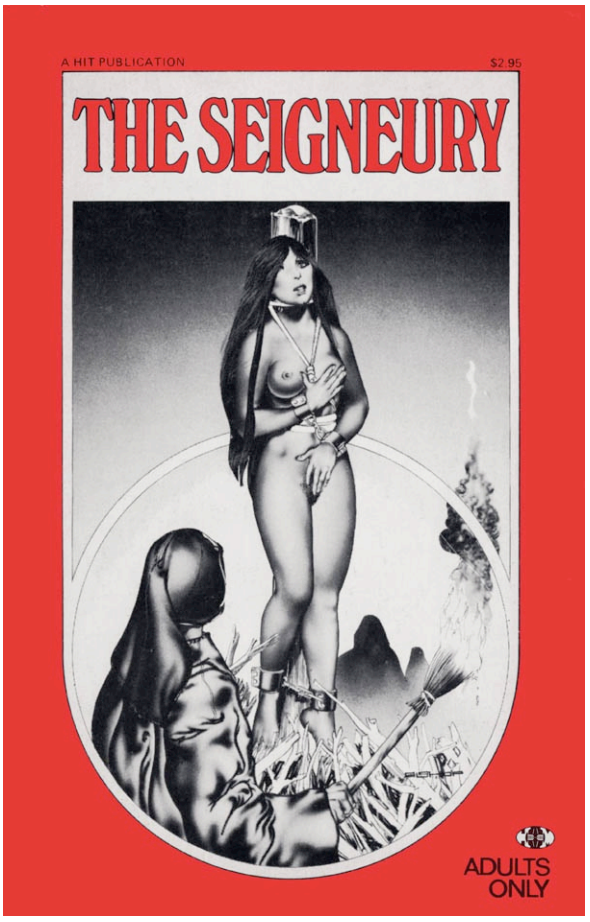



# The Seigneury

## by F.E. Campbell

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*illustrated by* The *Bishop*

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# THE SEIGNEURY

## Chapter One
## Innocent Witch

Griselda had come to know the opening of the door would never catch her unaware. The thudding of the bolts and the turning of the lock in the massive door were a prelude to its ponderous swing on its protesting hinges. In breathless hope, she turned from the heavily barred window to confront another of what she had come to think of as "faces."

It was a man she had not previously seen. His intelligent features belied the rough garb of Norman England. His appraisal of her seminudity was more than casual. The slender threat of a dagger hung from his belt. His hand idly swung the iron ring with its frightening keys - the keys of dungeon doors.

"'Tis a fine view you have."

It was the pebble in the pool, sending out its exploring circles. They examined each other cautiously. He had broken his silence, but Griselda was chary of her own. In the past days she had flung the obvious at the faces too many times without profit. She knew not what to say.

"You'll be getting out of here." His statement was oddly tentative.

"Now?" She could not quench the sudden hope in the single word.

"Oh, aye, soon enough."

"And I can go home?"

His silence was negative, but she persisted. Lifting her chained hands, and kicking fretfully at the links joining her ankles, she asked, "Am I to be rid of these?"

"They're riveted on thee, lass. ye'll wear 'em."

"But if I am to be released . . . ?"

"I said out of this tower chamber, lady, naught about release."

Griselda sighed, deflated. He was just another man, saying the same things. Her tears of disappointment had already been shed. She had no more. "Where, then, do I go?" she asked listlessly.

"To the stake."

Her mind flitted ridiculously in every direction save the true import of what he had said. Only the gravity of his regard finally brought the fatal word into focus. Her heart beat painfully. "Please don't joke," she pleaded breathlessly, "I'm frightened enough as it is. It's been awful, chained in here like this - four days!"

"'Tis the Bishop's ruling, girl. Thou art judged a witch."

The very enormity of the statement gave her the courage of anger. "Oh, stop it! Stop it!, I've had enough. I was a fool ever to listen." Her voice broke slightly. "I want to go home."

"As do all condemned witches, lass."

"Oh, stop that 'lass' and all this silly talk and pretending. You're like a lot of silly kids playing a game." She again raised and fingered the metal circlets on her wrists. "And these horrible things too! I'm sick of them."

He grunted dourly. "They'll confine thee to the end, woman. Nay doubt the smith will rake 'em from the ashes."

His prosaic thought evoked a terrible vision. Ashes! Her own! And the fire-blackened irons she now bore on wrist and ankle. Desperation lent credence to the impossible. "Bishop! What Bishop?" she demanded sullenly, "I haven't been tried or - or - Oh, this is all too absurd!"

"Ye'll be burned today, Griselda Greaves."

All the male "faces" were enemies. None were kind. None willing to help. What was the use of being sweetly reasonable or trying to play her part! They carried things too far . . . ! "Don't you know when to stop!" she exclaimed passionately. "You spoil things. D'you want me in hysterics?

"A few screams do no harm, lady."

"But it's so unfair! You hold all the cards. I'm a - a - a nothing! And if you think I'll swallow this nonsense about burning me at the stake . . . ! You can go jump in the lake."

"Yet the stake awaits thee, girl. In a little while ye'll see."

The half naked girl leant back against the stone of the wall but found no comfort in its chill. "Is that all ye sought me for?" she asked helplessly. Then in fury, "Damn you, I'm beginning to talk your fool idiom! Get me out of here!

"Soon. Does't want absolution?"

"Shove it! I've had a bellyful."

"Humility would serve thee best, lady."

"Look, you can be back in the eleventh century if you want. But I'm not. Your show's clever and damn convincing. But it's a rotten lousy trick to play on a girl. What do I have to do to get out of here?"

"Burn."

Again the vision! Screaming as the flames rose. Flinging her bound nakedness against the chains and the unyielding timber to which she was fastened. But it was all too easy to visualize - too many pictures of Joan of Arc! Angrily, she fought down panic. This man's gift for the wrong word in the right place was brutal. Urgently, she pleaded, "Couldn't you give me sensible answers - please?"

"I could give thee a bit o'comfort."

Bitterly, she considered it the first human thing he'd said. "You mean fuck me?"

"Aye. 'Tis considered a pleasure."

"For you, I'm sure! You should have thought of that before you chained my feet together."

"They are not that nigh, lass. 'Tis still possible."

Griselda had little doubt it was. "No thanks," she said stiffly, "that wasn't in the contract."

He looked at her strangely, as at an anomaly. "Thy speech," he queried, "'tis naught of Norman or Saxon nor of women . . . "

"It's yours that's screwy," she told him tartly. "Look! Go to your boss man and tell him I want out."

"Thy breasts are passing beautiful. . ." he observed irrelevantly.

"They are, aren't they!" The girl flamed. "You've been looking at them ever since you came. Try a topless joint - "

He shook his head sadly, shrugged, was about to say something but changed his mind and exited. The door thumped shut, the bolts thudded home. The lock turned. The girl by the window was alone.

Griselda shook her head as though to clear it of a dream. Clasping the bars with her fettered hands, she gazed from the tower room out across the parkland. It was verdantly peaceful. It could have been England - but it could have been many places! Venerable trees and greensward. . . . Her eyes roved for power lines of planes. There were none. The scene was ageless. She cast aside the idea of being adrift in time. A sense of unreality her stone prison and her visitors had, without obvious intent, imposed. In a continuing fascination with their incongruity she again played idly with her chains. They were of rough iron. Crafted well enough, but the chain could have been improved at any good hardware, and the bands around her wrists were heavy and rendered immutable by the rivets whose splayed heads shone raw against the rust.

The rivets were frightening. They were forever. During the days of her captivity, Griselda had come to realize the metal welded on her limbs was less to inhibit than to engender a state of mind. Her chains were a symbol. But of what! Quite soon after the door had first slammed on her she had discovered the fetters prohibited nothing. They were simply an irritating and shaming imposition on anything she wished to do. She was never free of their clinking and their weight. She had even considered using the chain between her wrists as a weapon, and her wristlets as clubs . . . ! But she was frightened of consequences and the damage she might do. Even if she gained freedom from her tower prison she could not run. That was the one certain thing the shackles denied. Even walking must be dealt with in caution.

The four days had not been easy. Her nights on the straw were restless and haunted. Bedeviled by recrimination of her own stupidity. From the first, she had been grateful for any visitor no matter how unrewarding. Mostly they were men who had stood and used their ambiguous words as an excuse to examine her nakedness. It was only on the third day Sister Amaldis had vouchsafed her the scrap of white which now hung from one hip, shielding her sex. Her breasts were bare, her navel a sweet innocence on a belly in which there was little food.

Sister Amaldis was the most provoking enigma of all.

Her coif and nun's habit precluded intimacy, but she was kind. Her voice was soft and sympathetic, evasive as the rest, but sweetly feminine in a world of men. Her features were classically exquisite. Griselda wondered if truly she was shaven bald as nuns must be. She suspected, too, that beneath the habit there was a female body vibrant and still young.

And The Seigneur! Griselda had not even seen The Seigneur.

The captive's reverie was shattered by the door. This time it was Sister Amaldis herself. Deferentially, two soldiers took up positions against the portal. As usual, the male eyes found their prisoner's breasts of absorbing interest.

"Ma pauvre cherie!" Sister Amaldis swept across the prison and enveloped its chaired occupant in cloth and ardent arms. "My poor child - "

"Sister, I am not a child. I am twenty-six."

"We are all children in the sight of God."

Griselda sighed. Everything was quicksilver. "Sister, please! Please get me released."

"It is today your spirit leaves us, cherie."

"Okay, Sister, okay. Some idiot has already - "

"But it is to be, dear girl Our good Bishop - "

"All right, all right, I'll play it right on through for you. But tonight I leave with my check. Okay?"

"I know naught of this 'okay' - "

"Sister, drop it. Between us girls there's no need. This whole thing's getting me scared."

"The fear of judgement, child - "

"Yes, yes, I'm a child, and I'm a prisoner in a great big castle, and I'm chained, and I'm naked, and a lot of kooks assure me they're going to burn me in a bonfire. . . . Dammit, Sister, why wouldn't I be scared! Give me a break."

"Such strange speech, beloved - "

"And there'll be a lot more of it if I don't get out! Look, if you'd only carried through on that first day! I was all hyped up for whatever it was. But days and nights in this damn dungeon all alone and fixed the way I am - It's got me into a dither. Something's gone wrong and I'm frightened."

Sister Amaldis regarded her perturbed charge sadly. "'Tis a thing most terrible to happen to so lovesome a morsel as thee," she mourned, "but there be no doubt within thee lurks a demon most vile."

Griselda grudgingly admitted its cleverness, its plausibility. If only - if only! Her mind flashed back to the first day suspended naked before the Inquisitor and the rest of the solemn men who had asked their questions and recorded her answers and then watched while her writhing nudity had been pierced with needles . . . needles that would betray the entry of Asmodeus . . . !

"But we don't have to believe it," she whispered urgently into the habit which, strangely enough, generated waves of ultra feminine perfume of a headiness that might have been of Sister Amaldis herself. "That first day I was primed . . . it's all this other."

"God will give thee courage, dear."

"All I want is OUT."

"Thy spirit shall most surely soar."

"Sister, this burning caper . . . ?"

"'Tis said the agony be but short, beloved. Unconsciousness comes quickly in the flames."

"Sister! Lay off the theatricals. I'm jittery enough already. I know damn well

I'm not going to be burned alive. But this whole act . . . !"

Sister Amaldis laid the captive's head on her own shoulder and gently patted the disarrayed hair. She murmured endearments as to a child, some of them in Latin. Having offered the comfort of hands and lips to the girl about to die, she raised her hand and nodded a signal to the waiting men. . . .

It was the worst of the moments yet. Every nerve in Griselda's loveliness screamed revolt. She longed to beat the metal of her chains against the leather vests and the rough strong hands. But she fought her panic; perhaps her panic was as absurd as all the rest! Afterwards she might be ashamed . . . ? And anyway . . . chained as she was they could handle her with ease. She clinked her way between them from her prison.

The sun was warm and felt good upon her skin. It was the only benefit. For a moment they stood at the postern gate surveying the double line of bug-eyed spectators who lined the course she must tread. They were a motley miscellany of both sexes, eyes and lips avid for her suffering. No doubt as a bonus for their enjoyment the bit of cloth was whisked from her loins to leave her starkly nude. Some sort of monk, friar or priest mumbled Latin and placed a huge cross upon her forehead before he lifted it high and led the way to her martyrdom.

It was then Griselda saw it!

The stake stood as starkly naked as she herself. It was massive, and doubtless well planted in the ground. Around its base were piled great bundles of twigs and branches. Griselda recalled the word: faggots. Bemusedly, she wondered why the term was applied to homosexuals. For a breathless moment her chained foot resisted, but the strong arms urged her on.

She wanted to gaze straight ahead, seeing no one. But a compelling curiosity denied. And these people! Of another age, nearly a thousand years past . . . ! Or were they 'extras' hired through an agent! But they were too real! It was all too real! The exclamation thudded in her mind: Too real, too real, too real . . . ! The grips upon her arms tightened. The soldiers had sensed her disquiet.

The villagers, or whatever they might be - peasants was probably the word - were controlled by scattered men-at-arms. But all were vocal. There were tentative cheers, some clapping, and a few taunts about witches and their just desserts. But most of it was uncouth sex.

"Too fine a cunt for the fire, lads."

"Mayhap she'll piss through it and douse the flame." "I'd pay silver for a roasted tit."

"How about a fuck, lass, afore ye fuck no more?"

Sister Amaldis, close behind, laid a soothing hand against the captive's cheek. "Heed them not, child. I will pray for their forgiveness."

It was strangely comforting. There had fallen upon the naked girl a terrible loneliness. She recalled something about when you entered the world and when you left it. She shook her head impatiently. Why, oh, why must it all be made so real?

Who was watching? Who? And it must cost a fortune! She wondered why her nakedness did not embarrass her more. But she supposed, like all excess, it numbed and was its own defeat. Ribald comment approved her pubic hair.

"She's got a bush to hide a fox."

"Hast lost a man in thy thatch, girl?"

"'Twill flame bright to warm thy belly."

Perhaps they were not paid! Griselda realized her nakedness was sport enough to attract volunteers! But the history books had said it: The burning of a witch was a public holiday. She was largesse tossed to the rabble!

Around the grim and lonely stake the soldiers formed a circle, beyond which the audience might gawk and fantasize their lusts. Griselda no longer saw those who had come to watch her die, nor did she hear their carnalities. Her gaze was riveted, in shivering fascination, upon the wooden column designed to hold her while she burned. She paid but scant attention to the cowled figure and his Latin and his Ikon. She returned the kiss of Amaldis in perfunctory recognition of a sympathy devoid of mercy.

For a brief moment she stood alone in her chained nakedness while her guards threw planks upon the tinder. It was an awkward scramble to hoist her to where she could stand upon the tiny platform hidden beneath the twigs. It was there for her feet alone. The brittle firewood embraced her feet lovingly. With care, as though it was a kindly task, the two men circled her waist with bands of coarse rope, constricting her stomach and welding her to the wood at her back. They knotted it firmly behind the post where she could never reach. They used no other bond. There was no need. The shackles were still fast upon her feet and hands. She was wedded to the vertical column, bride of the wooden phallus, in a union indissoluble, save by the fire. They scrambled back to firm ground and retrieved their planks.

For a short moment Griselda knew a wild exhilaration. She was the star, the cynosure of every eye. If there was an iota of glory in this madness it was now. But the euphoria was short. Her questing hands had found the rope, arching against it she knew herself helpless. Around her feet was piled the dry faggots by which her lovely nakedness would be burned to ashes. . . .

She remembered Disneyland where the controlled gas jets simulated the burning cabin and the camp fire. Somewhere beneath her feet? Some cunning replica . . . ? Or perhaps this was it! Surely it was grand finale enough! Surely . . . ? Without interest she kissed the big cross thrust at her lips. No doubt she owed them that! She did not start to scream until the soldiers struck flints for a flame and set the flame to the tinder at her feet.

Thrusting uselessly at her bonds she told herself it was a clever, artful trick. A simulation only. Perhaps if she screamed enough they would desist and call it a day. They did not call it a day. While her screams pealed high, they applied the flame, again and again . . . ! Smoke billowed up so that the screaming girl inhaled its acrid taste.

The smoke was real.

## Chapter Two
## Sabina Miles

"Sabina Miles," Miss Connors enunciated reflectively. "It's a good name. I think we can let you keep it. It will suit most situations."

"I don't mind, y'know. It's not important."

"It is to us, Sabina. Take my name: Margaret Connors would be hopeless."

"I think it's a nice name." The girl sitting on the edge of her chair looked across the desk and ventured, "Do you; I mean - "

"No, I don't, dear. I haven't the figure."

"Oh, but you have!" The exclamation was not flattery but honest surprise.

Miss Connors provided a girl to girl grin. "Then let's say I'm not showing it."

Sabina Miles wrinkled her forehead. "You mean . . . ?"

"Yes, dear, I do mean. If you've anything against nudity, now's your chance to run."

Sabina examined herself in a small silence. Miss Connor's requirement was a familiar hazard. But with these people it surely had to be legit! It just had to be' This was different. She wriggled diffidently and asked, "You used a term . . . about these plays?"

"Oh, a Masque! It's a sixteenth century name for an elaborately staged dramatic performance."

"But not in a theatre?"

"In our case, no. Our situations are intriguing inasmuch as our members are often a part, and sometimes the whole of the cast."

"And I'd have to be naked?"

"Only where implicit to the script, dear." Margaret Connors allowed herself a consoling smile. "But I will not hide from you the fact that most plays these days . . . !"

Sabina sighed. "I don't really mind. I suppose it's just that I don't want to seem anxious or accustomed to dive into nudity. Once you get the name . . . !"

"Of course. Don't let's enlarge on it." Margaret Connors consulted the employment application. "You are twenty-four. And your experience isn't all that much."

"It's almost nothing. I know I don't rate this job. But why do you want a girl for the leading role?" Sabina waved a deprecating hand. "Why not bit parts of supports? Look, my inexperience is in only one direction. I'm fairly hep on the rest.

There's something odd here, isn't there?"

"Is a flat rate of five thousand still odd, Miss Miles?"

"It's about five times as odd as I expected."

Miss Connors nodded soberly. "It's five times what you're worth. And we're not chucking it at you. You're right, there's something odd." "The usual screwing?"

"No, not that." Miss Connors permitted another smile. "Far worse."

Sabina cocked an eyebrow. "There's not supposed to be anything worse. Oh, don't get me wrong - I'm not a virgin."

Margaret Connors sighed. "Ever hear of the Seigneury?"

"Some sort of club or resort or something? You have to be very rich."

"Those names are not used. It is a loose association of a number of wealthy people with similar tastes. It is an estate."

"I only heard of it as a sort of legend."

"Their dramatic productions, which they sometimes film, often begin about the place Hollywood ends."

"You mean avant garde. Way out. Hairy?" The job applicant contrived to look brightly interested. "But wouldn't their standards be terribly exacting? I want the job in the worst way, but.

"They're not too concerned with a real pro. What they value is spontaneity. Take a girl who can't swim, and toss her in the water - you have drama! But if she can swim there's no reaction."

"But, Miss Connors, that five thousand! I'd have to be a babe in arms not to be suspicious."

Executive fingers rapped the executive desk. Margaret Connors fixed the squirming applicant with an amused eye. "Sabina, let's make a laugh out of this. How many movies have you seen where the heroine gets herself into the most fearful jackpots and is rescued at the last moment by the hero - after a lot of contrived suspense?"

"Gosh . . . hundreds. It's sort of a standard formula."

"At the Seigneury she doesn't get rescued."

The small silence grudgingly yielded to the applicant's nervous laugh. "What happens to the hero?"

"Mostly there isn't one."

"Are you trying to tell me I'll be given - a bad time?" "Yes."

"Why don't I just walk out of here right now?" Sabina's rhetorical question

was wryly plaintive.

"Because I primed you with the five grand."

Sabina swallowed. "Isn't this where you offer me brandy?"

The bottle and the glass appeared as though Miss Connors possessed a magic wand. The amber fluid splashed liberally into the snifter.

"Oh, please! I didn't mean . . . ."

"Drink it. I don't want a hasty no."

The nervous applicant gulped greedily. "I don't want to give you one," she admitted, "but could you - well, sort of cue me?"

"I don't have a script. But most of 'em aren't kind to the leading lady. You can figure on getting tossed to the lions, stretched on the rack, flogged, fucked and flayed . . . ."

"For real?"

Miss Connors shrugged. "They'd simulate where they can without spoiling the impact. The rest you'll just have to grin and bear."

"But supposing I can't grin and bear?"

"No problem. No decision. You'd have passed the point of no return."

"You mean . . . ? I'll be . . . ? They'll compel . . . ?"

"They certainly will."

"Wow! That's laying it on the line!"

"Now your five grand falls into place." Margaret Connors refilled the snifter. "You'd better down this. But give me a no if that's the way of it. There's an agency with four hundred girls on their books, some even have talent."

Sabina drank her brandy and saw the light. "What you've just said is they're a bunch of kooks?"

"You cease to be a kook after the tenth million."

"Will it hurt?"

"Not if you close your eyes."

The male voice from the door held laughter. Margaret Connors turned irritably, then softened. Sabina gasped and glowed. Here was The Male. The plush office was suddenly potent with masculine charm.

"Don't trust me," continued the urbane voice. "I'm too handsome by far, my treatment of women is shameless, and I dress too well to be a gentleman. I am also

very rich."

"This is Mr. Rolfe Campys, Miss Miles." Margaret Connors sounded slightly breathless. "Believe nothing he tells you."

"She adores me." The sleek head shook sadly. "If only I had the time to love you all . . . !"

"What d'you want, Rolfe? You can see I'm . . . ."

"I want you, beloved, only you. Tonight you share my bed - "

"Rolfe, stop that!" Margaret Connors was blushing. "Miss Miles is applying - "

"Miss Miles is delightful, delectable, and, I'm sure, delicious." Laughing satyr eyes examined their prey. The word 'delicious' had been overemphasized so that Sabina, too, was blushing. "Will you take your clothes off now or later?"

"I'm sorry now I gave you those brandies, Miss Miles. A girl needs a clear head when dealing with this lecher." Margaret Connors said ruefully, "Rolfe, is it any use asking you to go away?"

Sabina quivered. It was a purely feminine response to the masculine emanations beating at her in waves. For a girl caught unaware, Rolfe Campys was a heady potion. Placards at theaters around the world proclaimed him, and here he was!

"None, poppet, none!" He winked at Sabina so that she gasped. "The dear girl always goes through this protest bit before pleading with me to screw her. Absolves her guilt complexes. If you don't mind, I'd like to screw you first."

"He always carries on like this," said Margaret resignedly. "Rolfe, what is it this time?"

"It's her." Her jerked a thumb at the awestruck girl. "Heard you were interviewing, so came to strip this trembling morsel with my lustful eyes. She'll do. Sign her up."

"I think she was about to refuse. Rolfe, leave the poor girl alone!" Margaret offered an apologetic explanation. "Mr. Campys is an associate of the Seigneury."

"Screams in the night and all that rot." The Male was suddenly frightfully British.

Sabina felt herself on a euphoric cloud. "Watch it, girl, watch it," she cautioned herself inwardly. Aloud, she ventured, "It's too way out for me. I can't scream worth a damn."

"But my dear, exquisite, beautiful, appetizing creature think what you scorn!" The vibrant voice oozed reproach. "Beheaded on the block. Sold in the slave market. Branded with a good old Puritan 'A'! The delights are endless." He turned to a wryly amused Margaret Connors and demanded, "Have we got a good gallows hanging coming up? She's perfect. Can't you see! There she stands, hands tied behind her back the noose around her neck, looking soulfully defiant at the awestruck mob, and

wishing the Sheriff would hurry up and pull the lever."

"Rolfe, that's too corny - "

"But we haven't done it yet."

"Hmmmmm, how about her tied to a post, blindfolded, before a firing squad?"

"We could do it for an encore."

Sabina giggled and tried to repress a rising excitation. "You need a stunt girl," she protested, "but I'm flattered to bits."

"I need you." Campys made it a declaration.

"If I thought I'd be any good to you I'd grab it like - "

Rolfe turned to the woman at the desk "You have the agreement? This pulse quickening creature is just being shy."

"I always have the agreement," Margaret Connors snapped tartly. "But no girl should put her name on it while under your influence. Please go away so she can get her feet back on the ground."

He affected glad surprise. "I have an influence . . . Darling, don't tell me you care?"

"What I care doesn't matter. Every silly female in the world has the hots over you; we cancel each other out."

"But I adore this one! I shall insist on playing the male lead opposite her at least once."

"Just once?"

"In that glorious moment she will be immortalized."

"No second round?"

"She is far too beautiful."

"Where do I sign?" asked Sabina breathlessly.

"Rolfe, you have the charm of a homosexual. If you were as safe for a girl as they are I'd enjoy you."

* * *

Campys sipped his drink. His eyes were thoughtful. He carefully erased plaintiveness from his voice. "Glynis, you're a cocktease using 'hard to get' as bait. You'll die a spinster."

Glynis Woodhaye laughed across the silver and the linen and the roses. "I shall not die a spinster," she affirmed decisively. "I shall marry a wealthy and influential man

who doesn't flirt with every wench in sight. I will be a person, not a convenient vessel for your spend."

"Dammit, Glyn, go easy on the Vassar - or was it Girton."

"I will neither sleep with you or marry you. Now may we dine?"

"That's like you've said grace," Campys said cheerfully. "You're a cold, shrewd beauty. Trust you to choose a public place. If I had you where we ought to be I'd palm those pretty tits of yours until you begged for it."

"Only a boor needs the aid of friction."

"Boy, you come out with those dillies with a flair! I suppose you've got too many dividends pouring in to grab Zoskin's offer?"

"Yes."

"God! What you put into that one word! Haughty contempt for the plebeian! We could make a condition of the contract that you play opposite from me. Equal billing?"

"And sleep with Zoskin too, I expect."

"He's a happily married man. You'd render him impotent."

"Thanks!"

"He wouldn't survive the chill. Takes someone like me to brave the ice. You ever had a piece of tad?"

"Could we talk about something else?"

Rolfe Campys sighed. "When I'm with you I just get two inspirations. To bed you or to beat you."

"Nice ideas. I'll take the beating."

"I believe you would." He surveyed her somberly. "I have to be nuts to waste my time with you. Here I am, bright and cheerful - and you turn me into an introvert. I suppose you represent a challenge."

"That's better, and sensible. You were seen having lunch with a fresh face. Who is she? Yesterday's waitress or tomorrow's star?"

"Oh, Sabina. Rather sweet actually. She's signed for the Seigneury."

"What is that place? I was told it didn't even exist."

"Call it a club, I suppose. Highly exclusive."

"Orgies?"

"I could get you membership. You'd become a Chatelaine. The males

members are Chevaliers."

"Isn't one new member enough for today?"

"Sabina isn't a member."

"What is she then? An exclusive whore?"

"Glynis, ease off. She's an actress. The Seigneury stages its own productions."

"I bet they do!"

His long and level look was devoid of banter. Rolfe Campys was a man of many roles. He shook his head and said heavily, "Glynis Woodhaye the unapproachable, the lady in the ivory tower. Actually, a grade 'A' bitch. D'you ever let a man lift the lid and look inside?"

"No."

"Maybe there's nothing there to see?"

"If you believed that we wouldn't be here. By the way, I'm willing to pay my own dinner if you feel cheated."

"Okay. Offer accepted."

No surprise. No chagrin. Her response was maternal. "Rolfe, don't ever marry. Bed your popsies but leave the rest of us alone. If you have the Don Juan compulsion to female conquest, kill it. There's enough scented flesh comes your way to keep you satiated. Leave it at that. You'd have more friends."

"You?"

"No. I'm scared of you. There's something . . ."

"Nice?"

"I don't think so."

Rolfe Campys' eyes did match his grin. "Was that my conge?"

"Don't play the petulant brat." She reached and placed her fingers on the back of his hand. We could enjoy ourselves together. But we never do because all you think of is the thing between my legs."

"If you'd let me use it once I might forget - "

"That's it exactly! That's your trouble. To you, all us girls are a hairy pubic orifice completely surrounded by superfluous female."

Rolfe surveyed her ruefully. "And that's your trouble, sweetheart, you're always so bloody right. D'you ever realize you've got a problem?"

"No. But whatever it is I've got, I'll keep it."

"Horseshit apart, it realy would give me the most exquisite pleasure to beat the hell out of you. Glynis, you are without doubt the most complacent, self-sufficient, snooty - "

"Rolfe, coming from you, they're all compliments." "D'you hate men? Glyn, are you a les?"

"Look, Rolfe Campys, when you say 'men' you think of YOU. You're the sublimated MALE, surrogate for everything with a penis. As for being lesbian, I've considered it. I'm still considering it. I think I'd enjoy a petite nymphet with dewy eyes."

"I'm sure you can afford one."

Glynis laughed. "There are probably agencies - though, in fact, I've got my eye on a little sweetheart who's helping out in a drug store."

He scowled good naturedly. "If you say so I'll believe it. Bloody awful waste."

"I don't see that. The parts don't wear . . . ."

"One of your charms is your exquisite vulgarity, Glynis beloved. I think you use it as a bastion against male enterprise. Caustic carnality without four letter words."

"What will happen to the girl you had lunch with?"

Rolfe Campys stiffened in surprise. "Why d'you ask?"

"Something will happen to her, won't it? Something will be made to happen?"

"What fool nonsense have you been listening to?"

"I hit a nerve. What's your interest in the Seigneury?"

"It's an escape place. A 'get away from it all.'"

"She'll be in some way hurt, won't she?"

"I've offered you membership. You could see for your self."

"Then maybe I'd be hurt?"

"I'm not going to talk about it. There's a pledge."

"Very well. But you've offered to let me join. No girl's going to do that blind. Tell me the inducements."

"Sorry. Wrong approach."

"Who's Margaret Connors?"

He shook his head in mock despair.

"Glynis, what have I done to deserve this?"

"Who is she?"

"A competent secretary. Look, Glyn, what's the pitch?"

"I've a friend, a journalist, who wants to do an article." "Tell him to drop dead."

"It's a she."

"Tell her to come and see me. I'll give her an article she'll never forget."

"When's your next picture?"

"For Zoskin . . . ? He's aiming for about six weeks from now."

"A lot of boredom waiting?"

"I've offered to let you fill it."

"Rolfe, we've sparred enough. Let's call it a day. We've got ourselves out of sorts with each other." She looked at his irritated face placatingly. "Why don't we have a peace conference Tuesday?"

"We could." Campys sounded dubious. "Want to meet me out at the Silver Pheasant?"

"Oh, the new place! Sort of rural. Thanks."

"Still driving the little yellow Lancia?"

"Oh, sure! Rolfe, I know you. You'll be late. You'll find me in the bar. I can handle the lechers 'til you come."

"About eight?"

"Wonderful!"

Rolfe Campys watched her go, a graceful vessel on a sea charted by great wealth. For several minutes he sat on at the cleared table, somberly contemplating a vision far away. Then, in firm decision, he called for a phone and dialed. His voice was terse. "Eight P.M. Tuesday. A yellow Lancia at the Silver Pheasant as arranged. You have her photo.

## Chapter Three
## The Cart's Tail

The role had lacked definition. The absence of a script had filled Sabina with anxiety. Without Sister Amaldis she would have panicked.

"The ingenue is nearly always abandoned to her own reactions," Sister

Amaldis had explained patiently. "The effect sought at the Seigneury is impromptu. So much focuses on the feminine lead that can only be achieved by spontaneity." Her hand had been gentle on the tense arm, her voice soft.

"I'll blow it. I know I will!" "No, you won't, dear. It's not like a stage. Here, You'll be saturated in atmosphere. It's like the infant tossed into water; you swim instinctively."

It had come to an end, of sorts. But no beginning! The Seigneury blended and merged into a second reality in which there were no footlights or kliegs or prompter. It was as though she died and went instantly into another life. Looking back, her concern could be seen as laughably pathetic. Her fear, not groundless, but misaligned.

"But I must say something! There have to be words."

"They will come, Sabina. When you need them they'll be there."

It had begun with the costume and with outrage. Sister Amaldis had helped with the first. "Early seventeenth century, dear." A gentle murmur of laughter. "Their houses were cold. They wore a lot of clothes."

Knickers and drawers, ruffles and lace, camisoles and stays . . . a chokingly constricting authenticity. "We nearly always go back into history, Sabina, so much more colorful."

Her excitation had dampened discomfort. "It's a rehearsal, Sister?" She had been breathless.

"Everything we do is a rehearsal, dear. Come along downstairs. I'm so glad you're pleased. You look most charming."

The doorway had been like any other. "You go down the stairs and straight along the passage . . . ." Sister Amaldis had kissed her tenderly. "Good luck, dear. I'm sure You'll be wonderful. . . . "

Halfway down the passage the lights had dimmed. A rough hand had reached from a doorway and dragged her within. From that moment on, sanity had vanished from Sabina's world.

"'Tis the cutpurse wench they've sent us," a male voice growled, "an' a fine doxie she be an' all." A pull and a thrust sent her reeling.

It was a smokey untidy room lit by barred windows high on the wall. Behind a rough table sat a middle-aged man who wore a tricorn hat atop a tousled wig. Before him was parchment, in one hand a quill, in the other a mug he shared with a slattern who eyed the newcomer with a hungry distaste.

"Must ha' bedded half the town to buy them duds. She'll be havin' little need o' them here. "But search her, Perkyn."

The small purse was concealed in her bodice. It yielded several coins, one of them gold. It was laid on the desk while the quill scratched laboriously.

"But I didn't know - Was I supposed. . . ?" Sabina was certain she had intruded on the wrong set.

"They never knows, duckie." The woman chuckled coarsely and drained her mug. "You 'andle them clobber careful, Perkyn. I don't want naught o' 'em tore."

"No - No, please . . . !" Sabina backed away from reaching hands. "I think there's a mistake! "

"And it's you what's made it, lass." Perkyn pinched her cheek playfully. "You want ter take off them pretty feathers for Meg, or do I play the Lady's maid?"

"I'd best go back to Sister Amildis - This is all wrong . . . ." Sabina looked from one to the other of the unsavory trio who were examining her with frank lechery. "I'm sorry."

She was halfway to the door when the hands possessed her. In a daze of uncertainty she allowed them to take the voluminous dress, but when they fumbled at her waist she protested. "Stop it! You're way out . . . I don't want . . . ."

The slap across her cheek knocked her to the floor. Meg's hand in her hair hoisted her back on her feet. In shock and bewilderment she allowed herself to be stripped. Later, they could apologize. But she wanted no more clouts or bruised lips. Her breasts heaved in frustration and chagrin.

"Best tie the bitch, Perkyn."

Sabina slapped at the reaching fingers in alarm. Enough was enough! If this was someone's idea of a joke it had gone too far. It was bad enough to have lost her clothes her bare skin was flushed with embarrassment. But to be made helpless and exhibited!

The blow felled her. This time a knee thrust brutally into her back while her wrists were crossed and bound with sleazy cord. Roughly hauled erect, she stood before the table, twisting in shocked impotence at hands behind her back - hands lost!

"Fine high breasted piece, eh!" Bulbous salacious eyes assessed her quality. "And a lush black bush!" The quill scratched away as though recording her physical attributes. "And what you been charging to spread them pretty legs, m'dear?"

"I'm not! This is absurd!"

"Pickpocket and common bawd, lass," the voice intoned. "Should earn thee a trip to the colonies mayhap. Or, at least a warming of thy back and buttocks while M'Lord Rothsey sentences thee in the morn." The pen scrawled busily.

"Call Sister Amaldis. Or let me go . . . ."

"Ye'd like. to cover them tits, wouldn't ye, love?" Meg was busy folding her captive's lost finery into a bag. "Well, can't never be said Meg don't do the decent thing by her gals. Here, precious, I'll cover thy cunt."

In its way it was worse than nakedness. A soiled tube of sacking tossed at captive feet. But driven by carnal eyes Sabina stepped into it gratefully and stood meekly

while it was raised and knotted above her breasts. Its ragged lower hem scarce fell below the juncture of her thighs. It hid little but emphasized much. A piece of string was looped as a belt. "Makes you look like you're a gal, duckie," Meg cackled enjoyably. "Proper kind I be to the likes o' you."

"Ye'll be in court come morning." The clerk looked up at her as though expecting gratitude.

"Tomorrow!" Sabina tugged in futile dismay at her bound hands. "I can't possibly be like this until tomorrow.

"And why not, pray?"

"It's too silly! I'm sure there's a mistake. I certainly don't intend . . . ."

The clerk yawned. The other two smirked in some knowledge she did not share. Meg picked up the bag of precious clothes. "Best store the wench away, Perkyn," she suggested amiably. "And give her small comfort, she's not here fer no picnic."

It was a new dimension of sensation to realize that, with her hands tied behind her back, she could no longer exercise will or decision. These freedoms were gone, and would be exercised for her by others. Sabina considered kicking as defense. But with bare feet . . . ? She would only invite another blow. In mute bewilderment she suffered Perkyn's grasp to propel her from the room.

"'Tis best ye don't rile Meg," Perkyn advised kindly.

"She dearly loves a bit o' cruelty if ye gives 'er cause."

"But this is cruel!" The prisoner twisted in his grasp. "My wrists are tied far too tight. They hurt! And besides, what's the need? This can't possibly be any kind of performance."

The door he opened with the massive key revealed a sad, small cell. It contained nothing but a bucket and some straw. Light found it reluctantly through bars. Now it held Sabina! With the closing of the door, the turning of the key, and the shooting of bolts she stood forlornly surveying her tiny prison. Miss Connors and Rolfe Campys seemed a million miles away. Everything was a million miles away! This was another world - a nightmare!

That she was victim of error, she could not doubt. But how long before the error was discovered! She looked about her and shuddered. Even an hour in such a place was punishment. But all night and into tomorrow . . . ! She would panic and become hysterical. How could a girl fail to know claustrophobia caged thus! In angry rejection she fought the cord upon her wrists. It surely must be possible to rid herself of its shaming compulsion! No adult could be so constrained for long! Surely, surely - surely! But it was useless. Defeat found her as tightly tied as before, but with chafed, complaining wrists. The tears came then. Tears she could not dry on cheeks she could not touch. Sabina fell to her knees upon the straw and allowed her desolation to flow without constraint. Slowly she sobbed her way into acceptance of a new reality.

"Can't never trust a man wi' a wench." Meg's plaint was not without satisfaction. "Left ye in solid comfort, just like I thought he would. Good thing I

come prepared."

Sabina had raised herself from the straw. The key in the lock had spurred hope, a hope that died at sight of her visitor and her visitor's burden.

"Ye'll not be spreadin' them lovesome legs, me pretty." The ugly metal made a fearsome clatter as it was tossed on the stone. The sackcloth clad girl eyed the shackles with disgust. "Up on thy feet, love, while I clips thy wings."

"But this is silly! I'm already helpless!"

The small whip appeared in a boney hand. "This says it be right proper to iron thy feet, duckie. Does't wish to argue?"

"No! Oh, no . . ."

The captive girl's denial was shamingly instant. Sabina looked down passively, and in wonder, while iron bands were fitted round her ankles and locked. They were joined by a length of chain designed to constantly irk, a heavy bond of shame from which there could be no escape.

"Thy neck should wear a collar, girl. But iron's too heavy for a span so small - 'tis a pity."

It was hateful and frightening to be so helpless. With speeding pulse, Sabina stood while her neck was noosed and made secure. The other end of the long rope was knotted to a rusty ring in the wall beyond her reach.

"Our little pigeon will know she's caged." Meg approved her work. "Hast' had thoughts o' escape, love?"

"Of course not, how could I?"

"Ye're right there, me pretty." "Please, Meg, I don't know what's going on, I'm lost." Sabina made her voice respectfully coaxing. "But please be a little kind to me. I want to cooperate. But the way Im fixed. It's awful! And in this place. . . . I'm going to be miserable!"

"And so ye should be."

"But nothing like this was spoken of' It's not as though there's an audience - or a camera."

"Ye'll have an audience enough come thy sentencing."

"Please, not my neck. It's beastly."

"I can get thee an iron collar ye'll like less."

It was hopeless. She could not pin them down. Her words eluded them as though not spoken. The captive girl, now utterly demeaned and deprived of liberty, watched the closing of the door in a frightening conviction of something wrong, something that should have been corrected but was not. She shook her head irritably against the stricture on her neck and its weight of pendent rope. Then kicked idly at her chain to

send its links swirling on the stone. On her slender ankles the metal looked immense, an unfeminine gyve against which her whole being rebelled. Miserably she disposed herself upon the straw.

There were visitors. Men and women. All clothed in the period of her stolen garments. They came with Perkyn or Meg, paying no heed to anything she said or asked or pleaded. Her words fell away from them, shattered into silence by their disregard, She was made to stand still while the sacking was lifted to reveal her nakedness that it could be touched and discussed while her cheeks flamed. Yet, hateful as it might be, she was grateful for their coming. Her little cell was a fearsome place in loneliness. When darkness came she slept.

The court was noisy and well attended. Sabina stood her brief period in the dock in the same condition as in the cell. Her shackles had made a mortifying clatter as she dragged their chain to the place where prisoners stood to receive their sentence. If there were cameras they were not visible. The bound girl observed, in dazed disbelief, the bustle and drone of the trial which was not a trial at all but simply a ritual to make legal the terrifying things to be done to her. She heard the sonorous, ancient voice of Lord Justice Rothsey proclaim. . . .

" . . . and that ye be taken hence to the prison yard and there stripped naked for all to behold thy shame . . . and that ye be bound to a cart's tail and led thus through the streets . . . and to be whipped lustily as ye walk . . . ."

Led from the dock by the tether on her neck, Sabina had known a brief relief that surely now her travail must soon be done. They would give her the check and return her to the world of sanity. But, even for so huge a reward, she would never again . . . ! It had been an agony. It still was. When she saw the donkey and the cart she longed to scream.

They were determined to carry her martyrdom through to the bitter end. But then, why not! They had a right to their pound of flesh. This was the Masque, and this her role. Sabina stood, in shamed embarrassment, while the irons were taken from her feet, the rope from her neck, and her hands untied. She was given but a moment to massage her wealed wrists before they were placed in their prepared slots in the tailgate of the cart and tied fast. Where, now, the cart might go, she would follow. In bitter humiliation she stood helpless and alone while the crowd gathered and discussed her body.

Sabina had paid scant attention to the most terrifying part of her sentence. She had shrugged it off in the knowledge a Masque or any simulation could only go so far. The impossible could be dealt with by implication - the decent falling of the curtain. When the ribaldry fell silent and a stir and parting of the ranks made way for the striding figure in black tights and black hood, the tied girl vouchsafed but a single horrified glance for the man himself. Her stricken gaze focused instantly upon the thing he carried.

It was a whip. The production ran smoothly. The cart swayed as a nondescript figure clambered to the seat and gathered the reins. Sabina had time for no more than a strangled "No! Oh, no, no, no!" before the donkey was bestirred to motion and the cart began to move. Her arms were jerked so that, helplessly and fearfully, she began to walk.

The lash sought her at the fourth step, curling around her unprotected waist, arching

her nudity in shock, wealing her flesh in a reality beyond masques or plays or make believe. Sabina's head reared in pain and outrage, turning to protest, to denounce, to deny. But her hands defeated the intent. They followed the slowly moving cart and the sentenced girl went with her hands. Sabina found herself looking at her corded wrists as at an enemy. Two pieces of rope were compelling an unwilling participation in a cruelty subject to cessation if only the steady paces be halted and reason brought to bear on what must, obviously, be some terrible mistake. Adjusting to the knowledge she could not stop or make a stand, she turned again appealingly to explain to the man in black the awful error of his act. But was in time only to behold the black arm sweep toward her. . . .

Sabina screamed. It was a piercing feminine expression of pain, of anger, of frustration. If only she could stop and talk! But she could not stop and talk! The scream was the most eloquent and swift expression of all she so urgently needed to say. She realized, almost with surprise, the twisting contortions of her nudity beneath the lash. Her limbs and body were finding instinctive expressions of their own. They were greeted with hearty approval by the crowd.

There followed, then, a walk Sabina would never forget. The donkey's gait was slow but relentless. To a naked girl longing to have done with her punishment it was bitterly frustrating. To the same girl, driven by need to stop and expound reason, it was implacably negative. Her skin was virgin to the whip. Each blow shattered the processes of thought, logic dissolved beneath the lash. By the time she had assembled plea or protest the thong cut her again, driving her forward into fresh writhings and renewed screams. Each step was compulsion. The cart-tail and her bound wrista mocked her need to be free. By the manner of her binding she was unable to lean upon the cart. Her forearms were rigidly held so as to keep her at arm's length in total exposure. Sabina's martyrdom was total.

There was no rhythm. The hooded man went from side to side. But the spacings of his blows were deliberately irregular, catching her always unprepared. But it was in his placement of the thong the dancing girl found her greatest travail. Across her back, her bottom, her thighs, it cut and scored, and then with a devilish cunning all its own snapping up between her legs to impart its venom within her loins. It was an enemy, tangible and cruel, against which she had no defense.

As the plodding procession wended its way along the dusty street, and as the blows fell in their varying degrees of awfulness upon the naked skin, there seeped into the consciousness of the punished girl an inconsistency, a query nagging as a promise or a threat of the inexplicable.

To a maiden whose knowledge of the whip was academic, the truly awful quality of the first lashes transcended reason, logic, fortitude. They could be but a precursor of death. They would flay her until she fell senseless and was dragged along to a shameful grave. They were not for bearing! They could not be borne! Lord Justice Rothsey had condemned her to oblivion.

But she did not die! Sabina knew not the tally when her mind confronted the undramatic fact of survival. She would not die. She would not lose consciousness. She would plod behind the cart to whatever bitter end lay in store. Strangely she felt only resentment that her female flesh could absorb this agony and deny her the blessedness of darkness. Rob her of that final awfulness by which these people might confront the wickedness of what they were doing to her. It was not fair! Nothing was fair. Nothing was right!

Relinquishing death, Sabina was forced to examine life. She was in great pain and would be given much more. But pain was the limit. She was not being taken beyond. By the time the lash had licked her twenty times she was as sentient and vividly aware as when first bound in this new shame. There could be but one answer. The hooded man in black was whipping her cruelly, but not cruelly enough to take her beyond a certain degree of suffering. Or perhaps it was the whip! Sabina knew nothing of whips but supposed they came in varying degrees of severity. The one being used on her looked terrifying enough - but she had not died! She had never, in fact, been more pulsingly alive.

As her feet trod the dust and her flesh accepted the whip, there floated before Sabina's eyes a vision of the check. This agony she was suffering would justify the sum of its worth. Justify it to those who issued it. The Seigneury might he pleased with its bargain. But Sabina was not pleased. No check of any size would tempt her again to walk bound behind the cart. Never, never, never! Things had fallen into place. She understood the ambiguities and the trap. Five thousand dollars! As she gasped and moaned beneath the whip she found no comfort in the sum. Its very immensity ensured the continuance of anguish. Having bought their pound of flesh, they would extract it from her to the full and feel no compunction in so doing. She screamed like a wild creature trapped and hurt. Her wrists were raw beneath the cunning cords. The whip sliced her without abatement. Sabina Miles was under contract.

* * *

Sister Amaldis set aside the papers and smiled affection. She also contrived a bright and expectant attention which made Sabina wish she had not asked for the interview. "It's been such a long time," she ventured lamely, "There has to be some sort of mistake. . . "

"No, dear, I don't think so. Just be patient."

"But I've been patient! I've been patient for a whole month! Sister, it's that long since I was - I was - "

"Whipped at the cart's tail, dear?" Sister Amaldis had a genius for mentioning the unmentionable. "You did so well that day. There's been no end of compliments. Everyone thought your performance perfect."

"But, Sister, it wasn't a performance! It was just that something awful was done to me, and a lot of people watched."

"Our roles in life are often unsought, Sabina. Our responses are enactments. Yours was superb. Another girl might not have played the part half as well."

It was hard to nourish resentment for Sister Amaldis. Sabina concentrated hers elsewhere. "What the Seigneury does, then, is toss a girl to the lions and sees what happens?" she demanded heatedly. "But nobody tells us beforehand. The shock's too terrible!"

"It is generally considered a fresh approach to a new art form, dear. The creation of a facet of the human scene. It has yielded remarkable results. It was the Seigneur's concept. Everyone is more than pleased."

"I'm not. Why can't I go home?"

"You are home, dear." Sister Amaldis beamed gentle benevolence. "We want all you girls to feel this is your true home, your domicile, your place in the sun."

"What about these?" Sabina held up her hands to exhibit the gleaming chrome of the handcuffs joining her wrists.

The woman behind the desk regarded the shining steel as though seeing it for the first time. "They look exquisite on you, dear."

Sabina sighed. There was no coming to grips with the good Sister. She and the Seigneury were amorphous. To be likened to an asylum wherein the inmates were treated as children with great kindness - between the electrodes and the shocks. But she had to try. "I'm a prisoner, aren't I, Sister?"

"Oh, come, dear, don't dramatize. You have a tremendous amount of freedom. There's the lovely Common Room and the Courtyard. . . ."

"The Courtyard's got a high wall round it, and when I left the Common Room a few minutes ago one of the girls was tied naked to a pillar and another had to stand against the wall because her hand was chained up above her head and we're not allowed to help them."

"The dear girls were foolish. We have to insist on good behavior. Surely you understand the need of discipline."

"We've all earned our money. Give us our checks and let us go."

"All in good time, dear."

"It's past time now! I want out! We all want out." Sabina clinked her handcuffs fretfully and looked sullen. "Can I please see the Seigneur?"

"I would not advise it, Sabina." The voice of Sister Amaldis had firmed. "Your mood is poor and you toy with disrespect. To speak to the Seigneur as you are speaking to me would earn you a punishment." Wise grey eyes examined the standing girl shrewdly. "How many times have you been punished already?"

The captive twisted unhappily. "Twice, Sister."

"Tell me about them."

Sabina choked back a refusal. Sister Amaldis must surely know what had been done to her! Ungraciously she clothed her shame with words. "Both times I was considered too demanding in my questions. They said I made trouble. The first time I was tied naked to the pillar, terribly tight so it hurt, and I had to stand there 'til bedtime. The girls were told not to touch a knot! And they didn't. They were all too scared. The second time I had to stand with everyone watching and hold my hands out to be caned. Six on each hand. The pain was so awful I thought I'd never make it. . . ."

"But you did learn a lesson?" "I don't think so, Sister. It just made me more

scared and showed me how much of a prisoner I really am."

"Poor Sabina!" Sister Amaldis infused the two words with infinite sympathy. "But I am not pleased with your attitude, dear. I want you to lay face down on the rug. Oh, and kick off your shoes."

Sabina was aghast. Unreality hovered. Her voice was strained, "Sister! You're going to punish me?"

"Yes, dear."

"For my own good, I suppose?"

"That sarcasm was very obvious, dear. It illustrates your need of correction. Be sensible now. Do as you're told."

"What are you going to do to me?"

"You will soon see. Lay down."

Slowly, Sabina slipped out of her shoes and disposed herself on the floor. Tremblings of premonition sent her nerves twitching beneath the scanty provocative single garment the guests of the Seigneury were allowed to wear. She held still but breathless while her right leg was bent back at the knee and raised to the vertical. "Keep it exactly like that, dear." The Sister's voice was as kind as ever.

Surely it could not be . . . ? Sabina cast an apprehensive glance back across an arm she was compelled to hold out ahead to join its cuffed fellow. What she saw was startling. Sister Amaldis had produced a length of cane and was flexing it testingly.

"I try to be kind, dear. But there are time when it is not kind at all to be too tolerant. You are definitely sulky. I am sure I can cure it."

Again the sense of the incredible! Sabina Miles supine on the rug and raising her right foot so that its sole might be slashed with a cane in the hand of a woman who had always been unfailingly gracious. The handcuffed girl hated the quaver in her own voice.

"Please, Sister, I'm sorry! I'm sorry. Don't hit me!"

The blow was swift and precise. It sent Sabina into a moaning ball of agony. Pain possessed her totally. It was perhaps a minute until the Sister asked, soothingly, "Would you prefer to be fastened, dear?"

"No! Oh, no . . . ."

"Then arrange your other foot, please."

"I can't! Oh, Sister, it hurts too much!"

"I am sure it will help if I tell you this next stroke is the last - for now. Just a single stroke . . . ?"

It did help! Of course it helped! Sister Amaldis was far too wise. Sabina felt like a

small child being made to pay attention. Quiveringly, she raised the innocent bareness of her foot. When it was sundered by fire and scald she rolled in desolation on the rug and wept, her chained hands muffling her sobs and gathering her tears.

Thoughtfully, the nun returned the cane to the cupboard, then sat and studied the sad and lachrymose figure with its wounded feet. The room was quiet save for Sabina's sounds of penance.

"I - I'm sorry . . . ." Sabina's peace offering was tentative, between sobs.

"Of course you are, dear. The cane is a wonderful help at such times."

It was not the response Sabina wanted, but she was forced to make do with it. Her feet throbbed alarmingly. But, now more than ever, she wanted an answer. "Please, Sister, don't be angry with me. . . . But when may I go home?"

Sister Amaldis consulted her watch. "It's about midmorning, Sabina. Do you think the rest of the day against the pillar might help you forget this obsession, dear?"

Sabina returned to her tears. The Seigneury had her. It would never let her go. She was sure of it now. If only Sister Amaldis was not so sweetly evasive! "Just tell me," she sobbed, "Whatever you're going to do to me I have to know. Just tell me - oh, please . . . !"

The other girls were in their own predicament. But it was still shaming to be led back to the Common Room and told to strip before their commiserating eyes. Even more hateful to feel the cold of the stone to be warmed by contact with her flesh as she thrust her back against the column and placed her hands behind.

Nudity no longer mattered. The girls of the Seigneury gained and lost their scanty garments with a bland inconsistency. It was notable that each feminine figure was, in its own way, superb. Sabina had seen them all and they had seen her. But, even so, the exposure to which she was about to be subjected was a bitterly shaming experience. It was also painful, with the pain increasing each hour as the ropes bit tighter and the spirit weakened.

"You're so sensible about things like this, Sabina," Sister Amaldis approved as she unlocked the handcuffs. "It's such a pity you have to be punished. Such a nice girl really . . . there! Your hands all the way back. That's right."

When she was against the column the handcuffs were discarded. Her wrists were crossed at the back and tied tight with cord. It hurt more. She could move less, and her fingers never managed to find a knot. Sabina obediently pressed herself back whilst this was done to her.

"A girl looks so beautiful like this," the Sister said pensively as she plied the rope, "and it does so help contrition."

Sabina was already contrite. But it was too late now to plead. The bite of rope on her wrists told her of punishment. All she had to do now was bear it. She tried not to wince with overemphasis as her belly was deeply cinched and her shoulders were wrenched back with few but cunning cords. It was her shoulders that would hurt the worst - whenever she took a breath.

The process of being bound for punishment was a duo affair. In response to the urging of a still gentle hand, Sabina disposed her feet to each side of the stone. The kneeling nun bound them fast so that they contributed less support and opened up the thighs to further expose the blatant black triangle which screamed in mute modesty for long lost panties. The roping of the knees was a purely punitive imposition. Sister Amaldis stood back and assessed her work.

"Perhaps one other thing, dear?"

Sabina quivered. She could guess what it would be. Knowledge defeated pride. "Please, Sister, not my elbows too - please?"

"A final touch, Sabina. The tying of a girl's elbows is an excellent discipline. But, also, the effect is exquisite."

The delinquent girl said no more. What was the use! She flinched and her nostrils flared as the two strands circled her elbows from behind the pillar and drew them back, back, back. She was close to screaming when the pressure stopped.

Sister Amaldis kissed the pliant lips. "I would not have tied your elbows, dear, had you not been so obdurate. But it is a penalty you have earned."

"Yes, Sister."

"I know the things you long to say, dear." A playful hand patted a captive cheek. "But you are so sensible. In your position silence is much the best." Once more the assessment of a job well done. "You will stay as you are for quite a long time, Sabina. I will not tell you the duration of your penance. Goodbye, dear girl, goodbye."

A girl grinned and made the best of it. You met the eyes and said the obvious things. No one asked if it hurt; they knew it hurt. None offered to loose a strand, nor did you ask. Help to the punished was a no no! Unless you wanted to share their punishment. . . .

"What on earth did you say to her to get yourself into this?" Una giggled.

Una was the gossip. A pert, petite blonde who endured her unjust captivity as only another evidence of a hostile world which must be mocked and laughed at until it went away. "But they must let us loose sometime, darling! It stands to reason!" For her that was enough.

"You worry too much, Sabina," she counseled gaily. "I'm going to enjoy it while it lasts. It's a really way out thing - a gas."

"Did you enjoy getting whipped?" Sabina asked tartly.

"Not actually at the time," Una admitted, "but afterwards - oh, wow! And every time I think of it I get the hots. And anyway, my marks are all gone and so are yours."

"So's we can get some more."

"Well, maybe. But they do other things too. We might not he whipped next

time - could be something else."

"I don't want something else. I want to go home."

"Well, I suppose . . ." Una regarded her tightly bound companion pensively.

"Darling, d'you realize how scrumptious your breasts are like that! They're indecently beautiful."

"I hurt and I can't move and I want to go home."

"Gosh, you do, don't you!" Una made it sound like an aberration. "You ought to get your mind off it. I expect you'll soon disappear."

"Disappear!"

"Well, that's what happens. One day a girl's here, the next she's gone. And it's no use asking Sister Amaldis either. I say, Sabina, d'you really swallow about her being a nun? I bet she isn't."

"Probably not, but that doesn't help us. They probably think we'll be more respectful to a nun. But, Una, this disappearing . . . ?"

"Maybe that's not the word. But they just aren't here any more. I've never been able to figure if they let us loose by rotation, or they draw lots. I don't think it's rotation. I've been here an awful long time, simply months and months! I think they like me."

Una was the eternal little girl. Lubricity and innocence. Purity and prurience! But she was shrewd. The girl bound to the column scanned the other five inmates of the huge and luxurious chamber. Two were captive like herself, being punished. The other three were draped in arm chairs, quietly reading. She was grateful for Una's attention. Even if their talk was inconsequential, it was better than lonely pain.

"But, Una, don't you ever try and get away?"

"Escape? Oh, darling, don't be silly."

"What's so silly?"

"Lots of things, Sabina. First, I'm not going without my check - I say, d'you think well get paid extra for all this time?"

"I'm beginning to wonder if we get paid at all."

"Oh, jeepers, don't say that! I'm betting well get extra. But, on the escaping, I don't think it's even possible. There was a girl tried once - and the things they did to her - gollies!"

"And you still like them!"

Una contrived to look defensive. "It isn't all that hot on the outside, y'know. The Seigneury's giving me the first real money I've ever got close to."

"If you get it."

"Maybe you had things easier before you came here. I had it rough." Una shrugged resignedly. "At least the food's good, and we don't have to work."

The gap between them was wide. They had come to this strange place from different worlds. Una was good company but small comfort. Wearily, Sabina again surveyed her fellow prisoners. The girl, bound as she was bound, had let her head fall tiredly, perhaps she was managing to sleep. The other, who must stand against the wall, looked weary too, with her raised arm and shackled wrist. Eyes focusing, they exchanged smiles of mutual dolor. Punishment had become implicit to them at the Seigneury. Their day was unremarkable.

Sabina remembered another grievance. "Did you meet Rolfe Campys?" she asked.

"Him! Oh, wow!" Una was alert with interest. "Isn't he groovy! "

"He's another fraud." She related the meeting. "Play opposite! Like hell he did! I bet he doesn't even know the address." Una sparkled, her intent gaze was amused. "Darling, don't tell me you don't know. Didn't you guess?"

"No, I don't! What - ?"

"But you've met him here all right."

"No, I haven't! Think I wouldn't know?"

Una giggled, happy with her secret. "You got to do the one where the girl gets whipped at the cart's tail, didn't you?"

"Yes. It was me who got whipped."

Una exploded into laughter, then dropped her bomb.

"Rolfe Campys was the man in black who whipped you, darling . . . ."

## Chapter Four
## Glynis Woodhaye

The trunk of the car was hot. The transmission droned with a vicious persistent purpose. The hogtied girl was in pain. Rope bit at her everywhere: wrists, ankles, arms. Her feet doubled back to meet her hands. She was a package on her way to delivery.

The kidnaping of Glynis Woodhaye had been accomplished with demoralizing ease. She saw herself as having been "scooped up" or "collected." Hands and a gag had come from nowhere as she parked her yellow Lancia on the Silver Pheasant's parking lot. She had been dragged into the darkness and bound. When she had been lifted into the back of the car a male voice had asked, "Gag her tighter?"

"No. Take it out. She has to breathe. Let her howl. It doesn't matter."

She had howled. But, even to her own ears, the sound had been absorbed by the motion of the car. When her throat began to hurt she desisted. The dark enclosure in which she was doubled up after the slamming of the lid held her with the close intimacy of the womb.

Whilst feverishly searching for knots with fingers that might soon go numb, her mind raced with swift calculations: cash. Negotiable paper. Bonds . . . ! Her ransom would most certainly be high. For Glynis Woodhaye there would be no bargains. She would not be traded for as cut price merchandise, and the money would have to be her own!

She was pleased with her ability to repulse panic. She would negotiate her release as shrewdly as she could. Tressler at the bank would take over and gather up her price. She supposed her kidnapers would allow her to phone. And she would be safe. The very immensity of her wealth ensured her safety!

Her most immediate concern was the rope. It was unacceptable that a few strands of fiber should change the course of her life. The primitive nature of the control was demeaning. It was also extremely painful. Handcuffs or tape would have been more appropriate for the securing of Glynis Woodhaye. But, no doubt, the pain of cinched elbows and arched back was imposed to make her tractable. She struggled furiously and long against the indignity before relapsing into angry surrender and glumly conceding helplessness. The whining wheels, with their assurance of speeding miles, mocked her impotence.

The blinding cloth over her head was instant with the opening of the trunk. Glynis saw nothing. She was lifted and carried, like a sack of potatoes, for a long way. She picked up changing scents and indistinguishable sounds. Once she was put down while brutal fingers inserted a rubber ball in her mouth and strapped it tight. The end of her journey came when she was set upon her knees, and hands steadied her to sit back on her heels. The posture was strained and unstable, but she dared not jeopardize it, to fall sideways might be worse. Glynis Woodhaye knelt and waited.

She could understand the kneeling in pain as a softening up prelude to bargaining. She could not, however, identify the sounds. But fumed inwardly in the knowledge that she was observed. She made but one effort to speech. The sound was too shaming to repeat. She knew herself pathetically grateful when fingers fumbled at the cloth which hid her eyes.

But then came the nightmare.

* * *

Glynis Woodhaye knelt upon a sturdy table set well to one side of a large, ill-lit room. The tableau that met her startled eyes might have been on stage, with herself as the only occupant of a box beyond the footlights. A torch flared smoked from a bracket on the wall. A fire of logs added its light of flames from the huge stone hearth. Candles, set to one side of the long polished table, gave extra radiance for the ancient man with the quiff and parchment who sat, as might a judge, austere and remote. High barred windows added their own pale contribution to a scene from centuries long past.

The girl was panting. There had been a struggle, but now her wrists were bound behind her back. Her hair was awry so that she made tossing motions with her head

to keep it from her face. Her clothes were torn; splendid garments of nobility. Glynis, bemusedly, set their period, and that of the soldiers who held her arms, to be fifteenth century.

"You know my name . . . ?" The captive twisted fretfully against the soldiers' grip. "You cannot do this thing . . . !"

"'Tis already done, madam." The ancient voice was weary. "And as for thy father's name - 'tis not in favor."

"But I am a girl!" Lovely eyes searched the room desperately. "Harming me avails nothing."

"It will loose a stubborn tongue, young woman."

"But I have naught of which to speak."

"We both know better, M'Lady." The assurance was dryly caustic.

"What are you going to do to me?"

The young voice held courage, but also a terrible foreknowledge. Glynis shrank in mute sympathy and a sense of total unreality. Something somewhere had gone terribly wrong. With herself Or with the world! Or those who had captured her! For the moment she forgot pain and peril, yielding in total involvement to what her eyes beheld.

"The cord has been considered most fitting, M'Lady."

"The cord? What manner of . . . ?"

"'Tis also called the strappado, M'Lady." The old tired voice was bored. "Thy body is thus unmarked, a most suitable . . . ."

"But I have heard of it! The arms are pulled from their sockets . . . ?" Disbelief vied with horror in the maidens appeal.

"Yes."

The terse, dry affirmative filled the room like a thunderclap. The captive girl struggled against the hands and the rope. Uselessly . . . like the fluttering of a small bird.

"No! Oh, no! You cannot! 'Tis cruel beyond . . . ."

"Indeed we can, M'Lady."

"But I can tell you naught!"

"Not now perhaps - but soon . . . !" A bony hand gestured.

The rope and the pulley had been there waiting. It took but moments to attach the tied wrists and to exert the tension by which the captive arms rose behind the captive back and the maiden head bowed forward as though in obeisance to the austere

figure of the aged man.

"Expose her. Let us at least observe our work."

The full sleeves of the costly gown were rent, its bodice tom from the strained figure of the girl about to be questioned. In unconcern, the voluminous folds were allowed to billow from the young hips so that its owner was naked from the waist. Her arms already wracked unnaturally, the flickering light from candles and from fire illuminating the conical firmness of pert breasts now pointed at the rug.

"This is wrong! 'Tis wrong! Cover me."

It was a command, a relic of past authority. Glynis could guess no male eye had yet gazed upon the twin femininities now revealed. The girl twisted and turned ineffectually to hide what could not be hid, her slender nudity of breast and belly in strange contrast to the untidy billow of fabrics below.

"'Tis right an' we say so, girl."

A panicky denial died on maiden lips, to be replaced by a moan of anguish as the rope inexorably raised her arms.

"You may stop this when you wish, M'Lady."

"I cannot! You know I cannot. Oh - oh - oh, no!"

"In a moment thy feet will leave the floor, girl. 'Tis a sad plight for such as thee. Come - end it?"

The lovely prisoner cried aloud in a series of moans rising to a crescendo as her toes found only space. Her torn dress rustled as her slenderness turned slowly at rope's end.

"Rid her of that rubbish."

There came fresh and different sounds of protest as the soldier's hands stripped away satin and brocade and silk. Each tug revealed more maiden skin added to maiden pain. Glynis looked in fearful fascination at the nakedness revealed and the grotesque warping of the punished shoulders and arms. The victim hung suspended in a cruel and terrible exposure, the slightest move or touch generated its own slow turn of the pendent beauty.

"Oh, please . . . ! My - my - it must not be seen." "Thy pubic bush is seen and noted, lady. We have seen many such."

"But I must not be naked! Not thus! Not with men!"

". . . 'Pon my soul, Madam, ye treasure thy pubes more than thy arms in their sockets?"

"Yes - oh, yes - not naked!"

"Hoist her."

For Glynis it was nightmare as her eyes followed the slow rise of the grotesquely stretched and distorted maidenhood and her ears were assailed by the cries, the protests, and the moans of female youthfulness wracked beyond endurance. When the searching toes came to rest beyond the level of a man's head, the dry old voice took up its dreary tale.

"Men we check thy fall, Lady, thee and thy arms part company. Is that thy wish?"

"No! Oh, oh, oh, mercy! Please, mercy!"

The screams were frightful as it was done. The sudden fall, abruptly snubbed so that arms, shoulders, and body straightened into a vertical straight nudity in which even the breasts were flattened. The pitiful sounds of anguish robbed Glynis of awareness of her own pain and desolation. She had become one with the girl on the end of the rope. The withered hand motioned once more with the quill.

The soldiers were expert. When the tortured nudity was lowered to crumple, sobbing, to the rug, they pulled and thrust to return the torn arms to sundered sockets. Then stood waiting.

"Well?"

The ancient voice sounded more bored than before. The wounded girl raised her head at the sound of it, but nothing more. After long moments of silence she moaned helplessly, "Mercy . . . ? Ye must show mercy - ye must . . . ."

"We can raise thee and let thee fall a hundred times, girl."

"No - No! Don't! Please have mercy." "Next time ye go higher and drop farther."

" 'Tis not possible - ye cannot!"

"Hoist her high."

The screams were continuous until the fall. When the young loveliness was once again gravitated into a stretched and unfamiliar semblance of womanhood, the screams stopped, to be replaced by a silence more terrible than sound.

"The lass has fainted, sir."

"Let her to the floor. Replace the joints."

It was competently done. But a male hand sought a female breast, and then a female pulse.

"The maid is dead, sir!"

The ancient sigh held only irritation. "Aye. It happens. 'Tis not common, but sometimes the heart . . . ! " He gathered his parchments and his quill. "Shell be buried in hallowed ground. See to it. I'll advise those who need to know." He arose, tiredly, from his trying task.

The hood, once more, fell over Glynis' face.

* * *

"You look ravishing, darling." Rolfe Campys raised his glass. "A toast to sweet humility."

Glynis Woodhaye could not reply. She was still gagged. Her mind was working overtime to keep sanity in perspective. The contrast between the dark stone chamber with its tortured girl and his luxurious modern lounge demanded a difficult adjustment. To find herself bound and gagged and kneeling in enforced humility before Rolfe Campys took another. Nothing made sense. She made her small, sad sounds against the rubber ball in her mouth, and shook her head angrily against the strap which held it there.

"Chivalry demands I release you, beloved, or at least take out your gag." Rolfe sipped appreciatively. "Prudence, however, suggests I should say my piece while you can't say anything. You have a nasty way of cutting a man off. The famous Woodhaye freeze."

Glynis fought for control. She had come this far on a journey unsought. It would be foolish to go to pieces before Rolfe Campys' buffoonery. She longed for speech, but contented herself with the knowledge her time must come. It must - it must! But to kneel like this . . . ! In pain and silence! Passionately she longed to do him violence.

"By now, dear heart, you will have deduced you have been kidnaped. But you are not sure why." Rolfe smiled expansively at the bound and disheveled beauty kneeling to await his pleasure. "Let me end your suspense. I have had you kidnaped so that I may fuck you to my heart's content."

The bound girl tensed, her eyes betraying a fresh agony. Rolfe might be fooling - but! She shook her head in unconscious negation.

He held up an admonitory hand, as though she possessed the power to interrupt. "True, poppet, true . . . you would have eventually fallen victim to my charm and, as a tremendous concession, opened your legs. But I got to thinking about that, and I asked myself why the hell I should kiss your ass to fuck your cunt. You're the most icy bitch in the state and you need a lesson."

This time the shake of her head was conscious. She wriggled her wrenched shoulders at him to indicate pain. Surely . . . ?

Rolfe failed to notice. He was in full stride. "Remember, Glynis, when you said you'd sooner be beaten than bedded? Well, now you have the best of both worlds. You'll get both." He mused quietly for a minute, then continued crisply. "And if you're wondering about rescue and a big hooha in the press, forget it. You'll be signing a power of attorney and I've got a marvelous accountant . . . ." He bestowed his most charming grin. "I could keep you forever, sweetheart."

Glynis refused to contemplate his threat. Pain, humiliation, and the terrible thing she had seen were more immediate. She twisted as best she could against the ropes, frustrated, impotent, closer to tears than she cared to admit. Victim of her own revolt, she fell over sideways and lay helpless. The ropes burned more cruelly than ever.

"My, my!" He laughed delightedly. "Our Miss Glynis Woodhaye flopping on the floor like a gaffed fish! Here, I'll put you back up. And since I'm too tenderhearted for my own good, I'll let you talk."

The surge of gratitude she felt told Glynis how far indeed she had been humbled. Striving with tongue and lips to bring her mouth back to normal she fought for caution. She was still helpless, and Rolfe Campys was unpredictable. "Thank you," she ventured quietly. And then: "These ropes are hurting me terribly."

"Is that an invitation to untie you?"

He would play cat and mouse with her. She knew him too well to plead. He would enjoy her pleading. Instead, she spoke of the horror.

"Rolfe, I've seen a girl killed."

"Traffic accident, poppet?"

"Of course not! Somewhere close here. She was young and lovely and they were torturing her. The pain was too much - she died."

"Sure you weren't dreaming, dear girl?"

"No. I was there." Glynis shook her head in frustration. "I know nothing's making sense but I was there. I was tied this same way - I've been tied so long . . . ! A strange half underground place and fifteenth century clothes. . . . They tortured her and she died."

Rolfe Campys shrugged, his voice held no concern. "A loss of inventory, eh! Most trades call it 'shrinkage.'"

"Rolfe, what are you saying!"

"Wasn't me, actually. It was you." He smiled down at her. "Hallucination, I expect. You've had yourself quite a time."

"Rolfe, why was I shown that - that awfulness?" "I suppose someone must have thought it would be good for you. If you weren't dreaming."

She sensed something best left alone. Her own pain and her own plight was urgent enough. She played her cards cautiously. "Rolfe, I'm not being hysterical. Cue me in on what this is all about."

"Say please."

"Please."

It was the hardest single word she had ever uttered. Looking up at him she strove to keep her face serene. Hiding the bitter shame on which she choked.

"I suppose that's really what it's about," he admitted reflectively. "Having you on your knees and hearing you say please. It's been a thing with me for some time now."

"All right. So you want me humbled. If this is it, how about letting me clean up and taking me out to dine?"

"No."

Glynis accepted the negative as implicit to the scene. She hid fear and a bitter resentment behind a cool rationale. "I suppose we can both think of all the things I should say now," she said slowly, thinking her way into a dark unknown. "There are stock exclamations and corny cliches. I don't want to make them. Can we consider them said?"

Rolfe Campys glinted admiration. "Of course we can, dear heart. I said you were the coolest cunt in the state."

Glynis flinched at a word she had always loathed. Under the impulse of pain she made a plea. "Rolfe, can I get rid of the rope on my elbows? You've no idea how it hurts."

"No."

"But I'd still be helpless. My elbows don't need to be tied."

"Yes, they do, poppet. Look down at your tits, they're justification enough."

She did not look down, but her cheeks flamed. She had been all too well aware of her nipples thrusting at the thin stuff of her dress. Swallowing chagrin, she continued, "Look, Rolfe, I'm in a spot. I have to adjust. I don't want to provoke - I - I don't want to . . . ."

"Get your ass whipped?"

"Rolfe, don't be disagreeable. What's expected of me? Surely I'm humbled enough like this?"

He refilled his glass and looked down at her with amusement. "I should be a bastard and sip this while you watch." He bent down and held it to her lips. "Here, drink the lot. You'll need it."

"Thanks." Glynis gasped from the excess and gazed up at her captor apprehensively. "Rolfe, tell me. Please!"

"You're one for the book," he chuckled. "D'you realize that, bound and helpless and kneeling at my feet, it's you who assumes the initiative!"

"I'm only asking civil questions while in great pain."

"But still Miss High and Mighty."

"I'm not!" Glynis was indignant. "D'you want me to cry? I expect I could. I'm miserable enough."

"I'd like to see you cry, sweets." There could be no doubting his sincerity. "Please start."

She sniffed disdainfully. "You've killed it." She wriggled uncomfortably and contrived to look forlorn. "You've read about this," she accused. "So have I. It's been done in fiction a good many times. A girl says no, so she's made to crawl. Is this doing something for you?"

"Yes."

"All right! What do I have to do?"

"If I untie you, will you strip? Prettily, of course."

"No."

"Modesty?"

"Only part. It's a childish thing for a man like you to want. You must have seen and handled a hundred naked girls."

"But not you."

"That's an admission it's just a thing in your mind."

"See what I mean!" There was amused triumph in his voice. "Come hell or high water you're going to put a man down. Keep him in his place." Glynis sniffed again. "Can I help it if men never grow up? The look on your faces makes me feel like buying you a baseball and bat."

"How about a whip?"

"Rolfe, at least try and be original."

"Sorry, beloved, I'm pure corn. If I untie you will you spread your legs nicely for me?"

"No, I won't! You're just pandering to your own ego. There's no reason why I should too."

"Would thrashing you provide a reason?"

"Not one either of us would be proud of."

"Honeypot, can you glimpse in which direction we're drifting?"

"Yes. Confrontation. You're going to do something beastly to me. You've maneuvered yourself into a position where you almost have to."

Rolfe's grin was shadowed. "Shows the hazards of intellect and sweet reason," he mused ruefully. "I should simply have beaten you into submission, fucked you well and truly, then locked you up ready for next time, and gone about my affairs. We'd both be better off."

Glynis recognized truth, a knowledge inherent in all women. The Male was still the physical fact. The Strength. His compulsion to plant his seed in female wombs was

the motive force for most of life. Through connivance to gain her ends, Ionian had become the stronger. But in the recurring act and the brief moments of his glory he would always best her. To cling to virginity was as unlikely an achievement today as it had ever been. Prompted by a feminine mischief she could not control, Glynis asked coldly, "I thought that's what you were going to do?"

Rolfe shook his head in mock sorrow. "Okay," he conceded, "I'll admit defeat." He bent down and reached for the knot that secured the elbows of the kneeling girl.

Glynis tensed. The vibes were wrong. This new Rolfe Campys was a force. She gasped in pain as the deeply bedded strands were peeled from her flesh. But the feeling was good, good, good!

"Thanks, Rolfe."

"You're welcome."

The silly exchange of courtesy was like the deployment of hostile troops. The still captive girl contrived to awkwardly rest on one hip in order to extend her legs for her captor's attention. She winced again in painful gratitude as loops fell away from ankles and knees. When she was hoisted to stand erect she was cruelly stiff. Everything hurt. But the hurt was good.

"Gosh, that feels better! I really am grateful!"

Glynis looked back over her shoulder and smiled. She thrust back her bound hands for his convenience. . . .

Nothing happened. The tied girl had bent forward helpfully. Slowly she straightened and looked questioningly at the man who had sauntered from behind and was now regarding her with what she mentally labeled as smug satisfaction.

"My hands are still tied."

"Tied but not forgotten, beloved."

"Please untie them, Rolfe?"

"That 'please' is noted and recorded, sweetheart."

It went against the grain. But Glynis gave him her best sweet little girl smile and tried again. "Please untie my hands, Rolfe. The way they are, I'm so helpless."

"Delightful."

She tried not to sag in defeat. She must not admit the bitter disappointment. Rolfe Campys was playing with her - cat and mouse!

"Very well, what now?"

"Negotiations, sweetness."

"Am I allowed a point of view?"

"By all means, beloved. I wish to hear." Rolfe smiled winningly. "Your sentiments on certain questions are vital. For instance, the matter of your clothes . . . ."

"I have already told you. I will not strip."

"But I wish to examine your tits and pubic hair." "Phone a call-girl. They come fully equipped."

"Hmmmmm, we'll pass that one for the moment. Now! I wish to fuck you. Will you help?"

"No."

"How about a blow job?"

"Don't be disgusting."

His gaze and his voice were both level. "Glynis, how seriously are you listening to what I say? Do you believe I'm fooling?"

She twisted strained shoulders against her tied wrists. "I have to pay attention. Have you any idea how helpless I feel - having my hands tied behind my back?"

He shrugged. "Being helpless like that is a reality you can't ignore. How d'you suppose you can brush off the other?"

"I can't. I'm relying on the decencies. Rolfe, where am I? What's this all about?"

"You're at the Seigneury. Hadn't you guessed?"

"And there are no decencies here? I suppose this explains that awful thing I was forced to watch?" She paused, breathless. "Rolfe, are you going to throw me into something like that?"

Silently he turned to the mantle and took there from the thing he had laid in readiness. Glynis' eyes widened in dismay. Purposefully he flexed the long length of plastic, bending it double.

"New improved version of the old willow switch or a cane," he explained casually. "Your legs and your arms are bare. It will hurt quite indecently."

"You expect me to just stand . . ."

"No. I expect you'll leap around a bit. I'll just follow along and let the switch fall where it may."

It was like slow motion. In dazed disbelief, Glynis watched his motions, the swift, decisive motions to hurt her. Exclamations crowded her lips but she uttered none of them. They were only words - and there was no time!

"Sorry, poppet . . . ." Her scream was of anger and outrage as her leg was lanced by fire, a beastly kind of pain against which she had no defense. She tugged

desperately at her tied hands, twisting helplessly in travail. When she saw the switch begin another curve she backed away.

"No! No - Rolfe, don't! Oh, don't!"

Because of her retreat, the blow cut across her shins, a sickening stomach turning agony. Driven by instinct she fell to the rug and curled her legs as best she could beneath her skirt. But before she could mount defense the next blow cut at her arms, wealing both. Another followed, and another . . . ! With a wail of anguish, Glynis struggled to her feet, mourning her bound hands, uncertain and distraught. The withe followed her as she leaped away.

"Probably hurts more than you supposed, sweetheart?" The inquiry was casually polite.

Glynis faced him, panting and at bay, like the pictures of wild animals - trapped. The pain of her wounds was atrocious. Reason had fled. She could only gasp, brokenly, "Rolfe - oh, Rolfe."

"Yes, beloved?"

"What's happening to us? Why?" She could find no adequate words, only a cry of anguish.

"You are being beaten, dear heart, to persuade you to ask me to untie your hands so that you may become a woman instead of an iceberg."

"Rolfe, not like this - I won't - I won't! I can't!"

The blows continued. Even in the refuge of a corner the short, sharp slashes impacted where she least desired, so that she again fled seeking a sanctuary the room could not provide. Her whole being cried out against the binding of her wrists and the resultant helplessness. With her hands she might have stood some chance. But tied . . . ! Her moans and cries were of agonies beyond the demeaning pain. When a slash missed her arm and impacted on her breast the pain was frightening, scarcely modified by the thin stuff of her dress. In blind panic she again fell to the floor, curling into a pathetic ball of punished femininity, and sobbed, "Kill me - Kill me then! Kill me . . . ."

## Chapter Five
## The Schoolroom

"Simulation is only in the planning, sir. Our enactments are real." With grave courtesy, Maslin proffered the academic gown. "Please feel free to consult me. I am the butler here, but also one of the custodians. The other is Sister Amaldis. And now the mortarboard. . . . If I may say so, Mr. Atwood, you wear it with distinction."

Guilt over the squandering of Uncle Prescott's money modified before the image in the big mirror. Dick Atwood was aware of a quickening pulse. The blackgowned figure staring at him was the man of his fantasy. Tall and lean, the eyes intense.

"And I will be completely alone, in charge?"

"Quite so, sir. But you do understand that the chatelaines and chevaliers of the Seigneury are always free to come and go, in suitable guise, of course. You will find their deference to you beyond criticism. They will never intrude. Your class may receive callers."

It was worth the money. It had to be! It was so incredibly perfect. Dick Atwood posed an entrancing question at Maslin's imperturbability. "But, in the class, there will be chatelaines among the - the . . . ."

Maslin permitted a smile. "We refer to them as the girls, sir. There is no ambiguity."

"But should I not differentiate?"

"No, sir. They are there by their own wish, impelled by motives similar to your own. They will be hopeful of your attention."

"But will I be able to tell?"

"The difference?" Maslin's small smile held nothing but helpful respect. "I think so, sir. Mostly they are somewhat older - though suitably attired. May I request, Mr. Atwood, that you in no way betray your awareness. As a matter of policy, our girls are rarely fully informed. Their ignorance of certain factors is part of the authenticity."

Dick Atwood took a deep breath and offered Maslin an apologetic grin. "If the little darlings are half as nervous as I am . . . !" He shook his head and left the rest unsaid.

"It is most natural, sir, and will soon pass. And now, if you will come this way?"

All else was forgotten in a surge of joy as the headmaster swirled into the classroom. Here it was as he had dreamed. Fourteen respectful feminine faces turned at his entry. Fourteen leggy girls stood erect as fourteen, girlish voices pealed in unison.

"Good morning, Mr. Atwood."

Ecstasy!

The headmaster took his place behind his desk. Across it was ostentatiously draped the slenderness of a yellow cane. There was a sheet of paper with names. . . ."

"Please be seated."

The rustle of pure femininity as pleated skirts slithered back across wooden seats in obedience to his male command was the essence of life itself. Dick Atwood became aware of a tightening in his loins as he scanned the bland innocence of pert mischief or petulant compliance delivered into his hands. Briskly, he picked up the roll.

"Mabel Slingsby?"

A girl rose to her feet. "Present, sir."

"Daphne Durante?"

"Present, sir."

How exquisite they were! What sweet obedience! Dick Atwood felt a wave of deep gratitude to Uncle Prescott, now deceased. Without the legacy this could not have happened.

"Margaret Shwartz?"

A moment's silence, and then the eager raising of a bare young arm. "Please, sir, Margaret's being punished. She's in the dungeon. Sister Amaldis told me to tell you."

He coughed gently to gain a moment in which to digest the dungeon. "Thank you. And your name, please?"

"Chrissy Ragan, sir." A giggled. "I'm present."

It was a name and a face he would remember. Even at a distance and across the desks her sexuality struck Dick Atwood like a blow, a sweet and cloying clutching at the heart. His voice was coarse.

"Phylis Pendleton?"

As the headmaster called out the dwindling list of names and received the girlish reassurances of their presence within the room as feminine flesh and blood, he became increasingly aware of an approaching hiatus. When the last name had drawn its response, he announced crisply:

"We will start with English literature," he announced crisply. "I would like us to explore a possible relationship between Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare, with particular emphasis on any political overtones in Marlowe's Dr. Faustus and his 'Jew of Malta.'"

The atmosphere of the room was heady stuff as feminine fingers caused a rumble of sound in the withdrawal of the required volume from each desk. The Master became aware of two dark eyes and a raised hand. He consulted the roll and discovered, inexplicably, that he was pointing the cane.

"Vera Manson . . . ? Ah, yes. You wish to speak, Miss Manson?" He had the feeling of getting off to a good start.

"Please, sir, I don't know anything about the subject." The eyes remained bold, challenging. "And I don't think I want to."

So soon! It was perfect, incredible, wonderful! It was heart's desire. The pseudo headmaster labeled Vera Manson as a chatelaine but what did it matter! His voice was suavely confident.

"Perhaps you may be persuaded to change your mind."

"No, sir, I don't like poetry."

The rapt silence was exquisite. Dick Atwood knew himself the conductor of a

feminine symphony, his baton poised. . . .

No words in history had rang out the acceptance of challenge with greater emphasis. "Kindly step out before the class, Miss Manson."

"I'd rather not, sir. I don't wish to be caned."

"Did I speak of caning, Miss Manson?"

"No, sir, but that's what you're going to do to me. I can tell."

"Indeed! And just how, pray?"

A wriggle of feminine shoulders, but the dark eyes held steady. "It's happened before, sir. We always get caned. I don't like it."

The eyes belied the words. The headmaster knew himself in the grip of a tumescent excitation. His assurance was vibrant. "You are not supposed to like it, Miss Manson. Please step up beside my desk and hold out your hand."

"I'm sorry, sir, I can't." "What do you mean, you can't?"

Did the eyes waver! The tense shoulders droop! But the feminine voice was determined. "I guess I just don't want to, sir."

He poised a finger. "Do you know what will happen if I ring this bell?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what?" He made his voice snap.

"Some of the staff will come and compel me. . . ."

"And is that what you desire?"

Vera's wriggle was both pronounced and provocative. The bold eyes softened and became wistful. "No, sir."

"Then step forward."

It was an exquisite performance. The headmaster neither knew nor cared if it was real. Certainly the flushed cheeks were a visible proof of the same evidenced in every rebellious motion of the young body. Vera's steps were those of the condemned as she left the haven of her desk and revealed the inadequacy of the school uniform to shield her contours. Uncertainly she faced him before the thirteen pairs of fascinated eyes.

"Hold out your hand, Vera."

Vera Manson did not hold out her hand. Instead, she clasped them defensively behind her back. "Couldn't I be punished some other way, sir?" she inquired hopefully.

"You prefer to be thrashed on your bottom?"

Her flinch was clearly visible. "Not really, sir."

Dick Atwood reveled in a pure erotic joy. But he made his voice caustic. "Perhaps you have a suggestion, Miss Manson?"

"Must I be thrashed at all, sir?"

Her girlish wail was superb. He suddenly saw her naked, nubile and beneath his authority, pliant. She would be more than beautiful.

"You will be thrashed, Miss Manson. I leave the choice to you."

"I - I'd - I'd have to bend over, sir?" "If you please. First bare your bottom and protrude it to face the class. Touch your toes."

"Oh, sir . . . !" The now limpid eyes gazed up at him in supplication. "My bottom - all bare! In front of everyone?"

How sweet she was! How perfectly she prolonged the role! Was she perhaps giving an object lesson to the younger ones - the girls! And yet - the blush! Could females blush at will! Fervently the headmaster blessed his Uncle Prescott, now deceased!

"You don't expect me to cane you over your uniform, Miss Manson?"

"Weeellll, yes, sir. Could you, please?"

It was as though she had found an acceptable compromise. Her eyes were wide with pleading. Exposed to their female potency, how easily a male might relent, be twisted, managed . . . !

"Don't be absurd, Miss Manson. You are to be punished."

"Then, sir, could I - perhaps - just my panties?"

It was beautifully done. Dick's memory roved: De Granamour, Cleland, the Comte Du Bouleau. . . . None had penned their heroines blushing shames more graphically.

"Not even your panties, Vera. Come, be sensible."

Her surrender tore his heart. Vera Manson's eyes roved appealingly, her shoulders fluttered in distress. Her hands emerged from hiding.

"In that case, sir - perhaps I'd prefer - if you don't mind?" She extended a bare and very feminine arm.

Dick Atwood hoped the thudding in his chest could not be heard. Was Vera Manson's heart thudding too? And if so, was it in fear, or exultant joy? In the best tradition of the Victorians, he used the cane to adjust the level of the penitent hand. "Your palm taut, Miss Manson. Your arm well out. . . . Ah, thank you!" He began the preliminary tapping to gauge his aim.

"Please don't hit my hand too hard, sir . . . ." Even in the final cringing

appeal she was letter perfect. The headmaster took a deep, ecstatic breath and struck with all his force.

Whether Vera Manson was enacting a role or not, no longer mattered. The swift cut upon her hand was real. The resultant agony was real. Her response was the most real of all. With a wail of shock she hugged her punished palm within an armpit. Bending forward, oblivious to everything save pain, she sobbed in hurt surprise. "Oh - oh - oh! Oh, no - no - no - !" She stamped a foot in protest against something beyond bearing.

Dick Atwood knew it would be wrong to hurry. The room was involved, holding its collective breath. Vera Manson, coping with her anguish, was a pulsating piece of erotica that should be allowed to run its course. Standing quietly, he let his gaze rove across his class. It came to rest on Chrissy Ragan. The girl was totally absorbed, her eyes shining, her wide lips moist. She exuded a radiance. . . .

"Your other hand please, Miss Manson?"

Vera looked up at him, wan but adoring. "Must I, . sir?"

"Immediately."

In mute resignation to male authority, the caned girl stood erect and slowly extended her other arm. Her eyes, now, were infinitely pleading, limpid. But for what did they plead! Knowing himself the most privileged of men, the headmaster tapped and tapped - then struck.

"Owwww - oh - oh!"

Once more, Vera Manson bestowed bliss. Her writhings and her sounds required no script. This time, both her injured hands found solace beneath her arm's most secret place. She hugged herself and sobbed. The Master watched until the paroxysm of grief began to ebb.

"Thank you, Miss Manson. You may return to your seat."

"Oh - oh, yes. Oh, thank you, sir."

There was one more message from the witching eyes before their owner turned and retraced her shameful steps.

Seated at her desk, the caned beauty hugged her hands and quietly cried, her eyelids flickering upon a sparkle born not alone from tears.

Perhaps Vera Manson had expected more! Was it possible she was disappointed with her burning palms! The headmaster knew it was. He sighed heavily. Surveying his plethora of feminine riches, he turned the leaves of his book.

"I think we should trace the possibility of Marlowe having written or influenced the work of Shakespeare. . . ."

Dick Atwood had been prepared to drone on upon a favorite topic when his drone was terminated by a thud. He looked up, annoyed.

"Oh, dear - I'm terribly sorry." Chrissy Ragan looked up in dewy eyed apology as she retrieved the heavy tome she had allowed to fall.

He let it pass. Perhaps an accident! But he had concluded no more than a couple of sonorous sentences before there was an even louder thump.

"I'm so clumsy!" Chrissy's eyes were pleading. Pleading for what? She picked up the book and looked at him expectantly. "It's my own fault, sir, I'm so silly . . . ."

She was provocatively gorgeous. Pubescently female. Dick Atwood once more knew himself blessed. "I am sure your problem is subject to correction, Miss Ragan," he suggested blandly.

"I expect it is, sir."

"Perhaps a sound caning of careless hands?"

"If you say so, sir."

Chrissy did it superlatively well. To so combine the demure with the provocative was purely feminine wile. Here was none of Vera's shrinking, but rather a glad discovery of his understanding of the vibrantly sexual play of words.

"Step forward, please, Miss Ragan."

It was beautifully done, impossible to prove deliberate. In passing the desk of the girl in front, Chrissy's small hand hovered nervously. . . . Another book was sent tumbling to the floor.

From somewhere there came a titter, instantly quelled. The atmosphere was electric as the culprit picked up the displaced copy of "Spencer's England."

"I've done it again!" Chrissy exclaimed in flushed contrition. Her eyes sought those of the headmaster in perfect understanding. "You'll think I did it on purpose, sir."

"The thought had crossed my mind," Dick admitted dryly. "Perhaps four on each hand . . . ?"

She stood before him now so that her musk was heavy in his nostrils. Chrissy was sending out vibrations in wave after wave of lubricity. She looked up at him in genuine concern. "Four, sir!" The prospect was evidently daunting. "Four on each hand . . . ! Oh, sir. . . . !"

"Are they not deserved, Miss Ragan?"

"Well, I suppose so, sir. But I've never had four . . . ." She giggled nervously. "I'll never be able to hold my hands out after the first two." She became girlishly serious. "It hurts quite a lot, y'know, sir. It hurts awful."

"An excellent deterrent to carelessness."

"Oh, yes, sir!" Chrissy's agreement was quite unfeigned. It was possible to believe her grateful for a cure and dubious only of her ability to swallow the

medications. "You're ever so kind, sir."

She was outrageous, blatantly wallowing in the sexual overtones of the scene she had provoked. In this douce damsel Dick Atwood's fantasy was recreated a hundredfold. His loins were afire and would be a problem.

"There is always a first time, Miss Ragan."

"Of course, sir. I'll try and be ever so brave. But but - ?"

"Yes, Miss Ragan?"

"Well, sir if I hold out my hand and - and - sort of flinch - or pull it back - do I get an extra stroke?"

"Naturally."

"Oh, dear!" She looked up wistfully. "I might end up with a dozen. Or maybe more! I'm not sure I can manage."

"Are you contriving a conversational caning, Miss Ragan? We appear to be lost in words."

"We do, don't we, sir? Aren't I awful!"

It was less an apology than a statement of fact. There could be little doubt Chrissy was glorying in her awfulness. To the man with the cane it was intoxicating. Dick Atwood suddenly glimpsed a fresh new vista. "Perhaps you would prefer ten on your bottom?" he asked kindly.

"Oooooo, oh, would you, sir! Oh, that would be lovely."

Such heartfelt gratitude! Dick felt he had bestowed an inestimable gift. He explored Chrissy's further potential. "You would be required to bare your bottom for your punishment."

"Oh, of course, sir!"

"And to touch your toes."

"You're ever so kind, Mr. Atwood."

Dick sighed inwardly. He knew his limits and wondered what it would be like to orgasm before fourteen pair of interested female eyes. "You may, bend over, Miss Ragan," he instructed dazedly.

Chrissy obeyed with a shameful alacrity, as though fearful he would rescind his benevolence. Her round young bottom reared amazingly like the bursting of a bud in spring. With practiced fingers, she flipped back her tiny skirt to reveal the fact she wore no panties. With knees held rigid, she positioned her pert posterior to face the class. Then, to give good measure in her penance, placed the palms of her hands upon the floor. Chrissy was flexible.

"You do not wear panties, Miss Ragan?"

"No, sir." A giggle. "It saves a lot of time."

"Bur hardly decorous for a young lady."

"I'll remember, sir, and put some on for next time."

"Next time what?"

"Well, just in case, sir." Another giggle. "A girl never knows, does she? I say, sir, I hope you don't mind the way I stick out my behind?"

"Is that not concurrent with this required posture?"

"Yes, sir. But I don't mean just my bottom. My bottom sticks up beautifully, but I mean between my legs - my pussy. Perhaps you should look?"

The class was delighted. Dick Atwood knew himself on trial. How easy it was for these little baggages to make a fool of a man. Quite apart from erotic intent, they needed a firm hand. Conscious of inexperience in such comparisons, he stepped to where the twin curves awaited their punishment.

"I'm sort of proud of it, sir. If one of the girls hadn't told me about it I'd never have known." Chrissy seemed in no way discommoded by her trying pose.

It was a ludicrous shock. An amazing erotic discovery to a bachelor who had known no other similar glimpse of female versatility. Chrissy's plump pussy winked at him flamboyantly from between her parted cheeks. For company it had brought along a few fronds of dark hair.

Prudently, he quenched exclamations. Best not to evoke giggles at his own expense. Perhaps all girls . . . ? "Congratulations," he said heartily, "It's superb. I shall cane it along with the rest!"

"Oooooooo, sir . . ."

He could not tell if the exclamation was in pleasure or dismay. Aware of deep water, he swung the cane.

"Wooooow, woo, woo - oh, gollies! Thank you, sir."

The girl was magnificent. Dick watched the forming of the scarlet ridge across the taut skin. The bottom weaved but the pose was not broken. The pain was probably exquisite. He resolved to strike within the limits of this delightful creature's tolerance. Carefully, he raised a second crimson bar beside the first.

"Mmmmm! Oh, wow - wowwwwwww Oh, thank you, sir!"

"I'm so glad you're getting down to work, Mr. Atwood." Sister Amaldis had entered unseen. She bestowed a beaming smile on one and all. "Ah, dear Chrissy - I'm so glad you are caning her! She's a darling."

Dick perceived an inconsistency. But the Seigneury would have values all its own. In this case Chrissy's bottom was a casualty. And perhaps Sister Amaldis knew

something . . . ! His response was usurped by his bent over protege.

"Good morning, Sister Amaldis. Mr. Atwood canes ever so well."

"Isn't she sweet! So appreciative." Sister Amaldis absently relieved Dick of the cane and delivered half a dozen shrewd cuts before handing it back.

"Thank you, Sister." The gratitude quivered only slightly.

"You are enjoying your girls, Mr. Atwood?"

"Immensely! They are - "

"You will discipline them all, I hope?"

"Er - fourteen?"

Sister Amaldis sighed fondly. "It does the darlings so much good." Her eye hovered on the still bending Chrissy. "How many more has this dear child earned?"

"Er - just two."

"I suggest you deliver them. She may then return to her desk. I have in mind a brief demonstration."

Bemused by too much too soon, Dick Atwood aimed for and struck the plump puss pouting from between Chrissy's legs. The blows were not severe but evoked tears so that he knew a pang of conscience as the dewy eyes enveloped him in adoration and the dulcet young voice sobbed, "Thank you, sir, for caning me - there!" He stood enraptured as small hands lifted the cane to lush lips to lingeringly kiss the instrument of pain before their owner scampered back to her place.

"I cannot imagine the Seigneury without Chrissy." Sister Amaldis glowed with affection. "I am wondering, Mr. Atwood, if you have considered the possibilities of shame?" Oh Well, not specifically . . . ."

"It is most potent." Her eyes swept the class. "Noreen! Step forward, please."

Dick Atwood guessed the pretty creature who hesitantly approached to be one of the chatelaines, nor was it hard to surmise her displeasure at being singled out. Her voice betrayed nothing but a polite response.

"Yes, Sister?"

"I want you to lift your tunic and show Mr. Atwood your pubic hair, dear."

Dick realized the shrewdness of the demand. Sister Amaldis probably knew the Achilles heel of each member of the Seigneury. It was obvious Noreen shrank from what she must do. But she did it! With flushed cheeks and rebellious eyes, she fumbled beneath her skirt and stepped out of brief white panties. A moment later, Dick found himself confronted by an accusing black triangle above ivory thighs. The whole effect was cringingly indecent.

"Thank you, dear. Now turn and show the class."

Noreen was obedient but sulky. Dick wondered why she had attended his class. But perhaps the lovely creature had not reckoned with Sister Amaldis. The class itself examined Noreen's pubic hair with no more than a polite interest. There was an air of expectancy, emanations wholly female.

"You see what I mean, Mr. Atwood?" Sister Amaldis was briskly helpful.

"Er, yes - I do indeed."

"Nudity is implicit, Mr. Atwood." The Sister turned to the apprehensive class. "Girls, you will remove your clothes. Leave them on your desk, then form a line."

Dick was tom between resentment at the usurpation of his authority and enchantment with Sister Amaldis' methods. He was still holding the cane, but a firm feminine hand thrust into his grasp a short single thonged whip. The same feminine fingers patted his arm reassuringly. Suddenly, the first girl stood before him, totally naked. She was looking at his bewilderment with wry amusement. But the good Sister was in full stride. She positioned the docile damsel to stand with breasts outthrust and hands behind her neck. "One very hard stroke on her bottom, Mr. Atwood," she requested briskly.

Gratitude to Uncle Prescott once more flooded Dick Atwood's being. Fourteen naked girls! All waiting to be caned. All looking at him with their own response of adoration, lust, resentment, and docility. But all were expectant, and he was the focus of their regard. He swung lustily.

"Thank you, Mr. Atwood." The punished maiden delivered him a relieved smile and a curtsey, and minced back to her desk, rubbing her weal.

Sister Amaldis had prepared number two in exactly the same pose. It was Vera Manson. The girl's eyes glowed with an emotion all her own. The look she gave him was one of complicity.

"The right breast with the whip, Mr. Atwood," Sister Amaldis intoned. "Vera dislikes it. You will strike from the rear under the exposed armpit."

It was clever, and cruel, and wonderful! Strive as he would, Dick could not moderate his cutting thong. It bit into Vera's white skin beneath her raised arm and spent its curling lash upon the curve of her defenseless breast.

"Oh, Mr. Atwood!" She gazed at him with deep approval. Female fingers traced the tender line across her breast. Vera tripped, almost gaily, back to her desk.

Breast and buttock, thigh and armpit! It was compellingly beautiful. Dick struck and struck again, his loins afire, his breath responsive to the thudding of his heart. Sister Amaldis was helpfully efficient, the girls unfailingly charming in their acceptance of brief cruel shame. He was sure that no man had ever been so drenched in female nakedness. A bobbing array of breasts and bottoms, impudent nipples and concave tummies. But the inundation of bare skin brought no satiety. Instead, it fueled a mounting lust, for each nudity was an enchantment of its own. No breast or pube, bush or thigh, was ever quite the same. Naked girls passed endlessly. Each one offering him a splendor all her own.

"I will leave you now." Sister Amaldis beamed affection. "Forgive my intrusion. But I did so want to give the darlings a proper introduction. I feel now that you've actually 'met them.' Be very strict and very cruel." She smiled benignly. "They'll respect you so much more."

With the closing of the door, Dick Atwood consulted his watch.

The shaming of his fourteen girls had taken barely thirty minutes.

## Chapter Six
## The Cell

The grip of Glynis Woodhaye's bare wealed arm was harsh. The Wardress' stride was forceful, so she was compelled to bestir her lagging steps to keep pace. Around them were bare washed walls and the institutional smell of disinfectant. She was handcuffed.

Glynis was dazed. She was uncertain whether she had lost consciousness under the rain of searing blows from Rolfe Campys' plastic withe, or whether she had remained in a hurt and huddled female ball upon the rug after the blows had ceased. The stripes had been interminable, driving her to oblivion. She had kept her eyes closed as she had been yanked to her feet and handcuffed. It was not until the forced march she had opened them and examined her jailer.

Wardress Bulloch was as large and square as might be supposed. Her attire was severe, the ring with its keys a badge of the office. She turned sardonic eyes.

"You aim to be sensible, honey?" The tone invited hostility.

"Where am I? What . . . ?"

"You're in the pen, sweetheart. That's where you are and where you're likely to stay."

Glynis Woodhaye was no fool. But, bemused and beaten, she had learned caution. Rolfe Campys had tossed her into a snake pit in which, somehow, she must survive. Best not to say too much too soon. She allowed herself to be led through the dreary business of the search and confiscation. She watched the custodian put her several costly trinkets in an envelope and seal it. She stood passive through the fingerprinting and the farce of the mug shots. But the bath house with its fragrance of wet concrete was too much. The unlocking of one cuff and the curt command "Off with them clothes, honey" spurred revolt.

"Look, I know this is - it's just a charade. Something to humiliate me." She gazed appealingly at the large but amused figure of her guard. "I'm Glynis Woodhaye. I'm rich. If you'll help me I can pay you - "

The blow from the open palm drove her to the wet discomfort of the floor. She looked up, dazed and shocked. Her hand, from which dangled the handcuff, caressed her smitten cheek in fear of injury.

"You get punished for bribes, honey. That goes down on your chart. If you owned Fort Knox you wouldn't get out of here. Now! Get up and get them rags off."

Glynis got slowly to her feet, knowing that to strip before this cynical bulk was the last thing she desired. Striving for a moment's grace, she asked feebly, "But why? Why naked?"

"You're getting a rub down and wash off, rich bitch, that's why." The mocking female voice conceded a tolerance for feminine frailty. "Don't tell me no woman ain't never seen you stripped?" The big right hand was thrust into prominence. "You want I should knock you around a bit first?"

Glynis stripped. She felt utterly demeaned. The eyes of Wardress Bulloch had a maleness . . . !

"Damn sweet little cunt! Maybe I'll come to call some evening!" The woman let the promise hang, then added, "After you been in a cell awhile I might be right welcome. . . . And I do love a good thick bush! Got one myself."

Glynis shrank inwardly. She had read enough to know . . . ! Too frightened to demur, she allowed her shackled hand to be cuffed to a ring in the concrete wall. She was now helpless. Delivered to - to what?

The hose was brutal. A jet blast of bitter cold, and then hot. From a purely animal instinct to flee, Glynis tugged at her cuffed wrist, but it held her implacably against the stone so that she was forced to obey the brisk directives of - "Turn. Now the other way. Spread your legs." The jet probed her sexually to provoke the swift demand: "Get that hand off your cunt, girl. Hold it out and away."

Then the soaping. A harsh acrid smelling bar was frictioned everywhere upon her nudity to blossom into thick lather by which huge hands were lubricated to their task. The captive legs were kicked apart and the once inviolate sex of Glynis Woodhaye was foamed and frictioned into an unwilling response that was quickly quelled by a liberal insertion of soap where none should be. The most cruel invasion was of the lovely hair, soaped and plastered, the scalp massaged. The naked victim of prison ablutions stood, chained to the ring, moaning in protest against the icy blasts against which she had no defense as they rid her of the disinfecting stuff that clung and clung so that, of her own volition, she turned and twisted to ensure the water laved her clean.

"Damn cute effect, them welts on yer legs and arms, kid." The Wardress snapped the cuff back on Glynis' left wrist so that both were linked before her. "Go look in the mirror."

It was true! Her legs and arms were striated by scarlet and purple marks whilst the rest of her skin was virgin. The blows Campys had inflicted on her clothes had left no wounds. Glynis did not find them cute. Perhaps erotic and strange. . . . They were also tender. She winced when the rough towel dried her.

"Give you a bit of help, honey. Ain't easy for a gal when she's cuffed. Your cunt's 'bout all that comes handy."

No panties, no bra, nothing! The prison tunic was pulled up from below, its waist elasticized to slide over hips and then compress the tummy. It hid her sex with only a small margin of propriety. Its thin stuff hugged and did not hide nipples and breasts. Shoulder straps each had one button designed for handcuffed girls. A permitted glance in the mirror proclaimed the tunic's color as drab. But it was sexy,

outrageously flaunting her gender. Certainly no state or federal house of correction would permit this!

"Now, there's something we best get straight, sugar." The Wardress' voice was sweetly reasonable. "You can fight us all the way and have things rough. Or be sensible and do as you're told. That way it ain't so - well, it ain't so rough."

An answer seemed expected. Glynis ventured, "I'll try and be sensible."

"We got our ways. One of 'em's a guard named Josh. Don't usually deal with women. But if I need help with you hell come running and You'll likely lose that there tunic. Understand?"

"Yes. I understand."

"Good. That's one good thing 'bout rich bitches, they usually got a bit o' brains." Wardress Bulloch's eyes glinted so with enjoyment. "But we got a bit more'n Josh. Maybe it's best I show you. . . . "

The silent corridor itself told the story. And the steps down! Then the room with nothing but the post with its horizontal bar - like a cross. Bulloch fingered the shining metal at each end with pride. "We snaps one of these cuffs on each of your wrists, hon. That leaves you standing facing the post - or mebbe t'other way round, your arms nicely outta the way. Then we strips you naked and whip the tar out of you. Get the picture?"

"Yes, I get the picture."

The Wardress sighed. "Thought you would. But remember something else. We don't have to get an authorization or have you sentenced to bring you down here. I can bring you anytime."

Glynis felt herself curl up inside with horror. But she made her voice as level as she could. "If you'll tell me how I won't offend you - I mean what I must and must not do. I really will try. I don't want to be brought down here ever! "

"Sensible little sweetheart," Bulloch approved. "But I'll let you in on another little secret. We don't even need an excuse. If me or anyone else feels like putting a few stripes on that pretty skin and hearing you howl, then down you'll come."

It was soul sickening. Her world had gone mad - beyond nightmares. Glynis looked at the woman, smilingly amused by her dismay, looked down at her handcuffed wrists, looked at the stark and evil thing to which she could be chained and whipped at the caprice of people who she had never even seen. Her search for appropriate words was interrupted.

"Oh, and there's one more thing, honey. Come and take a look."

A door opened to disclose the most miserable box of a compartment Glynis had ever seen. No window. No light. She guessed its purpose.

"Solitary, hon. You go in naked. Hands cuffed behind your back so you can't play with yourself. It's dark."

There was a sudden thrust on her back. A moment later Glynis stood in total stygian oblivion. The door slammed shut. A key turned.

It was the most frightening thing yet. The push had disoriented her. In the close blackness there was no up or down or sideways. Glynis could not be certain where the door was - not that it mattered! Most certainly she would not get it open. She reached out her joined hands, even the concrete wall would be better than a dark vacuum. But there was nothing. . . . She took a step, and still there was no contact. She was ready to scream when the door opened and the hateful place was flooded with light from the passage.

"Thought it best you try it out, sweetheart." Bulloch's voice was cheerfully hearty. "There's just one thing 'bout solitary: you don't get it unless you've done something. It don't hot up my pants none to bung you in there. See what I mean?"

Looking back, Glynis knew only shame, but at that moment her need was dire. With an inarticulate cry, she grasped the Wardress' arm in her shackled hands and buried her own tearstained face on the more than ample shoulder. She sobbed quietly while a large and not ungentle hand patted her back and her bottom.

"My, my! You did take it to heart, love!" Bulloch sounded pleased. "Don't worry that pretty head, now. I'll not be putting you in there unless you give me reason - or someone tells me to."

When the paroxysm of fright and tears wore itself out, the captive girl stepped away from her jailer. She dabbed ineffectually at her bedewed eyes and muttered ashamedly, "I'm sorry - I've never been so frightened . . . ."

"That's good. You and me are going to get along just fine, honey. Come along and see your new home."

Another corridor and a line of cells. Three walls of con crete, one of bars through which an inmate could be open to view at any time. The door itself of bars, sliding back and forth, its lock impressive. Some of the cells held girls who viewed them hopefully as they passed. Some wore the prison tunic, some were naked. All bore some sort of restraint, handcuffs, a chain. One had her hands tied behind her back with rope. There were no introductions.

"You'll be glad of a rest, honey," Bulloch said genially as she opened the awesome door. "In you go, girl. Ain't exactly the Waldorf but it serves its purpose."

It was not the WaldorflWaldorf! The clang of the closing door and the snapping of its lock said all too clearly that indeed its purpose would be served. Its purpose was to imprison a half naked girl with chained hands. Glynis stood woefully and blurted out on impulse:

"Where is Rolfe Campys?"

The Wardress peered at her in what appeared to be a genuine puzzlement. "You mean that actor guy, honey? How the hell should I know where he is?"

"But he is connected with this place?"

Bulloch guffawed. "I ain't got him locked in no cell, kid, I can tell you that."

It was hopeless! Glynis held up her joined hands and asked wanly, "If this really was a prison I wouldn't be handcuffed, would I?"

"You are in this one, sweetheart. Don't beef, or I'll put em behind your back. Bye now . . . ."

The wealthy and influential Miss Glynis Woodhaye stood in the center of her prison cell " looking through bars at a blank wall. High behind her a barred window admitted light. There was a wooden bench on which, presumably, she slept. No mattress, no mirror. The small cell was punitive in its malevolence. She raised her hands and studied the metal bands clasping her wrists. It seemed incredible that human ingenuity could not remove them but she knew she could not, any more than she could open the barred door.

She knew the relief in being alone would not last. But, for this moment, it was good to sit on the bench and strive to place herself in perspective with the impossible. Playing idly with her handcuffs, she reviewed her nightmare kidnaping, Rolfe Campey insouciant cruelty, the dungeon torturing of the girl, and now this seemingly authentic convict condition in a federal penitentiary from which escape would be virtually impossible. So far as her other life was concerned she had vanished, ceased to exist.

Pain had chastened her. Glynis was shamed by the knowledge of how easily she could be controlled and made amenable. She who had never taken an order in her life! But she would fight them with her mind. Somewhere in this captivity there would be human links weak enough to exploit. One single word to the outside, and they would rally to her rescue, forces to obliterate the Seigneury and all its works. But was she in the Seigneury - was she . . . ? Exhausted, she lay down and slept.

* * *

It was thirty days before Glynis Woodhaye once more met Rolfe Campys. Thirty days of gradual conditioning in which the cell had become her life, and the things happening to her therein to be expected and accepted with humility.

There had been lessons.

She was enduring one of the lessons now.

The girl had largely replaced Wardress Bulloch as her guard. A pleasant girl, younger than herself, frightened. Glynis assessed her as a captive, but one who had been given duties. Carelessly revealed flesh had borne whipmarks. She had shyly admitted to the name of Clare.

"Mrs. Bulloch says you have to be naked," Clare had offered diffidently that morning, "She says if you want to make a fuss I'm to call Josh." She had eyed her angry charge with sympathy. "Do you want to make a fuss, Glynis? I don't mind."

"What happens to me if I do?"

"Well, I suppose hell take your tunic by force. Then You'll be punished."

"And you don't mind?"

"I didn't mean it like that, Glynis. What I mean is I understand. You used to be rich and privileged, and now you're in here. It must be rough."

"Isn't it just as rough on you?"

Clare shrugged. "I wasn't rich. And I've been here so long I've sort of got used to it."

"I've asked you before, Clare. Help me escape. I'll make you rich. Please?"

"They'd catch us and whip us half to death. It's no use . . . ."

Glynis sighed. Hopeless! Always hopeless.! Unhappily, she asked, "If I take my clothes off, what happens then?"

"That's sort of bad," Clare admitted ruefully. "I have to cuff you to the bars. It's a sort of discipline. We've all had it."

"But why? Why? Why?"

"There's never any why, Glynis. Not for us. There doesn't have to be."

Clare was sweet. Glynis perceived the underlying cruelty of making her perform these tasks. The child would be shamed and sorrowful and the victim would obey in order to deflect wrath from the innocent head. In a resignation born of many such incidents, Glynis shrugged and made a partial surrender. "Go ahead and fasten me. I won't struggle. But I won't strip. If you know it has to be done you can take my tunic yourself. I won't be able to stop you. Fair enough?"

"You quite sure? You've never been naked?"

"Yes, I'm sure. I've seen it coming. You can come in, Ill be very well behaved."

"You're awfully nice to me, Glynis - all the rotten things I have to do to you. . . ."

It had been just a little worse than expected. Glynis had supposed she'd be attached to a bar by one wrist. But Clare had unlocked one cuff, raised both hands high and locked them around a bar above a cross piece so that they could not be lowered. Glynis was not on tiptoe, but the posture would become wickedly tiring.

"I feel miserable about doing this, Glynis."

The fastened girl supposed there was always a first time when a girl would bare her body, for this reason or that, to be scrutinized by someone else. It was an act associated with love or lust, thrilling or joyous, tremendously exciting. But to be stripped in a prison cell! She was being cheated, robbed of an experience sacredly female. Standing tense and mute she endured the apologetic fingers and the tugging.

"Gee, I wish I had a lovely figure like yours!" Clare's tribute was genuine. "They'll never let you go. You're too beautiful." She paused a moment, thinking. "Glynis, is it really awful? Are you sort of - cringing?"

"Yes, I am. But I'm thankful it's you and not Josh."

"Would you like me to play with you a little? Would it help? I can make you come?" The young voice was alive with anxious affection.

Glynis quivered. The cell had defeated her to where she had yielded to Clare's lips and tongue. Loneliness had made her lesbian. But to be brought to orgasm while chained to the bars where Bulloch might appear was a comfort she must forego. Wanly, she shook her head and asked, "Is this it? Or is there something . . . ?"

Clare was forever apologetic. "Well, You'll probably have visitors," she admitted. "That's sort of the idea. You know - make us ashamed of having to stand like that."

"What sort of visitors?"

"Well, just anybody . . . ! Anybody who wants to see a naked girl."

"Not men! You don't mean men?" Glynis was aghast.

"Probably . . . ." The single word bespoke Clare's distress. A vivid awareness of her total exposure struck the captive girl like a blow. Handcuffed as she was she stood in open invitation. Her arms, held high, were a betrayal of modesty. She could be touched . . . ! The bars delivered her but would shield nothing. In an involuntary spasm of revolt she swirled about to face her companion and place her back to the bars. It hurt her wrists and was an additional strain but it was her only defense.

"You're not supposed to do that," Clare said unhappily.

"What am I supposed to do?"

"You have to face the bars - so you're right there - on view."

"But that's awful! They can touch . . ."

"That's right. They do. You just have to stand."

"But why didn't you tell me?"

"Because then you'd have made me call Josh. This is better."

Better! Glynis could see the logic. She also beheld the two lengths of rope. She was panting. Trapped!

"Don't kick at me, Glynis. Please? I have to do this."

Glynis did not kick. She would not kick Clare - and anyway, what was the use! She looked down dismally to watch her ankles snared.

"I'm afraid You'll have to turn round. You just have to. . . !" The young voice oozed sympathy.

She could not fight Clare. Fastened as she was she could not fight anyone. The clicking of her handcuffs had taken her beyond the point of no return. With an impatient and dejected sigh, Glynis turned against and thrust her nakedness against the cold bars as though to angrily deliver every particle of her captor's pound of

flesh. Grudgingly, she separated her feet in response to the pull of the ropes. Each ankle was again looped and tied to a bar, cinched tight and snug.

"They want you with your feet apart, Glynis. Are you sure you don't want me to play . . . ?"

She wished now she had let the loving fingers have their way. Now it was too late. Clare had kissed her and gone. It was not until she was alone that the tied girl realized the depth of her need, the unsatisfied longing for feminine comfort. In shame and silent loneliness, Glynis Woodhaye wept, wiping her cheeks against her upraised arms.

She had wondered about the silence. Surely with the other prisoned girls she had seen there would be sounds. But sounds were rare and unidentifiable. She had tried calling out against her own bars - surely some girl down the passage must hear! But there had been no response, and Clare had warned her not to try again. The girl would not say why, nor would she speak of the other inmates. Perhaps they were no longer in their cells! Perhaps she, Glynnis, was the only captive of the block. The silence of the passage was daunting.

With her feet tied well apart she could no longer turn. She could only stand, finding what support she could against the bars, gazing through them at the passage wall. They were too close to allow her to see much of anything. She could find no casement, no shifting of her stance. To keep the handcuffs from cutting her wrists, Glynis clutched the bar around which ran their connecting link. It was a sorry way for a girl to spend her day. It was a punishment - for innocence. Her breasts peeped pertly. Protruding through the bars in a manner she could prevent only at the cost of hurt wrists. Bored and helpless, the naked heiress allowed her mind to drift back through her tenancy of the cell. A tenancy that, as far as she could tell, might be for life.

She was taken from her small prison only rarely. At such times she was blindfolded, perhaps to prevent her seeing into the other cells and what they held. Intermittently she was chained by her wrist to the ring in the washroom wall and hosed down, made to soap herself, then hosed again. Sometimes Bulloch hosed her, sometimes Clare. It did not matter, the water was as cold either way, the jet as fierce against breasts and vulva. She was never suffered to close her legs.

There had been the one bad journey after her questions had become too insistent for Bulloch's tolerance. She knew she had brought it on herself, but the walk to the downstairs room had been none the less terrifying. "You silly bitches are all the same," Bulloch had assured her jovially, "Push and prod, and then wonder why you get your pretty skins striped."

"Please don't whip me. I'm sorry - I didn't realize."

"You knew damn well, honey. I sometimes think a gal locked in a cell the way you are gets so's she's grateful for a bit of attention - even when it's the wrong end of a whip . . . ."

"No! No, oh, no! Please, Mrs. Bulloch, don't whip me?"

"Sooner eat my cat, honey?"

It was not the first offer or demand. There had been other temptations. If Clare . . . ! Then why not . . . ? Thought of the whipping post had made the decision. "Yes," she said ashamedly. Then, knowing she had best show willing: "Oh, yes, Mrs. Bulloch. Thank you!"

It had been another defeat, utterly demeaning. While Glynis was still extracting the Wardress' pubic hairs from her mouth, the jeering voice spelt out her doom. "You did that damn well, honey. But I didn't promise it would get you off the hook, y'know. You and me are still taking our little walk downstairs."

Glynis' pride was shattered, her fortitude tested beyond its strength. Campys' thrashing of her arms and legs had breached a defense. Being whipped was a thing she could no longer contemplate as an abstract, something that happened to others but never to her. The mere sound of the word made her quail. Forgetting all else save the waiting whipping post, she flung herself at the Wardress' feet and used her cuffed hands to clutch, her cheek to seek comfort against rough cloth.

I "Please - Oh, Mrs. Bulloch, please! I did what you asked! I'll do it again. I will, I will! But don't whip me! Oh, please don't whip me . . . ?"

"My, my, you do value that pretty pelt, don't you, honey!" The Wardress had been delighted to have the former Miss Glynis Woodhaye clutching her leg. "I'm not going to kill you, y'know."

"I can't stand being whipped. It's too awful."

"Sooner have twenty-four hours in solitary, sweetheart?"

It was too much! She wept. Then, blindfolded, had stumbled her way to the downstairs room, guided by Bulloch's grip on her handcuffs.

"It'll help you settle down, love. Stop you asking all them silly questions. Don't take on so."

It was just as she remembered. Stark, functional, forbidding! Designed only for the punishment of girls. The unlocking of the handcuffs on her wrists gave no joy, it was a precursor of agony.

"You know where to put them little flippers. honey."

Glynis knew! In a mute agony of apprehension she lifted her arms and inserted her wrists within the waiting gyves. The Wardress clicked the metal bands tightly upon the slender flesh.

"In years to come You'll thank me for this, love." The sardonic voice mocked, "Nothing like learning an early start on how to behave."

"Please . . . ? Oh, please - not naked?"

"Good gosh, gal, you got more 'pleases' than a dog has fleas! You're not expecting to get whipped over that there tunic, are you?"

"I don't know. I'm so frightened. I don't want to scream, but I know I'm going to."

"What a worry wart! Scream all you like, kid. I love it."

Glynis knew herself a bundle of quivering nerves. The preparations and the suspense was demoralizing. She was ashamed of her inability to take her whipping in silence, cling to her dignity. But for her, dignity was a thing long past. Pressed against the vertical timber, her arms spread wide, her wrists hurting, she was bitterly afraid. "Mercy . . " she pleaded in a stumbling moan, "Oh, Mrs. Bulloch, please have mercy . . . ."

"Tell you what, honey." The Wardress' tone had been infinitely forbearing. "This ain't what you could call a real flogging. When you get flogged it's from your knees to your neck. This here's just a little lesson in manners for you real helpful! So, since you're so all fired concerned about baring your ass, I'll just work on your back. I can baste the other half another time."

"Thank you . . . ."

Glynis heard the small lost voice. It was her own! Expressing gratitude that only half her nakedness be whipped, leaving the rest of her . . . ! It was absurd! Outrageous! She was shamed beyond imagining, and she was helpless . . . !

"I'll watch out for your tits, sweetheart."

"Thank you - Oh, thank you!" How humble could she get!

"It's going to hurt quite a bit, so scream all you want."

"Yes, oh, yes!"

"And if you think you're bleeding, just forget it. You won't be."

"Yes, Mrs. Bulloch."

"And now this here tunic, love. Real handy the way it buttons."

Handy indeed! Two buttons swiftly freed. Glynis leant back from the post to facilitate the peeling tug baring her back. When the scanty garment reached her hips it was allowed to hang.

"There you are, kid. Only half naked. You got to keep half your modesty. Don't say I never did nothin' for you."

"I am grateful - really!"

And now the harsh wood against her breasts, her armpits exposed. Her arms and hands held as a bird's wings. . . .

"Here we go, baby."

Don't scream - don't scream. . . . Glynis mutely commanded her inmost self as her back exploded into agony. If you don't scream she'll know you're somebody she'll respect. She thrust her breasts and belly against the immovable timber as though seeking a haven within its solidity.

This was quite different from Campys. It was a shock to realize that whippings could be different. Each of them specifically awful in this own special cruelty. Or was it the part of her that was being whipped? Was that the difference? Glynis was appalled by the fearful sensitivity of her back. It was cut in two - it must be! Incongruously her bottom was still inviolate. Yet a girl's bottom was supposed to be the first part of her to feel the lash.

"You're doing fine, honey."

This time it was more difficult. The pain was cumulative. One agony on top of another. In a pathetically animal instinct, Glynis sought to bury her teeth in the flesh of her arm. But her bonds denied. Whimpering pitifully, she thrust her nudity again and again at the post to which she was inexorably attached.

"Gals ain't all the same under the whip," Bulloch commented chattily. "They each got their own way of wiggling or fighting the cuffs. And as for noise . . . ! Honey, the sounds I've heard!"

Glynis knew she was losing control. Even with the blows widely spaced as the Wardress' conversational style dictated the pain was more than she could bear in silence. Could any girl . . . ! The thong circled her waist above the tunic's folds, then lanced the breadth of her shoulders. She was alive and palpitating with agony. Campys and all else had vanished. She was alone with her pain and the post - and a smug female voice somewhere out in space.

"How's your cunt, honey? Cunts ain't all the same either."

It followed naturally that a questing hand should penetrate between her thighs. Glynis. dared not demur. She stood mutely in agonized shame as a large palm squeezed the plumpness of her swollen vulva.

"Oh, you're a sweetheart all right!" Bulloch enthused. "Here, look at yourself."

Cheeks flaming, Glynis backed as far as her bonds allowed from the wet evidence of her femaleness thrust against her nose. This, too, was wrong - wrong! What was the matter with her! Sexually aroused! She shrank back against the refuge of the post as the intrusive hand was wiped dry on the bare flesh of her shoulder.

"Should be across your ass for best results," Bulloch mused imformatively. "But maybe if I hit you hard enough I can make you come . . ."

"No - oooh!"

The blow came, mercilessly. Glynis surged back against her ironed wrists and screamed in animal fury.

"Lovely - lovely! Sweetheart, you're precious."

Again the hand between her legs. This time with intent. Glynis knew herself consumed by pain - but also something else! She moaned and moaned again . . . and then the blows! One after the other in a fury of flogging so that every atom of her being screamed and screamed.

With the final scream and the wild thrashing of her hips, the whipping of Miss Glynis Woodhaye came to an end.

It was an evocative memory. The bars, now, were worse than the post. The naked prisoner tried to shift position but could not. Her tied ankles were a defeat. When she had been whipped in the downstairs room her legs had been free to kick. Now they were rigidly held - and held apart. She could guess what of her sex was visible. And her hands were no longer her own - helplessly handcuffed. Glynis Woodhaye sighed. If she was to stand thus all day the hours would be long. She was jolted out of her reverie by the sound of footsteps.

It was Myrtle, another of the guards. she stood, arms akimbo, and surveyed Glynis' impotent nudity with relish. "Well, look what we've got here!" She simulated pleased surprise. "Pretty nice, eh! Nice tits and twat." "Myrtle, be nice to me," the captive coaxed. "Untie my legs. I promise I won't try and turn around. I'll keep my front to the bars."

"You know the drill, eh!" Myrtle guffawed. "I'm not untying nothin'. Someone musta' wanted your feet tied or they wouldn't be the way they are."

"It was Clare. She thought she had to. Please, Myrtle . . . ?"

"You'd charm the tail off a cat. Dammit, girl you gotta' be tied to keep your cunt in view."

"I'd keep my legs apart. Honest! I know I can't get loose. But it's so tiring, not being able to move my feet. Myrtle, be nice?"

"What you holding on to that bar for? You're grabbin' it like you're scared it will get away."

"If I don't do that the handcuffs hurt my wrists."

"Gee whiz, gal, you really think you got troubles."

"Well, haven't I!" Myrtle was one you could answer back.

"Sort of. Say, kid, how's 'bout I flip your clit? Make you feel better?"

"No, I'd feel awful after."

"Think I'll do it anyway Watch you squirm."

"No!"

"You going to stop me?"

Glynis longed to scream. Longed to do anything that would put these people in their place. She knew she would gladly pay a million dollars for her freedom. But Myrtle, too, was impervious to bribes. "No, I can't stop you," she admitted sadly. "Anybody can do anything they like with me. But, please, I ask you, don't shame me any more."

Myrtle did not bother to reply. Her face was that of a happy child. She sidled up to

the bars, inserted a hand and arm around the small captive waist, her other hand felt its way between captive thighs. "Say 'please', kid."

"Please, Myrtle." She was too helpless to rebel.

"Please what?" "Please provoke my clitoris."

"That's a damn rummy way to say it," Myrtle chortled,

"But I like it. Comes from being educated . . . ."

Glynis made no pretense of anything. What was the use! Myrtle would do what she wished with her anyway. As the busy finger found its prey she delivered herself over to sensation. She reflected, bitterly, that it might be the one bright spot in her day. It was a gauge of how far she had fallen. To welcome a strange woman's hand within her sex! She, who had once been The Miss Glynis Woodhaye. Tears fought for supremacy over a mounting libidinousness. Her hips began to weave. . . .

It was so unfair.

When it was done and Myrtle went her cheerful way, Glynis stood against the bars in the moist and heated aftermath of orgasm. She wanted to die, to find unconsciousness. Or, by some miracle, blast the Seigneury into oblivion. She supposed she was in the Seigneury! But how could she be sure! Suppose some chicanery had been at work when she was unconscious, some quasi-legal trickery! She might then indeed be a convict in a prison for years and years! A strange penitentiary perhaps. But there was nothing make believe or fake about her cell or the handcuffs, or the place downstairs. . . !

She was intensely uncomfortable. The ropes bit at her ankles. Her fingers were numb from clutching the bar. She longed for easing motion but could make none. She wondered dismally what she might have done or said to deserve this. But that was the ultimate cruelty; she had done nothing. She was being punished because she was a pretty and sexy girl. If her breasts had been flat she would be safe at home. She drifted into a pain distilled doze.

This time there were voices, the deep growl of the Male and a woman's tinkling laugh. There were three of them. Wardress Bulloch, Rolfe Campys, and a girl Glynis had never seen, a girl who clung to Rolfe's arm possessively whilst looking about her with an intense interest.

In the moments of realization, the punished prisoner found herself beset by decision. What to do! What to say! How to behave! But, for the former Miss Glynis Woodhaye there were no decisions. She would stand as she was and endure what she must. The thought of bowing her head and closing her eyes was untenable. She would give them stare for stare. She would not plead.

Mrs. Bulloch had adopted a guide's omnipotent drone. "We have here an interesting case. A young woman of good family and great wealth. The factors leading to her becoming a convict can be studied in her file. At the moment she is enjoying a day of discipline."

The girl tittered. Glynis judged her to be a screen aspirant exchanging sex for whatever favors Rolfe Campys might pass her way. There had been a string of

them. Few had become stars. Like all of them she was highly decorative. She was also immensely intrigued by what she beheld. "Did you say enjoying?" The question bubbled amusement. "She doesn't look as though she's enjoying it one little bit."

"A figure of speech," Bulloch said gruffly. "Our girls are disciplined regularly. It keeps them amenable."

Rolfe Campys was frankly enjoying every inch of Glynis' skin. His eyes roved impersonally from breasts to thighs. "Beautiful girl," he conceded. But his regard was clinical. It would be possible to believe he had never seen this naked woman in his life. His eyes were masked. They refused to meet Glynis' challenging stare. "Is a girl of this type ever flogged for misdemeanors?" he inquired casually.

"Such a punishment would be within our terms of reference, sir."

"You have had no occasion to flog her?"

"A mild whipping only. She is a highly intelligent girl who tries not to break our rules."

"I'd find it interesting to see a girl of this type flogged," Campys mused reflectively. He turned a shrewd eye upon the Wardress. "D'you think a thousand dollars might bend the rules a bit?"

"Oh, Rolfe!" The girl sounded genuinely shocked. "Don't be so cruel! Can't you enjoy her the way she is? Gee, I know I wouldn't want to have to stand like that."

"Probably do you a world of good, poppet."

"We are not subject to bribes, sir." Mrs. Bulloch sounded starchy.

"Gosh, Rolfe, why don't you offer the thousand to get the poor thing off the hook right now? I bet she's hating every moment - probably hating us too. But, gollies, what a figure! Look at those breasts and that waist . . . wow!"

The old Campys was never far below the surface. He grinned down at his protege. "Perhaps I can persuade Mrs. Bulloch to let you take her place, Tess?"

"Rolfe, don't be horrid. You scare me sometimes." Tess turned to their guide. "Mrs. Bulloch, may I speak to the the prisoner?"

"Of course you may, Miss Lynton. Her name is Glynis."

"Never known a girl of that name," Rolfe Campys said blandly. "I still think she'd make an interesting subject for a flogging?"

"Don't listen to him. He always talks like that." Tess had moved closer to the bars and was peering at the fastened naked girl with avid interest. "Is it really hurting the way you're fixed, I mean?"

"Yes, it's hurting."

Glynis had debated keeping a surly silence. But Bulloch would not like that. Best play

it safe.

"And you've actually been whipped?"

"Yes."

"I'm told being whipped gives a girl the hots. Did it work that way with you?"

"No."

"Glynis!" The Wardress' tone Was sharp. "You know damn well it did. Remember my hand!" She winked at Tess. "Feel her now. I bet she's soaking."

Tess was both eager and contrite. "D'you mind?" "Go ahead." Glynis met the laughing eyes. "I can't stop you."

"She's up for grabs," Campys chuckled. "My turn next."

It was another of the steps - down! To be naked and publicly fingered! Glynis writhed inwardly as the small hand cupped beneath her pubic hair. Her cheeks flamed as her vulva was tested. She saw only Rolfe Campys' amused absorption with what was being done. She cared little for Tess' excited "Wow!" or the wet and glistening palm held for all to see. Her secretions under punishment were as much a mystery to her now as they had ever been.

Tess had become both serious and curious. "Is it the being punished?" she asked slowly, "Or is it being naked and having to just stand there for us to look at?"

"I don't know. I wouldn't have been able to tell." Glynis met the searching eyes levelly. "I'm certainly not sexually excited, if that's what you mean."

"She has a subconscious longing to be thrashed," Campys contributed brightly. "Most girls have. It shows up at times like these."

"You could be right, sir. I've often wondered . . ." Mrs. Bulloch pondered.

"You're both unkind." Tess pouted. "I don't think we should talk about the poor thing while she's listening like this. I bet she hates us." She turned, impulsively, to the amused Wardress. "Couldn't you untie her - unfasten those things on her wrists? I mean, we've had a good look . . . ."

"Sorry, miss. She's there for the day. We've found it unsettles them to show intermittent kindness."

"Didn't know you did social work, Tess," Campys mocked. "Save your tears, she's probably enjoying every moment. Think of the thrill, three distinguished people at one time, all looking at her cunt."

"Don't call it that, Rolfe." Tess pouted. "I think we should go."

"And leave the dear girl to her secretions! Well, I suppose . . . ." " Y o u had mentioned an interest in our downstairs room, Miss Lynton?" Bulloch was anxious to please. "Down there is also the solitary."

"I'm not so sure now - after seeing this one like this."

"Gee, I keep thinking of myself. But I suppose . . ." Tess grinned impishly at Rolfe. "I bet you can't wait to see it."

"They should call it the rehabilitation room," Rolfe quipped. "Brings the sweet things face to face with themselves. Sure, let's go."

The voices drifted away down the corridor, there was the closing of a door . . . ! Bulloch had led the way briskly. Tess' smile had been commiserating sympathy. Campys had bestowed a kindly nod at a suffering stranger. Once more Glynis was nakedly alone with immobility. .

She seethed with anger. Rolfe Campys was teasing her, playing with her a game of cat and mouse. But there was something wrong! Something that did not add up! His surname had not been mentioned. His association with Wardress Bulloch was not casual. Penitentiaries did not exhibit their female inmates naked for the delectation of privileged visitors! Or did they? Who knew what went on behind the masses of concrete and stone and steel confining the living vital flesh of girls!

Tess Lynton signified nothing. There would always be a Tess clinging to Campys. They were part of a long succession to which she had refused to belong. What mattered, and what hurt the most, was Rolfe's bland refusal to recognize or be recognized. It was part of the game, but what! Glynis was suddenly overwhelmed by the prisoner's blind panic at having perhaps allowed a chance to slip by, a chance to deflect him from his course. Should she have pleaded, accused, blurted out the truth, enlisted Tess' aid, planted a doubt in Bulloch's mind!. The possibilities aligned themselves in a row, and she had availed herself of none of them! She had used only the same haughty silence she knew infuriated him. Perhaps if she had uttered the right words she would now be free! The thought was agonizing. Miserably, she fought her bonds for painful and frustrating moments before relapsing into the naked impotence from which Campys had derived so much satisfaction.

But the thought persisted. Surely she could have said something to send at least one of the trio away with an intent, to aid the chained and naked beauty that had once been Miss Glynis Woodhaye. Somewhere in those three must lurk compassion! Resolve formed. It was a panic resolve, but it was there. Glynis waited, quivering, for the footsteps . . . .

They were long in coming. Perhaps they would not come at all - some other exit from downstairs! She could picture Campys gravely expounding the virtues of the flogging of girls, his eyes twinkling mischief, and Tess' negative but fascinated rejoinders. The Wardress would be politely attentive, offering statistics . . . . What did it matter to any of them that she stood, palpitating, against the bars!

"Fascinating study: penology." Campys' voice was formally conversational. "It's hard not to see masochism in the way these girls get themselves into situations . . . ." Words droned as the steps approached. Glynis drew a deep breath.

"Rolfe Campys! Stop this nonsense! Get me out of here!"

Polite embarrassment! That was all. His enquiring glance at Mrs. Bulloch. "The girl's up to something. Any idea?"

"They'll try anything, sir. That's why visitors are not encouraged. She thinks you're that movie star fellow."

"It often happens," Campys admitted modestly, "But I don't see her motive."

"Rolfe, don't be so beastly to me! Make them let me go. You can, I know you can!"

"She's likely thinking of the parole board, sir."

"I'm not! I'm not! I'm thinking of you, Rolfe. Get me out of this. Look, I'll do what you want! There! I've said it."

"Sad, isn't it?" The male voice was impersonally observant. "Is this a common reaction?"

"I'm afraid so Sir. But she'll have to be punished."

"A flogging?"

Glynis could swear his question was hopeful.

"Hardly that, sir. Perhaps another day as she is or a period in solitary."

"Mrs. Bulloch, this man is Rolfe Campys. He does know me. He has used his influence to get me in this fix. Please help me." Glynis made her pleading as urgent as she could. She would be punished anyway, so she might as well make it good.

"Glynis, you're asking for trouble." The Wardress' voice was coldly disapproving.

"Rolfe, please, I beg. Show me mercy. I'll be as humble as you like. Please, please, please!"

"Perhaps we should leave . . . ?" Campys' voice held only male embarrassment at a female lapse in mixed company.

"Rolfe, don't go! Don't leave me like this! Oh, please . . . ?"

"Terribly pathetic . . . ." He was already on the move.

"I am sure it must be very hard for them not to - clutch at straws . . . ."

The faintly stilted exchange drifted slowly away. In desperation, the naked girl tied to the bars cried out her agony:

"Rolfe! Rolfe . . . please! Rolfe?"

The slamming of the door was a final punctuation. Then silence.

This time the captive did not fight her bonds. Instead, she wept, sobbed in a desuetude utter and complete. Her fingers clutched the bar above until the knuckles showed white. It was not until she again lapsed into hopeless resignation that the obvious struck her like a blow. Tess Lynton, laughing and lovely, had gone

downstairs with Campys and Bulloch . . . !

But she had not come back.

## Chapter Seven
## Pillory

Sabina Miles repeated the arithmetic over and over in her mind. It was a straw to clutch, a boost for a morale slipping into despair. Five thousand and five thousand made ten thousand dollars. It had been pointed out how well she had survived her whipping at the cart's tail, its marks had faded in captivity, even its memory was diffused. Perhaps this too . . . ?

She twisted against the solid timbers of the stocks, moving them not at all, and easing herself but little. The stocks were not quite as she had supposed. Her memories of pictures and stories were mostly humorous. But there was nothing funny for a girl to be standing naked with bowed head and raised arms, her neck and wrists firmly locked in bonds of wood. The freedom of legs and torso tantalized, enabling her to do nothing that mattered. The parts of her that mattered most were held immovably.

And there was the nagging doubt. When was her freedom! What was her reward! As yet she had not seen a dollar. When Sister Amaldis talked gently and reassuringly everything seemed to fall into place and assume logic. But afterwards . . . !

"You do it so well, dear. The Seigneury is so pleased with you. When you go home you will know you will have given much happiness."

There was a considerable traffic. Most of it stopped and admired. Some tested the rigidity of her imprisonment, others tested the resiliency of her flesh. She was well postured for their convenience, She had been warned against protesting or, complaining. Mention had been made of a "scold's bridle." She had been fervid in her assurances of good behavior.

In this first hour of her placement in the pillory, the courtyard had much the flavor of a street in a major studio. A good deal of preoccupied motion. Sabina's sex and breasts had been fingered by a pair of cowboys, two nuns, a Roman senator, and were now receiving the attention of a couple of early Puritans.

"She's too fair a piece for the colony. Nothing but mischief," one of them pronounced dourly.

"Aye. But she'll be well dealt with this day."

"Tell me, lass, were ye properly whipped as a child?" Sabina longed to tell him to grow up and stop playing silly games. But a vision of a magic check coupled with total helplessness counseled caution. She was proud of the meek respect she was able to infuse into her voice. "No, sir, I was never whipped until I was adult."

"Ah, a pity!" Wise heads wagged knowingly. "For want of the rod ye have come to this. Tell us, child, would ye not prefer to have been well scourged than to be now standing in the pillory?"

Silly old fart! Sabina could see the erection in his trousers. Both of them were drinking in her plight with avid eyes. "I do not know, sirs," she admitted innocently. "'Tis a fearful thing for a maid to be whipped at any time. I pray thee mercy."

They nodded, pleased. A second erection joined the first. "Yet thou art full of the wiles of Satan, are ye not?"

"So I am told, sir. But I think myself innocent. Please, can I not be covered? Surely 'tis shameful for me to be thus naked?"

Heads were shaken sadly. "Too late to speak of shame, lass. Ye have been knowing too little of it. 'Tis but meet thy female parts be exposed for all to see. They be the tools of Beelzebub."

In the name of purity they felt her breasts and pubes.

Then walked on their way, their heads wagging, their movements awkward for the first few paces. Sabina hated them and all their kind, but was absurdly aware of how easily they created an atmosphere, not entirely illusory. In the brief exchange of dialogue she had found herself a delinquent damsel in the Plymouth colony. She shivered. The Seigneury was never easy.

The next were women. Middle aged, informally dressed but with the proprietary air of chatelaines. They studied. Sabina's helpless nudity with the same hungry curiosity.

"Nice material. Where did we pick you up, girl?"

"The office, Beth. Margaret Connors,"the other interjected. "Her name's Sabina. She's been used."

There was a chuckle. "Enjoying yourself with us, Sabina?"

"No." Sabina found refuge in truth.

"Why d'you stay here then?"

"Because I'm kept prisoner."

"But you volunteered for this today - didn't you?" "I suppose so. They've promised to let me go home after."

"Who's 'they'?"

"Sister Amaldis."

There were chuckles. "Think you'll last the day, kid?"

"I don't know what's going to be done to me. I'm frightened."

"You haven't been whipped for a long time. No marks?"

"No. But I've been punished - in other ways."

"Well, what's wrong with that, Sabina?"

"They don't have the right. No one has. Not to punish a girl because she doesn't want to be a prisoner, because she wants to go home."

"Are you any good at making love to a woman, Sabina?"

The captive nudity tensed unhappily. Always something new to keep her off balance, and never knowing the right answers. "I don't know anything about being a lesbian," Sabina retorted sulkily. _

"We could arrange for you to learn."

"No, thanks."

"Would a good whipping change your mind?"

Sabina had lost illusions of heroism. "I expect it would," she admitted honestly. "I think you can make a girl do anything if you whip her enough. But - but please don't make me. I'm in enough - enough - well, trouble now."

"Have any of the chevaliers named you?"

"I don't know what that means." .

More chuckles. "The little beauty's innocent! You can be 'named', Sabina. If a man wants to bed you he simply makes a claim. You become a sort of perquisite of office." .

"Dammit, Beth, let's you and me name the little baggage. I'd soon whip her into being a turtle dove."

"There's the rule, Laura. Sex only. Only the Seigneury punishes."

"I'll talk to the Seigneur about her. There's a sweetness there I like. Pity to waste her. The way we go through girls . . . !"

They went their way, laughing. Leaving Sabina with fresh concerns and distasteful vistas of a captivity without end. The grip of the wood on neck and wrists doubled its implacability. Any effort to move told the naked girl how abstract freedom or escape had become. To the Seigneury she was an acquired asset to be used as required. She thought of the girls who suddenly appeared and as suddenly were gone. Suppose they did not go back to freedom! Suppose . . . ! Suppose . . . ?

Sabina drifted into a cheerless reverie, head bowed. Her first awareness of Rolfe Campys within her limited range of, vision was an exquisitely polished pair of shoes.

"Sabina Miles! Have you any idea how gorgeous you are, standing like that?" It was the voice that fluttered a million female hearts.

Sabina looked up, guiltily glad. Her heart, too, doubled its beat. "Oh, Mr. Campys!" Her eyes lit with pleasure. But, suddenly a hundred times naked, she blushed in a mantle of pink. "Oh, Mr. Campys!"

"That's me, poppet. You seem to be in a bit of a fix."

"I'm - I'm locked in the pillory, I think they call it."

"And a very pretty picture you make."

"Please, Mr. Campys, let me loose."

"Naughty, naughty!" He shook an admonitory finger.

"Bad girls have to stand in the stocks. Does 'em good."

"It's not doing me any good. It's beastly."

"The benefit will show in your character, dear girl. Not today but in years to come."

"Oh, Mr. Campys, don't make fun! I know if it's you who lets me loose no one will mind. Gee, I need to stretch so bad!"

"Bit confining, eh! But that's the idea. Sabina Miles, you have the perkiest breasts - and you're blushing."

"I shouldn't be naked like this."

"But indeed you should! Damn shame to cover up what you've got to offer. The Seigneury's not going to waste those treasures you've got on display."

"But it's not right! A girl hates . . . .". "Remember, love, I've seen you naked before."

Sabina was overwhelmed by the memory. Her blush deepened. "You whipped me . . . !" It was less an accusation than reproach. "Someone told me - afterwards."

"I was greatly privileged." He bestowed a comradely grin. "You are most rewarding to whip - such writhings! And don't tell me you didn't enjoy every stroke - afterwards?"

"How can you joke about such things! For a girl to be whipped naked is awful. And to be tied the way I was . . . !"

"How d'you know I won't whip you again today?"

"I don't. Are you going to whip me?"

"Would you like me to?"

"Oh, please, Mr. Campys, don't tease!"

"But seriously, poppet, if you're to be whipped would you sooner it was me than someone else?"

Sabina twisted her hips in embarrassment. "Yes, I suppose I would," she admitted grudgingly.

"Better the devil you know than the one you don't? Or some other reason, sweetheart?"

She looked up at him yearningly. Why were men so obtuse! "I'm one of the foolish females - about fifty million of them - who are in love with you," she told him desperately, "You represent something to us, something we long for. And that first day we met - you were so kind to me . . . ."

"And then I had you tied to the tail of a cart and whipped you through the streets!" His voice was husky with remembrance.

"Why? Oh, Mr. Campys, what does it do for you? Do you hate girls?"

"I adore you all."

"Why, then? Is it that ugly word?" Campys chuckled. "Sadism? Maybe. I'm not sure what sadism is. But whatever it is, it only applies between me and girls. I couldn't possibly beat old ladies or domestic animals."

"All right, then. Why girls?"

Campys studied her vehement nudity with amusement.

"I think perhaps it's for contrast," he said slowly, "Girls are pampered like crazy. Their little ass gets kissed every hour. Striping their skin strikes a nice balance."

"Do you really believe that?"

He shrugged. "As good a theory as any."

How ridiculous a plight for a girl! Naked! Locked in a pillory! Chatting pleasantly. with Rolfe Campys. Knowing you can't move, his eyes devouring every bit of you every moment! If her feet had not been as bare as the rest of her Sabina would have stamped them in fury.

"But, actually, you enjoy it? That's the real reason?"

She made her surmise an accusation.

"I enjoy it enormously, poppet," he conceded with an unusual seriousness. He glinted at her slyly. "And so did you."

"I did not!" Sabina was suffused with outrage.

"Think again. Be honest. Somewhere along the line you got a wet cat . . . ?"

Sabina's denial wavered and died. "I'm ashamed of it," she admitted blushingly, "Afterwards! I got horny as hell. It makes no sense."

"You're horny right now, aren't you?" He pressed the advantage.

"What girl wouldn't be!" She flared. "Fixed like I am, and you! Standing there looking at me."

Campys bestowed upon her the intense regard by which he had throbbed a million feminine hearts. His voice was persuasive. "I can unlock that thing you're held in. I can take you to a very private place. D'you want me to?"

Sabina was angry at her heart, and surprised by its sudden leap. But she would yield no ground. "And lock me back in here after?"

"Of course."

"No thanks." She was close to tears.

"After all, this is the Seigneury, remember."

She twisted angrily against the stocks. "How d'you expect a girl to forget!" Her voice was bitter.

"That was a good offer I made you. We could keep you out of that pillory for over an hour. Today's show is going to be slow getting going - a long wait for you like that."

"Oh, stop it!" Sabina stamped a bare foot, hurting it.

She glared up at Rolfe Campys' smile. "You must know how I long to get out of this hateful thing! Is that your way of getting a girl? To get her in a spot and make her buy her way out?"

"Sweetheart." His tone was infinitely tolerant. "I can name you any time I wish. D'you know what that means?"

"Yes."

"Would you like me to - after today?"

It was not possible! But it was her own voice. It said meekly: "Yes. I want you to."

Campys tilted up her chin and kissed her left eye. "Your lips can wait, beloved." He had returned to his casual banter. "But not for long."

Sabina watched him walk upon his way. Once more she was trembling.

Rolfe Campys' magic went with him. When he was lost to view in the courtyard's changing pattern of motion, the invincibility of the stocks reasserted their implacable possession of Sabina's slender nudity. Morosely, she looked to either side to view her hands hanging limply like an extrusion from the wood. As though for reassurance, she flexed her fingers and made what small motions she could. Her hands responded, but the effect was incongruous. She had become a part of this stark structure for the discomfort of a girl. Nothing she could do would evoke response from the wood. Escape was, as always, a pretty dream.

She should have accepted Campys' cynical offer. Looking sideways she beheld the hanging padlock to which he had a key. She could have smiled and been submissive and been free. By now she would have been in his private place, working what wiles she could upon his tolerance. She would not have been the first girl to have used the

orifice between her legs to gain a freedom.

Why, why, why! Sabina was bitterly angry with her pride and pique. She could not afford either. For some minutes Campys had desired her. No doubt, in this, the pillory had been her friend. She probably looked sweet and helpless and erotic. His lust was probably as evanescent as his charm. Next time . . . ? But there might be no next time! He might "name" her or he might not. She had little faith in his promise. She had had her chance and she had blown it. The dolor of the pillory descended on her like a blanket of gloom. There would be no check, no freedom nothing! Only an endless captivity interspersed by bizarre punishments. Her tears fell in soft salt drops upon the soil.

"Not the best possible place to have a good cry, Sabina." The girl stood watching, an introspective smile examined the pillory and the female thing it held. It was a wise smile, possessing knowledge. Its owner was older than Sabina thirty, thirty-one. Her loveliness fully up to Seigneury's standards. Strangely, she was clothed.

"Here, let me dry - must be damnably frustrating." Sabina sniffed. She was grateful for the cambric square and the deft fingers. She felt helpless and silly.

"Sorry I don't have the key."

"Thank you." Sabina sniffed again. "It's - it's got me down. Being like this - Oh, damn!"

The fingers ministered again. Perfume enveloped the pillory in sweetness. There were deft sure touches to captive hair. "Gosh, there's not a thing you can do, is there?" It was an interested comment, no more. "Is it very tiring?"

"Horribly." The prisoner cocked a cautious eye at beauty. "Why are you being nice to me?"

"It's that bad, eh?" There was a tinge of sympathy now. "What gets to you, hopelessness?"

"Everything!" Sabina's smile was a failure. "There's never a chance. It's endless, on and on - You must have felt it - "

"I should have told you. I'm a chatelaine." The girl laughed. "Don't look so shocked. We come in all sizes." The lovely eyes were intent in their assessment. "You must want to escape in the worst way?"

Sabina tensed. This was dangerous ground. "All prisoners want to escape, don't they?" she countered cautiously.

"I suppose so. If you want me to, I'll help you."

"Why?"

"Poor Sabina!" The exclamation held warmth. "I know you have to be suspicious. Don't be. I'm for real. I want you."

"Me!" Sabina was startled.

"Why not! You haven't known, but I've watched you for a longtime. I'm tired of the Seigneury. I'd like to take you home with me."

"Oh, that!" Sabina put all her weariness into the words.

"You want a well behaved lesbian pet?"

"You put it so well, dear. By the way, my name's Candice Remple. Daddy was Remple's Tire and Rubber Company. Now I am. Even the Seigneury treats me with respect."

"Why don't you just 'name' me? I'd have to do whatever you wanted. I expect I'd get between your legs if I was whipped enough."

"Don't talk like that! Don't ever! Not about something beautiful." Candice Remple's command held a surprising vehemence. In it was sincerity to prompt Sabina's question.

"You mean you can get me out of here?"

Candice grinned ruefully. "They don't respect me enough to let me walk out with you. But I'll contrive something. It won't be too difficult." Her eyes sparkled. "But there are conditions, y'know! You'd expect some conditions, wouldn't you?"

"What are they?"

"If you can't put more enthusiasm into it than that, Sabina, maybe I should just walk away and leave you alone."

"No, don't! Please don't!" Sabina was enveloped in a terrible loneliness. She had rejected Campys. Now this! "I'm so scared," she wailed. "How can I know about anything!"

"Poor darling girl!" Soft fingers lifted the prisoned head, warm lips found Sabina's. For some moments no words were spoken. Then, softly, Candice whispered, "I'd be beautifully cruel. You know that, don't you?"

Sabina had suspected. But hope of release from the Seigneury was devastating. It swept all hesitation aside. Her words seemed formed by other lips. "I don't mind. Please take me. Please get me out of here."

"You'll go in handcuffs, pet."

"I don't care. Put six handcuffs on me. I want out."

"And I'll whip you into an obedience such as you've never dreamed."

"You won't have to. If you'll get me out of here I'll do anything."

"But, darling, I'll want to whip you anyway . . . ." Sabina twisted her hips in a frustration of longing. "I understand that too. At least I think I understand . . . but, yes, yes, yes! Just get me out of this hateful place. Do what you like with me. At least you're honest."

"I'll make you glad. Oh, I'll make you so glad. Darling . . . !" Lush lips nibbled at the ear into which they whispered. "Look, I'm going to back away. We'd better not be seen as too intimate. We can talk a minute, then I'll go."

"Candice, when? When will it be?"

"Soon. Perhaps tonight. I want it as much as you do. I'll make it happen. Don't be surprised at anything."

Sabina's captive heart was thudding furiously. She looked in wonder at Candice's casual loveliness. Suddenly, within her, there' was a hunger to know the unknowable. She tumbled out her need in words.

"I said I understood. I mean, about the - the things you'll do to me - about whipping me! I do understand, sort of. But there has to be more than I know . . . ?"

Candice laughed delightedly. "That's easy, silly girl! The weals on your skin make you a hundred times more beautiful, and they make me horny like nothing else ever. While I whip a girl I rage with lust." She chuckled. "Is that reason enough?"

"But why, Candice? Why?"

"I don't know why," Candice affirmed cheerfully, "And I don't give a damn. I don't think there is any Why. I don't see why we have to look for a Why. It's something beautiful that just IS."

The logic was feminine enough even for Sabina.

The magic of Candice did not fade with her passing as Campys had done. It clung, a tangible hope. It clothed the captive of the pillory in dreams. Strange erotic dreams, absurd and exciting and impossible. But an excitation of the spirit much to be desired. Candice Remple was not the Seigneury! Her being was vital and alive and utterly feminine; as much a reverse of the amorphous impersonality of the Seigneury as one could imagine. Sabina knew that, for good or ill, she had taken a step into the unknown.

The captive girl had been in the grip of the Pillory a long time. Now, without much interest, she raised per head and examined the courtyard's changing scene. As though by some natural evolution it was different. It had acquired the Seigneury's chameleon quality of merging into something it was not, leaving the beholder uncertain of reality. The twentieth century had slipped back into the seventeenth. The dress, the wigs, the scraps of talk . . . . Impinging on it all were the sound of hammers, a sound intermittent through the past hours, a sound now delivering a visible evidence of its purpose. At the far end of the huge enclosed space there had been erected a gallows. Sabina moaned, a small involuntary sound for herself alone. Even if she were no more than an unwilling spectator of the gallows use she wanted no part of its cruelties. But suppose? Suppose she herself was to be the one for whom the rope was noosed! Was she conveniently locked in the stocks to await execution! It would be 'a masque, a grim and frightful play enacted with all the Seigneury's practiced perfection. But it would need a star!

Was this the explanation of the second five thousand?

To earn it by standing all day in the pillory was almost a gift, hateful as it might be. But what good was five thousand dollars if you were hanging by the neck until you were dead, dead, dead . . . !

"She's a pretty wench! And her neck's chafed a bit already, I'll warrant. Perchance well ringed for the rope."

"Aye, she's that. 'Tis a pity to waste that cunt and tits. She'll make a pretty sight a kicking in the air."

They were a florid paunchy pair, well in their cups, viewing her nakedness with immense enjoyment. Sabina closed her eyes, but she could not close her ears.

"Will she get her flogging 'ere she mounts the steps?"

"To be sure! Ye may lay a wager on't. 'Tis a free benefit the law provides. A well whipped wench is a fine sport."

She could stand no more. Sabina's plea was piteous.

"Oh, sirs, is it me? It can't be me!"

There were bawdy guffaws. "'Tis not Nell Gwin, lass! Ye may lay a guinea on that."

"But why?"

"Know thee not of treason, girl?"

"Treason! Me! It's not possible!"

"Tell it to the executioner, lass. Mayhap hell give thee pardon." There were more guffaws.

"And flogged?"

"And what's wrong wi' a good flogging! 'Twill warm thy back, so it will, my pretty baggage."

They departed. Sabina watched them go, uncertain.

They could be drunk and having sport with her. It was a cold comfort. She was seeing now the planting of the post. She knew its function. Its function was herself.

When the two soldiers came for her she did not fight.

The lifting of the hated yoke left her stiff and cramped. Strong hands grasped her arms. There was no escape. All eyes sought her as she was lead to center stage. Sabina Miles was the star. She was quivering with terror.

They raised her hands and tied one on each side of the post. Tied them bitterly tight, since if she was to die the circulation did not matter. She stood, exquisitely exposed. Thoughtful fingers made a hank of her hair and brought it forward across one shoulder to shield one breast and leave her back virgin for the thong. She was left to stand.

But there was more. The crowd was agog with hushed expectancy. In the depths of fear, Sabina clutched at hope. Perhaps her role was minor to some main event! A flogging began to seem merciful. Surely the gallows were a sham, a realistic prop . . . !

The gallows were not a sham.

Candice Remple marched between the 'soldiers, head high, face flushed in outrage. Her arms as firmly gripped as Sabina's had been. For her, too, there would be no escape. As she passed the prisoner of the post their eyes met in agonized communion. Sabina felt sure she had received a message, but she knew not what it was. If they were to die, what did it matter! And they were to die - even the Seigneury could not simulate that!

Candice Remple's gown and wig were of the period.

When the executioner began to strip them from her she fought. Fought with a fury it took the strength of three men to control. At last, breasts heaving, hair awry, she stood naked and exhausted as the man in black bound her hands behind her back and then, in an excess of caution or cruelty, strictured her elbows too so that her shoulders were wracked, her breasts jutting.

The guards led the naked woman a few steps forward, - then stepped back so she might stand alone. Candice stood in pathetic loveliness. She did not run. Sabina knew the feeling all too well. Where could a girl run! What else could a girl do but stand where she was placed!

The man was a clerkly type, soberly clad. He took his place before the woman who was to die, his voice dry and ancient and without passion as he read from the scroll he held in claw like hands. It made no sense, none of it. Sabina rejected every word. It spoke of treason, treason - treason! And at the end: "To hang by thy neck 'til ye be dead, dead, dead."

Was it better than to be beheaded! Some kind of mercy . . . ?

It was when Candice was mounting the steps that Sabina realized the final beastliness of the execution was to be discreetly hidden. They would see her fall, but the obscene jerking and twisting at the rope's end would offend none present. The area below the trap was boarded in so that Candice's last motions would be hers alone.

But her final words were for them all. Positioned with her frontal nakedness exposed for all to see. Her black triangle a heavy bush speaking only of life and a love now denied, she said in a loud clear voice:

"Spare the girl. She is innocent, without fault."

They led her to the trap. Swiftly, the executioner bound the slender ankles, then fitted the ugly noose to clasp the tiny column of the lovely neck. Candice shook her head against the proffered fold for her eyes. For a living moment she turned and sought the gaze of the girl pinioned to the post. Again Sabina had the awareness of a message she could not fathom. Then Candice Remple turned her face to a horizon only she could see. The executioner pulled his lever. . . .

Candice Remple was no longer there.

The rope jerked and twisted a surprisingly long time. Sabina was glad she could not see.

The atmosphere was electric . . In unison the crowd exhaled, then drew in a deeper breath and turned to where a naked girl stood ready to be flogged. Their joy was tangible.

It was the same executioner. Of course! Why not! His trade was death and torture. He strode forward to his second task. Sabina gasped and shrank against her bonds at sight of the cat. But that too was authentic to the scene. A flogging! The word held a majestic horror all its own. The nine knotted tails slapped back and forth against the black clad legs. Soon they would wrap around her waist and across the whiteness of her back! Sabina longed to die. The Seigneury held naught of life. It was a denial, a feasting on the innocent flesh of girls.

It was not until he had stepped past her to make his stance that Sabina realized who he was Rolfe Campys! She had no doubt of it - none! She turned her disbelieving eyes back over a naked shoulder to receive an insouciant nod from a head she knew too well. A black arm swept back in a wide arc . . . .

When the knotted leathers bit into her back, Sabina screamed as she had never screamed before.

## Chapter Eight
## Hold Out Your Hand

To Glynis Woodhaye the school uniform was an affront.

In the presence of women she would prefer to be naked. It was too small. But not so small as to burst its seams. Her slenderness did not tax it other than to fill it completely. It covered her private places reluctantly so as to make her constantly aware of them. She was sure the Seigneur was chuckling somewhere in the wings.

"You look deliciously sweet, dear," said Sister Amaldis. "I feel deliciously indecent. Sister, please help me? Help me leave this place? Help me to go home?"

"The first day at school is always difficult, dear."

Glynis wondered in frustration how a woman coped with Sister Amaldis. Perhaps she didn't! Sister Amaldis was as elusive as a shadow, though endowed with all the terrible substance of authority.

"You know I'm held here against my will. Sister, I don't want to play these games. I just don't!"

"But, dear girl. I thought it would be such a pleasant change for you." Sister Amaldis sounded hurt. "I have felt your sentence was overly long. I'm sure it's nice to be out of your cell and away from the prison for a little while."

"You mean - after - after this charade I'll be taken back to prison!"

"Of course, dear. Hold out your hands, please."

It was all of a pattern. All impossible but happening.

The mailed fist beneath the velvet glove was never far from sight. There could be no profit in provoking Sister Amaldis. Feeling ridiculous, Glynis held out her hands and watched the handcuffs clasp her wrists and click snugly to render her semi-helpless. Or were they no more than a symbol of her servitude! She had grown used to them!

"They look so nice on your wrists, so bright and shining, dear."

"And they keep me well behaved. is that it, Sister?"

"All of us are subject to authorities, Glynis."

"Please, Sister Amaldis, don't send me back to prison."

"I have no choice, dear. I wish I did."

"I wish you did too," Glynis said morosely. "What must I do now?"

"You are joining Mr. Atwood's class, dear. This is Mr. Atwood's second day with us. He's such a' gentleman. So - kind to his girls."

There were times when Sister Amaldis was just too much. A girl longed to scream and beat her fists. The Sister was a force. A power who swept aside obstacles to her course by means most obvious yet impossible to counter. Impossible, that is, to a girl with chained hands and under threat of punishment. Glynis swallowed her shame and followed meekly where she was led. It was a perfect humiliation: a grown woman in a child's school tunic, handcuffed, going to school!

"This is Glynis Woodhaye, Mr. Atwood. Such a charming girl."

Dick Atwood approved the charming girl. Glynis knew herself stripped bare. "Welcome to the class, Glynis."

"Thank you, sir." May as well play the fool game!

"Miss Woodhaye is somewhat older than the average pupil, Mr. Atwood." Sister Amaldis perceived an awkward question. "No, she is not a chatelaine. She is, however, of strong character and will require a firm hand."

"Discipline?" Dick Atwood's gaze roved the scantily hidden breasts.

"Of course! Discipline! I am sure you will temper justice with mercy. I know the dear child is in good hands Glynis, you may take your seat."

A quick reconnoiter as the headmaster accompanied the Sister to the door revealed the lovely figure of a naked girl standing facing a corner, close into the junction of two walls. Her hands were out of sight, presumably handcuffed as were all the rest. She did not move or turn around. Her bottom was ablaze of stripes. Standing facing the class was a girl still clothed, fidgety and ill at ease, waiting. Glynis scanned her companions in academie and collected shy sad smiles quickly quenched.

"We are studying French History, Miss Woodhaye," the Master informed briskly. "The colorful period prior to the Revolution. But first we are engaged in a matter of correction." He turned stern eyes upon the waiting girl. "You were saying, Miss Bristow?"

The standing girl undulated, a pleasing motion Glynis suspected contrived. "Well, I don't think it's fair, sir, to ask me questions about things I don't know anything about."

"Has it occurred to you that perhaps you SHOULD know?" "No, sir."

"Perhaps an incentive?"

"I don't want to be caned, sir,"

"Your wishes are quite irrelevant, Miss Bristow."

"I don't think they are, sir. That cane hurts awful. Look at Gladys' bottom over there."

"I have already seen it," Mr. Atwood said expansively.

"But I am prepared to be accommodating. I will cane your hands."

"No, sir."

"What did you say?"

"I said, no, sir. I don't want my hands caned. That hurts something dreadful too." Elizabeth Bristow was red faced but determined.

The Master took a deep, ecstatic breath. These feminine creatures were exquisite. A man's fondest dreams! "Perhaps you will tell the class what portion of your person you deem acceptable for punishment, Elizabeth?" His sarcasm was thunder.

"None at all, sir. I don't think girls our age ought to be punished with pain."

"I see. What would you suggest?"

"Nothing at all, sir."

"Ah!" Dick Atwood revelled in the power this damsel was delivering him gratis. "Would you like me to ring for assistance so that you may be flogged before the class?"

"No, sir. Why don't you whip Chrissy? She likes it." There was a dead silence, then hushed giggles. The headmaster smiled benignly. His finger hovered above the buzzer. His voice was smooth. "Miss Bristow, I will count to five. If you have not started to remove your tunic by then, I will press this button. That will mean a sound flogging. However, should you wish to apologize and to moderate this absurd obstinacy, only your hands will be caned."

Glynis Woodhaye watched, breathlessly as the rest, rejecting the absurdity, yet fascinated by its authenticity.

This transposition from a Victorian schoolroom was happening before her eyes and she was a part of it. Inevitably her turn would come. What then!

The count was deliberately slow. Dick Atwood was revelling in the situation Elizabeth Bristow created. He was as uncertain as Glynis Woodhaye of Elizabeth's sincerity. He strongly suspected her obduracy to be a seeking of the limelight, an excursion into an erotic exploration all her own. As his voice intoned the fatal numbers, he observed the shadows of expression cross the lovely face of his trapped victim as she twisted and turned and looked appealingly at the averted faces of her classmates. At the count of four her fingers rose to the strategic buttons.

"Very well, sir," she said woodenly, "I seem to have no choice. I - I apologize."

"Thank you, Miss Bristow. Proceed with your preparation."

Glynis saw it as a strip tease. Each slow reluctant motion. was a provocation of the flesh as well as a rearguard challenge in a lost cause. It was beautifully done. The lush lips pouted redly moist. The body revealed by the falling tunic used every curve and muscle to flaunt its desirability. Glynis spared a quick glance at the Master. His tumescence was all too evident. Amused, she returned her attention to the now fully revealed loveliness of the girl about to be punished. It seemed the Seigneury took to itself only the most nubile of femininity.

"Thank you, Miss Bristow. Face me and extend your hand."

It was as though the girl had achieved her purpose and milked her plight of its dramatic potential. She was now all business. Her arm rose, the small palm tautened. The cane sang.

Glynis flinched. She could imagine the awfulness of the impact. But she watched in wonder as Elizabeth casually examined her wound, shook the injured member limply a few times, and said, with an infinite sweetness: "Thank you, sir."

There was no real pause. The eyes of the hurt girl locked themselves with those of the man with the cane. Elizabeth's other hand rose negligently and offered itself for agony. Once again the cane shrieked its savagery.

I t was the same as before. The young breasts rose and fell in spasmodic reaction. Their owner examined her injured hands woefully, shaking them as though to fling away her pain. Her voice held true.

"Thank you, sir."

"May I commend your acceptance of your punishment, Miss Bristow?"

"Thank you very much, sir. May I dress?"

"Most certainly not! Extend your hand again."

"Surely you're not going to cane my hands more sir!"

"And why not, pray?"

"But you hit me so hard, sir. The pain is awful."

"You are a big girl, Elizabeth."

It was ritualistic as though rehearsed. Glynis Woodhaye felt irritably guilty with her own rapt attention. She was breathlessly involved, her own hands tingling. The Seigneury had her in its grip.

"Yes, sir, I suppose I am." Elizabeth shuffled a bare foot and bestowed a questioning look upon the black gowned male, assessing his temper. Deciding to get her travail over with, she positioned a quivering arm. Immediately it had received its cut she extended the other, evidently determined to give herself no chance for weakness. When it was done, she stood trembling, hands limp and listless at her sides. She appeared determined to exhibit none of the writhings so commonly employed by caned girls to ease their distress. Her voice was no longer assured.

"Thank you very much, sir."

The Master nodded. For the moment he was satisfied to behold his work. The girl was incredible. He was unsure whether he witnessed amazing female fortitude or whether his authority was being obstinately challenged by bravado. Elizabeth stood, eyes bright with more than tears, waiting.

"Again, Elizabeth, please."

The dam broke, the tears flowed. With an inarticulate cry of defeat, the caned girl sank to the floor in a bundle of hurt nudity, her face buried in her hands, sobbing. Elizabeth Bristow had had enough.

"Elizabeth." The command was stem.

"I can't, sir. I can't!" The denial was choked.

"You can and you will."

There was no answer, only sobs and heaving shoulders.

With care and precision Dick Atwood cut his cane squarely across Elizabeth's unsuspecting bottom. Elizabeth screamed.

"Stop it! That's enough!"

Glynis Woodhaye recognized the voice. It was her own.

She was trembling with outrage for the girl on the floor, and now in fear for herself. But she glared defiance at the Master's interested attention. "You're being unnecessarily cruel to the poor girl," she added lamely.

Dick Atwood's heart beat high. Here was treasure indeed! A magnificent creature bursting at the seams with pulchritude, inviting punishment. His invitation was almost reverent.

"Would you care to step out in front of the class, Miss Woodhaye?"

"No, I would not! This is a silly game and we should all be ashamed of ourselves. I refuse to play."

She was panting, in the grip of a fearful excitement. She saw the finger of authority move towards the buzzer, and forestalled the obvious. Her challenge was furious.

"Go ahead and ring. Get your bullies. Have them brutalize me. You should feel really proud . . . !"

The finger paused. "I would prefer not to . . . ."

Her voice seethed contempt. "Perhaps you can subdue me yourself. I refuse to submit!" Her defiance overflowed. "How much do you pay these people for the privilege of caning naked girls?" She was truly splendid. Dick Atwood glowed. Here was an endless potential! His voice was suavely regretful. "But, Miss Woodhaye, you do realize you have earned a punishment?"

"By your standards perhaps!" Glynis waved his standards airily away. "And you know where you can put your standards. If you've any sense you'll aid me in getting out of this appalling place."

The silence was dramatic. Having enjoyed it to the full and noted the heaving breasts of his oldest pupil, Dick Atwood suggested blandly:

"Step before the class, Miss Woodhaye, and remove your tunic."

"You know perfectly well I must refuse."

"No, I do not know that. It is a conviction of your own. I am hoping mature reflection will change it."

"Bullshit!"

Glynis hated the word. Her use of it betrayed her agitation. She wanted no part of standing naked in this room, to be ogled by a young man whose motives were suspect. The day she had spent tied spread out on the bars of her cell, suffering Campys' amused scrutiny, had in no way inured her to being naked in the eyes of men.

"Miss Woodhaye, you are angry. You are new here. I make allowances. Please consider, we have our rules. We will not change them to oblige you. It would not be fair to the other girls. The fact that you are some what older . . . ."

"I am hardly a grandmother! My age simply enables me to judge this nonsensical charade!"

"Miss Woodhaye!"

The protagonists rose to their feet, glaring. The clash of wills had gone beyond Dick Atwood's intent. He was grateful for the diversion of a raised arm.

"Yes, Miss Manson, you have something to say?"

"Please, sir, could I - could I - I mean, could I speak, just say something to Miss Woodhaye?"

"And what would you have to say to this intractable young woman?"

"Well, sir, I think we all want to say something. Could I, please?"

"Very well." The headmaster turned to the flushed rebel. "You are being honored," he said stiffly, "I believe Miss Manson wishes to be kind."

Embarrassment touched them all. Vera Manson rose diffidently to her feet and absorbed Glynis' surprised hostility.

"Don't be angry, Miss Woodhaye." The young voice was concerned. "But we all think you're new and don't understand - "

"Perhaps I understand too well."

"Don't make them flog you. They will, y'know! If you won't obey . . . if the men come and get you it's awful. They strip you and hang you up and flog you with a beast of a whip. You're not much good the day after. It's happened to a lot of us . . . ."

Glynis was touched by the girlish sincerity. She repulsed a momentary vision of herself, bare, suspended, lashed. A sudden realization that these girls were obedient only under the dictates of common sense chilled her anger. They were none of them children. Their obedience stemmed from conviction, experience! She felt deflated.

"But this is all so wrong . . . !"

"We aren't allowed to say that, Miss Woodhaye." Vera's voice faltered. "I think I'm trying to tell you our punishments can be borne. They don't kill us or put us in the hospital. I expect you're frightened of being caned. But, if you like, I'll ask Mr. Atwood to cane me instead so's you can see it's not fatal. You saw how well Elizabeth . . . ."

There was a hushed silence. Vera's breathing had. quickened. She flushed under the admiring scrutiny of her classmates.

"I couldn't possibly -" Glynis felt an idiot. "I don't mind a bit - not if it would help."

Glynis suddenly glimpsed the bizarre - it would explain - ! "You're one of those girls who - who likes it?" she asked dazedly.

Vera's grin was shy. "A lot of girls don't mind getting their bottoms caned a little, Miss Woodhaye," she admitted equably. "It makes us - well, it feels good after! But we're just as scared of the other . . . ."

Dick Atwood was enthralled. He knew himself a privileged Witness to an intensely female exchange. He had guessed right about Vera; within limits she would be erotically aroused by punishment. He sighed. If only he could buy the Seigneury for life . . . !

"I'll take a few strokes too!" It was Chrissy Ragan's eager voice. Abashed, she exclaimed, "Oops, sorry." and subsided back into enthralled silence.

"Very well, Miss Ragan." Dick Atwood knew himself throbbing with lust. "If you care to step forward and raise your tunic."

Chrissy cared. The speed in which she bared her striped bottom and extended it for his approval was nothing short of indecent. Someone giggled. Elizabeth stopped. sobbing and cocked an interested eye. The headmaster took a deep, ecstatic breath and implanted two vivid bars across the willing flesh.

"Thank you, Miss Ragan. I am sure Miss Woodhaye is grateful."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" Chrissy's voice throbbed with gratitude as she twinkled her way back to her desk. The pain of contact with the seat brought a glow of ecstasy to her bright eyes.

"And now you, Miss Manson?"

"Thank you, sir." Vera gave the bemused senior a reassuring smile and tripped forward for her punishment.

"One on each hand and two for your bottom? Would you feel that adequate, my dear?"

"Oh, thank you, sir. That will be lovely!"

Glynis felt a familiar world slipping away beneath her feet. Here was a new dimension of the feminine mystique. Her heroics began to seem laughable. She felt ashamed. Without the intervention of this delightful girl she might at this very moment be getting her back scarred for life. Were all human postures thus subject to revision! Guiltily knowing herself the cause of what was taking place, she nonetheless watched as Vera Manson demonstrated the resilience of female flesh.

Vera slipped out of her tunic. Evidently the dual punishment merited nakedness. Glynis envied the girl's lack of concern over baring her body before a man's hungry eyes. Receiving the nod of approval, she bent forward and touched her toes . . . .

Two savage slashes snickered into the young cheeks, imprinting their weals. Without haste, but with a studied casualness, the slender nudity came erect and smiled around the class. In particular she smiled up at the man who held the cane. Then she thrust out an arm and a hand . . . totally innocent.

The arm sank beneath the impact of the cane. A small sound of anguish fought the smile, but did not win. The other hand, pert and willing, offered itself and was duly wounded. Both punished palms sought the refuge of moist armpits but were resolutely thrust down to hang limply against naked flanks.

"Thank you very much, sir. They hurt beautifully."

"I am glad you're pleased, Miss Manson. You may dress and resume your seat."

Vera did as she was told. Her eyes were very bright.

After she was seated, her small hands found their way back beneath her arms and were lovingly hugged. Only a couple of tears escaped the shining eyes.

"And now, Miss Woodhaye!"

Glynis knew herself lost, betrayed by reason and the unpredictable eroticism of her sex. Chrissy's and Vera's contribution to her cause had robbed her of defense. An ordeal lay ahead. She supposed she would survive.

"Yes, sir?" "Perhaps we may now proceed?"

It was the moment! Dick Atwood found poise hard to maintain as he watched the trapped woman struggle with her emotions. His need to ravish her was urgent. But greater delights were in the making. Glynis Woodhaye was going to yield. But what delicious hesitations she would betray! How fearful would be her shedding of the armor of dignity she still carried from her former life! He almost licked his lips.

"What must I do - sir?"

"You do not need to ask, Miss Woodhaye. You are now well aware of how to prepare yourself for punishment."

Glynis was aware! Terribly and fearfully aware! Slowly, her cheeks flaming, she took the shameful steps.

"You may dress and resume your seat, Miss Bristow." The naked girl, still crouching on the floor, rose to her feet. She was crestfallen and ashamed. The worst of her pain had been erased by the drama she had beheld. Her hand was halted halfway to her tunic by the stern male edict:

"Your punishment will be completed later, Elizabeth. It will be doubled. You have disgraced yourself."

She turned, beseechingly. "I did try, sir."

"Falling to the floor! You disappoint me."

"I'm sorry, sir. I'm ashamed." The young loveliness squirmed in decision. "Please, sir, I would like to receive the rest of my punishment now. May I?"

It was one more of the wonderful moments. The class seemed forever breathless with them. Dick Atwood felt humble before the wisdom of girls. "You may, Miss Bristow. Since you wish to make amends I will offer you a choice. The four on your hands or six on your bottom?"

"The six on my bottom, please, sir."

Glynis knew herself for the moment unnoticed. She watched in awe a demonstration of courage she was sure she could never match. The lovely youthfulness bent and touched its toes, stiffening its knees, adjusting its curved cheeks for the convenience of the Master. She held her breath for what seemed forever as the cane bedded itself in them again and again. . . . The hips swayed, a foot was raised and immediately returned. Elizabeth gasped under each blow; that was all. When the six crimson

weals joined the flaring wound previously administered, she straightened up and faced her tutor.

"Thank you, sir. I'm sure I deserved them. I'm sorry about - about - what I did."

The caned girl slipped into her tunic. Returning to her desk, she wept quietly into her hands.

Glynis Woodhaye was in full retreat. She was in the throes of a trembling reaction. She was committed to being one of the girls. She was about to be punished in ways she was sure she could not bear. She was also about to strip naked before the eyes of a man and a roomful of girls. She moved,. diffidently, to where she knew she must. Her chained hands rose to the two buttons she must now undo.

"I will not remove your handcuffs, Miss Woodhaye."

"Very well, sir, I will try and manage."

She managed surprisingly well. She and handcuffs were now old friends. A moment later she faced him. Naked. Deliberately she thrust her sex at him, hiding nothing. It was a bravado to sustain her courage. Her eyes met his, questioningly.

"You are a very beautiful woman, Miss Woodhaye."

"Thank you." She purposely omitted the "Sir."

"It is a privilege to punish you."

"I am sure it is, sir." She laid on as much sarcasm as she dared.

"One on each hand. Six on your bottom. That is as lenient as I think you deserve."

"Thank you, sir."

She hated him, hated the servile words she must utter.

Memories of her former life rose to mock her and accuse. She tugged at her handcuffs, hating them too.

"I think first, your hands." Glynis raised her joined wrists questioningly. "It is awkward, I know. But you can manage."

She managed. The connecting link was tugged tight and the cuffs hurt. But her open palm was suitably presented for the cane. She was still feeling untidy and awkward when the blow struck.

In spite of the handcuffs, her wound found its way instinctively to her armpit. She hugged it in agony. Her startled eyes beseeching mercy. The pain was far worse than she had supposed.

"Come, come, Miss Woodhaye, that is a child's response."

Hating him and angry with herself, Glynis lowered her arms so that her linked hands hung before her, passively impotent. Apprehensively, she brought them to where she could examine the angry scarlet swelling the cane had given her.

"You have a second hand, Miss Woodhaye." Passionately, Glynis did not wish to grovel on the floor.

If only she could carry this off with some semblance of maturity! Perhaps this man knew the limits of a first time. If he had sentenced her to four she would have been lost. But one more - only one more! Flinching, she repeated her awkward posture for her pain. When it struck, consuming her in fire, she managed, somehow, to allow her punished hands to fall and stay limp within their metal bands.

"You see, Miss Woodhaye, you were unduly concerned. By the way, there is a matter of thanks?"

"Thank you for caning my hands, sir."

"You said that most charmingly. It absolves you from punishment for the omission. I believe you are familiar with the correct pose for your next punishment?"

"Yes, sir." Glynis bent her loveliness into the oldest Of female submissions. She supposed her fig would be Staring at him, but she could do nothing to prevent. It was not adjustable.

"If you will allow me . . . !" Allow! How would she dare stop him! She had gone this far! Seething inwardly, she suffered his hands upon her everywhere, pulling and thrusting. She was astonished and perturbed by the degree in which he was able to tauten and extend her exposure. She felt ninety percent bottom. The cane would hurt more, much more! She was sure it would.

It did! The searing scald was shattering. But her throbbing hands had paved the way to fortitude. Glynis managed to hold still, and even to ask humbly, "Do you wish me to thank you for each stroke, sir?"

"Once at the end will suffice. But it was a nice thought." There was nothing nice about number two. It evoked a wail of anguish and a trembling of her knees. But the naked girl had discovered an ancient formula. Two down and four to go! She said it fiercely to herself, over and over! And then three, and then two, and then one. In flaming agony she knew it impossible. But the last ringing stroke proved her wrong. She was crying with pain and she had made shaming sounds, but she had come through. She had made it!

"Six!" Dick Atwood counted it with gusto. "May I commend you, Miss Woodhaye."

"Thank you, sir. Oh, and thank you for caning my bottom!"

"You are most welcome."

She presumed nothing. Miss Glynis Woodhaye stood naked and awaited permission.

"You may dress and resume your seat. I am pleased with you."

Thankfully, she obeyed. The school tunic covered little, but she put it on thankfully. She gasped and flinched once when she sat down. That was all. She felt certain that to massage her wealed bottom would not be acceptable. And anyway, the handcuffs . . . !

The class returned to France and Louis the Fifteenth.

Glynis' chained hands discovered the appropriate volume. She was taking no chances. Authenticity was one of the Seigneury's most disquieting facets. Her cell in the prison was real enough. She wished she might not be returned to it. In spite of a blazing bottom and swollen hands, the schoolroom and its girls seemed a cheerful and colorful place by comparison.

It was then that Chrissy Ragan dropped her book.

There were giggles. The Master gave the fallen tome his full attention. Chrissy looked coy.

"Oh, dear, I'm so clumsy." She looked winningly contrite.

"Would you have dropped that on purpose, Miss Ragan?"

"Well, sort of."

"And what does that mean, Miss Ragan?"

"I think you're awfully nice." Chrissy wriggled in sensuous enjoyment of the situation she was creating. "You're so kind . . . ."

"I am sure your seat will not agree with you."

"Oh, it will, sir! It will . . . ! It does . . . !"

How sweet she was! An utterly desirable package of female. Dick Atwood wondered if her lust and his own could be quenched by coupling. He doubted it. In this vibrant girl there would be an endless regeneration. Chrissy's needs arose from some deep well of eroticism within her psyche. He longed to possess her. Perhaps . . . ! But why think of the future when there was this moment now, now, now . . . !

"You enjoy being caned, Miss Ragan?"

"Only by you, sir."

He doubted the truth of it. Chrissy was a quivering bundle of sexual desire. But she was also lovable. Suppose he could take her home with him! Supposed he married her and whipped her daily! Suppose - suppose! For a moment Dick Atwood was lost in a roseate dream world.

"This display of sexual carnality is highly improper in class, Miss Ragan."

"Ooooo, I expect it is, sir. But isn't it lovely!" She was deliberately provoking. He must keep the recurring giggles within bounds. He was keenly aware of Glynis Woodhaye's speculative gaze, and was thankful for the academic gown which hid the tell-tale bulge in his pants.

"If you will step this way, please. Perhaps we can make it somewhat less lovely for you."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" Chrissy stepped forward, glowing. "You present a problem, Miss Ragan. Since you enjoy being caned, how would you suggest I punish you?"

Chrissy was instantly helpful. "I don't enjoy it while it's happening, sir." She wriggled delightfully. "It's the - well, it's like right now - and afterwards. It's groovy."

"I associate this, er, grooviness to a certain zone . . . ? Perhaps the caning of your hands produces less agreeable sensations? "

"It's sort of the same, sir. But different."

"Ah! Have you other erogenous zones?"

He picked up her flicker of uncertainty. So the little beauty had an Achilles heel! He would find it. Chrissy undulated outrageously and exuded musk.

"Girls just get caned on their bottom and their hands, sir."

"What about their back?"

"That's sort of like a flogging, sir. It's done with a whip and we have to be tied up."

"You are being most helpful, Miss Ragan. I have in mind another sensitive spot. In your case most appropriate."

The silence quivered. "Oh, sir?"

"You may strip."

It took a moment. Chrissy without clothes was almost too much for any man to bear. Everything had the same pert loveliness as her features. Dick Atwood was breathing hard . . .

"You may fetch me the appropriate whip."

"Appropriate, sir . . . ?" "You know perfectly well where I am going to punish you. I believe there is a most suitable instrument?"

Chrissy's tone was only faintly tinged with dolor. "On my cunt, sir?"

"The word is unsuitable. Use another. But, yes."

Chrissy knew it all. She had no illusions. The small whip she handed him was exquisite. Her eyes were bright with tears; but her smile was of adoration.

"Perhaps you will acquaint me with the preferred posture for this correction, Miss Ragan?"

Chrissy positioned a chair. "It's best done from the back, sir. I put one foot up on the chair and then the other. You swish the whip up underneath."

"Thank you, Miss Ragan. You may position yourself." She did it beautifully. Standing on one foot, she placed the other up and sideways to rest on the chair. Her pubic area was blatantly exposed from back or front. With arrogant grace she clasped her handcuffed wrists at the nape of her neck and stood, expectant, for her pain. Dick Atwood measured the upward sweep and stuck his beloved between her legs. He could have sworn the thong slapped wetly. .

The whipped girl gasped exquisitely. It was a sound echoed round the room. Without lowering her hands, Chrissy nimbly changed sides. Once again her nude sex screamed for attention.

In freedom, Glynis Woodhaye had kept sex in its place.

She had used it as a pleasurable facility, but yielded it no more than social usage made convenient. The Seigneury had changed that. It thrust at her fresh dimensions of eroticism which she had at first scorned, as she scorned Rolfe Campys' vulgarities, but which here and there penetrated the armor of her pride and propriety. In the Seigneury sex was a rampant monster. A monster that became a hot and fiercely demanding part of a girl herself. It did not so much invade as possess. The effect was of an outrageous intensification of femaleness. Sitting at her desk, the wounds of the cane still burning hands and buttocks, she knew herself sexually aroused by what was happening to Chrissy Ragan. Knew that, even though she flinched, she envied. In a word, the caning of Chrissy had made her horny.

Stepping blithely from pain to pain, Chrissy's face was a study. Glynis gradually realized the girl was in the throes of a prolonged orgasm. An orgasm blossoming into flower, only to be cut back by the searching snaps of the whip. Suddenly it happened. Another wet slap upward to her belly took her beyond the brink She moaned in ecstasy, writhing, lost and enraptured, her boot remaining elevated so that Dick Atwood took advantage of the throes and added to them the final benediction of the most vicious slash of all. Chrissy screamed in joy.

It had to end. Glynis wished it did not. She envied the whipped girl her rapture. She wondered if within herself there lurked the same sensitivity, the same nerves screaming for fulfillment. She shared with the class Chrissy Ragan's return to the schoolroom and to pain, and watched achingly the small foot return to the floor as its owner returned to awareness. As usual, Chrissy was equal to the occasion.

"Oh, dear! I shouldn't have! I mean, that was awful . . . I don't mean that either. It was gorgeous. But I shouldn't! I'm terribly sorry, Mr. Atwood."

"Think nothing of it, Miss Ragan."

"You can always whip me some more, sir - you know . . . sort of to make up . . . ?"

"You may return to your desk, Miss Ragan."

"Oh, dear, you're not angry, sir?"

"Indeed no! I appreciate your helpfulness throughout."

"Oh, I'm glad, sir."

Unable to think up any reasonable excuse by which she could get herself whipped again, Chrissy covered her flaming and engorged sex with the school tunic and returned, with some reluctance, to her seat. The class resumed its studies.

But Glynis was disturbed. Her hands and bottom were still hurting from the punishment she had earned by denouncing what she had seen earlier as cruelty. Perhaps it had been just that. But the behavior of the three girls had changed things. Chrissy, Vera, and even Elizabeth had, each in their own way, shown her an aspect of the female. both shocking and enticing. Their sexuality had been so honest and unashamed it disarmed. It was an erotic enchantment. The excitations of the punishments, together with the personality of the Male who administered them, was intoxicating. After this, the sterility of her cell would be doubly dismal. She leant forward and edged her breast against the book . . . .

"An accident, Miss Woodhaye?" Dick Atwood had looked up in startled disbelief as the History of France thudded to the floor.

"I expect it was, sir. I'm sorry."

"You expect: . . ? Don't you know?"

"Not really, sir."

There were titters. Mr. Atwood flushed. So did Glynis.

She was beginning to be shocked by her own temerity.

"I suggest you deliberately tumbled it to the floor."

"Oh, sir, I wouldn't dare!"

"Miss Woodhaye, I believe you are being coy."

She was! She knew she was! For the former Miss Glynis Woodhaye, being coy was about as far out of character as she could get. Glynis was angry with herself, but was under a spell. She would mend no fences, retract nothing. She was inflamed by curiosity, about the man who would punish her, but most of all about herself.

"Am I, sir? I'm terribly sorry."

"Don't answer me with a question. Did you deliberately push that book to the floor in order to earn a punishment?"

"I sort of nudged it, sir."

"Indeed! Just how did you do that?"

"With my breast, sir." She gave him a Chrissy Ragan flow. "It was the one on the right, sir." Glynis was trembling. But she had never felt so vividly alive. At that moment she was prepared to burn every bridge in sight. Perhaps if she was outrageous enough they would not send her back to the cell!

Dick Atwood, too, was in a seventh heaven of bliss at what the Seigneury was providing. He hoped his joy would not diffuse his suave request.

"Ah! Be kind enough to bring your right breast here to the attention of the class."

"May I bring my left one, too, sir? They sort of go together."

"You are being flippant, Miss Woodhaye."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

It would serve her right if he made her scream with pain!

But Glynis was aflame with a force she could not control. Wryly she considered how astounded Rolfe Campys would be if he saw her now. She was thankful he could not. Almost gaily, she made the short journey to where she would be punished. She looked at Mr. Atwood brightly . .

"Kindly undress. I am sure we would all like to view your offending breast. Nudging, I believe you said?"

"Yes, sir. My breasts are large and very firm. They often - well, they - they do things."

"Perhaps we should discourage them?"

Glynis saw the trap too late. She had been positive he would inflict on her the same punishment he had given Chrissy. Surely no man would dare . . . . But her mood was high. A moment later she stood naked, thrusting her breasts arrogantly like pointing guns, her cuffed hands joined behind her neck to enhance their tautness. She did not answer but smiled expectantly.

"You expect to be thrashed between your legs, no doubt?"

"Oh, thank you, sir!" •

"For that reason I shall not punish you in that manner. I deduce you are seeking sexual gratification from an inflamed pudendum?" "Oh, sir!"

"Well, am I not correct?"

"Yes, sir."

There had sprung up between them a rapport. Each perceived the motives of the other. To Glynis now, quite suddenly, Dick Atwood had become a man. The Male! She could feel the intensity of his desire, the rampant maleness hiding beneath the gown. In the grip of it he would be merciless. But she, too was inflamed. The schoolroom and its pupils had infected her. Shame had vanished.

"You wish to be whipped on an erogenous zone, Miss Woodhaye?" ,

"Oh, sir!"

"Please stop making that absurd exclamation. You are a mature girl, Miss Woodhaye, and should approach your punishment with a mature recognition of its merit."

"Oh, I will, sir!. I will!"

"I intend to whip your breast."

Once more the impossible! The unthinkable! The Master's simple words Were shattering. Keyed and buoyed, as she was, for a vastly different infliction, they devastated her defense. She had played with fire. Now she would be burned!

"Please, sir, not my breast!"

Dick Atwood guessed her dilemma. Here was sport indeed! He would be inflexible and see how this sleek beauty coped.

"And why not your breasts, Miss Woodhaye? It is the offending member. The punishment is appropriate."

"I didn't know girls got their breasts whipped, sir. I've never heard of such a thing. Surely it's not permitted?"

"It is permitted. You deserve it."

"I don't think I can stand it, sir. Please punish me some where else?"

"No."

"More severely, sir? Somewhere else? Oh, please . . . ?"

"Don't be childish. There is no part of you not exquisitely designed for punishment."

"Between my legs, sir? Oh, please . . . ?"

"I get the impression you would be grateful if I whipped your pudendum as well, Miss Woodhaye."

He was going to win. Glynis knew she was being played with. He was allowing her to plead, but only because of the eroticism of the situation it prolonged. Her breast was going to be whipped, her beautiful, lovely breast . . . ! Surely she could employ more feminine wile!

"I think I could stand that, sir. I'm sure I can't stand still to have my breast whipped. Please, sir . . . ?"

"I will relent to the point of spreading your whipping over both breasts, Miss Woodhaye. I had intended to concentrate on one, but I will be kind."

She was on an avalanche of lust. Slipping . . . . She could manage only a trembling, "Thank you, sir." But then, under some feminine impulse of mischief and hope, she blurted, "Couldn't you whip me twice as hard on my cunt?"

"That word draws a punishment of its own, Miss Woodhaye."

"Of course, sir. I apologize. It slipped out."

"It slipped out with an intent to achieve your carnal desire, did it not?"

"Oh, sir, I wouldn't dream . . . ."

"We both know you would. You are in the throes of sexual excitation. You seek an orgasm at my expense. I am ashamed of you."

"I am ashamed of myself, sir."

It was true! Every word! And she was ashamed! Through the rainbow mists of lechery, the former Miss Glynis Woodhaye stood aghast in disapproval. But she did not care - she did not care!

"You will stand with your back to the vertical pole over there, Miss Woodhaye. Face the class."

She had wondered about the pole. Now she knew! She stood, trembling, as her wrists were unlocked from their cuffs and locked again behind the slender column.

"We will relieve you of the embarrassment of standing still." The Master turned to the class. "Miss Phillips, be kind enough to fasten Miss Woodhaye in the approved manner."

"Sorry, sweetheart, but I have to." The words were whispered as the appointed girl adjusted a strap around Glynis' taut tummy and buckled it so tightly as to make her a part of the pole itself.

The rope hurt, under her armpits from behind and back over her shoulders. As it was tensioned more and more the captive's shoulders were back and back and her breasts thrust themselves more and more into the limelight. It was a cruel tie, wickedly efficient. Every time Glynis drew a breath the strictures cut. She looked down at her flaunting but immovable breasts in wild dismay. To her fevered imagination they were pleading for the whip.

It was the same slender thong as used on Chrissy.

Gauging his stroke, the headmaster slapped it lightly across the delinquent breast. The nipple became hard, turgid, engorged. Absorbed, he sensitized both of Glynis' soft curvatures so that she herself was ashamed by their tumescence as the slender lash slapped and slithered across their skin which even their own palpitations and their owner's frantic thrusts against the ropes could move no fraction of an inch. Miss Glynis Woodhaye was bound for punishment.

"Can you move your breasts, Miss Woodhaye?"

"No, sir."

"I trust you are grateful for my kindness in relieving you of the hazard of unseemly struggles?"

"You are very kind, sir. Thank you for having me tied."

"Anything to say in mitigation?"

"Only to plead for mercy, sir. I don't want my breasts whipped. I'm frightened!"

A quick flash of an arm and her right breast burned with fire. "One at a time, Miss Woodhaye. Much more efficient." It had happened! It had been done to her! Her breast bore a thin, straight thread of scarlet. Glynis gasped and coped with sobs, her head thrusting back against the pole to which she was bound.

"Five on each, Miss Woodhaye."

Even as she choked out her denials: "No! No, no! Please don't - not my breasts!" and as the thong sliced again neatly below her nipple, she knew the incredible was happening. The fire within her loins was fanned to intensity by this new pain - a new and different pain - a splendid agony! As the strokes cut at her firm, taut curves the flame consumed her utterly so that she screamed aloud in the strangest ecstasy of all, her untied legs writhing, her pelvis striving frantically against the strap. It was her greatest shame of all.

But she did not care.

## Chapter Nine Candice

"It will take me a little time to digest," said Sabina. She looked about in wonder at the huge bedroom. "You must be frightfully rich, Candice."

"All the chatelaines are frightfully rich, sweetheart. That's the only way you make the grade."

"I can't really believe it, y'know. After awhile I will, I will because of you. Oh, Candice!"

"Think I was dead?" Candice Remple laughed. "I wanted the thrill. They do those simulations damn well."

"But it's not all simulated . . . !" "It is for us chatelaines, pet. Although some of the hornier girls accept a few of the milder tortures or a whipping just for the experience - something to boast about."

"But some of the girls, girls like me . . . ? When I was imprisoned with some of the others I was told stories. Girls disappear. . . ."

"Where are your hands, Sabina?" The irrelevant query was casual.

Sabina was startled. "Behind my back - handcuffed."

"You're my sweet little slave girl. Remember?"

"Of course I do. We made a bargain. Oh, Candice, I'm so grateful! You've no idea."

"And slave girls don't interrogate their Mistresses."

"Oh, gee, I'm sorry! But I'm so . . . ."

"Of course you are, lovebird. But the less you know about the Seigneury the better." Candice Remple's lovely face clouded. "I think I got you out of there without leaving a clue or a trace. But if they did track you they'd take both of us, and they'd want to know what I'd told you. Best you know nothing."

"Take us both! You mean they're that powerful?"

"Damn right! If they're powerful enough to get away with Glynis - well, never mind! There's other things to talk about. Sweetheart, are you happy?"

"Am I ever! Mmmmm!"

"I'll change your hands after awhile. But I'm enjoying you the way you are, delightfully helpless. Notice anything on the floor?"

Sabina had noticed. A shining swirl of links from a bronze ring and at the end . . . .

"Get over there, darling, I can't wait."

The anklet was a thing of beauty, heavy, gem-studded.

Under Candice's fingers it closed around Sabina's left ankle snugly with a solid snap. No join was visible. Its weight alone spoke of servitude.

"Walk, darling."

Amused, Sabina walked, one foot lagging. The shining links followed her like a snake until they tautened and snubbed her to a halt.

"Test the radius."

Sabina gleefully obeyed. The big bed was within range.

But that was all. Door, windows, the dresser, cupboards were denied. Always the chain snapped her short of a goal. Candice nodded approvingly and held up a key. "See this! It hangs on the wall where you can't reach."

They shared laughter. "I wouldn't run away from you, Candice. I've given my word," Sabina said with innocent sincerity. "But you like me like this, don't you! I don't mind. It's - oh, it's so - so good to be free."

"But you're not free, darling, You belong to me."

"I am too! I'm beautifully, gorgeously free!" Contradictorily the slave kicked at her chain and made her handcuffs clink. "I'm away from that awful place. I don't care what you do with me, I'm out of that beastly Seigneury."

"I've got all sorts of chains and things waiting for you, pet," Candice warned. "I've had them fabricated here and there. I knew I'd find a girl to put them on. When I saw you . . . mmmmm!" .

"I'm so grateful It's a miracle."

Candice waved it away. "Sorry I took so long, sweetheart. But the day after they flogged you . . . ! You weren't in very good shape. I didn't think they'd be that rough. It's that damn Campys! They spend girls like water . . . ! Darling, your back! How is it?"

"I'm naked. Can't you see how it is?" Sabina shrugged away her wounds. "Candice, are you always going to keep me naked?"

"Hmmmm, mostly! I like you nude. Besides, it's convenient when I want to whip you or make love. But I've had a few trifles made . . . ! You'll see them in good time. They're yummy!"

"I don't' mind being naked for you," Sabina said thoughtfully. "There's been enough people who've seen me stripped - I've got used to it. But, Candice, how is my back? Where they kept me there weren't any mirrors."

Candice went to her slave, kissed her sparkling eyes, and loosed the handcuffs. "There. You can get close enough to a mirror to look."

"Oh, wow!" Tugging at her anklet, Sabina twisted and turned and looked back over a shoulder. She turned stricken eyes to her new owner. "Oh, Candice . . . ! Will it ever heal?"

"Looks awful, doesn't it, pet? Or beautiful, according to the point of view. I wish they hadn't used the knotted thongs, though," Candice mused reflectively. "Give it a month, I'd say. Then you'll be back to virgin skin." She chuckled at the question she could see in her slave's eyes. "Don't worry, lovebird, in the meantime I'll use all your other places . . . ! You've got more of them than maybe you know."

Sabina forgot her back. The weals were several days old now and had ceased to hurt except when she lay on them. She was enjoying the ecstatic luxury of massaging her wrists. From time to time she stretched her arms as wide as they could go, a free bird. testing her wings. She turned to Candice's amused regard and said simply,"Thank you . . . . Oh, thank you . . . !"

"Feels good, eh!"

"Glorious!" Sabina kicked her chain. "And I can't turn away. You've thought of everything."

"It's forever, y'know?"

"All right, so it's forever," Sabina agreed amiably.

"Aren't you curious about the things I'll do to you?"

"Not too much. I'm too happy."

"I'll make you scream."

"Well, okay, I've had a lot of practice. I'm sure you'll find my screams satisfactory."

"Gosh, you're sweet! You're precious. Just looking at you on the end of that chain makes me horny as the Devil. And the things you say and the way you say them . . . ! Mmmmmm!" "Do I get time off for good behavior, Candice? I'm going to be boringly well behaved."

Candice Remple grinned. "I've thought of that. Yes, I'm going to take you out and around. Not right away, but after the kerfuffle of your disappearance has died. It will test your loyalty. You'll be able to run."

"And if I do?"

"I feel a bitch, darling. I had a threat figured. A threat that would scare the pants off you - if you wore any! I can't use it now."

"Oh, Candice, tell me."

"If you ran I'd put the Seigneury on your tail. They'd - pick you up in no time - and take you back."

Sabina shivered. Her eyes widened in dismay.

"But don't worry, lovebird. I can't do it. I've fallen in love with you. And after the way they flogged you . . . ugh!"

"I'd come and hug you, but my chain won't go that far." Sabina glowed. But she had momentarily beheld an abyss and must ask the inevitable question. "If the Seigneury never lets a girl go - then - then . . . ?"

"You've guessed it, pet. Let's leave it at that."

"It means you've given me back my life . . . ?"

"Mmmmmm, solemn thought!" Their eyes met and locked. "But that's about the size of it, pet."

Sabina forgot her chain. With open arms and shining eyes she leaped to grasp, but was snubbed short and tumbled to the rug. Candice, her Mistress, laughed delightedly and, pulling her to her feet, led her to the bed.

It held them for a long, long time.

It was Sabina's first lesson.

Idylls are rare. Candice and Sabina lived theirs to the full in an endless discovery of each other and themselves. Both, in their separate roles, were gloriously fulfilled. Sabina the slave was never without chains. Implacable as they might be, they were also a jeweled loveliness bestowing on their wearer a delighted fascination. Under the amused regard of her owner, Sabina tested their tolerance, and if it was sometimes short, it never occurred to her to complain.

It ended during the night of the eighth day. With the switching on of the bedroom lights Candice came awake and sat up. Her first thought was of her slave. But Sabina was still peacefully sleeping beside her, the links from her anklet trailing their shining way to the bronze ring in the floor. Sabina was safe. Candice Remple's eyes focused in horrified dismay . . . .

"Maslin!"

"Good evening, madam. I see our quest is ended. Forgive the intrusion but it appears warranted."

"Maslin, get out of here! And take those two men with you."

"You know we will not do that, madam."

Sabina awoke and instantly guessed. She looked wildly from the impassive faces of the three men to her shackled feet, and from thence to the key on the wall She was trapped! But Candice was trapped too, even though she bore no bonds.

"What do you intend, Maslin?" Candice was trembling.

"We will escort you to 'the Seigneury, madam."

"Escort?"

Maslin shrugged. "We do not expect you to accompany us voluntarily. In my position as custodian I cannot engage in risk."

"Maslin, don't, don't do this! You know what it will mean."

"I am profoundly regretful of my course of duty, Miss Remple. I have always held you in the highest regard."

"All I've done is rescue a girl - and look at her chain! She's safe enough."

"Miss Miles is the property of the Seigneury, madam."

"Oh, blast the Seigneury, Maslin!" Candice's voice was impassioned. "Can't you unbend a bit? Be human."

"We have taken an oath, madam. You yourself have sworn - " "Maslin, it's not that big a deal. One girl! The way the Seigneury runs through girls Sabina will never be missed."

"She has been missed, madam. Why else would I be here?"

Two naked girls in a bed, one chained by her ankle, and three men. The suave butler and his two helots. They gazed at each other in a total awareness of the inevitable.

"Maslin, if you take Sabina and I back to the Seigneury, you know what will be done to us. Do you want to see that?" Candice put everything she had into the appeal.

"It will grieve me, Miss Remple. But my wishes are irrelevant."

"Maslin, I'm rich. I'm very rich."

"So I understand, madam. But please refrain from offering a bribe. It only demeans us both."

"One million dollars, Maslin?"

"Please, Miss Remple - please . . . !"

"A million for you and a million to be split between your helpers?"

"Emphatically no, madam."

"Name a figure then. If I can meet it I will."

The butler waved a deprecatory hand. "Madam, you forget. Even if we were disposed to accept, it would be an act of suicide."

Candice slumped. "Very well. I know the spot you're in," she admitted slowly, "But I'm the real quarry, aren't I? I mean, I'm the culprit, the guilty one. Sabina certainly isn't. Let her go?"

"No, madam."

"But dammit, she's innocent. I stole her handcuffed, she had no choice. She was helpless."

"A more than willing victim, I suspect, madam."

"Look, there's a compromise. There has to be!" Candice looked around her helplessly. "Name your price to let Sabina go. Take me, but tell them she escaped." .

Maslin did not deign to reply. The silence was a denial.

The liberty, and perhaps the lives, of two girls were forfeit. Candice looked at the girl beside her on the bed, and said, in desolation, "It's hopeless. I know them. Oh, darling . . . !"

"I hope you will not compel us to use force, Miss Remple."

"Be good little girls and let you truss us up? Is that the drill?" Candice asked bitterly.

"It would be helpful - and most wise."

"We're both naked. May we dress?"

"There is little point in clothing, madam. But the two essential undergarments if you wish."

"Thanks a heap." Candice's sarcasm was deep and desolate. "May I unlock

Sabina's anklet? She can't dress . . . ."

"Of course."

It seemed wrong not to fight. Compliance seemed so much an admission of guilt, a willingness to do penance. Sabina seethed inwardly as she watched her Mistress don panties and bra and toss over the same trifles for herself. When the shackle fell away from her ankle she tugged on the brief covering for her loins and prisoned her breasts in the bra. It was a long time since she had worn either. They felt strange. They were a return to bondage. . .

"It's no use fighting them, darling," Candice ordered miserably, "They can beat us into submission with one hand. What's happening to us is bad enough, we can do without that."

"Most sensible of you, Miss. Remple. I have always admired your common sense." Maslin sounded genuinely relieved. "Hands behind your back, please."

"Look, Maslin, must you? We are adult, y'know! Being tied up is a beastly humiliation. Can't we just take orders?"

"You know better than that, madam."

Sabina watched her Mistress, and did what it seemed she must. She turned and allowed her arms to be pulled back and her hands placed palm to palm. The bite of cord was instant and vicious. Despair settled upon her like a blanket. "Oh, no! Don't!" Candice wrenched herself away from the male hands. "Leave our elbows alone. You don't need to rope them too!"

"We shall do so, Miss Remple."

"But, Maslin, what for! Why! Tying our wrists has made us helpless."

"Strictures on her elbows renders a young woman sensibly amenable, madam. It is desirable." .

"But it hurts! It's a kind of punishment!"

"Yes, madam."

They were lost! Without their hands they could no longer fight. The brutal binding was but a foretaste of things to come. In bitter resignation the two girls stood meekly to be tied. Their gasps and exclamations of pain as the ropes were drawn cruelly tight were disregarded. With arms immovably welded they stood with breasts pointing and strained, their shoulders wracked, their elbows aflame with the bite of cord.

They looked at each other with a terrible knowledge.

* * *

The Seigneury honored them with its best. The period was fifteenth century. The place, the Italy of Pope Calixtus III. The proceedings, semi-ecclesiastical. Maslin and his helots delivered them into phantasmagoria, then vanished.

"A preliminary questioning only," said the parchment-faced ancient: at the table. He shuffled identity documents absently and tested his quill. "We must establish intent and identity."

The force rested with the darkly handsome man who stood with one foot negligently raised upon a brocaded chair. He was surveying the tableau before him with a cynical eye. It was from him the cuirassed guards took their orders.

"Make thy rituals short, father. 'Tis all on record. There's naught to dispute."

"Messire, these things must be done properly. There is the matter of her estate." The cleric allowed the word to hang.

"We will take it."

"It is massive, m'lord. There need be signatures."

"Get them, man! Get them!"

"She has refused to sign . . . ."

"They always refuse to sign, father." The sneer was impatient. "Surely Holy Church holds persuasion?"

"Messire, torture! For one so noble . . . ?"

"Aye, she'll not be the first, nor the last to need Mother Church's aid to make up her mind. Leave her right hand intact, 'tis all she'll need."

"The maid, sire, the younger one? She is without property."

"Treat her the same. In heaven's name, man, what are you quibbling about? The screams of one work upon the other to our advantage."

"They be passing beautiful. . . ."

The sneer was open. "Ye do the Church credit, father: Lust at thy age! They can be ravished at will, so keep 'em in one piece 'til ye have slaked. thy thirst. They'll make a luscious feast for thy holy house."

It was the end! It had been the end ever since the first bite of Maslin's cord. The cord still biting deep at wrist and flaming elbow. Sabina stood beside her Mistress, twin penitents before an altar to greed and a strange lust. It appeared that Holy Church did not approve of argument. She was gagged, as was Candice, with a wad of wet stuff bound deep in her mouth by a cord cutting her cheeks. Cynically, she supposed that what delinquents might have to say could be taken for granted. Tongues muted by a gag would ease the Reverend Father's task. Behind them stood the soldiers, eyes alert, hands ready. Their hands had been brutal . . . !

The cowled elder ignored the inference. His voice was still dry and tinged with regret. "We will deal with them then, sire. May I send thee a messenger when there be aught to tell?"

"Aye, that ye may." The dark visage betrayed. amusement. "Be tender with them awhile. They'll make rich sport. But waste not too much time."

The cleric sighed.

* * *

"Darling, I'm sorry. I blew the whole thing." Candice's voice was wan. "It's my fault. I'll never forgive myself."

"Don't think about it. It's over. Oh, Candice . . . !"

"I stayed away from them, that was the mistake, I was so besotted with you . . . !"
Candice exhaled miserably.

"Darling, is the pain very awful?"

Looking at her Mistress, Sabina saw a mirror of herself.

The total nudity, stretched, suspended from the bar by the slight leather bands about each thumb. The reaching toes a foot from the floor. . . ."Yes, it hurts pretty bad," she admitted abstractly, "But don't blame yourself. I don't think anything matters now - except I love you."

"The bastards! The rotten bastards! Gagging us so we had to stand like dummies while they. played their damn fool game! I know that son of a bitch who was playing the high and mighty! Oh, lovebird, to think I used to play such games too . . . !" The lovely eyes spanned the distance between their strung-up nudities ruefully. "Say it, sweetheart, say it - serves me damn well right!"

"It doesn't! It doesn't . . . ! The cruel thing now is they're going to do it all to you too. They always would have done it to me anyway. I know that now."

"I'll never sign their rotten papers. I don't care what they do to me. It would do no good anyway, they'd still kill me." Candice's voice held all the heartbreak of the world.

Girls were beautiful beyond belief! Sabina was poignantly aware. Cruelty accentuated their loveliness. Stretched - and tortured, Candice's body revealed a hundred delights beyond the norm, her flattened armpits, the tautened breasts into which the nipples had inverted to leave a blunted symmetry. The elongation of the pubic hair . . . ! She supposed it was the same with her own nakedness. But it hurt too much to try and look. Everything hurt . . . ! Even breathing!

"Will they just leave us like this?" she asked uncertainly. "Hell no!" Candice spoke from bitter knowledge. "They don't consider this one torture at all. Just slapping our wrists and saying: naughty, naughty."

"Why wouldn't they be satisfied with punishing us? Maybe they will be . . . ."

"You heard 'em talking, pet. Did that sound like simple punishment?"

Sabina was lost. Her new found love for her Mistress left her doubly vulnerable.

"They could torture me," she gasped bemusedly. "That's all they get us girls for. But you're different. You're one of their own. You're a somebody. If they just punished you and took you back . . . ?"

"Thanks, darling. That's a lovely dream." Candice moaned. "Oh, damn them to hell, this hurts . . . hurts!"

"It is but a scourge for thy spirit, daughter."

The dry old voice and the parchment face had entered unobtrusively. Wise, sad eyes examined the tortured femininity with quiet approval. The ancient man had about him an atmosphere of timelessness, of infinite patience.

Candice played a hopeless card. "Look, you old fraud, I don't know your name, but if you'll get us out of here I'll make you rich."

"I am already rich, child."

"Yeah, you would be!" Candice conceded brokenly.

"What about mercy? Do you have any?"

"Only the Church is merciful, child."

"Fuck your church, and don't call me 'child.' I'm a woman. So is Sabina. Can we interest you in our bodies? They're grade A."

"I already have your bodies, child." "We could make them lovable for you. We could both be grateful. We could both be a lot better to fuck than the way you are going to take us."

"You should be grateful at this moment. Surely, girl, you recognize leniency?"

Candice raised and flexed a helpless leg in frustration.

"All right, you haven't racked us or burned us or had us flogged. Why?"

"I need signatures." A wrinkled hand waved deprecatingly. "I think you are more likely to give them to me if we can talk rationally instead of by screams and threats. Such agony as the two of you now suffer does not impair reason."

"Clever old swine, aren't you!"

There came the ghost of a smile. "Thank you, madam."

"Can I get you to contact Campys? Get him to intercede for Sabina? I think he might - just on the score of maintaining assets. And she's innocent. . . . She certainly doesn't deserve what you'll do to me."

The smile remained. "And what will I do to you?"

"Torture me and execute, me. Oh, sure, you'll make a big tarada out of the juicier bits so the chevaliers and chatelaines, and the hired help, can get fine erections or wet cats out of - out of - well, out of what you choose to make me

suffer."

He nodded wisely and shrugged. "You know it all, madam." He studied the pain-wracked nudity of the suspended beauty, quietly musing on some speculation of his own. "It crosses my mind to speak of your case to the Seigneur," he said meditatively. "Not that he is unaware, but I will advance the suggestion, madam, that you are altogether too exquisite to be wasted in a single grandiose masque."

For naked girls hanging by their thumbs it is not easy to either tense or relax. But Sabina and Candice became suddenly alert, their eyes widening in a questioning hope. In cautious silence they listened.

"Miss Miles is, of course, already the property of the Seigneury. She has proven herself responsive. There is no reason to use her in a, er, terminal role. You, Miss Remple, offer the Seigneury a rare treat. You are a fallen angel, an extremely beautiful angel fallen from grace. Indubitably you must be punished." The clerical voice fell silent for several moments, and then offered, diffidently:

"One is given to understand a convicted person's joy in having their death sentence commuted to one of life imprisonment, . . . ?"

Sabina's instant surge of gladness was blunted by realization. For life! To be whipped and tortured intermittently on through the years! In between the highlights, a prisoner! One of the Seigneury's stable of female loveliness. On call! Forever available. She looked at her punished Mistress in an agony of emotions.

"Yes, it is better than death," Candice admitted slowly. "You sound doubtful, madam. Let me not make a plea for a mercy you'll reject."

"Tortured . . . and tortured!"

"Let us not be overly dramatic, Miss Remple. Your companion has survived her 'ordeals' remarkably well, her back is almost without blemish. I am sure you will prove equally resilient."

Candice was bemused. "But, from being a chatelaine to this?"

"The contrast presents a potent eroticism, ma'am. It's certain appeal will be the basis of my suggestion to the Seigneur."

"You'll keep me chained . . . !"

"Handcuffed, I suppose. The other young ladies in waiting do not complain of the minor inconvenience. They soon adjust."

"I'm ungrateful. I'm sorry." Candice shook her head in defeat. "I know you're being kind. And, yes, I want to live! It's just that - well, look at me now! It's so hard for me to realize. . . . I'm hurting so much It's difficult to think straight . . . ." She fixed her pained regard upon the black clad figure. "Help me to live. Oh, yes - please - please! I do not want to die."

"Very well, madam. I will do my best. I promise nothing."

"Thank you - thank you . . . !"

"And now, the matter of the signatures?" The dry old voice was relentless.

"But if I am to live . . . ?"

"Your estate is, in either case, forfeit, ma'am. It is as much the property of the Seigneury as you yourself."

"I cannot!"

"Can you not realize, madam, you will have no need of, it. As the property of the Seigneury, all your needs will be provided."

"For always! My life - gone!"

"You are punishing yourself, Miss Remple." Sarcasm crept into the persuasion. "There can be no doubt in your new life you will be frequently 'named.' Both of you will."

"Raped!"

An impatient shrug of the shoulders. "It need not be."

"Can't you speak to my Estate or the Seigneur? Ask clemency? It was bequested to me by my father. I have a moral obligation to preserve it. Not give it away to save myself pain."

"We are splitting hairs, madam. I am hopeful your present discomfort may, given time, induce reason . . If it fails, then tomorrow will bring the heated iron. You are familiar with the repertoire of rack and whip. The rail, suspension! You have a magnificent body. Do not spoil it. It may stand you in good stead."

After the aged cleric had gone his way, the hanging girls exchanged their exclamations of dismay.

"Candice! Oh, Candice, it's too cruel for you!"

"No worse than for you, lovebird. You're not exactly happy like this - are you?" Candice's voice was close to a moan. "Maybe we'll live, but we haven't much of a future. That old bastard may mean well, but he's right about our bodies - they'll be used and used . . . ." She kicked angrily it nothing. "If I can make a weapon out of mine, I damn well will- and I'll use it!"

"But the torture and your possessions - "

"I don't know." Candice's moans were all too real. "Oh, darling, I just don't know . . . !"

They hung in silence as the hours passed. Their thumbs and shoulders screamed but could not be heard.

* * *

The headsman was Rolfe Campys! Sabina was sure of it as she had been sure of the

hooded torturer of the previous day. The glitter of male eyes behind the slits in the all encompassing black tights flickered constantly over her nakedness and the nakedness of Candice as the two of them stood bound and exposed on the platform for all to see. Once more, their hands were bound palm to palm and their elbows cinched tight together with implacable cord. Already, their arms and wrists were swelling against the strictures. But what did it matter! They were expendable!

The crowd was hushed in awe. Only a susurration of whispers floated up to where the dark figure held the broad bladed axe, resting on the ominous block with its indentation to accept a female head. Beneath it waited a wicker basket . . . ! Sabina had looked once but not again.

It had happened quickly, yet was vividly implanted in Sabina's mind as the agonies of a century. Their night in the dungeon had been a fierce entanglement of nudities and seeking lips, hampered by the chains fastened upon them at wrist and ankle, neck and waist. Punitive chains, serving no purpose but to demoralize as part of their punishment. Their sleep had been punctuated by savage ecstasies and tears. Morning had brought the smokey stone chamber and the brazier.

"The Fleur de lis. On her thigh." It was the same voice of authority, the dark features as intent as ever upon a task to be done. But he was not alone In the outer perimeter beyond the flame stood figures . . . . The Seigneury was going to get good value from Candice's torture.

Sabina had been stood against a narrow pillar. Her wrists handcuffed behind it so that, with her back against the stone, she would have privileged view of what was to be done to her beloved. She watched askance as Candice, naked as she herself, was corded firmly to the bench.

"Get the bitch's thighs immovable."

"Shell not move them, sire."

The voice acknowledged that both girls were gagged.

"You can nod your head, woman, when you're ready to sign."

Candice closed her eyes.

"Brand her, man. At least she'll bear the Seigneury's mark."

Sabina had smelt her Mistress' burning flesh, and beheld the smoke rise from her burning thigh. She had watched the bulge of thew and muscle against the bite of rope, and the wild thrashing of Candice's head as the glowing iron ate through her skin to the count of five.

"A pretty piece of work, Headsman. For her other thigh the Seigneury 'S'."

From within the bound girl's gagged lips the sounds were frantic, indecent, ineffectual. But Candice Remple did not nod her head. The iron pressed home upon her skin, its burning of the maiden flesh both audible and visible . . . . By the count of four Candice had fainted.

They allowed her to regain consciousness by herself.

They stood in reverent silence, admiring the brands, raw and black, reliving the sentinent minutes of her agony.

"Come, girl, enough of this! We have a pen." Candice shook her head.

"By heaven, I've had enough of her! We can deal well enough with the legalities - her name on paper can be contrived. We've managed before. She can yield us better sport than by whittling her body away in this dismal hole."

Dark-face was furious.

"I can burn off her nipples, sire?"

"Let be. Do your work tomorrow."

"The block and the axe, sire?"

"Aye. See to it - for both of them."

As the chamber had emptied, Sabina had searched desperately for the ancient cleric who might have been a friend. But he was nowhere to be seen.

How do condemned girls spend the night before their execution? How? Candice and Sabina spent it in chains, in tears and in passionate clutchings. When, in the morning, their arms had been so cruelly bound it was a reminder of Maslin and his men. His binding ropes had been the beginning of the end.

Sabina looked around at the eager faces, avid, intent.

Truly, the Seigneury outdid itself this day! She fluttered her wracked shoulders. But she was helpless! If she fled, there would be a hundred hands to grab her. She realized people walked nobly to their execution because there was naught else they could do. Perhaps at the final moment you were glad to have done . . . .

But she was not glad now ! Her life, her loveliness to be extinguished by a blow! She gloried in her nakedness and knew it good. A hundred of. the watching' men would give much to possess her. But there were other girls, available, waiting their turn. Perhaps down there watching!

"The older one first."

Two guards led Candice to the block. She shook off their hands and protested,"No! Don't force me. I'll do it."

Candice knelt, her bound arms making it awkward to do anything. She turned to Sabina and smiled. Her heart was in her eyes. She bent forward and placed her head within its wooden resting place. A guard gathered her long hair and draped it forward . . . .

Her neck was tiny. The axe rose and fell.

The wicker basket shivered as it received its burden. A hand at Sabina's back impelled her forward.

## Chapter Ten
## The Whipping Post

Her tightly bandaged eyes told Glynis Woodhaye nothing. She might suspect the journey from the schoolroom to the cell simulated. But she could not be sure. If it was simulated it was cleverly done. A good deal of time passed between the cuts of Dick Atwood's cane and whip until the metallic clang of the cell door. Desperately, her fingers reached for her blindfold. It was surprising how difficult some things were when handcuffed.

Glynis did not at first associate the naked girl on the cell floor as anyone she knew. The girl was handcuffed too. She was sobbing quietly into the crook of her prisoned arm:

She had not bothered to raise her head. A second set of shining chrome. joined her feet. Her ankles were slender enough for the metal to circle them with a notch to spare. Across the virgin back were five scarlet stripes . . . ! It took Glynis several bemused seconds to realize she was looking at Tess Lynton.

"Tess!"

Startled by an unexpected voice, the girl sat erect. Her tear stained face looked up in relief.

"Miss Woodhaye - Glynis! It's you! I thought it was that - that horrible . . . ."

"Mrs. Bulloch? The wardress?"

"Yes: They just tossed me in here. I'm all fastened up. But you are too! How many pairs of these horrible things have they got?"

"Enough! But they're better than rope." Glynis knelt beside her new cellmate. "What happened?"

"That bastard - that absolute bastard!" Tess used her fingers to dry wet cheeks. "These bloody things . . . !" She clinked her handcuffs savagely. "Has everyone gone mad?"

"Rolfe Campys?" Glynis felt guiltily amused.

"The son of a bitch!" Tess' fingers moved on to tidy her hair. "Oh, damn, I can't do anything properly!" Once more her handcuffs were tugged and viewed with loathing.

"Here, let me. It's easier to look after each other."

"They took me down to that rotten basement. I've been there all this time. I'm not even sure what day."

"They didn't put you in that - that - awful hole?"

"They sure did!" Tess was vehement. "Before they slammed the door on me I

heard that fearful woman say to Rolfe: 'She'll be very amenable when we take her out, sir.'"

"But, had you done something?"

"Of course I did something! When they unlocked me from that awful post thing I managed to scratch his face and kick him in the balls. I hope they fall off!"

"But I don't understand."

"Neither did I! Oh, damn, I feet an idiot. I asked them to lock my wrists to that post affair. I was curious and wanted a thrill. Imagine it! I actually asked . . . !" She sniffed angrily. "I really thought this was some sort of federal or state pen and that everything was on the up and up - I was a privileged tourist."

"But when you saw me tied to the bars in that obscene way you should have guessed."

"Of course I should!" Tess looked shame-faced. "The fact is, you looked so - so . . . . Well, anyway, seeing you like that gave me the hots. I've never got so horny so fast. I stopped thinking. This serves me right, I guess."

"I expect it would have happened just the same., If Campys wanted you . . . ."

"That's the hell of it! I'm not sure! I've got an awful feeling seeing me fastened to that blasted post triggered something. He'd been so loving . . . ! He's a sadist, isn't he?"

"Nobody knows what he is. I'm not sure he does himself. Tess, is there any chance you'll be missed?"

"Hell, no! I'm just another girl from Vermont using her plump cunt to get into movies. That prick used it enough I thought I was getting somewhere. I sure got someplace all right, look at me!" She mused silently, breasts heaving. "When they locked me in that black hole down there I thought I'd die. I screamed and screamed!" Tess' breathing had quickened. "What will they do with me? With you?"

Glynis shrugged. How did you explain the Seigneury to a frightened girl? "We've both been kidnaped. A better word would be enslaved. We're now the playthings of a sizable club of blase, satiated millionaires looking for an erotic thrill. I think we can forget escape: It's just not possible. They've got us."

"I've got some marks on my back, haven't I? Is that why they whipped me - they get a bang?"

"Yes. I'm surprised you only got five." "Oh, his majesty explained that. After they'd got me fixed and I was raising hell while they stripped me, he said I'd just get a taste - he called it 'whetting my appetite.' Then I could stand as I was the rest of the day and think about it, and then I could think about it while I was locked in that - ugh! The idea is I've still got the real whipping to come. Have they whipped you?"

For answer, Glynis stood. The school uniform had been replaced by the prison tunic, but both were easy for cuffed hands. She fumbled and allowed her only covering to slip to the floor.

Tess gasped, her eyes wide in shock. "Your breasts! And your - your . . . !"

"Yes, between my thighs." Glynis turned. "And my bottom. We mustn't forget my bottom."

"But what had you done to deserve . . . '?"

"Same as you, nothing."

Tess Lynton examined the inflamed breasts and striated loins somberly. "They go all out on us, eh! Nothing's sacred. We're pretty bits of meat. . . ." Doubtfully, she blurted, "I suppose you know Rolfe's nuts about you? Or he's got a thing . . . ?"

"I know. I suppose it's why I'm here."

"He talked about you to the wardress - same way he did when you were tied to the bars and I was on top of the world. You bug him someway. He wants to flog you. That's the word he uses . . . ."

"I've come to believe flogging girls - or whipping us is his favorite sport."

"With him you're some big deal. When you get it the whole place is going to have some sort of Fourth of July." Tess looked at Glynis shrewdly. "Say, you got money?"

"Yes:" Glynis laughed bitterly. "At least I did have."

She offered her linked hands. "Here, let me help you up on this bench thing."

"I can't walk. My feet are chained together."

Glynis chuckled ruefully. "You'd be surprised what handcuffs allow a girl to do. I expect that's one of the reasons they use 'em on us. Come on."

Sitting on the hard surface that would be their bed, Tess kicked her cuffed feet and examined them in puzzlement. "Why have we got all this metal locked on us? We can't get out of here, so why can't we have our legs and hands?"

"Keeps us amenable, Tess. We won't fight. We'll be good girls."

They found comfort with each other through the night.

* * *

It was a small courtyard. "It's our exercise area," Clare explained shyly, "You'll have company."

"What's that thing in the, middle - as if I didn't know!" Tess asked bitterly.

Clare flushed. "I'm sorry it's not going to be all that good a day." She said shyly, "Would you sooner I got a couple of the men?"

"What!. To knock us around!" Tess demanded.

"Mrs. Bulloch's away, and they've given me this job and told me what to do . . . ." Clare wriggled uncomfortably. "But I'm sure it must be lousy for you both to just be obedient and do what I tell you."

"You're going to chain me to that damn whipping post?" Tess said morosely.

Clare wriggled some more. "Well, actually, it's straps."

She looked at Glynis woefully. "And it's both of you. One on each side."

"A real fun day! What do the other prisoners do?"

"It's just exercise for them. I expect they'll talk - and look. I know it's not very nice . . . ."

"Better you than men, sweetheart. Let's get on with it," Glynis said resignedly. She looked apologetically at a rebellious Tess. "That wall's too high to climb. So where would we go?" She held up her hands. "Don't forget we're still handcuffed."

"But I'll have to take your handcuffs off. There'll be a few moments when you can jump me." Clare was looking at Tess dubiously. For answer Tess held out her hands. Looking only at Glynis for guidance, she said testily to their shy wardress, "Okay. Fix me. Hurry before I change my mind."

Tess Lynton had been given no clothes. She was ready for the post. Obviously seething, she flattened her breasts against the timber and raised her. arms. Glynis watched unhappily as Clare thankfully buckled straps around slender wrists. Without waiting to be asked, she offered her own.

"It's a bit different for you, Miss Woodhaye." Clare's pink deepened. "I think they want you to feel - well, sort of ashamed."

The difference was an eight inch phallus attached to a metal bracket. Huge, distended, an enemy!

"It's easier if we get it in before I do the straps, miss." Glynis was sure it was. She viewed the horror with loathing. She felt certain it was a gift from Rolfe. To be whipped with that thrusting within her! She could hear him chuckling.

"Don't worry, Clare. I won't make a fuss." She cocked a dubious. eyebrow. "Are you sure that monster's possible?"

"I'm afraid so, miss." Another blush. "I've brought some vaseline."

"Can we take a bit of time?"

"Oh, of course, miss."

"Better suck her tits for ten minutes," Tess contributed dispassionately. "Why don't I get one too?"

"I don't know, miss. But it's different with you."

It was bitterly shaming and far from easy. Glynis was well aware of the limited experience of her sexual experiments. Other girls might be better adapted to accept. . . .

"I'll make it nice and slippery, miss."

"Be nice to her," Tess urged. "Nibble her a bit first - all three places. That giant of a thing! If you want to undo these straps, I'll do it."

Clare did not want to undo the straps. She was a cautious girl who knew when she was well off. Bashfully, she offered the phallus to the girl who would sheath it. Her own fingers rose to Glynis' breasts. "I hope you don't mind, miss, but it is a good idea."

Suppose he was looking! Glynis could believe Rolfe might be observing this absurdity from a distant window. Binoculars would betray every obscene detail. But, determinedly, she inserted the plastic glans within her vulva and began the persuasive motion's by which her sex could be suffused to betrayal. Clare's fingers were both wise and busy. Glynis' pulse began to quicken . . . .

"The bracket fits here, miss."

Engorged and impaled, Glynis Woodhaye examined the full extent of her humiliation. At the requisite height upon the post there was indeed a metal fixture.

"If you'll just push up against it, and rest your arms on the crosspiece, miss, I'll do the rest."

Face to face with her fellow captive, Glynis was more than ever aware of the improbability of what was happening. "Supposing I'd struggled and fought?" she asked, amused.

"They'd just have beat you, miss, until you helped." To Clare it was a fact of life.

The hands between Glynis' thighs were busy, their motions forceful. There came a solid click. "There we are, miss: All done!"

Done indeed! The impaled girl tested. The thing inside her had become immovable, holding her loins hard against the wood. To ease its thrust she stood slightly on tiptoe. The angle of the bracket was precise. She was wedded to the post; its bride!

"I'll have to do your wrists, Miss Woodhaye."

She extended her arms. Without their support, the phallus thrust harder. Glynis watched while her wrists were strapped tight.

"I'm afraid there's something else, miss."

It was too late to complain, or protest. Too late! Too late! She felt the rope circle her ankles and draw tight. Her foot was pulled out to the side and tied - and then the other . . . ! The effect was an enhanced impalement. Robbed of her arms, her feet splayed out, the giant thing inside her sex possessed her totally. Her added weight upon it drove it deeper. . .

"I think you'll get a little used to it, miss - after a while." Clare's voice was loaded with apology.

"What is it, a punishment or a reward?" Tess asked cynically.

"I'm afraid I don't know, miss. But you don't get one."

"Shouldn't there be a strap round my middle to hold me against the post?" Glynis asked wistfully.

"'Fraid not, miss. You are supposed to be like you are - so's you can wiggle it a bit."

"I can't move!"

"Well, not right now, miss."

Clare went away, Glynis' sad, small prison garment draped over an arm. The twin captives eyed each other woefully over the crosspiece. They talked, and tried to joke over Glynis' internal embarrassment. But there was little to say. Soon they fell silent. The post held them.

* * *

"I'm Ermie Bulloch," said the child brightly. "I've come to whip your asses. Ma said I could before she left."

Perhaps thirteen! Precocious! Already a lewd eye; She had crossed the yard to them unnoticed. Her hand held a yard long slenderness. She eyed the captives with a prurient assessment. "You've got that thing up your cunt," she informed Glynis sagely. "I can tell."

Ermie Bulloch was hardly an adjunct of a federal prison!

And yet . . . ! Behind these high walls anything was possible. If it amused the wardress, it most certainly would amuse Campys!

"Undo my straps," Tess suggested brightly. "Then I can bend down properly for you."

"Think I'm nuts or somethin'!" Ermie eyed them both with a proprietary eye. "I gotcha good, see. I'm goin' ter bounce your little asses." "You touch us and I'll complain to Mr. Camps." Glynis made a shot in the dark.

Ermie giggled. "He'll just warm you up some more." She used a grubby finger to trace wounds already upon captive skin. "'Course I ain't allowed to cut you this good - someone's really looked after you. But I'll still make yer squeal." She looked up at Glynis. "That thing in your cunt. . . . Make you come yet?"

"No."

"It will all right. Lickin' yer ass will get you goin'."

"I can't move."

"That's what you think!"

The withe wrapped itself around Glynis' bottom and one hip. She jerked and twisted in shock and pain.

"See! What did I tell ya?" Ermie was proud of her proof.

"Want another?"

"No! Oh, no . . . !"

"Look, kid, go peddle your papers." Tess was vehement.

"You lick us with that lousy thing and you're in trouble. We're on the list for something a damn sight worse. If they find us already marked . . . !"

"You're going to be flogged," the moppet acknowledged matter-of-factly. "Maybe I'll get to watch."

The captives exchanged glances of dismay. Each, unconsciously, flexed her wrists against the leather bands. Ermie was a cruelty they could have done without. "When do we get flogged?" Tess asked guardedly.

"This afternoon." Ermie radiated bonhomie. "Gives me lots of time to make you wiggle." She grinned at Tess. "You want I should make you come?"

"Don't bother, thanks."

"Ain't no trouble." Ermie thoughtfully slashed her wand across Tess' seat. "That's fer bein' sarcastic, see! Think I can't tell!" For a moment she admired the pink line she had created across the curved skin. "I want ter make yer come - You kick and you'll be sorry."

Glynis saw the lovely eyes widen in dismay as a deter- mined hand insinuated itself between Tess' thighs. She shook her head in negation of the anger she beheld. "It's no good," she said dismally, "We're helpless."

"Relax and enjoy!" Tess struggled against her bonds.

"Oh, damn, the little bitch . . . !"

"She's right," said Ermie cheerfully, "You better be nice to me. Real polite, see!" She paused for several intent moments as her questing finger sought its quarry. "'Course I'll lick you both anyway, but maybe not so hard."

Tess gasped. "She knows what she's doing," she admitted ruefully to the lovely face so close to her own.

"Oh, jeepers . . . ! Wow!"

"Just about when I get you ready to pop, I'm goin' ter stop and whip your ass."

"Gee, thanks!" Tess was gasping and writhing in competent hands. She gasped and yelped and kicked as the finger withdrew and the withe bit at her unprotected bottom again and again. Held only by her wrists, she was able to achieve a defensive writhing that benefited her not at all. Wherever her bottom went the cane followed. If she kicked too forcefully it slashed the sole of her foot. In the end, she stood still and sobbed as the slender thing cut.

"See, yer get ter like it!"

"I don't! I don't! It's beastly! Oh, please stop please!"

"That's better! Now let's have another go at yer clit." Tess orgasmed. Tess wept. Glynis, in her turn, wept too.

There was something hopeless and implacable about the cane biting at their bottoms again and again without end. No single blow mattered. But the steady slash and cut demoralized. It could go on and on . . . ! In a wave of sensation, Glynis too knew herself delivered to a response she could neither hide nor reject. As she flowered into climax the cane beat at her bottom with savage intent so that a blaze of agony blended with her carnal fire to produce a sensation so vivid she screamed aloud in a wild undulation she could not control. Ermie was happy with them both. She slashed and climaxed them in turn again and again. Interspersing their peaks and valleys of pain and pleasure with lewd observations. She was an immensely objectionable child. Their bottoms blazed.

When the time of the flogging came it was almost a relief.

No executioner. No hood. No mask. It was Clare and the other wardress, Myrtle. They sent Ermie packing.

"Ain't what you'd called a proper flogging," Myrtle apologized. She held up the wickedness of a single tapered thong. "No cat and no knots, but you'll notice what we're doin'."

"I'm awfully sorry," said Clare inadequately.

"Don't be such a drip, girl!" Myrtle admonished. "We'll both enjoy lacing into all that lovely skin. Look at it! Just waitin' fer us. That there Ermie sure has scorched their bums. Make a good base to work on."

The captives exchanged dolor, but said no word. What was there to say! There was a faint chance their whipping might be within bounds!

"Young Clare here needs a bit O' practice," Myrtle advised helpfully. "She never done much whippin'. We ain't aimin' fer no special number O' licks so it don't mater if she botches a few before she picks up the knack."

"I really am sorry. I feel sorta bad . . . ." Clare was out of her depth.

"Shut up, fer Pete's sake!" Myrtle was indignant at such ingratitude. "What the hell's there to be sorry about!"

Tess screamed at the first blow. It crossed her shoulders and licked her underarms.

Glynis winced in sympathy.

"That's the way to do it, kid. Make it snap. This here gal's got a sweet back fer whippin." Myrtle proffered the whip. "Now you try one,"

Clare struck Tess' twisting hips with a blow that said all too clearly she wanted to get it over with. Tess yelped in surprise. "You like the ass, eh!" Myrtle said indulgently. "But try higher up. She ain't marked much yet - you can see where you've landed. I sure do love to see them weals spring to life. Don't know 'bout them, but it makes me horny."

Clare was a good girl, obedient to her superiors. She lashed out at Tess' cringing back. The resultant wound was unimpressive.

"Oh, shit, that ain't no good," Myrtle reproved. "You're scared O' hurtin' the little bitch. Don't be! If you don't do better'n that I'll whip your ass too. Tell you what - get one up between her legs." Her voice crackled authority. "You, Tess! Git them feet apart."

Tess' scream was genuine in response to a new and different pain. Clare had enjoyed beginner's luck. The thong had cruelly bisected Tess' already engorged vulva and snapped its fury on the quivering belly.

"You found yer right spot, dear," Myrtle approved.

"Give her another. Same place."

"Don't whip me there! Oh, no - no -" Tess' plea was urgent.

"Why not, honey? T'ain't that time O' the month."

"It's too awful! Oh, it hurts so terribly - and I can't get loose - and - oh, please . . . ?"

"You ain't supposed to git loose, honey! You're supposed to stand there and like it."

"I know! I know! I'm sorry - I'm - Oh, don't whip me there!"

"This ain't no fun thing, honey. Leastways, not fer you it ain't." Myrtle reached and took the whip from Clare's willing hand. "You want to know what a whippin's all about, you try this one."

Tess screamed. Again and again she screamed. The straps holding her wrists creaked with the fury of her onslaught against their authority.

"See what I mean, dear," Myrtle said consolingly to her wide eyed pupil. "Now we got her attention. Screams lovely, don't she?" Glynis was bereft. The ugliness within her sex was forgotten. Everything was forgotten but her need to help the writhing girl whose pain-wracked features were but inches from her own. Tess' screams had beat agonizedly in her ears. "Stop it!" she demanded hysterically. "Oh, please stop! It's too awful for a girl! Can't you see . . . ."

"See what, sweetheart?"

"It hurts her too much. It's too brutal. She's a girl, not an animal."

"I had noticed," Myrtle conceded dryly. "If she's too much a female, let her try one of these." The whip shrilled and entwined Tess' writhing nakedness so that it spent its final force across one breast. .

To Glynis, the screams were a crescendo of horror. She could bear no more of them. "Whip me instead," she pleaded. "It must be my turn. Give Tess a rest . . . ."

"You ain't gettin' no whipping, gal."

The quiet announcement should have held joy. But it did not. It held something ominous. The helpless girl looked at Myrtle askance and quavered, "Why? Why not . . . ?"

Myrtle guffawed. "I'll be damned, you're disappointed."

"I'm not! Oh, no! But - but- poor Tess!"

"Can't tell yer why, honey." Myrtle was apologetic. "'Ceptin' you's somethin' special. I suspects when you gets it, you gets it good. Like as not you'll git marked for life."

"But it's not fair! You're killing Tess!" The threat to her own skin was lost in her concern for the sobbing girl twisting in agony on the other side of the post. Glynis gazed imploringly at the woman with the whip. "Don't whip her any more - please?"

"She ain't goin' ter die, gal, and she knows she ain't! So do you!" Myrtle chuckled. "Bet the little filly ain't never felt more alive in her whole damn life." She poked her victim with her whip. "Ain't that so, honey?"

"No! No, no, no! I can't stand it! It's too - too . . . !"

"She's a bit put out," Myrtle allowed tolerantly. "She ain't never been whipped enough. Gal's your age oughta get a good shellacking at least once a month."

"My breast! You hit my breast!"

"So what, kid! You got a pair - real pretty too! Never hurt a breast none to get a good cut once in awhile. Makes a nice mark where you can see it." Myrtle chuckled. "That's right! Press up close ter that there post. Won't save much, I'll git at yer anyhow. But yer won't git quite the wrap around as when yer do a buck and wing."

"Give her a rest! Please!" Glynis was frantic.

Myrtle handed the whip to Clare. "Give that sympathetic heifer a few of your specials on her ass, It'll make her feel better."

Glynis endured Clare's apologetic strokes without screams. She moaned and gasped as they stung and seared her already burning bottom. She must acknowledge hurt or Clare would be blamed. And hurt there was aplenty. She could struggle little, but the

motions the lash impelled rekindled the fire . . . !

"Keep slicing her 'til she explodes," Myrtle ordered kindly.

Glynis exploded all too soon. The whip and the phallus were a potent pair. Soon she, too, screamed and tugged the. straps. But her scream was different . . . ! And everyone there knew it was different!

"And now shut up," said Myrtle amiably.

Clare proffered the whip. It was refused. "See what noises you can get out of this one," Myrtle directed.

Tess screamed fearfully. Her flogging went on and on.

## Chapter Eleven
## The Slave

It was good to be clothed again. Exquisitely and expensively clothed. Glynis recognized her own wardrobe and her own jewels. The Seigneury had her home and her belongings . . . . It was a bitter knowledge. She faced Rolfe Campys' warily.

He lolled, with affected casualness, in the armchair, the riding crop draped negligently across one thigh. He dominated the luxurious lounge, his sardonic features surveying his prize.

"I'm still in love with you, Glynis."

"I'm sure that's why I've been imprisoned, chained, whipped . . . ." Glynis' voice trailed off into bitterness.

"It's done you a lot of good. I mean it, poppet. You're twice the woman you were."

She shrugged. "What do I do, say thank you?"

"You undress, dear girl, that's what you do."

She had known it would not be real. Just one more of his humiliations. But she had prepared herself. Glynis Woodhaye was prepared to concede defeat - to a point! She knew herself broken . . . to a point! No more feeble, futile girlish protests or demeaning struggles! But she was alert. Within her was still a part of the girl she had once been. As though accepting a challenge, she began to remove her clothes. Wryly, she consoled herself; they had been good to wear even for thirty minutes. One by one, she draped the things she loved across a chair.

"That's progress, beloved. You wouldn't have done that three months ago." It was a sarcastic tribute, more to himself than to her.

"The jewelry too?" she asked politely.

"No. Keep it on, poppet. I like the effect."

Naked! Miss Glynis Woodhaye extended her full frontal nudity for his approval. Masking defiance, she clasped her hands behind her neck and widened the space between her feet. If he wanted nakedness he should have it! No longer would she argue.

"You're better than magnificent," Rolfe Campys said with what appeared to be deep sincerity. "Will you marry me?"

"No, not like this."

"We can concede a few clothes. at the altar, sweetness," he suggested dryly.

Glynis kept her voice even. "What I meant was that a man does not strip a girl naked as a prelude to a proposal."

"I do!"

"And I said no."

They faced each other without anger. Anger was past. Rolfe's eyes crinkled. "You have the most lush cunt and pubic bush, dear girl."

"Thank you."

"You realize I'm going to thrash you, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"That cell get you inured to fun and games?"

"Yes."

"Don't you owe me a bit of gratitude? Dammit, girl, you've been given the most liberal education . . . !"

"Thank you." She raised a hand. "Rolfe, don't be angry. Some of that thank you was real."

"Help you grow up a bit?"

"I suppose so. Yes, I expect it did."

"It could continue, sweetheart. Shame to stop now." Her flinch was slight but he saw it

"I realize that," she said slowly. "I hope it won't, of course. But I know it can."

"You haven't had your flogging yet."

"No. I wondered why."

"D'you want it?"

Glynis shrugged despondently. "No."

"Now, about this getting married. You'd be crazy not to accept, sweetheart. I promise never to whip you on Sunday."

"Rolfe, don't make a mockery . . . ."

"Get me a drink, and present it properly." His voice was savage.

At the bar, Glynis made his favorite cocktail. Then knelt before him and presented it as might a slave.

He took it and sipped while she remained kneeling.

"You did that damn well," he mused. "Would you sooner be a slave than a wife?"

"No."

"Go and make yourself one. You may need it."

Glynis thankfully obeyed. Inwardly she was in turmoil.

Perhaps her life was being decided in this room right now. There had been no cocktails in the hated cell! This one was going to be so good! She made it a double. Without asking, she knelt before the man who could use her as he wished.

"Why d'you do that, Glynis - the kneeling?" .

"I thought it might please you," she admitted simply.

She smiled up at him over her glass. "I suppose it's halfway appropriate."

"You tempt me," he admitted, "to keep you like that - for life."

"It would be an honest relationship. Why don't you?"

"Better than the cell, eh!"

"Don't sneer, Rolfe. That cell's a kind of death for a girl. If I have to be a slave, I'll be a good one." She glinted up at him. "I'm not denying I've been broken."

"I'm up against something female," he said in a return of good humor. "What the hell's the distinction between accepting slavery and rejecting marriage?"

"I've been whipped into slavery, Rolfe: So I can accept it with honor. But to be whipped into marriage! there would be no honor in it for either of us." Glynis' eyes were sparkling with animation. "Honest, Rolfe, I'd sooner you took me as a slave."

"And beat you daily?"

She shrugged. "If I deserved it."

"I'm going to beat you now."

"Yes, I know. Any particular position you want me in?"

"Cool as a cucumber! Supposed to be defeating, I believe."

"Sorry, Rolfe! I'm just trying too hard. Do you want to tie me?"

"On the mantle there's handcuffs. Put them on, poppet. Purely symbolic, of course."

"Of course." She did not mock. Simply agreed. Clasping the familiar metal round her wrists, she was annoyed by the comfort she found in them. Handcuffs absolved a girl from so much!

"Now touch your toes and stick it out."

Glynis took the five swift cuts, using every ounce of her fortitude. The pain was sickening. "Go get yourself another drink." He handed her his glass. "Me too."

She could feel his eyes on her bottom as she walked to the bar. It would be ridged and flaming! But she was grateful for the drink. How strange they were! How absurd! How nearly wonderful! Once more she knelt.

"You're bloody marvelous," he acknowledged.

"I've come a long way, sir."

"You do everything right except one thing. Say, that little rump of yours . . . ! I was almost ashamed to hit it on top of what's already there. That little bitch of a kid!"

"I suppose you were watching?"

"Oh, sure! Saw it all. Poor Tess - working her cunt through Hollywood! Well, anyway, her talents won't be wasted."

"Myrtle whipped her terribly."

"Don't be jealous, poppet. Your turn will come. The old fashioned cat with all the trimmings."

"It will leave me scarred for always, won't it?"

"So I believe, sweetheart. They revive you with icy water when you faint."

"Rolfe, are some of the girls who are taken to the Seigneury actually killed for - as a - show?" Glynis gulped hastily. "I was made to watch one who died . . . !"

"You must ask the Seigneur, poppet. I'll introduce you sometime."

She was uncertain of him, and of the topic. She let it drop. "Why must you have me flogged, Rolfe? Has it some special meaning for you?"

He nodded. "Yes, it has. Don't ask me why. Strange, eh!"

"Do you want a wife with a scarred back?"

"But you've turned me down, sweetheart! Spurned my love."

She forbore the obvious: that marriage would absolve her from the cat O' nine tails. But perhaps it would not!

There had been a frightening longing in his voice. "Rolfe, are any girls ever allowed to go? Sent home, free?"

"What's your guess, poppet?"

"What will happen to me, Rolfe?"

"Hell, why ask me! It's as much in your hands as mine."

"I want freedom." She looked up at him longingly. "Oh, Rolfe, I doubt if you can have any idea how much I want to go home and be done with prison and punishments."

"And me?"

"I didn't say that." She was suddenly vehement. "You must know damn well how easy it would be for me to marry you! Not because of being flogged - and that wretched cell. But just because . . . ."

He looked down at her for long moments of silence.

When he spoke it was with a calculated coarseness. "Go get a cushion to put under your ass. Then spread yourself to be fucked."

She was ready for this too, had glimpsed it's inevitability. She was not a virgin. It was not a milestone. Only one more defeat. Without expression, she got the cushion and settled her wounded behind upon it on the rug. She opened her thighs wide and held her cuffed hands above her head. For good measure, she smiled.

Rolfe Campys ravished her savagely. So intense was his dedication, he made her scream as she climaxed. For a long time he held down her captive arms as he lay upon her. Then ravaged her again with savage thrusts as though from some store of frustrated potency long held in check. At the end they lay together on the floor, exhausted.

"There, damn you, marry me now."

Glynis did not answer. She lay in a strange limbo, satiated. Longing only for peace. Had he put his arms around her at that moment she might have said yes. But he did not reach out. Instead, he got heavily to his feet, tidied himself, and resumed his chair.

"That was probably the best either of us will ever know," he said accusingly.

"Yes."

"But you still prefer the cell?"

"No, I don't." She shook away the sleep and the peace and the longing. "I think I'd do almost anything to avoid going back to that beastly little place behind bars." She sighed heavily. "Look, Rolfe, you know and I know: if you're mean and cruel enough to me I'll break down and say yes to anything. You could take that riding crop and do it to me now, I expect."

"I tried that once before. Right at the start."

She had actually forgotten. But it was so. Would her will be less now than it had been when he had whipped her into unconsciousness! Probably not! Then it had been shock giving her oblivion. The darkness would be harder to come by now. She might never reach it. She tried a compulsively recurring theme.

"Rolfe, take me as a slave. It's what you really want much the best. You like seeing me kneeling here on the floor. I can tell."

"Hell, girl, what man wouldn't like it! I told you: you're magnificent."

"I'll be a good slave to you. I promise." She grinned impishly. "There, that was a good Victorian pledge. Besides, surely this last hour or so must have proved something."

"It could prove you a consummate actress."

"You don't really believe that." She gazed up at him steadily. "And anyway, you can't lose. If I'm not a good slave to you there's always the whip and the cell. One or the other, or both, would always bring me to heel."

"Dammit, Glynis, have you got a streak of masochism?"

"You know I haven't."

"Sister Amaldis told me she thinks you get hot pants when you're thrashed. There was that classroom."

Glynis could not stem the blush. It flooded down to her neck. "That is part of what I said thank you for," she admitted slowly. "You have taught me things. Things I didn't know about myself! Things I once would never have believed. That's one of them. I'm ashamed of the way I reacted that day. I can think of reasons but they're just surmise - all those girls . . . !"

"Why be ashamed?"

Glynis grinned wryly. "Okay, so I'm not ashamed. I'm not really. I suppose that's my real attitude. But don't think I get horny every time I'm thrashed. I don't. You just thrashed me and I didn't."

"Want to bet?" He was laughing at her. "All right then! So what!"

"I'll thrash you again to test the theory."

"Thank you. Right now, sir?"

"Not immediately. Go and get us both another drink." Glynis Woodhaye took their glasses to the bar and was strangely happy.

*  *  *


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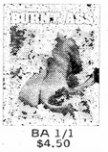
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