

JEWEL
By
F.E. CAMPBELL

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Vivian allows me to write this. It amuses him. He reads it. I can't stop him. I haven't been able to stop anything for a long while.

I've always loved Wivenhoe. I suppose I've always loved Vivian. Little girl adoration when I was eight and he a lordly twelve. It's gone on from there without either of us noticing any milestones. He seemed twice as old as me then. He still does, even though he's only twenty-four. But then, he's got Wivenhoe. He and the old house and the Park share a wicked antiquity that's deliciously decadent. I think anyone born in a place. Wivenhoe and Vivian sort of live up to each other. My family and I always felt several centuries in arrears.

Wivenhoe arrives about seven centuries old. You'd hardly expect less. It's that kind of

I should have been warned! Oh, I suppose so. But Vivian never pretended to he ordinary. I admired him tremendously and always privately thought of him as avantgarde. If he'd taken a shot at a gamekeeper, I'd have giggled. I'd done a lot of naughty giggling over Vivian by the time I was into my teens. I always knew I'd marry him. It was that lovely golden thing off in a girl's future. I doubt that it ever occurred to him. We shared so much in those summers together, even to the point of both being orphaned by the same accident. Vivian inherited Wivenhoe and Aunt Millicent inherited me.

Aunt Millicent looked after me admirably in an absentminded sort of way. The right schools, the correct resorts and, from time to time, carefully measured doses of Vivian. Aunt Millicent herself was charmed by Vivian, but wasn't sure whether she ought to be. Wivenhoe charmed all of us. I'm not sure it was good for Vivian to own so much so soon. You can try judging that later. But being lord of Wivenhoe intensified all he was, all the things I used to giggle about. You notice I use the past tense.

That will do, won't it! I mean, you don't want statistics and things. I can now look after that bit where I way: "So on this lovely summer day in the reign of our beloved King Edward the seventh, dear Vivian and I sat on the terrace at Wivenhoe having Tea and making giggly remarks about our relatives." There, that's done.

"You won't be seeing good old Aunt Millie back from Madeira in under three weeks," Vivian observed absently. He nibbled a watercress sandwich, "No chaperone at all?"

"I'm still about ten years old in her eyes."

"You're not in mine, poppet. Looked at yourself in the mirror lately?"

I had. I'd even taken my clothes off and looked. But I didn't tell Vivian. I was gorgeous!

He handed me a sandwich. "These are cucumber, they're better. You might as well stay over the weekend, eh?"

I had to think twice. "But it's only Tuesday!"

"That's right, poppet. Nice long weekend." He was laughing at me.

"We can't do that! You know we can't, Vivian! Unless. . . Can't you dig up someone for a chaperone?"

"Who wants one!"

That's Vivian all over. He doesn't really care. He owns Wivenhoe so he owns the world. I'm part of his world. I looked at him reprovingly. "I'd be letting the side down. Poor Auntie Millicent."

"You want to, y'know."

It wasn't his words that made me blush. It was his eyes. I knew what he was thinking. He knew I knew! It was nice! I'm awful, aren't I! At least I thought I was then. Notice that past tense again.

"If you stay I'll let you see the Wivenhoe Griffin." He dropped the offer casually, in between bits of cucumber.

"What's the Wivenhoe Griffin?"

"Rummy business actually. Old Waller dug it up in the rhubarb patch. Turns out to be valuable."

"But what is it? You're teasing."

"That's what's odd. No one knows. Some sort of Satan worship little Devil, the museum chappie believes. I've got it locked away down in the vaults."

"Viv,' darling. Show me. Now!"

"Promise to stay over?" He was conceitedly assured.

"No, we mustn't! Come on. Show me this Griffin effect.

"You're a spoiled brat. The answer is no."

He was doing his supercilious act. He does it well. Keep the peasants in their place. "I'll go and look myself," I flounced at him.

I could tell I was being teased from the way he laughed. "You're afraid of the dark," he said complacently.

He was quite right. I was! Wivenhoe has its own special kind of darkness down below. Vivian and I had done a lot of breathless exploring long ago. But the ghosts had always sent us scurrying back into the sunlight. "I can find my way," I threatened.

Vivian helped himself to another sandwich. He waved it at me in lordly condescension. "Pour me another cup, poppet."

I did my duty and poured. "I am going, y'know."

"Of course, Jewel. My heroic beautiful Jewel. I'll be waiting when you run up screaming." He blew me a kiss.

I stuck my tongue out at him in a most unladylike way. Then, with my chin well up the way Aunt Millicent holds hers when marching to do battle with a tradesman, I walked regally off on my self-appointed quest.

If only I'd known!

There's a shelf with lanterns at the foot of the lower stairs. I lit one just to be safe. It's not that there is no daylight at all down there. But in some of the stone compartments there isn't much. A lot of them didn't pretend to be anything else but a place to lock people up in. I shivered deliciously. I wasn't scared yet. I'd show Vivian!

He'd given the game away by having that particular cell or dungeon cleaned and polished. It screamed aloud. It was one with bars all along the front to the passage. I almost laughed when I pushed the barred door. No squeak. It had been oiled. Inside was nothing more than a low wooden bench. Square in the middle of the floor was a sizeable rolled bundle tied with string; obviously the Griffin was kept under wraps. I put my lantern on the bench and went to work.

It untied easily. It was a thin sad little mattress. There was nothing inside.

"You and Mother Hubbard," said Vivian.

I almost jumped off the floor. He must have followed me silently, just behind. "Oh, Vivian!" I exclaimed exasperated. "You frightened me half to death." I looked down at the mattress. "There's no Griffin here."

"There is no Griffin, dearest one."

"That's what I just"

I suddenly realized what he had said. At the same moment it was borne upon my awareness that he was speaking from beyond the door and that the door was shut. Vivian looked like a cat who has swallowed a canary. "You mean?" There was no need to finish the line.

"Alas, poor maiden, you have been betrayed." He rolled the cliché off in a fine stage baritone.

I kicked the mattress.

"It goes on the bench," Vivian said solemnly.

I was searching for the humour. There would be a bit of subtlety tucked away somewhere, if I knew my Vivian! I was also grimly hanging on to an assumption of normalcy. "May as well go back and eat that other sandwich. This was a rotten swindle!"

A silent Vivian looked at me through the bars.

I tossed the mattress on the bench. I grasped my lantern and pulled on the door. It did not move.

"The door won't open, Viv'!"

"It's locked."

"Well, unlock it then," I asked with all the feminine confidence I did not have.

"No."

It was all in the one word. I was furious. Not with Vivian, but with myself. To fall

into such a simple, obvious, baited trap. What a Ninny! Now I'd he in for about thirty minutes steady teasing, some of it probably a bit cruel. He held the total advantage. The only weapon I might have would be a retreat into a miffed silence with my back to him. But I rejected it. He'd laugh and leave me to sulk. I remembered practical jokes when we were children. So I smiled brightly to show I loved him, and played the jolly comrade.

"Alright, Viv', you win. What do I have to do to get out?"

"Take off all your clothes and pass them to me through the bars. That's the first step."

"Oh, come on, Viv'! Even for you that's a bit thick."

"Them's my terms, lady." He was enjoying himself.

"You know I won't do THAT! So don't be silly."

"Not a very cheerful place to stay." He looked around the miserable cell as though seeing it for the first time.

"That's a good reason for opening the door. Come on, Viv'!"

"There's the matter of the weekend, too." He dropped the words casually.

"Well, I'm certainly not going to spend it in this dismal hole!"

Vivian's amused smile ranged over the prison and came to a full stop on me. It was the way you picture the big guns on a battleship swivelling on to their target. "Oh, but you are, dear girl," he assured me blandly.

It was too preposterous! But I'd let myself in for the tease, so I'd have to cope the best I could. I would get even with him after I got out. I stamped my foot, but gave him my most winsome smile, the one that gets me gifts. "Don't be a beast, Viv'.

"You'll get to like it after the first day or so."

"If you don't let me out this instance, I'll go all peculiar!" I threatened. The 'all peculiar' is an intimate joke between us. It's when a girl punishes a boy by deliberately becoming remote, silent and sulky. I do it well.

"You wouldn't!" He sounded horrified.

"I would and I will!"

"Oh, Jewel. Not right now? All peculiar!"

"Unless you open that door," I said firmly.

"You wouldn't."

For answer, I spread the mattress on the bench and sat down sideways with my back to him. I even lifted up my feet and hugged my knees as though prepared for a long meditation.

"You really have gone all peculiar." Silence. "Aren't you going to talk to me?"

It's a wonderful weapon, the all peculiar! I knew Vivian hated it. I concentrated on silence.

"Not much use me staying around." I heard his voice, regretful and pained. Then receding footsteps. . .

I have never moved faster than those few paces to the bars. I thrust myself against them in panic. "Vivian! Vivian! Darling, come back. I'm sorry. O Viv', don't leave me. I'll be scared."

My cry floated down the passage as though absorbed by the stone. The footsteps did not pause. Knowing the place, I could follow them as they grew fainter. There came the slam of the door as he reached the stairs. Then silence.

I can't tell you I was wholly angry or wholly afraid, or wholly anything else. My mind was a jumble. What I most vividly recall is that awful silence. I could feel it. I could sense the stone and the brick and the mortar feeling it as they had done for centuries. The whole place listened for a sound that was not there. The vast weight and immensity of Wivenhoe was on top of me, pressing down, shutting out the sun. It had become a dread place filled with menace. The walls of the place in which I was locked moved closer.

The wall of the passage moved further away. No matter how I pressed and wriggled against the bars that wall was my sole view. Mocking me and obviously hung there for my attention was a very large and very shiny key. I could not have reached it with a shepherd's crook.

In case you've never tried it I can tell you that being locked up all alone in a place that's mostly underground is a damn funny feeling and no fun. It just does not seem possible that there is no way out. There has to be a way out! But there isn't. As kids, when the game calls for you to be locked in a cupboard, there's a lovely gooey thrill to it. I can't tell you why that thrill was absent now. It ought to be at work. This was a game, a big tease. After awhile Viv' would come and let me out. But no thrill! None! Even the joyful prospect of going 'all peculiar' on him after I was free carried no pleasurable sensation. I told myself it was the sombreness of the place. I refuse to countenance the possibility that I was not going to get free. But, of course, the refusal itself was an admission.

I then did what I had neglected. I looked at my prison. It held four things, the bench, the mattress, a pail with a cover, and me. Oh I forgot the lantern I'd brought! It was still burning brightly. With a view to conserving its oil I turned down the wick. But the walls took on such a fresh menace that I immediately turned it up again.

I won't call the wretched place a dungeon. Cell is the best word. The bars and the barred door took up all one side and robbed me of all or any privacy. The opposite wall at the back contained a sizable shaft high up to a barred window. Quite a lot of light came on down, but by the time it arrived it was sort of pale and tired from the journey. Once more, I considered turning out the lantern. But I was scared. I did not have a match to relight it with. I went over and kicked the door. It did not move. I pushed and pulled each bar. They didn't move either. That exhausted the exploration. I kept my eyes averted from the pail. It could be just a vulgar part of the tease. On the other hand. . .

I sat down on the hard bench with its austere thin mattress and considered my plight. My plight was Vivian, so I considered him. I knew him inside out, or I thought I

did! What would he be most likely to do! He'd be up on the terrace chuckling, having the laugh of his life and eating the last cucumber sandwich. I considered the hope of thirty minutes. Yes, thirty minutes would be about what Viv' would sentence me to. He'd try and hit a nice balance between frightening me too much and too little. With thirty minutes he might expect a few tears. I felt sure I could supply them. There would be more teasing, of course, and I'd have to eat a lot of humble pie. But my stay in this horrible place should be less than an hour. And when I got out! Furious and a little scared, I settled down to serve my captivity.

But you don't settle down. You can't! First off I realized I could not tell the time. I had no watch, and I couldn't think of any other way short of counting. How could I tell my estimated half hour! I couldn't. I couldn't tell anything. I'd just have to sit and hope. I could have killed Vivian and his male superiority. I would have kicked myself, too, if I'd been able. What a confident little jackass I'd been. Him and his Griffin! I longed for something dramatic, like beating my fists against the wall.

Why drag it out. I was quite certain hours had passed.

Convinced something awful had happened to Vivian, and that I was incarcerated there forgotten and abandoned, perhaps to die. When he sauntered back to have a look at his captive maiden, I was in a fine old panic. Any thoughts I may have had about staying 'all peculiar' had been tossed into the discard. I was unashamedly glad to see him. Men I heard him coming I pressed up against the bars and stuck my lips through to be kissed. He kissed me alright, a gorgeous Vivian kiss. But when I backed up for him to open the door, he didn't. I stood there looking at him expectantly with nothing pert to say.

"Still dressed, eh Kitten!" he inquired as though this normalcy was odd.

"Oh Viv'!" I said reproachfully. I was close to tears.

"Just hand them through the bars, dear girl."

"Don't be horrid. I don't like you when you're like that."

"Everything, poppet, no cheating. Come on, now. Start with the shoes." .

I burst into tears. He was being unkind.

"If you don't stop crying I'll go away again."

No tears had ever been dried faster. The sobs and sniffs wee a bit difficult, but I managed. "I thought you loved me."

"I do, dearest heart. But take your clothes off."

I started to cry again. I couldn't help it.

Vivian turned and left.

Once more I glued myself to those bars and simply howled. I promised ever everything. I pleaded, I begged. But I didn't mention my clothes. I knew he could never be serious about that! The steps receded. The door slammed. I threw myself on the bench and wept hysterically.

I was now frightened.

It could still be a joke. But it had gone too far. My beloved Vivian had often been cruel. It was part of his charm. I forgave him anything. But this!

I finally had to look at what I did not wish to see. Viv' and I were not kids any more, hadn't been for a long time. I'd looked at myself in the mirror a lot more than the once. I'd gone through all the years at Naverleigh. Oh sure, it's the acme of respectability and rectitude. But what goes on in the dorm after 'lights out' and in the prefect's study doesn't leave a girl with any illusions. She may not always believe all she hears, but she's heard it! Besides, there were the books! How we loved those books. They were read until they were in tatters, and someone had to smuggle some more.

So there it was. I was a female who could be taken to bed and mated.

But why didn't he marry me! He knew he could. I'd thought it was a foregone conclusion. He could have me any time. He didn't have to lock me up in a dungeon.

So why this!

You'll notice I'm sort of taking us along step by step. I was still clutching at the tease. But I was also beginning to recall some of those books. I denied them. But there were certain similarities. It would explain the clothes business.

When he showed up again I really worked at getting out of that cell. I was abject.

"I'm sorry, Viv'. I'll try not to cry."

"Good. Still dressed I see."

I looked up at him as appealingly as I could manage. "Darling, I don't understand? I can't strip naked; no girl can! But why? Why do you want me to? You are teasing, aren't you?"

"I'm not teasing, Jewel. I don't believe you even think I am. Not now. As for the why, that's not for little girls to ask. You'll find out in good time."

"if you want me, you can have me. But. . . properly."

"Orange blossoms and the organ, poppet?"

I leaped a chasm. I looked my darling in the eye. "No. Not if you don't want them. You've got me." I waved my arm around the cell. "I'm your prisoner. Take me."

For a moment I thought I'd won. I was shivering at my temerity. But it was a gorgeous shiver. Vivian's eyes positively glowed. He had tensed at my words; gradually he relaxed. In a softer voice without banter or cynicism he told me, "Sweetheart, you are going to do things. Things that, at first, will shock. You'll do them because you have to. If you don't do them you may spend the rest of your life right where you are. But that won't happen. In a minute, or an hour, or a day, or a week, you'll take the first step. That step is to take everything off. Do it now, poppet, and save a lot of time and tears."

"No, Viv', I can't."

He sighed. It was a beautiful sigh. Full of all the male's exasperation with the female.

I could have given him one in reverse. He looked at me with mock sadness and shook his head in mock sorrow. "Darling, Jewel. I'm going to leave you here. I'm not coming back to bandy through the bars. But sometimes I'll peep down the passage. When I see the pile of clothes tossed well away from the bars I'll come and take you on the next step of the journey. But if I find you have cheated with even the smallest little thing to wear, I'll go away again." He grinned cheerfully, "It will get dark after awhile. So best make up your mind first. If you haven't by the time I take my last peek you'll be there for the night."

I was alone again. In a way I was getting used to it. In another way each time was more awful. I was finding it hard to talk myself into believing it was fun and games. Vivian was doing something in his own way. I was in the centre. He would make me do it his way too. I knew he would make me. He could make me do anything, in a prison or out. I adored him. But I couldn't take my clothes off! That was just too, too absurd.

Up to now I'd been able to pass over the strip bit as a tease. Between us it wasn't as shocking as it would have been between to examine the possibility that he might really mean what he said. The fading light speeded this mental exploration. My prison was becoming less and less agreeable. My lantern was flickering along with my courage. Vivian wanted me naked. Why!

I was now prepared to jettison the why. I'd find that out later. So how about the naked! How vital was it that no man should see me naked until my wedding night! I began to think about being naked.

See the progression! Clever, wasn't it! I suppose I had grown up in a very prudish and proper society. All over the world all sorts of females did without clothes, or tossed them aside with scant thought of consequence. But not in England. Certainly not around Aunt Millicent! I was willing to believe Aunt Millicent bathed in her underwear. I became aware that I was swathed in a good deal of textile material. The naked Jewel was a long way underneath. The thought of uncovering her in this dismal place was totally out of the question.

So I sat there in the increasing gloom and heard the door open and close. When it got dark that sound stopped. I knew I was there for the night. I did not want the panic of pitch blackness, so I lay down to sleep before my poor lantern gave up the ghost. I was tired and emotionally worn. But my last thought before falling asleep was of the cucumber sandwich I had failed to eat.

Thank heavens it was summer and the night short. Sleep had spared me the horror of Stygian blackness. My lantern was out. But it was a new day. My first sensation was hunger. After eternities of time Vivian brought me water and a piece of bread. He passed it through the bars without comment. I was ashamed of the way I downed it.

He was so very, very normal. My own dear Viv. I was his darling Jewel. "Dinner at the usual hour this evening, Pet," he told me casually. "Same bill of fare as breakfast. You can have a nice quiet day all by yourself. I'll look down the passage from time to time. But I don't suppose there'll be anything to see. Your virtue is impregnable. You are"

"Stop it, Viv'!" I broke into his nonsense. "Let me out. Please, please, please let me out. You don't have to keep me like this. I'll do anything you want, you know

that"

"The little matter of clothes?" he questioned blandly.

I stamped my foot in frustration. "Oh Vivian!" Following some sort of instinct, I dropped to my knees inside the bars and looked up at him beseechingly. "Viv, let me out please. Little Jewel promises to be a very good girl."

I'd always been able to touch him with this sort of thing. I touched him now. I could tell. But it was not enough. Vivian was in the grip of some sort of compulsion. "You are a very sweet and very adorable little Jewel," he said softly. "But there still remains the small."

"I won't do it!" I asserted furiously. I went to the bars and clutched them, the way you see in pictures. If he had been close enough I'd have reached through and clutched him. I longed to. Instead, I stamped my foot again and asserted vehemently, "Alright, you rotter, I'll stay here. You can keep me locked up. Forever if you want to." I burst into tears.

Vivian walked thoughtfully away. I couldn't even get enough of me through the bars to watch him go. I stood there holding them. The key on the opposite wall mocked me. I wept.

I expect a student of feminine psychology could tell you that the more positive a girl's denial, the closer she is to acquiescence. No doubt wise, wicked Vivian knew, even if I did not. Turning from the bars and facing my prison I saw my day and my night and the next day. . . Suddenly my clothes seemed quite unimportant. What was I making all the fuss about! Tentatively, I removed a shoe.

I wondered if his instruction arose from delicacy, knowing how shaming and impossible it was for a girl to strip naked while a man watched. The fact that I loved him should have made it easier. But it did not. It left me feeling I was throwing something away, something I'd treasured. I looked at the shoe in my hand and debated putting it back on. I could sit out the day and surrender before the awful darkness came. But I looked up the shaft at the little barred window and thought I saw sunlight. My cell suddenly became unbearable. I took off the other shoe.

The hardest thing was to throw them out into the passage to a distance where I could not reach them. Vivian had been shrewd in that. I could well understand that in a last minute panic I might retrieve them, unable to stand naked within my cage for him to see. I took a deep breath, closed my eyes and tossed. when I looked I knew for sure my shoes were lost to me. It was the same agony with everything, the awful reluctance to part with it, then the throw. I knew I was throwing them as far as I could so that I be not tempted. To stand for an hour or two looking at my poor dear warm safe treasures lying out there in the passage, yet knowing I could reach through the bars and retrieve them would be pure agony. No! Vivian's way was best. Damn him! When I flicked away the last flimsy scrap I was close to tears, but possessed by a strange new excitement.

You have seen that Chabas picture "September Morn," I expect. For a minute or two I was like that naked girl sampling the chill water of the lake. I embraced myself. Damn silly, really. I think that's what made people enjoy a rather naughty picture. It was obvious that no matter how hard she tried, that girl standing ankle deep in water couldn't cover enough of herself to matter, either from the standpoint of warmth or the disapproving eye of Mrs. Grundy.

I was so thankful Vivian had not seen the silly performance. I expect it works the same with all girls. You cross your hands so that one covers each breast. Then you

bend forward and try and get your elbows far enough down to cover the other thing. You can't. But you try. By way of covering nakedness it doesn't help much. For warmth it does not help at all. It took me several minutes to reach the conclusion that I'd be happier, and just as warm, if I stood up straight and proud and tried to cover nothing. I knew I could be proud. I expect that helped.

I quivered and quaked when I heard the door and the footsteps. I'd debated how I'd carry off the awful moment. Curl into a ball as far away as possible, or stand wantonly with feet apart and hands on hips. I compromised by sitting on the end of the bed with my nice long legs stretched out and my hands playing with my hair. I was proud of that last inspiration. It showed I was in command of the situation and that I didn't mind him seeing my breasts.

I might have known I couldn't vie with Viv' in the matter of nonchalance. He gave me an appreciative look, gathered up my clothes, and was walking away with just a casual, 'That's my darling Jewel," when I leaped to the bars and cried, "Vivian! You're supposed to let me out."

His steps paused. His faintly puzzled voice came from the passage where I could not see him. "Are you sure, darling?"

It hit me like a blow. Vivian had made no promise. Only that I'd be taken on the next step or some such nonsense. Here I was, well and truly naked, my lovely clothes disappearing up the passage with a disembodied voice, and the door still locked.

"Oh, Viv', I've done what you asked. I want to get out of here."

"And you will, poppet, you will. Have patience." His steps resumed.

I was still a prisoner. My eyes filled with tears of disappointment. Had he cheated, played a scurvy trick? Should I hate him? He saved me the trouble of debate by returning. He carried something in one hand. Something that shone.

"Remember taking your measurements, Sweetheart?"

I recalled my curiosity as to why he wanted them. Now I knew. Vivian was dangling for my inspection a set of silver fetters. It was easy to guess they had been fashioned just for me. They looked expensively beautiful, but implacably final. Instinctively, I put my hands behind my back.

"Perfect, poppet. Now back up against the bars."

"You don't think I'm going to let you put those things on me, do you!"

"Made just for you, Pet. You'll adore them."

"I won't! They're horrid. Take them away!"

Vivian sighed and turned to leave.

"No. Stop! Don't go, darling. I'm sorry!" In this fresh distress I'd forgotten about being naked. All I wanted was not to be left alone.

"Come along then. Back up." His voice was very gentle.

"But, Viv'. What d'you want to chain me for?"

"Never mind. You'll find out. Over here, Jewel."

"I don't want to be chained!"

Another gorgeous sigh. "What you want no longer matters, darling. Takes a bit of getting used to, but you'll come round."

"Let me out, Viv'. Tell me all about what you want somewhere else. I can't think properly in this dismal hole. It scares me."

"Exactly the appropriate atmosphere, kitten. Here its real. Upstairs it wouldn't be."

"You're a beast. I could cry. Here I am naked, and I'm no closer to freedom than I ever was. Its not fair!"

He nodded and gave me his nicest grin. "Right, Sweetheart. It's not fair. No one said it was. Now we've disposed of that, come here and let me chain your wrists. You'll still have quite a lot of freedom."

"You're teasing, being unkind."

"Not at all. Consider the trivial matter of your clothes?"

I knew what he was getting at. "You think I'll agree to anything if you leave me alone here long enough!"

"Won't you?"

His sweet reason made me feel like a little girl throwing a tantrum. I knew he was right. But I dared not admit it. "No I won't, Viv'. Besides, it's silly. Wanting to put a girl who loves you in chains."

"They won't hurt."

"I don't care. I don't want them on me!"

Vivian gave me his most quizzical grin. I longed to throw something, or to kiss him. "Make it simple for you, darling."

He hung the glittering manacles on a crosspiece of the bars. "You can put these on yourself when you're ready. Behind your back, please. You'll find they snap shut quite easily and the chain is plenty long. But no hurry, mind. Since you love your little home here, I'd be the last to want you to leave it, But if I ever come to visit and find you wearing these delightful and costly bracelets, I'll unlock the door. This time it's a promise."

Once more I listened to the departing feet. But my eyes were riveted on that gleaming length of chain hanging on the bars.

It took my mind a chaotic hour to allow me near. I was both fascinated and repelled by the sight and thought of a shackle crafted especially to prison my wrists. I speculated wildly about why and what Vivian was up to. Prodding at me, too, was

the memory of some of those books. . .

It actually took courage to pick the thing up and examine it; I had the feeling that it was alive and might snap at me. It was unexpectedly heavy. Perhaps it actually was made of silver. Once in my hands, I was enthralled by its loveliness. It was exquisitely feminine, not in weight, the bands for my wrists were an inch and a half wide and the connecting chain of heavy links fifteen inches long, but in the care to make it symmetrical and decorative. The bands had been etched and engraved with patterns. I could not avoid a clutch at my heart when I read within the scrollwork on each wristlet the words: "For Jewel, with love." Almost with reluctance I set it down

and went back to my bench. A naked girl in a prison cell.

Vivian had tied me up as a kid. Quite often, come to think of it. Cowboys & Indians. Was this an adult version! With those things locked upon me I could not defend myself. But then, what was there to defend myself against. Certainly not Viv'! Wearing those fetters, therefore, had to be symbolic. Being symbolic, did they matter all that much? What was I being obstinate about! Compared to the removal of my clothes they were a mere nothing. Besides, I had his promise: he'd unlock the door! The thought of stepping through those bars back into the world was excitingly wonderful. My nakedness was suddenly cold.

Another heart searching moment when I fitted my wrist inside the open jaws. If I pressed them shut I would not be able to open them again. The act was irrevocable. I was walking into a trap and springing it after me. Was it not foolish! Firmly I thrust the circlet together. There was a very final click.

The metal was a part of me. A perfect band as a wedding ring might be. It gripped my wrist tightly enough that I could not move it back or forth. It was snug. It was useless to even think of trying to wriggle out of it. Now I faced the final Rubicon, to pass it behind my back and snap the second circlet on my other wrist. In a sudden need to be done with decision I put my hands behind me. When I heard the click, and tugged my hands apart, I knew myself doubly captive.

It was a strange sensation. Not unpleasant. Quite different from my memory of being tied. It came from Viv', so that made it alright even though I felt a bit shamed at being such a captive. Surely this was total surrender! I experimented and wanted to giggle. One thing was certain now, I was not going to be able to cover any bit of myself that mattered. I thought of myself amusedly as 'in chains'. Yet I found that I could do quite a lot of things with my locked hands. If I put one hand as far at my back as it would go, the other hand found itself with sufficient chain to enable it to do quite a lot of things. With a bit of tugging I'd be able to accomplish all the essentials. Trust darling Vivian to be ingenious. When I was not trying to do something my hands rested one below each hip. But, being a girl, my foremost awareness was that my front was without defense. So, far as my sexual attributes were concerned, poor little Jewel had lost her hands.

Having taken the plunge, waiting was agony. Vivian, please come, please hurry! I found myself praying within my mind. When he did come, he examined me with such amused approval and libidinous interest that I delivered all the blushes anxiety had held in cheek. With my hands lost to me I was one big beautiful flush.

"Exquisite!" Viv' exclaimed exuberantly. "Back up so I can check."

Obediently, and no longer caring, I offered myself so that he could test the security of my chain. It was comforting to feel his strength on my wrist. When I turned to face him I'm sure I looked absurdly expectant. He unlocked the door. I stepped into

the passage.

The words are too few to tell of something so momentous. I was delirious with joy. I forgot I was naked. I remembered the fetters only because I could not throw my arms 'round his neck when he kissed me. But he gathered me into his. The tweed of his jacket was rough against my breasts and my tummy. But I did not care. I cared for nothing save that I was out of that cell. Even that which Vivian did next only made me giggle instead of weep. He locked on my ankles a set of shackles that proportionately matched those on my wrists. As he placed them on me, I found myself admiring the effect instead of hating it. You can tell my state of mind by the fact that I did not ask the obvious question.

It was like being young again. Kids, I mean! We shared our laughter at my first tangled attempts to walk. There seemed enough chain to trip over but not enough to take a decent step.

"You're going to have to learn to walk all over again," Viv' chuckled.

"But, Viv' darling!" I looked at him sideways between stumbles, "You mean you're going to keep me chained like a slave girl for a long time?"

"You are a slave girl."

I digested that as I took my dainty steps. Certainly I was a slave girl in the sense that one might be a gladiator or Napoleon at a fancy dress Ball. But I had a feeling I was into something much deeper than that. The strength and perfection of the chains locked on me would have held twenty men, let alone one girl.

It felt good to have his hand on my arm. I needed it in more ways than one. My ankle chains made a frightful clatter on the stone of the passage and the steps. Half way up I stopped and looked at Viv' askance. "Darling, I'm naked. . . the servants?"

His grip tightened. "All on their yearly holiday except for the grounds staff and Betty, Sweetheart. Nothing to fear."

"But Betty! She mustn't see me like this."

"Why not, poppet! My prize housemaid has been the way you are more than once. I've already briefed the dear girl."

"Oh Vivian! You haven't! Not had her walking 'round like this?"

"And why not indeed!" He laughed happily. "Tell you what, kitten, you ask her yourself when she serves lunch."

One thing I can say about chains, they prevent you standing on your dignity, or being declamatory, or striking a stance. At that moment I wanted to do all these things, but nothing about me was quite right for giving Vivian a piece of my mind. The Master of Wivenhoe was also very much the Master of me. And I wasn't sure my outrage would not get me laughed at. It was not an honest outrage at my condition so much as in the fact that a housemaid had preceded me. Probably with a lot less fuss. So I clenched my teeth, determined to follow the laughing suggestion.

Have you ever, in an English County House, sat down to lunch completely nude! Of course not. But try it sometime. My seething indignation was largely dissipated by the embarrassment of incongruity and by Betty herself. Betty was a fresh cheeked

country girl with a conviction of the essential rightness of things. I am sure she believed Vivian could do no wrong. He was The Master. If he wished to keep any

girl naked and in chains, it was only proper that he do so. That girl should be honoured. She smiled brightly at my nakedness as though it was fully clothed.

"Betty," I said, determined to put Viv' out of countenance. "I hear that you have already enjoyed my present condition?"

"Oh yes, miss, isn't it lovely!"

I hadn't won that round. I tried again.

"Did you get shoved in a rotten little dungeon downstairs?"

She giggled and looked at a smiling Vivian with arch complicity. "Oh yes, miss. Proper lark, an' all. Weren't it spooky."

"And how long did it take you to part with your clothes?" I inquired acidly.

The girl looked puzzled. "Just a few minutes, miss." She paused, evidently giving my quaint question further thought. "It don't take all that long to undress."

I hadn't won that one either. "I suppose you put the chains on at the same time?" I asked without optimism.

Betty was suddenly virtue triumphant. "Oh no, miss." More giggles. "I don't mind Mr. Vivian having a look at my 'you know what. That's just natural like. But them there chains, they frightened me. Real kind, the Master was. Said as how I'd have to stay there all night to think about it. Give me me clothes back, so 'e did, so I wouldn't get cold. Real thoughtful gentleman the Master is. Scared to death I was down there in the dark. When morning come I couldn't get them chains on quick enough. Real pretty when you get used to them."

I turned on the grinning Vivian. "Aren't you ashamed?"

"No. I'll lock you in there again tonight if you don't behave."

I addressed myself to my lunch. I wasn't sure about that 'behave'. But I was very, very hungry.

Vivian cut up my food. I jabbed it with a fork and conveyed it to my mouth with my one chained hand that had that much freedom.

"What are you going to do with me, darling?" I asked determinedly.

"Turn you into a slave."

"I've always been your slave. You don't need theatricals."

"Thank you for loving me, little Jewel. But this is not the stage. You are going to be a total slave. Remember that word: Total."

"What's it mean?" I was eating avidly. My question was still academic.

"Obedience beyond anything you have ever dreamed. The possession and use of your lovely body. Utter submission. Chains, in case you get other ideas."

"Vivian, don't be an ass. I'll marry you tomorrow. You don't need chains."

A beautiful sigh. "For the girl you are going to be I need chains."

"Betty isn't chained. I suppose you got what you wanted from her?"

"Yes. That's right. Might call it a dummy run. She's a good girl, but limited.

"And if I refuse to play?" The food had given me confidence.

"Jewel!" There was that masculine impatience again. "Good heavens, darling, face facts. Are you in any position to argue?"

"You aren't that much of a rotter."

"Yes, I am. If you prove difficult or go 'all peculiar' I'll lock you in that cell for a long, long time."

"You wouldn't, Viv', I'd go mad do" there. You're not cruel."

"Yes I am. In this I am." He looked at me searchingly. "Darling Jewel, you've never been whipped, have you."

I stopped eating. Everything else stopped too. The world ceased to revolve. The food half way to my mouth fell back on my plate. I looked across at the man I loved, wishing to believe that he had not said the words he had uttered.

"Of course, I haven't. You know I haven't. Who on Earth would want to whip me?"

"I do."

"But darling, why? I haven't done anything."

"You don't have to do anything."

I was still debating that one, and remembering those books when Betty showed up with more cauliflower. I pounced.

"Betty! Did this man whip you?"

"Of course, miss. I still got some marks. Lovely, ain't it!" She flounced off to her kitchen.

"Viv', aren't you ashamed to treat a girl like that?"

"Betty's not a girl. She's a domestic."

"Well than, wouldn't you be ashamed to treat me like that?"

"You're not you. You've become a slave girl." He was infuriatingly complacent.

"You'd actually whip me, your little Jewel?"

"Yes. I intend to."

The chains on my ankles and wrists were suddenly heavy, their metal bands tight.

They were there upon me for a purpose, not just whimsey. I looked at the man who had put them there. I made it as pathetic as I could. "But darling, why?"

Vivian dropped some of the insouciance. "Darling, I wish I could make you understand. The whip would do the job better than I can. But let me try." He looked across the table at me, seriously and with love. The way you do when saying goodbye to someone going far, far away. His grin was an apology for what he would say.

"Every man desires his own slave girl." He said it as though thinking aloud. "I'm going to make you mine. I'll probably have to whip you a great deal."

"I don't want to be a slave girl."

"That's where the whip comes in. There doesn't seem to be any other way." He sounded genuinely sorry.

"I'm jolly well not going to be whipped to satisfy some silly fantasy you're carrying around in your mind!"

"Feel your chains," Vivian said sombrely.

I could feel them. It was almost as though they burnt my skin. I shrugged resignedly. After all, he was still my darling Viv'. "I'll obey you in anything, dearest. There's no need to whip me." I was still dealing in reason.

Pain flitted across his features. "I'm sorry, Jewel. It isn't that simple."

"Alright then," I said crisply. "It will give you joy to whip the naked body of a girl who loves you. When do I get whipped?"

"After lunch."

The two mundane words were more frightening than a threat. They left me no doubt. When our meal was done he would dispose me as it might please him and scar me with a whip. It was nightmare in a county afternoon.

"But we remain friends?" I worked at keeping the acid out of my voice.

"Of course, darling. I'm so thankful you understand."

"The only reason I understand," I told him bitterly, "is because I once read a few books. I'm trying to remember the titles: Miss Floggems Academy for Girls and The Schoolmaster's Cane were two of them. I expect you have a drawer full?"

He shifted uncomfortably. "Touché! I have. Next time you have a long stay in the cell, I'll give you some to read."

"Darling," I gave my beloved my full impact. "Don't put me in there again. I'll do anything rather than be locked in that dismal place. I suppose I'm a prisoner. I'll try and be a happy one. But please, put me in a prison that isn't in the bowels of the Earth."

"The cell is good for you," he said it defensively.

"Viv', you are going to whip me after lunch." I gave him my best little girl wide-eyed appeal. "But after I've been whipped there's hours and days and weeks.

What are you going to do with me?"

He was unconcerned. The aloof and imperturbable Master of Wivenhoe. He dismissed my question with a wave of his hand. "You'll fall into routines. You'll attend me. There are things for you to learn. You'll be whipped daily. You'll adjust."

"Thank you, kind sir," I ejaculated angrily, "especially for the whipping. I'm sure I'll love that. But the rest of the time, am I to be chained in some rotten little cell

for effect?"

He grinned at my vehemence. "Never mind the cell and the chains. That's all incidental. I want you consider the proposition that you may come to love the whip."

"Horseradish!"

"Ask Betty."

I asked her with the dessert. "Betty, did you enjoy being whipped?"

"Oooooh, miss!" She seemed to consider it an indelicate question. "It does hurt something terrible, but afterwards. . ." Her eyes widened in ecstasy. "It make a girl feel. . . feel. . . well, you know, miss, all lovely like."

I was getting used to her lovely' response. Evidently she was a palpitating bundle of eroticism. "I'm sure Betty was a rewarding subject," I said tartly to Vivian. "I wish you'd use her instead of me."

"Do you really, poppet?"

The quiet words brought me up with a jerk. Did I!

Wouldn't I gladly suffer the tortures of Hades rather than give up my Viv' to a pert housemaid.

"Oh alright," I retorted irritably. "Whip me and hang me up by my thumbs. How better can a girl know she's loved."

It was sort of an impasse. I dealt with my chocolate Bavarian while my companion studied me sorrowfully.

"Dearest Jewel. You have so much to learn."

"I'm sure you'll be a good teacher." I gobbled the Bavarian. I could see myself back in my cell at any moment, certainly after I'd been whipped. The bread and water menu there wasn't sustaining. I made hay while the sun shone.

Viv' watched me with more than casual interest. "You're taking all this with remarkable aplomb," he offered tentatively.

The same thought had struck me. I was a girl. I was stripped naked. I was chained. I was going to be whipped quite soon. Then I'd be tossed into a cell. Yes, indeed! I was taking things with remarkable unconcern. "I suppose it's because I love you," I said between mouthfuls. "I can't think of any other reason I'm not screaming my head off. Girls in love are notoriously absurd."

"Training you will be wonderful," said the master of Wivenhoe dreamily.

I took another helping.

"You're not serious about this whipping business, Viv'?" I asked casually and hopefully.

"Deadly serious," he assured me. "It's an essential part of turning you into a slave girl."

"Why don't you just marry me?"

"That's something quite separate."

"It would make me being naked with you respectable, and I read once there's a law that allows husbands to beat their wives if the implement used is within specifications." I pushed the thought forward as one advances a vulnerable pawn in chess.

"Altogether too limiting," darling Viv' dismissed the institution of wedlock with a wave of his hand.

I suppose you are wondering about the quite bizarre situation I describe. I was wondering, too. Surely no other girl had ever found herself in such a predicament! Or had she! I shivered in the realization that it was only the beautifully civilized lunch that made my plight remarkable. For centuries girls had been enslaved and brutally used. I was not a pioneer in that direction. But I was still trying to sort things out. Only yesterday I had been free and worn clothes.

"Darling, what's wrong with me?" I asked Viv' with the coffee. "Am I a wanton that I'm not using the tablecloth to cover myself? It's only taken me an hour or so to get used to being bare?"

"That's the virtue of chains, Pet. You couldn't use the tablecloth, or anything else, even if you tried."

I did a beautiful sigh. "But I ought to be on my knees begging you not to whip me?"

""That comes next time. At the moment you are getting a small thrill from the notion of some minor discomfort, tiny impact blushes on your bottom. Until it happens no girl can guess the screaming agony of being whipped on her bare skin."

"Charming! I say, Viv, do you have to be so graphic?"

"You asked, sweetheart," he laughed. "I'm watching you grapple. Your conscience bothers you about being naked. Actually it's woman's natural state. You'll discover this. I'd suppose we can excuse the rest of your acceptance of the unacceptable by the fact I'm me and not some sinister male unknown. But don't forget the cell. It had a profound effect on you. That cell took you on a long journey in a little time. It helped you take each step by your own reasoning. Make sense, kitten?"

"Alright," I agreed dubiously. "Now, what about my chains?"

"Aren't they self explanatory, poppet? They keep you in the proper frame of mind. They make you a nice convenient, tractable package to handle, and they

quash any sudden silly impulses you might have to make a run for it." He chuckled. "Just consider, beloved. If it was not for your chains, you would not have enjoyed

your lunch. You'd have been tensed up to do a hare and hounds across the lawn, or bothered about which bit to cover with the serviette. Be honest, confess?"

"Oh alright. Leave me chained. I'm not sure myself how I'd behave without them. But, Viv... I looked at him anxiously, "how long are you going to keep me like this?"

"How about life?"

"No. Seriously."

He gave me our old comradely grin. "You'll write a weekly letter to Aunt Millicent and anyone else who matters. We'll deal with other problems as they arise. When you are trained, you'll find that being an obedient slave gets easier and easier. Those chains are permanent. You are a slave girl. Mine!"

Looking back at it all, it is as unreal to me today as it was then. I was sustained without hysterics by a delicious naughtiness and my adoration of Vivian. Pleasantly frightened about sums it up. But I was about to cross a line. It was just as well I did not know.

Viv' rose and gave me what I did not know to be a final kiss. "Betty will bring you to me," he said incisively. A moment later he was gone. I was alone with my coffee, my thoughts and the Chocolate Bavarian. I rejected the thought of another slice. Without Vivian I was uneasy. With a sudden certainty I knew if I was not chained I'd be making a run for it. It was not a good feeling.

I was close to panic.

I'd been half amused by the chains. They were tremendously decorative. They did not hurt. Now I longed to be rid of them. Each metal band upon my skin burned as though to remind me of my strange illogical captivity. Without Vivian's key there was no hope of getting them off. I looked out over the wide lawns and the Park. I could walk very slowly. Suppose! But I cast the thought aside. How absurd I would look, hobbled, limping! And naked! Nothing could justify a girl showing her nakedness. It was indecent! Looking back now I laugh.

If only I'd known.

I became aware of Betty. She was looking at me. Just looking. She had intangibly changed. I sensed what the change was. We had become two females. Two girls who were sharing something. My state of mind was not helped by the pity in her eyes.

"It ain't quite time yet, miss." She kicked one foot awkwardly against a chair. She had something on her mind. She looked at me doubtfully, "I'm sorry 'bout what's goin' ter happen."

"What is going to happen, Betty?" I was still the young Mistress.

"You know, miss." Another kick at the chair. "The master's goin' ter do it to you."

"You mean this nonsense about whipping?"

"T'aint nonsense, miss. It's awful."

"Didn't you just describe it as 'lovely'?"

She seemed close to tears. "Mr. Vivian was here, miss."

"Well?"

Betty gazed at me imploringly. "Them chains you got fastened on you. They ain't nonsense!" She had an aggressive need to tell me something.

"Have you any way of getting them off? I have been foolish. Mr. Vivian has been foolish. I would be grateful?"

"Nobody can get 'em off but Mr. Vivian." She began to sound desperate. "Please try and get away. . . even with 'em on. Please! Don't argue with me, miss. I brought yer this."

She handed me a bit of cloth and a tape. "It ain't much. But you'll be decent. Get as far away from Wivenhoe as you can."

It was too absurd. I'd already rejected the idea. Betty was a simple country creature. I could understand her distress at my condition. But I was not going to make a fool of myself and have Viv' laugh at me for the rest of our lives.

Betty shrugged unhappily. "He'll whip you, miss."

"That's too ridiculous."

"He'll break you, same as he did me, miss. You'll do anything to make him stop. But he doesn't stop." She looked at me in commiseration. "He keeps on whipping you until you know you're going to die." She paused for a longtime. "Mr. Vivian ain't what you think he is. He ain't what any of us thought."

I fought down the panic Betty's words had generated. I was angry. I felt foolish. I wanted to climb back into normalcy. I wanted to assert myself. "I think you had better take me to him, Betty, wherever he may be. I must put an end to this situation." I knew they were just words to fill a vacuum.

Betty knew it too. "Very well, miss. I done me best." She looked anxious to say more, but shrugged and led the way.

With hobbled steps I followed her into horror.

I knew the house. I knew the tower room before which we paused. At least, I thought I did. Betty again gave me a sorrowful and speculative look as I awkwardly caught up with her. "It's in here, miss. There's been changes." She turned the handle and pushed the door ajar, gave me one more enigmatic glance, and sped away.

A door to the unknown! I knew that if I stood and looked at it long enough my dwindling courage might vanish. Best to deal with the nonsensical situation firmly. I minced my clinking way inside.

He stood waiting. Black tights, a mask, his closely sheathed torso muscular and menacing. I cringed. I expect I

stood looking as foolish as I felt. "Welcome, madam." The voice surely was not Vivian's, sardonic, gloating.

My anger was a weapon. I used it. "You look comic, Viv. Let's stop this nonsense. I've had enough of it. We are old enough to know better. This belongs back when you were twelve years old."

There was something ritualistic in his courteous bow. Once more the strange voice, "Very well, madam. Shed your chains."

I stamped my bare foot on the floor and hurt it. "Viv, you know I can't get rid of the beastly things. You take them off me, and then go and get a job with the Old Vic. You'd do well in Shakespeare."

I stood and faced him, naked, my breath beginning to quicken, my clenched fists tautening the chain that linked them. It was then I became aware of the room.

Wivenhoe was huge. There had always been surplus rooms gathering their dust and their ghosts. This had been one of them. But not now! It was big and it was lit. It could have been pleasant. But now the large windows were barred. There were slender posts, and one not so slender at all. There were pulleys and benches, and rings set in the wall. The effect was of a delightfully macabre stage setting, or of something of which to be terribly afraid. The black figure stood, quiet, powerful, in total command.

"Taking up amateur theatricals, darling?" I tittered. "They'll never let me on the stage like this, y'know." I enlisted humour I did not feel.

"Come here, madam."

"Oh, Viv, don't keep calling me madam. And I'm not coming here or anywhere else. I've had enough. Let me loose."

Reaching in the folds of his single garment the black figure produced a key and held it for me to see. Hating myself for responding to bait I clinked forward. Without another word the fetters on my wrists were unlocked. "That's a lot better," I said as I rubbed the red circles on my skin. It was wonderful to have my hands again. Perhaps I would forgive the dear boy his little game after all. I stuck out one foot for his attention.

Nothing happened.

There was a tense silence while the knowledge sank in. "Your wrists within the straps on the bar, madam."

Following the wave of his hand I saw that a bar had been bracketed down from the ceiling. Through it were two straps, the function of which I could guess. By straining up it might be possible for me to place my hands against it. Right then it was the last thing I wanted to do.

"Viv', I'm tired of this. I'm going home. If you compel me to go like this, well, I'll have to. Good bye." I made for the door.

The door would not open.

I had not really expected it to. So I clinked over to one of the benches and sat down.

I'd go 'all peculiar.' It was a sad little weapon, but all I had.

"You prefer the use of force, madam?" The strange voice was enjoying itself.

No answer.

His movements must have been quite silent. My hair was grasped in a brutal hand and dragged back so that I must follow. I could not kick my chained feet, but I beat my fists against whatever I could touch of this black Vivian I could not comprehend. I might as well have waved them in the air. I had never realized how easily the hair we girls are so proud of can betray us. Let someone get a handful of it and our defences crumble. I was dragged beneath the bar and released.

"Your hands where directed, madam." That cold impersonal voice.

I struck as hard as I could at the masked face. I might as well have hit a rock. But a heavy hand slapped against my own cheek with a force that sent me sprawling.

"I will have respect, madam. And obedience."

I was still not really believing. Vivian had struck his beloved Jewel, knocked me to the floor where I sat soothing my tingling cheek, looking up at him in disbelief. Was it Vivian? Was this black figure my childhood love? Was this grim executioner the boy I had lunched with? I found myself dabbling with tears.

"You will place yourself to be fastened, madam."

I cannot tell what prompted me then. Perhaps no more than stern necessity. Had it been someone other than Vivian I might have struggled. It would have been instinctive. Hopeless, but a sop to self-respect. What I did do seemed without volition. Keeping reproachful eyes on my tormentor, weeping, infusing my every motion with disdain, I got to my feet and put my hands within the looped straps that menacingly awaited them. To do so I had to stand high on my toes. For a moment I considered protest. But I was humiliated enough. If this was how darling Viv' wanted his darling Jewel, he could have me! I was a bundle of uncomprehending misery. I refused to think. I would give myself to him utterly so that he would understand my love and my trust. Vivian would never really hurt his dear little Jewel. The slap on my cheek had given me more shock than pain. I was his. I wanted to be.

But when the first strap tightened 'round my wrist I knew panic. It was so snug, so tight. When it was tugged and fastened, it was deep in my skin, a part of me. I could not move that wrist a particle. I wanted to protest, to struggle. It was too late, far too late! With only one free hand I was lost. Far better to keep what shred of dignity or pride was left. Vivian would not love a silly hysterical girl floundering from a single tethered hand. Resolutely, I stood taut and felt my other wrist taken from me by the biting leather that grasped it in a neat inexorable circlet.

I was more helpless than I had ever been in my life.

It was a day of sudden confrontations. This was the most cringing. Since it was only Viv', my nakedness had carried with it a piquant naughtiness that offset shame. The chains with their decorative quality had not been too frightening. Viv' had the key. I loved him, he loved me, they were only the trappings of a game. But, this black-masked figure with his curt and formal authority was far removed from the boy I had played with all my life. Now, naked, on tiptoe, my wrists welded to the bar by straps I could not touch, I had lost all volition. He had used the word, fastened. It was apt.

I was fastened for his pleasure. Now I was face to face with whatever that pleasure might be, and there was nothing, nothing I could do about it. It was one of the awful

moments. There would be others.

"You are to be whipped, madam." A judge passing sentence.

"Viv', darling. You frighten me. Please stop."

Looking back over one shoulder, I was able to see him go to the wall where it hung: a tapered length of cruelty as black as his own tights. When he took it down I knew that for dear little Jewel life was never going to be the same. Again, it was an instinctive realization born of millenniums of feminine agony.

My executioner stood before me, examining my nudity. I was outrageously exposed. I had never before realized how much of a female front is taken up with breasts and vulva and pubic hair. I began to grasp the significance of a woman to a man, how strange and alluring our breasts must seem to them. We are curved and soft against their bone and muscle. Aunt Millicent would never admit to possessing breasts. Her clothes conform to them, but fashion sterilizes the significance. It was only by giggling confidences in the cloak room that I had come to know my breasts could secrete milk and that a baby could draw sustenance from my nipples. Now my breasts belonged to this dark stranger with the whip. I could not shield them from him. They contained no milk, I had no baby, but from the burning eyes behind the mask I became certain my breasts were a necessity to men.

He fingered them. Mine are conical. But he lifted them with an exploratory finger, then pinched the nipples hard enough to make me wince. He smoothed his hands across them so that I gasped in a new knowledge of female vulnerability. If he did that enough I would do anything. The male hands made my own exploration of my senses trivial.

"These will not be whipped today," said the man in black.

It took moments for the implication to sink in. Even then I took the words as sophistry. I wanted to think I had not heard alright. But I knew I had. If Vivian would whip my breasts, what else might he not do? The accoutrements of the room thrust themselves upon my attention. I tugged at my prisoned wrists. They did not move.

A female has more than breasts. We are treasure houses of sensation and delight for the male. We know it in our inmost hearts, but we dare not speak it aloud. Why I do not know. The hands that had explored my breasts sank lower to my loins. One of them cupped the hair at the juncture of my legs. I gasped in a beautiful agony. But it was an agony. Surely no girl could know the male hand there and live! Aunt Millicent, the widow of Windsor, surely they possessed no such sensitivity! I moaned. I should order the authoritative fingers from my flesh. I said nothing. Why shame myself with what he would know as insincerity?

"The pain will be greater than you believe, madam."

"Oh Viv'. I don't understand. Why?"

"It is the only way."

He sounded so damn solemn I was enraged. "Don't be an idiot!" I pleaded. "I'll love you to bits if you'll let me loose."

"Madam, this goes beyond love." He sounded almost as lost as I was.

"Set me free. You can take my maidenhead right here on the floor." I was no sophisticate, but somehow I had to reach the boy behind the mask.

The eyes glowed at me. "Madam, you jest of the irrelevant."

"Vivian, I'm terribly frightened. You're so strange. I don't know how to please you."

"You can scream, madam."

"Of course I can scream!" I retorted irritably. "Any girl can scream. What good does it do?"

"Your screams can take us both into another world."

"I don't want to go into another world. I like this one. I liked you until you put on that black underwear."

His sigh was of infinite patience. There is so much you must learn, madam. Only the whip can teach you."

"Vivian, why this 'madam' business?"

"It is best."

"But, darling, surely you are not going to whip me! I'm your dear little Jewel. That beastly whip will hurt terribly."

"You have never been whipped, madam. You have no conception of agony."

"But darling, if you want screams, I'll scream. You don't need to whip me. The way I feel, a few healthy screams would do me good."

Again the sigh. "I am going to whip you, madam."

I was tired and lost and baffled. "Oh, go ahead then!" I said angrily. "If you want to be a beast then be one."

My world exploded into something cosmic, a pain so utterly beyond endurance as to remove me from all I had ever known into another consciousness. I heard myself screaming, peal after peal of keening complaint. In between the tossing of my head, my eyes managed to look down and behold the wound where the tip of the lash had cut the skin over my ribs so that a couple of drops of blood, my blood, formed and trickled down the whiteness that was me' I wondered why my wrists suddenly hurt so much. By them I had raised myself from the floor in a paroxysm of anguish. I threshed and swung and writhed in a dance of which I would never have believed myself capable, an arabesque of agony.

I lived within my world of pain. I had no eyes for its instrument, the man in black. I heaved and struggled helplessly. I was delivered naked to him. The straps held me. There was no escape. He struck me a second blow, the tapered lash curling 'round my waist in a perfect circlet of cruelty. Once more I looked down to behold my blood. "I'm bleeding, Viv," I sobbed. "I'm bleeding."

"You are very beautiful, madam. Your blood is the tears of angels."

He was mad. Insane! All my nakedness hung from my pinioned wrists. It was his. Not mine anymore. Vivian's to whip until I died. I moaned in desolation. "Please, darling! Don't whip me anymore." It was the title of a song: A 'Maiden's Prayer.' I whimpered like a whipped cur.

"Your whipping has only begun, madam." The clipped precise declaration of the end of love. My tears were not of pain but of loss.

"Darling, don't call me, madam. Please!"

For the third time the fire took me into its arms and held me in an exquisite anguish. I heard my voice screaming. I wished that it might never stop. The eyes behind the mask glowed. The slope of my right breast yielded its blood. My ankle chains danced a wild gavotte. I was being whipped. A naked girl being whipped; that was all. I had joined an age old sisterhood.

I struggled and flung my way through thickets of suffering. The blows of the whip were not rapid, but came closely enough that their effect merged. I screamed under each, sometimes again and again. Between the pealing crescendos I moaned and sobbed my pleas knowing, with a terrible prescience, there would be no mercy. What was to be done to me would be done.

It had no end. I screamed my way toward death.

I surfaced from my sea of pain when something was pressed against my lips. The brandy choked through my sobs. I spluttered and gulped avidly. I opened my eyes to return to a world in which I had no hope. I did not believe the whip had stopped. It had only paused to bring me back to sensitivity. I was not to be allowed the balm of unconsciousness.

The mask and the eyes behind it was so close. His hand behind my head, the other tilting the glass from which I drained the last burning drop. Yet I could not touch him. It was only then I realized I was hanging from my wrists. I had lost the will to stand upon my toes. Desperately now, they searched and took my weight. But my wrists hurt demandingly. All of me hurt. In weariness my pose was doubly strained. I stood tall as I could to ease my hands. But I had been too cunningly fastened to find relief in any motion.

"Congratulations, madam." So suave and smug.

"Why Viv', oh why?" I had no coherent thought.

"You are marked exquisitely, madam."

I knew the marks were deeper than my skin. I was bound and could not move. But I had travelled far. "Is it over?" I asked tiredly.

"No, madam."

"Are you going to kill me?" At that moment the question seemed rational.

The masked man laughed. "You are far from death, madam. In truth, you have never been more vividly alive."

I sobbed bitterly. "I don't understand!" I walled. "It's too cruel. At least let me down

and give me rest before you start hurting me again."

"No, madam." The voice I did not recognize was decisive and assured. "To free you now would be to destroy a masterpiece. You are breathtaking."

"I don't feel breathtaking. I feel hurt and shamed and ugly.

"But you do feel!" He laughed in pleasure. "For you, madam, feeling has just begun."

"But Viv', is there something you want of me? Something you think I can only give if I hurt enough. I'll give it to you. I'll do anything. I will, I will! Please don't whip me anymore. There's no need."

"There is every need, madam. I will be the judge."

I moaned. It was the voice of despair.

He was behind me again. I felt the firm strong male hands upon my nether cheeks. Once more I gave him the tribute of the gasp I could not contain. "These are unmarked, madam."

He was right. I had hurt so much elsewhere I had seen no significance in my bottom's immunity.

"You will be caned."

I wept afresh. Indignity with pain.

Like a child! Oh, Vivian, don't do that?"

"By no means like a child madam."

Miserably, I watched him select the cane with which I was to be cut. He had a great many. I liked none of them. He also produced a riding crop, a long slender thing such as I have never seen used upon a horse.

"If I am not to bind you shamefully, madam, the cane calls for your cooperation."

"Oh, Vivian! Fastened like this I can't do anything at all!"

"You will discover, madam, that under the stimulus of the cane your bottom will display a surprising mobility."

"You are being vulgar, Viv', and ridiculous. Don't be pompous

"I will require of you, madam, that after the first effects of each stroke modify, you protrude your behind to the best of your ability for the next."

"Oh alright! You don't have to make a speech about it!" The brandy had done me good. I was astounded by my own resilience. I still had the futile hope that by keeping dear little Jewel alive and perky I could coax back into existence the boy I had once loved.

"Are you ready, madam?"

"No! I'll "

The cane sliced my sentence and my bottom at the same time. Momentarily it stunned me.

I don't know why we think of bottoms as humorous or vulgar. It's silly. A girl's bottom is a nice part of her. It can also feel pain the same as any other place. We think of childhood spankings, or even of those 'six of the best' the boys used to boast about, but we never quite manage to take our bottoms seriously. When my masked captor announced his intention to cane mine, my reaction had been humiliation. Caned like a kid at school.

The first cut cured.

It was awful! It was as bad as the whip. It was worse than the whip! It had a cruelty all its own. On impact you felt your flesh disintegrate. Felt the shock of your blood as it crept back into your crushed tissues and found its familiar paths destroyed. Felt the burn and the scald so that every nook and cranny of you cringed.

Shock got me over the first. I looked over my shoulder in reproach and in a need to know how much of himself Vivian was putting into hurting me. I saw his arm sweep back, then flash forward in fluid force. I turned away a second before the cane buried itself in the softness of my cheeks, and before I went berserk.

Is that a good word for it! One is harddriven to find adjectives enough to meet the versatility of pain. Once more I betrayed my poor wrists and let them take the brunt of my convulsions. But it was scant moments before the quiet voice reminded, "Your position, Madam, if you please."

The words seeped through, but I paid them no heed. I had no concern with positions and poses. I continued my gasping convulsions as though they had not been uttered. Without warning, my loins were laced with agony.

"If not the back, madam, then the front." The imperturbable voice from which there was no escape and in which there was no mercy.

The final indignity! I must suffer and offer myself for that suffering. Nodding through my moans I indicated understanding. I stuck out my bottom. I was surprised by the degree to which I could offer it as sacrifice. I had to teeter more on my toes, but out it went invitingly. I wanted no more across my front, not across the sacred place.

My derriere's invitation was instantly accepted. My poor hurt cheeks were sliced again. I paid my token of sound and motion. In between I managed ineffectual pleas. I knew them useless, but had to utter them. I was being tortured and knew not why.

I counted them. Ten strokes, and an extra across my front, before there was a pause. I had no feeling that my pain was ended. But the cane had ceased to fall.

"Have you glimpsed anything, madam?"

I sensed his need of an answer beyond moan or complaint. Pain had made me

perceptive. Vivian was reaching. I was bereft. I had an absurd wish to offer him the comfort I needed so badly myself. But I knew not what to say. Yearning to give, the

best I could manage was a tear drenched: "What do you want, Viv'? What is it I should see? Tell me. If it's there, Viv', I'll see it."

He sighed. I had not said the right thing. He had wanted spontaneity. But I was groping. There was something I had missed. Something that perhaps another girl might have seen: Betty!. . .

"You must not call me Viv' or Vivian. For you, now, I have a title."

"You want me to call you Sir?" I could not hide bitterness.

"You have perception. Try again."

A cruel little game! Or were my steps being guided? "I suppose you expect to be called Master?" I let him hear the disgust.

"If it was not so hackneyed a word we would use it. You will call me Lord."

"Oh Viv'!" My exclamation of ridicule escaped my determination not to hurt him.

"You find the term offensive, or humorous, madam?"

"If I wasn't in this fix I expect I'd laugh," I admitted. "You are laying it on a bit thick, y'know."

I was saying the wrong things! I could sense it. I was talking to someone who was not there. The impersonal thing behind the mask was not darling Vivian. In spite of agony I was still hurt and angry and utterly baffled. I had a feeling he was serious about the Lord thing. But really! There are some things too absurd! I'd never be able to address Vivian as Lord!

"I'm going to start caning you again." The quiet voice had a new intensity. "When you feel able to address me properly from a wish within yourself, a wish natural and unaffected, not from a desire to stop your pain, I will stop. You may keep me informed, madam."

I was about to give him a neat bit of logic. Any girl in her senses will call anybody anything to save herself from being whipped. But he gave me no time for common sense. My already wounded bottom jerked under the impact of the most vicious blow yet. It also jerked out words that, even to me, sounded inane: "I will address you properly, Lord."

My only acknowledgement was one more lash that drove me over the border of behaviour. I danced like a puppet from my prisoned wrists. I was desperate. Somehow I must make him stop hitting me. But how! How speak nonsense and make it sound like truth.

In the midst of my desolating pain it came to me quite suddenly that what I was labelling nonsense was only that by my own judgement. Because I believed it nonsense, I made it so Certainly this was true of myself. Vivian's judgement was the opposite of mine and for him, too, it was real. It was a profound discovery.

I fought my way up through the pain and looked back over my shoulder. I caught his

eye. "Please, Lord, give me a chance. I think I understand something."

The cane was lowered. My executioner walked to stand before me. He listened gravely while I blurted out my thought.

"I will be what you wish me, lord." I was shamed.

I knew instantly that he was pleased. I sensed that I had crossed some sort of threshold, that perhaps he, too, had found an open door. I clutched at determination. I was terribly wounded. I wanted no more cutting of my skin.

"Have you found a message in the whip, madam?"

"Yes, lord. I have found a message in the whip."

"What was the message?"

I was struggling again, but now I had a clue: "That I must obey you, lord."

"Think, madam."

I wracked my brains. There was another approach. "That I wish to obey you, lord." For good measure I added a bit that seemed important to him. "I will treat you with respect, lord."

From his exhalation of breath one might suppose he had been holding his breath in suspense for my answer. I knew it had been right. I was still uncertain of the truth of the commitments I was making. But I would avow them to escape the whip.

"And what does that make you, madam?"

Damn him! Was he never content! Had I not abased myself enough! How long did this guessing game go on! "I am your prisoner, lord." I was pathetically determined to give him his title.

"Of course you are my prisoner," he agreed irritably. "But you are more. What are you?"
I thought of parlour guessing games and wanted to be facetious, but was sure he would whip me for levity. What did you call a girl in my predicament! The answer slipped so neatly into place I was surprised I had not seen it.

"I am your slave, lord!" I felt like Scheherezade.

I had pressed a magic button. The black-clad male thing dropped the cane, took me in his arms and kissed me beautifully so that I kissed him back and longed for hands and arms. How can a girl kiss a man properly without hands and arms! I did my best. "Darling, little Jewel," he whispered in my ear. "You are my slave, my own slave girl." His arms tightened 'round me until I thought he would break something. He was so strong, so fulfilled. I was almost happy too. I closed my eyes in bliss. When I opened them he was gone.

Being a slave girl is different. Does that sound trite? I expect it does. I am saying that values for slaves are different from values for those who are free. The transition into slavery is terribly painful, not only because you are whipped all the way there, but because you can't forget what you were. A girl makes the free valuation first, then sadly and of necessity makes the slave valuation second. But it is that second

valuation she must obey if she values her skin. I had still to learn that slave girls do not argue. They obey. If they have opinions they keep them to themselves. Woe to a

slave girl who, even by the flicker of an eye, tells her lord of thoughts contrary to his desires. She will be whipped until her thoughts evaporate in pain. It is all so simple. The least complex relationship in human affairs is that between a slave girl and her lord. The male who holds the key to her chains.

My agonized wrists reminded me to stand straight upon my toes. I did so. But without joy. I was alone. I was hurting. I was helpless. My lord had left me with my pain. Evidently there need be no period to a slave girl's suffering. I had been fastened as I was so long it had become a torture in itself. I longed for release. The straps around my wrists mocked me. But he had left me thus. It was his wish I suffer. He would believe it good for me. And he would be right. The more I suffered, the greater my sincerity when I called him lord.

I was a slave.

How long had it taken. Twenty-four hours to transform me from a young lady of fashion into an entity of breasts, vulva and buttocks for a man's amusement. Oh, oh, oh! If only I could get free! But, for dear little Jewel freedom had become a purely academic premise that need not concern her. I looked up at my pinioned wrists and down at my fettered ankles. Dear little Jewel would never know freedom again. She was done with it. Or, more properly, freedom was done with her. I cried quietly for a little while in memory of yesterday.

It was very terrible to stand strapped to the bar. All of me ached and hurt and was exhausted. I knew that eventually I would give up hoping and trying and would allow myself to hang by my wrists. I supposed it would injure them. But already my toes were starting to disobey me. I stood taut, neck limp. My body damp with the perspiration of pain, my hair lank and wet. I had ceased to care about my female secrets. He had seen his fill of them. My breasts and sex had been wantonly displayed. They still were. What more had I to offer or to lose. That sooner or later I would be ravished there could be no doubt. But it would be an anti climax. I had lost interest or concern. The whip and the cane had deflowered me more poignantly than any male genitals could do. I looked down at my cut, bruised skin. I moaned in solitude.

Hope is the ultimate cruelty. I had not learned its falsity. I listened, I longed. Sure he would not keep me like this! Surely at any moment I would be set free. I had been whipped. Why then hold me ready for the lash. I had managed to please my tormentor, why punish me more! My mind revolved uselessly. I had ceased to he a girl named Jewel. I was a girl's body to which things happened. My mind was a spectator to these things. It could neither invite nor prevent. My store of hope was soon doing battle with the knowledge I could be left hanging for hours or days, or that the ominous black figure might reappear and continue to whip me to his heart's content.

I hung there for hours. Alone, hurting, waiting. Only the changing light told me of time. I fell into a haze of constant pain and weariness, my head fallen forward, my eyes half closed, enduring.

"You are unfailingly lovely, madam." The cold even voice dragged me back into the world. I had not heard him come.

I raised my head knowing my appeal was written on my face. I did not need words.

"Punishment becomes you, madam."

"Thank you, lord." I was surprised at the weakness of my voice.

"Remind me of your condition, madam."

He was unrelenting with his probes. In frantic guesswork I gave him what I supposed he desired: "I am your slave, lord."

He nodded. "Good! Has your slavery enhanced in these past hours of solitude?"

"Yes lord." I hated the admission. But it was true.

He loosened the straps from my wrists. I slipped, moaning, to the floor, rubbing tenderly the indentations they had cut into my skin. "Thank you, lord!" At least those words were sincere.

"You may show gratitude."

Always to be caught off balance. With my whole being alive with memory of the whip and the cane and the straps, I wanted only to please. I was cringingly fearful of a wrong word or gesture. I was certain they would earn me a return to agony. To show gratitude! I longed to throw my limp arms round Vivian's neck and kiss and kiss and kiss. But I dared not. An instinctive prudence warned me. As before, knowledge smote me devastatingly. I clasped my masters feet and kissed them abjectly.

I had passed another test. My lord was pleased. But I had also passed another milestone into abnegation. Kneeling back upon my heels I looked up at the man who possessed me. "You may rise," he said gravely with faint affection.

I stood before my lord. To move, to stand, to move my arms, it was all a miracle. I ached with a glorious ache. I looked up at the ugly bar and the straps that had held me. I shuddered.

"You did not like to stand with your hands held high, madam?" His voice was almost banter.

"No, lord. It was terrible."

"You would do much to avoid it?"

"Yes, lord, anything!"

"Well, well! You are impressed." He chuckled. "I may take it that to hang there through the night would leave you very obedient indeed?

"I am obedient now, lord." I was cringing with fear.

"Are you truly. Good! Place your wrists within the straps again." Once more there was steel in his voice.

I froze in pure horror. I had been played with, that was all. A brief respite to amuse and feed his vanity. Now the night stretched out endlessly. Hanging there in the darkness I would be a poor thing by morning. In a brief flash my mind reviewed and rejected the things I might do. Without volition by slave instinct but in utter

desolation, I once again strained upwards on my toes and placed my poor wounded wrists within the straps. "Thank you, lord." I looked at the man in black and smiled

a poor pale smile.

Within my heart I knew it for a gamble. To be so totally submissive must surely touch his mercy. But it was a gamble I had lost. Without a word he pulled tight the straps, tighter than they had been, so that I could not contain a moan. I looked up at the leather biting and holding me. When my eyes sought his again they were filled with tears. It was a bitter disappointment and a bitter, bitter night that lay ahead. But there was more.

"I think a few more marks upon your skin are in order," he said thoughtfully. "Would you prefer the whip or the cane?"

I could gain nothing, so I had nothing to lose. "The whip please, lord," I asked as brightly as I could manage.

Laughing, he set me free. "Dammit, girl, you've come a long way." He tilted my chin and kissed my lips. Not as a lover kisses, but as you kiss a child. Without thought or purpose I fell to the floor and kissed his feet again and again. . . I was lost in a welter of thankfulness. "I am your slave, lord." I said it over and over as a litany of joy.

He let me grovel. I suppose the situation held its piquancy for him. Then, with gentleness, he raised me to my feet and locked back upon my wrists the chains I had worn before. I stood passive and without complaint. The links were cold across my wounded bottom. "Come with me, Jewel." His voice was husky. I clinked behind him where he led.

I soon guessed my destination, guessed it in misery and loathing. But if I had not protested the ship, why protest the cell! I had been taught a bitter lesson: A slave girl who obeys is hurt less than one who rails against her master's wish. When he opened the hated door, I stepped past him into my beastly little prison as though eager to be home. The only feminine wile I allowed myself was to stand in the centre of the dismal place, erect and proud, but with a very genuine tear trickling down my cheek, and to watch him reproachfully through the bars as he closed the door and locked me in. When he raised his eyes to mine I contrived a wan smile and a pale, "Thank you, lord." He nodded, satisfied, and left me alone.

So much for feminine wiles! A girl couldn't really rely on them. I hobbled over to the bench and sat down. It was good to rest. Sardonically, I realized that my prison seemed less awful today than it had seemed yesterday. Compared to standing on my toes with my wrists strapped against the bar it was pure luxury. I had become a slave. I turned over on my front and went to sleep.

Morning brought an alert mind and speculation. I had become accustomed to the chains joining my ankles, those on my wrists were still strange and hampering. But they allowed me to do the things I must. Yet, I was pathetically helpless. I could defend myself against nothing. I was sore and tender from the whip and cane. The marks of them upon my skin were livid and frightening. The speculation concerned me most. But I had to face the fact that I knew nothing and could learn only what it pleased my master to teach me. For all I knew we might, today, revert to normal and my ordeal become only a strange dream. But if I was held in subjection, what then? Absurd visions of myself kneeling beside Vivian's chair at meal times and being offered bones and scraps flitted through my mind. But they might not be absurd at all. Examining the circumstances of my life and family, I had come by a fearsome

knowledge that by this expedient I could remain in my present slavery forever. Vivian could easily force upon me whatever acts of mine were needed to make this possible,

letters, signatures, perhaps even interviews. My chains weighed heavily upon me by the time I had reviewed my prospects.

Approaching footsteps warned me. I stood in my chains waiting behind the bars of my cage.

It was Betty. She surveyed me cheerfully. "My, the Master did lace into you, didn't he, miss."

"Did you get whipped this terribly?"

"Turn round, miss, and I'll tell you."

I did a slow clinking circle. I also wanted her to know I was beautiful.

"Me bottom was as bad, miss. But not the rest. Really give it to you."

Two girls upon whom the whip bestowed a bond, I was suddenly thankful for Betty. "Can you let me out of here?" I asked hopefully.

"Master says for me to take you and look after you proper." She raised an apologetic eyebrow. "But only if you promise not to do no backsliding. Those were his own words, miss."

"That means I've got to behave like a whipped puppy dog?"

"'Fraid so, miss." She brightened and tittered. "That's really what we are when you come to look at it."

She was painfully right. "And what if I refuse?"

She looked distressed. "You just stay here, miss." Once more she brightened. She dropped bait. "Master wants breakfast on terrace with you if you want me to help you clean up."

"Do I kneel at his feet or sit in a chair?"

Betty tittered doubtfully. "I wouldn't use sarcasms, miss. Master won't like it." Then she added an afterthought, "I think you get to sit in a chair, miss."

"Alright, I'll be a good little girl and do what I'm told," I I assure her cheerfully. "I won't embarrass you. But Betty!" I looked her in the eye. "Before you unlock the door tell me what your Master expects of me. What am I going to be made to do?"

She did not answer readily. She considered. "Master's gone all funny-like, miss."

"I'd noticed," I said dryly.

"Don't do no good to fight him." Her voice was troubled.

I rattled my chains. "I couldn't fight a kitten, Betty."

"No, miss," she agreed absently. "It's his dream, y'know. Bloody silly, really."

"Come on, tell me!"

"Calls it a fantasy, he does. Told me about it one time when he was whipping me." She laughed bitterly. "Seemed to think it would cheer me up. This here fantasy says he has to have a slave girl who'll be a real doormat and do whatever she's told. She'll always be naked and she'll always be chained. She'll adore him and never say 'boo'."

"Didn't you fill the bill?"

"No, miss. Wants a real lady, he does. Educated and all that."

"The higher we come the harder we fall?"

"That's right, miss! You got the idea." She looked at me archly. "But with you it's even better, like. You've always loved him."

"He expects to whip a girl half to death and still have her love him!"

She looked embarrassed. "Girls are silly, miss."

I suddenly realized I had a rival. Betty, too, loved this absurd man. "You stay here because you're fond of him?" I demanded.

"'Fraid so, miss. Like I said: us girls are silly. We can't help it." Apologetically she added, "Master's awful generous with wages."

An obvious thought struck me like a blow. "Betty, with your help I could escape."

"You sure you really want to, miss?"

"Betty! That's an absurd question. Of course I want to."

She looked at me ruefully. "You still in love with him, y'know."

I flushed angrily. "Whether I am or not, I still want to escape. This nonsense has to be stopped."

"T'ain't nonsense, miss. It's real. Terribly real. Can't neither of us escape."

"You don't even want to." I made my words contemptuous.

"That's true, miss. And, forgive me, I won't help you."

"You love him that much?" I sounded incredulous.

She shrugged. "I'm a slave same as you are, miss. Master 'll take you a lot further than he will me. But ain't no real difference."

"Unlock the door, Betty." I said firmly. "Do you lead me on a leash to where I get a bath?."

"Nothing quite like eggs and bacon," Vivian observed happily. The man in black had disappeared.

"No, lord." I felt an idiot.

"A good night's sleep, I trust?"

"Yes, lord."

"You look delightful, Jewel."

"Thank you, lord."

My Master sighed beatifically. His cup was full.

"I expect you'd like to know something of your future?"

"Yes, lord." I was suddenly quivering.

"Damn rummy spot you're in, Jewel," he mused ruminatively. "Easy to make you a slave and keep you in chains and in your cell. Nothing worth discussing there, really. Fact is, though, you've got a much bigger role to play." He grinned at me in comradely fashion. "Slave girls come in all sorts and sizes."

"Yes, lord."

He laughed at me. "For the time being, poppet, you can drop my title. We have things to talk about, and I expect it will be good for you to get things off your mind. Clear the air a bit."

"Yes, lord."

I grinned at him ruefully. "Sorry. You've beaten it into me so deep that slipped out. Darling, tell me what you are going to do with me?"

"You'll be my slave. You will question nothing, obey everything. You will be whipped constantly to keep you in the proper frame of mind. But your punishments can be light or heavy as your obedience merits. Total obedience. That's your motto, love."

I was nervous. "Promise not to punish if I talk?"

"On my honour. I'll tell you when to revert to normal."

"Oh Viv'! I'm normal now."

I blushed. Had it been that obvious! "I have thought of you as my Master."

"See!" He was delighted.

"I suppose you're proud that by half killing me you've made me humble?"

"Yes. My methods work."

"Viv', that was cruel. You tortured me. I hated you."

"Do you now?"

I remembered Betty. "Girls are ridiculous creatures," I said defensively.

"Still love me?"

"Yes. Damn you!" I looked at him beseechingly. "Darling, don't keep me locked in that rotten cell."

"And don't you want to get rid of your rotten chains?" he gibed.

"Oh, I'll wear 'em if it pleases you," I conceded irritably.

"Kind of you," he acknowledged sarcastically. "Don't you want clothes?"

"Of course I want clothes. Of course I want to be rid of chains. And of course I want freedom. There! Now can I please get dressed and go home?"

"Of course, poppet. After breakfast we'll stroll down to the village. You're free as air."

Once more he had me floundering. "Vivian, don't joke. Don't be cruel."

"What's cruel about that?"

"You're going to let me think I'm escaping, then suddenly I'll be tied up and whipped or something awful."

"If you say go, dear girl." He was cheerfully insouciant.

I was lost. "Vivian, if you whip me and hurt me or put me,

in that beastly cell long enough, I'll do anything, or say anything, or be anything. Does that make me a coward? Am I poor stuff?"

"I thought the subject was for you to get dressed and go home?" Viv' asked, puzzled.

"Answer my question."

"Well, if you must know," he said seriously, "You were a ruddy little heroine. I was tremendously proud of you."

"All that noise I made. . . unladylike contortions?"

"You did them beautifully."

I was still searching. "Viv', didn't you feel, or don't you feel now an awful rotter for being so cruel to your little Jewel. All I've ever done is love you?"

"No shred of conscience or remorse, dear heart. You were far too beautiful."

"What's my being beautiful got to do with it?"

Vivian shrugged, his face clouded. "I don't know. Don't ask me that one. But it's of the essence."

"You mean I get hauled off to that awful room if I persist?"

"Yes."

There is an end to every road. "Darling," I said without hope. "Please take me home."

Vivian took me home.

If you are to listen to this silly tale of mine you must keep in the forefront of your mind the realization that all through this period I was lost, alone, far out to sea. The only thing that stood out for me to take hold of and examine was Vivian's wish to own a slave girl. It did not make much sense. But it was the only thing in the whole picture that made any sense at all to me. I did not like it. But I was illogical enough, or feminine enough, to be glad that if he must have one he had chosen me. Not that I was going back to play the role and feel his whip. Never!

Poor Betty. She was lost. Her story was sad. Now that Viv' had parted with me he would turn to her. At this very moment she was probably being whipped. Well, better she than me! But I wasn't happy about that either.

I was not happy. I should have been deliriously happy at getting back my freedom. But except for the brief moments when my Master had taken off my chains, and when I had first put back my clothes, I had known little happiness. I had lost Vivian. We had clung together at the last and kissed and kissed. But then I had walked away. I had thought I was walking away from his whip and his chains and his beastly little cell. But I was walking away from him, from a man I had loved faithfully all my life. Since I would never dare go to Wivenhoe alone I would see little of him. I was not even sure I dared visit there with Aunt Millicent.

I was lonely. There was no one I could talk to about what had happened to me. I expect Aunt Millicent thought me odd. I was so often distrait. So apt to let my thoughts take me back to Wivenhoe and my slavery. . . and Vivian. . . and the man in black.

I was intrigued about the man in black. I knew it was Viv', but it was a quite different Viv'. If he had insisted that it was another man altogether, I would have believed him. I could still remember with an awful cringe the way he called me "Madam". Fancy being addressed formally as "madam" a moment before you were whipped! These things would not leave my mind. I was in a constant dither of wondering.

I was also consumed by lust. Oh, I know! Nice young ladies are not supposed to even know the word. Phooey! Ever slept in a dorm with twenty other girls! We are also not supposed to feel it. That's nonsense too. I felt it! I felt it shockingly and consumingly as I had never known it before. What was so strange to me then, though I understand it now, was that it centered upon the marks upon my skin. Those marks did not leave me soon. Some of them were wounds with cut skin. For days I was a rainbow of yellows, greens and purples. I was shocked but intrigued by my own lasciviousness in parading naked before the big mirror in my room at every opportunity. In fact, I did not wait on chance. Under delicious compulsions I barely understood I would lock my door while I posed and admired myself and my wounds at any time of the day as the mood took me. For the first several days while they were still tender and sore, I would run my hands across them and shiver at the result. I was in a fine old state that I was ashamed of but would not have relinquished for the world. After all, those striations on my skin were Vivian's farewell gift.

They vanished slowly as I went about my affairs of everyday. At the end of two weeks

I found myself regretting their fading and being inordinately glad of those which had cut my skin and thus would leave me with dark or white lines for long into the future.

Surely such pain deserved an epitaph! Once again I can say: If only I'd known!. . .

It was chance. It had to be! Aunt Millicent and Cynthia's family liked each other. It was taken for granted that dear little Jewel and dear little Cynthia would like each other too. Actually we didn't. We'd gone to school together, and that was about all you could say for our relationship. She was Lady Cynthia Ramsden and she let you know it. Supercilious bitch! Then they came to Tea.

She knew about me and Viv', of course. Who didn't! So she took great delight in telling me of their visit to Wivenhoe the week before, and how attentive darling Vivian had been. She must have seen me perk, but mistook my interest. She thought I was jealous. How absurd!

I probed. If Betty, and then me, why not Cynthie! But he had told her of no Griffin nor taken her beneath Wivenhoe. I wondered. But Lady Cynthia was less vulnerable than I. She would not easily disappear. But how good it would have been if he had whipped her! A hundred people around England would have owed him gratitude. Cynthie was a snooty little besom. "I'm sure I shall see more of the dear boy," she cooed.

I could have killed her.

A week later Aunt Millicent and I passed the gates of Wivenhoe. Lady Cynthia in her brougham was leaving. She held a big bouquet of roses. She waved it at me triumphantly. Next day Auntie went to Northumberland to visit a cousin.

I suppose you who read this have been able to see the threads weaving themselves into the cord that pulled me back to where I said I would never go. Alright! I agree with Betty. Us girls are silly. I'm the silliest of the lot.

"Lovely to see you again, dear girl." Viv' was glowing.

Betty was serving us tea in the lounge. The sandwiches were not cucumber. They were mustard and cress. She looked at me archly, knowingly and infinitely wise. "I suppose you are well whipped, Betty?" I inquired kindly. I wanted to keep her in her place.

"Oh yes, Miss. The Master's very kind to me." She giggled.

"Charming child," said Vivian when she was gone. "She actually does whip beautifully. Nothing like you, of course."

"What's all this about Cynthia?" I demanded.

"Cynthia?" He played with the name as though trying to recall. "Ah yes, the social Lady Cynthia Ramsden! Sorry, poppet, I haven't got around to whipping her yet."

"You know perfectly well what I mean."

"You're jealous." He laughed delightedly. "I'm afraid you have nothing to fear. I have not been able to devise a way of luring the lovely Cynthie into my foul clutches. Bit too heavily involved in the upper crust, y'know. Don't want the House of Lords on my neck."

"So I just got whipped because I'm socially negligible?"

"You got whipped, darling, because you are the most beautiful thing in the whole world."

Absurd. But I was mollified. Us girls are silly! "I'd love to see you whip her, Viv'."

He sighed. "It would be a pleasure," he admitted dreamily. "A great many people share your wish. Poor Cynthie. She is not popular."

"Never mind the pleasure. She deserves it."

"Don't you?"

"Don't be silly! Of course I don't."

"All girls deserve it. Just because they're girls." He was in a Puckish mood. "The agonies you give us men. You should all be whipped daily."

"Thanks! Have some more Tea."

He handed me his cup. "That's what you have come for, isn't it? A return to normal?"

"Vivian! Don't start that again or I'm leaving."

"No one will stop you."

I relaxed. I'd been wondering if he'd use force. I had not believed he would. But I could not be sure. "That's a relief," I admitted. "I was half afraid to come."

"You are quite ridiculous, darling Jewel. You know perfectly well why you came, and you know perfectly well what is going to happen."

"The servants are all back," I told him crisply. "I'm quite safe."

"Been a few changes, sweetheart."

I looked at him, startled.

"It's a big house, poppet. I've had one wing separated. In it is everything the heart desires. It awaits you."

"A dungeon down below, no doubt?"

"A truly dramatic compartment, beloved. Far superior to the sad little room to which you took such exception."

"Guaranteed to drive a girl insane her first night!"

He shrugged. "I shall value your opinion."

"Well, you're not getting it! Practice on Betty."

He waved airily. "The poor dear girl tries so hard. But she's limited. She has but one

criteria: everything !E; lovely. No! The wing is for you. It has always been for you."

I was absurdly flattered and pleased. I had no intention of entering his dungeon. But still "Why didn't you violate me when you had me?" I asked seeking a crack in his armour. He considered my question as though it merited attention. "When one owns a Rembrandt, one does not smear paint hoping to improve." He shrugged. "Sorry, poppet, that's as close as I can come."

It was vague. But I glowed without wishing to. "Darling, you really truly won't use force on me?"

"Honour bright, sweet."

"Then show me this sequestered wing. I'm female enough to be curious."

His smile was wholly charming I followed like a lamb.

"But, darling, you've spent thousands!" I was incredulous.

He nodded, pleased. "No slave girl was ever more richly housed."

"Or more implacably imprisoned," I amended. "But why the luxury here and there?"

"Slavery is not all bad, poppet. In between your training you'll have a delightful life."

"Viv'! You don't expect me to stick my head in that noose again!"

He smiled at my vehemence. "I can easily kidnap you."

"You promised no force!"

"The promise holds for today."

We stood and looked at each other awkwardly. Two people who had not said what they had come to say.

"Forget this dream, Viv'. Marry me."

"Marriage is the dream, sweetheart, not this. This is reality."

"You did this. Made this place for me? Just Me? Oh Viv, there are facilities enough for half a dozen girls."

"I may get you handmaidens. Slavery has its own hierarchy."

"Then get me Cynthia Ramsden." The demand slipped out. I could have kicked myself.

I could feel his tension. He was assessing my semi admission. "What would you do to her?" he inquired blandly. "Whip her, of course! Bring her ladyship down to Earth." Wishful thinking. But I couldn't resist.

Vivian laughed delightedly. "You see, poppet. You're as bad as I am. Let's drop the pretense. Take off your clothes."

Even though it came from him, I blushed. "We are not starting that nonsense

again," I affirmed. Then weakened the effect by feminine curiosity, "Supposing I was that silly, what would you do to me?"

"Whip you?"

"But why?"

"You earned punishment by electing to leave me. Men I said you were free, a good slave would not have left her master. You have stayed away for weeks, compounding your felony. So first off the whip! I'd say about fifty of the best." His smile was charming.

"That's a jolly fine inducement for a girl," I said bitterly. "Just the whip? No hot irons?"

"They come later. I intend to brand you."

Insane, isn't it! This polite exchange. A gay repartee about agony. But that's Vivian. I suppose it's also me. . .

"Show me the dungeons. I've seen the rest." I wanted to change the subject.

He led me upstairs instead of down. It was a circular tower room: old yellow stone, wide windows heavily barred, a couple of slender pillars, the usual bench, and round the walls, set deep in the stone the rings.

"I'd describe this as a lady's prison," Viv' suggested brightly. "Nice and light. Cheerful atmosphere." He sounded like an Estate Agent.

There were others. In Vivian's Wivenhoe a girl could he held captive in many places and in many ways. He showed them with pride, always watching me with enigmatic eyes. I could not fail to picture myself naked and chained in these places. . . and the man in black.

"Kept the best until last," he said offhandedly as we went downstairs.

It was a dungeon in the best tradition, dark and grim and with all the frightening accoutrements. The door would have withstood a battering ram. The chains were all heavy and menacing. I could not withhold a shudder.

"Viv', would you really lock me in a place like this?"

"Yes." He seemed to feel no need to amplify the brutal word.

"I suppose there are others?"

He showed them to me. They were various.

"Why the variety, darling? A mood thing?"

"I suppose so." His eyes glinted, "Or according to your desserts."

"I don't get to choose?"

"Just your first night. An inducement."

"You are sweet!" I was enjoying our exchange of nonsense. "But what about those lovely rooms upstairs?"

"Again, according to your behavior."

I made a gesture of disparagement. "I'd spend all my time in the worst of the lot then."

"You underrate the whip, darling. It is every girl's guide."

We walked back upstairs. Beneath our chatting was a steely undertone. Together we had passed through a dimension of human experience strange and terrifying, altogether rare. The man in black and the naked girl screaming beneath his whip. They were in every room we saw and in every word we uttered. I knew myself reprehensible to have come to Wivenhoe. I knew, too, that I could not have stayed away. I turned, laughing, to my host:

"Darling, I want to see that tower room again. The one you called the lady's prison.

He raised a quizzical eyebrow. "Thinking of renting it, sweetheart?"

"I'm sure I could enjoy its amenities free of charge," I told him drily. "But honest, Viv', the place has atmosphere. You've created something."

He threw open the heavy studded door. Again I had the impression of the earnest estate agent with a valued client. I walked in and surveyed the place that had made such an impression.

No, Vivian did not slam the door. An obvious thought, but he did not. He walked to one of the barred windows and took in the view. Then turned back and, seated on the sill, watched me quietly.

He had named it aptly. But I realized its appeal was by way of contrast to the disagreeable little hole he had locked me in previously. There had been something sordid and disreputable about that cell that was absent here. This was no less a dungeon, perhaps more so, but it was less daunting to the spirit. Or was it simply that after my previous travail I could view such places with equanimity? Without preamble, without thought, almost without volition, I removed my clothes.

I did it slowly, without emphasis, without bravado. I did it without consciousness of male eyes. I did it because it was the thing I had come here to do. I dared not analyze. I clung to Betty's precept: girls are silly. . .

"I am supposing you wish me naked, lord?"

"Of course." He did not move.

I made a neat pile of my clothes, wrapped them in my skirt and tied its ends to make a bundle. Without pause I went to a wall and stood with my back to the brutal ring with its cluster of waiting chains. I looked at my Master expectantly, smiling.

He came and faced me. His face grave, but his eyes vividly alive. "I love you, Jewel." He kissed me with tenderness. I kissed him back, but did not me, e. I was a slave.

"I shall hurt you bitterly and cruelly, beloved."

"Yes, lord, you must." My words came easily.

"I will not free you again."

"Never free me, lord." I was happy to have crossed a barrier.

My master picked up a chain. He kissed me once more. His eyes were laughing. "I will lock a wristlet upon you. Its bite may make you panic. If you ask me then I will take it off and you may go. It is a last chance. Good old fair play. If you do not say the word you will have accepted slavery. My own cruel slavery."

I held out a hand and, with a great detachment, watched the heavy metal band slipped 'round my wrist and locked shut with a frightening click. The weight of its chain was heavy to support, a graphic foretaste.

I stood still. Vivian's eyes burned. It was the moment, the one moment. But there was no doubt in me. I had shed few with my clothes. It would return, but, for the moment, I was free of it. I used my other hand to finger and test my metal bond. It was snug and tight. It had been beautifully crafted, a thing of beauty, but deadly strong. Smiling with an innocence, I held out my still free hand. We had no need of words.

I watched my chaining with palpitating concern and with a feminine vanity that it should enhance as well an hold. I need not have feared for its loveliness, though I might have wished it less total.

When it was done, my ankles were joined by a foot of chain, my hands the same. From ankles and wrists other chains joined to a central ring at the level of my knees. This ensemble held my chained hands down about the level of my hips. The only way I could get use of them would be to squat and thus gain slack. That way I could feed myself. But oh, I was well held and helpless. Most demanding of all was the metal collar about my neck. Its chain to the wall-ring was long. I could walk several paces. I could lay upon the bench. I could gaze out of one window. But its range was still low than half my dungeon. Its weight was great enough that I must keep it looping from the front of my collar. To let it fall away at my back was choking. I was a slave girl very much in chains.

"Are these a punishment, lord? Or may I expect to wear them often?" I was genuinely curious.

"You may expect to wear them often. They are not for punishment." He backed away and examined me with pleasure. "There are many variations, darling girl."

I knew what would please him. I walked within the limits of my tether. I took immense care to do so with as much grace as was possible. I went to the window, my steps noisy yet mincing. All the chains clattering and clinking. Having surveyed the view, I walked as close to my master as the chains he had placed upon me would allow, then sank to my knees and bowed my head. "I am your slave girl, lord. Please instruct me."

There were long moments of fulfilled silence before he raised me to my feet. His lips found mine. "Thank you, darling." It was as though I had given him the world.

Perhaps, without knowing it, I had.

"May I be seated, lord?" I must be careful and not presume.

He nodded absently, and watched me make my hobbled way to the bench and arrange my chains. I did it prettily on purpose.

"Your other life is over, Jewel."

"Of course, lord. I know."

"Tomorrow you will be whipped."

"That, too, I know, lord. I accept." Actually the words had set me shivering. But I could have no complaint. He had told me.

"You do not mind?"

"I mind, lord. But it is fitting. Please whip me."

"You are quite incredible, Jewel."

I allowed myself a faint latitude. "I wish to be incredible,

lord. For you."

Vivian kissed me and left me in my chains. He took my poor little bundle of clothes. It was a solemn thought that I might never see them again. The thud of the door and the shooting of the bolts was frightening. But I was happy.

Girls are silly! I keep coming back to that. As I sat in the lady's prison on the bench, naked and chained, I had to ask myself just how silly I was. Tomorrow I faced screaming agony. My night could hardly be comfortable. Chained as I was, sleep would he disturbed. Why had I done it?

I wasted no emotion on recrimination or analysis. I knew damn well why I had done it. I was bored with Aunt Millicent and I wanted Vivian. If this was the only way to his heart then this is the way I would take, and be damned to the agony! No doubt I'd survive. That there were other strange and delicious stirrings within me I could not deny. Let them run their course. I looked ruefully at my load of chains. For dear little Jewel the die was cast. I had walked into a slavery from which I would never, never be allowed to escape. At that moment I did not want to. I sat in my chains and dreamed.

The man in black was formal as ever. He fascinated and frightened me. He was not my Vivian. But he was wickedly appropriate to the occasions he created. His title for me of 'madam' precluded intimacies that might have brought tears or shame. He was simply the executioner who had come to whip a girl.

When his deft fingers were done with keys and locks, only my ankles remained chained together. It was one of those moments I have become used to since. An ephemeral freedom loaded with temptation you dare not face. Free, you remain bound by another's will.

"Madam." His hand invited me to a pillar. He held a length of cord. I clattered forward and stood, uncertain of what was required of me. Gently, my

executioner lifted my hands and placed one of each side of the pillar at a level with my chin. He used his cord to bind them there.

It was different. The cord hurt more than the straps. I winced as he drew the strictures tight. But I would not be hanging from my wrists. Or would I? Was my plight better or worse than that other awful time? On the face of it, it seemed better. But I could glimpse a possibility! When the last knot was tied I stood erect at arm's length from the metal, my wrists tied in such a way that I could not bend my elbows and thus could not move forward to lean against the column for support. I must stand, separate and exposed and terribly, terribly vulnerable. But at least I was squarely on my feet and not upon my toes. I looked over one tied arm and smiled thankfully at the man who had tied me thus.

"Fifty strokes, madam."

"Thank you, lord." If only my courage was as glib as my tongue.

He slashed the whip across the centre of my back. Its tip curled and bit beneath a breast. I screamed.

My whipping had begun.

It lasted forever. It had no end. Oh, how I tugged at my poor wrists! How I strove to shake the pillar that stood so firm with me tied to it. How my ankle chains clashed as I stamped and kicked at nothing. How I cursed myself for letting this awfulness happen. To think that I could have been comfortably enjoying myself elsewhere, yet here I was, by my own connivance, tied to a post, naked, a whip cutting my skin wherever a man chose to curl it 'round my nudity. Here I was, screaming, screaming, screaming, so that I was shamed by my own noise. I was quite sure it was worse, worse, worse, than last time!

After centuries it stopped.

"You do astoundingly well, madam."

I moaned.

"Your punishment is half-done."

Half done! My head reared in horror, my nostrils flared. I had not counted. The fifty had vanished from credence. It must be hundreds! Looking down I could see all the bites of the tip of the lash. There seemed a great many. But it was only half-done! I turned piteously to the man who held the whip. But a strange compulsion held me mute. My appeal was all in my eyes.

He saw it. His eyes smiled. He had brought the brandy flask. I was ashamed at my avid gulps. I tossed the dank hair from my face. I looked at my tied wrists. One was bleeding. Without conscious thought words formed upon my lips, "Thank you, lord." It seemed proper that a slave girl should be grateful for the thong.

It curled, once more, around my hip and bedded itself upon my most secret place. My cry was more than agony.

The second half of my whipping had commenced.

It is an awful moment and a glorious moment when the last stroke has cut the flesh

and a girl's whipping is done. Behind and still upon her is the pain; ahead is surcease. Perhaps not in comfort, for she may remain bound, but for now the whip is

done with her. The knowledge that it will stripe her no more that day is a thing to be savoured over and over. It is glory.

A strange lesson. That a slave girl discovers glory.

He kissed me and went away. At the door he paused. "I should tell you, madam. There are different and stranger cruelties than the whip."

I was alone.

Stranger cruelties! Well, what of them? I had seen the room with its mechanisms of pain. I expected to suffer them. I dismissed concern. It was a bridge I could cross when I came to it.

I stood. I had expected to stand. The afterwards was evidently as much a part of a girl's punishment as the whip ping itself. To hang or to stand. Perhaps another time to kneel. Suffering was rich in variety. My tied wrists were constantly before my eyes. I tried for release, but only hurt myself. I could never get them free. I subsided, leaning my tied arms forward for what small support they could find against the post. It might be a long, long day.

I was cruelly sore. But I could touch no wound, trace no stripe upon my skin. I could see only those marks that had curled upon my front. They were beautiful. But the beet of them would be upon my back.

Did you catch that? The word beautiful! The word beet! What becomes of me? Is this dear little Jewel who speaks of whipmarks as though they were diamonds? I remembered Shakespeare and a girl in 'Measure for Measure' who spoke boldly of wearing the marks of whips as rubies. That's exactly what I am doing. The screaming is over. Now the joy! If this is the wage of slavery, they are highly paid.

I have not wept. This must be significant. But of what? Were the tears of that other time only the salt of self-pity, of a girl who thought herself betrayed? I hurt as much today, but I have not cried. But today I have asked for and deserved all that I have received.

Deserved? Oh yea! I deserved to be whipped. My behavior is outrageous! What would Aunt Millicent think of me? Of course I deserved to be whipped! I will always deserve it.

Always! Where did that word come from and why? Standing naked as I am, I am in a mood of honesty. Men a girl voluntarily parts with her clothes, she parts with much ' much more. There is no hypocrisy when a girl is naked. I recognized with some disquiet that a fire burned hotly in my loins. It was the fire of desire. The whip had kindled it from the spark of all my feelings for Viv' through all the years. I wanted to be ravished. There is another word I know of. But I will not use it. Not yet. But I turn it over and over deliciously in my mind. You know the word, don't you? We both know it.

It is beautifully explicit. Why must it be so ugly?

I will ask my master to do it to me. Have I the courage? For some reason of his own he does not wish to. So I am afraid I can see the possibility of making him terribly angry and being whipped and whipped if I spoil something that he holds dear. I

expect that in this I will have to await his pleasure as I do in all else. But, oh, the fire burns hot!

I am all female. Breasts and vulva and nipples and curved bottoms. Funny! I never realized before how different girls are. Under all our clothes we are pure mystery.

But I am naked. I threw my clothes away.

So I deserve to be whipped. Notice how I return to the theme. I want to assure myself that I deserve a whipping., ergo I must want one. I must want one because of this delicious fire it kindles. A fire that does not quench, but burns on and on. I am quite shameless. I am wanton.

Did Vivian always know!

I stand, very tired, very thoughtful, and becoming increasingly wise. I may soon be too wise for my own good. But Viv' will whip it out of me. Of that I can be sure. I consider shedding a few tears. They seem so terribly appropriate. But since decision is involved, my eyes remain dry. I look back at the cords round my wrists and wonder if it might just be possible?.. . . I would score tremendously if, when my Master returned, he found me sitting demurely upon the bench. I do try. But it hurts too much. So abandon the pretty dream. I stand on this leg and then that. I lean forward, then lean back upon my pinioned wrists. It is all a part of being bound, of being helpless, of trying to make the hours pass. Hours!

How many of them slip by I do not know.

Lady Cynthia Ramsden walks in fresh from Bond Street. She is immaculate. She is very beautiful. She is also very happy.

I am not happy. I am horrified. I go into a frenzy of tugging at my cords. I desist only when I see how much pleasure my struggles give her. . . the bitch!

"So nice to see you, darling," she coos as though she loves me.

It is not nice to see her. But I have to keep my end up. "So nice of you to drop in." I hope it sounds nonchalant.

"You seem to be in a spot of trouble, dear?" She drinks in my predicament with avid interest.

"I do it for fun," I tell her blandly. Is there truth there!

"You are quite helpless, aren't you, darling?"

I don't like the sound of that. But what can I do! "Yes. I'm quite helpless. That's the main idea."

"And someone's been whipping you. What lovely marks!"

I could swear her mouth was watering. It was an awful feeling to be tied in front of her like this. Why, oh why, had Vivian done this to me. Anyone but Cynthie! Anyone! "They are nice, aren't they!" I said, as though discussing new shoes.

"Darling Vivian says I may whip you," she says vivaciously. "Would you like me to?"

What a question! "No," I say with total honesty.

"I think I should. After all, we've never liked each other."

"Go ahead." I tried to make it sound indifferent. "Don't mind me."

"Oh, I won't, darling," she assured me ardently. "You don't really count, do you. I mean. . . you're just a lovely body. Where's the whip?"

"On the hook on the wall," I said in a nadir of misery. Oh Vivian!!!

Cynthia was not skilful. But she put venom into her arm. It did not hurt as much as Vivian. But it hurt horribly. I tried hard to keep quiet and not give her satisfaction. But I moaned a lot.

"I mustn't whip you too much, darling. Not for fun, y'know. Darling Vivian said you'd had a bad morning. I can see you have. You do moan beautifully."

"Thanks."

"I'm afraid I have bad news for you."

She was gloating. Anything to do with her was bad news. I looked at her without hope. I was close to tears and she knew it.

"I'm staying at Wivenhoe for a few days."

If she had said she was marrying the Prince of Wales I could not have been more shocked. Why was Vivian doing this to me!

"Darling Vivian has given you to me for the duration. You're to be my personal lady's maid." She was so happy it hurt.

I had nothing to say. It was too awful.

"I'm allowed to whip you all I want, darling. Just to keep you obedient and cheerful."

Cheerful! The bitch! How I longed for our roles to be reversed!

"You will address me as Mistress. Understood?"

"I'll die first!" I wished I hadn't said it. Far too dramatic.

"By all means, darling. You can call me Mistress when you want me to stop." She picked up the discarded whip.

I could not bring myself to surrender right away. Silly, but there it is. I endured four or five awful slashes with that damn whip before I muttered: "I'll obey you, Mistress."

"Louder."

I repeated my surrender in clear loud words and bitter humiliation.

"You are so sweet," Cynthia gushed. "I'll love having you for a slave. You can

expect to be whipped heaps and heaps. But I've got to leave you now. I'm having tea with darling Vivian. What a shame you can't join us. But I can B" you just have to

stay here, don't you, darling."

Bitch, bitch, bitch! I ground my teeth in fury after she had gone. So this is what he had meant: a punishment beyond the whip. This was it indeed! I could have born the rack and red hot irons more willingly than Lady Cynthia. I'd probably get 'em anyway if she had anything to say. I'd get no mercy from her. She was probably in a seventh heaven of delight over having found me like this. I wanted to cry. But I was too angry and too afraid.

I stood. More hours passed.

When she returned, she carried a collar and a leash and a long slender riding crop. I groaned inwardly.

"Are you going to behave, darling?" So sweet!

"Yes Mistress." So abject!

She snapped the collar round my neck and gave an experimental tug at the leash. I knew I would follow. Then she untied my hands. I longed to strangle her. But my feet were closely chained, and she held a whip and the leash. I had no hope. I had to be a good little puppy dog.

It was a beautiful apartment. One I had admired. It was hers, not mine, hers! I hated her. I was forced to notice now something I had not seen before. Even the most luxurious of the apartments were equipped with rings here and there about the walls and on the floor. My tether was fastened to one on the wall.

"Turn round, darling, and put your hands behind your back."

Miserably I obeyed. What utter humiliation!

Cynthia tied my wrists with an unexpected expertise. She did it tight so they hurt. "Mustn't have you getting loose, must we, darling?"

I kept a sulky silence. She hit me with the riding crop. "No sulks, darling. Speak when you're spoken to."

"No, Mistress. I must not get loose." I hated myself.

She seated herself comfortably in an arm chair. "We may as well have a proper understanding, darling," she said equably.

"I understand everything," I said bitterly. "You are going to be a bitch and make me hate myself."

She got up casually and started to whip me. The blows falling on whatever part of me my contortions presented. It hurt horribly and could have only one end. I managed to stand still for a moment under the blows and say abjectly, "I apologize, Mistress. Please forgive me."

The cessation of the blows almost made my humiliation worthwhile. But not quite. I stood there, tethered, helpless, naked and hurting. Cynthia's victory was total. She returned to her seat.

"Kneel."

I knelt. I wished I could die.

"You will obey me utterly, or I'll whip the skin off your back. Understand, you simpering little nothing?"

"Yes, Mistress. I will obey you." How I hated her!

"You will be set free except for the chains on your ankles. This is so you can attend me. Have you enough sense to obey with that much freedom?"

"I will obey you, Mistress. With my ankles chained I cannot fight."

"Good! You have some glimmering of sense. Do you understand I will whip you to the blood for the slightest fault?"

"I understand, Mistress."

"Ask me. Be humble."

"If I fail to please you, Mistress, please whip me very hard." I made it good. I had already lost everything.

"You will be a lady's maid."

"Yes, Mistress. I know the duties."

"You will service me." There was a new timbre in the voice.

I stiffened. Here were fields I had not trod. I had small doubt that Lady Cynthia had trod them often. I was shy and scared. I did not know what to say. Surely Vivian had not wished this for me!

"I do not know how Mistress."

"Nonsense. Every girl knows how."

"I do not, Mistress."

The crop sliced my bent back. Cut after cut found me before I managed to blurt, "I'll do it, Mistress! I'll do it!" What did it matter. What did anything matter now!

"Please teach me, Mistress," I begged. "I am sorry I am so stupid." What more could the rotten bitch want!

Cynthia stripped. She did it slowly, her eyes intent on me as mine were on her. She was quite lovely. I was jealous. But my eyes were riveted on the thick growth of black hair between her legs. In that hair lay my final degradation. I considered whether it would be better to be whipped into unconsciousness. But there are limits to heroism. In the end it would not matter much if my tongue had entered her.

Lady Cynthia Ramsden instructed her slave on how to give her a satisfactory orgasm with lips and tongue. It was surprisingly easy, even with bound hands. Certainly not worth being whipped over. I was ashamed at my wish she do it to me. I would have

asked, but I was deathly afraid of that crop and the viciousness of her arm. I knew she sensed my need. She would take joy in withholding her lips from my aching loins.

I was a slave. I was Cynthia's slave. I hated my lot.

Once again the pseudo freedom. Only my ankles chained. Surely I could do her some injury before I was overpowered and bound! But to what end. Only that I be whipped beyond bearing. I did not want to be whipped. So I drew her bath. I did her hair. I serviced her three times more. She was quite insatiable. She then locked my wrist to a ring in the floor and left me for the night. I hated sleeping on the floor at the foot of Milady's bed. But it was more comfortable than the dungeon of the night before. Thus are measured the small satisfactions of a slave.

Morning brought fury. When I awoke and sat up as far as my chained wrist would allow, I saw the bed had not been used. Lady Cynthia had slept elsewhere. The location of her slumber, if any, was not hard for me to guess. I tugged at the metal band upon my wrist in a frenzy of frustrated anger. Why had Vivian done this to me! Why, why, why! My poor wrist! I treated it shamefully. At the end of my tugging I was just as securely joined to the ring in the floor as at the beginning. It is foolish of slave girls to struggle. They do not have a chance.

It was Betty who freed me, bathed me and took me to join my Master at breakfast. She laughed at my anger, but refused to speak. Lady Cynthia was nowhere in evidence. Darling Vivian was charmingly evasive as he held the chair for me. One again I was free save for the chain upon my ankles. I never seemed to get rid of that. I forgot I was a slave girl. "That was a rotten thing to do to me," I accused.

"In a way, yea," he agreed. "But every day you build character. I am sure that yesterday taught you something profound."

"It taught me I'd like to whip the skin off that supercilious bitch's back," I told him defiantly.

"Did she really lace into you, darling?"

"Count the marks if you're interested." I was taking kidneys, bacon and eggs while I had the chance. I had learned that a slave girl never knows about meals. They can be very irregular.

"Don't like her much, eh?"

"Oh really, Viv', you" I broke off in horror, and tried again hoping I had not erred too unforgivably. "Forgive me lord. I am new to slavery. It is not easy to remember. No: lord. I do not like Lady Cynthia. She is pure bitch."

"My own opinion entirely." His agreement was airy, unconcerned.

"Then why did you sleep with her!" I could not contain myself.

There was a long silence. Our eyes caught, but did not hold. "Oh, very well," I said resignedly. "Whip me for impertinence."

I added the 'lord' defiantly, certain it would earn me an extra five.

Throughout breakfast my Master kept looking at me and stifling laughter. I did not find out why until after the toast and marmalade.

I was pushed inside, the door pulled shut behind me and locked. I heard the click. I looked around, startled. I was expecting at least another fifty.

Lady Cynthia was kneeling. It was neatly contrived. Her calves below the knee were clamped to the floor, well apart. Her ankles were similarly held. Her arms were raised. Rope from her wrists rose tautly to the bar. She could scarcely move, but was held in supplication. At the moment it was to me. I as the only other person present. She glared at me balefully. I could imagine her feelings.

"You'll all go to prison for this!" she hissed.

I stared stupidly. It was just too much.

"That rotten bastard. I'll have him rot for the rest of his life."

I was beginning to enjoy her fury.

"Let me loose immediately you. . . you, strumpet."

A light began to dawn. There was justice after all. Darling Vivian! I cold have hugged him. "You didn't let me loose yesterday, did you?" I asked as though trying to remember.

"Never mind yesterday. Let me loose. Get these ropes off."

"No." Oh, how I loved that word.

Lady Cynthia digested it. She must have expected something of the sort. "Very well," she temporized, "what do I have to do or say?"

I pretended to consider. "Just scream while I whip you, darling," I told her blandly.

"Lay a whip across my back and you'll go to prison."

"It will be well worth it. Besides, the way you are tied your front is even better."

I saw her wince. Any girl is frightened about her breasts.

"Don't you dare!"

"Why not? If I'm going to prison for whipping you I might as well enjoy myself. I'll whip your breasts and your pubic hair after I've nicely scarred your lovely back."

"Please Jewel. Don't whip me. I can't stand pain."

"I can't stand it either. Remember how I screamed?"

She tugged at the ropes and tried to move. She could not. "I'm going to cry," she complained. "I'm frightened. Please be kind to me, darling."

I laughed outright at her effrontery. "Were you kind to me?"

Again a futile struggle. "I suppose not," she admitted wanly. But there is such a thing as mercy."

"For you, but not for me, eh?"

She was weeping now. "Alright," she sobbed. "I treated you abominably. Go ahead and get your own back. I can't stop you." Her cheeks were wet with small streaks of tears.

When you hold all the cards it is easy to forgive. But this absurd girl did not deserve forgiveness. If I withheld the whip she would be convinced her rank had rendered her immune. Looking around, I picked up the wicked thong. Her eyes followed my every move in fascination and horror. I knew her feelings well.

"How many strokes do you deserve?" I asked conversationally.

"Oh, get it over with!" It was a good stock answer.

I gave her one with all my strength across her shoulders. I'm ashamed to say the tip landed on one breast. She looked at me in disbelief, tensed, frozen. Unable to grasp that it was really happening. It was another moment I remembered all too well.

"Did you enjoy it, darling?" I asked pleasantly.

"Don't hit me again. I'll do anything." All of her was in the words.

"But there's nothing to do!" I explained innocently as I struck again.

This time she went wild. Watching, I wondered if I had looked like that. I had to suppose I did. It was somehow beautiful. I thought of Vivian. I was learning so much.

My feet were chained. But it did not matter. I had my hands. I could imagine Lady Cynthia's social soul curling up at being whipped by a girl with chained legs. The thought was beautifully satisfying. I swirled the thong around my head and brought it slicing down across her breasts.

I sat down for this one. Her response was beyond words. She tugged and heaved. She promised. She pleaded. She threatened. "You know where I'm going to whip you next, darling?" I asked comfortably. When she had gotten to the moaning stage I got up and took care with my aim.

I suppose it was a pity, really, she was fixed so tight. Her contortions were limited. More than mine had been. But I'd made a pretty fair cut. It had bisected those pouting lips inside the hair. That's what I'd wanted. Once again I sat down to enjoy darling Cynthia.

She put on a wonderful performance. Her vocals touched the heart. I allowed her to expend them fully to where she was simply panting and straining against the ropes. I had to admit that the stirrings deep within me made her suffering worthwhile. I had to wonder if the kneeling position in which she was fastened had a significance. Surely Vivian had not. . . But whether he had or not, the convenience was screamingly evident to a girl who had been through what I had endured and performed the previous day. It was a nice warm thought.

Cynthie was eyeing me doubtfully. She was very lovely tied as she was. I was glad

Viv' was not there to see. The scarlet brand across her breasts proclaimed her condition. I wondered if the effect would be enhanced or diminished if I placed

companion strokes beside it. Just to be sociable I asked the dear girl's opinion.

Her breasts heaved as though from a blow. "It's wrong to hit a girl there," she said virtuously.

"That's not what I asked."

She looked down at her breasts and their wound. "One stripe is best," she said grudgingly. "If you put more on me it'll look messy. Oh, Jewel, please!"

I motioned her to silence with an admonishing finger. "Perhaps you're right," I said reflectively. "I'll concentrate lower down. A crisscross pattern will look nice there."

"No!" Her denial exploded vehemently.

"You prefer me to whip your breasts?"

Cynthie produced more tears. "I don't want to be whipped at all," she snivelled.

"That's understood, darling. But let's get back to your breasts."

"You're being deliberately cruel. I'm helpless and you're free. You're gloating."

"D'you call this being free?" I rattled the chain between my legs.

"I think you like wearing those things," she sniffed.

"I can't get them off."

"I hope you never get them off," she said petulantly.

"I probably never will. How would you like to have your ankles chained together for life?"

She twisted her shoulders helplessly. "Darling, get me out of this mess. Please!"

"What! Before I've whipped you! Don't be silly."

The poor girl clung to even the slightest hope. "You mean you will. . . after?"

I laughed at her eagerness. "Your knees and ankles are locked the way you are. I don't have a key. Forget about freedom. There isn't any for either of us. Now let's get back to the job of whipping you."

She flung her head from side to side in despair. "But you've already whipped me," she protested.

"Four strokes!" I exclaimed derisively. "Do you know how many I got yesterday?"

I turned myself around for her to get a good look at all the welts and wounds my skin flaunted. I watched her eyes widen in consternation. "What on Earth did you do to deserve that?" she asked, genuinely puzzled.

"Well, you gave me some of them I expect I got the lot from about the same motives."

Cynthie looked even less happy. "So you're going to whip me for your own pleasure?" Her voice reeked tears.

I'll admit I felt guilt. Cynthia was so helpless and so afraid, just as I had been. But I had loved Vivian. I doubted that Lady Cynthia loved anybody except herself. Her immediate future must have looked very bleak indeed. But the guilt was not strong enough to counter the fierce beauty I had found. A gift from Vivian. Casually I rose, ignoring her pleading eyes I curled a band of fire around her strained and concave waist. While she was coping with the pain as whipped girls do, I placed myself standing close before her and waited with excited curiosity. It was another threshold.

When her agonies subsided, my old school friend found herself confronted by a feminine demand so close that she could scent its pungency. For a moment she tensed, then looked up at me with sly appeal. "If I. . . do it, will you not whip me any more?"

I laughed gleefully at Cynthie's search for advantage. "Darling, you can't bargain," I assured her. "If you don't do this job for me very, very nicely, I shall start whipping your breasts and I won't stop until they look very sad indeed. But if you're a good girl I'll leave them alone. There's lots of other nice parts of you I can use the whip on."

She sighed in bitter impotence. "I'm tied too tight and stretched too upright. I can't do it," she complained.

I went to the pulley and let her hands down the requisite number of inches. When I returned to her, she took me on a long journey to a new and distant land. She did it very well. I wondered why I had never been there before. For a little while I think both of us were very happy.

Cynthia looked at me reproachfully when I pulled her hands and arms back up tight. I suppose the poor girl had hoped. . .

"Please Jewel." Her voice was controlled and conciliatory. "Please whip me at the. . . the back. Not my front. I beg of you.

I whipped her at the back. I made it go on and on and on. She screamed and moaned exquisitely. Prom time to time we paused so that she could take me on the enchanted voyage. Sometimes we moaned together.

"She seems much more tractable," Vivian said cheerfully at lunch. "Much less argumentative." He cut a square of beef from the meat on his plate and offered it in his fingers to the bound and naked girl kneeling beside his chair. Lady Cynthia Ramsden eyed the morsel bleakly, but accepted it between her lips and began to chew. Probably she was hungry.

Cynthie's ankles were chained the same as mine. But her wrists were crossed and tied tight behind her back. Mine were free. She knelt beside her Master's chair. I sat at table with him. I guessed her bitterness as she was fed the scraps. We were served by Betty whose lips were silent, but whose eyes spoke volumes.

"I gather you showed the dear girl the path of rectitude?" Viv' inquired of me politely.

"She's a cruel bitch!" Cynthie burst out incautiously. "She..."

"Quiet girl!" Vivian firmly cut off the flow of complaint. He picked up a pencil and made a notation on a slip of paper.

"What's that for?" the captive asked suspiciously.

"Five strokes, dear girl," Vivian told her blandly. "Each lapse from grace earns you an appropriate infliction. You get them after lunch."

Lady Cynthia swallowed hard. I could sympathize. So much to say, but not a word permitted. I offered her a piece of potato. She pretended not to see my outstretched hand. But when Viv' reached for the pencil she gobbled the offering hastily.

"How can any girl doubt the efficacy of the whip!" Vivian intoned piously.

Lady Cynthia looked at us both with pure hate.

"Am I to whip her, lord?" I asked demurely. I saw her start at my use of the title.

"You enjoy whipping this delectable creature, poppet?"

"Yes, lord. More than I thought possible."

"Matter of fact I'd thought of punishing you both this afternoon," he said reflectively. "Mustn't let you get ideas above your station."

""Rank you, lord." I'd show the silly bitch how to be a slave girl!

"Have you explained to dear Cynthia how you came to be a slave girl?"

"No lord, but I can"

"You are both insane!" our kneeling captive protested. "I don't want to hear"

This time the pencil got used. "One way and another you've upped yourself to twenty," Viv' told her sadly.

"You're absolutely mad. When the police"

"Oh dear, now it's up to twenty-five." His pencil poised.

"I'm sorry!" Lady Cynthia interjected. "May I take that back please?"

"No." The pencil made its mark.

"But that - but Jewel has already whipped me terribly."

"You were going to call her a bad name, weren't you?"

The girl with bound wrists twisted unhappily and looked up at our Master imploringly. "Oh alright! Yea, I was. She deserves it. She was cruel. Look at my back."

"A work of pure artistry," Vivian breathed admiringly. "Oh! Y. . . you! Alright

then, go ahead and give me five more you rotten sadist. What's it matter! What does anything matter. . ." Lady Cynthia Ramsden wept.

I tendered her a piece of meat which she accepted with hatred. Vivian made another notation with his pencil.

I was at least half as scared as she.

The room was so familiar. I was tremendously pleased that I had made my hobbled way to it with much more grace than my fellow captive had contrived. Cynthia was new to chained ankles and bound hands. She was also in a welter of apprehension and resentment. She viewed the place of her morning's agony without enthusiasm.

But darling Viv' had a surprise. He untied her hands, pulled a heavy narrow bench from against the wall, and motioned, "Lay down. On your tummy."

Lady Cynthia obeyed with alacrity. There was something about Vivian's voice. She and I watched in fascination as she was bound tight with cord, arms down the sides toward the floor, waist cinched down with cruel bands so that her lovely round rump rose up invitingly. That was all. He was going to let her kick her legs and toss her head. I guessed he was going to cane her bottom. She could not move that. It was going to be fun to watch. Or was it? I could tell from my Master's manner there was something in store for me too.

He pushed a stool against the wall. "Up'sadaisy."

Gingerly I mounted. Then I saw the straps and knew. I was sick with disappointment and chagrin. For Cynthia to see me as I was going to be! I loathed the thought, and I loathed the pain I knew was waiting. I did not have to be told. I turned my back to the wall and stretched my arms up and out. I just managed to fit my wrists into where I least wanted them to go. Vivian pulled the leather bands tight and took away my stool. I hung, suspended like a picture against the stone, my questing toes unable to find the floor. I hurt.

€€

Each of us girls had a front seat view of the other's suffering. Knowing her eyes upon me I said "thank you, lord!" brightly as though I was enjoying every moment, then settled myself in my pain to watch Cynthia get her bottom caned.

For the first little while she joined me in an interest in our Master's actions, sparing a pleased glance now and then for my own predicament which, I am sure, gave her much satisfaction. I managed not to catch her eye. Vivian selected his cane with care and deliberate intent to heighten his victim's suspense. Cynthia had given up complaining. I suppose she did not want to add to her score. I wondered if she had any idea how bad the cane would be. It was easy to see she was expecting it to be kinder than the whip.

"Twenty-five, wasn't it, darling," said Vivian cheerily. "Anything you wish to say before I start?"

"If I say anything it will go up to thirty," Lady Cynthia Ramsden said bitterly.

"Let us consider it said, dear girl. Thirty makes a nice round figure. Fifteen for each cheek, we might say. Since the total is a bit stiff for one female bottom, I'll give you half now and half later. Give you time to meditate a bit in between. You

know, wisdom of a civil tongue and all that."

The girl tied to the bench looked up at her master without affection. The cane sped swiftly in its are. She closed her eyes and turned away.

I have to admit I watched avidly. It had happened to me. Now it was happening to another girl. You can't really see yourself being caned. No matter how you twist the blow eludes you. But now I could see it all. Viv' made certain I should see it. No doubt I would be caned often enough in the future. This was how I would look.

It is both terrible and beautiful to see the weal spring up upon the flesh an indelible imprint of the cane, a brand, a signature, a token of punishment. Poor Cynthie! She had not expected such agony. After the first blows she tried to look up and back to convey the awfulness of what was happening to her. To impart knowledge that others did not know. But when she realized she was the only one surprised she let her screams take over and kicked her legs in frantic agony. She tore desperately at her cords but did not move them. Her punished bottom reared as though to meet each sweeping cut. She was still crying out and moaning after our Master had gone.

The only virtue of my position was that I was divorced from act or decision. I hung limp and forlorn. I couldn't even think of anything worthwhile to say. A girl who has just received fifteen cuts of a cane across her bottom does not want to hear something fatuous like: "Does it hurt terribly, darling?" I kept quiet.

Cynthia sobbed herself up through the pain finally, the way girls do. I don't think I existed for her. I watched as she turned her head this side and that. I watched as she tentatively explored the limited freedom of her feet. Saw her tugs at her tied wrists in the eternal hope that if you pulled or turned in the right way they might come loose. Silly, but a girl tries. When she reached the inevitable conclusion of impotence, she relaxed and opened her eyes. They looked straight at me.

"I'm sorry," I said inadequately.

"Who for?" Cynthie asked despondently, "Don't tell me you're enjoying hanging there like something waiting to be cooked."

"You're already trussed for the oven," I said unkindly.

My companion in distress lost herself in thought for a minute. Then, in a stage whisper, asked despairingly, "He's mad, isn't he? Insane?"

I was about to make a vehement denial. But my wracked shoulders told me the situation was hardly normal. What could I say to this girl who shared pain with me.

She took my silence m assent. "He'll have to Bet me free sometime. My people will be here with the police if he doesn't. With two of us to testify against him, and with all these marks we have to show, he'll get at least ten years. . . probably in Broadmoor."

"You needn't think I'm going to testify," I said, shocked.

"Why the devil not?" She strained her head up in annoyance.

"I love him. I don't care what he does with me."

"You ought to be ashamed of the way you're acting. You're a doormat." Her

voice was contemptuous.

"I notice you are getting a little low heroic all the time," I reminded her dryly. "And Ill tell you something else." I added with deep wisdom, "when Viv' lets you go you won't say a word to anybody."

"You're as mad as he is." But her voice lacked conviction.

I couldn't shrug. It was frustrating. So I just grinned in a pitying sort of way.

"I say, Jewel, does that hurt as much as I think it does?"

"Yea. Much more. Try it sometime."

"Can't you move at all?"

"I could kick my legs, but it hurts too much. When you hang by the wrists its beet to keep still."

"You mean you've been hung up before?" She was aghast.

"Of course." I sounded smug.

"Has he caned your bottom?"

I managed a laugh. "That was one of the first things." I hoped I sounded proud.

"I suppose you enjoyed that too." Cynthie was bitter.

"I hated it. I hate it all. If I seem cheerful it's only because I know I can never get free, so I'm making the best of it. There are some good bits. You haven't seen 'em yet."

"You mean you can never, never get loose, never escape?" It was a new idea to Cynthie. It's quite shattering to any girl when she comes face to face with it.

"That's right, darling. There's no mystery about it. Look at me now. Do I look like walking away from here! Even if I wasn't hanging, there would be the chain on my feet. There's always a chain on me somewhere. I'll never get away. I know I won't."

She thought about it. "Men it could happen to me tool" She was examining the proposition. I was curious as to how alluring or how dreadful she found it.

"But your parents will get you out," I comforted. "No one is going to set poor little Jewel at liberty. Vivian will bamboozle Auntie some way or another. I'm here for life."

"But I can rescue you after I'm back home. I can have the police here in no time."

Cynthia was genuine. What she said was rational. But I knew with a great certainty I did not want to be rescued. I felt guilty about it. I thought of poor Aunt Millicent and the lies I would have to tell. But all I wanted was Vivian. If agony would hold him, I would pay in full measure. I spoke seriously and slowly. "Please Cynthia, don't. Men you are free please forget me. Something has happened to me. I'm not

sure what it is. But my life is here. Here in chains. Vivian's chains. That's all I want."

She was not too incredulous or too scandalized. She was as far at sea as I had been that first time. "It's erotic - that's it. Something delicious and naughty along with the pain and the humiliation. . ." she mused aloud. "Remember those books we used to read? I'm sopping wet down below. I never really believed it."

We fell silent for a long time until she asked. "You're hurting, aren't you?"

"Yes.

She struggled angrily. "It must be possible to get free of these damn cords, it has to be! If I could get one knot undone I could free us both."

"A girl never gets loose," I told her wearily. "Forget it.

You'll only cut your wrists."

"And you still love that absolute cad?"

"He's not a cad, Cynthia."

"He's either a cad or insane. Dammit, Jewel, I've never been in such a fix. I've never been tied before. I can't quite believe it. I keep thinking about him coming back. I suppose when he does I'll get the other fifteen. It's. . . it's, even fiction doesn't go this far. I say, is my bottom cut as badly as it feels?"

I was about to answer when in walked the man in black. I can't call him anything else. He might be Vivian underneath, but I could not believe it. I cringed. I associated the grim figure with pain. Supposing he whipped me while I hung like this!

But his effect on me was as nothing to his impact on Cynthia. She reared against her bindings, eyes wide in disbelief. In them was no recognition, only fear. Our visitor held a thin and limber riding crop.

No word was spoken. I suppose none was needed. The cruel instrument in the hands of the masked figure rose and fell fifteen times. The girl whose bottom it sliced and cut entered her world of agony and did there the things a girl must at such times. I watched the cruelly beautiful tableau. While it lasted I forgot my pain. Vicariously I shared each stripe and cried with her each peal of desolation. It is terrible to be a girl, to be naked, to be tied, to be whipped. It is very terrible indeed. . .

The Master did his work unhurriedly, but with a fierce intensity. Cynthia would remember her second fifteen far longer than she would recall her first. This time there were specks of blood. When he laid aside the weapon, he unlocked the shackles from the squirming legs and untied the knots in the cinching cords on waist and wrist. He did the task without haste or concern. In the moaning aftermath of her suffering Cynthia seemed unaware of what was taking place. Her eyes remained closed as though she feared to see. Having freed her totally, the dark figure stood back and surveyed her for a moment. Then, with a quaint and ancient courtesy, bowed, first to the unheeding girl upon the bench, then to me. His eyes glinted with an emotion I could not name. He turned and left his prisoners, leaving wide the door.

How lost I was! I hung against the wall in pain and helplessness. My first instinct was to call to Lady Cynthia that she was free. She seemed unaware, still submerged in

her pain and her sobbing. It was as though the riding crop had robbed her of all concern for anything beyond the feeling of her flesh, a fear to open her eyes and behold more agony. She used her newly freed hands to dab at her wet cheeks and to gingerly explore her welted bottom. But the significance of their freedom escaped her.

My mind raced. It seemed probable that what I had just witnessed might be the end of Cynthia's ordeal. Vivian was dismissing her as abruptly as he had once dismissed me. Always a girl must be kept off balance, wondering, fearful even of freedom. Most certainly she could climb off her bench. What then! Should I ask her to free me too, or should I stay as my Master had placed me. I hurt so terribly that I longed for release, the wonderful surcease of placing my feet upon the ground. And yet. . .

It was almost amusing to watch Cynthia return to consciousness of her condition. Raising herself she looked at her hand with its chafed band about the wrist as though surprised to see it. Suddenly, she slipped from the bench and stood rubbing her bottom. Her dazed eye went from the open door to me. "What's that rotter up to?"

I wished I knew myself what Vivian was up to. "You're free. You might as well run," I said doubtfully.

"I am, aren't I!" The fact astounded her. "Oh, Jewel, I'll let you down. He is a beast to hang you like that."

This was more my test than hers. I could imagine Vivian quietly chuckling over my dilemma: to accept a dubious freedom from Cynthia, or to hang in pain as a good little slave girl should. The question was settled for me. My companion pushed the stool beneath my feet and unbuckled the straps that held my wrists. I suppose I cold have protested and told her to leave me alone. But I did not. So, there we were. Two naked girls, each of us hurting. Neither of us sure what we should do next. We massaged our hurts and looked at each other questioningly.

"It's a trick, isn't it? He'll let us think we are escaping, then all of a sudden we'll be up to our necks in trouble?" That riding crop had robbed Cynthia of all optimism. But she looked at me hesitantly and quavered: "I know where my clothes are?"

Our animosities were forgotten. We shared a fearful excitement, a truly crinkling suspense. We even managed a giggle over my improvisation with a sheet while Cynthie donned her own garments. With a few safety pins I managed a Grecian effect of which I was rather proud.

"The Master asks you to join him for tea on the terrace." Betty had crept in on us unobserved. She was obviously enjoying our quandary. With a pleased giggle she made good her escape before we could ask questions.

"What did I tell you!" Cynthia said bitterly.

"No rope, no cord, no chain!" Vivian sparked at us both as he provided chairs. "You must try these shrimp sandwiches. Betty has excelled herself."

"I suppose you'll cane her bottom as a reward," Lady Cynthia said acidly.

"Champion idea!" he enthused. "Want your bottom caned, Betty?"

"Oh, thank you, sir!" Betty departed in a wave of giggles.

"What brutality awaits us now?" Lady Cynthia asked as she poured tea.

"Oh come, dear girl!" Vivian chided as though her bottom was unmarked. "The coachman will drive you home, or you can catch the five-thirty up to town."

The silence was almost painful.

"You mean you are going to let me go? This isn't some sort of trick?"

"Of course not, darling. Do try one of these small cakes."

Lady Cynthia nibbled distractedly. "I shall go straight to the police."

"I am sure the constabulary will enjoy the baring of your bottom." Vivian beamed amiably.

"You'll get ten years. . ."

"Don't be absurd, dear girl. You won't go near the police. You won't even tell mother. You've enjoyed a delightful visit here, and you know it. You must come again."

"You're. . . you're impossible! Jewel must come with me, of course."

"I'm afraid she can't." Viv' sounded surprised.

"Why can't she?"

Vivian shrugged over the obvious. "Her feet are chained."

"Unchain them then."

"Can't have the dear child wandering round London in a sheet and three safety pins." Vivian adopted a patiently practical tone.

"Give her her clothes."

"Are you sure she wants to go?" Viv' was still being patient.

"Of course she wants to go. You treat her cruelly."

"Do you wish to shed your chains, poppet?" My Master's eyes glinted at me in amused assurance.

"No, lord."

Lady Cynthia snorted. "You are both ridiculous! Really, Jewel, you deserve everything this. . . this, monster does to you.

I tried to look apologetic. "I belong to him."

"Well!" She looked at us both in vexation. Then gave her haughty attention to my Master, "In that case, perhaps you'll see me to the station?"

Vivian grinned at our angry companion. He was frankly amused. His voice was

casual. "You know, Cynth', you're incurable. You need at least another thirty on that arrogant bottom. Always happy to oblige."

I watched them walk away. I felt silly in the sheet. I was also afraid. I poured myself more tea and ate the last sandwich. A slave girl should avail herself of privilege when she can. I kicked my ankle chains. They were still there. I wondered if I had erred, and if so, how gravely. It was pleasant on the terrace. I sat and sipped and daydreamed. Finally I dozed.

"Sheets all the rage this year, eh." My Master's sardonic voice woke me into instant response.

I clutched at the pins. "I am sorry, lord."

"Oh, leave them alone!" He laughed. "Wear the damn thing. You look delicious."

"Thank you, lord."

"Don't thank me, slave girl. It will come off soon enough. Enjoy Lady Stuckup's visit?"

I giggled. "Immensely, lord."

"Doesn't seem to have done her much good," he mused. "She departed in a flurry of aristocratic anger. Think she'll be back?"

"She is not as I am, lord."

"She isn't, is she?" he laughed. "If half the nobility wasn't related, I'd have persevered with the dear girl. Bit of a challenge there."

"Am I not sufficient, lord?"

"You are more than sufficient, my lovely Jewel. I would regard my work on dear Cynthie as largely clinical."

"I hope so, lord."

"Is my slave permitting herself the luxury of jealousy?"

"Yes, lord. I have given you me. I had hoped it enough." As far as I was concerned Cynthie had come and gone.

"Tut, tut! Perhaps five, do you think?"

"Ten if it will get rid of Cynthie, lord."

"You are a delectable morsel, darling. But, speaking of fives and tens, I suppose there is a little matter on the books?"

My tummy tensed. This was it! "Is there, lord?" I sounded beautifully innocent.

"Oh, come now! Butter wouldn't melt in your mouth."

"Have I been a bad girl, lord?"

"Offhand, I'd say yes," my master said airily. "Wouldn't you agree?"

"I have not tried to escape, lord."

"Probably because your feet are chained?"

"Oh no, lord!"

He accepted my sincerity. "Well, at least, that keeps you out of the dungeon tonight."

"Oh thank you, lord!" He could not mistake my gratitude.

"But you're still guilty, y'know."

"What have I done, lord?"

"You know perfectly well what you've done, you conniving baggage. You allowed yourself to be released from a punishment I had placed upon you. Then you encouraged darling Cynthia to get dressed and head for the horizon. What is even worse you displayed a clear intent to accompany her."

"But my feet are chained, lord. How could I go with her?"

"I'm not sure," he admitted. "But if you did not have such an intention, why the classic draping of the sheet over my property?" His voice was suddenly grim.

I was not certain about the last question myself. I had done it in a shared excitement. But, just supposing I could have freed my feet, would I have run? I had been suffering pique from the unearned punishment from which Cynthie had released me. My mind was confused. With feminine logic I felt the question academic. My feet were chained. Why did he have to harp! I looked at my master appealingly. "I am sorry, lord. I was thoughtless."

"And what would you suggest as a cure for thoughtlessness?" His voice was urbane and deceptively kind.

Here we went again! He was going to make me crawl. I reflected bitterly how far my training as a slave girl might still have to go. I was a novice. "Would you like to hang me up on the wall again, lord? It is very terrible. . ."

"Nonsense! A mild discomfort."

"Perhaps I should be whipped?" It seemed a safe suggestion.

"You are already well striped.""

I twisted unhappily. He was probably playing with me. "I do not know, lord. Please don't be too cruel."

"You prefer that I decide your punishment?"

"Oh yes, lord. Please." I was ashamed of my eagerness with its implicit acceptance of guilt.

"Very well, dear heart. You shall spend tomorrow expiating your sin. Since it

may be a trying day, we must insure you a night's rest."

It sounded like sarcasm. I expected the worst. But, as usual, he defeated me with the incongruous. He led me to the most luxurious of the suites. There he locked a collar on my neck. From it yards of relatively light chain tethered me to the ring in the floor. I could move within my magnificence, but I would never leave it. The windows were barred. I could not reach the door. But I would be very, very comfortable. I was overjoyed. "Oh darling!" I was about to throw my arms around my master's neck when I remembered what I was. Fearfully, I knelt. "Forgive me, lord."

He laughed delightedly, raised me to my feet and me soundly. When he was near the door I could not contain my curiosity. With great temerity I asked, "Lord, what is my punishment to be?"

That, too, evoked his laughter. "You have all night to think of it, my love," he told me gaily. "You'll find out soon enough. Pleasant dreams." He left me standing in my chains, puzzled, apprehensive, yet strangely happy. The snap of the lock was very final.

I had seen them when Vivian had given me the grand tour of the sequestered wing. They had a room all to themselves in which they stood, morbidly menacing, waiting. Presumably waiting just for me.

"A nice Puritan penance," my master encouraged.

I looked from the ugly set of stocks to the man who would set me within their grip. "Must I, lord?"

"Indeed you must." He was enjoying my distaste.

I suppose it was the historical associations of witches and adulteresses, but I cringed from placing my head within that open half-circle.

"Come poppet. Think! No pain. You'll love it."

"I won't love it, lord. I'll hate it!"

"Mutiny, dear girl?"

"No, lord."

Hastily, I made amends for my honest words. Loathing every motion, I bent my head over the bar and fitted my neck into the larger of the circles. Thoughtfully, I gathered my hair and brought it forward to fall to one side of my lowered face. Knowing this to be their last freedom, I placed my wrists in their appointed slots to each side of my head. I winced as the upper timber was lowered to imprison me in the ancient posture of the pillory. The fit on wrist and neck was so snug I knew Vivian had had the beastly thing made for me.

"A perfect fit!" my master enthused, confirming my suspicion. "Think you can wiggle out of that, poppet?"

"No, lord." There was no doubt whatever that I would not wriggle out of the clutches of the horrible machine. The snap of a padlock emphasized the fact. I

longed to ask how long I

would be made to stand its prisoner, but did not dare. Perhaps I would be happier if I did not know!

"A time for quiet meditation, beloved." My master tilted my prisoned head and gave me a chaste and parting kiss. Facetiously he slapped my bottom in passing. Then the thud of the door and the slamming of the bolts. I was terribly, fearfully alone.

It was a bad moment. I had a feeling it would get worse. Quaintly enough, it was my bottom that had the most freedom, such as it was. I could weave it from side to side within a short range. That was all I could do. My ankle chains prevented me having a good look at a foot. I could get some toes within vision before they were snubbed. I had a fine view of the floor. By turning my head awkwardly within its yoke, I got a good look at my hands. I wiggled my fingers in wry greeting. That was the extent of my diversions. It looked like being a dull day for dear little Jewel. I only made one essay at testing my bonds. That was enough. They were tight. It chafed.

What was I in for? An hour, the morning, all day! Should I be thankful? I wasn't hanging, I wasn't hurting. I was not elusive. There was something grim and malignant about the heavy wood designed to hold me. The way I stood was shaming, so passive and submissive, and so naked! My sheet had not survived the night. An intriguing but demoralizing facet of my plight was that I could not see myself. I knew I had a body and elbows and things, but they were somewhere at the rear and quite lost to me. The thought inevitably occurred that, whilst they were out of my ken, they were quite shockingly available to anyone else who might enter the room. It would be frightful to have one's bottom caned in such anonymity. Not to know!. . .

By the time my sad pose was making me very unhappy I was thinking of Cynthie. How sensible she was, and how foolish I had been. Fancy electing to stand as I was standing now when I could be free. Or could I be free? Could I? It was a question about which I was still terribly confused. But certainly, if Cynthie could see me now, she would have a good hearty laugh and tell me it served me right. I have to be honest and admit I thought wistfully of Cynthie. She would he out and around London now, enjoying herself. Certainly not held immobile in a medieval instrument of torture. I shed a couple of tears of self-pity. Fortunately, they fell straight to the floor. My fingers were in no position to cope with wet cheeks.

I shifted my weight from foot to foot. I kicked my ankle chain, just to hear it clatter. I raised my elbows and let them fall. I could hardly call it an athletic day. As the centuries passed, I wondered if I had been locked in the stocks five minutes or five hours. It was tiring and dispiriting. Why, oh why, did darling Viv' treat me so? I suppose that by the standards of our quaint situation I had been bad. I was being taught a lesson. I wondered if I was learning it. One thing I had learned in the things Viv' had done to me was that while being punished I would promise anything or make any good resolve if only it would bring that particular distress to an end. I had a strong suspicion there would always be enough "dos" and "don'ts" hovering to keep me forever delinquent. Darling Viv' did not really want an absolutely good little girl.

The door lock and bolts made enough noise that I could not be unaware of a visitor. But that part of the room, like most of my own person, was lost to me. I tensed in the knowledge that Vivian was looking at me. I blushed at the thought of how odd I must appear minus head and hands. But was it Viv'? Suppose it was someone else?! My

whole being revolted against the implacable wooden grip that held me shamed.

Silence.

The door had opened, but there was no footstep, no sound of breathing. My naked skin scorched under eyes I could not see. Suppose a servant had strayed into this forbidden wing?

At such times a girl's mind is fertile with blushing possibilities. Instinctively, a ripple of apprehension imparted small motions of unease. The atmosphere was electric as before a thunderstorm.

"Don't tease me, lord." I just had to break that silence.

I gasped in shock, and lunged ineffectually against my prisonment. Two nimble fingers had found my nipples and begun to play.

I had never felt so naked. Never so vulnerable. I had to stand and do nothing while someone unknown did as they pleased with me. My first reaction was outrage. "Don't do that! Stop it!"

Silence.

The busy fingers did not pause. Were they Viv's or someone else's? I knew I was blushing. My breath quickened. I longed for my hands to sweep the prying fingers from my breasts. But. . .

How fallible we girls are! What easy prey. Captives of our senses and emotions. Whoever had possessed themselves of my nipples used a knowing skill to render me a palpitating package of feminine desire. After a minute the stocks vanished from my consciousness. I hung suspended on a cloud of pleasure, curious as to who had placed me there, but no longer caring. It went on and on until I was in a delicious agony. Then one arm more firmly circled my back, seeking lips found and took to themselves one nipple, releasing a hand that traced a teasing path down across my flesh to cup within its palm the brush of hair at the junction of my legs. I moaned with an intensity of sensation I could scarcely bear.

As though I was a spectator, I felt myself writhing within my wooden prison, heard my gasping moans as the fingers and the lips took me to wonderland. Felt the tug of my ankle chain as I strove to separate my wanton legs so that whoever was tormenting me might have a more easy access to the centre of my being. When the world finally exploded in a blaze of light and fire, I heaved against the wood and then lapsed quiescent within its grasp.

"My, you did have a turn, miss, didn't you?"

I opened my eyes. Betty was seated on a stool in front of the stocks. She was smiling cheerfully. She was naked.

"Couldn't resist it, miss. There you was all ready, like. Awful, ain't it with your head stuck in them things."

How do you say thank you to the housemaid who has just given you an orgasm? Since reciprocity was impossible all I could do was blush and give her a smile of welcome with the raised eyebrow of curiosity.

"Sorry 'bout no clothes, miss." She giggled with obvious enjoyment of her nudity. "I bin' sent down with you to be punished."

"What on Earth have you done?" She seemed little concerned.

More giggles. "I was a bit cheeky, like. Got above me station, I did. Easy to do with the master. A girl never knows where she's at with him." She looked at me sympathetically. "Expect you found that out, Miss."

"I know where I am right now," I said bitterly. "But, Betty, why no clothes?"

"Like I told you, Miss, I got to be punished. A rare one for taking off a girl's clothes, Mr. Vivian is," she snickered with coy amusement. "Going to cane me hands, he says. Like they did in school. But off come me clothes anyway. Probably have a go at me bottom too," she added without concern.

"Won't it hurt?" It was hard to reconcile her insouciance with impending pain.

"Hurts like Billy-O, Miss. He done it to me before. Expect I'll make a proper fuss."

"You don't seem alarmed."

She considered the idea cruel as though it was odd. "Nothing to he alarmed about, Miss. Hurt me cruel, he will. But afterwards, he always. . . you know, Miss, what he always does. . ." She had the grace to blush. "Sort of nice, ain't it?"

I was furious. Viv' could make love to a housemaid, but not to me. He would reward her suffering with something 'sort of nice,' while I'd probably just get safely chained away in a dungeon. I stored the knowledge for future use. I did not trouble to explain that I was not vouchsafed the same honour as herself.

"Why do you get sent here to get your hands caned? I'd have thought his majesty could have done that anywhere." My voice was bitter.

"It's a good example, Miss. I get to see what you have to put up with, and you watch me dancing around hugging me hands. Does us both good, a". Real clever is Master Vivian." To Betty everything at Wivenhoe made sense.

"Betty, don't you think your master would be disappointed if he didn't have excuses to do these things to us? I think he'd do them anyway."

"I thought about that, miss," my cheerful companion admitted. "I expect you're right," she tittered. "But it ain't possible for a girl to go a day or two without giving him some excuse. Don't worry me head about it, I don't." She obviously considered her reward adequate compensation.

"I'd like to stick Master Vivian in these things for a couple of days!" I exclaimed angrily. "Do him a world of good!"

Betty's shocked face and a sound at the doorway told me of my indiscretion. Vivian would have overheard every word of my declaration. I cringed, then doubly cringed as the black clad executioner came into view. I had never discerned in this dark figure the slightest trace of humour. To him my words could be no less than lèse-majesté. Fresh and awful penalties hovered before my frightened eyes.

But I was not alone in fear. Betty evidently possessed the same awesome regard for the masked man as did I. She sprang to her feet and adopted what was obviously a

pre determined pose: erect, hands at her sides, head bowed eyes lowered. She looked very pretty and very frightened. Our visitor ignored her and gave me his full attention.

"Would you care to repeat that remark, madam?" he invited heavily.

"No lord." I was trembling.

"I would like to hear it." He was going to make me wish I'd never been born!

"Forgive me, lord. I was impertinent. I'm sorry."

"I am sure you are. You realize you will be even sorrier?"

"Yes, lord." I was willing to wallow in humility if it would ease what I feared was about to befall.

,,Repeat your statement. Word for word. I would miss nothing."

Verging on tears, I gave it to him as closely as I could remember. My neck strained at its yoke in an effort to look at him with appeal and sincerity. I was scared.

He listened gravely as though attaching importance to each of my facetious words. "I hope, madam, that for such an unforgivable impudence some suitable penalty suggests itself?"

"I am afraid not, lord." All of me that was out of sight was quivering in awful anticipation.

"What do you mean: you're afraid not!" he demanded with acerbity. "That's no proper answer."

My tears came now. I was frightened of this black clad Vivian. "I don't want to be punished any more," I walled. "This thing I'm fixed in now is awful enough."

"Of course you don't want to be punished any more, madam," he said testily. "That point is irrelevant. You have earned punishment. The question is, what." His eyes surveyed me fiercely.

"Please don't punish me any more, lord. What I said was thoughtless and in jest."

"A couple of days. . . do a world of good. . ." he mused thoughtfully. "Perhaps we should adopt so admirable a precept.

I curled up inside. Two days like this! It could not be borne! And what of the nights! To stand and stand! "Please no, lord! Not to stand like this. Please whip me."

"Ah, ha! You wish to he whipped as well." He was playing with me.

"No lord! No!" I was frantic. I squirmed as well as I was able within the infernal thing that held me. Somehow I must make this man understand the limits of agony to which a girl is capable. "Please whip me. Please don't keep me in these things two days. . . and nights!"

"You defeat yourself, madam. In seeking to choose the punishment you prefer,

you make my task simple. I award you the other."

"It will kill me, lord."

"It will not kill you. At the end of the period of your own choosing you will emerge a wiser and less impudent young woman.

He meant it! The stocks would hold me for two days and nights. My courage fled. I wept without restraint, my tears splashing to the floor beneath my eyes. My punishments were piling one atop the other. I might never be free of them.

The Executioner turned. He was done with me. I had been sentenced. He bestowed his attention upon a pale faced Betty who had held her submissiveness throughout. "And you, young woman, what are we to do with you?" he asked rhetorically.

"You are going to cane me, master."

"And on what part of your pretty person, m'dear?"

"On my hands, master." Betty's voice had become uncertain.

"You are looking forward to this correction?"

"Oh yes, master! Thank you." She would have thanked him for anything.

The eyes behind the mask turned to me. "I trust, madam, you learned a lesson from this young woman?"

"Yes, lord." I suppose, in actuality, I did!

"Fetch me the most severe cane, Betty."

The poor girl scurried to her hateful task. Presenting her tormentor with the wicked object, she kissed it abjectly before bending her knee and proffering it as she might have done a treasure.

"You may prepare yourself." Vivian was happy, the bastard!

For all her carefree approach, Betty was as much afraid as I myself when confronted with the awful moment. She might laugh later. But not now. Her features tense, she stood straight and courageously extended her right arm, its hand taut, palm flat and inviting.

Without preamble or warning, the Executioner struck. A savage accurate slashing blow that drove the naked girl into bending double, hugging her injury and moaning in the desolation of her pain. There was nothing reminiscent of the schoolroom about such cruelty.

He tolerated her writhing for but a short time. Then sternly rapped her elbow. "Come!"

Instantly, in total obedience, Betty positioned herself once again, offering her left hand for the cut. She was visibly trembling. After it had fallen, she hugged both hands in tribute to the unbearable.

"Your right again." It was as though he was trying to break her spirit.

Betty turned agonized eyes up to him. "Please, master, how many will it be?" Her voice was piteous.

"It is not for a girl in punishment to ask that question," the stranger's voice admonished. "It was to have been three on each hand. It is now four."

The caned girl moaned. "Please master! Oh please!"

"Please what!" His insistence on the literal was brutal.

"Please don't make it more, master. It hurts something terrible."

"Good! Hold out your hand."

Betty had courage. Once more she offered herself. But her cheeks were wet with tears. When her open hand was driven down by the cut she screamed.

My heart went out to her. Vivian had no right to he so callous. The stocks that held me, my own plight, my love for this man who owned us, all were forgotten. I blurted out indignantly, "Don't be so cruel, Viv'! She doesn't deserve it. Don't hit her so hard."

The silence was shattering. Everyone was shocked, including myself. What had I done! Betty stopped writhing. The executioner swivelled 'round to frown upon my quaking impertinence. His voice was ominous. I had placed myself beyond the pale.

"You expressed an opinion, madam?"

"I am sorry, lord. But please be kind to her." I knew I was in for it.

"You seem often sorry. As for being kind, that is hardly the purpose of our missions in this room." He paused for effect. "I suggest an even half dozen."

"Thank you, lord." I had indeed feared more.

"You will ask for them politely." His pound of flesh!

"Please lord, cane my bottom six times," I asked humbly.

"Who said anything about your bottom?"

"I am sorry, lord. I thought. . ." I was lost!

"We are dealing with hands. Yours are not immune." Each word a rebuke.

"I am in the stocks, lord. How is it possible?"

"It is easily possible. You will amend your request, madam."

Hating myself, I tried again. How broken is a girl when she pleads for something she loathes! "Please lord ' cane each of my hands three times." Having watched Betty, I was sick with fear at what I must now endure.

"That's better." His hands busied themselves. A moment later the yoke rose from my neck and wrists. Painfully, I straightened up into a freedom enabling me to

accept more pain.

"You may stand aside, child," the cold voice directed Betty. "Your other five await you when we have dealt with madam here. She has a positive genius for seeking punishment."

Poor Betty gave me a frightened look and hastily got herself out of the limelight. She had no hope for either of us. I took her place.

"It is possible you may learn to control your tongue, madam?" His voice was beautifully sardonic.

"I hope so, lord." I fervently meant it.

"Since you are the cause of an interruption, I will dispose of you quickly. Your full six will follow each other without pause for these childish hand hugging displays. Having received a stroke, you will lower one hand and extend the other until you have received your full six. Failure of any kind, any show of weakness or rebellion, will earn you double. On completion of the sixth stroke, you will thank me properly and place yourself back within the stocks to resume your punishment. Is that understood?"

"Yes, lord." I looked at him through tears, and held out my right hand.

The power of fear of pain astonishes. When I obediently held out my poor hand for its punishment, I had little hope of being able to live up to the sentence imposed upon me. But the thought of twelve instead of six was so fearful that it gave, me a strength I did not know I had.
The cane cut my hand. I extended the other to receive its wound. Then the first, throbbing and numb in fiery agony to be cut again. I was in a trance, hypnotized by fear and those dread eyes glinting at me through the eye-holes of the mask. Up and out cut! Up and out cut! The cane bit at me six times. At the end of it I had no hands, only swollen and throbbing agonies.

"Thank you for caning my hands, lord."

Then I spoiled it. I turned to go back to my bondage in the stocks. But seeing the ugly machine with its raised yoke awaiting my neck and wrists, with its implacable promise of two days and two nights of torment, my courage failed. The pain in my hands was more than I could stand. Now, to place my neck within that hateful imprisonment. . . I couldn't! I just could not.

I moaned in desolation and fell to my knees before the man who held the cane. Uncaring of consequence I clasped his legs with my arms, my injured hands limp and awkward. "Please don't put me back in there!. Please don't lock me in there again!" I hugged desperately with my arms closed in a desolate need to escape. I moaned and sobbed.

It was another of the shocked moments. It did not last. The cane slashed across the exposed sole of my left foot. I gasped in a whole new concept of pain. Yet, so great was my distress, that I bore the blow, continuing to clutch my master's knees and plead. "Oh, please, please, please . . ."

The second blow was beyond bearing. I rolled on the floor clutching and screaming.

The cane followed me. It slashed me wherever my writhings offered a target. I leaped to my feet towards the door, only to trip. I had forgotten I was a slave with chained

ankles. Before I could cover them the soles of my feet were sliced again. I think it was the most devastating pain I had known. Whimpering in defeat, I hobbled to the waiting stocks and placed myself in their shameful embrace. The bar was lowered, the padlock snapped. I sobbed in an abandonment of hopeless grief. My feet lanced fire back at me as I stood on them.

The Executioner lost interest. I was safely disposed of. A mutinous slave girl properly dealt with. I could only stand and hope I had not earned more stripes than I had received in the tussle. They were grievous enough. I hurt everywhere. I quietly wept while Betty received her pain. On the last stroke the black clad man grasped her arm and led her from the room. I knew their intent. The knowledge compounded my misery. The thud of the closing door was fearful in its portent of what I now faced.

To stand with raised hands and bowed head. Simply to stand. Immovable, hopeless, helpless. Such are the stocks. Their timbers are a mighty oak against which the struggles of a girl are no more than the alighting of a bird. My stocks held me contemptuously. My most angry revolts caused them not a quiver. I did rebel, uselessly and foolishly. The thought of the two days and two nights was more than I could bear. A girl cannot weep forever.

The door opened. I was sure much time had passed. My aching shoulders and arms told me so. Time enough for Betty to receive her slave's award for pain and for her master to find pleasure in her flesh. I hoped it would be Betty, at least she would be kind.

It was the executioner. He stood and surveyed me, arms akimbo. From one hand dangled a whip. I strained to meet his eyes. It was not easy with my neck held in thrall by the yoke of wood. We exchanged glances. Mine of fear, his of satisfaction. I was as he desired me. I would let him speak first. All that I could say he already beheld in my eyes.

"You do not learn at all, madam." His voice was sorrowful.

"I do try, lord. There are things I cannot bear."

"You bear your present situation well."

"Because I must, lord. I cannot free myself. I cannot move."

"You look quite charming."

"I do not feel charming, lord." I eyed his whip but did not speak of it. "I am deathly afraid. If I should faint or fall asleep I think my neck might break. I am so tightly held."

"Such a pretty neck."

"Thank you, lord. I fear for it."

"There is a matter of disobedience, of unseemly conduct." His voice bespoke unfinished business.

"You punished me terribly with the cane, lord."

"No more than enough to persuade you to stand as you are. Your formal punishment remains."

So I was to be whipped! It seemed cruelly unfair on top of all else. My hands locked on each side of my head were still numb and pulsing. Now to feel the lash! "Please, lord, have mercy. I am only a girl." It sounded trite, but it came from my heart.

"I am going to whip you, madam. Next time you are told to place yourself in the stocks you may perhaps do so."

Involuntarily, I gave a wailing moan of anguish. "Please lord, no, no. . . no! Don't whip me. I can't stand it!"

"You will stand it very well, especially in your present posture. It is most suitable, madam. Why are you so concerned? You have been whipped before."

"I am tired, lord, and I already hurt terribly. And. . . and. . . I am afraid. I am afraid of standing like this for the time you have said I must."

"Yet, you suggested it for me?"

"I didn't mean it! You know I didn't mean it! Oh, Viv'. Please let me loose. And please don't whip me. Don't be unkind."

"You forget yourself, madam."

"Oh, damn your madam and all the rest of it! If you love me, Viv', let me out of this thing. I'm getting hysterical."

"You are indeed. I have a cure." He let the snakelike thong fall to the floor.

"Love me," I pleaded.

My master walked back to where I could no longer see.

Suddenly I was a hundred times naked. I longed to get my bottom out of sight. It was altogether too prominent to be viewed by a male who held a whip. I was frozen in screaming anticipation.

He struck me vertically, the tip of the lash at my neck, the rest of it down the centre of my bent back. While I was still screaming, he contrived to sweep it upward between my chained legs so that what little of me could move went into a paroxysm of motion. The next curled around my waist, to be followed by one around my thighs. I could see nothing, prepare for nothing. The stocks delivered me and held me for my master's punishment. He whipped me cunningly and carefully so that none of me escaped. He only stopped when my sobbing breaths flashed him danger signals.

It was a long time after he stopped before I took any interest in anything but myself. When I finally blinked my way out of the haze of anguish he was standing watching the play of emotions on my face. Wearily, I supposed he would expect his due and that I had best give it him.

"Thank you for whipping me, lord."

"So! I have my title back!" he said sarcastically.

"I will try and do better, lord." I was ready to promise anything.

"No familiarities?"

"No, lord." I could have wept that I must not use his name. "Somewhat less dilatory?"

"Yes, lord. I will obey you instantly."

"Excellent! I will leave you to your thoughts."

"Lord?"

"Yes, child?"

"Lord, please, may I plead with you?"

"No."

The single word said everything. I dared not speak again. Once more, the thud of the door emphasized my impotence.

They were bitter, bitter hours as the day waned. Once, I was given water by a subdued and frightened Betty who did not linger beyond the time it took me to swallow it. As darkness came I knew a degree of misery beyond anything I

had ever glimpsed. How could Viv' love me if he treated me like this? How could he? But then, perhaps he did not love me at all. Perhaps, to him, I was no more than a nicely shaped female body, beautifully receptive to the pain he loved to give! How could he love me? How could he. . .

It would be easy to say that with total darkness I panicked. But a girl held in the stocks cannot panic. She cannot make any of the motions that express panic. She can only stand. But she can scream. This I did. I screamed until the panic subsided and only weariness was left. I drooped in the clutching wood. I leaned into it in an effort to find easement. But it had been designed by a genius in the art of cruelty. It gave fatigue, but would assuage none of it. I could no longer see my tears as they splashed upon the floor.

I do not know at what time of night it was when my master came. It happened very quickly and without words. The opening of the door was fearful with portent. I was more expectant of the whip than of mercy. But my padlock clicked. The imprisoning yoke was lifted from my neck and wrists. Strong arms caught me as I was slipping to the floor. I was lifted and carried from the hateful room. Gratefully, and with love, I encircled his neck with my arms. My hands I could not use. With great happiness I rested my head upon his shoulder. True, I might soon be in a dungeon. But this moment was mine. I drew sustenance and comfort from his warmth and strength.

But it was no dungeon! It was the place of feminine luxury. Gently, he placed me upon the bed and fitted 'round my neck the metal collar with its long chain. I did not mind. He could have put a hundred chains upon me and I would have been happy. The lock clicked so that I knew myself a prisoner. But what matter? Always now I was a prisoner. I would always be captive. It did not matter. What mattered was that my master had taken me from the stocks and given me this glorious female place. The hated timbers no longer held me.

Compared to them, the chain upon my neck was as light as a feather, even though I

could always feel its tug.

Vivian kissed me. We kissed passionately, but said no word. I sensed some need of silence. With one final brushing of our lips he turned and left, closing and locking the door upon his slave. I wept. Partly in happiness, partly because I had received no slave's reward for pain.

I envied Betty the maid.

I could never keep up with my master. Being his slave girl was similar to those Turkish baths where you are alternately immersed in hot and cold. The small periods of normalcy when we shared a meal were, to me, as a swimmer, who drowning, struggles to the surface and gasps air and life. To be Vivian's slave girl called for endless adjustments to incongruities. I had to be constantly on guard against calling him Viv'. For some reason this was unforgivable and always earned me a whipping. Not always severe. But any whipping hurts, so I avoided the hazard. Besides, I had become accustomed to addressing him as lord. With all my pains and memories of pain, it came easily.

"Ran into darling Cynthia." My master dropped the remark into our luncheon time as casually as he might have flipped a pebble in a pool.

"Please tell me, lord." I did not like her much. But she was news. She and I had shared something.

"Ran into her in Harrods, actually. She was surprisingly pally considering the way I whipped her bottom. But she wanted something."

"What did she want, lord?"

"You."

My master has a gift for single words. They have such impact. They can be more explicit than a sentence. But this one left me gasping.

"What on earth for?" I forgot his title.

"Up to no good, I suspect," my master said meditatively. "Claimed she wanted to whip your bottom."

"Whip my bottom?"

"Well, I don't think the dear girl's hidebound about your bottom. Probably intends to have a go at whatever you have to offer."

"I'd like to have seen her face, lord, when you turned her down."

My master cocked an eyebrow at me. "Well actually, poppet, I didn't refuse." He gave me an apologetic grin. "Fact is she promised to cut up rough if I didn't loan you to her for a few days."

"You mean about you kidnapping her, lord?" I was horrified.

"That's right." Vivian looked uncertain. "Don't know whether there's much she

can do. Or even if she'd do it. But I thought you wouldn't mind. It wouldn't be for long."

"I don't like her, lord," I said decisively. "She doesn't like me much either. We are jealous of each other. She'd probably be most unkind."

"Think she'd hurt you more than me?" The question told me where I was going.

In view of all the things my master had done to me I doubted the truth of answering yes. I temporized. "Do you want me to go, lord?"

"Might soothe ruffled feelings, beloved."

My feelings did not matter. I could take that for granted. I have to admit that I was also intrigued. "I will obey you, lord. How does darling Cynthia propose to possess me?"

My master looked sheepish. "Matter of fact there's someone waiting here to escort you right now."

"Did I ever have a choice, lord?" I was disappointed at being robbed of my grand gesture for my love.

"'Spose not, poppet. Sorry, and all that."

"Think nothing of it," I said bitterly. I reflected that dear little Jewel had nothing to say about anything. "I suppose you'd better unchain my feet so I can go and dress."

My master showed further signs of embarrassment. "The party who's escorting you had better take over. Seems to have firm ideas about the disposition of youthful females. She's Cynthia's old governess. Name's Fraulein Pabst. A no-nonsense type. She's waiting in your bedroom. You might as well pop up and get acquainted."

"Ve unlock ze chain' said Fraulein Pabst. She did so.

"Ve tie ze little hands," said Fraulein Pabst. She placed my hands palm to palm behind my back, circled my wrists with a couple of strands of cord and knotted them tight. "Must not get loose," she said encouragingly.

There seemed little need for me to speak. I was a package. But I nearly yelped in dismay when she ran cord 'round my elbows and pulled them tight together. She modified the pain by using several bands. But when they were knotted I fluttered my shoulders in futile revolt. "That hurts terribly," I complained.

Fraulein Pabst was built on the lines of a super dreadnought. She was not a female with whom to argue. "Ja! Iss goot!" She accepted my plaint as tribute. She buckled a wide strap very tightly 'round my waist. It had metal loops front and rear. She snapped a thin ligature to the back, brought it down shamingly between my bottom cheeks and up over my pubic hair, then buckled it to the loop in front. As she pulled and tightened it bit at my most secret recesses as might a live enemy. When she was satisfied and pushed the end through the buckle, I was in real pain. To walk would be agony. I told her so.

"Ja, iss goot." Her approvals were limited. "When fraulein iss hurting, fraulein

iss goot. She behave."

She seemed to have said it all. I could not dispute a word. I

did as I was told. I sat on the bed and let her put on stockings and shoes. I would have preferred to have done it myself. But she had robbed me of the possibility of doing anything at all. Next she flung a long cape 'round my shoulders and fastened it firmly. The young Mistress was ready to travel.

I let her thrust me in front of the big mirror'. It was amazing. No one could tell I was

naked and bound. But, oh, I hurt! "You don't need to tie me this tightly," I told her reasonably. "I'll be good. I'll do what you tell me. You don't even need to tie me at all. You certainly don't need this awful strap between my legs. It's cutting me in two. Please take it off."

"Iss goot to hurt." It seemed her only reference. "When hurting you giff me no troubles."

"I wouldn't anyway," I told her without hope.

Vivian had discreetly disappeared. There were no goodbyes. An iron grip on my arm guided me to the waiting hansom. I could have wept in pain as I walked. That damn strap between my legs had actually entered inside me. It was awful! Fraulein was right. A captive girl in this regalia would be thinking only of pain. She would be tractable. I was.

But my Teuton escort did not trust me. There was more to come. As the gates of Wivenhoe swept past, she undid several buttons of my covering cape and exposed one of my breasts. Rummaging in her bag, she produced an ugly small metal object that proved to be a clip with serrated jaws. From it dangled a length of velvet cord. Without pause she pressed the clip so that it opened up its two small but horrendous jaws. Before I had a chance to move or protest she had positioned it on my nipple and let it close. I yelped in pain as the beastly thing bit at me. She paid no attention to my distress, but buttoned up the cape, leaving the length of velvet dangling. She gave it a demonstrating tug to which I responded in a manner most satisfactory to her. "You not behave, I pull," she assured me genially.

I was distraught. Fastened as I was, the journey would be torture. And there was no need. I was a willing victim. "I don't think you understand, Fraulein, I ventured. You don't need to tie me. You don't need this hurting thing on my nipple. I'm coming willingly. I want to come. I'd come even if I was free."

My escort smiled benignly. "You kom," she agreed. "You hurt nice. You be very goot girl." She gave a gentle pull on the velvet cord and enjoyed my agonized response. She was quite right in her own way. I would most certainly be a 'goot girl'. The beastly metal jaws burned steadily into the flesh of my nipple. Whoever held the velvet cord held me. I would obey its tug. But all the rest of me was agony too. My elbows and my crotch were on fire. I could not imagine myself running. I resigned myself to misery. Fraulein Pabst beamed omnipotent. Her methods, I was sure, always ensured a very goot girl' indeed.

I suppose the train ride was as much mental as physical in its awfulness. I let myself be guided. My mind filled with a vivid vision of the cape slipping away to reveal me naked in my shaming harness for all to see. That such exposure was improbable did little to dampen my fears. My plight was pure nightmare. Happily, Fraulein Pabst's visage daunted anyone who cast an eye at our first class compartment. We had it to

ourselves. I was able to moan and twist to my heart's content. It did me no good.

Fraulein watched my distress with satisfaction. I am sure that, to her, it was the evidence of a job well done. I shed a few tears here and there which she solicitously dried. I had a feeling she would have been disappointed had I failed to produce them. I had a sad feeling that a weeping girl was evidence of a competent governess. I bolstered Fraulein's self-esteem with copious tears.

"What about the Ramsdens?" I asked timidly. "What will they say when you walk me in there like this?"

"Iss gone. Iss taking waters at BadenBaden," Fraulein Pabst assured me with patriotic approval.

"But the servants?"

"Iss minding own business. Most not seeing."

Well, that was that. I returned to my most pressing concern. "Please, Fraulein, loosen my elbows a little."

"You Iss mooch silly girl," said Fraulein Pabst comfortably.

I tried to find comfort in the scenery as the train whistled its way toward London.

Lady Cynthia Ramsden eyed me with sparkling satisfaction. I expect I looked as doubtful as I felt. I was a package. Having delivered me ' the beaming Fraulein had departed upon her affairs and left Cynthie the pleasure of cutting the string. "Darling, I'm going to enjoy you no end," she enthused. "Aren't we lucky?"

"I suppose you are," I vouchsafed ungraciously.

"Poor sweetie, you're a bit put out, aren't you?"

"So would you be if you were fixed the way I am," I assured her bitterly. "Where did that absurd woman get the idea I'd try to escape?"

Cynthia kissed me placatingly. "Well after all, darling, you might have." She patted my cheek with the tenderness of possession. "I'm not sure that in your position I wouldn't have bolted. Never mind. I'll make it up to you."

"With a whip?" I asked bitterly.

"Oh, of course darling!" She kissed me again with tenderness. "But there will be nice things too."

"It would be nice to be untied," I said pointedly.

Cynthie cooed with pleasure. "I haven't seen, have I." Her fingers became busy with the buttons. She threw the cape aside and stepped back and looked, almost in awe, at the gift Vivian had sent her. "Oh darling!" she breathed. "You're just too, too gorgeous!"

"I hurt," I said with emphasis.

"I'm sure you do, darling." Slowly she circled me to enjoy the finer points of

Fraulein Pabst's travelling costume for young ladies. Everything she saw evoked gasps of admiration. Completing the inspection, she stood before me and grasped

the velvet cord that still hung from my tortured nipple. She giggled. "What happens if I pull?"

"Please, Cynthie, don't. It's awful. Don't tug it. Just tell me what to do and I'll do it."

"It's that bad, sweetie?" She was enraptured. "But, darling, I must try once. You wouldn't expect me not to? I'm going to give it just a teeny little pull to make you kneel and tell me how much you love me."

I was about to tell her I'd do it just as well without the tug, when the tug came. I yelped and fell to my knees and bowed my head. The pain was beastly. "I love you very much, dear Cynthie," I assured her humbly and untruthfully.

I remained kneeling, quivering fearfully. Cynthie was keeping the cord taut. I feared she was not finished with my nipple. I could understand how amusing it must be for her to wield such power over me. She pulled gently. "Look up at me, darling."

I gasped, but instantly did as I was told. Cynthie smiled down, the happiest girl in London. "I want you to stop calling me dear, and darling, and Cynthie, and all the rest. You will now call me Mistress, and very respectfully too. Understand?"

"Yes, Mistress." The tension on my breast was still there. I was taking no chances.

"You're gorgeous, Jewel. It's going to be wonderful. You may stand."

"Thank you, Mistress."

The straps with which I was bound made rising an ordeal. But I managed it. Cynthie maintained a gentle but steady pull on the cord by way of encouragement. I was hurting so much I was once more close to tears. But Cynthie is unpredictable. She can be kind. She is wilful, not vicious. Intrigued by the tiny mechanism she reached slowly to the metal horror on my breast. My eyes followed her fingers fearfully. She gripped it. Her eyes sought mine and smiled. She pressed. The angry little jaws opened and released me. I moaned in ecstasy and did what seemed most natural. Her face was close. I kissed her with a flood of gratitude. Tears welled. "Thank you, Mistress. Oh, thank you..."

"Was it that bad?" Cynthie was genuinely startled. I had neither hands nor arms, but she threw hers 'round my neck and hugged. She kissed me back harder than she need have done. "You poor kitten. I hadn't realised. Anyway, it's off now." She backed away and grinned impishly. "I won't put it back on unless you're very naughty.

"Thank you, Mistress," I said fervently. Being a slave makes proper responses very simple.

"Let's have tea," she said gaily, and pulled the bell cord.

Tea would be nice. I felt a sudden warmth towards this spoiled beauty who had chosen me as captive. But I still hurt terribly as I stood there with the cords and straps cutting me in two. Cynthie obviously felt that the aesthetic virtue of my bonds offset any pain I might have to suffer.

"Please, Mistress, could I have this strap thing off and my elbows loosened?"

My plea sounded too, too, familiar.

"Of course not, darling. It would spoil a simply wonderful effect. You'll have to suffer a bit in the interests of beauty."

"I don't feel beautiful, Mistress."

"Would you like those dear little jaws on your other nipple, darling?" Cynthie was not going to be pushed.

My courage dissolved. I was so helpless. Cynthie could do what she pleased with me. I was truly hers. She was in a happy mood. I had best keep her so. "I am sorry, Mistress. I'll try not to complain," I said humbly. I also did my best with a bright smile to show her I was really trying.

But my concern for myself had sparked my new Mistress's interest. She knelt and examined the bindings on my loins. "Why, darling, the strap's gone right inside your cunt!" She giggled gleefully. "It must hurt dreadfully. Or does it work the other way round?"

"It just hurts, Mistress." I tried to sound joyful.

Her fingers traced the straps as they cut into my flesh. They were cruelly tight. Even the one 'round my waist hurt., She commented approvingly on Fraulein's knowledge of such matters. "I'll let you put it on me sometime, darling," she promised ecstatically. "Just so I'll know what it's like. About two minutes would be about right, I expect." She sparkled at me happily as she stood up. She turned me 'round and tested the cords on my elbows. "Mmmm! I I can see these really are bad. You are a lucky girl to be so beautifully tied. You do agree, don't you, darling?" She looked me straight in the eye, daring me to complain.

"I'm such a lucky girl, Mistress," I lied demurely.

Tea arrived. The young woman who pushed in the trolley showed no surprise at my condition. She was either well trained or inured to the erotic. Probably both. She served and left.

My Mistress fed me and held the cup to my lips, she was enjoying me. I did my best to sparkle. I was quite sure I would get kinder treatment from Cynthie if I was good company, rather than immersed in gloom as my pain might normally dictate. As usual I was confronted by incongruities. I conceived a title for a book: "How To Be Happy While Hurting." If anyone could write it, I could.

"I'm going to do the naughtiest things to you, Jewel." Cynthie twinkled at me over her teacup.

I fluttered my shoulders. "I can't stop you doing anything you like with me, Mistress," I conceded cheerfully. "But, Mistress dear, please don't hurt me just to make me obey. I'll obey without that. I'll do what you tell me. I'll be a good girl."

Cynthie laughed delightedly. "Damn strange, y'know. I think you probably will be obedient. Its really terribly unfair because it won't do you a bit of good. I'll whip you whenever I feel like it. Look at you now! I know you're hurting. I'm keeping you like that just out of caprice. It's lovely! I can understand the joy that rotter Vivian got out

of whipping me."

"Are you going to take out your revenge on me, Mistress?" I asked coyly.

"You love being whipped, don't you, Jewel?"

"No! Oh no!" I must disabuse her mind of that notion or I'd be cut to pieces. "Honestly, Mistress, I don't like it any better than you do!"

Her laughter was genuine. "But, darling, there are times when it does something for me. Come on now, don't be shy."

"It just hurts terribly," I said doubtfully.

"Of course it does! It also starts that lovely glow going down in a girl's cunt."

Cynthie's thoughtless use of the forbidden word both repelled and intrigued. There was an honesty about her enjoyment of the carnal. I was lounging on a low stool beside her chair so that she could feed me and so that my bound arms were not in the way. I looked up at her and grinned sheepishly. "Alright! I won't pretend."

She popped a tiny sandwich in my mouth and propounded mischieviously, "If you had a choice, darling, which would you part with first: that lovely strap through your cunt or those nice cords 'round your elbows?"

My heart missed beat. Was she having fun, or did she feel sorry? I did some quick thinking. I hated the harness, but I was nervous about the circulation. "The cords 'round my elbows, please Mistress," I responded hopefully.

"Quite sure?"

"Yes, Mistress."

"Good! In that case I'll take off those nice straps down below."

Cynthie laughed gaily at the mixture of chagrin and joy upon my features. I longed to get rid of the strictures on my elbows. But if that was denied I would still be happy to shed the strange harness that violated my most female place. "Up'sadaisy, darling," she ordered.

This time I did not mind the pain as I struggled to my feet. I stood firm and hurting as straps were tugged. My breath caught in agony as the strips of leather were peeled from within my flesh. They left upon me marks almost a facsimile of themselves. But, oh, how glorious to be free of the beastly thing! For moments I forgot my elbows. I kicked my legs and even did a little dance of joy. It felt so good! Quite instinctively, I sank to my knees before the laughing girl who had freed me and rubbed my face against her knees. It was all I could do. "Thank You, Mistress. Oh, thank you. . ."

She stroked my hair as though I was a kitten. There was suddenly between us a mood, a rapport. Two girls. One owned, the other possessing. It was so very good. She raised me to my feet. We kissed long and lovingly. Her hands and arms caressed us both as mine could not. Why had I disliked this girl once! I did not now. The pain of my elbows seemed a small price to pay for belonging.

Cynthie turned me 'round and tugged at knots. I overflowed with happiness. It was so unexpected. More than I had dared hope. More than I deserved. . . I who had

thought so ill! Again I gasped as the cords were released from the grooves they had cut in my flesh, livid grooves that were almost wounds. "Our good Fraulein must

have thought you a menace to society, darling," my mistress cooed in a voice faintly shocked. "I say, I am sorry, Jewel. I hadn't realised."

The last strands fell away. I did not mind the scald. I savoured to the full that ineffable moment of release. Twice it had been granted me. I was humble with gratitude glowing with a new well-being. Only at this moment did I fully realise how brutal and complete Fraulein Pabst's subjugation of me had been.

Cynthie turned me again. She put a hand on each of my shoulders and smiled in empathy, saying nothing, but letting me have these wonderful moments that were wholly mine. Once more she brushed my lips with hers. Her hands on my shoulders controlled me. Her voice held mischief. "Want me to untie your hands, sweetie?"

It was almost too much to bear. Quite absurdly, I felt she was going too far. I was a slave girl. "But, Mistress dear, I'd be free! I mean, completely free. Just as you are. . ."

My Mistress laughed at the puzzlement in my voice. "You would, wouldn't you!" she agreed. "Can I trust you?"

"Trust!" I echoed blankly. "Oh, you mean about trying to escape or refusing to obey." I laughed at her concern, but sobered quickly and seriously considered her question. It took me into a jumbled realm of emotions I did not myself understand. But I wanted to share them. "I am a slave girl, Mistress," I explained slowly. "I belonged to Vivian. He has given me to you. I was not really coerced into slavery. I chose it. Don't ask me why. You may know better than I do." I grinned at her ruefully, "But there's a silly thing. . . I'm ashamed of it."

"Tell me, darling." Cynthie's face was aglow.

"Well Mistress, there are times when even the best behaved slave girl longs to escape, when she's been hurt too much or punished too long. Her wish doesn't last, but it has existed. Then there is a sort of morality that nags and says: "why don't you cut and run any chance you get?" It never really leaves a slave alone; it's as though you owe it to someone or to yourself to seek freedom." I laughed at a memory.

"I tried it once. Then went back and got chained up again. But here's the silly bit. It's pure slave mentality. But it's practical. I want to be tied or chained. I really do! It does not have to be severe. One wrist or an ankle or anything will do just so long as it defeats that nag. Just so it stops me having to watch for chances and feeling guilty if I don't take them."

My Mistress nodded. "That's not silly, Jewel. I can understand. Don't forget: I was a slave for a little while. I was chained."

"If you untie me, Mistress, I'll be terribly obedient."

"I'm going to untie you, kitten. But not for long. I like you tied.

I twinkled at her happily. I did not care. She turned me about and untied my wrists.

Once more I knew glory. This time it was not so much a release from pain as simple release. I was free!

Cynthie lounged back in a chair and enjoyed my antics. I leaped, I tumbled. I flung wide my arms in worship of the sun, I danced. I rubbed my wounds. How glorious to

be able to massage my bruised flesh! Tenderly, I explored the sensitivity of my punished nipple. It responded. But it was, oh, so red! In short I behaved much as the kitten she had called me. When I had expended these urges I lounged on the floor at the feet of my Mistress and rested my head upon her knee. I was very happy.

"I'm spoiling you," Cynthie said lazily. "You'll be getting ideas."

"Yes, Mistress. You do spoil me. I do get ideas," I agreed.

"I'd better put a stop to it then. Up on your feet, kitten. Hands crossed behind your back."

In all that has happened to me there stands out a supreme moment repeated again and again. It is when I stand erect and cross my wrists behind me to be bound. There is no other time in which I know so utterly that I am slave, or in which I so totally yield my freedom to another.

That moment was returned to me then as, totally free, I stood erect and crossed my wrists and felt the girl who was my mistress circle them with cord and draw the cord tight, and tighter yet. My nostrils flared in sensation, in an awareness of a deep emotion expressed in the act we both performed. In that moment while I might still struggle, Cynthie came to possess me completely. I was hers!

When the knot was tied where I could not touch it with my fingers I did indeed struggle. I twisted and tugged to test her skill. "I'll never get loose from this, Mistress," I paid tribute. "Where did you learn to tie a girl's hands?"

Once again she clasped my shoulders and drew me to her so that we might kiss. We glowed. "Never you mind, kitten. I'll always tie you tight. You'll never, never escape. You'll want to sometimes. But you never will."

I took it as a promise.

There is a kingdom of girls. It has a wonder all its own. For those who never enter it I feel sorrow. Cynthie took me there. I wanted never to leave. Cynthie was the kingdom's queen. I was her most loyal subject. She did as she pleased with me. I was her kitten. I was terribly happy. She did not untie my hands. They remained as she had bound them. I did not miss them much. My mistress's hands did for both of us. At night she chained my ankle to the bed we shared. "Just in case. . ." she teased. But the chain was long. It had need to be. Yet it held all the freedom I would ever need.

"I will make you most beautiful," said my mistress after lunch. She surveyed me speculatively, then added: "And most helpless."

"Thank you, Mistress." As was becoming my habit, I did not care.

She took me to the bath and to our room. She used her skills and the most expensive aids to those skills. "It is an occasion, Mistress?" I asked quivering.

"It is an occasion, kitten," she assured me. I sensed mischief. "Vivian loaned me these," Cynthie told me as she chained

my ankles. "I want you to have your accustomed tether so you won't trip. You walk

so gracefully in chains."

They looked and felt familiar. I would walk in them. But I would never hurry or run! They were quite lovely.

"You will not like what I do now, darling."

I guessed instantly. "I do not mind, Mistress," I told her truthfully. I did not mind.

"I had thought of a strap, kitten. But somehow a strap is not quite right. The cord makes you more captive.

I stood quietly while she loosened my hands, then tied them palm to palm. Her fingers were deft and strong and very knowing. I did not wince when she joined my elbows. It hurt, but she made it as easy as she could with many bands of cord. She worked intently, concerned that I should not get free but that I should not hurt more than need be. I would hurt enough.

"It makes you gorgeous," she said consolingly. "Your breasts stick out so beautifully."

I watched with pride as she painted my nipples scarlet and rouged my areoles. I was glad she had tied my elbows.

Cynthie consulted the clock. "There's a little wait, darling. Get your arms over the back of this chair and sit down. I don't want you spoiling the work of art I've made you," she helped. It was a small chair. With my bound arms over the back I could sit comfortably. Cynthie passed a strap 'round my tummy and the chair and buckled it tight in front. "I have things to do," she told me. "I don't want you wandering." She kissed me and left me sitting.

I would not wander. Not that I wanted to. I was, once again, a neatly tied package awaiting delivery. At least, that's what I felt like, a beautiful expensive package. I was consumed with curiosity. Vanity kept prompting me to look down at my breasts and nipples. I was immensely proud. I had a feeling someone was going to see them. But I could not guess who. Most probably Vivian. I was glad I looked so nice.

Cynthie looked pleased. She unbuckled the strap and helped me stand. She produced a blindfold. It was a real one fashioned to fit the face. An elastic band would keep it snug. "Sorry darling," she apologized. "But this completes the ensemble." She patted it into place. I could see nothing. It was totally dark. She guided me with a firm grip above my bound elbow.

My mistress's voice was loving but regretful. "I don't want you too disappointed, darling. So I'll tell you now: you are going to hate me." Her fingers tightened on my arm.

My pulse raced. It was not hard to guess. Cynthie was going to exhibit her slave girl to a man! I was very docile. I let myself be led. My ankle chain clinked cheerily.

It was a big house. I could not tell where I was led. I did not mind. I have to admit to a naughty anticipation. I knew Cynthie was up to something. But after all, why not? I was a slave girl. When she halted me she said casually, "Just stand a minute, darling. I'll be right back." Obediently, I stood. Not much else I could do. I could not

remove the blindfold. I certainly was not going to hobble around with chained feet in the dark. I did not have to pose. The cords 'round my elbows made certain my chest

stuck nicely out.

Without warning the blind was snatched from my eyes. I could see. I stood in the centre of the drawing room. Around the large and beautiful compartment sat every girl Cynthie and I had ever known.

I had nowhere to hide.

Assuming that you've all had the nightmare about finding yourself naked in the main street, I suppose I don't have to dwell on my feelings at finding myself naked in the Ramsden drawing room. But in a nightmare you wake up; often you know all the time you are going to wake up. But I didn't. I was wide awake from the first.

So was everyone else!

I don't suppose there was ever a happier or more intrigued group of youthful females than those I faced at that moment. That probably is not the right word. But whichever way I turned my chained feet I found myself facing sparkling eyes and lips open in exclamation. I knew more than half my audience by name. I became one huge blush. I was willing to bet half of them had never seen adult pubic hair before. As for scarlet nipples! Cynthie had provided our friends a rare treat. I wished I could fall through the floor. I did turn to the door. But Cynthia was standing there, so I gave that up. I was in no condition to tussle.

It helped a bit to realize more than half of them were almost as embarrassed as I. They did not get bound and naked girls served up to them every day. Guilty eyes sought my breasts and my sex, then looked hurriedly away only to return to feast again on darling Jewel's wantonly displayed cunt. I wondered how many of them used the wicked word within their mind.

The dam of silence suddenly broke. Questions filled the air: "I say, Cynthie, how did you manage it?" or "Did you let her do that to you on purpose, Jewel?" or "What's it feel like, darling?" or "I've never seen a naked woman before." There were floods of giggles and much whispering. I just stood. Tied as I was I could not even shrink or hope to cover anything. I understood Cynthie's insistence on tying my elbows. No matter how I stood my breasts would always flaunt themselves. I did turn this way and that, but the effort only gave everybody a better view. I am sure no naked girl was ever more thoroughly examined.

Cynthie timed everything beautifully. Suddenly tea was served. I stood naked, ashamed and blushing in the centre of the room while they enjoyed it and chattered among themselves. I could almost feel their eyes. Someone fed me a sandwich and held a cup to my lips. I really think if my feet had not been chained I would have made a run for the door. I was curling up in shame. But my afternoon was still young.

Tea disposed of, the hostess as Mistress of Ceremonies took the floor and asked for suggestions as to what they should do with me. She pointed out that it wasn't every day such a chance occurred. Pity to waste it. . . I was available. . .

After the first hesitant snickers the suggestions came thick and fast. I was horrified by some of them. Our old school friends were beginning to feel their oats. I could sense that dear little Jewel was in for a bad time. Cynthie quelled the bedlam and appointed a committee of five. They could leave the room, debate my fate or fates.

Their decisions were final. They were adjured to speed. I quailed as I realized my mistress had chosen the five most avantgarde damsels in the room.

They didn't take long. But it was like waiting for a jury. They came back with a hat and a list. My first act to entertain our guests would be to service six of them right there in the drawing room. The hat was filled with scraps of paper. The six who picked the X's were the lucky ones. Or were they? I noted with joy a number of apprehensive faces as the hat passed from hand to hand.

The first X was Gertie. She flatly refused the honour. Cynthie ostentatiously locked the door and pocketed the key.

"It's not decent," Gertie proclaimed.

"Who said it was?"

"I've never done such a thing."

"Now's your chance."

The uninvolved loved it. Gertie fought a losing battle. The committee finally used force. They laid her across a coffee table on her back. They removed a good many undergarments and rolled back others until that portion of her to receive my attentions was well exposed. The poor girl was quite frantic, but could do nothing against four pairs of eager hands. My pubic hair now had company far more wantonly displayed than my own.

The fifth member of the committee had a task. From somewhere Cynthia had produced a cane, a whip, and a riding crop. I cringed as I saw them laid out on the carpet. I knew whose skin they were intended to mark. But I took a small comfort from Cynthie's wink and my experienced knowledge that, whilst they would all hurt, they were by no means the cruelest instruments to be had. They were, in fact, relatively humane. The fifth girl made her choice. It was the crop. She looked at me invitingly. Everyone else looked at me too, except Gertie whose head was hanging down at the other end of the small table.

I may as well be honest and admit I was as intrigued as all the rest of them. I wasn't doing anything I hadn't done before. I had, in fact, become quite skilled. I knew it gave a fillip to their imaginations to think me so hopelessly bound that I had no choice. True enough that was exactly my condition. I could not effectively have said boo to a goose. Cynthie had really fixed me. For all they knew I was going to my doom just as poor Gertie thought she was. I looked hard at the riding crop, then smiled bravely and clinked my way to my victim's magnificent growth of pubic hair. When I fell to my knees you could have heard a pin drop.

But not for long. At the first searching of my lips Gertie became extremely vocal. She invoked the police, her member of Parliament, the House of Lords and her mother together with a number of lesser deities. It took me almost a minute with my tongue to change her string of reference to a series of small moans and cries. I judged it to be about five minutes before she reached the desired point after which her panties were returned and she was roundly cheered and jeered. I remained kneeling. My task had scarce begun.

The second X was as reluctant as Gertie. While she was being competently stripped and positioned the committee member with the crop explained her intention to whip me whenever my dedication to my duty showed signs of lagging. I promised her my

very best efforts. I had a feeling she envied me.

Number two had much less pubic hair. Strange how it varies. I was glad. With my hands tied as they were it was hard to rid my mouth of stray strands of foliage. Gertie had shed heavily under my suction. I had to try and lick them off on her thigh. My new victim was particularly prolific in pleas, threats and name dropping. My poor tongue had to work busily for a long time to reduce her to the production of more acceptable sounds. I found myself hoping that some of the half dozen would be less frigid or had made better use of their fingers. I collected two stripes with the crop while engaged with number two. I had not earned them. The damn girl just wanted to try it out. My bottom was nicely positioned. There was some scattered applause and some "Oh's" and "Ah's" as the red marks showed up on my skin. My tongue rasped frantically.

Number three was an exhibitionist. She stripped and sauntered to my waiting lips in total unconcern. The committee retired. Before positioning herself upon the table she told me blandly that unless I gave her total satisfaction she would personally thrash me. Fortunately, I found her responsive. I gave of my best. She soon exploded with the most gratifying gasps and moans. I think she was a bit disappointed and would have liked to stay on for a second go. But number four was in a hurry. She was a 'get it over and done with' type who did not relish either my tongue or the committee's attention. I dealt with her speedily. I knew the girl with the whip was watching like a hawk and longing for an excuse.

Number five was shy. No force was needed, but she took a lot of time to get down to where her pussy came into view. My tongue needed the respite. She was a sweet girl. I gave her my very best work. She took twice as long as any of the others, but she was so grateful at the end I felt the time had been well spent.

Number six wanted to be different. She did not want me to do it to her. She wanted to do it to me. No one seemed to mind. I was not consulted. So there I stood with my legs as far apart as my chain would allow while Millie Andrews knelt down and went to work. At another time or place I'd have loved it. Even being bound and chained as I was added piquancy. With my arms behind me I could not be laid on the table. I had to stand. Thus the effects on me of Millie's oral attack on my pussy were visible to all those watching eyes. No slightest quiver or gasp escaped them. Millie was expert. No matter how I tried to be impassive and remote she made me squirm. In the end I gave up. I let her tongue compel my behaviour. It was quite shameless. Everyone enjoyed themselves immensely.

My next stellar role designed by the committee was to go to each girl, greet her by name, and ask her to cane my bottom. You can imagine how much I relished that! The committee were adept in the art of humiliation. The cane was thrust into my bound hands and I was sent to my first martyrdom.

"Hello, Phyllis. Lovely to see you. Please cane my bottom."

You can guess how I cringed. But I tried to smile brightly. For some reason or other I did not want to let Cynthie down. After all, I was her slave girl and owed her my best. Besides, she was quite capable of punishing me terribly if I failed to please.

Having gotten over the greeting and request, I had to turn and proffer the cane, then advance to where all could have a good view of my bottom getting sliced, and then bend over. They had the privilege of giving me one stroke each, as hard as they liked. There were quite a lot of guests. My poor bottom.

tom would know it had been caned. After I had received each girl's gift, I had to say a pretty thank-you; the cane would be pressed back into my tied hand, and I'd go on

to the next. Can you think of a pleasanter way of spending an afternoon?

In its way it was interesting. I never knew what I was going to get. Most of the girls surprised me. My closest friends hit me the hardest and hurt the most. I can only suppose they thought I'd be offended if they didn't put on a good show. Or maybe they'd never really liked me. Who knows? Some who scarcely knew me just gave my bent-over cheeks a light swish that did not hurt at all. These were roundly jeered. I could have kissed them. The exhibitionist struck me so hard I fell forward on one knee. The pain was so brutal I failed to manage a satisfactory "thank you" between my gasps. It was judged by all to be inadequate, so she was allowed to hit me again. I had to steel myself to manage a smile and a honeyed "thank you." But I did it. I hated her!

You'd have thought that would have been enough for a genteel tea party for young ladies, wouldn't you? I thought so. I was wrong. The committee now had me billed for a proper formal whipping. I was to be suitably strung up. The hat was to be passed 'round. The single girl who got the only X was to give me my whole twenty strokes. Twenty! I had a feeling they thought they were being kind.

The drawing room was split by an arch and two columns. The architect must have had me in mind. I enjoyed my good moment when the cords came off my elbows. But it did not last. A minute later I stood between the columns with my arms stretched very high and very wide; the cords pulled and pulled until I was on my toes. The dear girls were certainly getting their money's worth out of poor little Jewel. My ankles were still chained. I'd been given no chance to get ideas. But now my mistress unlocked them.

You'd have thought they would have let it go at that. I was beautifully tied and vulnerable. But no! They wanted a better look at dear little pussy. Cords went 'round my ankles and 'round the columns, they were pulled and pulled until I thought I'd split. They stretched my legs so far that I was almost hanging by my wrists. My cunt gaped at a room full of my best friends. They all looked back at it with sparkling eyes.

Spread and hanging like that I hurt terribly. But I took a keen personal interest in the draw. I had a lot at stake: Me! I prayed Miss Exhibitionist would not be the lucky girl. She wasn't. It was one of the gentle swishers, a girl named Jill. I untensed thankfully.

For the moment I ceased to be the centre of attraction. Jill took over. The poor girl was horrified at her good fortune. The very last thing she wished to do was whip dear, naked little Jewel. She put up such a resistance that I began to fear the imminence of another draw to replace her. But I had underrated The Committee. They were prepared for any eventuality. They told the hesitant prize winner to do her duty or they'd strip her and hang her facing me and give her the same as I got.

Her face was a study. For a moment I thought she was going to go noble and let them do it rather than wield the whip herself. She came up with some real corkers:

"My mother would never approve."

"You're not whipping your mother." Applause!

"I don't think it's quite nice. . ."

"It's lovely. Try it." Titters from around the room.

"It's too terribly unkind. I couldn't . . ."

"Don't be silly. She loves being whipped! You do, don't you, Jewel?"

What an awful question! I looked to my mistress for guidance. She gave me a scarcely perceptible nod.

"I adore being whipped," I lied with deep feeling. "It's gorgeous!"

Jill looked at me in despair.

"If we have to string you up too, Jill, after all this hesitation, it will be thirty for each of you. You're just making things worse for Jewel," The Committee announced firmly.

Jill accepted the whip as though it was one of the more deadly reptiles. She looked at me pitifully. "I'm terribly sorry. . ." She was close to tears. She made a wild swing in my direction.

Only the tip connected. It stung my hip. A mere nothing. I closed my eyes with a luxurious feeling of being very, very lucky.

But I had underrated The Committee.

"Take your clothes off, Jill."

My Whipper stood, eyes wide, mouth agape.

"We want you naked. Every time you muff a stroke, we give you one." Five determined females converged.

"I couldn't possibly. Not naked! What would the vicar say!"

"Don't tell him."

"But my husband! When I"

"You haven't got a husband."

Timidly, Jill began to shed. The Committee helped and encouraged. One of them thoughtfully took my discarded chains and locked them on protesting ankles.

"What are you putting those things on me for! I won't have them!"

"You've got them, darling. Here's the whip. Start again."

Poor Jill! I knew how she felt. A girl can't argue against chains. A Committee member flexed the riding crop and eyed the freshly naked bottom hungrily. They moved behind me. I had to strain over a taut arm to watch, but turned back when Jill started her swing. It's hard to watch yourself being whipped.

Jill's effort was a repeat of her first. The sound of it flicking me was instantly followed by the whine and thunk of the crop cutting into the newly bared delinquent flesh. The

Committee had wasted no time.

I just had to look! Once more I strained against my bonds. It was worth the pain. Jill stood in frozen unbelief. Both hands clutching her wealed bottom as though fearing she might lose it. She was a girl striving to cope with that first awful stroke that has given you more pain than you thought existed in all the world. My heart sank at what followed.

Jill was the wrong girl. The draw had been bad luck for her and me too. Confronted with the unbearable she lunged for the door. The chains tripped her. She sprawled.

The Committee handled her with ease. She was too shocked to struggle much or even to protest. In about three minutes she stood face to face and tummy to tummy with me, tied as I was tied. I kissed the poor kid and told her not to worry. Damn silly thing to say, really. But what else was there.

"Thirty each," the Committee announced gleefully. The audience clapped. Jill was in tears. I felt like a good cry myself.

The Committee member with the crop inherited the job. She would be less awful than the Exhibitionist. But I could tell she knew what she was up to. It was going to hurt. She started on my back.

It's rotten being whipped on your back! I can't tell you how it hurts, it just does. It has little side effects that are beastly. The tip curls under your arm and snaps at your breast, or 'round your waist and licks at your tummy. This time I had a quite new experience: Jill! Our tummies touched, our breasts touched as we hung there to be whipped for the delectation of a gathering of nice young ladies. But now the tip of the lash was unpredictable. I got the tall end of hers and she got mine. The Committee member soon realized the delightful possibilities. She moved in a few inches and struck us so that each time the end of the thong flashed 'round it cut one or the other of us somewhere. It amounted to thirty strokes and thirty licks with the tip for us both.

Have you ever been closely face to face with a girl who has to scream? I have. Jill started to scream at her fourth. So I contrived to get us cheek to cheek so she could peal it out over my shoulder. Being a bit more used to pain and, as I said the whip was not the worst of its kind, I tried to manage with just moans. A girl can do wonders with a good moan if you put your heart in it. A Besides, I was supposed to be enjoying it, wasn't I? It was about at the halfway point when Jill and I got some more bad news.

When the whipping stopped, I opened my eyes and saw the girl who had been happily cutting us to shreds saunter over to my mistress and whisper. Cynthie didn't look all that happy, but they left the room together. When they returned I breathed a sigh of relief. The whip whose marks I bore had been discarded. The committee member now held a slim little thing with a single slender thong. It couldn't possibly hurt as much. Or could it? An awful possibility loomed. . .

Jill was brokenheartedly sobbing against my cheek. She should have been left off the invitation list. The poor girl was not up to the fun and games that most of her girl friends seemed to enjoy. I could detect other nervous faces, but mostly they seemed overjoyed by having a couple of naked girls to whip. I felt sorry for my companion in distress. If my apprehension was well founded she had a bit of a shock in store, to say nothing of the pain! She was an old-fashioned girl whose father, I am sure, voted conservative. During the time the whip had been busy with our skins, I had sensed her shame every time our breasts had brushed each other or flattened themselves

against the other pair held so close. It was a bad day for Jill.

It got worse. The first stroke of the new whip confirmed my suspicion. That lovely little slender lash came up between my spread legs and found the place where I wanted it least. In its biting passage to its final resting place within my flesh its tip snapped at Jill where she least expected it. Neither of us could move much. But she did her best to go berserk, her distraught voice was close to my ear.

"You mustn't! Oh no! It's the wrong place!" I think she genuinely believed an error had been made.

"It's not the wrong place, darling," I whispered. "That's where we are going to get it now."

She stiffened and gasped incredulously. "But it's not nice! No nice girl"

The whip cut her plaint in two as it sliced her in the same way it had sliced me. She screamed in outrage as much as pain. Her head went back so that she could look me in the eye, so that I might deny the unthinkable. "They can't! Oh, they can't!"

They could. They did.

Jill and I were whipped with almost scientific precision. The committee member had the range and the skill and knew where it hurt most. Our pussies received the tip almost every time. As with our backs, she often managed to cut the two of us at the same time. Two naked girls had their loins competently lashed. Nor did she forget the softness of our thighs so enticingly spread. Jill screamed and screamed. Sometimes I screamed too. I couldn't be heroic. That thin little whip held a personal intimate animosity. I felt certain it had depilated my sex. I hated that committee member.

Our thirtieth stroke marked the end of a pleasant afternoon for Cynthie's guests. Goodbyes flitted hither and yon. Kisses and hugs were exchanged. Glowing thanks were sincerely tendered for the most wonderful time ever. Through all this flood of goodwill and affection Jill and I continued to hang, to gasp in pain, to try, impotently, to struggle against our cords. No one paid much attention to us any more. Unless we were being whipped we weren't all that interesting. One or two of the more intimate friends did come and kiss us and pat our cheeks and assure us how much they had enjoyed our performance. A few innocents really believed the whole affair rehearsed. I ardently wished they were hanging by their wrists.

"Aren't. . . aren't, they going to untie me?" Jill quavered.

I swallowed my irritation at her implication that it was alright for me to remain tied, but not her. "We'll probably be left like this the rest of the day," I said casually. I was a bit put out with the poor child. If she'd had a bit of sense I wouldn't have gotten hurt as much.

"I don't think I can stand it," she whimpered.

"What would you suggest?" I asked acidly. "If you can get loose, please do."

"Someone should cover up my. . . my. . . you know," she stammered as though speaking of a dahlia on a frosty night.

"Why?" I asked, wishing to be difficult. "They won't catch cold."

She shed a few tears. I felt a bitch.

"Does this often happen to you, Jewel?" I could swear she was making polite conversation.

"Almost daily," I assured her in a bored voice, fighting to hold back my gasps of pain. "Didn't you know? I'm a slave girl."

Jill pulled her head back again and looked at me reproachfully. "You mean. . . Lady Cynthia won't let you go home?"

"That's right. If I get freed from this fix I'm in now, I'll be chained and kept prisoner so I can be whipped some more tomorrow," I said more cheerfully than I felt.

"She'll let me go, won't she?" There was agony in the question.

"Not if your people are away or if you won't be missed overnight."

I heard the in-drawn breath, the gasp of sudden revelation. "But my people are away. I won't be missed. . ." She bit the sentence off fearfully.

"Maybe we are both like this for the night then," I said gloomily. I was sorry for the girl. But she was a bit feeble.

The room suddenly was very quiet and very bare. We were alone, perhaps forgotten. We had served our purpose. We could just hang. Who cared? Jill managed a bit of a struggle and a few more tears. "Rub your pussy against me if you can," I suggested helpfully. "It'll make you feel better."

Jill gasped and gave me 'The Look.' "Please. . . please. I couldn't!"

"I'll rub mine against you then," I said determinedly. I needed a bit of solace. It had been a bad day for poor little Jewel.

"You mustn't! Oh, you mustn't do such a wicked thing!" Jill was quite sincere.

I paid no attention. I tried. I tried and tried. I twisted, I struggled. I hurt myself. But I was tied too damn tight to do even that. There was two inches between our pussies, but it might as well have been a mile. My companion's relief was obvious.

"I hurt so much," she quavered. "Lady Cynthia won't leave us like this, will she?" In Jill's eyes a title could do no wrong.

I was beginning to wonder myself. Cynthie would know the demoralizing effect of leaving us alone and hurting. I knew the rest of the day might be a real possibility. I would be very tractable at the end of it, a model slave girl. I longed to be free. It was a terrible way to be tied.

Cynthia walked back in. She looked very happy and very beautiful. "They are all away," she told us cheerfully. "You won't mind staying like that for a few hours, will you darlings? You do look so sweet."

I never knew when to believe my mistress, so kept quiet. But Jill believed every word. "Oh please!" she begged. "Please, Lady Cynthia, let me loose. I'll do anything."

"You haven't wanted to do much up to now, darling," Cynthie pointed out

reasonably.

"I expect I was silly. Please let me down. I'll be very good."

"Very good at what, darling?"

Poor Jill was lost.

"Your silliness has caused poor Jewel a lot of pain." Cynthie's voice was silky.

"I'm terribly sorry." Jill had little imagination.

"Don't you think you should make it up to her?"

"Oh, I will! I do apologize." Jill was making amends her way.

"How would you like to get your nice little tongue into her cunt?"

I could feel my companion stiffen. I knew Cynthie had used the hateful word deliberately to shock. But I perked up.

"You are being hateful. I refuse to speak to you." Jill was reverting to type.

"Bye, bye, then darlings. I'll leave you for the night." My crafty mistress sauntered to the door. I perked up even more.

"Don't go! Oh no! Oh please!" Jill did not want to hang all night.

"Think you can manage that small kindness?"

"It isn't a kindness! It's beastly!" Jill couldn't let go.

Cynthie went out and closed the door. "Wouldn't have hurt you to do it," I accused bitterly. "Now we'll hang like this for the night. Hope you enjoy it."

Jill went wild again. She only managed to cut one wrist. "I'm sorry. . . I'm sorry!" she said over and over.

My mistress came back. "Did I hear a noise?"

"I'll do it," Jill said firmly.

Cynthia released her ankles, but immediately chained them. She was taking no chances. Then she untied Jill's wrists. While the captive was rubbing her wounds Cynthie picked up the riding crop and flexed it thoughtfully. Jill kept on rubbing.

"Darling Jewel is beautifully positioned for your task, dear," Cynthie reminded gently.

Jill looked at my female pubes, her chains, Cynthie, and the door. "I don't know how," she said absurdly.

"This whip can teach you, darling."

With a groan of despair Jill sank to her knees. I began to feel excited. In obvious reluctance the girl who would pleasure me reached out and fingered my hairy triangle

as though doubting there was anything beneath. I wished I could thrust it at her.

"You're getting warm," my mistress told her acidly.

Quite incredibly the silly girl leaned forward and kissed my pussy in much the manner of a political candidate kissing a baby at election time. "There," she said brightly. "Will that do?"

Cynthie thrashed her fiercely. I must admit I did not feel much sympathy for the writhing virtue. I hurt. I wanted to be set free. She wasn't helping. The whip did not stop its task until my mistress was panting. Our moaning guest crawled to me and buried her lips in my fur. Her tongue went instantly to work and pursued its task with vigour until after I'd burst into a hundred pieces. When I got so I could take an interest in things again, Jill was still kneeling bowed between my legs. She was suddenly beautiful.

Her chains were unlocked. "You can dress and go, darling," Cynthie told the subdued figure quietly.

Jill dressed and disappeared. Neither of us missed her.

Cynthie's tongue was far more magic.

I was chained by my ankle to the bed. The rest of me was free. "Do you hate me, darling?" Cynthie asked.

I did not hate my Mistress, I told her so. I felt that I should have done, but could not. I supposed there would always be times when slave girls should be very tolerant. Their Mistresses were only human. For some ridiculous female reason I loved my Mistress more than ever.

"I should have kept that absurd Jill for the night," she mused.

I giggled. It might have been fun. "You can whip me instead," I said happily.

"You mean that, don't you, Jewel?"

"Of course, Mistress. I'm chained." I lifted my ankle and rattled. "I'll try and keep still except for wriggles. May I moan?"

I moaned steadily for a long time. But not from the whip.

"I was cruel to you," Cynthie said in the morning.

"It wasn't you. It was Jill," I told her, remembering.

"Would you like to whip me, to get your own back?"

"No, dear Mistress. I am a slave girl.

"Does that matter?"

"It matters terribly, Mistress. Slave girls do not whip their mistresses. Besides, I love you."

"I love you too."

We looked at each other happily and gaily laughed. Cynthie and I had found something.

"After breakfast you must whip me, Mistress," I said firmly. "We are falling in love. It must not be allowed to interfere. I am a slave girl who should be whipped daily or I will get ideas. Don't you remember, Mistress?"

My mistress was saturated with me. "I remember, kitten. I will whip you, never fear." Her eyes sparkled and adored. "How would you like that small thin whip across your breasts?"

I should have been frantic with horror. Instead I glowed. "Yes please, Mistress." I did not want my breasts whipped. But if Cynthie was going to do it I would not mind.

Is this being Lesbian?

It was a joyous breakfast. The impassive maid pretended not to notice my whip marks. My mistress kept reminding me how my breasts would bounce under the thong. I was free except for the chains upon my ankles. I did not mind what was going to be done to me. A bit of wisdom came into my mind that it does not matter what is done to us. It is the one who does it that counts. I was going to have my breasts whipped by my mistress. Wasn't I lucky!

"Please keep me your slave girl always, Mistress," I pleaded. I could not bear the thought of being sundered from this glorious creature whose flesh was as my own."

"I've been thinking of that," Cynthie admitted. "Vivian won't like it."

"Vivian puts me in dungeons," I recalled morosely. "I'd sooner be chained to your bed.

"Poor darling!" My mistress laughed. "You've no hope of ever being free, have you?"

"What girl could be silly enough to want to be free!" I spread marmalade upon my toast. I was a slave girl with my ankles chained. I glowed. "For how long did Vivian lend me to you, Mistress?"

"A few days, Sweetie. It was a bit vague. But he'll be howling at the gates before a week. Fraulein Pabst is supposed to deliver you back in the same condition she received you, marks not counted."

"What did you plan to do with me, Mistress, during the time I am on loan?"

"I'm cruel, darling. Yesterday was a sample. You may think today's worse."

I was intrigued. But Cynthie would only laugh and tease. I could gather nothing of my fate. Even as Teatime approached we were only sitting in the lounge talking. My hands were chained as well as my feet, but there were enough links that cups and saucers would he no problem. As a reminder of what my breasts had to look forward to I wore a light cord round my tummy, from it dangled the wicked little whip. I was

secretly uncertain whether it would be used. But its constant brushing of my thigh kept me delicately aquiver. I was beginning to wonder if the punishment of my

breasts was to he the piece de resistance of the day, worked up to with awful suspense, when the maid calmly announced Mr. Cuthbert Abernathy. She actually smiled. I suspected she was trying not to laugh. Cynthie refused to meet my panic stricken and imploring eyes.

I was naked. A strange man was about to enter the room. I was chained enough that precipitate flight was out of the question. Having Viv' see me naked was one thing. But to flaunt my nudity at a male with a name like Abernathy was something else. I looked reproachfully at my mistress. She was walking to the door with hand outstretched.

He was young. He had protuberant eyes and an Adam's apple. He was the sort who collects butterflies or stamps. In his case probably both. They are inclined to be effusively responsive. He started out in good form. "I say, dear Lady Cynthia, this is frightfully decent" Then he caught sight of me.

He froze. Cynthie went the rest of the way and messed around a bit with his outstretched hand. "So glad you could come, Cuthbert. I did so want you to meet dear little Jewel. Jewel, this is Cuthbert. Isn't he sweet!"

I knew my cue. I wasn't scared of Cuthbert the way I might have been of some. I knew he was far more scared of me. I clinked forward, knelt before his startled eyes and kissed his hand. "Your slave girl is honoured, master." I backed away and stood so that he could got a good look at everything. The afternoon would not be a bore. Trust Cynthie! I felt wanton. Men were for the amusement of women.

The deep freeze still held. His eyes, quite glassy now, were focused on my breasts. There could be little doubt they were the first he had seen. Cynthie had done them up nicely with scarlet and rouge. The lips inside my hair had been painted scarlet too. They pleaded for attention. For Cuthbert it was one of life's memorable moments.

"She hasn't any clothes on," said Mr. Abernathy in the tone of an astronomer announcing discovery of a new planet.

My mistress turned and examined me. "No, she hasn't, has she!" she brightly confirmed his hypothesis.

"I'd no idea girls looked like. . ." he blushed heavily.

"Oh, you mean her breasts and pussy!" Cynthie prompted helpfully. "I suppose we are a bit of a shock when you strip us.

It was pure cruelty. It was easy to see Cuthbert was considering flight. He was trapped by the arrival of the Tea trolley. At a wink from my mistress I poured and served, not the easiest thing when your hands are chained. But I was becoming experienced.

"One lump or two, Cuthbert?" I asked sweetly.

"You. . . you. . . seem to have two," he said bemused.

"Sugar, Mr. Abernathy," I prompted gently.

"Oh dear! Yes, of course. Quite! Three lu mps of sugar, please." He was being

very explicit. He looked longingly at the door.

We had got him seated. In giving him his cup and saucer and plate I contrived to bend down so that his range of vision was largely occupied by my breasts. I had to rattle his cup to bring him out of a trance. He accepted the crockery much as the condemned man before the firing squad accepts the last cigarette. When I took him his sardine sandwich, I made sure he had a good look at my dear little, pussy. Though actually my dear little pussy isn't all that small. I don't know what a girl would do with a really small one. He stared at Cynthie's paint job in pure fascination, and absently took three sandwiches. I suspected he needed the stamina of food.

"Don't be shy, Cuthbert," Cynthie prompted gaily. "Jewel is a slave girl. They don't wear clothes."

"Indeed!" Obviously Cuthbert had never owned a slave.

"Makes, it simpler to whip her, y'know."

"Really!" A sardine sandwich stuck half way down.

Cuthbert was turning purple.

"She has to be whipped today. I say, Cuthbert Be a good chap and do it for me, will you?"

A convulsive gulp got the sardine started on its way. His bulging eyes looked for mercy where none was. "Thanks no! I couldn't possibly . .. . .

"Why not, Cuthbert?" My mistress looked hurt. "Nothing too severe. Just her breasts."

Cuthbert dropped a sardine sandwich on the floor. In Belgravia it's the sign of a broken man. Or, even worse, that he hadn't gone to the right school. But Cuthbert had gone to Harrow.

"I had thought that the. . . the, other side . .,." he floundered.

"You'd prefer to whip her bottom, darling!" My mistress was the perfect hostess.

"But, Lady Cynthia, I am not accustomed..."

Cynthie turned to me. "Would you mind very much, Jewel, if Cuthbert just whips your bottom?"

I knelt before the suffering man. "Oh thank you, Mr. Abernathy!" I said fervently. "Please do whip my bottom if you like it better than my breasts."

"I did not say that!" He was clutching at straws.

I replenished his cup and gave him two more sandwiches. "Then you really would prefer my breasts!" I let him see I admired his judgment.

He looked, in agony, from one to the other of us, at bay. "The roses are doing well this year, don't you think." He was seeking loopholes.

"You do like Jewel, don't you?" Cynthie sounded anxious as though fearful of

boring a valued guest.

"Very much." Our guest's eyes rose to the ceiling as though seeking succour from above. "Such a charming girl. . . I couldn't possibly . .. . .

"Couldn't what?" My Mistress's voice was honey sweet.

"Well really. . . I'm sure she does not deserve. . ."

"Oh, but I do, Mr. Abernathy!" I assured him earnestly. "I've been bad."

He looked about him in dismay. I suppose those poor chaps on Spion Kop did the same before they were shot down. "Perhaps you could confine her to her room for a day or so.. . ." He had my welfare at heart.

We both looked at our victim reproachfully. Damsels scorned.

"I'd so relied on you," Cynthie sighed. "Whipping's so hard for a girl. I get so tired."

I found it hard to look properly subdued. Cynthie did it so well I longed to laugh. Poor Cuthbert was now having to do battle with chivalry. I made my chains clink, and looked forlorn.

"Would you prefer to take her to bed?" Cynthie asked, as though struck by sudden inspiration.

"It's mid-afternoon," said Cuthbert, missing the point.

"I was referring to fornication," Cynthie elucidated innocently.

I served him more tea and sandwiches. He obviously needed them. Whilst bending over I scratched one of my nipples as though it itched. I managed it about six inches from his face. I am sure he was convinced my endowments were an isolated anomaly. I let him see my chains were very, very real.

"But we are not married." Cuthbert disposed of the whole contretemps at a single stroke.

"Don't be hidebound, darling," Cynthie countered.

"Perhaps you'd like to purchase Jewel? I might be persuaded to sell her. Would that make you feel better about popping her into bed?"

"Really, Lady Cynthia, I had not expected. . ." He looked hungrily at me and doubtfully at my mistress. "You mean you actually buy and sell her?"

"Of course, darling, she's a slave."

"Er. . . what is the price?"

"Five thousand, darling."

Sir Galahad took out his cheque book. "I shall free her, of course," he proclaimed

nobly.

It was a bit of a poser for my mistress. But she was equal to it. "Oh dear, that would be most unkind. Dear little Jewel would be lost." She looked at Cuthbert earnestly, "You see, she's a real slave girl. She wouldn't be happy in freedom. How would she make a living?"

The knight errant gaped.

"I have promised the dear girl a punishment this afternoon. You won't mind, will you?" Cynthia's tone bespoke concern for the well-being of all. "Just her breasts, y'know."

Poor Cuthbert stiffened again. So did I. I was not looking forward to the use of that darling little whip hanging to my waist. But I was a slave girl. I owed my mistress pain. "Do please watch, Cuthbert," I pleaded. "It's so nice to know someone cares. I promise to be interesting."

"She is a slave girl," my mistress said proudly.

Cynthie unlocked the chains from my wrists and sat me in a very ordinary chair. She then proceeded to tie me very thoroughly, ankles and waist. Then my arms over the back, my wrists were tugged down and tied separately. I could make no effective motion. I smiled reassuringly at Mr. Abernathy's concerned face. My mistress gathered my hair and braided a cord in it. She passed the cord through the framework of the back against which I leant. She pulled. As my head went back and back I realized my plight. When Cynthie made a knot I was staring at the ceiling, my breasts isolated and demanding, my face nicely removed from the hazard of the lash. Now I could not move at all. I was tautly and beautifully positioned. I felt the little whip removed from my waist. I was suddenly terribly afraid.

"Perhaps I should leave," said Mr. Abernathy.

"The dear girl would be terribly hurt," Cynthie chided. "Your moral support would be helpful."

"I fear I'm not competent. . . most embarrassing. . ."

My mistress put an end to his dithering and my suspense. She slashed the wicked little thong across my right breast.

I longed to howl. Screaming does help. I can assure you it does, and I should know! My poor breast! It isn't cut in two, of course. But a girl is always sure it is. I couldn't look. Cynthie's cord in my hair allowed me to admire only the ceiling. I hurt. Oh how I hurt! "Isn't that lovely, Mr. Abernathy," I cooed. It took the last bit of self control I had.

"Now her other one," Cynthie said demonstratively.

I could see nothing that mattered. I could only feel. When my left breast exploded in pain I forgot about the charade. I ceased to find enjoyment in pulling the leg of this absurd Cuthbert. I screamed. The scream was all that mattered. I had to scream. I had never wanted my breasts whipped. To the last I had hoped my mistress was joking. Now I knew she was not. Just as she had foretold, each breast bounced when it was struck by the thong. Bounced and accepted a scalding agony that was deeply shaming.

"I fear you are hurting her," Mr. Abernathy ventured inadequately.

"Of course, darling. It's the main idea, y'know," Cynthie explained patiently.

She went back to breast number one and cut it in a different place. While I was still moaning, she offered the whip to her thunderstruck guest. "Here, Cuthbert. Have a go."

I might be in agony, but I was also curious. My hair strained against its braid so that I was able to catch a glimpse of a perspiring face. Cuthbert was gasping for air.

"Do try my left one, Mr. Abernathy," I begged. I could not lose. He would not hit as hard as Cynthie.

"Really! I am at a loss!" The scarlet features knew not where to turn. "I had no idea that ladies . .. . .

"We're not ladies," my mistress assured him. "We're females. There's a big difference. And anyway, Jewel's a slave. I can do what I like to her."

"But, Lady Cynthia. . . Magna Carta. . . the Home Office! Are you quite certain?"

"My Mistress is quite certain, Mr. Abernathy," I told him with as much dignity as a girl in my circumstances could contrive. "I am quite certain, too. I am a slave girl. I absolutely have to have my breasts whipped. Please do it for us. I would like you to. I am sure you won't hurt me as much as my dear mistress."

Poor Cuthbert! His chivalry was assailed from all sides. A million men would have given their all for his privilege. He simply perspired and stood gulping.

"Is there another part of the dear girl you'd prefer, darling?" Cynthie inquired solicitously.

I strained and hurt my scalp, but managed to note that Cuthbert's focus was upon the whip which now, by some magic of Cynthie's, was held gingerly in his hand. He was viewing it in fascinated disbelief.

"Of course, Cuthbert, I do understand how you men have definite preferences about girl," my mistress suggested helpfully. "Perhaps you'd like to whip me?"

If I hadn't been tied so tight I could have seen more. But I saw and heard enough. The retreat of Cuthbert Abernathy was a total rout. His jaw fell, his eyes bulged, the convulsions of his Adam's apple did battle with his collar. With a sound that was almost a groan he turned and fled. My mistress let him go.

Two girls were left, a slave and her mistress. Cynthie bent and kissed my upraised lips. We giggled and exclaimed together long after the front door had slammed. We had been very cruel. But, after all, Cuthbert Abernathy was only a man. It was women who mattered. Men were our natural prey, to be used and cast aside.

I was still tied very tight. In fact, Cynthie tested my braid and tugged my head back even further to make my breasts still more tautly stretched. But she did not pick the whip from the floor where Cuthbert had dropped it in his flight. Instead, her lips found mine while her fingers lovingly traced the wounds she had made upon my breasts. Cunningly, the female hands worked her will with me, replacing pain with

ecstasy until I closed my eyes in surrender to the magic of her lips and fingertips and let myself drift into the glory land. I knew most of my whipping was still to come.

But, as usual, I did not care. For now I was vividly happy. It was enough.

I cannot tell you if the happiness I find at such times lies in wait for every female in the world, or whether it is an ecstasy rendered only to the slave. I think it is the latter. I cannot believe a girl who is free can ever know or feel what I know and feel. A girl who neither possesses or is herself possessed is not complete. A girl who has never been whipped can never know the fullness of her flesh or the depths of her emotions. She is a vessel only partly filled by love.

Cynthie and I took such a wondrous journey in that time when the male had gone. He left no vacuum. By fingers, breast and lip we were welded together as an entity. Finding in each other all we sought or needed in humankind. I did not miss the hands bound so tightly to the chair. True, I strained constantly at the cord. But it was right that I should be held impotent. I was owned. Mistress was endowing me with a more vivid life than my hands could ever find. My joy came from her and because of her.

When she gently withdrew, my heart skipped a beat. I knew what was to happen. But I did not open my eyes. I would stay in the magic land as long as the whip would allow. Even cruelly fastened as I was, I think I could have drifted into sleep.

I did not scream when the whip cut me. I was still drugged with contentment. I moaned, and continued to moan as each blow fell. But I had to leave Glory Land and, once more, be a naked girl tied and stretched so that my breasts were twin sacrifices to the thong.

Why do I not hate Cynthie who hurts me so! Should I! I do not know the answer.

It appeared that Fraulein Pabst was an old family retainer. She had been Nanny and Governess and other things. Her present status was vague. Housekeeper was as close as anyone bothered to come. She had her own apartment within the mansion, and in the apartment she had an office in which she kept accounts and wrote busily at a biography of Catherine of Russia who she much admired. It was understood that she was erudite, privileged, and a bit odd.

"A slave's lot is not a happy one," said Cynthie tentatively at breakfast.

I cocked an inquiring brow.

"I have to run down to Uncle John's Place at Ardingly for the day," my Mistress said with a faint note of apology.

"Never mind, Mistress. I won't mind being chained somewhere."

"You're not going to be alone, kitten. Fraulein Pabst is going to look after you."

Now I understood the apology. The day seemed less Bunny. "Oh please, mistress, don't give me to her!" The protest positively popped out.

"It's a special request, sweetie. The poor dear doesn't get all that much amusement. Do you mind?"

"Have I any choice?"

"No. But it would be nice if you could see it as a charitable act. She can't use

the maids too often or they pack up and leave. Sometimes I feel so sorry for her I let her have me for a day.

I gaped my astonishment. "You!"

My Mistress shrugged, embarrassed. "Well, why not! She's my old Nanny and I'm fond of her. We all know her little weakness." She grinned confidingly. "I suppose I could say she taught me all I know. She hurts a lot. But she's very careful not to damage."

I kicked my ankle chain to make it clink. "It's a good thing you've got that on me," I admitted bitterly. "If you didn't, I'd probably run. Brunnhilde has no sense of humour. She frightens me."

"You don't hate me too much, Darling?"

"No," I said morosely. "I ought to, but I don't."

My mistress kissed me goodbye. "You know what to do, kitten. You can tell me about it in the morning."

I knew what to do. I clinked an unhappy passage to Fraulein Pabst's office door and knocked.

"Enter!" It was not permission. It was a command.

"Ach! Our little leibling. Iss standing in front pliz."

I assumed I must stand to attention before her desk. I did so. The middle-aged Valkyrie beamed. "Iss nice to have young girl." She sounded like the wolf in Red Riding Hood.

"Lady Cynthia says you are looking after me for the day, Fraulein. I promise to be a very good girl. My ankles are chained."

"Goot! Vy so red the breasts?" She had a keen eye.

"My mistress whipped them yesterday, Fraulein."

"You had been bad girl?"

"No, Fraulein. My mistress enjoys whipping them, so she did."

"Ach goot!" It was evident Cynthie and this massive Teuton shared much.

I stood there looking as dulcetly as I could manage. If she had a heart perhaps I could touch it.

She had no heart. I touched nothing. "I whip hard. You like?"

I was not sure of the right answer to that one. "I don't like being whipped, Fraulein. Please don't whip me." My humility was not entirely acting.

"Ach, you keep still." Fraulein Pabst produced cord.

I shivered inwardly, feeling certain of the uselessness of pleading or protest, certainly

not protest! I stood submissively while she bound me.

It became evident that Fraulein Pabst's approach to the control and discipline of young ladies lay not in the whip, but in immobility. Her motto might have been 'Keep 'em still and sorry.' She did so with a fine German competence. No matter how inevitable a disaster may be, the heart never fails to falter when it happens. I quailed and felt the sting of tears when the familiar cords went round my elbow. I had hoped she might have varied things a bit for her captive. But Fraulein Pabst knew a good thing when she had it. Dear little Jewel was going to he well controlled and adequately demoralized right from the start.

Tug and pull, tug and pull. Each jerk on the cord cuts me and jams my forearms and elbows together as though they were a single limb. I stand passively and let it happen to me. I long to fight, but once the first loop is drawn tight it is too late. Even had I fought from the first, it would have availed me nothing. How well can a girl fight when her ankles are chained! Even without the chain. . . A naked girl against Fraulein Pabst! It would he David & Goliath without the sling. No! Throughout a day, Jewel would be captive to Pabst. Essentially very simple.

She has been given the key. My shackle is taken from my ankles. Fraulein scorns such trinkets. They are for the effete. A girl's ankles should be tied tight and snug so that her legs become a single unit to match her arms. No hobbled steps for her; no steps at all! She ties above my knees with a pair of vicious strands cinched together within my flesh. I wait in mute misery for the harness. No matter how tight she has my legs, I am sure she will manage to place it within my secret place. But the harness does not come. The harness is to discourage girls from motion, but for poor Jewel today there will be no motion. I dare not try to hop, I would fall. I am a package, a package that hurts.

I stand. It is not easy. Balance is precarious. I must stay alert. My tied feet could not correct an ill-judged motion. It would hurt terribly to fall when I am so utterly helpless. I would strike the floor like a log. I am sure Fraulein would not mind. I am, of course, beautifully at attention. I know I look female and delectable. The good Fraulein eyes me from time to time with glowing approval. When her pen is not busy dissecting the Great Catherine, she turns to me. Possibly, I inspire. I seem to recall the Russian Lady as having similar tastes. The only thing missing is the knout. Perhaps one awaits me in a drawer.

It gets worse. Immobility is punishment. Never doubt it. Add the bite of the cords, add the stricture on the elbows, and you have something akin to torture. I suppose you could call it torture. I do not have to plead. Fraulein Pabst can see the pleading on my face. She enjoys it immensely. I am being a 'goot girl.' One presumes that if our Fraulein had her way, every damsel between fifteen and twenty-five would be permanently bound as I am bound. Were it not for the knowledge of the return of my mistress, I myself would have no hope and no expectation of freedom. Her return seems frighteningly distant. My scarlet breasts point at the desk and its occupant so arrogantly I fear they will invoke attention.

They do. I see her eye light up as it roves over my bound nakedness. Smiling grimly, as at an oversight, she produces the little jaws. There are two of them. After all, I do have two breasts and two nipples. There are no velvet cords today. I need not be leashed. Both of us focus on my nipple as the jaws approach. I can make no effective evasive action, so I keep quite still. It is better for me, too, that I do this. The placement of the small teeth upon me is a delicate task calling for precision. Fraulein

Pabst gives it her full attention. So do I.

When the small metal horror is released to possess my nipple I cannot smother my gasp, the quick in-drawn breath that acknowledges pain. There is no need for heroics. To strive to be stoic proves nothing. It cheats me of a form of release. It cheats Fraulein Pabst of her own special joy. I gasp and shudder twice as my nipples receive their investiture then settle down to their steady burn. I look at the large woman I do not like, with a gratitude I do not feel, and I say a thank you I do not mean. All of them give her happiness. Perhaps it justifies my pain.

When lunch time comes, she leaves. There is no admonition, no warning. I am not a hazard. I can do nothing. My most strenuous effort to escape would only leave me lying bruised upon the floor. So I will keep standing. Fraulein Pabst knows I will keep standing. So far as little Jewel is concerned Fraulein Pabst knows everything. When she returns from lunch she notices the tear stains on my cheeks with approval.

I do not get lunch. She brings me no food. But there is a glass of water and something else. The something else puzzles me. It is a rose. It evokes horrific visions. Where is it roses are commonly pinned! I would not put it beyond her. I drink my water, but become a bundle of tingling nerves as she puts the empty glass upon her desk, but retains the rose which she handles carefully. Its short stem is well endowed with thorns. I am sure it has been plucked especially for me.

Fraulein Pabst gives me my rose with her usual competence. Her arm and elbow keep me pinned against her hip so that I will not fall. Despite the closure of my legs, two strong and ruthless fingers penetrate my vulva and separate its lips. The rose stem is inserted, the fingers are withdrawn, the lips close upon the thorns. My lips! Closing upon the thorns within my body! I would not believe such a thing could happen if I did not feel the pain. I manage to look down. The lovely rose, so red, so fresh, is nourished within my cunt. Its beauty is immaculate within my pubic hair. The thorns will keep it safely anchored.

It is too much. I do the unforgivable. I plead. "Please Fraulein, not that. . . oh, not that!"

She smiles benignly. Perhaps she will not punish me for pleading. "Please Fraulein. . . please take the things off my nipples. Please. . . just a rest. . ."

Now she nods wisely and produces a cane. I get three vicious strokes across my bottom for my presumption. 'Little girls should be seen and not heard' is evidently another of her precepts. No word is spoken. We understand each other.

I hurt everywhere and I am very tired. I consider falling to demonstrate that I am at the end of my tether. I will take my chance on injury just to show this implacable creature that enough is enough. But I do not have the courage to let myself go. I think she would let me lay. Whip me a little perhaps. But with all the things fastened on me and within me I may be better off to stand, even though I am weary beyond words.

The rose intrigues her. The eager eyes return to it again and again. The thorns have pierced me, but I do not have to walk. I am utterly still. It is the salvation of my sex. To move would be to tear. The jaws upon my nipples steadily burn. With a tremendous yearning I long to have my hands to deal with them.

I suppose when a girl is being tortured it becomes her raison d'être: to yearn! Yearn for freedom. Yearn for her hands to tear from herself the hateful things placed upon

her flesh. To yearn to move. How well Fraulein Pabst understood! Had she once been a girl and known cords?. . .

She carried me to the evening meal. In all my panoply of pain I knelt beside her chair and ate greedily the scraps she offered from her plate. Scraps thrust at my by the heavy blunt fingers that did not look clean. I longed for Cynthie.

When night came the good Fraulein chained my ankle to my mistress's bed. She evidently had her instructions. She rid me of the cords and of the hateful jaws. I wept with agony and with relief. She took my head between her hands and kissed me warmly on the lips. A moment later she was gone. I sat there dazed and wondering. There is no end to the wonder of woman! But what did it matter. With a great thankfulness I kneaded and massaged my deeply imbedded weals. It was only when I changed position that I realized my strange companion of the day had left me my rose. It gave me a task. I performed it painfully. With the crimson rose beside me on the coverlet I fell asleep. I was utterly exhausted. My mistress told me later that when she found me lying there, I was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen.

I thought often of Vivian. How strange are these loves that possess a girl and make her slave whether she be chained or free! My mistress had erased Wivenhoe from my immediate consciousness and replaced it with a new captivity in which we both had discovered a land only dimly seen. I felt guilt about Viv'. But I diluted my guilt with the memory of his offhand disposition of my person. I no longer knew he was the same boy. I set guilt from my mind. I was actually helpless. It was an amusing and faintly thrilling knowledge that if Viv' ever wanted me back he would face a fighting tigress in Cynthie who would never let me go. But then, perhaps he did not even want me. Giving me to her might have been his way of ending an amusing incident. I was a little piqued.

"You deserve a diversion, darling," Cynthie told me a couple of days later. "We are going to a party."

"I can't go to a party, Mistress! Not like this."

Cynthie giggled. "Actually you probably could, kitten. Remember Muriel HessingtonBrowne?"

I remembered her all too well. She had been a member of that fateful Committee. Avantgarde was indeed the term for Muriel! But even so. . .

"You and I are going," my mistress said decisively. "Be a nice change for you to wear clothes."

"Won't my chains look a bit odd?" I was genuinely puzzled.

Cynthie laughed delightedly. "You really are a slave, aren't you, darling! No, they won't look odd. You're not wearing any."

It took a moment to sink in. "You mean. . . I. . . I'll be free?"

"As a bird, kitten. Won't it be fun."

"But I'll be able to escape!"

"Of course you will, darling."

It took me a little while to digest the announcement. The more I considered it the more silly seemed my exclamation. Escape! Where? Escape! Why? What was I

talking about. I could never escape. I was my own captive. I looked at my mistress. She was laughing at me. "Where are you escaping to, kitten?"

Without volition I was on my knees beside her chair. I was kissing her hands, clutching at them to save me from myself. "Mistress, don't free me. I don't want to be freed. Don't take me to a party. I'm afraid. . ."

She raised my head to be kissed. "My poor darling, what are you afraid of?"

"I'm afraid of me. I'm happy a slave. I don't want to spoil it. I don't know how I'll behave. Half the girls there will have seen me naked and whipped. Their escorts will probably leer and ask me to dance. I won't know whether they have been told about you and me or not."

"Why, Sweetheart, you're shy." Cynthie was enraptured.

"I suppose I am. I'll feel naked without chains.

"But we are going, Sweeties."

"Vivian might be there." I was clutching at straws.

"Vivian will be there," Cynthie stated emphatically. "He can see you walking around free. It's our chance to make him understand that Fraulein Pabst won't be delivering you back. Much the nicest way. He'll know I don't have you chained in a dungeon."

She had a point. I cheered up. I didn't look forward to telling Viv', but he did have to be told. "Pity it's not fancy dress. I could go as a slave girl," I said brightly. Suddenly I was excited.

"You are shockingly overdressed," Vivian observed irritably. He turned to Cynthie. "Can't you look after her properly?" He sounded like a parent dissatisfied with a Nanny.

"Poor girl needs a bit of fun," Cynthie observed casually.

"And what's the idea of letting her be free? You're supposed to keep her chained?"

We explained to him as gently as we could. I have never seen him more angry. We persevered, but could make no dent in his outrage. Suddenly, he wheeled from us and threaded his way past the couples and to the door. Muriel caught his eye and followed him, concerned and aware of something wrong. They disappeared.

I won't pretend I was happy. But I was not as distraught as I might have been once. This new Vivian frightened me, just as he had frightened me from time to time while I was his prisoner. I turned to Cynthie and found comfort. Feverishly we dived into Gayety. I remember the evening was very long and very tiring. Towards the end of it Muriel showed Cynthie and I a room and left us to go to sleep.

It's really a mistake to go to sleep fully dressed. You wake up after awhile and are shocked to think of all the things you have to do before you can properly get into bed. You think longingly of going back to sleep, but you're bothered, and by that time

you're terribly uncomfortable. So you decide to face the inevitable. You open your eyes and move.

It was a very hard bed. So hard it could not be a bed at all. It must also have been a long sleep. It was now daylight. The room wasn't quite what I remembered either. It had a bareness. I sat up suddenly, wide-eyed and wide awake.

My Mistress sat against the opposite wall. She had been watching my return to consciousness. With a gasp of gladness I scrambled towards her before the words she uttered reached me. "No! Keep still! Don't!"

Pain bit me strangely. I was swung around and stopped. My thumb was hurting. Why my thumb? I looked at it for a moment uncomprehending. It didn't seem to belong with the rest of me. My arm was pulled back. It was very neat, and very deadly. A ring of metal had been riveted round my right thumb below the knuckle. From it a chain tethered me to the ring in the wall. Not a heavy chain. But stronger than I could ever break.

"Oh darling, I'm sorry! I didn't tell you in time. Is your thumb alright?" Cynthie was kneeling and looking at me anxiously. I saw that she was tethered in the same way.

I shuffled back to the wall and examined the tiny shackle that held me. It was a pretty little thing. It was on me tight; it was evil and relentless. About three feet of chain attached me to the wall. The puzzling thing was that it had been riveted. It could not be removed. It's miniature nature should have been reassuring; somehow it wasn't.

"If ever I get my hands on that bitch Muriel!" Cynthie was vehement. "Have you any idea where we are?"

The room was undistinguished, but I knew where it was.

"We're at Wivenhoe," I told my mistress unhappily.

Cynthie considered. "She must have helped. It's the sort of lark that would appeal to Muriel. They slipped something in our punch, and here we are. Not too difficult, I suppose. Probably brought us here in Vivian's own carriage."

Propelled by the same instinct we got to our feet and came as close to each other as the chains would allow. Even when we stretched and held out our free hands, our fingers were a yard apart. "The bastard!" Cynthie said bitterly. "Separate walls! It would take Vivian to think of that."

Disconsolately, we returned to our rings and sat on the floor, dishevelled and untidy in our evening finery. We worked on the metal bands round our thumbs. We spit on them, we twisted and tugged. They held tight. There would be no getting them off. "You know what he's going to do to us, don't you!" my mistress agonized. "The man's insane. We've got to escape."

Escape! It was a word I had forgotten. In neither of my two captivities had I ever come near the possibility. I was quite sure this cunning bond upon our thumbs was only a subtle beginning to a captivity more total than anything I had yet known. But why Cynthie! I could understand Vivian taking me by hook or by crook, but why my mistress. He had possessed her once and let her go. Now he could want only revenge. He would hurt her terribly. My darling mistress. . .

"It's the lesbian thing," Cynthie reflected angrily. "He's jealous. Men hate two girls finding something they can't' share or take away."

"He's taken it away from us already," I mourned. "I think these silly things on our thumbs are his way of telling us how easily he can do it."

"Why didn't he strip us! I'd have thought that the first thing he'd do."

"Not Vivian! He'd find that distasteful. He'll make us do it ourselves, you see! Make us do it in some way we'll hate."

We looked at each other across the bare and cheerless room in love and frustration. "Mistress," I ventured hesitantly, "don't fight him. Don't provoke him. It's probably what he wants."

"I've been thinking of that," Cynthie said thoughtfully. "If we both say 'yes sir' and 'no sir' and bend the knee, he's partly disarmed. Don't suppose we've anything to lose by trying it. But he won't be deceived. Vivian's clever."

Vivian did not come. Betty came, shamefaced and anxious. She carried, awkwardly, our ultimate degradation. Each of us was hurriedly given a cup of water, a slice of bread and a pail. "Reel sorry, I am, misses. Not nice, it ain't. If you'll use the pails I'll be right back and take 'em away." She fled, leaving our questions unanswered.

Where does horror end and farce begin! My mistress and I looked at Betty's gifts, then at each other. We giggled. We laughed. We used the pails and put them as close to the door as our chain would allow. We ate our slice of bread and drank our water. When a red-faced Betty returned, we were ready for her.

"What's he going to do with us, Betty?"

"Betty! Go to the police and put an end to this." Cynthie's voice held authority.

"I can't, miss. You)mow I can't." Betty burst into tears, grabbed the pails and ran.

"Damn, and double damn!" said Cynthie, gritting her teeth. "If ever I get to lay my hands on milady Muriel HessingtonBrowne I'll make her squeal. . . the rotten bitch!"

"Someone mention my name?" The dulcet voice was honey sweet. Muriel HessingtonBrowne stood in the doorway smiling at us brightly.

As usual, Viv' was a jump ahead of his captives. Who would have expected Muriel at Wivenhoe!

"What are you doing here?" Cynthie demanded angrily and without hope.

"I'm here to cane your bottom, darling. I found that little entertainment of your's habit forming." Muriel's eyes sparkled with mischief.

"Get us free of these absurd things." My mistress rattled her chain demonstratively. "If you let us go home now without further nonsense, I won't go to the police."

"Don't be silly, darling." Muriel HessingtonBrowne deigned no consideration

of the threat. She turned to me. "Darling Jewel, I do hope you are ready to have that sweet derriere of yours nicely striped again?"

"Where's Vivian?" I asked sulkily.

"Here I am, poppet." He was as beautifully timed as a stage entrance. "Welcome home, and all that. Glad you brought your friend."

Muriel looked at him expectantly. "Dear Lady Cynthia is doing the high and mighty act. What do you suggest, Vivian?"

"Cane her bottom, dear girl. Nothing like it. Half a mo' I'll get a few items and a chair. I'm just an audience for the once."

The few items were canes and whips and crops. My mistress and I eyed them shiveringly. Viv' set the chair against a wall and sat with the air of a man about to enjoy some good theatre.

Muriel eyed us both delightedly. "Im going to be quite

"cruel, darlings. Hope you don't mind." She turned her attention to the display of instruments laid out on the floor.

"We all owe dear Muriel her little bit of pleasure," Vivian announced equably. "She's been most helpful."

"Did you give her thirty pieces of silver as well?" Cynthie was bitter.

"A few extra for that, darling," Muriel cooed.

The advent of Muriel adversely affected our plan of battle. But my mistress tried. "Look, both of you, Jewel and I will accept shame and humiliation. We know we are helpless, so we don't want to fight. We will obey. There's no need of whips and. . . things."

Vivian laughed derisively. Muriel cooed with pleasure. "Darling, you're so sweet. . . and so silly. You know perfectly well I'm going to shame you and whip you as well - hard to have one without the other. You're going to enjoy a lot of lovely pain purely for my pleasure. . ." She laughed suggestively. "Remember now, what's good for your drawing room is every bit as good right here." She flexed a limber cane in competent hands.

Cynthie flushed. Muriel's touché struck home. "Oh, very well," she conceded crossly. "I suppose I'm a bitch the same as you. But take it out on me, not on Jewel."

"Poor darling little Jewel." Muriel's words were as derisive as Viv's laugh. "Looking after your little lovebird, aren't you? You're quite absurd, darling. You know as well as I do that dear little Jewel is designed by nature to be whipped, so whipped she will be, and hard too. It's really her fault I've got these erotic thrills running up and down my spine. There's something about her. . ."

"Damn you, there must be some way of settling this!" My mistress was angrily defensive.

"Of course, dear girl. Just bend over nicely and bare your bottom."

Cynthie flushed. Her eyes went from one to the other of us around the room. She lifted her hand and examined with hatred the small metal band that made her

captive. She shrugged resentfully and did as she was told.

To bend over when you are naked seems quite natural. Your bottom sticks out to be caned. When a girl is naked anything comes naturally. She is designed and ready for punishment. Once you are nude, shame is defeated.

But to bend over, fully clothed, and then be compelled to lay bare that one portion of yourself! That is obscenity! That is cringing shame. Cynthie did it with scarlet face and heaving breast, stripping away her under-things and throwing them in a pile upon the floor like a gage of battle. With a final glare of hatred and defiance at the girl who was going to whip her, she positioned herself as conveniently as her tether would allow, flipping up her skirt as she bent over.

It was a beautiful bottom roguishly displayed. The fluffs and flounces framed it. But the effect was untidy. The clothes added their own touch of humility as though the bending girl was morally delinquent. The school room connotation matched ill with this room in which we were to be given pain that another might know joy.

"Six hard ones," said Muriel succinctly.

My mistress took them. She flinched and gasped, but she took them without breaking pose. I watched and cringed. Muriel was vicious. She wanted results. Perhaps it would be better to scream. When the six were done Cynthie straightened up, shamefaced and hurting. She let her skirt fall and stood, uncertain. I knew how she longed to rub her wounds. I knew, too, the pride that prevented the act.

"And six more, darling."

Muriel's insouciant demand invoked a shocked silence. Cynthie was frozen in dismay, defenceless.

"I don't think I can manage six more," Cynthie admitted wanly.

"Well, you'll just have to, won't you, darling.?" Muriel suggested cheerfully.

Cynthie backed against the wall, holding her chain wrapped around her hand against injury to her thumb, a female at bay. "I can't bend over and take six more like that," she said flatly. "There's no need to hit me that hard. You know there isn't."

"Over you go, Cynthie."

"Please!"

"Bend over and hold it for six, or I'll raise it to twelve."

Muriel was enjoying every moment.

Her eyes flashing hate and misery, Cynthie once again accepted shame. The cane flashed and thrummed. Watching, one could not fail to realize Muriel's intent. She would break the spirit of this proud girl who had been delivered into her hands. The weals on the soft bottom were vivid. At the end Cynthie fell to her knees. She buried her face in her hands and sobbed out her anguish. The chain from her prisoned thumb rose in a graceful loop to the wall.

That should have been the end.

But it was not the end. "Just another half dozen, sweetheart," Muriel announced imperturbably.

Cynthia continued to weep as though she had not heard the cruel sentence. But she was allowed no respite. The cane rapped an exposed ankle. Springing to her feet she again backed against the wall and faced her tormentor, her face wet with tears. "I'm sorry, I can't," she said an though that was the end of it.

"You can, y'know."

The tortured girl turned to the man who watched. "Vivian, stop her. She's going too far. She's hitting me as though I was a horse. I'd try and be a good sport. But I can't stand this."

"You're in good hands, Cynthie," Viv' assured her cheerfully. "Just be a good little noblewoman and do what you're told."

My mistress turned in desperation to the girl with the cane, her eyes were pleading. "Muriel, don't be beastly to me. I know I can't get away. I know I have to do what I'm told. But I just can't stand still for another six. I'll be rolling on the floor. Or is that what you want. . . please!"

"Six more, Cynthie. Touch your toes. Up with your skirt." The demand was adamant.

It was the last straw. I expect it was intended to be. Cynthie broke in fury, clutching her chain she leaped and kicked, the heel of her shoe connecting with Muriel's shin.

Muriel yelped in pain and hopped on one leg, holding her injury with exploring hands. My poor mistress stood listless, shocked by what she had done. Her tether chain hanging in mute testimony of her helplessness. Vivian's eyes glowed with an excitement all his own. I stood impotent. I could do nothing.

Three pairs of eyes, each with their own special involvement, watched Muriel deal with her bruise. When the hopping stopped, she rubbed tenderly, then stood erect, eyes venomous, mouth tight-lipped. Without pause, she returned the cane to the assortment on the floor and carefully chose a whip. She did it all with a deliberate slowness as though her choice was vital, her intent unequivocal. She limped back to face she who had done the injury.

"strip, Cynthie." All feeling had been expunged from the voice.

My poor mistress! She stood tethered. Unable to flee or to fight. Finding no mercy in the girl who had given the blunt command, she turned to Vivian who simply nodded approval. "Do what you're told," he said tersely. "You asked for it."

She turned to me, not for the help I could not give, but seeking compassion and the assurance she was not alone in what was being done in the bare unfriendly room. At the end of her visual confirmation of hopelessness she shrugged and wearily set her fingers on the fastenings of her dress.

Muriel gloated. Never before had she known such power. She stood with her whip, eyes glued upon the girl who was slowly stripping herself naked so that she might be whipped. I watched too in horror and misery. But Vivian's face was rapt, absorbed,

his mind busy with fantasies I did not share. Perhaps he was the loneliest of all of us. My Viv'! Mine no longer. . .

"Please don't make it more than I can bear," my mistress humbled herself to plead. She stood unashamedly naked,

facing the cruelty to come. Hanging from her tether on her thumb were such clothing as the chain would not release.

"Tear it." Muriel was wasting neither words or time.

Wretchedly, Cynthie did as she was ordered. It was not an easy task for one free hand. It was also hurtful to destroy a thing of beauty. But soon she was kicking the newly discarded things to join that other pathetic small pile upon the floor. She stood bare and defenceless for what was to be done to her. "How do you want me to stand?" she asked diffidently.

"I really don't care." Muriel was going to be brutal.

Without hope, Cynthie faced against the wall, her hands covering her breasts. It was the most defensive position she could take. How sad and pathetic she seemed standing there, the chain falling away from her thumb hidden between her and the stone. She waited. I held my breath.

The whip slashed across the white shoulders. Its agony flattened her against the wall, seeking its shelter. A second lash across the alabaster skin brought a moan and a writhe, the third broke the pose. It is more than a girl can endure to stand still and naked to be whipped. It is against nature. She must be tied. I know!

It was terrible for me to watch. I wanted to turn away. But one doesn't. I don't know why. Perhaps we think that by watching we absorb a little of the pain. But Vivian watched in glory, his eyes joyous. He was a man I did not know.

Cynthia abandoned herself to instinct and the compulsions of pain. Tethered as she was she could move freely within the limit of her chain. There was no posture she could not contrive. The seeking thong drove her into all of them. There is no logic in the motions of a naked girl beneath a whip. Yet, perhaps there is a more natural rationality in whatever surcease she may glean from struggle. As she contorts the whip may hurt her more or hurt her less. But after each stroke has cut at her, she may turn away and clutch her hurt. The chain denies escape, but does not invoke the awfulness of immobility. In this there is a strange comfort. If you have not been a girl naked beneath the whip you cannot know these things. How exclusive is the club the tortured join!

Muriel whipped Cynthie as she pleased. It might be upon the back, the thighs, the breasts or the hairy sex. Each was presented as the naked girl fought and twisted against the pain. Each brought its own cry of protest as it suffered. Often, in seeking to minimize the bitterness of the thong, the distraught victim forgot the chain and would cry out in pain and frustration as her thumb was snubbed in flight. She would re-enter her span of tolerance to continue her battle against the scourge. There was no mercy, no pause. Muriel was triumphant. The small metal band about our thumbs held my mistress and I in total subjection. Vivian could have thought of no more humiliating frustration.

It went on and on beyond the excusable. Beyond even the dictates of revenge. Cynthie's movements were slowing. I could not bear to see her treated so. Forgetting

all the whip had taught me, I tugged at my tether and demanded angrily of the man I had loved, "Stop her, Viv'! Stop her! This is insane."

The whipping stopped. Muriel turned and surveyed my distress with amused enjoyment. Lazily, Vivian dragged his attention from the moaning Cynthie and bestowed it upon me. "Forgotten how to address me, poppet?" His eyes were cold.

"Oh, damn you and your nonsense!" I flung at him. "Stop playing this rotten game. Stop this beastly cruelty. Don't you remember me? I'm Jewel. . . the girl you used to love. Oh, Viv'!"

Everyone was shocked. I was shocked myself. I was a slave girl who had forgotten she was slave. The cold hand of fear touched my spine. It was not my Viv' I was subject to, it was someone else. Someone without pity. Vivian smiled at an enraptured Muriel. "Perhaps you would do the honours, darling?" he suggested casually.

My heart sank. But I reassured myself with the knowledge that what I would suffer now I would have suffered anyway. At least it was bringing a respite to my darling mistress. I stood, defiant and desolate, before Muriel's scrutiny.

"Off with your clothes, Jewel dear." No animosity. It sounded like an admonition to a child to drink up its milk.

I turned to the only hope of succour there was. "Please, Viv', please! Stop it!"

"For your own good, poppet," he adjured languidly.

I tried Muriel. "Please don't be too cruel." I hoped it would sound like an appeal to reason. I began to tug at my clothes.

"Why darling girl, one has to be cruel to be kind!" Muriel was laughing at me mockingly. "I love punishing you. But I love you too, y'know. Scream all you want. I won't give you extra. You're so sweet . .. . .

I tore the sleeves and the straps that the tether would not allow to fall away. I could have cried over ruining that lovely dress my mistress had given me. But my tears would flow soon enough. Cynthie was still sobbing brokenly in unhappy witness to all that was being said and done. She was vividly striped with irregular weals so that her nudity was decorated, almost with beauty. Soon my own nakedness would be similarly striated.

I knew I was in for it. So I saved myself the shame of more pleas. I did as Cynthie had done and pressed myself against the wall. It would shield me against the curling tip of the lash for as long as I could manage to stand still. My heart was pounding. If I was whipped every day all my life, this moment would always be awful. The band on my thumb burned like fire. I hated it.

"Why, darling, aren't you a little precipitate?" Muriel sounded hurt.

What now? I knew it would not be good. I turned and faced her inquiringly. "I'm sorry. I thought you wanted to whip me," I said humbly.

"Oh, but darling, I do! But I've just thought of something really sweet." She turned sparkling eyes to Vivian. "The dear girl is simply going to hate this."

She bent to the array of things designed to hurt, and selected a cane. She smiled at me affectionately, tilted my chin and kissed my lips. I knew then she was going to

hurt me terribly. "Now I have you naked, dearest girl, I'm not going to cane your bottom. I'm going to cane your hands. Isn't that a lovely surprise?"

I curled up inwardly. But without waiting to be told held out my right hand. I'd sooner be whipped than have my hands caned. I'm sure she knew this. She cut me savagely and happily watched as I went through the shaming motions and made the shaming cries. As soon as I could bring myself to do it I held out my other arm. I would rob her of whatever satisfactions I could. She wounded me with precise cruelty. The third blow crossed my palm and rapped upon the metal on my thumb, setting my tether into clinking motion. She and Viv were ecstatically happy. Cynthie watched bitterly as I was reduced to tears and, finally, to the shameful pleadings I had sworn to eschew. It is hard for naked girls to be heroic.

When the caning stopped, and after I had controlled my writhings, I stood abject and passive, my throbbing hands limp at my sides, my cheeks wet with the tears of which I was no longer ashamed. I looked at no one. I endured within my small world of pain, pain which I knew would soon be compounded on my nakedness. I waited, letting them feast their eyes on a maiden's subjection. I was without hope.

Muriel let me stand. I waited for the order that would position me as she desired. It did not come. Instead, without warning, the lash cut me from across my right shoulder down below my left breast. I screamed in agony and dissolved into a frenzied struggle to escape the inescapable. I became a squirming tangle of arms and legs and breasts striving for a sanctuary that was not there.

A century of anguish! At least a century. . .

I expect it was quite a long time before I took an interest in anything except myself. I had curled into as compact a ball as I could contrive. It had protected much. But my back felt laced to ribbons. I sobbed and moaned my way back to a willingness to open my eyes and look cringingly around. Our tormentors had gone. Cynthie and I were alone. She sat anxiously watching my return to life.

"Are you alright, kitten?" Her heart was in the words.

I nodded and looked my love at her. I was not alright. But I was alive, just as she was alive. But to what end! To be whipped and whipped forever! To be kept chained so that we might not touch.

"It has to end, darling! It has to." Her voice was vehement.

"How can it end, mistress?" I wailed. I gestured with my chained hand. "We'll never, never get free."

"Don't call me 'Mistress' any more, kitten." Her voice was bitter. "I'm nobody's mistress. I couldn't be mistress to a pet poodle. I'm naked, I'm chained. I'm a slave to a madman and a bitch the same as you."

"What can we do, Mistress?" Even in slavery I was still her slave.

"Oh, darling, you're sweet! If only I could hold you. I want you so much." She edged forward until her captive hand was at her back. I did the same. It brought us a frustratingly little bit closer. She tried to smile. "My people will start a hunt for me. They can easily trace me to the HessingtonBrowne's. They have to find us. They

have tot"

"But when?" I moaned. "It could be days and days. We could be whipped to death."

Cynthie nodded somberly. "But we can't be sure of that.

Vivian was angry with us both. Muriel was simply enjoying a new experience. They are unpredictable. We have to work on Muriel and on Betty. Try and frighten them over what's being done to us. In the meantime be very, very humble and obedient. I hate doing it, but I'm going to. I'd do anything to keep us from being whipped again the way we've just been." She grinned wryly. "I don't think I was ever quite sure, but I can understand now how, if you whip a girl enough, she'll become your salve. Oh, darling! How cruel was I to you! This serves me right."

I could not comfort her. Neither of us could do anything but mourn. Two naked girls locked in a bare prison, their love sundered by two short lengths of chain, fearful of each hour and each day. We tugged and twisted at the ring upon our thumbs to no avail. It was something to do, an expression of our frustration. When Betty came with her shameful burdens she scarcely paused before fleeing from our pleas and demands. We spent a miserable night huddled on the floor. If we turned in sleep, the chain would jerk and hurt our thumb. But after the morning had brought Betty again with her pails and the bread and the water, there came a change. The change was Betty herself. She returned carrying a burden.

"You going to let me put these on without fuss?" she asked, looking from one to the other of us shamefacedly.

We looked at her and at the ankle chains she held out awkwardly. "Why?" The demand came from us in unison.

"Master's orders, o'course. Got a surprise for you, he has."

"More torture?" Cynthie asked hopelessly.

"No, miss." Betty smiled in an effort of friendliness. "If you let me put these on your feet you'll ace for yerself. Mustn't tell you."

"We can't leave here with these damn things on us." Cynthie held up her captive hand.

"Master give this little thing here." Betty held up a bit of bent metal. "Opens up the big link next yer thumb." She looked at us both pleadingly, "Promise you won't fight?"

We let her have her way. Our ankles were closely linked. Our hobbled steps would be short. We could not fight. The metal remained riveted on our thumbs. No doubt it provided a useful facility and would be used again. Our first act was to stumble into each other's arms and find, lovingly, the comfort our chains had denied. "Better not do too much of that," she warned sympathetically. "Master don't like it."

Holding hands we followed Betty's lead. Our steps were short and slow. Vivian was taking no chances. But the room was close. Betty opened the door and motioned us in. It closed behind us with a solid snap. We stood in wide-eyed amazement.

Muriel HessingtonBrowne was an ivory statue. Her wrists were clamped by metal

bands one on each side of the whipping post. Her back was to us, but she made no move to try and see who her visitor might be. Her pose was weary as though she had

given up caring. Her skin was unmarked. She had been fastened helplessly to the whipping post and left alone.

In such circumstances silence can be unbearable. Muriel broke it, petulantly, angrily. "Let me loose, you absolute cad. Touch me with one of your damn whips and I'll make you wish you'd never been born. You must be insane!

"Why, darling Muriel!" Cynthie cooed. "Fancy meeting you here."

The effect was startling. The captive girl tensed and twisted in her bonds to look back over one shoulder in disbelief. We clinked our way into her range of vision. Muriel blushed. She was quite naked and very helpless. Her quick eyes assessed our chains and the bands upon our thumbs. "But, darling, what's he doing with you now?" She was obviously outraged by her own predicament and surprised by ours.

"It's you who has to tell us. You're part of the Establishment, aren't you?" Cynthie said sarcastically.

"Don't be horrid! Look what that absolute rotter's done to me. His idea of a joke, I expect. Don't suppose you can get those things off my wrists, can you?"

"I wouldn't if I could, darling." Cynthie was not pleased with Muriel.

I examined the clamps upon the captive wrists. They were securely locked. Muriel was there to stay.

"I suppose you're going to be unkind?" Muriel ventured tentatively.

"D'you expect to be showered with kisses! Look at us both. It's you who put these marks on us. Remember!"

Muriel sniffed. "Oh, alright. Get your revenge. I think that's what his majesty wants you to do. He mentioned that long box over there has all that's necessary." She looked at us with a sudden little girl appeal, and said hesitantly, "Darlings, I'll try and be a good sport about. . . whatever you do. I know I've been a bit of a bitch. But. . . it seemed such fun." She grimaced in rueful apology.

Cynthia and I exchanged glances. "Hurting you won't get us out of here," I told the girl who was waiting to be whipped.

"We are not going to get out," Muriel said with finality. "You're helpless, I'm helpless. Vivian can easily keep us. We can't fight chains and iron clamps and things. I'm so angry! I was such a fool!"

"You were, weren't you," Cynthie agreed without sympathy. "Damn rotten trick you helped Vivian play on Jewel and I."

A silence lengthened. Each of us surveying the bleak future in our own way. The girl at the post twisted tentatively against her captive wrists. It was Muriel who said slowly, as after much thought, "Look, darling, we're locked in here together, probably for the day. I want you to do something. . ." She looked at us dubiously. "You'll think I'm as insane as Vivian"

"We can't get you free of those things on your wrists," Cynthie said coldly.

"I don't suppose you can. It wasn't that.. . ." Muriel appeared in difficulties

over what she wanted to say. She flung the words at us as though fearful they might not get said. "I've been a real bitch. I've played with something I should have left alone. Punish me. Do what Vivian wants you to do. Whip me!" She looked at us defensively. "I want you to."

Cynthie and I looked at each other. A female instinct made us understand. I knew that in similar circumstances I might have made the same strange request.

Muriel misinterpreted our silence. "Don't you see," she explained plaintively, "I treated you hatefully. I'm ashamed. I expect I'm a bitch, but not that much of a bitch! Vivian's got all three of us now. We're all in the same boat. But you hate me, and I don't want you to hate me. So make me the same as you. Whip me!" She tossed her head in a wry gesture of admission. "Oh, I know! There's something erotic in this whole thing we don't understand. Maybe I want to try and find out. Whip me, please, while I still have the courage to ask."

"You don't understand how it hurts," Cynthie said contemptuously.

"Alright, teach me!" There was no mistaking Muriel's vehemence.

Cynthie shrugged and went to the box. When she hobbled back she held a cane and a whip. "You won't be able to bear it, y'know," she said questioningly.

"I know I won't! I'll howl and beg. But let's make a pledge that mustn't be broken no matter how much noise I make. Twenty with the cane and twenty with the whip." Muriel was determined to suffer.

"But that's a shocking sentence for your first time!" Even Cynthie was loath to be so cruel.

"Very well then, fifteen of each." Muriel sounded not unwilling to make the sacrifice.

Cynthie handed me the cane.

I won't make any excuses. When a girl deserves to be whipped, and when that same girl asks you to whip her as a favour, it is hard to feel guilt. I cut Muriel's lovely bottom as hard as I could. I cut it again and again with few pauses. The weals were gorgeous. I knew that between us three such a thing as guilt would be utterly nebulous. . . an intangible. Where was it joy and anguish merged! The white bottom accepted my brand. I cut it again and again.

Muriel was quite marvellous. It took six or seven strokes to break her. You could see her fighting for control, but when she lost it, she went beautifully wild with a total abandonment to pain and to shame. How beautiful it was to bear her pleas, as she had heard mine, and heed them not. This was not revenge. It was a sharing.

We allowed her to sob herself into silence before Cynthie began to mark her with the whip. I moved forward to where I could see Muriel's face and watch for the tip of the lash to curl and bite her flank, her hip, her ribs, her breast. The flicker of the thong was so instant it could not be sun. But a moment after it had gone there would spring up upon the soft girlish skin the white line that slowly merged into red. Sometimes there would be a speck of blood. Muriel screamed and moaned without cessation. She was very beautiful.

We were standing in that quiet aftermath of agony when the door opened. Betty's

eyes sought mine. She beckoned. "Just you, miss." I looked at Cynthie and shrugged. What could any of us do but obey! I clinked my way into the passage. Betty closed and locked the door. "I'm sorry, miss." Poor Betty, she was always sorry. So I let her tie my wrists behind my back. I was rewarded by the removal of my shackles. I could walk. How impossible it all was!

Lunch on the terrace with Viv'. It was like old times. It was the old Viv'. The anklets were locked on me again. My hands were untied. I would once have kissed him. I did not now. I ate hungrily. I might be back on bread and water in an hour.

"Hate me, poppet?"

"Yea." I did not stop eating.

"Would would you consider a suitable punishment?"

"For you or for me?" I asked, no longer caring.

He sighed patiently. "Leave females together for a little while and look what happens! Darling girl, I'm going to have to be severe with you."

"Are you ever anything else?" I speared a Brussel sprout.

"You're in love with a girl, aren't you?" he asked bluntly.

"Yes. I was in love with a man once. But all he wanted to do was whip me. As far as I know that's all he wants to do still."

"Come, poppet, you're not telling me Cynthie never touched you?"

"What she did to me she did with love." I kept my interest centered on my plate.

"I'm going to hang you up by your wrists and give you a sound thrashing. Knock some sense back into you," Viv' promised blandly.

"What's for dessert?" I asked with equal panache.

Repartee is wonderful. But it only takes a girl so far. When I found myself actually hanging by my wrists I wasn't nearly so brave. I looked at Viv' forlornly. "If you whip me enough I'll do or say anything," I told him miserably. "But what good does it do?"

"Does me a lot of good, poppet," he said with relish, and cut the thong around my waist.

I danced like a puppet on a string. I screamed as hard as I could. Damn shame and pride! I was a naked girl being whipped. I might as well behave like one. Viv' cut and slashed at me with tremendous gusto. My punishment had no end. I pleaded piteously and uselessly. I was being whipped to death. I was going to die. . .

When it stopped, Viv' asked casually, "Any chance you remember my proper title?"

"Yes, lord."

"That's better. Now, tell me. Are you a lesbian?"

"Yes, lord." Why lie!

He resumed my whipping. I resumed my screaming. Before death, there came a pause. I was free, totally wonderfully free. I opened my eyes. Vivian was as naked as I. Roughly and competently, he laid me on the floor and ravished me. It was very terrible and very wonderful.

Aeons of glory passed.

My master raised me to my feet. He held me very close and kissed me very hard. "Little Jewel, are you a lesbian?"

"No, lord."

"Are you wishful to be punished for having been one?"

"Yes, lord."

"Tell me in your own words."

"I was unfaithful to you, lord. Please punish me." I was in the grip of emotion I could not fathom, nor did I care.

"Fetch me that cane."

I fetched it. I kissed it. I knelt and proffered it.

"Your hands were brutally caned yesterday, were they not?"

"Yes, lord."

... Ask me to cane them again now."

I did not hesitate. I had no will. I took position and held out my arm. "Cane my hands please, lord."

A searing cut on each. I did not move. My arms hung, my hands flaming at my sides. "Thank you, lord."

I knew what to do. I bent and touched my toes. "Cane my bottom, please, lord.

Something has possessed me. I feel the agony. But I bear it as though it belonged to another. Six raised welts. When I am allowed to stand I can feel their ridges in my flesh with my fingertips. "Thank you, lord."

I fetch the cord and hold out my wrists. I watch them bound and lifted to the sky. When I hang, the words are easy to say. "Whip me, please, lord."

I am whipped. All of me. If I think my master has missed a recess, I remind him. I lift a leg that the agony may be placed upon my secret place. I moan but I do not scream. He does not whip my breasts. He loves them. I am glad. When my feet are again on the floor and my wrists released, instinct guides me still. I sink down and hold up my arms. "Love me, please, lord."

I am much loved.

When that glory, too, but lingers, I ask the question. "Am I not enough, lord?"

My master nods. He has no need of words with me.

"Release the others, lord." I kneel. "Chain me and keep me always. Please lord, I would wear your chains. Never let me be free." I held up my hand and pointed to the metal upon my thumb. "Let me keep this too, lord."

Again the quiet nod. I can have my hearts desire.

"You must tell them," my Master says. "They would not believe me."

I tell them. Cynthie and Monica look upon my freedom and my face. They believe. They are female. They know! I give them the keys to their fetters. I go. I dare not linger.

I return to the lush apartment where my master waits. I hold out my hands so that he may lock upon my wrists the lovely silver chains he has had made for me alone. Again we love, we love, we love . . . The world is very beautiful. It is all mine, mine, mine! Then he chains my ankles with other exquisite links, long enough that I may walk, but never run. Around my waist he locks a silver belt. It bears his name and can never be removed. He lifts my left hand and Kisses it. Upon its third finger he places the diamond ring. It sparkles as does his eyes and mine. I do not believe, but it is true. My Master laughs joyously at my bewilderment.

"A slave girl can be a wife, poppet."

"Yes, lord."

"And a wife can be a slave girl, beloved Jewel."

"Yes, lord." The whip marks upon my flesh are tender ad I move or touch. My caned hands still throb with an agony all their own. The metal band upon my thumb burns ecstatically as does the ring upon my finger. I am owned and I am loved. I kneel and kiss my Master's hand.

In this entrancing story of the girl, Jewel, F.E. Campbell portrays the cool and calculated enslavement of a maiden by the man she had always hoped to marry. A man who she adores through all the impositions he imposes and who, without the brusing of her blithe spirit, uses chain and whip to mould her to his heart's desire.

In this tale of maiden bondage the author touches, with his usual uneering skill, on the centre and the core of the love of Women. A love that can survive the whip, the cage and the shackles. Nay, not survive! But flourish and flower in pain and suffering and the loss of hope.

Here, too, is Lady Cynthia who makes her own discoveries of bondage and finds therein an unexpected ecstacy in the privilege of being, at different times, both slave and Mistress.

Over both, the enigmatic Vivian is Lord.

Barbara C. Behr
THE HOUSE OF MILAN CORP.