze burning through the veil.

“One wonders what a girl in your position would consider unusual.”

“You could always find out for yourself, ma’am.”

Alex winced. Lola’s superior smirk twisted into an ugly sneer of rage as she summarily smacked Jessica across the cheek, so hard it left a hand print.

Conversations stopped in the immediate vicinity, people stopping to stare.

“Insolent little bitch!”

She grabbed Jessica by the hair and pulled her head back.

“I don’t think you’re quite so cool as you pretend,” Lola hissed between her teeth.

Her hand shot down between Jessica’s legs. Jessica stiffened, but knew she could do nothing to protect herself. She put her hands down on the bar and planted her feet firmly on the railing, bracing herself from the invading fingers. Lola worked expertly away down there, knowing that Jessica couldn’t move until ordered. Jessica trembled. A hot flush rose on her peaches-and-cream bosom. Her breathing grew deep and heavy. But she never moved a muscle, eyes remaining fixed on the mirror over the bar.

“Just as I expected. Quite wet. Feel for yourself.”

Without appearing to hesitate, Alex dropped his hand between Jessica’s thighs also.

She was quite bare down there, having been shaved smooth but for a tiny patch of close-cropped red curls meant to prove the authenticity of her hair color. Stephanie had an eye for the commercial value of such things. Jessica was indeed quite wet, her lips spread open around the stiff dildo upon which she was firmly planted.

“Actually, ma’am, I was recently lubricated.”

Lola’s eyes narrowed.

“If this is an example of the effectiveness of your training methods, I’m not terribly impressed.”

“I train them to be honest. I find it’s more practical that way.”

“Personally, I think respect comes first. Perhaps you’d like to see how I get it.”

Alex already had a pretty good idea, but figured he might as well know for himself.

Lola ordered Jessica to get up. Jessica lifted herself coolly off the glistening, black rubber plugs that kept her in a state of perpetual openness, smoothed her skirt down the short distance it could go, and then calmly folded her arms up in the small of her back. Lola's hand flew to the nape of her neck, pushing her down so her chest fell hard against the bar.

“Where's that maid?” Lola barked.

Pamela appeared instantly, yes ma'aming all over the place. Lola ordered her to hold up the back of Jessica's skirt. By now, a crowd was starting to gather.

Alex watched, a model of impassivity, while Pamela hoisted the skirt, exposing Jessica's perfectly round bottom, so nicely framed by her black garter straps. Jessica still had a few, fading marks from previous whippings, but her flesh was mostly white and waiting. The wait was brief.

“I've heard you talk, bitch. Now I want to hear you scream.”

Alex and Pamela looked at each other. This could be serious. It was a matter of pride with Jessica that she did not scream, period.

Lola went right to work with the heavy crop. Alex had to admit, she knew what she was doing in that department. The strokes were strong, accurate and evenly placed.

The crop fell again and again, inscribing its distinctive triangular mark on Jessica's pale skin in nicely arranged half circles around each cheek. Every blow sent a fearful shudder through Jessica's whole body, but not a sound escaped her lips.

Lola was really working up a sweat. Her jacket open to expose her own nicely tanned flesh, she lashed away, getting lots of attention from the

watching crowd, but not a peep out of Jessica. Lola stepped back, sweeping her hair off her sweaty brow.

“Okay, tough girl. Let’s try a change of tactics. Turn around!” Jessica wobbled up to a standing position, a challenge in itself in her fetish pumps.

“Expose your breasts.”

Jessica undid her top three buttons and pulled the dress open, baring her round, rosy tits. The single, thick gold ring through the nipple of the right one flashed briefly in the muted light. Lola stroked Jessica’s breasts, played with the ring.

“Nice. All very nice.”

Without warning, she slashed down with the crop, blazing a bright crimson stripe across Jessica’s right breast, just above the ring. A strangled sob died in Jessica’s throat as a single tear “squeezed out of the corner of one eye. The crop struck again, lower, sweeping up between Jessica’s legs in a slashing arc to splat wetly against her clit. This time it doubled Jessica up, but only briefly. She came back into the attention position, arms firmly behind her, the chain between her wrist cuffs circling closely around her belly. Alex couldn’t take it anymore.

“Really,” he said with practiced calm, “you’ll be here all night trying to get a scream out of her that way.”

“I suppose you can do better,” Lola said icily.

“I’ll make you a bet. If I can’t get a good yelp out of her, you can have her in your quarters for the rest of the night. If I can, she goes upstairs with me.”

Everyone was watching as Lola weighed the wager. She didn’t want to look as if she was afraid of the competition.

“Deal.”

Alex stepped up to Jessica, tilted her head back so their eyes met through the veil.

Hers were now desperate and pleading. “Alex,” she whispered, please don’t interfere.” “You know what to do.” “Yes, Sir.”

Resigned, she sank to her knees, planting them wide apart to expose as much thigh as possible. “Borrow your whip?”

Lola handed over the crop. Alex stepped in behind Jessica, sweeping aside the open front of her skirt with the end of the crop. With chilling accuracy, he brought it down across her inner thighs, just above the black lace. Jessica squirmed, but remained silent. Slowly, Alex laddered his way up, working the crop relentlessly into ever more delicate territories, laying neatly spaced stripes one after another. He could feel her imploring eyes, but Alex was who he was because he could carry out a plan once undertaken.

Sure enough, his final stroke, straight up the center, did the job. Jessica threw back her head and let out a wail that silenced the whole room. It hung in the air like smoke, until Jessica broke the silence, throwing herself around Alex’s riding booted leg in a paroxysm of sobbing. He reached down and stroked her luxuriant red hair, then handed the whip back to Lola.

“Well, I guess you’ve proved your point,” she said sourly. “I suppose it is easier to break them once you know them better. You win, this time.”

“We’ll be on our way, then. I’m sure you can entertain yourself for the rest of the evening.”

Without waiting for a reply, Alex turned to Pamela.

“Take Jessica to my quarters and prepare her. I’ll be right up.”

In a few moments, Jessica was waiting in Alex’s private chambers. Her dress had been removed, leaving only the gloves, hat, stockings and shoes. Her collar had been chained to a ring bolt in the floor next to Alex’s bed. The chain was short, keeping her head low as she waited on all fours, hands

stretched prayerfully in front of her, rump high in the air, heels up exactly six inches off the floor. It was the approved, somewhat impersonal posture in which slaves offered themselves to members of the staff.

As Alex entered, Pamela was putting a few finishing touches on the scene, lighting candles, laying out Alex's robe. She looked undeniably cute in her little scraps of a uniform. Alex wondered what kind of slave she would make, if she lasted through the training period. She looked over at him.

"One of these days, you guys are going to get caught and we'll all be out of here on her buns."

"Not if you care as much about Jessica as I do. Get in position. I may want you for something."

Pamela knelt down next to Jessica and waited as Alex caressed his slave-lover. Her body warmed instantly to his touch, a low moan escaping her full lips. He rolled the metal of her nipple ring back and forth under her skin, making her shudder involuntarily. His fingers found the neat half-circles of raised welts surrounding her bottom.

"You're a very stubborn girl, Jessica. It could get us in trouble."

"You didn't have to intervene for me, Alex. I could have taken it." "Yes. But I couldn't."

He turned her face up toward his for a long kiss. Then, he got down behind her and slid himself in, slowly but firmly, until he was buried inside her hot, wet interior to the wall of her womb. Almost instantaneously, he felt her powerful internal contractions begin.

As always, they started slowly, building relentlessly. At one point, Alex enlisted the aid of Pamela's hands to make sure Jessica's nipples and clit got all the attention they deserved. Pamela's eyes were huge, watching their ferocious passion play itself out before her. She begged for a hand free for herself and got it.

With a kind of magical, synchronous rhythm, they all managed to work each other and themselves up to the same point at the same time. When it happened, it broke like a storm on the sea, the waves lashing over all of them until they fell together in an exhausted, sweating heap.

Alex held Jessica in his arms.

“It can’t go on forever,” Jessica said when she finally got her breath back. “And you have so much more to lose. This is your home.”

“Whatever it costs, it’s worth it.” Pamela looked at her watch.

“Oh my god! I’ve got to get back to the dormitory. They’ll skin me alive.”

“No they won’t,” Alex promised. “You’re skin’s much too valuable.”

She dashed out of the room, leaving the illicit lovers in a tender embrace.

Outside the door, in the darkened hallway, Pamela darted right into the arms of the waiting Lola, who silenced her with a hand over the mouth.

“Well, well, what have we here? A little maid out after curfew. I wonder what she’s been doing. Perhaps we should take her down to the interrogation section and find out.”

Now it would be Pamela’s turn. Could she show the kind of strength she so admired in Jessica? She could only whimper in fear as Lola dragged her down the hallway.

## Chapter Three

Lola already had Pamela's cuffs locked behind her back and a hard, black latex ball gag stuck in her mouth by the time she got the hapless maid down to the interrogation section.

"Is cell number three available?" Lola asked as if she were inquiring about a bus schedule.

Bridget, who was in charge of the watch desk on the night shift, looked up from the romance novel she was reading. Bridget was a tall, powerfully built woman with a strikingly exotic, Middle-European face. She wore her dark hair pulled straight back which, along with the snug-fitting uniform white blouse and black skirt she wore, gave her a slightly butch appearance. She regarded Lola and Pamela skeptically.

Pamela looked terrified, but she didn't dare make a sound, let alone attempt to squirm out of the iron grasp in which Lola held her upper arm.

"What do you need it for?" Bridget asked warily.

"I caught this lower housemaid out wandering the halls after curfew. I want to question her."

Bridget got up and came around to check the nameplate on Pamela's collar. A ring of keys rattled on the wide, black leather belt Bridget at Bridget's waist.

"If you want her to talk, how come she's gagged?"

"I got tired of listening to her whining and begging."

Bridget looked dubious.

"Why don't you just put her on report and let Stephanie and Alex deal with her in the morning?"

Lola's voice was cool, her dark eyes inscrutable.

"I just thought I'd save them the trouble. They've got better things to do than interrogating little fools like this."

Bridget weighed the situation while Pamela held her breath. Bridget shrugged.

"Go ahead and sign her in."

Pamela's heart sank. Lola scribbled on the log book page. Bridget unlocked the barred door that led back into the block. Lola followed her in, dragging Pamela along.

Three sets of high heels clacked on the smooth, polished concrete as they made their way down the row of riveted metal doors with covered portholes in them.

Pamela dared a glance over at Lola's tough, attractive face, at the lean, muscular body in the tight, revealing black leathers, at the heavy riding crop that swung from the belt. She could expect know mercy at these slender, capable-looking hands with their perfectly-lacquered, bright red nails.

Pamela remembered this place. She had spent three excruciating days down here as part of her induction processing. They had "debriefed" her in shifts, dragging out of her every detail of her personal history, particularly the more intimate details of her sexual experiences and fantasies. The memories were not pleasant. It had been even worse, in a way, than the physical examination, which had merely invaded every orifice of her body. Here, they invaded her mind. In the six months since, she had been careful not to do anything that might bring her back to this terrible place, and now here she was again.

Bridget's keys rattled at the door to cell number three. It swung open and they stepped inside.

It was just the way Pamela remembered it - brightly illuminated, all tiled in white like a giant shower room, complete with floor drain. There was only one piece of furniture in the room, a great, ominous black steel chair festooned with straps and wires. The wires led to a control console mounted next to the chair. At the sight of it, Pamela had to fight the impulse to jab a stiletto heel into Lola's ankle and make a run for it, but she knew she wouldn't get far.

"I take it you're familiar with this equipment," Bridget said, checking out the console to make sure everything was working properly. The red lights popped on and the voltmeters bounced just like they were supposed to.

"Quite."

"Good. You can go ahead and get to work. But don't take all night with it. The party upstairs will start breaking up pretty soon and some of the guests like to use these cells for recreational sessions."

Bridget pivoted on her heel and rattled out, closing the heavy door with a clank behind her. Lola turned to Pamela, an evil smirk on her bright red lips.

"Well, looks like it's just the two of us now."

Pamela moaned behind the latex ball, which had begun to make her jaws ache. A little rivulet of saliva had started to leak from the corner of her mouth.

Lola pushed her down onto her knees with a firm hand on the shoulder. The tile floor felt hard and cold, intensifying Pamela's fearful shivering. Keeping her head obediently bowed, she watched out of the corner of her eye while Lola went calmly about her preparations, humming to herself.

First, Lola sorted out the cables: two sets of hot electrodes with round, black rubber patches, two sets of sensors with square patches. Then she got out the tape and conductance jell from the cabinet under the control console and loaded a fresh roll of graph paper into the chart recorder. She twiddled

the dials. The meters jumped. Lola seemed pleased. She looked over at the trembling Pamela.

“Get up.”

Pamela struggled awkwardly to her feet, trying to balance on her heels with her hands cuffed at her back. She managed not to fall over, barely. Lola came around behind her and unsnapped the small padlock holding together the close-fitting leather cuffs that were permanently locked around Pamela’s wrists. They matched the set on her ankles.

“Strip.”

It was an almost redundant command. Pamela’s costume consisted of nothing more than a filmy little black skirt, a starched white apron and a matching lace ruffle held by a comb in the dense pile of blond curls above her blue eyes, which were even bigger than usual at the moment. She removed these things methodically, carefully folding them up on the floor so as to avoid committing further infractions.

Lola watched her. She liked the way Pamela’s lean, girlish body moved, liked the tiny, cropped blond patch between her thighs. Yes, this was going to be most enjoyable.

Naked but for cuffs, collar and pumps, Pamela stood quivering under Lola’s gaze like a wet animal, her skin glistening with nervous sweat. Lola ran a casual hand down the front of Pamela’s body.

“Very pretty. But so pale. Are you afraid, darling?”

It was a rhetorical question. Pamela’s gag prevented her from answering. Lola’s hand found its way down between Pamela’s legs. She wanted to clench her thighs together, but knew better than to give in to the impulse. Lola’s practiced fingers immediately discovered one of the secrets Pamela was most anxious to hide.

“So fear makes you wet, does it? Just my kind of girl. Go and sit down.”

Pamela hardly hesitated for a heartbeat, but it was long enough to merit a lightning-swift whack across the rump from Lola's riding crop. "You heard Bridget! We haven't got all night" Pamela tottered over to the looming chair and perched on it, sliding herself carefully back against its cold, metallic surfaces.

Goose flesh rose all over her. Her pale, pink nipples hardened instantly.

Lola came over and positioned Pamela with great care, seeming to take more than the necessary precautions to make sure that Pamela's most vulnerable parts were centered over the wide slot in the middle of the seat. Lola methodically went about attaching Pamela's wrist and ankle cuffs to the chair's arms and legs and the girl's collar ring to the headrest. Buckled straps secured Pamela around the forehead, over the chest, under the tits, around the waist and across each thigh. All the buckles were nice and tight, so Pamela could hardly move a muscle.

"Just in case you've forgotten, let me explain how this apparatus works," Lola said, snapping on a pair of elbow-length black latex gloves from the cabinet under the console.

"First, I apply the conductance to the sensors," she said, she squeezing ample dollops of the blue gel onto the white rubber. "Then, I attach them here and here."

Lola pasted them down onto Pamela's flesh. One set was placed on the upper surfaces of her breasts and taped down, another slipped in under the armpits. Both the head strap and the chin support of Pamela's high training collar made it impossible for her to look down to see what was being done to her.

"The sensors measure heart rate and galvanic skin response," Lola explained. "The more you lie, the more you sweat."

Next came the black electrodes. Lola taped one down directly over each hard nipple, then two more onto the delicate, clean-shaven flesh on either side of Pamela's clit.

“The current passes through these, but I suppose you’ve already figured that out.

Let’s see now, am I forgetting something? Ah yes...”

Lola took a thick glob of the blue gel onto the fingertips of a gloved hand and reached down into the open slot underneath Pamela, who let out a stifled squeal as the cold conductance was rubbed up inside her, first in front, then in the rear. Lola lingered over this part of the job, being extra thorough. Pamela’s breath was already coming in short, ragged gasps as she tried desperately to will herself to relax. Lola’s cool, latex-clad fingers holding her open didn’t make it any easier.

“Much better. Now then ...”

The tap of a boot on a foot switch at the back of the chair produced a low, mechanical whirring from the depths of the apparatus. Pamela went rigid at the cold intrusion of the plugs into her well-greased depths, from which her bonds precluded any chance of escape. A tear dribbled down Pamela’s face. She knew she wouldn’t be able to hold up very long.

When the thick, metallic probes were both in place, Lola patted her on the cheek with a sticky glove. “Comfy? Good. Let’s have a little chat.” She undid the gag strap and popped the wet ball out of Pamela’s mouth. Pamela’s previously-stauched stream of protestations erupted instantly.

“Please don’t hurt me Mistress Lola! I wasn’t doing anything! Alex kept me late serving him with Jessica!”

Lola glanced over at the chart recorder. The scribbled line showed fear and guilt, but none of the unmistakable peaks of outright lying. “I figured as much.” Pamela couldn’t conceal her relief.

“See! I’m telling the truth,” she babbled. “Now you can let me go.”

“Actually, I couldn’t care less what you were doing out in that hallway.”

Pamela's look of relief vanished as Lola strolled around behind the control console.

She knew now what this was really all about. Lola took hold of the dials controlling the voltage to the electrodes and began turning them up ever so slowly.

“What really interests me is what you all talked about.”

Pamela could feel the first tinglings in all her most sensitive spots. She could hear her heart hammering in her ears.

‘Talk about? You know we're forbidden to talk when we're on duty.’

Lola gave the handles a swift twist. Pamela jerked against her straps, letting out a strangled cry.

“Don't recite the rule book to me, you dizzy bitch! What's going on between Jessica and Alex?”

“Nothing! I mean, I don't know ...”

One quick look at the chart told the tale.

“Now I know you're lying. They set me up to lose the bet so they could spend the night together, didn't they?”

Lola cranked the handles again. Pamela's whole body shuddered, then went rigid, arching out against her bonds so hard the leather creaked. A high, thin scream was torn from her lips. The pain and terror humiliatingly made her lose control of her bladder, a small stream of yellow liquid jetting out from between her labia, which were stretched wide around the base of the fat, electrified plug. A small, amber pool formed on the white tile under the chair, trickling lazily toward the floor drain as Pamela twitched and squirmed against the implacable restraints.

Lola cut the current abruptly. Pamela struggled for breath during what she knew would be a short respite. Tears rolled down out of her wet, blue eyes. Rivers of sweat poured off her onto the black leather straps. Her words came in short gasps.

“It’s not true! They’d never do a thing like that.”

Lola laughed. It wasn’t a pretty laugh. She lifted up the chart reeling off the drum and held it up for Pamela to see. It looked like a map of the Himalayas.

“Not a very good liar, are you?”

Lola’s hands went for the knobs again.

“No, wait, please!”

Lola paused. This was almost too easy. “I’m listening.” “So are we.”

Lola whirled around at the sound of an imperious feminine voice from behind her.

Stephanie stood in the doorway of the cell. She wore a flamboyant black evening gown that nicely accentuated her spectacular figure. Her striking, angular face was only made the more mysteriously beautiful by the black satin patch over one eye.

Alex stood at her side, looking somber in his evening clothes. His tone was all business.

“What’s going on here?”

Lola was momentarily shaken, but quickly recovered her composure.

“I was just interrogating this maid about what she was doing out of her quarters so late at night. I think she was about to tell me something interesting.”

“No doubt. In her situation I’m sure any of us could come up with something interesting to say,” Stephanie observed. “Let her go.”

Lola and Pamela looked equally astonished. “What do you mean?”

“I think it’s quite clear,” Alex said. Lola looked him in the eye. She started to say something, thought better of it. There would be another day. She set to work undoing the electrodes and straps. Pamela tried to hold as still as possible, afraid to even breathe.

“These tactics seem a little excessive, considering the nature of the alleged offense,”

Stephanie lectured. “Inexperienced staff mistresses such as yourself tend to be a bit overzealous about such things at first, so we’ll just forget all about this little incident, won’t we?”

“Yes, ma’am,” Lola muttered, working frantically at the buckles. As soon as she was free of the terrible chair, Pamela fell to her hands and knees and crawled, sobbing, over to Stephanie to kiss her patent leather shoes.

“That’s a good girl, Pamela. Take your things and go.”

“Thank you, Mistress,” she cried, running to gather up her clothes. As she dashed out, she chanced a quick look at Alex’s face. It betrayed no hint of emotion.

“I’d suggest you call it a night,” Alex said to Lola. He offered his arm to Stephanie.

They turned and departed. Lola lingered for a moment. When she was sure they were gone, she ripped off the polygraph chart, folded it small and tucked it away in the deep cleavage of her leather dress.

Jessica lay on top of the covers, naked but for her collar, her thick red hair splashed across the satin pillows. A soft ocean breeze blew in through the open window, bringing a slight stiffness to her coppery nipples. She

remembered Alex's hands and lips, making them even stiffer. Her own hand strayed to the thick gold ring through her right one, then on down the deep crease of her belly, over her little triangular patch of red curls and between her shaved lips. Would she ever get enough?

Her hand froze at a frantic knocking on the door. She jumped up, threw on her diaphanous, black robe and padded over to open it a crack. By the dim light of the hallway, she could see Pamela's tear-streaked face.

"What are you trying to do," Jessica demanded in a harsh whisper, "get us both thrown out?"

"Please, Jessica! You've got to let me in."

Jessica opened the door wide. Pamela fell into Jessica's arms, burying her face in Jessica's well-upholstered bosom. Jessica quickly kicked the door shut, holding the crying girl close. Pamela nuzzled under Jessica's robe, her wet eyelashes brushing against the gold nipple ring.

"What happened?"

"It was that new bitch, Lola. She took me down to interrogation." "What for?"

Pamela looked up at Jessica.

"She tried to make me tell her about you and Alex."

Jessica made her voice calm.

"Did you?"

Pamela looked away, half ashamed.

"Almost. If Alex and Stephanie hadn't come in ..."

Pamela broke down in renewed spasms of sobbing. Jessica held her, stroking her sweat-matted hair and damp, sticky, bare back.

“There, there, baby. It’s okay. No harm done. Come lie down with me.”

Pamela let herself to be led over to Jessica’s bed. Jessica set her down on the edge of it, bent down to take her shoes off, then swung her legs up so she could stretch out. Pamela lay still, continuing to cry quietly. Jessica let her robe slip to the floor before lying down next to her.

“Thank you for trying to protect us,” she said, kissing Pamela’s face gently. Her skin tasted salty.

“You know I’d do anything for you.”

“Yes, I know.” There was a note of sadness in Jessica’s voice. Only the very young made promises like that. Jessica found Pamela’s lips with her own. Pamela’s kiss was ravenous.

“I want you so bad,” she moaned when they came up for air. Jessica began slowly kissing her way down Pamela’s body. Pamela’s nipples were already erect by the time Jessica’s mouth reached them. At first, Jessica wondered what it was that made them taste faintly sweet and sugary. Where had she tasted it before? She remembered, appalled. Conductance gel. She looked up at Pamela.

“She really did work you over, didn’t she?”

Pamela managed a wan smile.

“Maybe it was worth it.”

“I’ll do my best to make it that way.”

Jessica got down to doing what she did best, giving pleasure. She gave careful attention to each of Pamela’s breasts, sucking and nibbling with the specialized knowledge that women have of other women. From there, she kissed her way downward over the convex curves of Pamela’s firm little stomach. The girl sighed, flopped out a lazy thigh to let Jessica in.

Jessica slid down between Pamela's open legs and settled herself in on her elbows, contemplating Pamela's sweetly symmetrical labia. She extended an exploring tongue. Again, that sweet, sugary flavor. It made Jessica shiver. She thought of the marks still on her own thighs from Alex's whipping earlier that evening. In their world, love carried a very high price.

These dark thoughts soon passed from her mind. Jessica gave herself fully to the pleasant task at hand. She felt Pamela's small hands in her hair, heard her faint, distant moans and gasps. Pamela's ordeal seemed only to have whetted her appetite. Jessica understood this too well. She worked her tongue around in a steady rhythm, seeking out the good spots.

It didn't take long. Pamela's back suddenly arched up. Her hands clutched at the sheets, her thighs clamping shut around Jessica's face. Pamela turned her face to the pillow to smother her cry.

A minute later, Pamela was sound asleep in Jessica's arms. They were both safe now, but for how long?

It was late, very late. Alex and Stephanie sat back in the redwood deck chairs on the sweeping, marble-flagged terrace outside Stephanie's lavish suite of apartments in the staff wing.

The moon was low and the sea still and black, dotted here and there with the red and green running lights of yachts anchored in the channel. A stray breeze briefly brightened the glowing orange ash at the end of Alex's cigar, fleetingly illuminating the hard angles of his face.

Stephanie swirled the cognac in her snifter and studied that face. After all these years, Alex remained fundamentally a mystery. She knew more of the facts of the case than any living person, what with her husband Jack, who had been Alex's only real friend, lying somewhere fathoms deep in that black ocean in the wreckage of a seaplane.

Stephanie knew, for instance, that Alex had been born in Paris, his mother a spoiled, high-strung banking heiress from the Philadelphia Mainline, his father the highest-ranking American officer in the French Foreign Legion.

The marriage hadn't lasted and Alex had been brought up mostly in the states, until his dad lured him back from a life of aimless pleasure seeking with an appointment to the military academy at St.

Cyr. Stephanie had met the Colonel, as Alex called him. Still quite the charming old devil in his be-medaled Cadre Noir tunic. She could see a lot of him in Alex.

But Alex hadn't been meant to follow his father's lead. After graduating near the top of his class, he had seen action only twice, as a second lieutenant at Kolwezi and as a captain in Beirut. Though he had managed to accumulate a ribbon or two of his own in the process, Alex had already concluded that organized mass murder was not to be his preferred career. Resigning his commission, he had gone AWOL from his own life, finally taking refuge in the club in Amsterdam where Jack and Stephanie had run onto him during their own global search for something authentic and permanent.

With all that had happened since, Stephanie would still have had to admit that she knew Alex intimately but not well. Even though he was the only man, other than Jack, to whom she had ever submitted sexually (at Jack's bidding, of course), Alex retained his impenetrable otherness.

"You're brooding," she said after one of their typically long silences.

"I don't brood. I'm thinking."

"What about?"

"The future."

"How unlike you."

He turned to face her. Even her one usually-visible eye was lost in the shadows.

“Why have we suddenly gone into the business of training mistresses for our competition?’

Stephanie laughed. Her laugh was always surprising, quite merry and uninhibited, like the girl she must once have been.

“You really do worry too much, Alex. No one could replace you.”

“It’s not me I’m worried about.”

Stephanie’s look grew serious again. After a beat, she stood up, stretched and ambled over to the marble balustrade. She had kicked off her heels, for once.

“I never said I’d stay forever. What if I get restless, or lonely? What if I get hit by a falling meteor? Somebody besides you needs to know where the fuse box is, right?”

“Are you?”

“What?”

“Restless or lonely?”

Stephanie came back over and bent down to kiss Alex on the cheek.

“If you want to worry, you might as well worry about those meteors. You can’t control them either.”

With that she scooped up her discarded shoes and drifted back through the jalousied doors into her bedroom. Alex continued to sit, gazing out to sea, for a long time.

## Chapter Four

The morning began as the night had ended: late. Sometime before noon, Alex rolled over and popped open an eye to see Mariko, kneeling silently next to his bed, an exotic vision through the haze of sleep.

Daughter of a Yokohama bar hostess and an American sailor, her delicately sensual face was perfectly Asian, her full-breasted, long-legged body, disarmingly western.

Though she wore only her leather collar and plain, black uniform pumps, Mariko could never really be considered naked.

The fabulously ornate nukibori-style dragon tattoo (a larger echo of the similar piece on Alex's left shoulder) that covered her entire back from nape to thigh made her seem almost more clothed in her nudity than when she was dressed. Moreover, like many of the permanent residents, she had accumulated an assortment of body decorations symbolic of her ever-deeper withdrawal into their cloistered world.

There were heavy gold rings (one on the left side, two on the right) through each of her almost-black nipples. Two pairs of even heavier rings dangled from her clean-shaven labia, just to add an additional interesting friction to the many pleasures of having sex with her. The ring through her nasal septum had actually been the first, having been installed as a talisman of her servitude on the day Tak Fukushi had given her to Alex as a gift.

He had no idea how long she'd been waiting there for him to wake up. Being his personal slave, she had the key to his quarters, her comings and goings through which were eerily quiet.

Coffee waited on a tray beside her, along with a basket of brioche and a copy of the International Herald. Alex sat up slowly, making sure everything was still in working order. "What time is it?" "Eleven forty-five, Alex-san."

She poured the coffee from the silver pot into the oversized black cup, drizzled in the lightest touch of cream. Alex sat up to take the cup as she offered it up to him.

“Thanks, darling. Come sit up here.”

He patted the mattress. She sprang up and settled in next to him, snuggling against his chest. Her skin felt warm and smooth next to his. He stroked her tattooed back, fingertips tracing the dragon’s sinuous coils. Her small, perfect hand wandered lazily down his body. She turned her large, barely-tilted eyes up toward his.

“Are there any additional services I could perform for you?”

“It’s a lovely thought, Mariko, but I seem to recall that Stephanie wanted to see me first thing today.”

Mariko averted her eyes to hide her fleeting look of disappointment. Life as Alex’s slave had its frustrations, though it was a distinct improvement over her previous lot as an indentured inmate of the specialized Shinjuku bordello where she had spent two hard years satisfying the perverse appetites of high-ranking Yakuza. By now she had become accustomed to leather instead of rope, to whips instead of molten wax, to the peculiar custom of wearing shoes indoors. Most of all, she had become accustomed to Alex, who she had come to see as more husband than master. She would have been happy with her situation indeed, had it not been for the troublesome presence of the one she always thought of as The Red-Haired Demon, the girl Jessica.

“Ah yes, perhaps Alex-san should see the note Mistress Stephanie had put on the tray.”

“Note? Nice of you to mention it. Hold still.”

Mariko lay down flat on her stomach so Alex could perch his cup and saucer on her firm little rump while he reached over to snag the note from the tray.

It was from Stephanie alright. No mistaking her clear, angular hand, or her businesslike style.

“The pavilion. Now, please.”

Alex tossed the note back onto the tray, gulped down the rest of his coffee and gave Mariko a nice, authoritative smack on the ass.

“Next time Stephanie gives you a message, see that it’s delivered promptly.” “Yes, sir!”

Alex dived out of bed and threw on his thick, fleecy black robe. Mariko propped herself up on one elbow, rubbing the still-tingling hand print on her backside.

“Should I wait here for you?”

“It could be a long wait. Stephanie’s up to something again.”

He turned back to kiss Mariko once, good and hard, before heading off to the shower. She flopped onto her back and stared the ceiling, listening to the water run and dreaming of cutting Jessica’s soft, white throat with a balasang.

It was cool and overcast. The concrete walkway down to the beach was nearly deserted. Most of the guests were still in their rooms, recovering from last night’s festivities and gathering strength for tonight’s.

The pavilion stood at the end of the path, near the water’s edge. Its sides were open to the sea breezes, while its pitched, tiled roof gave shelter from the often-fierce Iberian sun. By the time Alex got down there, the entire company, except for the skeleton morning shift, was already well into the daily workout.

On one side of the pavilion, Marcy, the compact, blond dynamo in charge of physical conditioning for the slaves, put her girls through their paces. Shouting encouragement, she darted among them, urging them on with

occasional slashes of the sharp, nasty little dressage whip she carried. The slave's costumes, consisting of open black latex workout bras (nicely supported underneath, nicely exposed above) and matching T-straps afforded them little protection from Marcy's stinging cuts.

Since each slave girl had been given her own exercise routine, designed to enhance her particular attributes, they all appeared to be doing entirely different things, but somehow Marcy seemed to know who was working hard and who wasn't.

A short distance away, the staff did its group calisthenics. Dressed in black sweats with sleeve insignia designating their occupations and ranks, they had a distinctly military air, accentuated by their chanting cadence in unison under the direction of the formidable Bridget, who oversaw the staff athletic program.

Alex jogged up the steps to join Bridget.

"Stephanie been here yet?"

"Haven't seen her all morning."

Alex's eyes wandered to the slave contingent. Many beautiful bodies to be seen over there, but Jessica's was not among them. He wondered where she was. Maybe a guest had requested her with breakfast. She was certainly in demand lately.

"I'm considering putting together a football game between the slaves and the staff.

What do you think?" Bridget asked.

Alex thought it over, looking back and forth between the two groups.

"I think the slaves will push the staff all over the field," he concluded.

Bridget glanced over his shoulder, back toward the terrace. “Looks like your company’s here.”

Alex turned to see Stephanie coming up the path. As usual, she was making her morning rounds in a small chariot pulled by two naked slave girls, harnessed and bitted right up to the blinkers, with high, black feather plumes waving above their heads as if they were hearse horses. All the tack was perfectly elegant, right down to the small bells riveted to the body straps.

The mystery of Jessica’s whereabouts was solved. She was hitched to the chariot, alongside Corinne, an olive-skinned black-haired beauty with a spectacularly voluptuous figure. Alex would have been surprised to see Jessica employed in this way, which was generally considered beneath the station of a senior slave girl, but for the presence of the tall, distinguished, gray-headed gentleman who accompanied Stephanie’s chariot on foot.

Bart Calloway was one of their most frequent guests, and Jessica was his personal favorite. Nothing Stephanie did was unintentional. Alex came down the steps to meet them. Stephanie halted the chariot with a sharp yank on the reins.

“Sorry we’re late,” Stephanie said, leaning down so Alex could kiss her on the cheek.

She was stunning as usual, dressed in a clinging, black silk jersey body suit extravagantly printed with a repeating pattern of antique harness parts. Always attentive to detail, she’d had an eye patch made of matching material.

“No problem. I was late myself,” Alex said, extending his hand to Bart. “Welcome back. When did you get in?”

As always, Bart’s manner was cheery and confident. His handsomely-weathered face always looked tanned and rested. He was quite dashing in his slightly rumpled linen safari jacket. Unlike most of the guests, from whom Alex maintained a professional distance, he found Bart genuinely

likable, if for no reason other than his faint resemblance to Stephanie's late husband Jack, who had made it all possible.

"Too damned early this morning, thank you," Bart said brightly. "I managed to escape the office for a couple of days, so I thought I'd come down here to talk a little business."

"Bart has an interesting proposition for us, Alex. I thought we could chat about it while I take these two back to the stable."

Alex glanced at Jessica. Her green eyes were wild with shame and humiliation. Little rivulets of saliva ran down from the corners of her mouth. From the way her skin dripped with rivers of perspiration and her auburn hair was plastered down under the bridle, he guessed that Stephanie had been running them hard. Jessica stared straight ahead, obviously mortified at being displayed in this way. Corinne, on the other hand, couldn't resist shooting Alex a flirtatious look, flashing a quick smile around the thick, black, rubber bit between her teeth. Any opportunity to show it all off was good enough for her.

Stephanie shook the reins and snapped her long, wicked buggy whip over their heads. They started forward smartly, throwing their shoulders back and lifting their knees high. It wasn't easy, pulling the chariot while balancing on high stiletto heels, hands strapped up behind them to the tight body harnesses. It certainly wasn't made any easier by the snug straps cinched up between their thighs, complete with clever "internal appliances" designed to make walking a trying exercise in orgasmic self-control. Nonetheless, good slaves that they were, they got into step and clacked along the path, bells tinkling merrily. Alex and Bart fell in alongside.

"So," Alex began, "what is the underlying purpose of this seemingly casual visit, for which you've flown five thousand miles?"

"I know you suspect me of practical motives, Alex, and you're right. I was looking at my expense receipts the other day and I realized that for all the time and money I spend here, I might as well deal myself in for a piece of the action."

“And how, exactly, do you propose to accomplish this?”

“By buying out my share at a very good price,” Stephanie said calmly. Jessica balked in mid-step, throwing Corinne off balance. The chariot lurched to one side. In a heartbeat, Stephanie’s whip slashed down across Jessica’s back.

“Jessica, pay attention!”

Both girls straightened up and brought the chariot back into the center of the path.

“I can see it’s been too long since Jessica’s worn the harness. You might see that she gets a little more practice, Alex,” Stephanie said.

Jessica’s faltering had given Alex just enough time to compose himself, so that when he spoke his voice sounded perfectly calm and normal, as if Bart had suggested nothing more serious than a poker game.

“I’ll make a note of it. Really, Bart, it hardly seems a sensible investment for an absentee owner. You must know how management-intensive it is to run an establishment with slave labor. Look how many people it took to build the pyramids.”

Bart laughed. “That’s why I’d insist on you staying on to manage things.”

“I’m sure that would have nothing to do with the fact that under the terms of our partnership, neither Stephanie nor I can sell out without the other’s approval.”

“Now Alex, you wouldn’t try to keep me here if I wasn’t happy,” Stephanie said.

Even as Alex calculated his careful responses, he wondered what must be going through Jessica’s mind. He couldn’t quite believe that Stephanie would speak so openly in front of any of the slaves, but then again, Stephanie had a tendency to forget that slaves were also human beings.

“I wouldn’t want you to stay against your wishes, Stephanie,” Alex said coolly. “But I think you and Bart should both consider the implications of such a decision carefully.

It’s a family business of sorts. If you change the family, you change the business.

And vice versa.”

Bart threw an arm around Alex’s shoulders.

“I’d expect you to be cautious, Alex. You’re the heart and soul of this place. That’s why I’m willing to make it worth your while to remain on board.”

“It’s hard to entice a satisfied man, Bart,” Alex said, shaking his head. Stephanie shrugged.

“It’s like I said. Money doesn’t interest Alex. It’s one of his many peculiarities.”

“Well, no need to rush into anything. Take your time. Think it over. Maybe you’ll come up with something I can do to make the proposition worth your while.”

Alex promised to think it over. It was a promise he was sure to keep, whether he wanted to or not.

The stable was off to one side of the main building. By the time they got up the hill to it, the girls were both breathing hard, bosoms heaving inside all the strap work as they pulled the chariot in through the gate. With a tug of the reins, Stephanie steered them in through the high doorway of the whitewashed structure.

The stable was cool and dark inside. There was a hitching rail and tack storage area along one wall, a row of small stalls along the other. A couple of other girls waited, already harnessed, in the stalls at the far end. Stephanie walked Jessica and Corinne up to the rail, halted and dismounted

from the chariot. Alex stepped in between the girls to unhitch them from the traces. He could feel the heat of their bodies, could smell their perfumed sweat. Corinne sidled in close to him, rubbing her bare bottom ever so lightly across the front of his trousers.

While Alex backed the chariot out of the way, Stephanie stretched girlishly, exhibiting her spectacular physique in the tight body suit.

“I always find these little rides so stimulating. Maybe it’s the sea air.”

She stole a look at her watch.

“Well, we’ve got a little time before lunch. Shall we have some fun with these girls?”

It was the invitation Bart had been waiting for.

“Splendid idea!”

He came around and stood directly in front of Jessica. He took the rings of her bit in his hands and pulled her face up so he could look into her eyes.

“Don’t you think that’s a splendid idea, Jessica?”

She swallowed hard, teeth gripping the rubber bit. He went over to the wall where the various equestrian implements hung on pegs, picking out a nice, heavy quirt. He swished it in the air a couple of times.

“Yes. This should do nicely.”

“Do you mind if I watch?” Stephanie asked.

“Be delighted,” Bart replied, collecting Jessica’s reins. “Over here, and be quick about it.”

He trotted Jessica to one of the nearby mounting blocks, a stout pedestal upholstered in red leather with upright braces to hold the harnessed girl’s shoulders in place when she was bent over it from the waist. A hard shove

in the middle of the back slammed her, tits down, onto the block with an audible splat. She squirmed forward over the leather, settling her shoulders against the braces and extending her chin into the U-shaped support provided for it. There were some things she hadn't forgotten from those first, hard months of training. She held nice and still while Bart hooked her ankle straps to the pedestal's legs. It was just low enough to cant her upper body downward, thrusting her ass upward at a perfectly convenient altitude.

Stephanie lounged against the rail, enjoying the show.

“What about you Alex? You're not going to leave poor Corinne neglected. I'm sure she'd be heartbroken if you didn't find some use for her.”

Corinne actually dared a naughty little nod of agreement. Ah well, there were worse fates. Alex took Corinne's sweat-streaked face in his hands and kissed her, their tongues meeting around the bit. She tasted of salt and rubber. He leaned back on the rail next to Stephanie and signaled Corinne to her knees in front of him. She rubbed her face against him as he pulled down his zipper, her clever little tongue licking out from below the bit to greet him.

When Bart had Jessica positioned just as he wanted her on the block, he went to work with the quirt. It was just as Jessica had described it. For all his affability, Bart harbored a streak of savagery that she found “frightening and beautiful.” Without the slightest pretense of a warm up, he lashed away at her upturned left buttock, striking over and over again in the same place with the full strength of his arm.

“You're such a bad girl, Jessica. You have to be beaten all the time,” he said in a cold, hard voice.

Strapped tight to the block, Jessica couldn't even attempt to squirm out of the way of the thudding blows that rippled through her flesh. Gasps and moans escaped from behind the bit as the saliva pooled on the floor under her chin.

Without taking his eyes off this unfolding drama, Alex reached down and unsnapped the bit from Corinne's harness, liberating her mouth for more serious purposes. She got right down to business, taking him in through her full, soft lips right to the back of her throat. Her black plume danced jauntily atop her own blue-black mane with every expert motion. Alex's hands found her reins, snubbed them up to control her movements precisely.

By the time Bart tired of lashing her, Jessica's whole body was convulsed over the block with uncontrollable sobbing.

Never one to waste an opportunity for drama, she had screwed her head around on the chin rest so Alex could enjoy the sight of her tear-streaked face while he took his pleasure with Corinne. Now Bart brought her eyes-front with a vicious yank on the reins.

It was time for the kill. Bart undid the buckles holding the strap between Jessica's legs intact. He yanked it loose, pulling the long, fat double plugs out of Jessica's body with a wet pop. She gave a stifled cry as he stepped into her from behind, not as men usually did, but rather into her rear channel, which, though well-opened and lubricated by the plug, was still tight and narrow. Much as Jessica was loath to give this part of herself to any man but Alex, she knew what was expected of her and willed her internal muscles to accommodate the intrusion.

Alex watched Bart hammer into Jessica, hurling himself against her again and again, his jovial, tanned face contorted into a rictus of violent passion.

Alex understood it all too well. There was about Jessica a particular combination of the defiant and the abject that drove a certain kind of mad quite mad. Alex was that kind of man. So was Bart.

In that moment, Alex understood two things. One was that Bart was hopelessly addicted to Jessica's many charms, was prepared to pay any price, up to that of buying the whole place, in order to possess them all to himself. The other was that Alex was prepared to go to any lengths to prevent this from happening.

Alex's hand touched Corinne's cheek, the better to appreciate the sophisticated way in which she slid him in and out between those luxurious lips. He looked over at Stephanie. Her one eye was wide and bright as a headlight. Her hand had found its way down over her thighs to her vital spots, which were all quite well outlined through the stretchy silk material. How much did any of these people really know about each other? He had only a moment to wonder before slipping away under the influence of Corinne's expertise.

Taking a firm grip on her head harness, he held her face absolutely still, he letting go into her mouth, gushing in boiling spasms. She made herself completely passive, swallowing humbly, her eyes turned meltingly up to his. Women. Alex had no resistance to them at all. Far away, he heard the triumphant shout of Bart's climax. It was going to be an interesting day.

## Chapter Five

Shari hated scrubbing floors. She had hated it back home, and she hated it here. In fact, there were some aspects of her situation here that were worse. For one thing, she was having to do the job on her hands and knees, with a brush and bucket instead of a mop.

Then there was the absolute, undeniable fact of her nakedness, which was utter, save for the full set of chrome shackles locked around her neck, wrists and ankles and the nasty, slutty high heels locked onto her feet. The shackles were slender and feminine and the chains were light, but the way they rattled in time with her scrubbing reminded Shari of her lowly status as a newly-inducted slave.

Still, Shari had to admit to herself that things had improved considerably since her arrival. Having already been subjected to the most thorough, humiliating and uncomfortable physical examination of her life, then questioned under considerable duress about the most intimate details of her sex life, fantasy and actual, and finally held in complete, immobilizing bondage for several days of “isolation,” she knew when she was well off.

Not that Shari would have been one to complain anyway. She was basically a happy, cheerful girl, which was one of the reasons her family had gotten such a good price for her. Of course, her unusually lean and slender physique, which so nicely complimented her olive skin and Mediterranean features, hadn't hurt. Nor had the perfect roundness of the black-nippled breasts that had sprouted on her so young.

She'd had a couple of owners since then, both of whom had treated her worse, if less efficiently, than these people.

There were a million questions she wanted to ask about this place and those who ran it, and she had a pretty good idea who could answer them for her. Pamela, the cute little blond who served as personal maid to the ravishing

senior slave girl Jessica, scrubbed the marble floor of the hallway shoulder to shoulder with Shari.

She had to be considered a pretty promising trainee to have been placed in such a responsible capacity so soon, which made Shari wonder why Pamela had volunteered for this demeaning task.

Shari, who had a wide streak of mischief down the center of her soul, couldn't help rubbing up against Pamela's bare arm like a kitty cat and trying to strike up a conversation.

"So why are you scrubbing floors instead of brushing out your lady's hair or something?," she asked.

Pamela looked around nervously.

"Keep your voice down. You know we're not supposed to talk while we're on duty."

Shari shrugged, shaking her tits prettily. "Who's going to hear us?"

"Boy, have you got a lot to learn," Pamela whispered, rolling her eyes. "For your information, I always do the floor outside Jessica's room."

Shari giggled.

"You mean you even volunteer to scrub the floor outside Jessica's room because you love her so much? How sweet!"

Shari looked up from her work to give Pamela a quick peck on the cheek.

"Yeah, it's sweet alright," Pamela grumbled. "And if you get caught kissing another slave without permission, you'll be back downstairs in a heartbeat."

"Then I suppose I could really get in trouble for doing this," Shari said, furtively reaching over to pinch the nearest of Pamela's pink nipples. Pamela gasped, then swatted Shari's hand away with much rattling of chain. "Are you crazy?"

Shari had no idea how dangerous their position really was. She probably knew that any of the staff might come along at any moment. She had probably been told that she could be used or punished in any way any of them saw fit. What she did not know, however, was the real reason Pamela always did scrub duty outside Jessica's room.

Just a few feet away, behind a door that could not be locked from the inside, Jessica and Alex were stealing one of their moments of illicit intimacy. Pamela was actually serving as a lookout. She hoped Jessica appreciated the risks Pamela took for her.

At that moment, Jessica had other things on her mind. Looking exceptionally feline, she lay sprawled across her bed, naked but for her collar, her wild mane of auburn hair spread out over Alex's lap as she nuzzled him. He lay on his back, absently reaching down to stroke her head now and again as he recounted his conversation with Bart and Stephanie.

"Stephanie seemed pretty interested in Bart's offer," he concluded. He noticed that the welts Bart had put on Jessica's behind earlier had come up nicely, all red and purple. He felt the most transitory stab of jealousy.

"She wouldn't really sell the place to him, would she?"

"I wouldn't have thought so until last night."

"What happened last night?"

"We had cognac out on the terrace. Stephanie was definitely discontented. I could feel it. She hasn't been like this since Jack died."

"Maybe Bart will come to his senses when he sees how much it's going to cost him."

Alex sighed.

"Bart will never come to his senses while you're around. He's totally obsessed. I recognize the symptoms."

Jessica laughed, slid down a little further so she could rub her face against the hard, leather soles of Alex's gleaming boots, the only thing he wore at that moment.

"I'm so flattered you boys appreciate me. Want to see my tongue?"

Alex lifted his head to watch Jessica lap leather in long, lazy tongue-strokes. Her wide, green eyes were pressed shut in rapturous submission. Her slender hand wandered up the inside of his leg, finding exactly what she expected up there.

Taking it firmly in her grasp she stroked as she licked.

Alex sat up and took hold of the light chain locked to Jessica's collar, pulling her face back up into his lap.

"I would appreciate it if you would find something more useful to do with your mouth than make smart remarks," he said firmly as he gave her a nice, smart slap on the cheek. She bent her head to her proper labors immediately, taking him into her mouth and swallowing him whole.

Alex let her work on him for some time, enjoying the spectacle of her full lips working up and down his shaft, her brows knitted in concentration. Jessica took a justifiable pride in her skills at this.

He could have let her go on like that for hours, and she would have, but the preparations for the evening's entertainment would need supervising, and that was what Alex did.

Taking Jessica's face in his hands, he lifted it to his own for a long, hard kiss. Then he took her around the waist and staked her onto him. She held herself open to accommodate him, her insides hot, wet and welcoming as usual. Alex's hands found their way to her tits, her nipple ring hard and smooth between his fingers as she bucked and rocked on top of him.

Jessica rode him slow and hard at first, grinding her hips in wide revolutions. As her own breathing grew faster and more ragged, her creamy

bosom heaving above him, her tempo began to pick up. Alex lay back and let her do it, knowing how well she knew his rhythms. It wasn't long before they were thrashing their way toward one of their usual nuclear detonations. When the shock wave hit, Alex sat up, threw his arms around her and buried his face in the furrow of her breasts.

They lay in a panting, heaving heap for some time before Alex thought to glance at the little onyx clock next to Jessica's bed.

"Can it really be four already?," she moaned, following his gaze.

He rolled out from under her and headed for her small bathroom, surprisingly quiet in his heavy boots. Jessica always marveled at how sneaky the staff people were. You never heard them until it was too late. Alex was the one who taught them all that stuff. She rolled over onto her stomach to watch him through the open door of the bathroom. She liked his butt. Maybe that was it.

"You know," she said pensively, "we're going to have to come up with something to distract your friend Bart."

Alex couldn't hear her over the running water. She was about to repeat herself when she heard the commotion outside.

Out in the corridor, Pamela had still been attempting to defend whatever remaining virtue she might possess from the playful Shari when two of the male staff members had come around the corner. The girls had frozen in a tangle of hands, chains, tits and hair at the sight of them.

Under other circumstances, Pamela might have been glad to see at least one of them, Rene, a big, boisterous Quebecois with a booming laugh and an extremely large cock with which she was already quite familiar. Yoshi, on the other hand, was a man she always tried to avoid. The unit's martial arts instructor, he was tough, correct and a bit grim. Had she thought about it, Pamela might have found these two men's friendship unlikely, but at that moment her mind was fixed on her own immediate future, which did not look bright.

“Now there’s a fine example for you,” Rene said with cheerful scorn as they strolled up to the two girls, who hastily returned to their floor-scrubbing with suddenly-renewed enthusiasm. “Suppose we took our jobs as lightly? We’d be dropping the little darlings on their heads every time we strung ‘em upside down, wouldn’t we?”

Yoshi glowered down at the nervous girls, neither of whom dared to meet his ferocious gaze.

“I agree, Rene. This is disgraceful. These two will never amount to anything if they do not learn to apply themselves to the task at hand.”

Rene pondered the upturned ass-cheeks of the two girls, swaying side to side with each brush-stroke.

“You know,” he said, “perhaps all they need is a bit of motivation.”

“Motivation. Exactly,” Yoshi agreed.

Pamela heard the click of the snap as Yoshi unslung the flogger from his belt. Yes indeed, things were taking yet another turn for the worse. She couldn’t suppress a yelp when the heavy leather thongs splatted against her backside.

“You will continue scrubbing!,” Yoshi barked.

Pamela scrubbed. Yoshi whipped. Never in history would a floor be so clean. She would probably be kissing it before long.

Rene, as it happened, had a different kind of motivation in mind for Shari. Dropping to his knees behind her, he brought a casual hand up between her open thighs. This was just the kind of moment where Shari shined. She was as ripely sexual as a young girl with nothing else to trouble her mind could be and welcomed almost any opportunity to demonstrate it. She slid herself back into his palm with a heavy moan.

“Well, well, this floor’s not all that’s wet around here, is it?”

Shari pretended to continue with her work, while in fact concentrating on moving her body so as to make it as available as possible to Rene's exploring touch. She heard a zipper whisper behind her, felt him grasp her by the hips and slide himself in. She inched back onto him, dropping her shoulders to the floor, her firm tits spreading just ever so slightly out around her ribcage.

It was this fetching sight that met Jessica's eyes when she opened her door. She stood there, cashmere robe wrapped up to her neck, and watched, transfixed.

Jessica had watched a lot of sex in her strange, lurid life. She considered herself a bit of a connoisseur. And this looked good. Very good. The new girl was quite the little jewel, just as Alex had said. It struck Jessica that Shari might be just the ticket, distraction wise. She would definitely have to maneuver her into Bart's course.

Just then, Yoshi looked up from his flogging to see Jessica framed in the doorway.

Remembering herself, Jessica slowly sank to her knees, assuming the slave position. She did it in a leisurely way that stopped just short of insolence. Jessica did not scare easily.

Dinner was scheduled for eight sharp. It would be the usual circus, and Alex would serve as ringmaster, as always. At six, he was in the kitchen, conferring with Stephanie about the wine for the first course (the Bollinger prevailed). At six-thirty, he was in the main dining room, ordering the replacement of some flowers he found lugubrious.

Seven found Alex in the women's dressing room, where those who would perform in the evening's theatrics were getting into costume, having already dined in their quarters. Unlike many of the male staffers, Alex enjoyed the slightly tense air of the dressing room - the double rows of nearly-naked women sitting perfectly erect, legs open just so, on long benches in front of long mirrors while the maids fussed around them with brushes and spray bottles.

Alex understood, in an instinctive way the dramatic aspect of his work, and liked it.

The slight edge of stage fright always made the girls more attractive to him. It was eternally surprising to see them transformed by the period costumes they wore for the skits to be performed. Some would be laced into tight Victorian corsets, while others were packed into shiny, futuristic latex. All these familiar faces and bodies were once again made new.

Alex strolled down the line of seated girls, offering a whisper of encouragement here, a quick smack on the ass there, thoroughly enjoying himself.

When he got to the end of the row, however, he heard something that was troublingly out of place, a low, urgent male voice, coming from the costume closet, the one spot in the dressing room that could remotely be considered private.

As Alex approached, he recognized the male voice as that of Yoshi. Alex hesitated at the door into the vast storage vault where all the fetish gear of all ages and places was preserved. Something made him peer in before entering. What he saw and heard made him glad he had.

Alex's personal slave Mariko, who was to play the victim in the Samurai skit, was all but completely dressed in her traditional kimono. She calmly picked out an appropriate obi while Yoshi, dressed normally but for his white Kabuki makeup and topknot, paced and fumed behind her.

"If you don't stop treating me like this, I'm going to kill myself," he said desperately.

The tone of Mariko's reply could not have been cooler.

"Perhaps Yoshi-san would care to put this in writing."

He stopped in his tracks, whirled around and seized her, forcing her to face him.

“Why do you waste yourself on a gaijin who doesn’t even know you exist?” he demanded.

“You should save your energy for the performance,” she suggested helpfully. He let her go and turned away. She turned behind him, putting her hands on his back.

“I belong to Alex. The others need him, and he needs me, whether he knows it or not.”

Alex looked a bit shaken when he finally arrived in the dining room. Almost everyone else was already seated around the horseshoe-shaped table. The guests, male and female were all assembled; well-dressed, well-fed, smug and cruel for the most part.

And there were the guests’ chosen escorts of the evening, Stephanie’s ever-changing menagerie of exotic pets, all combed and curried to breathless perfection.

Alex was seated next to Stephanie at the center of the table. Bart sat next to Stephanie on the other side, and Jessica next to Bart. Cozy. Too cozy. The fact that the nasty bitch Lola had been placed on Alex’s left hardly improved matters. - Alex apologized for being late as Charlotte set his usual drink in front of him. Charlotte was Stephanie’s personal slave, a cute little blond thing with wonderful pouting lips and a perfectly dreadful, spoiled disposition. Alex pointedly paid no attention when she contrived to flip up her little serving-girl skirt to give him a flash of bare cheek.

Everybody seemed in a good mood. Stephanie and Bart went on about countries they’d been thrown out of over the years, Bart pouring on the cosmopolitan charm for Jessica’s benefit.

Oh well, Jessica had had a lot of practice as seeming interested.

Fortunately, Alex was spared most of this by the commencement of the entertainment, which was put on during the meal, Roman-style. The Samurai skit was first, to go with the smoked salmon.

The lights went down. The floor in the middle of the room slid open and the stage rose from below. There were oohs and aahs when the tableaux appeared. The set was a traditional tatami room, lit by red candles. Mariko knelt at a low table, preparing tea.

Suddenly, a sword slashed through the rice paper backdrop and Yoshi crashed through, dressed in samurai robes and wielding the sword two-handed. Mariko gasped, tried to get to her feet. Before she had half-risen, the cold steel edge was at her throat. She froze.

“I have come for what is mine,” Yoshi shouted. Mariko lowered her eyes in resignation, sinking back into a kneeling posture.

Yoshi sheathed the sword and produced an ample length of rope from inside his robes. With an amazing speed, he bound Mariko with it in the traditional style, four passes above the breasts, four below, then a double cinch around the wrists in back.

It was as practical as it was beautiful. It made the woman effectively helpless without obstructing her usefulness. It also had a pleasing way of enhancing the figure, even through fairly thick clothing.

Not that Mariko was destined to stay clothed for long. Whipping out his short, scalpel-sharp tanto blade, Yoshi proceeded to systematically cut Mariko’s costume to pieces, exposing more and more flesh through the coils of rope, as she did her best to stay perfectly still.

“These little extravaganzas must cost a few dollars,” Lola observed. Alex ignored her. She was a new mistress. In time, she would understand that everything here had to be as real as it could be made.

When he’d finished destroying Mariko’s costume, Yoshi flipped her onto her back.

Seizing two of the fat, red candles from their holders, he began laying the molten wax that had accumulated in them all over her sweating, writhing body in thick, red sheets.

When he finally had Mariko pleading and in tears, Yoshi sank down between her knees, opened his robes and plunged into her in a savage fury, oblivious to the discomfort of her arms bound under her back.

Mariko wasn't the only one who was uncomfortable at that moment. Alex couldn't put the scene he'd witnessed in the costume out of his mind. What was happening on stage' at this moment might be just a bit too real.

As it happened, he wasn't given long to think about it. The opportunity Jessica had been waiting for come, a bit earlier than expected, but she could be counted upon to turn it to her strategic advantage. Shari was coming around the table with a basket of rolls. In addition to her service uniform, she still wore the full shackles, as she would throughout her first two weeks on duty. That made her easy prey for Jessica.

When Shari leaned in between Jessica and Bart, quite obviously enjoying the view of her tits she was giving him, Jessica shot out a heel under the table and hooked the chain between Shari's ankles. When the girl tried to back up, she lost her balance and tottered over off her heels, tits down in Bart's lap. Bart laughed.

"It's raining girls!" he said brightly, flipping up Shari's skirt for a good look. "Pretty ones at that."

Stephanie was appalled.

"Really, Shari, do try to be a little less clumsy."

"Yes, ma'am," Shari mumbled from down near the floor. She tried to rise, but Bart held her across his lap.

"Don't you think a little punishment fitting the crime would go well with your Mikado presentation here?" he asked mischievously.

Alex had to agree, the situation did seem to have presented itself. Bart immediately set about giving Shari a truly memorable spanking. He had large hands and strong arms, and it wasn't long before Shari was wriggling

and squirming in his lap, muffled cries emerging from somewhere under the table cloth.

After about thirty really good ones, he let Shari down onto her knees, where he gave her the chance to thank him properly for correcting her inexcusable incompetence.

This was familiar territory to Shari, who made herself right at home in it by pulling down Bart's zipper with her teeth (a trick of which she was quite proud) and getting out his cock. As she'd already noticed, it had gotten extremely hard from all her girlish writhing. She sucked noisily away.

Stephanie clucked.

“Do try to eat a little more quietly, dear.”

Alex looked over at Jessica. As usual, her expression was completely inscrutable.

She would have made a wonderful spy. Up on the stage, Yoshi and Mariko were reaching the crescendo of their act. Everywhere Alex looked, storms were brewing.

## Chapter Six

All in all, the banquet unfolded fairly smoothly. The guests seemed to enjoy the various bondage tableaux staged in the center of the U-shaped table where they dined, as was evidenced by the increasing attention they paid to their collared, provocatively clad “escorts.”

At the center of the table, Shari knelt on the floor, her precociously sensual levantine face buried in the soft linen of Bart’s pantleg. She wrapped her arms as far around his leg as her shackles would allow, burrowing in softly. She still felt a not-altogether-unpleasant warmth and tingling, both external and internal, from the spanking she’d recently received at Bart’s well-practiced hands.

Shari still wasn’t exactly sure how she’d managed to trip while bending forward next to him with her serving tray, ending up with her rolls all over the table and her buns across Bart’s lap. Mindful of the dangers of shackled ankles and high heels, dangers she had known even before coming to this place, she had been extra-careful. Pretty embarrassing, having a thing like that happen right in front of the proprietor and her favored guest. And on Shari’s first day of service at that.

Anyway, she was happy enough with the result. Shari preferred older men, and this one gave a pretty good spanking. She liked the way he casually reached down to stroke her, as if she were his own.

Bart had gone back to watching the entertainment, which now consisted of a small-scale recreation of the Rape Of The Sapiens.

Alex, who had helped stage it, found it a bit melodramatic. But Jessica, who was aroused by any hint of violence, always enjoyed it. Alex could see her throat undulate beneath the collar with a dry swallow. As for Stephanie, who knew what she liked? Alex had been her partner in running this establishment for half a dozen years, and he still couldn’t anticipate her whims and caprices.

“These little entertainment may seem somewhat cliché,” Stephanie explained to Bart, “but that’s no accident. What we do is take images of events already in people’s minds and play them out to their logical conclusions. Where the history books discreetly draw the curtains, we fling them open.”

Alex thought to himself that Stephanie looked particularly alluring on this occasion.

With her statuesque frame, her cascading blond hair and her single, brilliant blue eye, there was no such thing as an evening gown too dramatic for her to carry. She loved having an appreciative audience like Bart for her keenly-incisive conversation.

She was the company’s left brain. Alex was its right. It was a suitably unconventional arrangement for a thoroughly unconventional business.

Alex’s eye wandered over from Stephanie back to Jessica, Bart’s assigned escort for the evening. Jessica ate quietly while Bart and Stephanie chatted. Back straight, head high, eyes front, her manners were impeccable. That her costume, a tight, black, Gwendoline-type dress, demurely concealing in the front and lewdly wide-open in the back, left her so exposed seemed not to concern her in the slightest. In public, Jessica was invariably correct without being the least bit modest. This was part of the reason Alex found her so desirable.

The last of the evening’s planned entertainment was a futuristic skit in which a gorgeous blond in a whimsically-revealing silver space suit was captured by a group of black latex-clad amazon aliens, who proceeded to strip her and examine her closely. Then, strapping on formidable-looking black latex dildos, they went on to fuck her in every conceivable configuration. It was a pretty stimulating piece of business that certainly appeared to be working on Bart and Stephanie, along with numerous glasses of champagne.

Bart had pulled Shari up off the floor onto his lap, where she sat, happily rubbing her bare behind on his dick, which was rock-hard under the fabric

of his trousers.

Stephanie had snagged Charlotte as she tottered by and plunked the girl down onto the table in front of her. Opening Charlotte's knees with a quick slap to the right thigh, Stephanie made her sit still, arms folded behind her, while she played with her clit. Charlotte whimpered and moaned predictably. Alex knew her as the type who enjoyed most what she pretended to hate worst.

"You know," Bart reflected, the hard glint of lust in his eyes, "maybe we ought to take dessert in our quarters."

Stephanie thought about it for a moment, then her face brightened with inspiration.

"I have a better idea. Bring Shari and come with me."

Stephanie excused herself, stood up abruptly and seized Charlotte by the collar. She started out of the dining room, pushing her slave on ahead of her with Bart and Shari following behind. Bart had one arm around the girl's waist while he pulled her along by her shackle chains, which rattled merrily. Shari looked pleased with this development.

As an afterthought, Stephanie turned back toward the table.

"We can use some assistance, I think." She scanned the faces of the staff members close at hand. Lola. This would be a good chance to watch her work.

Stephanie signaled her with a toss of her blond mane. Lola rose immediately and followed them out.

"Well," Jessica observed calmly, "we seem to have lost our dates. What a shame. I was hoping for a little abuse after dinner."

Actually, everything had gone exactly as she had planned it from the moment she shot out her heel and tripped Shari into Bart's lap. Her hand

glided up Alex's thigh under the table.

"Maybe we should slip off to someplace more private."

Alex seemed preoccupied.

"Perhaps later. I have to go to my room and change first"

Downstairs, Stephanie led her festive little party through the grim confines of the disciplinary block. Here in the isolation section, the cells had solid metal doors with small, square windows that could be slid open for observation purposes. On the other corridor, the doors were barred so the cells were open to general viewing.

Stephanie knew exactly where she was going and the others just followed along, though with unequal enthusiasm.

"Why are you bringing me down here, Stephanie? I haven't done anything wrong,"

Charlotte whined petulantly. Stephanie looked faintly annoyed.

"Honesty, Charlotte, you know I couldn't care less what you do. I punish you because I enjoy it." She stopped in front of the last door on the left and pointed at it.

"This one."

Lola leapt forward obsequiously, fumbling with the keys.

The lighting of the cell was dim, almost theatrical. Its furnishings were sparsely utilitarian: a steel sink, a toilet and, in the center of the cell, a large, low platform, padded in shiny, washable, black latex. In the middle of the platform were two adjoining pairs of locking stocks, head and foot. They were arranged so that two prisoners could be held immobile in close proximity to one another. Assorted restraining and/or punitive devices were displayed along one wall.

“We call this the Honeymoon Suite,” Stephanie said. “It’s usually reserved for girls who have fought with one another, or carried on illicit sexual relations. It’s a great place for people to get to know each other.”

She turned to Lola.

“Get them ready.”

Lola turned her attention Charlotte and Shari, who had automatically dropped to their knees on the rubber-tiled floor upon entering. Taking Charlotte first, she brought the pouty girl up to her feet, stripped off her apron and cap, which were all she wore, and unlocked her shackles. The manacles fell to the floor with a clatter, leaving her standing there, momentarily naked. She was a nicely rounded girl, very pale, not as young as she looked or acted.

Selecting items from hooks on the aluminum peg board, Lola quickly substituted a high, stiff leather training collar with an uptilted chin platform for the narrow steel one Charlotte had been wearing. It was locked in place at the throat with a little padlock.

Charlotte could just barely turn her head in it.

Lola led her over to the platform and sat her down on the edge of it. Charlotte whimpered in unpleasant anticipation, but assumed the correct position, feet planted on the floor well apart, hands behind her. She waited while Lola picked out the correct size of locking, stiletto-heeled ballet slippers, just as if the girls were being put to bed according to regular disciplinary procedures. Lola exchanged the shoes efficiently, then pushed Charlotte onto her back on the platform. Charlotte couldn’t help turning her plaintive face to Stephanie.

“Do I have to?”

“You know the answer to that.”

Charlotte moved over and positioned herself in one set of stocks. Lola locked her ankles down first, then lowered the yoke over Charlotte's wrists and neck. Charlotte was stretched out quite flat, legs spread fully apart, unable, owing to the collar, to even look down at whatever might be happening to most of her person.

"We'll dispense with the hoods and gags, Lola. They're not going to sleep just now."

With a quick "Yes, ma'am," Lola repeated the ritual with Shari, positioning her in the other set of stocks, so close to Charlotte their hips actually touched. Shari found she could just barely reach over to clasp Charlotte's hand, which gripped hers ferociously. Shari, who wasn't at all the fearful type, couldn't help wondering what had Charlotte so scared.

For her own part, Lola was also wondering what would happen next, and what her own role in it should be. Was this an honor? An opportunity? A trap? She would have to wait and see.

When both girls were secured, Stephanie slithered over and stretched out on the platform alongside Charlotte, stroking the girl's body in a leisurely, knowing fashion.

Charlotte's huge blue eyes grew heavy-lidded. Her lips parted in a small sigh.

"You have such a pretty mouth, Charlotte," Stephanie observed, feeling the little blonde's full, lower lip with the tip of an index finger. "And you can do such lovely things with it. Wouldn't you like to see, Bart?"

"Oh, absolutely."

Bart's eyes were pretty busy at the moment, taking in all of Shari's luscious, budding curves. Bart had indeed been temporarily distracted from Jessica. How long the effect would last remained to be seen.

Stephanie brought her face close to Charlotte's. She played with Charlotte's hair, which was just ever so slightly blonder than her own.

"You'd like it if I let you lick my clit, wouldn't you, little slut?"

"If you wanted me to," Charlotte said, voice quavering. Anything could go wrong here, and Charlotte knew it. "How much would you like it?"

Charlotte groaned, knowing where this game was leading. Stephanie pressed the point.

"What would you take in return for the privilege?"

"Anything you wanted to give me." Charlotte sounded resigned, defeated by her own lust.

Stephanie nimbly climbed up, turned around and settled onto her knees directly over Charlotte's face. She raised the hem of her dress slowly, revealing her customary lack of underwear. Bart came over and lay down next to Shari so he could get a better view. He caressed her casually, his sophisticated touch producing hard nipples and wetness almost instantaneously.

Stephanie leaned forward to pinch and slap Charlotte's tits, holding herself just out of reach of the captive girl's tongue. She even put a hand down to open herself so Charlotte could get a better look. The collar tilted Charlotte's head back at just the perfect angle, if only Stephanie would come down just an inch or two.

"Please, Stephanie! Please let me lick your clit!" "Ah yes, the begging stage. How about if I whipped you at the same time?"

"Anything... Please!"

Stephanie demanded a short, braided flogger, which Lola dashed to get from the wall. She handed it to Stephanie, who settled herself comfortably

onto Charlotte's face. Charlotte's whole body rose as much as the restraints would allow as she tried to bury her face in Stephanie's wet folds.

Stephanie's eyes were a little glazed, but her determination did not waver. She lashed the front of Charlotte's body without mercy, the invasive tails of the flogger wrapping everywhere around Charlotte's tits, down across her belly, up between her thighs. Charlotte jerked and moaned under Stephanie, but she didn't do anything impolite, even as the thin, nasty welts rose all over her pale, milky skin.

Shari couldn't see any of this, of course, but she could hear it all. Along with Bart's increasingly insistent attentions, it was having a definite effect. She was glad the bondage allowed her enough freedom to rotate her hips a bit against Bart's hand. It must have given him some ideas, because he abruptly pulled down his zipper and swung up into the saddle on top of her, bracing himself on the yoke holding her hands and head. The way Shari's legs were held open, she was a pretty easy target.

Wet as she was, he slid right in.

Stephanie, meanwhile, ground herself in slow circles on Charlotte's face, as the whip falling again and again, ever more furiously. Suddenly, with scarcely a warning shudder, Stephanie clamped her thighs shut around Charlotte's head, looked up with her eyes rolled back and let out a long, satisfying wail. Bart and Shari came right behind her.

Lola leaned against the wall, arms folded, taking it all in. It was obvious that Stephanie enjoyed this kind of thing, unlike Lola to whom it was mainly just work.

Still, she had the feeling this display had mainly been staged for Bart's benefit.

Whoever this man was, Stephanie appeared determined to keep him entertained.

That was reason enough to find out more about him.

It was quiet in Alex's quarters. Mariko had lit candles and incense as soon as she returned from the performance. His silk robe was laid out on the bed. He sat next to it, looking down at Mariko, who knelt in front of him, tugging off his boots. Her nudity afforded him an excellent view of the massive, magnificent dragon tattooed on her back. He never got tired of looking at it.

"You take very good care of me, don't you?"

"I do my best, Alex-san."

He took her face in his hands. She wore her usual mask of composure.

"I have to talk to you."

"Have I displeased you in some way?"

He patted the bed next to him.

"Come sit here."

It was an unfamiliar order and it made her uncomfortable, but she complied as always, perching gingerly on the edge of the bed.

"You've never done anything to displease me. I have no complaints with you whatsoever." She looked down sadly. "Except that I am not Jessica."

Alex didn't disagree. He had no secrets from Mariko. Hers was the first face he saw in the morning and the last he saw at night. She knew him better than anyone.

"We don't choose who we fall in love with, do we? I don't think Yoshi chose to fall in love with you."

For once, she was unable to conceal her amazement.

"I overheard him in the dressing room before dinner, threatening to commit seppuku if you didn't stop rejecting him."

She looked away.

“Please don’t dismiss him. He’s a fool, but he has his honor.”

“I wouldn’t think of it. He’s a valuable man. Why do you hold him in such contempt?”

“There’s nothing wrong with him, really. It’s just that...that...”

“He isn’t me.”

This time, it was Mariko who couldn’t disagree. Alex put his arms around her, pulled her close. “I want you to serve me tonight,” he whispered. Mariko was on her knees in a flash, trying her best not to seem too anxious. Alex stood in front of her, unbuttoned his wool crepe dress trousers and put her to work. She went for him as if she were starving which, in a sense, she was. When she had him good and hard, he shoved her down on all fours and got down behind her. She heard his belt buckle hit the floor. Languidly lowering her head, she lifted her backside to meet him. This would be one night Mariko would have Alex all to herself.

## Chapter Seven

Every afternoon for the first six weeks, new girls were required to attend class, where they were given instruction in the various arts and skills of erotic slavery. The lessons were invariably enlightening, if not always pleasant, for the instruction was delivered in a distinctly physical manner that made it difficult for any girl to forget just exactly what she'd been taught.

No detail in their preparation for lives of sexual servitude was allowed to escape the minutest attention. A whole week had been spent, for instance, teaching them how to walk properly - heads up, shoulders back, tits out - with books balanced atop their heads, despite the handicaps of various shackles, hobbles, corsets, posture collars, arm sleeves and, of course, perilously high heels. Every time a book had hit the floor, the girl carrying it had been given plenty of reason to regret her Awkwardness.

As the training process progressed, the subject matter became more specific, with each girl receiving ample individual attention as she acquired the most sophisticated knowledge of every kind of service she might be called upon to provide.

Pamela regarded all of this as pretty elementary stuff. Despite her girlish look, the little blond had brought a fair amount of experience with her when she came to this place. She figured there wasn't much about sex she didn't already know, and as for being a slave, well, she knew she was meant for that all her life.

The classes would have been downright tedious for her, if they weren't so harrowing.

Like everything else around here, the whole routine was designed to make a girl know her place.

First off, there was the uniform. It was almost a grotesque parody of a school uniform, or a cheerleading costume for some bizarre athletic event. Made of thin, white cotton, it consisted of a tight, stretchy little top, cropped so short as to fully expose the lower hemispheres of the breasts, and a lewdly abbreviated, loosely-cut skirt that barely covered anything when the wearer was standing straight up and exposed everything when she bent over. Since the girls wore nothing underneath the skirts, they were effectively unprotected by them in any way.

Then, as always, there were the restraints: the high leather collars with the little platform under the chin to keep the head tilted back, the readily snapable wrist cuffs and the stiletto bondage pumps with the locking ankle straps.

The hapless pupils, of whom there were six at present (the youngest just eighteen), were strapped into a row of small metal chairs, ankles apart, hands pulled up behind them and cuffed to rings in the straight backs of the seats, facing the front of the classroom. It was a situation that was surely well-conceived to focus the attention.

Up at the front there was a desk for the instructor and a variety of visual aids - a projection screen, a vertical bondage frame, an examining table - and plenty of storage cabinets for whatever fiendish gizmos might be needed on a given day. -

The severe way in which Pamela's wrists were pinioned thrust out her tits, which were rather full for such a slender girl, under the thin fabric, making her feel all too visible. Like the others, she only hoped to get through this unnoticed.

However, as soon as she saw who the instructor for the day was, she realized with a distinct sinking sensation that she was unlikely to be so fortunate today.

Lola strolled into the classroom in her creaking black leathers, cruel and beautiful as ever. Pamela still hadn't fully recovered from her last encounter with this evil witch, and she wasn't looking forward to another. Moreover,

Lola was not alone. Bart, the good-looking older man who was rumored to be considering buying out the owners, had come along with her. She could hear them talking in low voices in the back of the room, but after daring a single, hasty glance, she couldn't risk turning around to look. Whatever was going to happen, Pamela wished she'd get on with it. They'd already been strapped in place for some time, just waiting, and she was starting to feel uncomfortable in a number of different spots.

Finally, Lola sashayed up to the front of the room and the lesson commenced. As she suspected it would be, the subject matter was quite familiar to Pamela. She considered herself fairly well-versed in the area of fellatio, but the way Lola idly twirled the lithe, leather handled rattan cane as she spoke reminded Pamela to pay close heed regardless.

Lola paced back and forth in front of the row of bound girls, tapping the business end of the cane in her gloved palm. As usual, Lola seemed to be able to read all their minds.

"I'm sure most of you little sluts think you wrote the book on sucking dick, but you're all a bunch of lazy, spoiled brats as far as I'm concerned."

Lola paused for dramatic effect, stopping to fix the eyes of each girl as she passed back and forth, up and down the rows.

"How often have you gotten by with using your hands more than your mouth? How often have you secretly spit instead of swallowing? How many of our revered guests have you accidentally bitten in a moment of distraction?"

Lola came to a halt directly in front Pamela's chair. Pamela's wide, blue eyes dared not turn from Lola's penetrating gaze.

"No matter," Lola said quietly, "these little vices can be cured. It's all a matter of concentration."

Lola circled behind Pamela and, in the most seemingly casual way, began playing with Pamela's nipples through the fabric of the skimpy top. Pamela

stifled a moan.

They were terribly sensitive and, even as she cursed at them silently to lay down and be quiet, they sprang to instant attention under Lola's firm, expert touch.

"You must never let your own state of arousal interfere with the task at hand," Lola explained, "or unfortunate results may ensue."

Lola stepped back and, without warning, took a full swing at Pamela's breasts with the cane. Completely immobilized by the chair, Pamela could do nothing to protect herself, absorbing the complete impact of the blow right across her engorged nips, which stung like two hives of bees. She whimpered and squirmed as much as the straps would allow, but managed not to cry out.

Lola deftly unbuckled Pamela's restraints and pulled her to her feet by the hair.

"Get up, you little bitch, I'm going to demonstrate on you."

Pamela wobbled up onto her heels, still reeling from the stroke of the cane, which reverberated through her whole body. Lola shoved her to the front of the room and ordered her to strip. Pamela complied instantly, removing the top and skirt and folding them neatly on the desk. She stood at attention, legs apart, arms folded behind her. The cane had left a single, brilliant vermilion streak across her tits. It was clearly visible even to Bart, standing at the back of the room watching the proceedings. Lola certainly knew how to handle a stick.

She circled in on the now-naked Pamela like a shark, inspecting the blond girl as if she were livestock. Pamela stood very still, trying to make sure her position was correct in every detail. She barely trembled as she felt Lola's gloved hand travel down her body, which had been lightly oiled after her shower and was now additionally slickened with a coat of nervous sweat, coming to a stop over Pamela's clit. Since, like the other new girls, Pamela was completely shaved, it wasn't hard to find.

“You look like the type who’s easily distracted to me.” Lola held up the tips of her gloved fingers for Pamela to see. They were shining wet. “See?”

Lola pointed at the floor. “Down.”

Pamela dropped to her knees with an audible thump. She got her thighs apart and her hands up behind her as fast as possible. Lola paid no attention to Pamela. She went to a cabinet and got out the apparatus she would need for the completion of the lesson. Pamela’s eyes somehow got even wider when she saw it.

This was certainly not the first strap-on dildo Pamela had made the acquaintance of.

They were pretty popular around this place. But it was definitely one of the larger ones, a huge, black latex affair which Lola secured around her middle with a sturdy, black leather harness. But what made this device particularly unique and infernal was the fact that it obviously functioned in some way. From the same cabinet Lola had removed a bulb-syringe resembling a turkey baster and a glass jar of some nasty, viscous-looking white liquid. She drew a full load out of the syringe and injected it into the dildo through a valve on the top. As she did so, she directed her explanation to the class, rather than to Pamela, who stayed on her knees, resting her bottom on her heels.

“As you can see, this mechanism has been designed to recreate the real thing in a most ingenious way. The mixture of emulsified corn syrup, which has been kept heated to body temperature, is loaded into the reservoir under pressure. By activating this button on the underside, it can be released.”

Lola demonstrated, tapping the button lightly so that a single, thick, oily drop oozed out through the head of the dildo. Pamela saw it out of the corner of her eye. This was not going to be easy.

Lola casually lifted a short, multi-tailed flogger off a hook on the wall and strode up to Pamela with a sneer on her face. She looked ready to enjoy herself. Pamela moistened her lips and tried to relax her jaw while Lola

bent down behind her and hooked her wrist cuffs together. It was just as well. Pamela didn't want her hands getting her in trouble.

“Now watch closely,” Lola admonished, taking Pamela's head in her hands. Pamela lowered her long-lashed lids as Lola slid the dildo between her lips. It was big alright.

It tasted of rubber and the liquid inside it, which Pamela had to admit remarkably resembled the real thing. Pamela took it on just as if it were a genuine cock, and one she adored at that. She slurped and licked and sucked while Lola directed with a firm, steady grip on Pamela's skull.

“You will notice how she maintains an even stroke and keeps her teeth well out of the way, even when potentially distracting stimulation is applied.”

With that, Lola started on Pamela's back with the flogger, smacking her solidly between the shoulder blades. Though not as ferocious as the cane, it landed with a sharp report that threatened to throw off Pamela's rhythm. Still, she'd had some practice with this one and felt she was holding her own, up until Lola's big surprise.

“As you can see,” she said, flogging away all the while, this little slave is doing an adequate job, so far as it goes. But the real test lies ahead.”

Lola laid on the whip with a rising intensity, its furious lashing quickly bringing up long, crimson streaks across Pamela's pale back. At the same time, she hammered the dildo harder and deeper into Pamela's mouth. Pamela did her best to open her throat to the invading presence, but Lola was deliberately choking her. Pamela's whole body shook and tears trickled from the corners of her eyes. She fought for breath without breaking position.

Then, just when she thought she might pass out, Pamela heard Lola's ugly laugh from far away. Lola had hit the release button. Suddenly, Pamela's mouth and throat were filled with thick, hot, salty liquid. There seemed to be gallons of it. Pamela tried to swallow as much as she could, but with the

dildo buried so far back in her throat, there was only so much she could take down.

Inevitably, Pamela involuntarily pulled her face back and spewed out a mouthful of ooze all over the tops of Lola's shiny, black thigh-high boots. She huddled miserably, retching and coughing, while Lola stood smirking above her.

“And there you see a fine example of what not to do,” she pronounced.

Seizing Pamela by the collar she dragged her up and made her lick the her boots clean, which Pamela did gladly, though with no real hope of redemption. Sure enough, as soon as she had completed this simple task, Lola hauled her up on her feet and made her bend over the desk, behind facing her classmates. Pamela knew what came next.

The can seared her bottom like a branding iron, right at the crease at the top of her thighs. She tried to stand still, but that little right foot just wouldn't stay on the floor.

The second stroke was even harder. Pamela knew the usual penalty was ten. She hoped she might be dead by then, but doubted she'd be so lucky.

Lola did a fine, professional job, laying the blows an inch or so apart up over the curve of the buttocks, stopping just where the padding began to thin out. By the time she was done, Pamela was bright red overall, accented with deep, purplish welts where the contact had been hardest. She shook all over, muscles tensing visibly in her struggle to stay upright. What had she done to piss this bitch off so bad? She wouldn't have to wait long for an answer.

Lola dismissed the class with some stern warnings to avoid similar, ill-mannered behavior, watching the attending staff members unstrap the girls and lead them out.

Pamela remained bent over the desk, as she hadn't been ordered to move. She bit her lower lip, trying to keep from unseemly sobbing.

When the others were all gone, Lola came around and leaned down, bringing her face close to Pamela's. She casually twirled a coil of Pamela's blond hair around her finger.

"I hope you enjoyed our little presentation today, because you're going to be my special pet from now on," she said in a quietly ominous tone. "We'll have many opportunities to play together and I have lots of clever ideas."

Pamela couldn't take it any longer. This was getting personal. She turned her beet red, tear-stained face to Lola's and spoke between her teeth in a voice choked with fear and anger.

"Why are you doing this to me, Lola?"

"Because I enjoy it. And because I want to know what's going on between Jessica and Alex. Sooner or later, you're going to tell me."

"You're wasting your time." Lola shrugged.

"It's mine to waste. Now get dressed and get out of here. You've got work to do."

Pamela grabbed her clothes, wriggling into the top and pulling the little skirt ever so carefully over her blazing tail feathers, and scampered out. When her heels had clacked on down the hallway, Bart came from the shadows, slowly clapping his hands.

"Bravo," he said, "a most impressive performance. I can't say much for your ends, but I applaud your means."

"Just so long as you remember our deal. If I get Alex to sell his interest and you take over here, his job is mine."

Bart coolly patted her on the cheek.

"My dear, you're one person I wouldn't dream of antagonizing."

At that very moment, if Lola could have been a fly on the wall in Jessica's little art deco boudoir, she would have seen Alex and Jessica having a good, old-fashioned squabble. Jessica sat in the middle of her bed, black negligee drawn up to her locked collar. Alex paced back and forth, shirtless, in his uniform trousers and boots.

"Really, Alex, I don't see what you're so upset about," Jessica said evenly. "All I did was express a little disappointment at not seeing you last night. After all, we don't get that many whole nights together."

"I can't always be at your beck and call, Jessica. I have other obligations," Alex fumed.

"Well, I suppose if you felt compelled to mercy fuck Mariko because she's your personal slave, there wasn't much else you could do. After all, she is the one who polishes your buttons."

That was it for Alex. He turned and grabbed Jessica by the wrists, slamming her down on the bed "It seems a few people here have forgotten who are the masters and who are the slaves."

For once, Jessica fought him, thrashing her wild red hair in his face, trying to yank free of his iron grip. It wasn't much of a contest. Jessica found herself flat on the mattress, arms being pulled up above her. All Alex had to do was snap the rings on her permanent cuffs to the hooks on the chains attached to the head of Jessica's bed. He left her legs free, as was his preference.

Alex took Jessica's flushed, angry face in one hand, forcing her to look at him.

"Get this through your gorgeous head, Jessica. What we're doing is forbidden. If we're discovered, it's the end for both of us here. We both must continue to do what is expected of us. And I will continue to do what I please."

Alex took hold of Jessica's black negligee and ripped it apart, slowly and methodically laying bare her satiny flesh, her great, round tits, her coppery nipples, the tiny patch of red curls. She lifted her legs and spread them wide as he climbed on, pausing just long enough to unbutton his fly, liberating his throbbingly hard cock.

He felt her heels settle into the small of his back.

If this wasn't worth risking everything for, what was?

## Chapter Eight

“Tighter!”

Pamela thrust her knee into the middle of Jessica’s back and hauled on the corset laces. Jessica exhaled deeply to allow the heavily-boned black silk-satin corset to compress her waist a few millimeters further. With each new reduction, the corset rearranged Jessica’s physique a little more, narrowing her middle as it caused her already-luxuriant bust and hips to swell a bit more. With her fair, almost translucent skin and her head of thick, red curls, it gave her an almost Victorian look. The effect was heightened by the short, high-heeled lace-up boots that had been sent to her room with the rest of the ensemble. Bart certainly knew what he was in the mood for that evening.

Pamela gave one last tug on the strings.

“That’s it. If I pull any harder, the strings’ll pop.”

“Damn! Why does he always want this thing right after dinner?”

“Because he’s a sick, disgusting pervert. I could see him watching out of the corner of my eye while Lola pumped half a , gallon of goop down my throat with that monster dildo of hers. He was loving every second of it.”

Studying herself in the vast, round mirror of her vanity, Jessica arched an elegant eyebrow. Her lips had been lacquered a shiny, cocksucker red. “It does sound rather entertaining.”

Pamela whirled around to show Jessica her behind in the mirror. Pamela’s maid’s apron only covered her in the front (and that just barely), affording Jessica an excellent view of the ten thick, vermilion welts Lola had put on Pamela’s ass with the cane after the demonstration.

“I suppose you find those entertaining too,” Pamela said indignantly.

“No, darling,” Jessica whispered, bending down to kiss the angriest of the stripes softly, so as not to disturb the gleaming Up gloss. “I find them exquisite.” Pamela pouted.

“Well, I’m glad someone’s enjoying this situation, because I don’t know how much more I can stand. Lola’s not going to let up on me until I tell her about you and Alex.

And I know that she and that Bart guy are working together. You’ve got to get Alex to do something.”

“We’re running late,” Jessica said firmly, “and Bart hates to be kept waiting.”

Years of service had taught Jessica how to camouflage her emotions well, but inwardly, she was just as worried as Pamela. Their position was tenuous at best.

She’d always liked Bart, but she had no illusions as to his absolute ruthlessness. In his determination to own Jessica for himself, he was prepared to buy the whole establishment at whatever cost. Surely he wouldn’t stick at the prospect of enlisting a witch like Lola to help him get what he needed to accomplish this end, namely the elimination of Alex.

If Lola succeeded in getting Pamela to implicate Alex and Jessica in an illicit staff-slave romantic liaison, Alex would be forced to resign on principle. After that, it would be no big trick for Bart to get Stephanie to sell out her share of the business. Alex would, after all, have to do something if he hoped to protect the status quo.

Jessica turned her back to Pamela, who couldn’t help noticing how the corset enhanced the curves of the woman she served and loved so well. Other than the black, seamed, Cuban-heeled stockings and patent fetish opera pumps and the elbow-length black satin gloves, it was all she wore (except, of course, for her permanent collar and restraint cuffs). The breathtaking sight momentarily made Pamela forget her own troubles.

Jessica crossed her gloved hands behind her.

“Hook me up.”

Pamela snapped the leather cuffs together so that one of the keys carried by the staff and guests would be required to separate them. She took the long, light-gauge lead chain hanging from the low stool in front of the vanity and locked it to the front ring on Jessica’s collar. Jessica tossed her curls with one last, backward glance at the mirror.

“You sure I look okay?”

“That’s the least of my worries. Come on.”

Pamela led Jessica out of her private quarters and into the marble-floored corridor outside, their steps clacking away into the distance.

Jessica and Pamela weren’t the only ones aware of the need for action on Alex’s part. Alex himself was only too alert to the deterioration of his strategic situation.

Stephanie was obviously interested in Bart’s offer and Lola was obviously interested in Alex’s job. Alex, who always knew more than he seemed to, could foresee any number of calamitous outcomes from the current interplay of swirling ambitions, and he had already decided to take control of circumstances before circumstances took control of him. He chose his words carefully, watching Mariko lay out his black silk evening pajamas on the bed.

“I will have additional need of your services this evening.”

Mariko’s delicate-featured face brightened at the prospect. Since her master had shown unexpected desire for her the night before, she had begun to nourish fantasies of having him all to herself again. Perhaps he was, at last, getting over his fascination with the redheaded demon Jessica.

“I have no desires outside of your own,” she said humbly, trying to conceal her delight, which proved to be premature in any case.

“I want you to keep an eye on Lola for me. You’re the most trusted, respected slave here. No one will question your comings and goings. You can watch her without anyone noticing. Let me know who she talks to, what they tell her. Be my eyes and ears.

Mariko did an even better job of hiding her disappointment.

“It will be done, Alex-san.” She bowed stiffly, then went on about her tasks of turning down the bed and lowering the lights. Alex suddenly stepped in front of her, taking her by the upper arms.

“I know you consider spying dishonorable,” he said, trying to look into her downcast eyes, “but there’s a lot at stake here -my position, yours, the future of all of us.

There’s no one else I can rely on.”

“You are right, Alex-san, and you must never forget it.”

She slid from his grasp, turning away to flash her gloriously tattooed back at him on the way to her own quarters, which adjoined his.

As soon as Mariko was gone, Alex sat down at the glass and steel desk under the window with the ocean view. He flipped open his sleek notebook computer and punched up the address file. There was a certain phone number in Berlin he needed to access. It was time to enable the second part of his plan.

It took a little doing, but Mariko was able to secure the assignment of carrying refreshments to the private party in suite #3, Bart’s room. Since she helped make out the work schedules, she had plenty of bargaining power when it came time to negotiate with the girl whose shift it was supposed to have been.

Suite #3 was done up on the Turkish seraglio scheme, with heavily draped walls and thick carpets. Enormous cushions had been piled into the corners of the room, while in the middle of the floor various blocks, chains and shackles had been provided for the guests' convenience.

When Mariko made her quiet entrance with her tray of after-dinner drinks, she found the festivities just commencing. Bart reclined on the pillows with Shari, curled up naked with her face in his lap, sucking happily away, her full shackles tinkling musically. Pamela knelt off to one side, attending while Lola prepared Jessica for the main attraction.

Jessica lay flat on her back on the floor, arms and legs open wide. Lola efficiently made her way around Jessica's body fastening on an impressive array of wide, padded leather straps, which had been dyed an eye-catching bright red.

There were straps for the upper and lower arms, for the calves and thighs, for the upper body above and below the breasts and for the waist, where Lola cinched a broad, sturdy leather belt around the outside of Jessica's corset. A gratuitously hard yank on the belt just before buckling made sure Jessica's already constricted middle would be compressed to the maximum possible degree.

Jessica remained completely impassive during all these ministrations, staring straight up at the ceiling, never meeting Lola's eyes. Lola looked quite attractive in her bolero jacket, jodhpurs and high boots. Under other circumstances, Jessica might have given the black-haired, black-eyed, black-hearted dominatrix more than a second look. From what she already knew of her, however, Lola didn't command enough respect to merit Jessica's attention. She remained utterly compliant as Lola hooked the rings on the straps to the chains that hung like vines from the center of the ceiling.

Mariko, having served the drinks she'd brought, retired, pretty well able to imagine what was about to happen, though not yet aware of its full implications.

Oblivious to Mariko's arrival and departure, Lola satisfied herself one more time of the security of Jessica's straps, then gave a tug to the end of a tasseled rope hanging nearby. Silent hoists went to work overhead, taking up the chains attached to the straps buckled around Jessica's body, which rose slowly from the floor as if by levitation. When Jessica was suspended spread-eagled in mid-air at about waist level, Lola tugged on the rope again. The hoists stopped lifting. Jessica floated in the ethereal twilight of the chamber.

Bart clapped his hands, delighted.

"That's sensational! You were so right about this room. I can't imagine why I never tried it before."

"That's the advantage of working here," Lola coolly observed. "You get to know all the best features of the place."

Bart took hold of Shari's thick, dark hair and lifted the girl's mouth off his cock, which stood up wet, red and quite rigid in the amber, indirect light from the draped dimness overhead. He stood up and started over toward Jessica, motioning Shari to follow.

She crawled after him, stretching her movements out languidly, like a cat, so as to give everyone the best possible view of her undulating behind as she traveled.

Jessica grimly realized that her attempt to distract Bart's attentions from her by literally throwing Shari into his lap had pretty much backfired. Shari was obviously enamored of the attractive, charming and worldly Bart, whom she now followed around with mooning eyes, while he regarded her with nothing more than mild amusement. The one part of Jessica's body not supported by the straps was her head, which she rolled back to watch Bart approach, letting her red tresses hang toward the floor. It was clear even from her upside down perspective that he had lost none of his obsessive interest in her.

Meanwhile, Lola strolled around behind Pamela, took the kneeling girl's face in one hand and forced her to look straight at what was about to transpire.

“Watch well, little fool. This is the shape of things to come.”

Bart took his time, enjoying Jessica first with his eyes.

She was truly lovely, all airborne curves and red leather over black satin, still except for the shallow, rapid breaths the corset allowed her to take.

Jessica felt Bart's skilled touch, rolling her nipple ring between his thumb and index finger, much the way Alex liked to. Strange, how similar these two men were in some ways. And yet how different overall. Bart asked her if she was wet inside. It was a rhetorical question. If things like this didn't get her wet, she would have left long ago.

Still, Bart suggested that perhaps she should be made more so, and had Shari lend her assistance to that purpose.

Shari's full lips felt soft and warm against Jessica's mostly-shaved pussy. Her tongue was enthusiastic and surprisingly well-schooled. Jessica had concluded that harem-bred girls were full of surprises.

The suspension was relatively comfortable, with the corset lending welcome extra support to Jessica's back, and she let herself go with the sensation, head lolling, eyes closed.

Pamela couldn't help feeling a twinge of jealousy watching this. She understood enough of Jessica's nature to know that, given a chance, she would never refuse pleasure in any form. Still, Pamela felt she belonged in the place between Jessica's legs where Shari was so busy just now, and had a bad, ominous presentment about Lola's insistence that she watch so closely.

Jessica heard some movement around her body, felt Shari's mouth withdraw to be replaced by something much harder and more intrusive. She opened

her eyes and lifted her head to see Bart standing in between her wide-spread thighs. Seizing her around the hips, he pulled her in against him, sliding all the way into her well-oiled depths. As usual, the corset had slightly reconfigured Jessica internally, pushing her insides down to make her even narrower and tighter than she was naturally. She figured that was why Bart wanted it on her. A man of educated tastes in every sense.

The genius of the suspension apparatus soon became clear. Bart had only to stand still while Lola, who had come over at Bart's beckoning, rocked Jessica back and forth by the shoulders. Shari remained on the floor right at the coupling point, slurping and licking in any way she thought might be helpful. Her little pointed tongue working its way into Jessica's rear entrance while Bart's engorged cock squeezed into her constricted pussy made her feel quite remarkably full inside, producing a lingering moan.

Pamela looked on as Jessica swung back and forth between Lola and Bart. She didn't like the way this was shaping up one bit.

A sinking feeling in her stomach told her something terrible was about to happen.

As far as Bart was concerned, however, things were going swimmingly. The ball-bearing movements of Jessica's suspended body and the perfect internal frictions they produced were pushing him rapidly toward the edge. He had taken an iron grasp of the belt around Jessica's corseted middle and was slamming her up against him harder and harder.

Jessica, too, had slipped off into her private oblivion. This was not the man she would prefer to be fucking. This was not a place of her own choosing. In some strange way, these facts only turned her on all the more. Even the touch of Lola's fingertips on her clit was exciting, whatever her feelings about Lola. It dawned on Jessica that she could come quite easily this way, asking permission in a dreamy murmur. Bart granted it with an extra hard thrust.

Jessica's whole body went rigid in the air, arching up against the red strap work. She threw back her head and let out a low, guttural wail. This further

stimulated Bart, who hammered her even harder.

When his critical moment was at hand, Bart abruptly stopped the proceedings, withdrew himself and came around to Jessica's face. Lola nimbly stepped aside for him, grabbing a handful of Jessica's hair to lift up her head. Looking up at the underside of Bart's throbbing cock, Jessica knew what was about to happen. The spurts of hot liquid drenched her almost instantly. She opened her mouth wide to catch what she could, the rest running down her cheeks and neck into her hair. She felt a rough hand rubbing it in. It was all quite nasty and she liked it very much. If she weren't so in love with Alex, she could take a liking to Bart.

Pamela automatically rose to get a wet towel from the connecting bathroom, but halted at Lola's barked command.

"Back on your knees, bitch! Shari will take care of her."

While Shari scurried off to the bathroom, Lola came over to stand in front of the cowering Pamela.

"Bart and I have been discussing a few changes we might make around here."

This was it. Pamela could feel it coming. From the corner of her eye she saw Bart lowering Jessica to the floor, Shari blotting Jessica's face with a damp cloth. She wondered if Jessica had come back enough to be aware of what was transpiring.

Lola wore a grin of cruel triumph when she delivered her news to Pamela.

"Since Shari wants to serve Bart and Bart plans to be spending a lot of time with Jessica while he's here, we've decided to assign her to serve as Jessica's maid while you will have the honor of serving me."

Jessica, finally unhooked from her chains, sat bolt upright at the sound of Lola's words. Pamela's blue eyes began to fill immediately. She shook her head rapidly back and forth in furious denial.

“Please, Lola. You can’t do this to us,” she babbled. “I belong to Jessica.”

“Nonsense,” Lola snapped back. “Slaves aren’t permitted to have slaves. All of you belong to all of us. You serve at our discretion.”

“Perhaps you should talk to Stephanie about that.”

Jessica’s voice was composed and firm over Lola’s shoulder. She turned to find Jessica, hair wild, face still flushed from her recent workout, standing right behind her. Jessica’s green eyes were hard as emeralds. She was squared off in a fighting stance. For one instant, Lola’s arrogance was shaken, but she plunged on while Bart and Shari stood back, puzzled at the strange way in which events were unfolding.

“I don’t need Stephanie’s approval for this, or yours,” Lola insisted. “It’s just a routine reassignment of personnel.”

“No it isn’t, and you know it. You’re deliberately abusing Pamela.”

“Now why would I want to do that?,” Lola asked evenly. Jessica knew, but dared not answer.

“Right, then. I’ll take my new girl and be going.” With a victorious smirk, Lola took Pamela by the collar, hauling her choking to her feet.

“Come with me, slut.”

Jessica’s grip on Lola’s arm was like a vise. Lola felt it being pulled away from Pamela’s collar and twisted behind her. With her free hand, Lola snagged the whip she always wore at her belt and slashed at Jessica’s face with it. Jessica easily ducked the unaimed blows, kicking Lola’s knees out from under her. The two of them went down together, snarling and scratching, Pamela scuttling out of the way as best she could.

“Marvelous!” exclaimed Bart. “Feminine combat!” He stepped back even further, making sure he was out of the line of fire. He stood rubbing his

hands while Shari sat on the floor, clinging to his leg. She'd never seen anything like this before.

“My money's on the redhead,” Bart said. Shari didn't dare an opinion.

Bart was a good handicapper at cat fights. Despite a couple of low and dirty blows and a savage yank on Jessica's nipple ring, Lola was unable to subdue the rebelling slave, who clung to her like a fury. Jessica ripped apart Lola's jacket to expose her full, hard, black-nippled tits, burying her fist in the right one with a meaty thump that knocked the breath right out of Lola's lungs.

Abandoning all semblance of dignity, Lola now struggled just to get free, but Jessica held on, dragging Lola back down onto the floor. With a speed and strength Lola would never have expected, Jessica swung her knee over Lola's chest and pinned her down. Jessica's long, satin-gloved fingers wrapped themselves around Lola's throat.

Lola's blood turned to ice water when she looked up to see Jessica's lips pull back over her white teeth in a death's head grin of pure, animal delight.

“Nobody likes a bully,” she growled between clenched teeth.

Lola's eyes bulged. Jessica's grip tightened, unaffected by Lola's increasingly feeble attempts to push her away. Lola could feel the air rasping in her constricted throat.

She wasn't imagining it. This madwoman was trying to kill her.

Pamela, having grasped the seriousness of what was happening before anyone, sprang at Jessica's back, struggling desperately to pull her off.

“No, Jessica! Don't do it!”

And that was just the moment when Mariko returned to see if anyone wanted another round of drinks. Hitting the red silent alarm button next to the door, she lunged into the fray. With a little help from Pamela, she was

able to get Jessica under control long enough for Lola to stagger, coughing and wheezing, up off the carpet.

“You’ll pay for this, the both of you!” Lola gasped out, leaning against the wall, still fighting for her breath.

Jessica shook off Mariko and Pamela defiantly.

“It’ll have been worth it.”

Then the door flew open and Alex entered, along with a half-dozen staff members responding to the alarm. One look at Lola’s shredded clothing and Jessica’s blazing eyes and he knew what had happened. Now there would be real trouble, and it was coming too soon.

## Chapter Nine

“They’ve both got to go. That’s all there is to it.”

Stephanie’s tone was emphatic, her manner as agitated as Alex had seen it in their long years as partners and friends. She paced the floor of the small, oak-paneled antechamber, elegant as always in her severe black suit that buttoned up the front like a cavalry officer’s tunic. Her single blue eye burned with anger and frustration, her brow knitted under the patch that covered what should have been the other one.

“Don’t you think dismissal is a bit extreme for this case?”

Alex did his best to sound nonchalant, allowing himself to lounge as much as the stiff, leather-upholstered bench would permit. One of skills he’d picked up in the school of survival was the ability to appear the least concerned at the very moment he had the greatest reason to be. Stephanie stopped in mid-pace and whirled to face him.

“Extreme? You want to talk about extreme? A senior house slave trying to strangle a staff mistress in front of an important guest, now that’s extreme.”

“Jessica wasn’t really trying to strangle her.”

“That’s not what Jessica said.”

It was hard to argue the point. Jessica hadn’t exactly helped her own case during her interrogation. According to procedure, she had been questioned naked, strung up on an electrically-powered slant rack, calibrated to stretch the limbs by precise degrees.

Jessica, already stripped and shackled, had been brought to the hearing chamber direct from the private suite in which the attack had taken place. Alex, as chief of staff, had overseen the questioning personally, with Stephanie (who had been gotten out of bed for the occasion) looking on.

Alex had watched with no apparent distress while Jessica was strapped down to the massive machine. She had looked quite stunning in her state of post-combat dishevelment, despite the already-purpling bruise under one eye where Mistress Lola had backhanded her after she was already safely restrained by many hands.

Alex had hoped Jessica, who could be very stubborn indeed, wouldn't hold out too long under interrogation. He had no wish to make her suffer needlessly over a proceeding whose outcome could hardly have been in doubt, given the numerous witnesses arrayed against her.

As it turned out, that was the least of his worries. He had barely cranked the dial to activate the whirring gears inside the rack's stretching mechanism, pulling Jessica's alabaster-skinned body just to the point of uncomfortable tautness, when she had calmly offered her confession.

"Mistress Lola was unfairly tormenting my serving girl," Jessica said between gritted teeth, "so I stopped her. I would do it again if I had to, more thoroughly."

Anyway, Jessica had certainly gotten herself off the rack in a hurry. Now, she and Pamela waited in an adjoining holding cell while Alex and Stephanie pondered their fate.

"Well, I suppose you have to do what you think best, Stephanie," said Alex, "but Jessica is one of our most popular girls. A lot of the guests would miss her, especially your friend Bart. Do you really think he'd still be interested in buying out your share with Jessica gone?"

Now it was Stephanie who was stuck for an answer. She knew that Bart's obsession with Jessica was the bait that kept him angling for an opportunity to invest some of his vast fortune in their enterprise. It was he who had, without intending to, incited the whole situation that had led to Lola and Jessica's brief but momentous cat fight.

Stephanie shook her head.

“We’ve got to do something, Alex. If we let Jessica get away with striking a mistress, it could undermine discipline among all the slaves. Aren’t you the one who told me that a good dominant should take an interest in justice?”

“Oh, there’ll be justice in this case. Don’t worry. Instead of merely expelling Jessica, I propose that we make an example of her.”

“I’m listening.”

Alex described what he had in mind, knowing he had already won the battle. It had been close.

The holding cell was about as bleak as it could be made - a bare, narrow concrete cubicle furnished only with concrete ledges along the opposing walls and heavy, well-placed ringbolts. The light from the round fixture set in the ceiling was dim, but Jessica couldn’t have seen it anyway. Her head and face were completely covered by a tightly-zipped leather hood with small nostril holes and a cutout for the mouth through which her red-polished lips were still visible. She could breathe comfortably, but she couldn’t see a thing.

The rest of her was as bare as her face was covered. Chained to the wall by the wrists, collar and ankles, she could do nothing but sit upright and wait, appreciating the chill of the concrete slab under her naked behind. She knew that Pamela was chained on the opposite shelf because she could hear the blond girl’s head-muffled sniffings from time to time. Both knew better than to speak.

Jessica had no idea how long they had been there before the cell door finally clanked open. She expected something to happen immediately, but for a long time there was only silence, then the sound of familiar footsteps. She felt his presence sitting next to her on the slab.

“Alex? Are you alone?”

“Yes.”

Right at that moment, he felt very alone indeed. Sitting so close to Jessica's bare, chained, vulnerable body, which he knew and loved so well, he had to fight the desire to yank the hood off her face and kiss her passionately. That, however, was hardly the purpose of this mission. He contented himself with a slow caress, his hand traveling down over Jessica's perfectly large, perfectly round breasts, lingering on her coppery nipples to pluck lightly at the ring through the right one before continuing over her long, concave belly, finally coming to rest over her small, neatly-trimmed patch of red curls. Her hooded head fell in against his shoulder with a sigh.

"So what have you decided to do with us?"

"There's good news and bad news."

"Good news?"

"Neither one of you will be dismissed."

This brought a muffled exclamation from the slender, equally naked, equally hooded figure on the other concrete bench.

"All right! We get to stay!"

Jessica knew better than to celebrate just yet.

"Give us the bad news."

"Stephanie feels we have to make a strong statement. I've promised her one. You're to be bullwhipped in front of the entire company and then sent down to the disciplinary block for two weeks of retraining."

"That's unfair! She was only trying to protect me!," Pamela cried out from the other side of the cell.

"What about her?," Jessica asked.

"Well, she tried to restrain you from throttling Lola, so that weight in her favor, but she did as much as confess to having a prohibited personal

relationship with a senior slave she was assigned to serve, namely you.”

“What was I supposed to do?,” wailed Pamela, “let you draw and quarter me?”

“Anyway,” Alex continued, “she’s to be spared the whipping, but she’ll do your time retraining with you as your cellmate. I hope you still love each other when it’s all over.”

Jessica had one last question.

“Who’s doing the whipping?”

“Me.”

He wrapped his arms around Jessica and held her as close as her chains would allow, rocking her tenderly in his arms for a few moments.

It was certainly an event, if not a particularly festive one. The entire population -

guests, slaves and staff - had turned out in the broad, marble-tiled center courtyard under a still-potent late afternoon sun. Black, always popular with this crowd, was clearly the appropriate choice for the day. Stephanie, who almost never wore a uniform, had turned out in her full parade dress, as had Alex, who carried his custom-made Australian stock whip coiled around his left shoulder. Lola, the aggrieved party, wore her best black leathers, accented with a red silk scarf at the throat to cover, without concealing, the fingerprints Jessica had left there. Even Bart, usually the model of sartorial cheer, had dug up a black linen suit someplace.

All eyes were fixed on the black marble column that rose like an evil needle at the center of the courtyard. Ten feet tall, fitted with heavy iron rings around the top and base, its purpose was not difficult to imagine. On top of it, an iron frame held a cardboard sign hand-lettered in rather stylish calligraphy. On it was a single word: “Vicious”. The column’s advancing

shadow on the floor of the courtyard marked the passing moments like a sundial.

“I’d like to get on with this thing,” Stephanie said impatiently. This was precisely the variety of official duty she enjoyed the least.

“I wanted to make sure everyone was here,” Alex explained. “If we’re going to do it, we might as well do it right, wouldn’t you agree, Bart?”

For just an instant, Bart’s face darkened with anger, but he smoothed it out quickly.

“Absolutely. It’s the Royal Navy way.” He gave a stiff salute.

“It still seems to me that I should have been the one to do the whipping,” Lola muttered.

“This is strictly a disciplinary procedure,” Alex reminded her. “We wouldn’t want anything personal creeping into the administration of our offices, now would we?”

At last, the iron gate at the far end of the courtyard swung open and Jessica and Pamela were brought out, still naked and in full chains. Their hoods had been yanked off and they squinted against the light. Sweat had streaked their makeup and matted their hair.

In addition to her manacles, Jessica now wore a black leather flogging harness, consisting of a wide, sturdy strap around the kidneys, locked snugly in place, with a slightly narrower vertical strap intersecting it in the center of the back. The vertical strap covered the spine, terminating at the top in a laced-up half-helmet, below the edge of which Jessica’s curls hung lank. Below the belt, the vertical strap cinched up brutally between Jessica’s thigh, parting her labia to admit a fat, knoblike plug identical to the one penetrating her ass behind it. The round shape of the plugs squeezed the thin membrane in between most unpleasantly and the rear plug was so short it rested uneasily right in the middle of Jessica’s ring of anal muscles. The rude way it forced her open back there filled her viscera with a compelling

desire to perform a bodily function it made quite impossible. She was already sweating from its effects coming through the gate.

The helmet, meant to protect the back of the skull, was held in place by a strap around the forehead and a big ball gag buckled firmly behind Jessica's teeth.

The two penitents were led into the courtyard by the captain of the disciplinary block, the junoesque Astrid, and her first lieutenant, Bridget, the exotic, Balkan amazon who was widely rumored to be Astrid's lover. Both wore the tight uniform blouses and skirts issued to disciplinarians.

Astrid, a teutonic beauty taller than most of the men on the staff, unlocked Jessica's transportation chains and positioned her against the column. Jessica, who found gags particularly humiliating, turned her face away from the silent, watchful crowd, pressing her cheek against the cold marble. She unconsciously lifted her permanently-cuffed wrists to make it easier for Astrid to attach them to the overhead ring, then planted her feet next to the rings at the base without being told. Jessica was determined to avoid any unseemly display. Things were bad enough already.

Jessica surreptitiously watched Bridget lead the trembling Pamela to the other side of the column, where she fastened her in place with a simple collar chain. Pamela's punishment would be to watch Jessica suffer at close quarters, knowing that it was for her benefit that Jessica had intervened against Lola in the first place.

The poor girl was mortified with guilt, quite unnecessarily. Alas, even if she could have spoken, Jessica wouldn't have felt it prudent to grant Pamela the absolution she would have liked to. She wouldn't want Pamela to know that all of this had happened because Jessica couldn't affront to have the hated Lola take charge of the serving girl, lest Pamela's detailed knowledge of Jessica's secret affair with Alex destroy them all.

When Astrid and Bridget finished securing the girls, they stepped aside, standing at parade rest to await further instructions.

“Well,” Alex yawned, doing his best to sound bored, “time to go to work. “

He stood up and stretched, unlimbering his arm for the task ahead. It was one he approached with mixed feelings, to say the least. At any other time or place, Jessica would have welcomed a good whipping at Alex’s hands and he would have been happy to oblige. The context here, however, was more shameful than erotic. Jessica took pride in her obedience, and Alex hated to think of her chagrin at being punished like an unruly initiate.

Still, there were Jessica’s long, lovely back and superb heart-shaped ass, waiting to be whipped. That which could not be avoided might as well be enjoyed.

As per the custom, he approached her, sliding the whip down off his shoulder en route. She turned her face to him as he drew near. The look in her eyes was one of grim resignation. Alex unbuckled the gag strap and pulled the ball out of her mouth with a wet pop, spilling a little spit out of the corners of her full lips.

“Anything to say?” “Make it look good.” “I’ll do my best.”

Alex touched her cheek with the coiled whip. She rubbed against it, brought her lips around to kiss it briefly before Alex stuffed the gag back in. Heading back to his marker, he paused to glance at Pamela, whose face was perfectly gray.

“Jessica will appreciate it if you don’t make a spectacle of yourself. Just watch quietly and it will all be over soon.”

Alex took up his stance and uncoiled the whip, directing Astrid to count the strokes.

At the announcement that there would be fifty, an audible gasp rose from the crowd.

Alex had promised an example. Now he would deliver.

The stock whip was a beautifully made thing, twelve feet of woven hide with a perfect progressive taper from butt to tip. It unrolled with the precision of a good fly line. Alex could split a playing card with it.

He laid it out on the ground a couple of times to make sure it was unkinked, than abruptly swung it up and into the air and snapped it forward. The whip sang across the courtyard to lay a diagonal stripe down the middle of Jessica's right bottom cheek. She jerked, rattling her chains, the involuntary clenching of her muscles around the intrusive knob adding to her miseries. He had sent his message. Yes, he would make it look good.

Knowing that the flogging harness protected the parts of Jessica's back where the whip might do serious harm - the skull, spine and kidneys - gave him the freedom to play it over the rest of her at will, working his way up from the buttocks, over the ribcage, out to the shoulders and then back down again. Astrid counted each stroke in her clipped Dutch accent.

Each time the whip whistled through the air, landing with a sharp crack on Jessica's exposed flesh, she jumped in her restraints, gurgling behind the gag. She hated the damned thing, but at least it made it easier not to scream, something she hated even worse.

The whip seemed to be laying trails of molten lava across her back everywhere it landed. She couldn't help suspecting that Alex was deliberately wrapping her just a bit, so the wicked split tails would tickle the sides of her breasts. It would be just like him to do something like that. Even as she tried to bury her face in the unyielding marble, she had the faint intuition that she was becoming aroused.

Alex had started slowly, allowing a good, long interval between each stroke for the full impact to sink in, but he gradually picked up his tempo as he went along. What good was a whipping without the proper sense of dramatic timing? He glanced over at Pamela who stood hands to mouth, tears streaming down her face. He didn't doubt that she was getting the worst of it.

Again and again, Alex circled the sinuous leather serpent in the air and then let it fly, finding a new target on every unmarked inch of Jessica's pale skin. As always, she colored beautifully, each stripe clear and distinct, welts rising in ropelike ridges. Alex longed to be kissing those welts later, though he sighed inwardly at the knowledge that that was not likely to be possible this time.

The whipping continued. Jessica felt herself sliding into the dreamlike state that was better than any drug. She still felt the pain, but it diminished in proportion to a rising heat all through her body. She realized that she had stopped jumping at the fall of the lash, was now standing perfectly still, allowing the column to support her. She was grateful for its strength.

The crowd of onlookers remained respectfully silent. Any one of the slaves, and not a few of the staff members, could imagine themselves in Jessica's place. They tried to extend the courtesy they would want for themselves. Only Lola smirked with undisguised satisfaction. She had suspected that Alex might go easy on Jessica, but she couldn't find fault with his technique, try though she might.

"I don't know how much more of this I can take," Bart whispered to Stephanie.

"Just wait," she replied, "the worst is yet to come."

The last ten lashes were, by custom, to be administered to the front of the body.

When the count reached forty, Alex took a break to rest his arm while Astrid and Bridget unlocked Jessica. They turned her around and reattached her. What a sight she was, breasts heaving, body shining with sweat. Alex had to remind himself to concentrate, for this was the tricky part.

Settling himself firmly, Alex applied the final ten. Each tit got a stripe or two, the tails of the whip actually lifting Jessica's nipple ring without catching it. There were a couple of good ones above and below the navel that would be there for some time for Jessica to contemplate. Finally, Alex

snaked the whip around to Jessica's thighs, delivering the strokes that, he knew, would break her.

Slowly, she sank in her chains, head fallen back, sobbing weakly, saliva brimming out below the ball gag to drip down her chin. It was done. Alex coiled the whip, slid it back up to his shoulder, turned and departed. Jessica and Pamela would be left in place for an additional half hour for the general edification of the public. The Astrid and Bridget would take them down to the disciplinary block to begin their retraining.

Alex walked straight past Stephanie, Bart and Lola, who stood together watching the crowd thin out.

"He should at least have let me get in the last ten," Lola said sourly.

Stephanie turned her peculiarly searching, cyclopean gaze on Lola.

"You know, we've had a number of problems since you joined us, Lola. I hope that's merely a coincidence, for your sake."

Stephanie extended her arm to Bart, who took it. They strolled off, leaving Lola in the courtyard. Before following them, she went over to the column where Jessica and Pamela were still fettered.

"Guess what, girls," she gloated, "I'll be working some day shifts down in disciplinary while you're there. See you around."

She suddenly grabbed Pamela and kissed her full on the lips. Pamela pulled away, choking with revulsion. Lola headed toward the gate with a malicious laugh.

If she ever got another chance, Jessica vowed to herself, she really would kill that bitch.

## Chapter Ten

Jessica's first view of her new quarters was less than encouraging. After a long night spent chained and hooded in the holding cell following Jessica's public whipping, she and Pamela had been roused early and dragged downstairs to the disciplinary block.

There they would spend the next two weeks undergoing rigorous retraining.

Bridget had escorted the two of them, naked and jingling in their chains, into the vast, round chamber where those currently undergoing reform did their time. Unlike the isolation section, where the cell doors were solid steel plate, the cubicles here were open cages with heavy bars. Arranged around the walls in a single, circular tier, they offered an inescapable view of the central punishment area, a sort of arena well equipped with racks, pillories, posts, suspension bars and other, more exotically engineered punitive devices.

Jessica and Pamela weren't exactly strangers to this place. They'd spent time in isolation during their induction processing, and periodically since then they had been called down to participate in the entertainment of some of the more cruel guests. And then there was Pamela's more recent visit to one of the interrogation cells in the company of Mistress Lola. Neither girl, however, had previously resided as an inmate. Only those who had committed fairly serious infractions rated these accommodations.

At that moment, there were a dozen or so girls in residence, all equally appealing (if somewhat haggard), all equally naked. Some lay on their hard, latex-padded bunks.

Others pressed their faces against the bars to get a good look at the new arrivals.

None said anything, their swollen, sulking eyes following Jessica's and Pamela's progress around the tier.

If they all shared a single emotion, it was one of utter surprise at seeing the much-favored Jessica, her ever-so-fair skin freshly welted by the bullwhip, being led by in shackles.

For her own part, Jessica kept her head high and her shoulders squared, occasionally tossing back her auburn hair. She'd spent most of her adult life on display. If anything bothered her about it, she'd learned not to show it.

It was an ability Pamela envied, especially right now. She wondered if others could smell her fear. She certainly could. It rose, rank, from her unwashed body. She knew she must look like a drowned rat, with her blond hair hanging lank and dirty around her tear-stained face. Having had to watch Jessica whipped up close had been horrifying, but at least it had taken Pamela's mind off her own troubles, which now loomed large and literal in her wide, blue eyes.

Reaching the first empty cell, Bridget inserted a large key into a slot in the wall. A barred section slid open electrically.

"In," Bridget ordered, motioning with her riding crop. Bridget had a formidable solidity. Always a strong contender in the nude wrestling matches that were a frequent part of the evening programs, she was easily a match for any of her charges, which gave her orders a certain additional authority. Pamela and Jessica stepped into the cell and looked around. There wasn't much to see. There were two bunks, fitted with pillory-type restraints for hands and feet, as well as convenient steel rings for whatever other types of bonds their keepers might choose to employ.

There were a small steel sink with a little round mirror over it, a toilet set low in the floor (forcing the user to squat down deeply) and surrounded by ring bolts, and an open shower stall with a scary assortment of sprayers, nozzles and hoses attached to the tall standpipe. The cell floor was covered in textured black rubber with a single, large, open drain in the center.

"This is it, girls, home for the next two weeks," said Bridget. "The rules here are simple. You do exactly what you're told at all times. No back talk. No touching yourselves or each other unless ordered. When in your cells,

you will be naked at all times. Staff and guests are free to use you in any way they please. Astrid will want to see you in a few minutes, so we better get you presentable first.”

As if on cue, a most remarkable figure appeared in the doorway behind Bridget. A small, compact woman clad in a Roman-looking leather body harness and tall boots, her collar and the ring through her nasal septum identified her as a slave. Her assortment of exotic tattoos, along with the enlarged rings through her nipples, clit and labia, the big brand on her ass (“A”, for the only kind of fucking she was permitted, what with the gold padlocks holding her labial rings together) and her shiny, completely shaved head identified her as a lifer. Her name was Elizabeth, generally called Liz The Lez, and she was something of a legend among the girls for having requested permanent assignment in this hellhole.

Bridget cleared the way so Liz could wheel in her steel cart full of gear. Pamela tried not to look at all the paraphernalia filling the cart’s upper and lower shelves. She wondered if they could hear her knees knocking.

“We’ll take the redhead first,” Bridget informed Liz matter-of-factly. She unlocked the slender, leather-lined chrome collar and bands Jessica wore daily, letting them drop, clanking, to the floor with their connecting chains still attached. Jessica felt so much lighter without them she wondered if she could fly. She wasn’t about to be given the chance to find out.

“We’re going to get you nice and clean, inside and out,” Bridget said, walking Jessica over to the standpipe. Liz busied herself hooking up a long, complicated-looking nozzle apparatus from her cart to one of the hoses on the pipe. Bridget smartly commanded Jessica to bend over and grab her ankles.

Jessica couldn’t quite keep herself from flashing Bridget a hateful look, which was rewarded with a solid stroke across the backside from Bridget’s crop. Jessica was still plenty sore from the previous day’s whipping. She turned her back promptly and bent over, getting a good grip on her slender

ankles. Behind her, she heard the snap of a rubber glove. Jessica wasn't crazy about this sort of thing, but it came with the territory.

“Have a look at this,” Bridget instructed in a chatty tone. She held the nozzle down where Jessica could see it. At least a foot long and as thick as Jessica's finger, made out of heavy, black rubber, it dripped with gelatinous ooze. Jessica's nostrils flared at the sharp smell of menthol. Lovely. They'd hot-lubed it. At the base of the nozzle where it met the hose it widened out into a pair of inflatable bladders with a narrow tube in between. Black rubber squeeze bulbs dangled and bounced merrily from airlines leading to the bladders.

“You squeeze the bulbs so,” Bridget illustrated, “and the two little balloons inflate.

The first balloon goes inside you, just behind the muscle. The second one goes right outside. That way, once it's in and pumped up, it can't slide in either direction.

Clever, don't you think?”

Jessica thought it best to keep her opinions to herself. She was busy in any case, practicing her breathing. Nice and slow and deep. Get everything in there as loosened up as possible. It did no good to fight these indignities. It only made them worse.

Bridget deflated the balloons and went around behind Jessica who, looking back between her own ankles, admired the shininess of Bridget's boots. They certainly ran a spit-and-polish operation down here.

Jessica's musings were rudely interrupted by the invasion of a gloved digit into her backside. A second pair of hands, presumably Liz's, held her open while Bridget worked in another glob of mentholated goop. Jessica could already feel it starting to heat up inside her. It was clear Bridget had some practice at this technique.

Then came the nozzle, slid in ever so slowly, inch by burning inch. Jessica felt her legs start to tremble, forced them to stop. The thing felt like a snake crawling up inside her in the most leisurely way. It seemed as if it would tickle her tonsils by the time it the first of the balloons wedged its way through the puckered opening. When she felt the first balloon start to inflate just beyond her sphincter, Jessica's right hand momentarily lost its grip on her ankle, then clamped back on for dear life. Jessica's whole body shivered with the desire to expel the foreign object that seemed to be growing inside her like a fire hose, which she feared might be needed to extinguish the growing pulsating internal heat produced by the menthol.

At last, Jessica heard the squeak of a valve opening and felt the in-rushing tide. No relief there. It was even hotter. Her body swayed forward under it momentarily before she regained her balance. Looking back through her legs, she saw Pamela huddled on one of the bunks. How could she tell this girl that it was all in the attitude?

Whatever happened here would only be as bad as she expected it to be.

"Give her two quarts and then shut it off for ten minutes," Bridget ordered. Liz consulted a gauge on the standpipe, then twisted the valve shut. There followed what seemed an extremely long silence, punctuated by the dripping of a tap and a lot of heavy breathing. Jessica's distended belly ached with waves of ever deepening cramps and her inner membranes blazed like a furnace, but she was having more trouble with the bent over position than with what they were doing to her. At least, that was true until she heard a fresh glove being snapped on and felt Bridget's talented fingers strumming her clit briefly before slipping into her pussy.

"Bet you can really feel the pressure in that balloon when I do this," she said, massaging it in a slow, rotary motion through the slick wall separating Jessica's front and rear channels.

"Yes, ma'am," Jessica agreed through her clenched teeth. Among other talents, Bridget had a gift for understatement.

The, abruptly, Bridget opened the cocks and deflated the nozzle. The rest of the procedure was fairly innocuous, Jessica having hardly eaten for the previous twenty-four hours. She would have preferred a little privacy, but she had already deduced that was one of the many things of which she would be intentionally deprived during her incarceration.

The rest of Jessica's ablutions were less harrowing, though no less intimate. Bridget and Liz got Jessica up and steered her over to the shower, where she was bound in a standing, spread-eagle position with latex straps at the wrists and ankles attached to short chains from ring bolts in the floor and ceiling. Jessica was startled but not surprised that Bridget used cold water from a gleaming stainless steel fixture to douche out her pussy. It brought up an amazing crop of goose bumps and made her nipples so hard they throbbed, but it was almost comforting after the volcanic colonic.

When Liz approached with the lathered up brush and straight razor, Jessica knew what was about to happen, and she couldn't help feeling a pang of regret at the thought. A few dabs with the brush, a couple of deft swipes with the razor and Jessica's carefully cultivated patch of red pubic curls was history. She was as bare as the day she was born. Oh well, it would grow back.

After a quick wetting down from the shower head, she received a brisk shampooing and an efficient scrubbing over from Liz, who used a big sponge and some pleasantly mild, vaguely institutional-smelling liquid soap. Liz, who was extremely familiar with the effects of the bullwhip, was perfectly gentle with the sponge, passing lightly over the scarlet streaks that decorated Jessica's whole body from shoulders to knees. The soap and water still stung every place the whip had touched. Alex was nothing if not thorough.

Instead of rinsing her with the showerhead, Liz used the hose, to which she had attached a sprayer which focused the water into a fairly hard stream. Liz's expression was so completely composed and inscrutable, Jessica couldn't tell whether she was deliberately lingering with the nozzle between her thighs for entertainment, or simply because she wanted to do a proper

job. In either case, the steady stream of hot water beating against her clit inspired Jessica with desires she seriously doubted she'd be allowed to satisfy.

The tap of a foot switch activated a powerful air-drying fan above that stripped the water from Jessica's skin like a desert wind. Jessica's arms were beginning to go numb from being up so long, but she could still feel Liz's strong, practiced hands rubbing in the light body oil from the black spray bottle. Liz worked it in all over, getting it under Jessica's breasts, down between her legs, back up beneath her armpits, until the redhead's fair skin shone like polished quartz in the dusky light of the cell. Jessica could feel her nipples swelling and stiffening once again under Liz's expert kneading.

"We haven't got all day, Liz," Bridget reminded, tapping the toe of her boot.

"She's ready for the restraints," Liz said, putting down the spray bottle and undoing the rubber straps. She and Bridget worked together around Jessica, who didn't move a muscle. No need to obstruct the inevitable.

First came the collar, wider than the one Jessica usually wore, though leather-lined and banded with steel in a similar way and likewise padlocked at the back. There were equally heavy, steel-reinforced cuffs for her wrists. The shoes were next, plain black with cripplingly high heels and wide, locking ankle straps that doubled as hobbles. The shoes felt new, stiff, tight and uncomfortable as Liz locked them on.

Still, Jessica thought they must look rather striking.

"Now for my favorite part," Bridget said with a mean smile. She showed Jessica the chastity harness. It didn't look very chaste, what with the pair of rudely large, hard-rubber plugs strategically located on the center strap. At least they were anatomically shaped and thus not as punishing as the knobs on the whipping rig she'd worn in the courtyard. The harness locked in place behind her back, making it extremely difficult for the wearer to engage in the sorts of activities it was certain to suggest.

Liz held onto the belt while Bridget screwed a disposable rubber tip the size and shape of a cherry on the end of what looked for all the world like a standard automotive grease gun. Bridget charged its reservoir from a wall-spigot next to the bunk.

“We keep the internal lubricant heated up a few degrees above body temperature,”

Bridget explained, topping it off. “It increases the viscosity.”

She brought the gun up in front of Jessica’s face and squeezed the handle lightly, releasing a single, fat, glistening drop onto a fingertip, which she ran down Jessica’s cheek, leaving a gleaming streak.

“It’s very thick and heavy, as you can feel. Once it’s in you, your body heat will keep it semi-liquid all day. Spread your legs.”

Jessica moved her ankles further apart, steadying up in the challenging new shoes.

Liz knelt in front of her to spread her open so Bridget could work the injector inside.

She looked Jessica straight in the eye while she was doing it. Jessica didn’t blink, even when Bridget squeezed the handle and slowly filled her with the hot grease.

Jessica could feel a heavy sweat already breaking through the coating of oil on her skin. She could hear her breathing getting deeper and deeper. The tawny, stippled flesh of her right nipple tightened around the ring. Her lips parted involuntarily, her long-lidded lashes fluttering down. Bridget was pleased. She withdrew the glistening tube from Jessica’s pussy.

“Not as immune as you thought, are you, Jessica? Turn around, bend over and put your hands on the bunk.”

Jessica was glad to be able to turn her face away. She wouldn't have retained her composure much longer. And she was glad to be able to hide under her hair while she got the second load of lube in the ass. It was fortunate that they had flushed her so completely first. The renewed heat and pressure caused an instant, implacable wave of internal contractions. She was actually relieved to feel the large rear plug being wedged into her. At least now she wouldn't have to worry about controlling her muscles.

Once the front plug was in position, Jessica could fully appreciate the engineering of the harness. The plugs were curved so as to almost touch through the back wall of her vagina. A small, hard-rubber pad on the strap just in front of the vaginal plug was obviously intended to produce a constant, light pressure and friction on her clit.

Moving around in this rig was going to be a challenge. Bridget locked the waist belt shut with a solid click.

“This is your uniform,” Bridget said, tossing Jessica a scrap of thin, folded, black t-shirt material. Jessica unfolded it. The garment wasn't much longer than a tank top, cut low in the front and back. A narrow, white patch with a number on it had been sewn over the left breast. Bridget told her to put it on. Jessica rolled it down over herself. The little outfit was certainly tight enough. The flimsy fabric clung ferociously to Jessica's well-oiled curves. The hem stopped an inch or two south of Jessica's navel, well above the top of the harness belt. Jessica could well imagine what kind of lewd sight she would present in this get-up.

“You'll wear this whenever you are out of your cell unless ordered to remove it,”

Bridget went on, Jessica tugging and pulling on the cotton material in an effort to arrange the tiny uniform on her person as best she could. Every time she tried to cover up some part of herself, some other part seemed to pop out. Bridget instructed her to turn her back so she could lock the cuffs behind her. Just as an additional touch of her own, Bridget added a short strap around the elbows, bringing them together until they touched. Jessica

took pride in having the limberness in her wide shoulders to do this, though she did feel a bit self-conscious about the way her ample tits were thrust forward under the shirt. She knew they would bounce merrily when she walked. The short hobble chain Liz hooked between the ankles straps wouldn't make traveling any easier.

"I'll take her down to Astrid's office," Bridget informed Liz. "You get the other one ready for roll call." With that, she took hold of Jessica's strap-compressed biceps and maneuvered her out of the cell. Jessica gave Pamela a sympathetic look on the way out. The petite blond shrank back in the corner of the bunk, trying to avoid Liz's grasp. Jessica sighed. Pamela would have to learn for herself the futility of resistance.

Jessica was a little unsteady at first, what with the way her arms were cinched behind her, the height of her heels and the combined effects of the hobble chain and chastity harness. But she got the hang of it as they made their way back around the tier, and in a moment or two, Jessica was able to manage a pretty good facsimile of her usual sassy, hip-swinging walk. She figured she might as well give those dildos inside her a good workout. If this was hell, she was going to make herself at home here.

## Chapter Eleven

The row of girls stood at their best attention, heads up, wrists shackled firmly behind them, legs spread wide to pull the hobble chains tight between the ankles. The slightly-rounded toes of their severe, lock-on fetish pumps just touched the red line that ran along one edge of the vast, open atrium at the center of the disciplinary block. The light filtering down through the frosted skylight and the iron grating over it bathed them all in gray, shadowy pools. Before them lay the open area at the center of the atrium, its assortment of punishment devices cleverly engineered to inflict the most diabolic torments and humiliations that their designers, who had included all the best minds in the field, could conceive. Beside each device stood a uniformed mistress, ready to put it into use.

The dozen or so inmates, ranging in age from barely legal to well-preserved thirty-plus and in looks from better to best, were all uniformed in their meager black T-shirt that stopped well short of covering anything strategic. Each wore the hated chastity harness as well.

It was difficult to hold position with such internal interference, but it was unwise to do anything else. A girl had recently been caught rocking her hips as they'd sat, squarely upright in total silence on long benches at a single, long table, eating their simple breakfast. She'd been summarily dragged from her place and strapped securely to an X-frame at the front of the tiny mess hall as an example to the others.

"I was starting to think you'd forgotten us down here," Astrid said cheerfully as she and Alex began the morning inspection, accompanied by her adjutant, Bridget.

"I've been busy at headquarters with useless intrigues and fruitless schemes. I never get to do anything fun anymore."

"Poor Alex. Such a hard life."

Astrid ought to know. She and Alex went back a long way, to a time when they had both worked in a certain club in Amsterdam. Astrid was as good as any professional mistress Alex had ever worked with. Her looks alone would have guaranteed her success. Six feet tall before she put on her boots, she was lean and willowy, with fine, aristocratic features and piles of blond hair that fell to her waist, when not worn up in a braid around the top of her head, as it generally was when she worked. The penetrating gaze of her ice-blue eyes was enough to freeze men and women alike speechless.

But what made Astrid great at what she did, as with most things that people do well, was her love of it. It was a rare day when Astrid wasn't in the mood to hurt somebody. That's why Alex had put her in charge of disciplinary operations as his first staff choice. She ruled over her domain, which consisted mainly of this large, well-equipped punishment chamber and the cells encircling it, as the dark goddess she was born to be.

"Well, as you'll see, we've got a fine group of lazy, disobedient, lying sluts here, as usual," she explained in her ironic, slightly contemptuous voice. "Take us down the list, Bridget."

Bridget checked out her steel clipboard in front of the first girl, Denise, a tall, leggy, English model-type with a fashionable, short blond bob, classic features and a look of permanent boredom.

"Denise can't seem to shake off her trendy slouch," Bridget said, studying her chart.

"She's been written up for bad posture three times."

Astrid took Denise's face in a gloved hand.

"What a shame to waste such natural gifts. A woman as striking as yourself should be an inspiration to the rest. And so you shall be. Position Three."

Astrid stood aside so Denise could be quick-marched over to the designated spot, where her attendant mistress, a tough-looking Spaniard in jodhpurs, waited next to a small treadmill. She helped Denise, whose arms were still

bound behind her, up onto it and balanced a “book,” which was actually a flat box with a shaker alarm inside, atop Denise’s head.

Denise steadied up carefully, trying not to disturb the book. She knew that if it fell, the bell inside it would ring and Denise would get ten strokes from the buggy whip her attendant was flexing even as she switched on the treadmill. The surface moved under Denise and the book wobbled precariously. Her runway training would definitely come in handy. Denise knew from experience how sore and tired her legs and shoulders would be after a stint on this gizmo.

The inspection party stopped in front of a pretty, plump, freckle-faced blond girl named Phoebe.

“Let’s see how the weight-reduction program’s coining with this one,” Astrid said.

She reached behind the girl and released her arms with the flick of a cuff latch. She commanded Phoebe to strip. The black smock was off in a flash, neatly folded on the floor before the girl came back to attention. Astrid made her turn in a slow circle, watching the girl’s cheeks redden with embarrassment. Phoebe was, undeniably, a little well-padded, but her buxom, rubenesque rosiness actually struck Alex as rather delightful. Astrid was unimpressed.

“Better. But we still have a ways to go. Position seven.”

Phoebe groaned, started to pick up her uniform. Astrid planted a boot on it.

“You’ll do your training naked, so we can all watch you sweat.”

Phoebe looked up at Astrid pitifully. Astrid nudged her with a leather-armored toe.

“Go on, get moving!”

Phoebe jumped up and jiggled over to the special exercise bike that awaited her.

Aside from the straps on the handlebars and pedals, it wasn't so different from a standard model, except for the seat, which was definitely non-standard. A big dildo protruded through it in exactly the right spot. The dildo was mounted on a cam attached to the bike's wheel, which also powered a dynamo that made the thickly-padded seat vibrate. The faster Phoebe pedaled, the harder she would be fucked by the dildo and vibrated by the seat. Just in case these inducements proved inadequate, she could be sure someone would be standing by with a whip to encourage her on at all times. She sniveled a little as the plug harness was removed and she was strapped into place on the bike.

The tour of hell continued. A girl who had committed the opposite sin from Fanny's, starving herself to get down into a small corset size, was to be strapped into a dentist's chair and force-fed baby food through a funnel at half hour intervals.

Another who had talked back to a mistress got her head locked into a leather-padded steel scold's bridal, with a thick, rubber-coated brank thrust into her mouth and screwed down, forcing her tongue against the floor of her mouth.

Moving along, Bridget made notations on her clipboard, frequently consulting her watch. She was looking forward to the duties to follow.

Charlotte, Stephanie's slave, had returned to the disciplinary block once again. With her fat, pouty lips and spoiled little Lolita-like face, she was the perfect submissive brat. Always whiny, always disobedient, always in need of correction, she was just what Stephanie liked. And just what drove Alex crazy. She ended up here at least twice a month, though never for anything major. Charlotte simply misbehaved to get attention. It always worked.

"To what do we owe the pleasure of Miss Charlotte's company this time?," Astrid asked dryly.

“Caught using her mistress’ vibrator when she was supposed to be laying out her riding clothes.”

Astrid’s hand traveled idly up and down the front of Charlotte’s body (considerably more mature than her face) lingering over Charlotte’s tits, which strained against the flimsy material, the nipples hardening visibly under Astrid’s squeezing and pinching.

“Aren’t we incorrigible? Wasn’t it just last week you were down here for spying on the men’s staff changing room?”

“It was the sauna, actually ... ma’am.”

“It’s hard to keep all your transgressions straight. Anyway, we’ve got something special planned for you today. Take her, Bridget.”

“With pleasure,” Bridget said. Smiling evilly, she took Charlotte by the arm and led her over to a low, altar-like platform. Charlotte was quickly relieved of her uniform and strapped down flat on her back. Astrid explained for everyone’s benefit what was on the agenda while Bridget spread Charlotte out on the altar, clicking Charlotte’s cuffs into the waiting attachment rings.

“Stephanie wants us to teach you how to deal with your sexual frustrations, dearie, and that’s just what we’re going to do.”

Charlotte’s eyes followed Bridget’s every move as she taped the black rubber thermocouples to the upper surface of Charlotte’s right breast and the inner side of Charlotte’s right thigh.

“These will monitor your pulse and respiration so we can tell how well this is working.”

“This” was a heavy, industrial-grade vibrator that slid on a track up the middle of the platform. Bridget cranked it up until its padded surface rested snugly against Charlotte’s bare, shaved puss, so that it made direct contact with Charlotte’s saddle strap. A push of a button and the machine hummed

to life. Charlotte went stiff in her bonds, her back rising up off the padded surface.

“Here, let me turn this up a bit.”

Bridget cranked a knob on the vibrator, which hummed a higher note. “No, please, I...”

Charlotte’s protestations were cut short by the insertion of a ball gag conveniently mounted on a hinged bar over Charlotte’s full lips. Once it was locked down, she would be forced to endure in relative silence.

“The best part, Charlotte, is that as soon as the sensors detect that you’re about to come, the vibrator will automatically shut down until your heart rate returns to normal. I’m sure by tonight you’ll be more than ready to entertain Astrid and myself in our quarters during your recreational period. Enjoy.”

Bridget bent down and kissed Charlotte on the forehead before rejoining Alex and Astrid, who had come to the last two penitents in the line-up, Pamela and Jessica, both of whom shared the dark suspicion that they had been deliberately saved for last.

“So,” Astrid said, looking back and forth between them, “it’s not every day we’re graced with the company of such luminaries.”

Pamela felt particularly helpless in her immodest costume surrounded by these powerful, uniformed figures. She couldn’t meet Astrid’s gaze.

“You, Pamela, seem to have inspired one of our best, most senior slaves to forget her training. Aren’t you ashamed of the trouble you’ve caused all of those who’ve helped bring you along here?”

“Yes, ma’am,” she muttered under her breath.

“Well, by the time we’re done with you down here, you’ll have expiated every sin you ever thought of committing.”

Astrid turned to her assistant.

“Take this one to the flogging frame and get her naked.”

Bridget grabbed Pamela and pulled her toward the middle of the vast arena, where a simple frame of shiny steel pipe stood on a raised dais, easily viewed by all. Bridget busied herself stripping Pamela and getting her strung up with arms and legs outstretched. Astrid focused her attention on Jessica.

“You know, Jessica, you really puzzle me. Of all the girls I would ever have expected to have, you’d be the last. And for striking a mistress...”

“To be precise,” Jessica corrected, eyes front, “I tried to strangle her.”

“I suppose you’re going to tell us you’re sorry now.”

“I am sorry ... sorry that I didn’t succeed.”

Astrid cocked an eyebrow.

“Very good, then. Since you so enjoy inflicting pain on others, I’m sure you’ll warm right up to what I have planned for you.”

Astrid reached back and unsnapped Jessica’s pinioned wrists. Jessica warily lowered her arms to her sides, carefully remaining otherwise in position. Astrid drew from her belt the heavy, braided cat o’ nine tails she always wore at her hip. She held it up to Jessica.

“My arm is tired today. I want you to administer Pamela’s first whipping. Forty lashes, twenty in front, twenty in back.”

Jessica looked over at Alex. Whatever he was thinking or feeling, he was doing his usual, excellent job of keeping it to himself. She knew that he couldn’t help her, and wouldn’t if he could. That was there understanding. In private, they would be lovers, but when others were present, all the usual

rules would apply to them as they did to everyone else. Jessica's voice was hard and tight when she spoke.

"Suppose I refuse?"

"Mistress Lola has asked me to phone her upstairs if her assistance is required. I'm sure the memory of your hands around her throat would prove most inspirational."

With a look of ultimate disdain, Jessica seized the whip and marched off to do her duty.

"And remember, if I think you're being too nice to her, I can always add to the number of strokes."

Alex knew that wouldn't be necessary. If Jessica could be made to do a thing at all, she could be counted upon to do it well. She stepped up onto the dais. Bridget hit a switch and the flogging frame began to slowly revolve with a quiet whirring of gears, presenting Jessica with a tempting choice of target areas all over Pamela's trim little body. Jessica had playfully whipped her little servant girl before, but there would be nothing playful this time. They made eye contact just briefly when the frame turned Pamela full front to Jessica.

"Don't try anything, Jessica, please," Pamela whispered harshly. "It'll only make matters worse."

"Forgive me," Jessica said simply after the frame turned Pamela's back to her.

Jessica cocked the whip and let it fly, the tails reaching out to slice across Pamela's pale rump, leaving a trail of red streaks. The splat of the impact rang in the quiet chamber. There would be no slacking off here.

Though a full-time slave by preference, Jessica knew how to swing a whip better than most mistresses. She also knew that it was better to do a thing right than to do it over. For the sake of her friend, as well as herself, she

would do what was necessary. She hoped Alex would enjoy the performance.

Indeed, he and Astrid both admired the way Jessica handled the cat, laying the stripes up and down Pamela's body, timing the blows with the revolving of the frame to make sure the coverage was complete. Tits, belly, thighs, ass, all areas got their fair share of attention. Pamela shook and rattled against the frame, moans and whimpers turning to cries, the cumulative effect of the flogging building to a crescendo. Her already-oiled body shined even more with the sweat of anguish. She squeezed a tear or two out of the corners of her eyes. She felt sorry for herself, but even sorer for Jessica, with whom she wouldn't have traded places for a million dollars at that moment.

"Could I see you in your office for a moment, Astrid?" Alex asked nonchalantly.

"Why not? Everyone seems productively occupied here for the time being."

Astrid strolled off toward her office, her muscular backside undulating beneath the tight uniform skirt. Alex followed.

Astrid's quarters were much like herself, a bit austere, but not unwelcoming. She settled in behind her large desk, which had heavy iron rings mounted on it for attaching inmates she wished to keep a close eye on. She tilted back in her big, leather chair and put her high-heeled boots up. Alex made himself at home on a corner of the desk.

"Now I suppose I'm going to find out what really brings you to Hades," said Astrid.

"I need a small favor."

"Name it."

"I want Mariko to work down here for a few days. In a dominant capacity."

“Why would you want your personal slave attached to the disciplinary staff?”

“Because I’m thinking of appointing her permanently.” Astrid sat up straight.

“You can’t be serious. Mariko is a born slave.”

“She’s also a born administrator. She’s already doing half my job. If she’s stuck with the responsibilities, she might as well get the title. Anyway, I just want to see if she has it in her.”

Astrid looked at Alex for a long beat. She’d known him for so many years, and yet he still had his little surprises.

“Consider it done. Send her down and we’ll fit her for the uniform.”

Alex smiled, leaned over to kiss Astrid on the cheek. “Thanks, pal. You know, you really do have great bones.” “True. Maybe you ought to take them out for a ride sometime.” “I might just do that.”

The suggestion hung in the air for a moment. Then Alex got up to leave.

“Gotta go. Those senseless intrigues and useless schemes are waiting for me.”

He left her there, wondering, still, what the whole thing was all about. Passing back through the atrium, Alex paused to watch Jessica determinedly lashing away at the zebra-striped girl up on the dais. She certainly was putting her back into it, her face a mask of concentration. By now, Pamela hung limp in the frame, sobbing weakly, barely twitching when each new stroke of the cat found its mark.

Then, for just an instant, Jessica looked back over her shoulder, straight at Alex.

From the ever-so-brief contact that passed between them, she knew that he had not abandoned her in this place, and that he never would.

## Chapter Twelve

A light breeze from North Africa rippled the black canvas fantail canopy under which Alex and his old friend and former employer Racine dined on lobster salad and cold champagne. The wind hardly disturbed the yards of black sheeting flying from the masts. Seventy-eight feet at the waterline, the trim schooner known as The Black Freighter idled at anchor in a calm inlet where the water was still as blue glass beneath the serene and spectacular cliffs of the southern coastline. Alex's low-slung power launch lay moored a few yards off to starboard. The Black Freighter was Racine's boat, but Racine was no Pirate Jenny, at least not any more.

When Alex had worked for her in Amsterdam, she was already an extremely successful professional dominatrix, with a large following of steady clients of her own, as well as a lucrative percentage arrangement with the girls who worked at her establishment. But he knew how hard and bitter a climb she'd had from the red-lit display windows of the Canal District. It wasn't the easiest way to pay for a yacht.

Alex had learned much of what he knew from Racine, and their parting had not been without its mixed emotions. But Racine, above all a consummate businesswoman, had not expected Alex to refuse the opportunity to become a partner in the most luxurious den of barbarous iniquity in the modern world.

Even now, they remained good enough friends for Alex to be able to persuade her without much effort to take a few days off and come sailing in nearby waters. Racine, now operating clubs in Berlin and Hamburg as well, really couldn't spare the time, but she saw no reason to tell him that. She was as languid as the sea under them, stretched out in the deck chair in her spotless whites. The short jacket and tight slacks were cut to show off her figure, still svelte and solid like her boat. Her strong-featured face had hardly changed, though her dark hair, worn short and practical, was beginning to show a bit of gray, which she made no effort to disguise.

“I tell you, Alex, it’s a shame you’re not there to see it. The flood of new talent from the east is overwhelming. It’s like starting all over again with all fresh faces.”

“This face looks pretty fresh to me,” Alex said, reaching out to touch the cheek of the lovely girl leaning down to refill his glass. She was a perfect, Nordic beauty -

gleaming blond hair to the shoulders, vast blue eyes with long, pale lashes, full lips to take the sharpness off the high cheekbones.

Her body was slender and long-legged, almost equine but for the generosity of the swellings underneath the short, tight striped jersey she wore. The little blue skirt that went with it showed off about a yard of thigh and, when she bent over for any reason, a fair display of firm, little rump as well. There were no panties to obstruct the view, which included the occasional flash of gold from a tiny, heart-shaped padlock that, Alex presumed, was fastened through piercings in the labia as a precaution. Alex would have bet that the two tiny keys hanging on the thin, gold chain around Racine’s neck would open this lock and the matching one worn by the girl’s twin sister.

An identical blond, dressed exactly the same way, waited on Racine. Gold nameplates on the white leather collars locked around their necks identified them as Britt and Elke.

Looking back and forth between them, Alex marveled at how truly similar they were.

“How do you tell them apart with their collars off?”

“The only time they have them off is in the shower anyway, but I have taken measures to prevent confusion. Show him, girls.”

Instantly, the blond twins put their bottles and trays down and sank to their knees on the polished, teakwood deck. They pulled up their jerseys, full, rosy tits bouncing free. Each had one pink nipple pierced with a gold ring. Britt’s was worn on the right, Elke’s on the left.

“Ingenious.”

“There’s more. Turn round and show him the back view.”

The girls pivoted on their knees and lifted up the backs of their tiny skirts. Each had a small, black tattoo of a whip and a long-stem rose, crossed. It was Mistress Racine’s mark. Britt’s was on the right cheek. Elke’s was on the left. When Racine bade them turn back to face her, Alex noticed that even their ears had been pierced on opposite sides. Racine had lost none of her eye for detail.

She put the girls back to work clearing the remains of lunch. Their faint attempts at modesty in their skimpy costumes were difficult to discern from flirtatious wriggling.

Racine slipped off her jacket and peeled down her pants. She was bare underneath, tanned all over; the ultimate luxury for a native of a northern climate. Alex was continually amazed by how perfect she remained, hardly a line or a crease anywhere. She stretched back to take the sun, muscles rippling under her golden skin, reminding Alex of a big jungle cat sleeping off a kill. But she was not sleeping.

“You don’t much care for my associate, Mistress Lola, do you Alex?,” she asked, shielding her eyes against the sun over his shoulder.

“She’s irresponsible and destructive, utterly lacking the character strengths of a good dominatrix.”

Racine flashed her teeth in a broad grin.

“One thing I really miss about you, Alex, is your habit of giving straight answers.”

“Perhaps you’ll trade some with me, then.”

“Just a moment.”

Racine beckoned for Elke, rolled onto her stomach as the girl hustled over. Without further instruction, Elke grabbed a bottle of suntan lotion from the deck, knelt down and anointed her mistress' back, oiling her with great care from neck to heels. Alex could see her strong fingers gliding along all those sleek sinews.

“They're very good with their hands, Alex. Maybe you should have Britt do you.”

“Sounds nice, but my ink doesn't tan well.” “Ask your questions.”

“Have you planted Lola as a spy to facilitate an attempt on your part to take over our operation with Bart's money?” Racine stifled a yawn.

“Of course Lola's a spy. I assumed that, in addition to learning the basics of her trade, she'd probably pick up a few useful hints for my business from the way you run yours. I'm sure you wouldn't begrudge me that. As for taking over, believe me, I have more than I can handle now. Whatever Bart does with his money, I'm sure I'd be the last one he'd consult about it.”

Racine rolled over so Elke could get to work on her front side. Her small nipples stiffened under the blond girl's dabbings.

“Suppose I told you that my most trusted informants are convinced that Bart and Lola are up to something together?”

“I would say that if such a thing were true, I would have to reconsider my opinion of Lola. I might be moved to withdraw my protection from her altogether. I'd need concrete proof, of course.”

“That's why I asked you to come down here in person. I'm planning a little something for later on I wouldn't want you to miss.”

“Then I'll continue to enjoy my cruise a bit longer.”

Racine closed her eyes, giving herself up to the pure, sensual pleasure of Elke's well-trained attentions. Racine cocked a knee to allow Elke easier

access to an inner thigh. Unthinkingly, Racine's hands wandered up to take hold of Elke by a handful of blond hair and the gold ring on the front of her collar. She pulled Elke's face down into her lap. Elke knew what was expected of her, settling right in with eager tongue and lips. The skirt fell away from Elke's hips as she leaned forward, her hands searching upward for Racine's breasts. It was all very nice to watch.

It was also just the opportunity that Britt had been waiting for. Unbeknownst to Racine, who had been preoccupied with the preparations for Alex's visit, the twins had been squabbling all morning about who was or was not doing her share of the duties on board. Elke had stormed out of the galley, leaving Britt with a sinkfull of dirty dishes, and Britt had promised herself revenge for every single, solitary dish.

Slipping quietly up behind her sister, she swung the freshly-iced champagne bottle she was carrying abruptly downward, right in between Elke's knees. It only made contact for an instant, but the effect was electrifying. Elke lunged forward with a yelp, digging in her nails and sinking in her teeth involuntarily. Racine's eyes popped open and she sat up, dragging Elke's wet face up to her own.

"Incompetent little cunt!," she hissed, backhanding her so hard Elke lost her balance and sprawled onto the deck. She scrambled to her knees. Racine jumped up to stand over her.

"Can't you do the simplest little thing right? Go and get the whip."

Elke looked abject and wretched. Without thinking, she started to stammer out a defense. "But, Mistress, I..." Racine glared down at her. "You what?"

Alex spoke up from behind Racine's back.

"I think what she means to say is that she was sabotaged."

Britt, who had been stealing toward a hatchway into the forward cabin, froze in her tracks. Racine looked over her shoulder at Alex with a puzzled expression.

“Sabotaged?”

“Her loving sister goosed her with a cold champagne bottle at a vulnerable moment.”

In an instant, Racine’s fury turned to amusement. She looked over at the now-quaking Britt with the big cat grin on her face.

“Would you do a thing like that to your poor sister?”

Britt gulped.

An official punishment detail was mustered on the quarter deck forthwith. The twins, now stripped completely naked, golden curls and golden padlocks fully revealed for all to see, knelt miserably before the mainmast. Racine flexed out her flogging arm.

She expertly whirled a great, red leather flogger over her head. It was the really long kind of whip you could only use out in the open, the kind that could pick up some real velocity. Both girls had reason to fear it.

Overhead, Alex crawled around in the rigging, checking his belays. He’d furlled the sails, spliced some loose rope to some winches and dropped a long line with an iron hook on the end of it from each of the lowest mainmast crosstrees. It was a somewhat inexact business from up there, but the hooks appeared to hang at just the right altitude to keep a girl on her toes.

By the time he’d clambered back down onto the deck, Racine was already lashing Britt’s wrists together with loop after loop of soft, thick nylon line. The bondage was meant to be secure and comfortable, for it was soon to get a real workout.

Elke’s eyes darted back and forth, but she stayed very still so Alex could cinch up her wrists in a similar manner. She didn’t know much about this mysterious visitor in the black silk bomber jacket, and what she had overheard was not encouraging.

When the twins were properly trussed, Alex and Racine maneuvered them underneath the hooks, which they hitched off to the ropes around the girls' wrists.

Alex ended up with a few feet of extra rope.

“Seems a shame to waste it,” he said, pondering the loose end. Britt didn't like the look in his eye when he circled the extra rope around her middle, pulling it almost unbearably tight before knotting it off in the back. He tied another couple of knots in the remaining length in spots he knew would prove strategic, then pulled the last few inches up between her thighs nice and tight, finishing with a last hitch in the front.

Britt had already gotten pretty wet from events thus far and those knots sank right in, making her shudder.

Racine was so delighted, she found a few extra feet to do the same for Elke.

“There's a spare whip hanging from the bulkhead by the wheel,” she suggested helpfully.

Alex fetched it. It was nicely balanced. He swept the deck with the ends, setting his distance. The sun had passed overhead and was now slowly descending, taking the heat of the day with it. Pleasant weather for a bit of flagellation.

Alex and Racine surveyed their captives, who squirmed helplessly on their respective hooks. They were a fetching sight, twin heads of blond hair tossing in the light breeze, but Racine was still not satisfied.

“Something's still not quite right,” she said.

Alex went over and switched on the electric winch for just a second. Both girls squealed when the ropes took up, lifting them effortlessly off the deck. He shut off the motor, leaving them dangling a couple of feet above the teakwood.

“Better?”

“Much.”

Alex and Racine took their places, standing a couple of arm’s lengths from the twins, who twisted and swung in midair, presenting an endless cavalcade of ripe breasts, well-rounded bottoms, all manner of tender spots.

Racine’s whip hissed through the air first, slashing across Elke’s fair back with a sharp report, followed by a thin scream. The flogger painted a broad splotch of hot pink in its wake. Elke immediately started babbling.

“No, please! It wasn’t my fault! I’ll be more careful, promise!”

“Hm. A little close, I think,” Racine said off-handedly, stepping back a pace. “Oh, well. Be grateful, Elke, in the old days they used to soak the whips in brine first.

Lucky for you I’m almost as attached to your skin as you are.”

Racine got down to business then, lashing with measured strokes as Elke’s body revolved, thrashing, on the end of its tether. Alex, who had taken off his shirt and tied his scarf around his head as a sweatband, giving him a piratical air, followed suit. He swung his whip down past Britt’s chest, just kissing the points of her breasts with it.

Trying to jerk back, she put herself in the way of a really solid stroke from behind.

Together, Alex and Racine flogged in tandem, sometimes striking together, sometimes in counterpoint. The smack of leather on flesh, accompanied by panting, ragged breaths and occasional cries of distress filled the air. The girls kicked and thrashed, turning one part of their anatomy from the full force of the whip, only to expose another. In a matter of minutes, both girls were nicely striped from shoulders to knees in tones ranging from pale roses to bright fuschias.

Alex knew they couldn't hang there very long, so he made the most of the time, making sure Britt got every inch of the leather he whirled up and over her, shooting his arm forward to lay it out with a thrilling snap. It wouldn't be long now.

Sure enough, the lesson was conveyed. Britt shouted out to Racine.

"It's true! I did make her do it. Please let her go!" Alex and Racine stopped in mid-stroke. They grinned at each other.

"I think we've made our point," Alex said. "Let's hope."

Racine walked over to the hoist controls and hit the switch. The rope spooled off, lowering the girls to the deck, where they lay in a sobbing heap, arms and legs all wrapped around one another.

"Well, I suppose you could give them another chance to please you now," Alex suggested.

"Think I'll have a nap and a shower first. Why don't you take them below and entertain yourself with them in the meantime."

Racine lifted the gold chain with the tiny keys on it from her own neck and hung it round Alex's. There was no mistaking the nature of this invitation, nor any gracious way of refusing it. The giving and taking of slaves was the primary rite of their whole society. It was the glue that held together the fragile, volatile alliances among masters and mistresses that made their world safe to live in. Alex, as a master, was as much bound by these conventions as was Mariko or Jessica.

The bunk in his spacious, paneled cabin was almost as wide as his bed at home.

The shiny bright work railing around it seemed to have been thoughtfully placed for just the purpose he had in mind.

It took a bit of splicing and cutting, but in a moment or two he had Elke spread out on the bunk, wrists and ankles attached to the brass railing with the rope she and her sister had worn on deck. She made quite a tempting picture, blond hair thrown wild around her head, under which Alex had slipped a small pillow, face flushed and stained with tears, purpling welts still rising here and there.

With Elke fully battened down, he motioned Britt up onto the bunk. She climbed up tentatively, watching him dig in his small, black leather duffel bag. He came out with a tube of sunburn cream and handed it to Britt, who looked baffled.

“Don’t you think you ought to console your poor sister for all the trouble you got her in today?”

She gave him a hairy look, unscrewed the cap and squeezed some cream out onto a fingertip. She attempted to apply it carefully to a particularly angry welt above Elke’s right nipple. Elke let out a pained squeak and tried break her ropes, without much success.

“Watch it with that! You could hurt somebody!”

Britt bit her lower lip.

“I’m doing the best I can.”

Alex urged her to try again, stretching out next to the captive Elke. Britt dabbed at Elke’s stripes even more delicately. Evidently, she got it right this time. Elke relaxed in her bonds, closing her eyes with a sigh. Feeling more confident, Britt made her way down Elke’s long, slender body, painting over her marks with a thin layer of shiny salve. Alex stroked Elke’s hair, whispered in her ear.

“Now isn’t she nice? Who could hold a grudge against such a sweet, beautiful girl?”

Suddenly, unexpectedly, Elke turned her face directly to Alex's, opened her eyes wide and smiled up at him.

"Racine's absolutely right about you. You are a nasty man," she said. She looked down at Britt, who had worked her way to mid-thigh.

"You know, darling, I think he wants to watch us do things to one another." Britt looked up, smiling also.

"Well they certainly put us all to a lot of trouble over it, didn't they?"

Britt made herself at home in between Elke's legs, teasing aside the light, blond fur over her sister's clit, which she then sucked in between her full lips with a happy slurp.

Elke batted her blue eyes at Alex, who tugged gently at her gold nipple ring.

"You didn't have to tie me for this. She's my best lover in the world. Nobody knows what I like better than Britt."

"I can see we all have a lot to learn from each other," Alex said. Then he pressed his lips against hers, feeling them yield beckoningly.

## Chapter Thirteen

“I was living in Paris before I came here. A wealthy, older gentleman was keeping me there. He had rented me a nice little place in over in the Eighth, had it re-done with mirrored walls and ceiling hooks and all. Every morning, he’d call and tell me what I was supposed to wear that day. I was expected to lie around the apartment all the time, just in case he could get away from the office long enough to come over and use me. He had the most exquisite collection of erotic books and pictures to help keep me in the mood, all very beautiful and indescribably brutal. Talk about hard time. Between the boredom and the horniness, I was just about to go out of my mind.

Then I discovered this sweet young art student who lived with his parents on the floor below. The whole thing turned into a huge scandal. I completely ruined my poor old master. And there I was, free again.”

“And that’s how you ended up here.” \* “I came down to bid myself out at the annual auction. Stephanie bought my contract against Alex’s advice.”

Pamela and Jessica shared a quiet laugh.

Pamela’s body still bore a spectacular assortment of welts, stripes and contusions from the whipping Jessica had been forced to give her. If Pamela hadn’t known better, and she wasn’t entirely sure she did, she would have sworn that Jessica had enjoyed herself.

At least for the moment, the situation was relatively tolerable. After the day’s training sessions, they had been returned to their cell together. As always, they had been required to remove and carefully fold their uniforms. Rules demanded that they be naked in their cells at all times, but for their steel-bound leather collars, cuffs and locking-ankle-strap shoes. And, of course, the saddle-strap padlocked between their legs, its intrusive, double rubber plugs still planted deeply in their well-lubricated insides.

After a quick hose-down over the floor drain, Liz had served them supper in their cell.

Jessica and Pamela had been required to kneel on the cell's rubberized floor with their hands cuffed behind them while Liz spoon-fed them their bland but nourishing meals from a metal tray. It was exactly the kind of humiliating, helpless dependency that Jessica despised. Pamela, who relished almost any sort of attention, had found the whole thing rather a turn-on, to the point of willingly accepting the last few morsels directly from the warder's hand, licking at her fingertips with a busy, little, pink tongue.

They were allowed a brief respite after that, relaxing on their latex-padded sleeping pallets, to which they were attached only by ample lengths of light, steel chain padlocked to the front rings of their collars at one end and wall-mounted ringbolts at the other. Unrestrained by the wrist and ankle stocks in which they would be made to sleep, they were free to sit up or lie down on their bunks, but the collar chains kept them from reaching each other. Their hands were free, but the locked saddle chastity harnesses severely restricted the uses to which they could be put.

Like the other prisoners, whose low, murmuring voices could be heard through the barred doors ranged around the circular tier, they were compelled to console each other with conversation.

As the light from the skylight above the center atrium, where all the punishment positions were temporarily vacant, faded with the growing dusk, the subdued lamps in the cells came on behind their metal gratings, softly illuminating the women's naked bodies. Jessica lay stretched out on her side, her blatantly sensual face propped up by an elbow. Pamela sprawled on her stomach, one long leg dangling off the edge of the pallet. Jessica privately enjoyed watching the cheeks of Pamela's muscular little rump flexing unconsciously around the invading plug.

It was remarkable, how effectively every aspect of their captivity had been engineered to keep them in a state of relentless sexual tension. Jessica

wondered what Alex was doing at the moment, when she might hope to see him again. She sighed, thinking it would probably be a long time.

Shortly after the last flickering of dusk, the door to their cell clanged open. A shadowy figure dressed in the tight uniform blouse and skirt worn by the mistresses of the disciplinary detail stepped in from the catwalk. When she entered the halo of the cell's lamp, Jessica couldn't suppress a startled gasp. Pamela flipped over and sat up to see Mariko, Alex's personal slave, cool and perfect in full staff dress.

Thinking that their deliverance was at hand, Pamela started to prattle giddily.

“Mariko! Am I ever glad to see you! How did you get in here?”

Not a trace of emotion showed on Mariko's face. Her voice was firm and precise.

“Prisoners 78 and 787, on your feet.”

Jessica, who never obeyed an order too quickly, slithered off her bunk and straightened herself to attention, arms folded behind her back, feet planted squarely over the white triangles painted on the floor exactly inches apart. Pamela hadn't quite gotten with the program. She sat there, staring up at Mariko with a puzzled expression.

“Mariko, what the fuck ...”

Pamela never got to finish her question. Mariko reached over, took a nice handful off Pamela's thick, blond hair and pulled her slowly off the pallet.

“Okay, okay, I'm up,” Pamela yelped, assuming the attention position as gracefully as she could under the circumstances. Mariko snapped a pair of ball gags off her garrison belt and deftly thrust the first one into Pamela's mouth, effectively deferring any further questions. She settled the ball, which was black, nylon strap snugly at the back of her neck. A quick snap of the latch secured Pamela's wrist cuffs together in the small of her back.

Jessica disdainfully opened her mouth to receive her gag, then turned her back to make it easier for Mariko to join the wrist bands.

“Staff recreation time,” Mariko said by way of simple explanation, unlocking the collar chains from the ring bolts. Collecting the chains in one hand, she gave a tug in the direction of the open cell doorway.

Jessica felt the eyes of the other inmates all the way along the tier, acutely conscious of the lascivious spectacle they made, struggling for balance on their mercilessly high stiletto heels with their hands bound behind them. She hoped they all enjoyed the show. For her own part, she couldn't help admiring how fit and trim Mariko looked in the uniform. It occurred to her that perhaps it was more appropriate to Mariko's character than Alex's collar.

She led them past the electronic console where the watch mistress monitored the cells and out the main gate. Their heels clacked on the concrete floor of a short hallway lined with riveted, steel-plate doors, the dreaded isolation and interrogation cells. The memory of Pamela's last visit to this place still lingered, producing a visible shudder.

At the far end, where the spiral stairway led up to the rest of the complex, there was a double set of doors, like those of an elevator, with a sign reading “STAFF

LOUNGE” overhead. It opened automatically as they approached.

The chamber into which Mariko ushered them was quite spacious, its exact boundaries indistinct in the muted, filtered light. The air was warm and heavy with the scent of leather, sex, sweat and perfume. Moans of pleasure mixed with pained outcries and smack of hide on skin. From what Jessica could see, the place was done up like one of the playrooms upstairs, but with a ruder, more cave-like ambiance.

Following Mariko through the room, Jessica's eyes adjusted to the dimness and she began to make out familiar faces and bodies, caught in their various passions.

Astrid had shed her uniform, except for her boots, and strapped on a black latex dildo, with which she hammered into Stephanie's slave, the ever-troublesome, pouty nymphet Charlotte, from behind. Charlotte was chained on all fours on a round platform raised waist-high, so Astrid could fuck her standing up, which was her preferred method. Bridget, Astrid's second in command, had also undressed, revealing her superb, weight-lifter's body. She stood next to Astrid, methodically sodomizing Charlotte with a well-slicked black rubber truncheon at the same time.

All day, as part of her punishment, Charlotte had been kept teetering on the brink of orgasm, without being allowed to cross over. Now she was making up for it. Sweat pouring off her, she convulsed with wave after wave of spasms, burying her face in the furrow between Bridget's powerful thighs.

A short distance away, Denise hung naked by her ankles, strapped into heavily-padded suspension cuffs, from an overhead hoist, her hands sleeved behind her in a confining single glove, laced tight. Her cool, aloof face was flushed bright red, her eyebrows eloquently arched, her soft, full mouth wrapped around the base of a male staff member's cock. Jessica seemed to remember that his name was Eric. She'd never seen him with his clothes off before. She made note of his broad shoulders and strong-looking hands, which were entwined in Denise's fashionably short hair.

He steered her movements carefully, extracting precisely the pleasures he desired.

Just as Mariko walked Jessica and Pamela by, he gave a shuddering moan and pulled Denise back off him so he could splatter her face and breasts with his tribute to her skills. Jessica caught Pamela's quick look of envy. Pamela's appetite for male meat was limitless.

That was not to be the dish on her menu for tonight, however. At one end of the chamber, a narrow, padded leather sling hung from a spider web of leather straps.

From the instant Jessica saw Lola standing next to it, she knew with a sense of sinking dread that this was to be their destination. Mariko led them

directly to the grinning Lola and handed over their lead chains, betraying not a hint of the contempt she felt for this woman who sought to replace Mariko's master. Lola's eyes swept up and down their bodies with unconcealed relish. In her clinging black leathers, she was as lean and limber as the whip she wore on her belt. The red scarf was still around her neck.

"Good evening, ladies," Lola said, voice dripping with sarcastic congeniality. "I promised to visit you down here, and I always keep my promises, don't I?"

She patted Pamela lightly on the cheek. Pamela recoiled involuntarily, her whole body going stiff.

"Well," Lola said evenly, "I see your stay down here hasn't made you any friendlier.

Perhaps we can still change that."

Using a pass key from her belt ring, she unsnapped the lead chains from the girls'

collars. Mariko, who had evidently been briefed on the scheduled program, took the chains and hung them on a wall hook. She returned wheeling a trolley loaded down with scary items at which neither Jessica nor Pamela cared to look.

"You girls needn't look so worried," sneered Lola. "I have no intention of hurting you."

She took Jessica's face in her hands, looking her levelly in the eyes. Their emerald depths were completely unfathomable as always. The pressure of Lola's fingertips forced a trickle of saliva out around the ball planted in Jessica's mouth.

"Quite the contrary, in fact."

She reached behind Jessica and briskly unsnapped her cuffs, then pointed to the sling.

“Climb in and make yourself comfortable, darling. I have a little treat planned for you.”

Never taking her eyes off Lola, Jessica settled herself into the sling, shifting her weight so that it cradled her securely. The leather webbing held her body in a close embrace. She swung slightly back and forth on the heavy chains that held the sling at all four corners.

Mariko made a quick orbit around her, fastening her wrist and ankle cuffs to the supporting chains so her arms and legs were lifted high and wide. The small, hard cushion under Jessica’s head enabled her to look down through the open delta of her thighs to see Lola also freeing Pamela. Lola held up Pamela’s slender right hand and inspected it as she unlocked the cuff from around the girl’s wrist.

“Such delicate little hands. I’m sure they can do all sorts of useful things.”

From the cart Lola plucked a long, black latex glove and rolled onto Pamela’s hand as if it were a condom. Sleek and shiny, it came up past the elbow. Pamela looked down at her arm as if it had become a foreign thing, imbued with mysterious powers.

Mariko continued to busy herself with all the gear, warming up an electrically powered suction device similar to a milking machine with only two tubes instead of the usual six. Jessica had seen this gadget at work before and she wasn’t crazy about it. Mechanical sex scared her. She hated the way she could be forced to respond by some inanimate contraption as if she were being stimulated by a lover.

While Mariko adjusted the dials, Lola took up a freshly-charged grease gun from the cart and brought it to Jessica’s bosom, squeezing out a dollop of hot, oily lube onto each of Jessica’s coral-colored nipples. Carefully and methodically, she massaged the grease into Jessica’s aureoles until they

were swollen and gleaming, the heavy gold ring through the right one glinting like a newly-minted sovereign.

“There now,” Lola said soothingly, “doesn’t that feel nice?”

She brought her face close to Jessica’s Mariko positioned the transparent Lucite cups of the milking machine over the stiffened points of Jessica’s tits, which grew even stiffer in anticipation. The suction began to build in the long, black rubber tubes trailing back to the machine almost immediately. It was slow, rhythmic and insistent, the suction pump wheezing with each cycle. Jessica knew there would be no resisting it. Her eyelids grew heavy. Lola’s voice seemed far away.

“You know there’s no reason for us to be enemies,” Lola said, stroking Jessica’s hair.

“I’m perfectly willing to forgive your little outburst the other day. Just to show you I don’t hold a grudge, I’m going to let you and your little playmate have some fun together.”

Lola looked up across Jessica to Mariko.

“That’s fine. You can go now.”

Lola glided right past Mariko to stand next to Pamela, who was still staring at her gloved hand, wondering what was up. Mariko’s eyes met Jessica’s for just an instant.

There was no tenderness in it. They had little in common, other than a man they both loved and a woman they both hated. Mariko turned smartly and vanished into the gloom.

When Jessica felt Lola’s hands working at the latch of her saddle strap, she braced herself internally for a harsh withdrawal, but Lola eased the plugs out with surprising gentleness. She was equally careful with the grease gun, re-lubricating Jessica’s orifices, pumping her full of the body-temperature

goop until it oozed out around the nozzle. Jessica had a feeling she knew why she was being so heavily greased.

Her suspicions were confirmed when Lola ordered Pamela to hold out her hand, squirting a massive quantity of lube up and down the length of the latex glove.

“I wonder how many of these little fingers we can get inside,” Lola mused aloud.

Pamela’s eyes widened. Lola grinned at her.

“You mean you’ve never tried this before?”

Pamela, still unable to speak because of the ball gag, shook her head frantically.

She would never have dreamed of taking such a liberty with her beloved Jessica.

“It’s time you learned how. Give me your hand.”

Pamela complied meekly, allowing her hand to be guided to Jessica’s clean-shaven vulva. Lola parted Jessica’s nicely-padded lips and slipped the first two of Pamela’s oiled fingers inside. To ease things along, Lola stroked Jessica’s clit, which she found both surprisingly large and surprisingly hard.

Jessica was naturally rather narrow, but she had, by dint of much concentrated exercise, attained considerable voluntary control of her internal muscles. She breathed deeply, opening herself within to admit Pamela’s fingers, one by one. The lubricated rubber felt cold and strange, but not unpleasant. And then there was the constant pulsing of the milking machine. Lola knew what she was doing. Jessica couldn’t deny it.

“That’s it. Take your time,” Lola coached as Pamela worked her way in deeper.

“We’ve got all night.”

It didn’t take nearly that long. The first four fingers entered with little resistance. The thumb was a bit tricky, but with Lola’s instruction, Pamela quickly learned to tuck it in against her palm. With a slight twist, her whole hand slid in under Jessica’s pubic bone. Pamela felt the grip of Jessica’s muscles around her wrist, sucking her in. She looked down, disbelieving, as her entire hand disappeared inside.

The rest was easy. Lola guided Pamela’s arm in a slow, in-and-out pumping motion, as if it were a large cock. Jessica rocked in the sling, slowly grinding herself around on Pamela’s fist, gently at first, then in a hard, hammering, chain-rattling cadence.

Judging her moment carefully, Lola took an industrial-grade cordless vibrator from the trolley and worked it in above Pamela’s wrist, so the padded head lay against Jessica’s clit. When she switched it on, Jessica seemed to freeze in the sling. Her whole body trembled, muscles and sinews standing out under the creamy flesh of her arms and legs. A low, gurgling cry rose behind the gag, accompanied by violent shuddering.

Pamela could feel the contractions internally, popping all around her balled fist like tiny firecrackers. The wave seemed to travel down her arm and into her whole body, as if it was happening inside her right along with Jessica. She had never felt so completely, intimately joined with another human being in her young life. To her amazement, she felt herself clench around the rubber wedges on her saddle strap, felt her own thighs clap together, her knees suddenly weak.

Lola looked back and forth between them, pleased with herself for the ecstasy she had so cleverly orchestrated. What pain could not induce, she hoped pleasure might.

Not far away, in a dark corner of the chamber, Mariko silently watched the scene unfold. She would have much to report to her master that night.

## Chapter Fourteen

It was late. Very late. Silence lay like a heavy blanket over the circular tier of cells.

The slave girl inmates of the disciplinary block had all been put down for the night, and the last of the guests who had come down from upstairs after dinner to play out their prison-picture fantasies had all retired.

Mariko, having drawn the graveyard shift by virtue of her newly-promoted slave-to-staff status, sat at the circular console just inside the block's heavily-barred main gate, enjoying the quiet. Her almond eyes swept slowly back and forth across the banks of monitors ranged around her. Each screen displayed the interior of a cell in which a naked girl, or in some cases two, lay sleeping in relatively comfortable, but nonetheless absolute, bondage. Below each TV monitor, separate screens read out heart and respiration rates for every inmate. Small speakers, turned down low, emitted the sound of heavy, rhythmic breathing in a collective sigh. No trouble or expense was spared in the protection of such precious, irreplaceable merchandise.

In a way, Mariko envied them. Underneath her snugly-flattering uniform was a slave's tattooed, ringed body, inside of which beat a slave's submission-craving heart. She would have felt more at home, freer even, locked down to one of the bunks than in the emotional confinement of her duties as a guard. Worse yet, as a spy. Mariko hated subterfuge, hated the whole purpose for which she had been suddenly promoted and posted down here with all the recalcitrance and transgressors. She tried not to connect these feelings with the man who had put her in this predicament, but her humiliation kept bleeding through into her loyalty.

She felt him even before she heard him, for Alex had long developed the habit of moving quietly in a hushed world. She looked up to see him sliding his card key into the slot. The gate glided open and he entered. He wore his full dress uniform -short jacket, red sash, silver braid and riding boots - her favorite. For one moment, she might have hoped that he had actually come

in the dead of night to see her, but the purposeful look on his face did not suggest a casual visit.

“Everything under control?,” he asked quietly.

“Nothing unusual. How was the party?”

“Like all the others. I have a message to deliver. Don’t let anyone onto the block until I come back.”

Without a backward look, he strolled on through the round arena of the open atrium toward the door of Jessica’s cell. Mariko watched his broad, strong back as he went, thinking of how long it had been since she’d dug her nails into it. Whatever her inner conflicts, she would obey his order. He was not only her personal master, he was chief of staff. She flipped the switch, shutting off card key access to the main gate.

Down along the tier, she heard the door of a cell slide open. The screen-mesh-covered lamps on the wall of the cell had been dimmed even further, casting a soft light over the two immobilized bodies on the latex-padded pallets. Jessica and Pamela lay side-by-side, a few feet apart. Both had been positioned flat on their backs, wrists and ankles secured by the horizontal stocks built into the ends of the pallets. The neck holes in the wrist stocks situated the girls’ heads nicely on the leather-padded cradles to which their high, platform collars were padlocked.

Even if they could have lifted their heads to look up, they wouldn’t have been able to see much, with the snug leather hoods laced up to cover their faces, except for their mouths. The thick, round rubber gags with breathing tubes stuck through them would certainly have discouraged the asking of any foolish questions. And the rigid, seven-inch-heeled ballet boots with the locking ankle straps would have slowed them down a bit, in the unlikely event of their somehow having gotten loose. Even in their sleep, they were never allowed to forget their utter helplessness and dependency on their keepers.

Since the inmates were required to be naked in their cells at all times, their skimpy uniforms folded neatly on the shelves next to their bunks, it was easy for Alex to see what kind of time they had been having in this place. Pamela's fair, slender, girlish body was decorated from head to foot with a vivid assortment of stripes, welts, weals and bruises from what Alex took to be a variety of different whips wielded by numerous hands.

Jessica's glorious curves had gotten their share of attention as well. Someone had obviously put some serious attention into caning her thighs, which were laddered with neat, horizontal strokes from knee to pelvis. The work must have been recent, because the marks were just going from red to purple. Another set of stripes, these from a short dog whip of some kind, had been laid over her concave belly in oblique slashes. Her coppery nipples looked red and sore, which they were, from having been abused through much of the afternoon with a combination of clamps, ice cubes, hot wax and suction hoses.

Alex wasn't surprised at the zeal of the disciplinary staff in dealing with these two.

What other fate could be expected for a senior slave who had dared to strike a mistress, or the troublesome apprentice slave who had inspired her to do so? Alex sat down on the edge of Jessica's bunk and just watched for a while. The black rubber electrodes taped to the inner curves of her breasts rose and fell rhythmically, sending their message of deep slumber back to the monitors at the console.

Jessica's mane of red hair spilled out from under the edges of the full hood, spreading out in an auburn halo on the black sheeting. A shiny track of saliva streamed out of one corner of her wide, rubber-stuffed mouth.

Alex wondered what dreams might be invoked by the insinuating presence of the latex harness locked around Jessica's middle and cinched up ever so tightly between her thighs, holding its twin plugs securely within her. The influence on Pamela was obvious enough, from the soft rocking motions of her hips, never still even in sleep.

Alex lowered a careful hand to Jessica's breast, taking her gold nipple ring gently between his fingers, not wanting to awaken her too suddenly. Always a light sleeper, she came to at once, her body shifting as she strained up to meet his unmistakable touch. She turned her hooded face toward where he sat, murmured softly. Alex put a finger to the rubber ball between her lips, bent down to whisper to her through the hood.

“Be very quiet. I've come to give you some good news. This is your last night here.

You'll be back in your regular quarters tomorrow.”

Fighting against the restrictive collar, Jessica struggled to lift her head, rubbing her leather-clad cheek against his face. Her pinioned hands fought to reach for him. Her gleaming, naked, thoroughly abused body arched desperately off the pallet, trying to make contact.

It was foolish. Dangerous even, especially under the circumstances. But it was inevitable. Unsnapping his pass key, Alex unlocked the saddle strap from Jessica's waist harness, slowly easing all the hot rubber packing out of her well-greased insides. Her smooth-shaven lips, always full and pink, were especially swollen and shiny. From the looks of things, these parts had not been spared the staffs ministrations. He could still make out a clamp-mark or two on the outer lips.

Inching his way down along her glistening body, kissing a nipple here, a welt there, he cautiously nuzzled into her clit, which met his tongue all hard and quivering. The ankle stocks held Jessica's legs well open, but she did what she could to get them even more so. Alex could hear her gurgling happily behind the ball gag, could see the shuddering rise of her full bosom as her long-denied desires flooded forth. She twisted and writhed, every muscle tensing under the implacable grip of the stocks.

Alex knew her well, knew every twitch and quiver of the well-endowed clit hidden so discreetly beneath its demurely-narrow hood. When its throbbing point seemed about to explode, Alex rolled his tongue back into his head

and climbed on top of her, unbuttoning his uniform trousers to free his cock, which had been trying to batter its way out for some minutes.

Positioning himself ever-so-carefully, he slowly lowered himself onto Jessica's bruised and battered form, sliding into her slickly-oiled depths, his jacket brushing up against her raw, erect nipples. The stocks allowed her just enough freedom to swing her hips in time with his, grinding her bones up against the wool of his trousers. He could feel the fevered heat of her face against his, even through the leather of the hood. She pressed the wet gag into his cheek. A stifled sob rose from deep in her chest.

Why not? A forbidden pleasure in a forbidden place. Alex cupped his hand over Jessica's breathing tube and the nostril holes in her hood. Everything in the world seemed to stop with Jessica's breathing. She didn't fight it, succumbing to the sensation she loved the most, being fucked hard to climax well drifting off into the blur of unconsciousness. As soon as he felt her internal muscles start to contract, he took his hand away, allowing her lungs to fill with air again with a spluttering gasp.

Pamela slept through it all on the adjoining pallet, dreaming of boys she had known and boys she would know, and also of Jessica, who would always be there when the boys had gone away.

The passion of Alex and Jessica did not go entirely unwitnessed, however. Out at her console, Mariko watched them on the screen, her face impassive. She watched the rising peaks of Jessica's climax on the heart and respiration monitors, the sudden break in the breathing line, then the slow return to normal levels. No one seeing her at that moment would have had the slightest idea what was in her mind.

It could have been called a dress rehearsal, but for the fact that most of the participants could hardly be called dressed. A collar here, a cuff there, ample chain to connect them all up, but hardly a stitch of clothing was to be seen along the double row of slave girls, each standing on her low platform, chained at the neck to the platform's tall center post. Next to each stood an attendant mistress, armored in leather, whip swinging at her belt. The roof

of the pavilion afforded shelter from the afternoon sun, but the light North African breeze whispered up from the beach and through the open sides of the structure to cool the sweat of the girls, who had just been put through their display positions for the third time.

Alex and Stephanie strolled along between the rows, looking over some of the rarest, costliest, most beautiful inventory in the world. Only the most exotic, exquisite and expert need bother to apply for the annual slave auction, the richest event of its kind in the world. What the Kentucky Derby was to horse racing, or Indianapolis to motor sports, this sale was to the erotic slave trade. As its organizers and sponsors, Alex and Stephanie could only be pleased at the sight of all the golden skin, the fit bodies, the unforgettable faces, the eyes hinting at pleasures and mischiefs to stun the most jaded appetites.

“I think we’re going to do fairly well this year,” Alex reflected. He wasn’t a man given to superlatives. They stopped in front of the two adjoining platforms where Mistress Racine’s twin slaves Elke and Britt lay on their backs demonstrating the limberness of their long legs with wide, aerial splits. In the process, they offered incontrovertible proof of their status as pure, Nordic blonds. It was quite a view. Alex had enjoyed it before, when he had frolicked with the two playful girls on Racine’s boat. One of them, Elke by the ring through her right nipple, as opposed to Britt, whose piercings were on the left, dared a wink at Alex between her open thighs.

“I’m sure Racine will take home some profits on these two.”

Stephanie seemed troubled, remote.

“Maybe we should buy them for the house,” Alex said.

“We’ll have to see about that.”

They moved on to the last platform on the right, which was unoccupied.

“So who’s the mystery guest?” Alex asked.

“Let’s go outside.”

Stephanie strolled on out of the pavilion without looking back, her spectacular form, nicely flattered by the close fit of her riding clothes, silhouetted against the glare of sun and water. Alex followed her out.

When he caught up with her, she was staring out to sea, watching some tiny, white sails gliding across the distant horizon under a cloudless sky. Alex put a hand on her shoulder.

“Stephanie, I don’t mean to pry, but…”

He never got to finish his question. Stephanie rounded to’ face him.

“Alex,” she said evenly, “I’ve decided to put Jessica’s contract up for bid.”

Whatever she was looking to see in Alex’s face, she didn’t find it.

“Do you really think that’s wise? She’s terribly popular with the regulars.”

Jessica was considerably more than that. She was widely acknowledged as the establishment’s star slave. Having discovered the ultimate power in giving ultimate pleasure, Jessica had used it ruthlessly to become the most desired, most envied and, in a few places, most hated, woman in the compound.

“I know about you and Jessica, Alex,” Stephanie announced.

There was a very long moment of silence indeed. Alex had always known this day would come, had never considered lying directly to his best friend’s face when it finally arrived. But all the clever evasions he had practiced over the preceding months seemed now to have mysteriously faded away.

“How did you find out?,” he managed at last.

“Mariko told Lola. Lola told Bart. Bart told me.”

Alex should have expected it. One betrayal begot another.

Alex had intended to cure Mariko of her futile love for him, with all too great success.

Now she had delivered them both into the hands of their enemies, the scheming Mistress Lola and the lovesick toff Bart. Bart was prepared to go to any length to acquire Jessica for himself, even to the extent of buying the whole place just to get control of her. Now it looked as if that wouldn't be necessary.

“You understand the situation, Alex. You broke the rules. Now one of you has to go.

And I need you here.”

“I'm sorry, Stephanie. We've wanted to tell you many times, but we could never bring ourselves to choose between each other and our world.”

Stephanie's cool, intelligent face broke suddenly into a sad smile. She touched Alex's cheek with a gloved hand.

“I'm the one who's sorry. I think it's sweet that somebody finally got through to you after all these years. Too bad she had to be a slave here. You and I wrote the rules.

We're the ones who have to obey them the most closely.”

“What if I buy her myself?”

At that, Stephanie gave a surprisingly bitter laugh.

“With what?”

“With my share of this place, of course. You were ready to buy me out for cash a few weeks ago.”

“With Bart's money. Now neither one of us will need to sell out. I'm putting Jessica up with such a high reserve price, no one will even bid against him. We'll still come out ahead.”

For the first time in the whole, tragic history of their friendship, Alex felt a hot rush of genuine anger at Stephanie.

“How can you be so mercenary? This is Jessica we’re talking about.

“We’re talking about much more than that, Alex. We’re talking about all of us. If I don’t lay hands on a half-million dollars by the first of next month, we’ll have to shut down.”

Alex had figured he’d already had his biggest shock of the day. He’d been mistaken.

“I don’t get it. We’re booked solid for the next eighteen months. With the sale coming up, and then Festival Week ...”

Stephanie turned her back on him to study the ocean some more.

“We’re doing fine, now. It’s the last three years that are the problem. It just took us a bit too long to get into the black. You should know what it costs to run this place. You would, if you ever bothered to look at the books.”

“Do you really think I’ll cooperate in this?” Alex’s voice was cold and ominous.

Stephanie’s reply was equally chilling.

“It’s that, or an open hearing. She’ll be interrogated until she confesses and then dismissed. You really think that’s in Jessica’s best interest?”

To this, Alex had no reply whatsoever, at least none for the moment. There would be a few more moves before the game was over.

## Chapter Fifteen

On the day of the annual slave auction, the whole place crackled with the electricity of the trading floor at the Chicago Commodities Exchange. All morning, the long, black cars continued to come and go at the front gate as the late-arriving bidders disembarked with their bodyguards and their expensive luggage. The guests wore everything from Savile Row suits to burnouses to black leather jackets. Some came to shop for themselves. Others represented the interests of potentates even mightier.

Some came for business. Some came for pleasure. Most came for both.

In the inner courts, the voltage was even higher. From the kitchens to the stables, every square inch of the place had been burnished by the fevered labors of slaves and staff alike over the preceding week. Now, the hallways and grand salons were virtually deserted, last minute preparations for the auction being completed behind closed doors.

Slave girls destined for the auction block that afternoon had been confined to their quarters with their serving maids, to insure plenty of time to make certain that those to be sold would be displayed to their best advantage. The confinement also served the dual purposes of keeping the girls from getting caught up in the passions and intrigues that always swirled around the sale. Distracted slaves didn't perform as well on the block.

And, too, a little quiet time provided a girl with one last chance to reflect. Over the years, more than one had chosen at the eleventh hour to tear up her contract and depart.

That, more or less, was what Pamela tearfully attempted to get Jessica to do while she brushed out her lady's long, thick mane. Jessica sat up very straight, naked but for her locked collar, on the small, velvet-cushioned bench before the vast, round mirror of her vanity. Pamela, back at last in her little bits of a maid's uniform and her full set of slender chromed shackles

and chains, hovered over her. Pamela's pert, upturned breasts occasionally brushing against Jessica's face, Pamela lingered over every brush stroke.

It was not uncommon for apprentice slave girls to develop strong affections for the more senior girls they served as part of their education. The shared the pleasures and punishments of a life that offered plenty of each made for close relations. But relations between Jessica and Pamela were closer than usual. Not only had they been lovers, which was more or less expected, they had been conspirators. All through their time together, Pamela had known the secret of Jessica's desperate, forbidden romance. They had both suffered for that knowledge during the long, terrible days in the disciplinary unit. Both still bore on their bodies fading shadows of the marks left by the daily whippings they had received down there. The inner effects of their incarceration together in that tiny cell - bathing each other, feeding each other, even punishing each other when ordered - had bound Pamela to Jessica with chains far heavier than those connecting up her collar and her wrist and ankle cuffs.

"We could run away someplace, live some other kind of life," Pamela said with a bleak snuffle.

"Where? What kind of life? We didn't choose to live in this world. It chose us. If we run away from here, it'll only be to someplace worse."

"But being sold to Bart..."

Pamela made the name sound like a curse. Actually, Bart was not a bad person, merely typical of his kind. He was rich and spoiled and used to having what he wanted. He wanted Jessica and, like most of his class, he had both the means necessary and the inclination to use them.

"Bart's not so bad. He'll be easy to handle, especially since he's in love with me. I'll figure out some way to make him bring me back here. Anyhow, for the moment he's got the upper hand. I've been caught having forbidden relations with the chief of staff. If I don't leave voluntarily, I'll be exposed and dismissed, and Alex right along with me."

“Why doesn’t he just resign and let us stay here together?” Pamela was crying hard now. Jessica offered her a tissue from the vanity.

“You’ll ruin your mascara. You want to look your best out there, don’t you?” “I don’t care how I look!”

Pamela dropped the brush and sank to her knees, wrapping her arms tightly around Jessica’s leg, she buried her face in one, long creamy white thigh. Jessica stroked her for a moment, then gently tilted Pamela’s face up to look into her own. Jessica’s green eyes were calm and clear.

“Listen to me, Pamela, darling,” she said with quiet intensity. “I’ve led a very selfish life. I’ve hurt many people, done many destructive things. Just this once, I’m trying to do what I think is right. If you really care about me, you won’t make it any more difficult than it already is.”

Pamela looked up at her, swallowed hard, blinked back a cresting wave of new tears.

“You’re right,” she choked out, regaining her composure a bit, “if I’m really going to be promoted to a senior slave around here, I’d better start acting like one.”

Jessica flashed a lascivious grin down at her.

“That’s better. Now why don’t you do something really useful, like sucking my clit for awhile?”

“Yes, ma’am!”

Pamela nuzzled into Jessica’s freshly-shaved and perfumed probing tongue seeking out the hard button of Jessica’s clit, the preferences of which she knew so intimately.

If Pamela had to say good-bye to the woman she loved, she couldn’t think of a better way.

Jessica threw back her head. A low growl rising in her throat, her hands found their way into Pamela's blond hair. In the back of Jessica's mind there formed the ironic thought that girls always brought a better price when delivered hot to the block. The buyers could smell it.

A short distance away, in the sumptuous guest suite of Mistress Racine, this very principle was being demonstrated with Racine's girls Elke and Britt, who would be joining Jessica under the gavel later that afternoon.

Alex, resplendent in his dress blacks, and the lean, athletic Racine, somewhat more casually attired in a pair of high black boots and an excellent tan, sat side by side on the high platform bed. Like all the guest suites, this one was appointed with thoughtfully-place ring bolts, both on the tubular steel bed frame itself and in the low, padded platform next to it, where slaves usually gave service and not infrequently spent the night.

At the moment, the platform was occupied by the delectable twins. Anchored to the ring bolts in the platform by padlocked leather cuffs, they were positioned in a perfect sixty-nine, Elke flat on her back on the bottom, Britt on all fours on the top, though with both of them naked, the only way to tell who was who was by their opposite body piercings. Both their blond heads were buried between each others thighs, with much loud lapping and slurping attendant.

"By the time Prince Ali finishes paying for these two indolent sluts, the price of gas will be up ten cents at the pump," Racine said, resting her high heels on Britt's pertly elevated butt. "And they'll be living in luxury in the prince's new place in portofino. I almost envy them."

"I suppose you could always change places," Alex said dryly. He thought he heard a smothered giggle from one of the girls. Racine must have heard it two. Her face tightened as she watched them, squirming and gasping in their bonds.

"The secret," she said, changing the subject, "is not to let the little darlings come.

That way, they'll be positively dripping by sale time. Look at Elke down there. She's obviously getting too close."

With that, Racine snatched up a short, nasty split-tailed viper, a highly-accurate whip for such close work, from the night stand and lashed downward. The knotted ends came right in under Britt to snick against the outer curve of Elke's breast. The girl let out a startled cry, slightly muffled by Britt's pussy. Both girls stopped what they were doing instantly.

"Time for a little cooling down," Racine said, scooping up a handful of shaved ice from the silver bucket in which her ever-present bottle of champagne rested. Lifting Britt's face out of the way by the hair, she reached down and slapped the pile of ice up against Elke's overheated pussy. Alex could have sworn he saw steam rising.

The hapless slave let out a squeal of surprise. Her whole body shook while Racine held the ice in place until melting rivulets puddled on the platform between Elke's legs. Britt watched the whole process anxiously, reminding herself not to moan too loudly as Elke licked away all the more frantically, lest she suffer a similar fate.

When the ice was fully melted, Racine put Britt back to work. She dried her hands on a napkin. Taking up the bottle from the bucket, Racine poured fresh flutes for Alex and herself.

"Right, then," she said, "here's to our new venture, partner." She and Alex clicked glasses. Racine suggested that Alex might want to enjoy the twins' favors to celebrate the deal. Having already sampled those delights on Racine's yacht, he might otherwise have been tempted, but there was much yet to be done and time was short. He kissed Racine on the cheek and took his leave, with just a quick, backward glance at the twins, still chained to the low platform, going diligently about their pleasant tasks.

A moment later, Alex was knocking on the door of Stephanie's private apartment, which was only a few doors down from the offices they shared as co-proprietors.

Stephanie, who ran the business side of things, never liked to be far from her telephones and faxes.

She was even more businesslike than usual, if that were possible, admitting him to the inner sanctum that so few ever saw. In the surprisingly soft, uncompromisingly feminine pastel confines of her private domain, Stephanie was all the more strikingly severe and somber in her black boardroom suit, the formality of which was only slightly subverted by the closeness with which it was cut to her impressive curves.

Even her black grosgrain eye patch added to the air of formality.

Alex wasn't surprised by the relative coolness of her greeting. She had reason to be angry with him. Since the death of Stephanie's husband Jack, Alex had been more than just a partner. Through the comings and goings of her numerous lovers and/or slaves, he had remained as her only real friend. And now he had, in effect, betrayed her. Stephanie liked to feel in control of her world, and this was just the kind of thing that threatened that control. It gave her all the more reason to want to be free of this business, with all its seductive entanglements, though now the prospect of that freedom seemed all the more remote. With Jessica gone, how long would Alex remain? If he left, she would have to carry on alone.

Stephanie kept her thoughts to herself, concluding a little domestic business of her own, the final inspection of her personal slave Charlotte, who looked even more petulant than usual today. Having been temporarily demoted for the latest of her innumerable infractions and indiscretions, she wore a maid's apron, training collar and shackles like Pamela. Her arms had been strapped up behind her and a small tray buckled on in front, with straps to the shoulders and around the mid-back to hold it in place. The tray had been placed high up, so her full, firm tits, which were bare with the pale aureoles rouged for the occasion, rested on it, along with whatever refreshments she might be assigned to serve. Indeed, her tits were likely to stay right where they were, thanks to twin sets of spring-loaded, rubber tipped tweezer clamps mounted upright in the middle of the tray and fastened firmly to her

nips. Each time a glass was placed on the tray, or lifted from it, the clamps could be expected to give her an extra little tweak.

“I’ll be so humiliated, having to go around looking like a maid on auction day,”

Charlotte whined.

“You brought it on yourself, dear. I mean really, going down on Sir Paul’s driver right there in the garage ...”

“But I hadn’t been fucked all week, and he seemed like such a nice young man.

“Enough! Get down to the kitchen.”

Stephanie gave Charlotte a sharp smack on the behind, practically knocking her off her steep heels. She tottered out whimpering, trying to get her balance with the tray in front of her.

“Quite hopeless, that one,” Alex observed after Charlotte was gone.

“I know. That’s what I like about her. The more I punish her, the more she provokes me. Everything in order downstairs?”

“Of course. Isn’t it always?”

Stephanie flashed him a slightly scornful look.

“I used to think so. Now, I’m not so sure.”

“That’s precisely what I’ve come here to discuss. Got a minute?”

It ended up taking ten. Alex knew he wouldn’t have much time before the auction began, but he had one more stop to make, his own quarters, where he found Mariko, dressed in innocuous travel clothes, packing her bags. There wasn’t much to pack.

Slaves traveled light.

“Where will you go?” Alex asked, watching her.

“Back to Osaka.”

“You may not get much of a welcome. The Yakuza don’t think highly of returned gifts.”

Mariko shrugged with elaborate casualness.

“I’m sure some use will be found for me, since I’m obviously no longer needed here.”

“But you are needed here, by me.”

She turned to face him, her classically beautiful geisha’s face streaked with tears.

“For what? I have failed you and dishonored us both. My jealous foolishness has ruined everything for all of us. I’m unfit to be a slave to you or anyone else.”

Alex took her face in his arms. He could feel her trembling.

“You’re quite right. You’re not really suited to slavery. You’ve learned how to go through the motions, but in your heart, you remain entirely your own. You can never really surrender to anybody. I knew that when I enlisted you to serve as my spy. It was beneath you and, inevitably, you would rebel. All you did was prove that you are your own person, and that is as it should be.”

With that, Alex unsnapped the ring of keys from his garrison belt, dexterated a tiny gold one from the many on the ring and opened the lock on Mariko’s collar. She reflexively put her fingertips to her neck, feeling its unaccustomed nakedness. Her eyes were unutterably sad.

“I do have some consolation for you,” Alex said, gently setting her discarded collar down on his bed, which they would never again share.

“Whatever happens today, I have arranged for you to be permanently posted to the supervisory staff here. You’ll be giving the orders from now on, instead of taking them.”

Grief gave way to astonishment as the news sank in. “But why? Why me?”

“Because you’re the one person around here who has no interest in acquiring power for herself. That is the only kind of person who can be trusted in a position of authority. Go to the office and pick up your keys. It is my final order as your master.”

She bowed and withdrew, not saying another word.

By the time Alex made it down to the pavilion, the festivities had already commenced. He could hear the excited chatter of the crowd on the way up the steps to the open-sided structure, which had been garlanded heavily with fresh flowers for the occasion, their scent carried in wafts on the soft, lazy spring zephyr from the ocean. The water itself, only a few yards across the sand from the far end of the pavilion, smooth sparkling. Even nature seemed to be cooperating in making the sale a success.

All was in readiness under the pavilion’s pitched roof. Each of the small, elevated stages ranged in two long rows down the center of the floor was occupied by a uniquely beautiful, completely naked girl, unfettered but for the collar around her neck, attached by a long chain to the post in the center of each stage. The stages revolved slowly to make sure all the merchandise was viewed fully from every angle.

The girls went through their posing routines under the vigilant eyes of their respective attendant mistresses, who were there not so much to supervise the slaves as to keep them safe from premature handling by the guests. In endless reps, the girls did their positions: stand at attention, turn full circle, kneel, go to all fours, onto the back with legs elevated and spread, then back to attention.

Anything that might be desired in the way of enslaved feminine flesh was here to be found. There were blonds, brunettes and redheads. There were blue eyes and green eyes and brown eyes. There was skin the color of milk, skin the color of ivory, skin the color teak. There were faces from magazine covers, faces from convent schools, faces from country clubs, faces from opium dens. There were small breasts and full.

There were little, doll-like creatures who could be thrown over a shoulder and carried home, as well as strapping, buff amazons who could probably throw their prospective owners over their shoulders and carry them home. Their were gold rings in intimate places and, here and there, the exquisite, exotic touch of the tattooist's needle or the branding iron.

In among the stages, the guests drifted by in small groups, speaking in low voices. It was very much the crowd one met at art auctions, stylish, self-confident, nice tans and good teeth. Americans, Japanese, Europeans, Arabs, all were residents of a very particular world, that of the rich and powerful. These people were never of much interest to Alex. He made conversation with them as his job required, but it amused him to imagine how different his real life would seem compared to their notions of it.

He ambled down the row with studied casualness, exchanging winks with Britt and Elke, offering a nod of encouragement to a girl or two who seemed to need it.

Jessica's platform was at the very end. She was attended by none other than their mutual nemesis, Mistress Lola, who had worked so long and hard to bring about this situation. Her cruel, red lips wore a twisted smile as she watched Jessica's work out.

Alex watched also, from a distance, unaware for a moment of Pamela's presence at his elbow.

"Drink, sir?"

He turned to see her standing there with her little strap-on tray laden with full glasses. "No thanks. I'm working."

“We’ve lost her,” Pamela said miserably, looking down the aisle toward Jessica. “Not yet.”

Alex gave Pamela a pat on the behind and headed toward his target. Bart stood right at the foot of Jessica’s stage, gazing up at what he was certain was about to be his.

He wore a natty Panama, a perfectly creased linen suit and a look of infinite self-satisfaction. He pumped Alex’s hand enthusiastically.

“Doesn’t she look fabulous? You’ve done a wonderful job preparing her. When does the bidding start?”

“You won’t have long to wait. Stephanie’s decided to start at this end of the row.”

“Marvelous. Jessica and I will be having cocktails on the plane before sunset.”

“I don’t think so.”

They both turned at the sound of Stephanie’s cool, unwavering voice. She had come up behind them soundlessly, accompanied by Racine and Mariko, who had already changed into her staff uniform. Bart looked baffled.

“There have been a few changes in the program,” Stephanie continued. Bart’s eyes narrowed with suspicion. He had already agreed, in private, to pay what would be the highest price ever brought by a girl at this auction for Jessica’s contract. He couldn’t believe they would have the nerve to try and hold him up for more.

Nonetheless, his voice was perfectly mild.

“What kind of changes, Stephanie?”

“Well, for one thing, I won’t be conducting the sale, Racine will.”

At this, all eyes turned to Racine, except for Jessica's. She continued looking straight ahead, going through her ritual movements.

"Stephanie and I have worked out a new arrangement," Racine said. "She's selling her share in the business to Alex." This was too much for Bart.

"Alex! Don't be ridiculous! Where would Alex get that kind of money?"

"From me. I bought his share, with a little help from our friend Prince Ali. Alex and I will now be partners and Stephanie can take her well-deserved vacation."

Bart's voice dripped with scorn.

"You can't really intend to stay down here and run this place, Racine. Your business is in Berlin."

"Of course not. I'm going home as soon as we've signed the papers. Alex and Jessica are going to manage this place. I've withdrawn her contract from the sale so she can serve as his personal slave."

Bart whirled on Alex, doubling up his fists. But what he saw in Alex's face stopped him cold. For just an instant, in Alex's eyes, he saw what it was that was so carefully concealed under all of Alex's self discipline and good manners. He had heard once that Alex was cashiered from the Legion for shooting an insubordinate non-com between the eyes. For the first time, he believed it.

After a tense beat, Alex's face broke into a broad grin and he extended his hand to his vanquished opponent.

"Really, Bart, what would Jack think if he were to see his two best friends fighting in front of his widow?"

After a brief hesitation, Bart took Alex's hand.

"What the hell? I really couldn't afford her anyway."

“Well,” Stephanie said, I guess we’re going to be one girl short.”

“Oh yes, that reminds me of another matter,” Racine broke in. This girl, Lola who I sent to you. She apparently misconveyed my instructions. I wanted her trained as a slave, not a mistress.”

Lola’s face turned purple.

“That’s a lie, Racine! You know why I was sent here!”

“As you can see,” Racine continued, “she’s fairly resistant to instruction and, frankly, I’m inclined to put her on the block and let her become someone else’s problem.”

“No! Please don’t do this to me!.”

Lola abandoned her post to prostrate herself at Racine’s feet, groveling over her boots. By now a small crowd, having overheard the commotion, had gathered to witness this spectacle.

“You’re the only person in the world I’ve ever cared about. Please don’t send me away,” Lola sniveled.

At just the moment, Pamela scooted up with her tray, stopping dead in her tracks at the sight of her savage tormentor blubbering on her knees.

“What the fuck....?”

Seeing Pamela gave Alex an idea.

“Perhaps this wretched poseur might be of some value to us after all. We’ll have an opening in the slave quarters now for a new senior slave. I thought Pamela, here, might be a good choice.”

Pamela couldn’t believe she’d heard it right. They were actually talking about promoting her.

“And of course,” Alex went on, “she’ll be in need of a serving maid.”

He lowered his gaze to Lola. Racine's eyes lit up with malicious delight. She nudged Lola in the ribs with a booted toe.

“On your feet, bitch.”

Lola scrambled off the ground, immediately folding her arms up behind her back. So this was the real Lola.

“I'm going to give you another chance to start over at the bottom. Strip.”

“Yes, ma'am! Thank you, ma'am!” Lola sputtered, frantically peeling down her leathers. Meanwhile, Alex unstrapped the tray from the still-dumb struck Pamela, setting it down beside her. He took out his keys and unlocked her combination shackles, starting at the neck. Her huge, blue eyes blinked up at him as the keys rattled at her neck, freeing her from the weight of the chains she had worn for so long.

Alex turned with the shackles in his hand. Lola looked good naked. He'd always suspected her of keeping her tits strapped down. He appreciated the way their unexpected generosity softened the hard muscularity of Lola's body. Yes, this was going to be entertaining. He clamped the padded steel collar solidly around Lola's throat, making sure she heard the sound of the latch closing. She stood perfectly still, face front, while he put on the manacles.

“I like you better already,” Alex said, stepping back to admire his handiwork. “Mariko, take this one downstairs and start her through induction.” He turned to Pamela. “And we'll be needing a fitted collar for Pamela here, along with some real clothes for tonight's party.”

Mariko came forward to take charge of Lola. Thinking of all the outstanding accounts between them that would soon be settled, Mariko had to admit to herself that being a mistress had its compensations. Alex kissed Pamela on the forehead and gave her a little smack on the rump.

“Go get dressed. I'm tired of seeing you in that fucking apron.”

Breaking every known rule and some not yet written, Pamela threw her arms around Alex and planted a big, wet one on his cheek. Then she turned and ran for her life.

The whole crowd, which now included virtually everyone in the pavilion except for the slaves-at-auction and their attendants (who had remained steadfastly at their stations throughout all the drama) burst out laughing.

“Could we please get on with the sale?” Stephanie wailed in amused exasperation.

Even she was laughing.

“Just one more thing first,” Alex said, “something I’ve been waiting to do for a very long time.”

He stepped up onto the stage where Jessica continued her posing routine with unwavering precision, even though he could see her eyes were brimming with tears.

She didn’t stop, even as he approached her, even when he unlocked the chain from her collar to the center post. He had to forcibly seize her by the arms and turn her to face him. He gazed at her for just an instant, savoring one last second of longing, before pulling her head back by her long, red hair and kissing her ferociously.

Neither one of them heard the explosion of spontaneous applause that shook the pavilion to the rafters and rolled out to sea on the light breeze.

## Chapter Sixteen

Jessica turned to look at herself in the full-length mirror. Inclined as she was to be self-critical, even she had to admit that the effect was fairly breathtaking. She so rarely wore white, it seemed almost as if she were looking at someone else in her wedding ensemble, such as it was. Her outfit consisted of a long, white net veil, held in place over her auburn tresses (which had been tightly woven into a single, thick braid that reached almost to her waist in the back) by a narrow band of pearls, a brief, white satin corselet, cinched down to a perfectly uncomfortable inches, white seamed stockings and white pumps with perilous heels.

In the place of her usual black leather collar and restraint cuffs, she wore bands of white patent with gold hardware. The rest of the view was all Jessica, her natural voluptuousness exaggerated even more by the constriction of the corselet. Since she wore no panties, her garters and stocking tops nicely framed the intersection of her thighs. Her usually close-cropped patch of red curls had been shaved off completely for the occasion.

A wry smile played over Jessica's broad, sensual mouth as she watched in the mirror while Pamela, serving just this one last time as her maid, fussed over Jessica's makeup. The heavy strap work of the red patent training harness chosen for Pamela and the other attendants was most flattering to her girlish physique and natural blonde's complexion, but it didn't make her delicate labors any easier.

"I look so virginal," Jessica laughed.

"Yeah, right," Pamela said, "these next few days will probably be the longest time you've gone without sex in ten years."

Pamela dabbed rouge onto Jessica's tawny nipples with a long brush. The right one, always the more sensitive, stiffened around its gold ring at the touch of the soft bristles.

“Who said anything about going without sex?” Jessica asked.

“After the ceremony...”

“I’ll think of something.”

They both laughed. Pamela kissed Jessica on the cheek.

“That’s my mistress.”

“Not any more. Now you’re a senior slave with a serving maid of your own.”

“Please, don’t remind me.”

“I’ll bet that Lola’s quite a handful.”

“She was less of a pain when she was a mistress. Who’d have thought that somebody who’s so good with a whip would be so slow and lame with a garter clip?”

“She has a lot to unlearn. Just be patient, the way I was with you.”

“Was I really that bad at first?” Pamela asked sheepishly. “Quite hopeless. You did all your thinking with this.” Jessica swept a hand up between Pamela’s legs, getting a good grab.

“I can see its time to get those hands out of the way. Turn around.”

Jessica turned her back obediently, placing her hands palm to palm. Pamela tossed the veil up over Jessica’s head to get it out of the way so she could slip on the arm sleeve. Made out of gleaming white patent, it slid up over Jessica’s arms, pressing them firmly together behind her. Laces and buckled straps cinched the single glove tight, so that Jessica’s elbows touched. Jessica shifted them slightly to help Pamela get the straps in the right places. The buckling of more straps under the arms and across the shoulders anchored the sleeve in place. The effect in the mirror was now truly

stunning, the constriction of the single glove thrusting Jessica's tits out even further.

As a final touch, Pamela locked a short, lightweight gold chain between Jessica's white ankle cuffs. Jessica took a quick, hobbled step, steadying herself on her spikes. The hobble chain tinkled musically. Pamela looked her up and down, making sure everything was in place.

"I guess we're ready. Hope I haven't forgotten anything," she said.

"I swear, Pamela, you're more nervous than I am, and I'm the one getting married!"

Actually, in the legal sense, Jessica was in the process of getting married at that very moment. A few doors down from her new quarters in the senior staff wing, Alex and Stephanie were completing the paperwork. With the title to the rather large grant of land upon which the whole complex had been constructed, Stephanie had acquired the rights of seignury, including the powers of local magistrate. In that capacity, she signed off on the documents officially joining Jessica and Alex in legal matrimony.

Alex watched her dutifully executing the formalities in a her black magistrate's robes which, being made entirely of sheer silk chiffon, did nothing to hide her spectacular figure. In honor of the festivities, Stephanie had donned a red eye-patch in the place of her usual black one.

"I'm going to miss you," Alex said.

"We'll come back to visit. Just as soon as I've taken a nice, long vacation."  
"I hope we'll still be in business."

"Leave that part of it to Jessica. She's got a good head for figures. Just don't let the girls take too much advantage of you. And whatever you do, make sure they don't get personally involved with the staff, okay?"

She turned and handed Alex the fat fountain pen.

“Ready to sign away your freedom?” she asked.

“Gladly.”

He took the pen in hand.

The ballroom was riotous with flowers. Stephanie and Bart had had them flown in from the capitol at staggering expense. Garlands hung from the chandeliers. Giant bouquets filled the dais that had been erected at the front of the room. The air was heavy with the cacophony of scents. A long, red carpet had been unrolled up the center of the room, and the rows of white-painted folding wooden chairs that had been set up on either side of it were already filled by guests in bright afternoon finery. At the end of each row, a mistress in dress leathers and a kneeling slave acted as a honor guards, lining the aisle in perfect formation. The buzz of excited conversation subsided with the first chords of the familiar march.

The doors of the ballroom swung open. Chairs creaked in unison as the strained for a glimpse of the wedding party. A murmur of approval rippled through the crowd when Jessica entered, face veiled, body displayed. She moved with easy grace, despite the hobble chain and the restricting single glove. Pamela carried the leash that ran to the ring on Jessica’s collar.

The blond twins Elke and Britt, on loan for the occasion from Prince Ali, to whom they had been sold at the recent auction, accompanied the bride, carefully keeping pace at her sides in the unlikely event of Jessica losing her balance. Like Pamela, they wore the red leather training harnesses that revealed more than they concealed. Mariko, so short a time ago Alex’s personal slave, escorted the party as chief of staff, looking fit and authoritative in her new uniform, smiling, on Yoshi’s arm.

Alex entered next, his black mess jacket accented just this once with a red rose pinned to the lapel. Several ranking staff members, including Yoshi and Astrid, had come along to lend Alex their moral support.

“Still time to turn back,” Astrid said under her breath.

“Too late. The band’s already been paid,” Alex replied, equally soto voce. Making their way forward, Alex spotted many a familiar face in the crowd. It was a little intimidating, the number of people who had passed through their little world under glass over the years.

Alex noted in passing that the former mistress Lola, the black-haired virago who had nearly proved all of their undoing before her schemes were exposed and she was demoted to the rank of first level slave, wasn’t kneeling quite in position. She wasn’t fully down on her heels, her knees weren’t far enough apart and her back wasn’t completely straight. Pamela, under whom Lola was now serving her apprenticeship, must have noticed it to, because she shot Lola a poisonous look, making the former mistress straighten up with a visible shudder of dread. Alex smiled. Justice, how he loved it.

And speaking of justice, Bart, the man who had been Alex’s rival for Jessica, who had tried to buy the whole business just to get her and, failing that, had sought to undermine it through subterfuge, now sat in the front row with a big smile on his face.

Racine, Alex’s new partner now that Stephanie had sold her share, sat next to him.

Alex knew that, right after the ceremony, Stephanie and Bart would be leaving together for a leisurely tour of East Asia and the South Pacific, taking little, dark-haired Shari along for company. Bart was nothing if not a gracious loser.

Stephanie waited on the dais in her black robes for the party to assemble and the music to subside. Next to her was a small, draped table upon which rested a beautiful, gold-mounted riding whip and a small stainless steel surgical tray with various instruments neatly laid out on it. In a jar of green alcohol solution, a tiny, solid gold padlock lay soaking. Next to the table stood a vertical X-frame from which hung many sets of straps. Charlotte, well-behaved for once, stood by in her red harness, pouting quietly at not being the center of attention.

When all were in place, Pamela helped steady Jessica as she sank to her knees in front of Alex. Stephanie commenced her ceremonial duties. As promised, her words were brief.

“Love makes its own rules,” she said. “Alex was most senior of all the staff here.

Jessica was the most senior of all slaves. Their love was forbidden by both regulation and custom. And yet, it seems, the more obstacles that were put in their path, the more certain their eventual union became. The beauty of our way of life is that it assumes the inevitable violation of every law it makes. Our kind of slavery is a secret celebration of freedom.”

There was the civil boilerplate language of the official marriage ceremony, as well as the additional vows of obedience and protection between slave and master. When Stephanie asked Jessica if she was prepared to surrender fully, Jessica whispered huskily through her veil that she was. At that, Pamela knelt to support Jessica’s shoulders when she turned her back to Alex and bent forward, offering up her bare behind. Charlotte came forward and gave Alex the ceremonial whip. He flexed it a couple of times in mid-air. It was heavy, whooshing a sub-sonic note in the stillness of the hushed room. Charlotte held Jessica’s sleeved arms up out of the way, clearing Alex’s target.

Alex drew back and laid on two solid strokes, one to each cheek, in rapid succession. The whip smacked into Jessica’s bottom with short, crisp reports that echoed off the vaulted ceiling. Jessica budged not a millimeter, though a strangled sob did emerge briefly from under the netting as the two wide, crimson stripes rose slowly on her creamy skin.

Jessica turned to face Alex again, Pamela parting the netting so Jessica could kiss the whip. Then, kneeling ever so carefully, she kissed each of Alex’s boots, lingering with a lascivious tongue, affording him an excellent view of her freshly-striped behind. For one instant, she rolled her eyes up to his. He could tell she was thinking of something really nasty.

But whatever it was, it would have to wait for the climax of the rites. Alex helped Jessica to her feet and removed the sleeve, tossing it aside, he dutifully folded her recently freed arms in the small of her back, though they throbbed furiously from their sudden release and she dearly longed to rub them. She was led over to the X-frame, where Mariko meticulously strapped her to the cross pieces, cinching everything up nicely so that the leather straps indented Jessica's flesh every few inches from the ankles all the way up to the chest and arms. With her typical attention to detail, she carefully arranged the leather work around Jessica's costume, so as to avoid rumpling it unduly. Alex came over and stood nearby.

At a tap on a foot switch, the X inclined slowly backward with a soft whirring of electrified gears, rising and tilting. The chairs creaked again as the crowd leaned forward, not wanting to miss a minute of the procedure. It had been a long time since anyone had seen Stephanie work in public.

Flicking back the full sleeves of her robe, Stephanie extended her hands so Charlotte could snap on a pair of latex gloves, straight from their sterile packaging.

The gloves were black to match her robe. She arranged her instruments while Pamela gave Jessica's freshly-shaven parts a quick betadine rinse from a small silver basin. Pamela had made sure the water was nice and warm. She wasn't surprised to find her former mistress already quite wet in that area.

Stephanie knew just what she was doing. On either side of Jessica's outer labia, Stephanie located tiny dots made with indelible ink. These were the spots Alex had marked. She had trusted him to do the measuring. Those nice, full outer lips that Alex liked so well would be a bit of a challenge. Stephanie took each one in the jaws of a pair of forceps with open loops at the ends. The tiny ink dots were centered perfectly in the loops of the clamps. Stephanie was relieved she had not lost her touch. Now for the good part.

Charlotte ripped open the autoclave envelope containing the ten-gauge piercing needles. Stephanie took one out and held it up so it gleamed in the spotlight over the dais. It looked big. Alex saw Jessica swallow hard under her collar. He placed his hand in hers, which was held down to the X-frame at the wrist. She squeezed his hand hard.

Stephanie brusquely ordered Pamela to hold the forceps and hold them steady.

Pamela had dreaded this. She knelt between Jessica's spread-open thighs and took hold of the clamps. She shut her eyes when the needle touched. She heard the leather groan and the frame rattle as Jessica's body went rigid. Jessica didn't scream, for which Pamela was grateful.

In fact, the needle went through the soft tissue swiftly in Stephanie's expert hand, despite going through a fair amount of anatomy. The second needle went in even faster, though this time Jessica couldn't quite contain a small cry. It was a bit worse, knowing what to expect.

The rest was elementary. Stephanie fished the tiny gold lock out of the jar of alcohol and opened the hasp. Deftly sliding the curve of the lock in as she slid the needles out, she passed it through both of Jessica's labia and clicked it shut, effectively locking Jessica's pussy to all but the one who had the key.

Snapping off her rubber gloves, Stephanie picked up a gold chain with a miniature key on it from the draped table, turned to Alex and hung the chain around his neck.

Leaning forward, she whispered in Alex's ear.

"She's all yours, God help you. And remember, that lock to stay in for at least a week while the piercings heal."

They hugged for just an instant before Alex turned to assist Mariko in unstrapping Jessica from the X. She slid loose, into his arms. Then they kissed, for all the world like any other newlyweds. The crowd was already

up out of their seats, the mad revelry that would last until the late hours would not be denied another minute.

Champagne corks were already popping like a volley of gunfire. But for Alex and Jessica, there was no one else in the room.

“Are you sure you’re up to this?” Alex asked when they were safely back in the bedroom that they could at last share openly.

He sat on the bed next to Jessica, who was bound on her knees, face buried in the pillow, hands cuffed under her to a short chain locked to the spreader bar holding her ankles apart. She still wore her wedding costume. At Jessica’s request, a small mirror had been placed on the bed between her thighs so she could see the lock dangling from her pierced parts.

“You wouldn’t deny a girl her wedding night?” she asked, her words muffled by goose down.

“Aren’t you a little sore?”

“Only in one place.”

Her logic was persuasive, as was the insistent stroking of Pamela’s hand under his heavy, black silk robe. Pamela had learned a lot about Alex during her service to Jessica. With the other hand, Pamela massaged a large helping of shiny lubricant into the only one of Jessica’s passages still unobstructed. Jessica sighed and willed herself to admit Pamela’s skilled fingertips working their way inside the tight ring of muscle. All tasks accomplished, Pamela rolled out of the way and knelt at attention while Alex took his place behind his slave bride. The marks he had given her that afternoon were vivid even in the flickering light of the bedside candles. He traced them lightly as he slowly and carefully worked his way into her. He felt the wonderful sensation of knowing that she was truly his property at last, and vice versa.

The End

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## THE GIFT

A Short Story by Ernest Greene

Edward and Desmond were the best, if not the oldest, of friends. Desmond was a young, still unestablished artist and Edward was an older, very rich, art collector.

But what really brought them together was a shared love of a certain kind of woman, a woman who seemed free to all the world, but could be a willing, loving slave to the right man.

When Edward insisted that Desmond come up to his place in the country for the weekend, no excuses accepted, Desmond had a feeling he knew the reason. It had to have something to do with Edward's slave, Audrey.

Edward's country place was a rambling, field-stone house with a large, white barn out back where Edward stabled his horses.

Over lunch in a high-ceilinged, whitewashed sunroom, Edward explained the situation. He was going away on some kind of archaeological dig for a number of months. Audrey couldn't go along. He wanted to make sure she would remain in the right hands, so to speak, while he was off digging for pots.

Desmond started to raise a few questions. Edward wouldn't hear them. He went to fetch Audrey so they could make it official. He returned shortly, bringing Audrey with him, a proprietary arm draped over her shoulders, which she carried high and straight.

Audrey was tall, as tall as Desmond in the heels she always wore. She had broad shoulders, tapering to a long, slender waist, from which flowed highly mobile hips.

Her long, long legs gave her a kind of equine perfection, only a little offset by breasts slightly larger than her slim frame was designed to carry. Her hair, which came to her shoulders when worn down, was a lustrous auburn, more brown than red, its highlights carried over into a Mediterranean complexion and great dark amber eyes, remote and slightly disturbed. Her full lips had an exaggerated, almost theatrical quality.

Desmond was surprised to see Audrey, whose taste he had previously observed to tend toward a fashionable severity, dressed up to the neck in creamy Victorian lace.

Her sleeves came down to the wrists, her skirts to the tops of white, high-heeled boots laced to mid-calf. Her hair was pulled back in a chignon which, along with the high neck of her dress, served to further accentuate those slightly over-dramatized features.

After a friendly but correct greeting, Edward ordered her to go and prepare herself.

She turned and walked out of the room, showing Desmond the long, inviting line of closely spaced buttons down her spine, which she held so square. Edward suggested that he might want to go upstairs and unpack while he and Audrey readied the “entertainment” they had planned for the afternoon.

He directed him up the stairs and to the first door on the right, which led into a small, cozy bedroom, heavily curtained, thick rugs on the floor, the whole dominated by a great brass bedstead piled high with colorful quilts.

Desmond unfolded his few articles of clothing, hanging them in an armoire a head taller than he was.

Drawing back the curtains, he looked out the leaded window which gave onto the back of the house just as Edward was quick-marching Audrey, hands now firmly shackled behind her, out to the barn. He let the curtains fall shut and stood a moment with his back to the window.

Winter light filtered in through the windows high up in the roof of the barn. The damp air smelled of wet hay and horses, one of whom nickered in a stall at the opposite end of the building, off to one side, Edward's shiny Mercedes was parked, incongruously, amid rusting farm implements.

In the middle of the open, amphitheater-like space, Edward had finished binding Audrey, now naked except for the white, laced-up boots, between two stout uprights anchored in the sod floor. As Desmond approached, he could see that her arms and legs were held outstretched by heavy chains attached to broad steel manacles.

Edward had also fastened a heartless steel collar closely around her neck.

Desmond came up to stand next to Edward, directly in front of Audrey, who avoided meeting his gaze.

"Attractive, wouldn't you say?" Edward asked, re-checking the lock on her right wrist.

She was much more than that, even with her clothes on. Her generous proportions, her tawny skin, seemed made to touch. Desmond did so, staring with her face, which was hot, almost feverish. She turned her head to graze the back of his hand with her lips. His caress traveled down the side of her collared neck, seemingly the slimmer and more graceful for the harsh restraint, traced the curve of a perfect teardrop breast, its point hard under his hand from the draft that swirled by the red hot Franklin stove warming us from a few feet away. Her nipples were unusually red, he noted, but did not appear made up.

He drew fingertips along the furrow her long, flat belly down to the swell of her pubis, which was shiny and bare, as smooth-shaven as any he'd seen. He remarked on it as he traced the vulnerable crease that bisected it.

"She does something to keep it that way. What is it that you do, Audrey?"

"I... I have it waxed," she answered in a small, hesitant voice.

“I would think that would be unpleasant.”

She didn't answer him.

Desmond found her hot and slick at the center, as she was to be every time he would ever touch her in that place. She took in her breath sharply, but when her eyes met his for the first time, he detected in them heat and fear and something like a challenge.

While Desmond played in and around her, Edward took the coiled whip he carried under his arm and brushed it against Audrey's breast, then her lips, which kissed the leather lingeringly.

“As you can see,” Edward said, “she has no marks on her. I haven't whipped her in quite a while. How long has it been?”

Audrey moaned, whether from the subject under discussion or his ministrations wasn't clear.

“Well?”

“Five weeks and three days, sir.”

“Good. That should be long enough for you to have built up some fresh apprehension. I find that if I whip her too often she gets numb to it. Make sense to you, Desmond?”

“Hm?”

Edward laughed.

“You're too easily distracted, I think,” he said. “Let's get on with it, then.”  
“Edward, darling, please ...,” Audrey stammered out. “What?” His tone was flat and hard.

“Nothing.” Hers was resigned. “I should hope.”

He turned and walked around her, planting himself firmly about ten feet behind her.

“Coming?” he called to Desmond.

Desmond took Audrey’s face in his hands and kissed her. She yielded to it helplessly. It was over too soon.

Desmond stood next to Edward, studied Audrey’s exquisite and as yet unmarked back as he shook out the whip.

It was a nasty, yellow and black braided thing about seven feet long, long enough to develop plenty of momentum in flight. It ended in a hard, fringed knot.

“I think I’m getting a little arthritic. This damp weather bothers me,” Edward said, unlimbering his arm.

“I’m not going to make you count, Audrey, but I imagine you’ll get about twenty-five.”

“Thank you, master,” she said miserably.

There was a heavy silence of a moment or two, broken by the sound of the whip whistling backward over Edward’s shoulder and snapping at the end of its trajectory.

He laid it out forward elegantly, landing it between Audrey’s hips with a report so sharp it made Desmond jump and her cry out. Desmond could see the first welt rising before Edward even had the whip back up in the air. The lash snaked forward again, slamming down across Audrey’s buttocks, throwing her forward as much as her fetters would allow. She strangled a scream, made no sound as the next five strokes fell at random between her shoulder blades, around the small of her back, horizontally over first one, than the other smooth, rounded rear cheek. The skin reddened instantly from each blow. He wasn’t hitting her quite hard enough to rip flesh, but almost.

By the fifteenth stroke, Audrey had lost her composure and begun to cry out. When Edward got done, all she could do was sob weakly as the two of them unshackled her, wrapped her in Edward's long duster and helped her back to the house. Edward and Audrey retired upstairs for a well-earned nap while Desmond helped himself to a warming brandy by the fire.

Having elected to go up to his room and get back into the book he'd brought along, Desmond found an envelope with his initial drawn on it in Edward's baroque hand taped to his door. Inside the envelope was a small, old-fashioned key, such as might have come from an old pair of roller skates.

The curtains were drawn and the bedroom, which was, happily, warmer than he'd expected, was illuminated only by the glow of the candle on the table by the bed.

The candle cast a halo of golden light over the figure of Audrey, naked, kneeling on the floor at the foot of the bed, her legs drawn up under her.

She was anchored to the bed's brass frame by a long chain leading from the post to her steel collar. Her hands looked to be secured behind her. Around her middle she wore a real, medieval-style chastity belt, steel like the collar, held up at the waist with light chain, a hinged steel plate at the front. Desmond was certain that the key he held would open the lock that kept that plate in place.

Audrey's only other attire was a perfectly peculiar pair of shoes of soft black leather, like ballet slippers, but with spectacular seven inch spike heels that would make it possible for her to walk, if at all, only on tip-toe in cautious, mincing steps.

She looked up when he entered. Like a trapped animal, she moved not a muscle as he came toward her. He got down on the floor in front of her, put his arms around her as best he could in their awkward positions. Her kiss was not so frightened as her demeanor. He could feel the hunger in it, in the way her body seemed, again, to grow electric under his hand.

“I want these off you,” he said as he fumbled behind her for the wrist manacles.

“They’re not locked,” she offered helpfully.

He had her hands free in an instant and brought them to his face. They were warm on his cheeks. She left them there while he rattled her collar and chain, trying to figure out how remove them.

“It isn’t possible,” she whispered. “Soon I’ll be yours and you can do things with me your way. For one more night, let me stay under the old rules.”

“Of course.”

He kissed her on the forehead and then, very carefully so as not to worry her injured back, he brought one arm around her shoulders and slipped the other under her knees. She started to protest that she could get up on her own, but he shushed her.

She tucked her head in against his shoulder as he carried her to the side of the bed.

He lowered her ever so slowly to the mattress. Even with that, her eyes shut for an instant when the soft fabric of the counterpane touched her raw skin. She stretched out and lay quietly while he sat stroking her - her hair, her face, her breasts and stomach and thighs, which she parted as his hand approached, though the steel plate denied him access to the places to which she wished to admit him.

She reached up to take hold of the top button of his shirt.

“May I, please?”

“Certainly.”

She took her time, making her way down the placket, working fingers in under the fabric to spread it open. He let her open his belt and zipper, the

heel of her hand gliding seductively over the hardness beneath, and then stood to take off the rest himself. She studied him as if memorizing every detail while he did it.

Taking the steel key from the pocket of his trousers before he tossed them onto a nearby chair, he held it up so Audrey could see it.

“I assume we both know what this is for.”

She said she did, something sad in her voice.

He pressed his lips to hers as his hand sought the lock by feel. It clicked open without resistance.

Audrey lifted her elegant legs so he could slide the chastity belt off over the spike slippers. He tossed the contraption over his shoulder, hearing it land with a clank on the floor. H wondered if Edward heard it too.

Audrey lowered her legs slowly, stretching one out straight, crooking the other at the knee and flopping it over to expose an inner thigh right up to the waxed parts. The same hand that had freed her found its way back up along that expanse of flesh, the softest on a woman’s body, to the wet lips of her sex, which was pouted open by the position of her leg. She shivered at the contact, ground her mouth against his.

They stayed that way a long time, neither of them feeling the need to hurry. As he explored, her hips began to rock, just a little, to increase the friction.

“What would you like?” she asked when they came up for air.

“I would like you to let me find out what you like.”

She reached up to lay her hair, red-gold in the candlelight, out behind her head, settled back and closed her gold eyes. His lips traveled down her. He shifted the collar to kiss the hollow of her throat. His lips grazed over her heart, brushed across a breast, which he cupped in one hand, to take in a red, already-hard nipple. He felt it engage further under the suction.

When Desmond gave his attention to her other breast, Audrey pitched her shoulder forward an inch or two, to offer herself for sucking. He rubbed his face in her muscular stomach, nipped her on the low swell below her long, narrow navel.

The smoothness of her lower abdomen, so carefully maintained with that murderous wax, was a special pleasure in itself. He looked up at her as his fingers spread open the crease of her vulva, starting where it started. He lowered his head to her. Her legs opened wide to welcome him. Audrey's scent, and that of the perfume she'd dotted on her thigh, mingled in his nostrils when he touched tongue to her wet labia.

Her clit budded forth within them, thickly, almost at first contact.

He got serious then, his mouth doing everything to her it knew how to do, as if schooled for the express moment. His hands reached up and down for moist lips and swelling breasts and tensed calves and leather-clad feet.

Audrey did not buck or thrash. She surrendered herself to sensation with a sort of languid intensity. She made herself utterly available while remaining, in some way, quite inaccessible.

She moaned low and a tentative, almost timid hand came to play in his hair. The pressure on the back of his head grew more urgent as she went up the curve very fast, her breathing getting ragged, her pulse pounding in the arteries of her thigh, so close to his ear.

When his tongue found the sweet spot on the left side, she took him by surprise, crying out and arching her back clear of the mattress, her shaking legs closing around him involuntarily.

He let his attentions grow more passive so as not to interfere with her orgasm, letting her shove herself down against his face as hard as she wanted, which was hard indeed.

She was as slow coming off the peak as she had been quick heading up it, only reluctantly sinking back down into the coverlet when the last wave had

died away.

He stayed where he was, finding new places to kiss, soft indentations to rub against, while Audrey petted the back of his neck. Eventually, he lifted one of her legs by the laced ankle so he could roll under it to come up and taste her mouth once more. He smoothed back her hair, tossed up in a halo around her face, licked the salt from her eyes.

“Come here,” she said huskily.

She extended her arms. He was up over her in an instant. She reached down to guide him, fingers snaking up and down for a moment before putting him to her entrance.

He held himself up on his knees and elbows. She raised her hips to swallow him up inside in a single, slow, powerful movement.

With Audrey, there was no first-time awkwardness. Somehow, her every flick of the hip and swing of the shoulder seemed exactly right and made him feel he was doing just as right by her with each thrust and withdrawal.

She held him around the neck, crossed her legs behind his back so her heels dug in lightly at his sacrum. The heat of her, of her arms and her insides, was all around him. He grasped her backside, mindful as he could be of her fresh stripes, dropped a light palm over her sweating forehead.

They slowed for a while to prolong the engagement. When the tension of her body eased momentarily, Desmond found himself somehow even deeper inside her, where he could almost feel her narrowing. He kissed her sopping shoulder, nibbled in her armpit.

She grew more insistent beneath him and he soon found himself coming down steadily harder on the in stroke, drawing back almost all the way out of her and then coming forward with his full momentum behind the motion. She rose to meet me every time.

Desmond began to lose the sense of himself, pounding down on her harder than he meant to, to the extent that he was able to mean to do anything at that point, giving himself up to the passion he felt.

And then he was in the midst of his abandoned moment, the outrushing tide building from somewhere far down within him to flood her.

Audrey slammed herself up against Desmond and held herself there as the spasms swept over.

“Yes,” was all she said, and she said it only once.

When the flood passed, he fell on top of her like wreckage. She rocked him while they cooled off.

When he slid off her and rolled face up, she quickly flipped over to snuggle, half on top of him, a leg thrown across his middle. When the candlelight washed over her back he saw, for the first time, the full extent of the damage.

The welts left by the whip appeared as a latticework of dark, shadowy lines, some broad, some narrow, virtually covering her from nape to knees.

She lay on her stomach, letting him trace the elevated ridges with a fingertip. The skin was only broken in one or two spots lower down. But it was clear that Edward’s beating had been every bit as savage as it had seemed at the time.

“Your marks are very beautiful,” Desmond said.

“Thank you. I think so too.”

A very few minutes later, they were under the covers, cuddled front to back, his arms around Audrey below the armpits, his hands sheltering her breasts.

He’d belayed her chain around the bedpost so it wouldn’t strangle them both in their sleep and arranged the remaining slack among the pillows to

keep her from bruising her face on it.

He asked her if she would be ready to go the next day.

“I’d be ready to go now if he wasn’t so tired.”

She proved the point an instant later by falling off into a sleep that deepened quickly, her breathing growing slow and regular as she sank under the exhaustion of pleasure, pain and fear. He held her that way a long time before falling asleep himself. His last thought was one of deep gratitude to the field of archeology.

The two weeks went by quickly. It was a period of pleasurable anticipation and delightful discovery. Desmond gradually came to accept his good fortune in having suddenly inherited an exquisitely lovely, utterly mysterious, tawny-haired sex slave.

And Audrey herself began to appreciate the bargain more than she had expected to.

It was hard to admit it to herself, but things with Edward had been getting pretty stale recently. It was nice to feel passionately desired again.

They rarely went out into the city from Desmond’s downtown loft. It was comfortable and well-equipped and they were satisfied with each other’s company. Moreover, both of them knew that time was short. They spent most of their hours in the half-light of Desmond’s dungeon-like bedroom. Desmond kept Audrey more or less naked, collared and chained at all times, bringing up food from the kitchen and feeding it to her as if she were an exotic pet.

By the fading light of a winter afternoon through the slats in the blind, she noticed that the marks of Edward’s brutal farewell flogging had faded to pale lines of shadow on her skin. It was not a good sign.

“They don’t hurt at all anymore,” she volunteered as Desmond studied the disappearing traces. She lay on her stomach, resting her cheek on her

forearm, wrists banded but unattached. A long chain ran from her collar to a ring set in the wall near the head of the bed.

“That’s perilously close to an invitation,” Desmond said. He had been giving her a taste of the whip almost daily, but with a light hand by comparison to Edward’s.

“It’s more like a request. Edward told me to suggest to you that you should give me some marks to take home before you returned me.”

Desmond pondered.

“It doesn’t seem unreasonable.”

“I was hoping you’d say that.”

Desmond got up, giving her bottom a friendly squeeze, and headed for the mirrored cabinet. “How do you want me?,” he heard her say over his shoulder. “All fours would be nice.”

From the cabinet, he selected a long, sinuous black riding crop of woven leather with a gleaming silver handle. It had a broad, stiff, reinforced flap that could be trusted not to snap back and administer extra, unintended strokes. Of course, the stiffening made it more ferocious, but that was part of the choice.

Audrey, good girl that she sometimes was, didn’t even look over when he swished it through the air a couple of times to refamiliarize himself with its action.

He returned to the bed, where she had positioned herself, bottom up, over the rumpled black sheets. The shiny, unscratched bottoms of her high-heeled black dress pumps gleamed dully in the low light.

He laid the crop next to her face and direct her to look at it and touch it. Resting her weight on her elbows, she turned it over in her graceful, slender hands, caressing the leather.

“It’s beautiful,” she said, then kissed it and extended it back to him on her open palms.

He took it and pushed her shoulder back down. Laying the crop aside, he felt around the base of the bed platform, coming up with another length of burnished chain kept coiled down there and snapping it to her wrist cuffs. Coming around her prone body, he stopped to play with her a bit, producing instant moans and a definite swaying of the hips. Audrey was very wet.

“Liking this already, I see.” “You’re teasing me.” “You’re right.”

With more chains from the lower posts of the bed, he fastened her ankles apart. For several minutes, he let her stay like that, disturbed, if that was the word, only by his light strokings from her collar to the hollows of her knees. She purred like a big cat.

“Now then,” Desmond announced abruptly, resting the flap of the crop across her bottom, “I’m going to hit you, softly the first time, but harder with each successive stroke until you ask me not to. Understood?”

“Yes, sir.”

He let her have the first one low across both cheeks, barely hard enough to send a ripple through her firm flesh. She pressed her face into the bed, arching to offer herself for more.

Desmond’s next blows alternated buttocks and were hard enough to make a fairly loud report. He liked the note of the crop’s smack, and the fiery splotch left by its kiss. Audrey moaned, burrowing into the pillows, but didn’t even twitch from the impact.

He struck harder. She didn’t complain, but her haunches tightened in anticipation of worse. He waited a moment for her to relax before striking again, this time with some real force. Audrey lifted her head and gave a little gasping cry. He stopped with the crop upraised. “Good?”

“Ooh. Getting there.”

The next stroke got there. Audrey threw back her head with a yelp.

“Please, sir, more like that!”

“Very good,” Desmond said with a smile. “Now we know, so we can both relax.”

She did, the muscles in her strong legs and back visibly unknottting when he used the whip to stroke her thighs and the sides of her breasts before returning it to its intended use. He began to strike her regularly, switching sides, working from the tops of her thighs up to the inward curve of her lower back and then down again. The leather painted wide, crimson triangles on her that, he knew would last at least a few days.

Audrey gasped and moaned and cried, squirming deliciously as he applied the leather. In between lashes, his empty hand found its way between her legs, where her clean-shaven parts were nicely oiled. His fingers navigated skillfully to her hard, swollen clit. She did all her bondage would allow to make things more convenient for him.

Desmond surveyed Audrey’s ass. It was uniformly red over all its curves, with brilliant fuschia highlights nicely distributed hear and there.

“The most important thing about a whipping,” Desmond observed, “is knowing when it’s over.”

“So soon?,” Audrey asked huskily as he set her free, at least briefly. He had her kneel in the middle of the bed, legs open wide, arms folded in the small of her back.

“I’ll try to see that you don’t get bored,” he promised, going back to the cabinet. He brought out a complicated head harness with a sinister-looking bulb and hose arrangement sticking out the front.

After a short visit to the bathroom, he returned with a brown apothecary bottle and a small gauze pad. Setting these things n the night stand, he kissed her, tasting her a mouthful of wine from a nearby glass and let it flow

from his mouth into hers. She slowly let it wash down her throat, a little spillage finding its way down her chin for him to lick off. She looked up to see them reflected in the mirror floated above the bed.

“You’ve gotten me used to doing it under a mirror,” she said languidly. “I can be very narcissistic, you know.”

Lying on her back now, she watched herself in the mirror as she toyed with her own nipples, causing them to perk right up.

“I’ll bet.”

Desmond had to fight off a momentary attack of lazy self-indulgence which, had he yielded to it, would have had him on top of her in the most conventional way in an instant. But if there was one thing Desmond knew, it was how to carry through with the plan.

He told her to open her mouth.

“This is called tincture of myrrh,” he explained, putting a drop or two of liquid from the brown bottle on the gauze pad. “It stimulates the salivary glands and keeps your mouth from going dry. Lift your tongue.”

He tucked the pad in underneath.

“Good?”

“Reminds me of Pernod, without the anise.”

Desmond kissed her again, exploring her mouth with his tongue. It was an apt comparison.

“Now then,” he continued, taking up the head harness, “this rubber sack goes behind your teeth and these straps buckle around your head. When I pump this bulb, the sack inflates as you can see.”

Audrey looked dubious.

“Couldn’t I just promise to be quiet?”

“That’s not the point.”

Audrey did not resist when he slipped the deflated sack between her lips, reaching into her already-flooded mouth to settle it in place. She closed her lips around the tube, holding her head still so he could work with the straps. He tried to center them on her head without pulling her hair.

When everything was in place, Desmond reached up and took down some chain attached to an eyebolt sunk in the middle of the overhead mirror, clipping it to a ring in the top of Audrey’s headgear. The chain had enough slack in it to let her look up or down, mover her head a bit from side to side, but not enough to allow her to change her basic position.

Desmond took Audrey’s wrists and snapped the cuffs to the chain holding her head.

It made her marvelously vulnerable.

“I’m going to inflate the bulb slowly, by stages. You’ll feel it happening.”

He squeezed the bulb lightly. Audrey’s eyes got very wide. He was right. She could definitely feel it happening. “Working?”

She nodded her head rapidly. He squeezed again. Audrey went quite rigid through the shoulders. “Still okay?”

She hesitated for a moment, then nodded gravely. After consideration, he opened the valve and let a tiny bit of air bleed back out before shutting it off.

“If you start to have trouble breathing, nod your head up and down quickly and I’ll take it right out,” he promised, “but I know you’ll be a brave girl and not do that unless you really have to.”

He kissed her face where the skin showed through the strap work, his hands busy at her breasts and lower, feeling her body acclimate and warm to what was happening.

Reaching over to the night stand, Desmond dipped his fingers in the wine glass, anointing Audrey's red nipples with the red wine. She gurgled through the rubber as he sucked them clean. He was very thorough and it took a long time, her nips growing achingly hard in the process.

Before stretching out under her, he hauled up from between the bed and the night stand a long, wand-type vibrator with a round, blunt head. He knew it was particularly effective at concentrating external stimulation. Audrey strained to look down at it, but the harness prevented her.

Desmond set the vibrator down on the mattress next to him, then worked his way in under Audrey's open thighs. Using one hand to arouse her in front, he opened her with the other and impaled her slowly, feeling her heat engulf him.

The way in which Audrey was bound was calculated to permit only the most subtle and sophisticated of movements in her hips and knees, as she quickly discovered. In order to increase the friction, she undulated herself like a belly dancer, her stomach muscles rippling, her breasts swaying above him. The orange bulb swung on the end of its black tube, bouncing off her shoulders.

Putting his hand on her tits, Desmond kneaded and cradled and pinched lightly at their points, making Audrey whimper through the gag. She made wet sucking noises around the tightly-inflated rubber.

"There's no point in trying to swallow it all," he told her. He rubbed a hand over her face, pressing in against the balloon behind her lips to release some of the spit filling her mouth. It ran down onto Audrey's neck and dripped off her chin. He rubbed it into her sweat.

Sitting, he buried his face in her bosom, kissing and nipping, listening to her rapid heartbeat, swinging her hips around on top of him. When he put a

hand inside hers over her head, she squeezed it hard.

Desmond lay back, took up the vibrator and switched it on. Exploring her geography with it, he visited first one breast, then the other, lingering over the nipples. Audrey leaned into the contact as far as she could.

Drawing the machine down her belly, he pressed himself into the mattress so he could get the head of the device in between them. Separating Audrey's labia, he brought the humming surface up against her broad, luxuriant clit, which was already hard as a button.

Audrey's nostrils flared and she threw back her head, snapping the chain taut. He felt the full weight of her body balanced on the vibrator, which buried itself in his lower abdomen, buzzing against the bone.

With a deftness born of necessity, Audrey shifted herself back and forth, throwing her hips out in short swings to roll the cylindrical head over her hot, wet inner surfaces. Desmond helped by rotating the handle in half turns to synchronize with her motions.

And then Audrey was shaking convulsively, her legs clamped around him, shoulders as far back as they could go. She let out a stifled scream through the inflated gag.

As soon as the last convulsions subsided, he took the vibrating demon off her, shutting it off and letting drop over the side of the bed. Audrey hung limp, breathing raggedly, rivers of sweat breaking over her.

Excited to the edge himself, Desmond's hands were around her middle, guiding her in more rapid orbits, which she augmented by snapping herself forward, then back as she rotated, lifting herself slightly at the end of each rotation. He gripped her breasts hard.

In the abandon of his climax, Desmond sat bolt-upright, throwing his arms around Audrey's back, dropping his face onto her shoulder, spurting up into her for an endless moment that was over all too soon.

They stayed that way, rocking slowly, for a long time. At some point, he opened the valve on the gag, letting the air escape with an audible sigh, matched by one of Audrey's own. He released her hands so she could hold him. While at it, he also unsnapped the chain keeping her head up so she could rub her face against his, the wet leather sliding over his cheeks and against his neck.

Holding her off long enough to get the harness free, he ran a finger along the grooves it had left in the soft skin of her face. The myrrh still haunted her mouth. She lifted her tongue to let him pull out the gauze pad.

"There now," he said with satisfaction, "that should give you something amusing to tell Edward about when you go home."

"About that..."

"Yes?"

"I'm not going home."

Desmond must have looked as surprised as he felt.

"Edward isn't coming back. He doesn't know I know. I was the one who talked him into loaning me to you. And I'm glad I did."

Audrey wasn't the only one.

The End