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DIANA



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Diana

by F. E. Campbell

Chapter One

The Cheerful Pain

It was variously referred to by the clientele as The Nunnery, the House, or The House on the Point. The Sisters had, from the first, named it The Citadel. Its architecture was Moorish, as befitted the climate. The girls spoke of it as "The House". According to their backgrounds and temperaments they saw it as a holiday resort, a haven or a prison. Diana had known at the start it was a prison for sure. But now she no longer possessed any clear certainty about the place: other than the knowledge that if she could escape its walls she would still do so.

Kneeling on the rug, as the girls must do in the presence of one of the Sisters, she looked up at a pair of kindly gray eyes, and tried to answer a question. "Yes, I suppose I'm happy, Sister Nona. But… but—"

"That 'but' would be an amendment to such a statement from any woman anywhere, child."

"Yes, I suppose so." Diana surveyed the disillusionments of

womanhood and supposed all of them were short changed. “But, Sister Nona, I’m not a child, I’m twenty seven.”

“We have all been twenty-seven, dear.”

“Yes, of course.” Diana was careful now never to be too contentious with a Sister. She was here to be punished, there was no need to ask for extra stripes. “But I wish I’d been ‘taken’ when I was younger.”

“Let me see your bottom.”

Diana did a reverse bend and blushed, then winced as interested fingers traced the lines of her new weals. She was never short of whipmarks but the others were a week old and were beginning to fade. Perhaps, a year from now, her skin would be without blemish, but this she doubted… there were always the clients!

“They are quite beautiful, Diana, your flesh etches exquisitely. You may kneel again.”

Diana sat back on her heels, her cuffed hands resting demurely in her lap. Her seat burned, soon it would burn a great deal worse. She kept her tone quietly respectful. “Sister, I earned punishment because of Mr. Florenza. Do you think I could be excused from servicing him in the future?”

“Certainly not, Diana. All the girls take the rough with the smooth. We’d be in a fine old pickle if we catered to your antipathies. I know you dislike anything pertaining to the

anus, but there are more difficult assignments. At this moment April is looking after Mr. Silvers, and you know what he wants!"

Diana knew, she also knew April. "But April likes it, Sister! I think April likes everything we do here, she and Tina."

"And I expect you think they are the only kind of girls the citadel should have. But there you're wrong. The client senses the resistance in you, he sees your whipmarks. You give him something April and Tina cannot: the sense of conquering, of possession against your will. Oh, and by the way and speaking of clients, I don't want you falling in love with that nice young Mr. Farrell. I've noticed your face after you've spent time with him. Falling in love always leads to trouble for the girl, I mean. We can't stop the men falling in love with you, and this doesn't matter much because the citadel allows them to work out their fantasies with the actual girl they are enamored of, this is our service."

"Mr. Farrell wants to buy me, Sister."

Sister Nona pursed her lips. "There, you see! You must have given him encouragement. Mr. Farrell cannot possibly afford you."

"But girls are sold, Sister Nona, you've told me—?"

"Only in cases where the girl is in some way unsatisfactory to The Citadel, even then the sum is enormous. We like you and have faith in your future here. The sum required for

your purchase would stagger Mr. Farrell's wildest imaginings."

"How much is it, Sister?"

"That is not for you to know but it's in excess of half a million, it could well be in excess of a full million—you have a quality...! But I can tell you are thinking of it in romantic terms of a ransom, and this you must not do, it only gets you and the client disturbed." Sister Nona smiled archly. "Don't look so forlorn. Many a Victorian maiden would have been thankful for the delicious intimacies The Citadel enables you to enjoy with this young man. If he waltzed you off and married you he could give you no more carnal delights than the two of you wallow in when he purchases a session."

Diana flushed. The Sisters knew everything. It was like being a goldfish in a bowl. There was no use allowing her feelings for Mr. Farrell to get herself whipped. Compliantly, she agreed, "Yes, Sister Nona, I know you're right. I'm sorry. It's so easy to be silly—"

"That's my girl! You're more sensible than you think you are. Now, as a reward, I'll let you take your punishment and, as you said, get it over with—I expect you have chores?"

"Yes, Sister—and thank you." Diana paused awkwardly. "Do you wish to fasten me?"

“I think not. It’s only six strokes, dear, and you’ve gained such control since that first time I caned you.” Diana arranged her nudity in the shaming posture of punishment. These six would hurt shockingly and she would prefer to be tied or strapped so she could not move. It was much easier that way because she could vent her agony against her bonds. But this way she would have to grit her teeth against the need to writhe and clutch her wounds with comforting hands. Any serious deviation from the approved pose would earn additional strokes. Six could easily become ten or twelve if a girl succumbed to the demands of her bruised flesh. She tried hard not to look back to see the cane and how close the Sister was to striking the first blow.

“Not your thighs today, dear. Now, hold tight!”

“Thank you, Sister.”

The cuts were every bit as bad as Diana expected. Inevitably some tapped each other and were shrinkingly abominable. It was hard to believe her stretched skin could remain intact as it was sliced again and again. But, over and over, she told herself: “Six, it’s only six!", biting hard to allow only the smallest sounds of anguish to escape while her hips weaved within that small latitude The Citadel considered acceptable. Ruefully, she recalled her first caning without the comfort of bonds. She had disgraced herself appallingly and ended up with thirteen strokes instead of

the six to which she had been sentenced. Unless a girl had been really bad the punishment was always six, it was a Citadel tradition.

“There, Diana, another of the punishments you worry about. It’s over and done with.”

Sobbing, the punished girl threw her nakedness at the feet of the smiling Sister and buried her face in the folds of fabric while she clutched Sister Nona’s thighs in a terrible need of human contact. Choking out her broken “Thank you, oh, thank you!” she secretly knew her gratitude was for the cessation of pain rather than for the infliction of the pain itself.

“Feel better, child?”

“Yes, yes, yes! Oh, Sister…!”

It was always the same, an involuntary flood of love for whichever of the Sisters who had punished her: a great thankfulness. Sister Nona’s fingers caressed her hair and patted a wet cheek. When Diana’s sobs died she was raised to her feet and turned about for the inspection and approval of her flaming bottom, the weals were gently patted and she was sent on her way to perform the tasks she shared with all the girls. The Citadel did not believe in idle hands.

Phoebe was already busy with the vegetables. She was grateful for help and more grateful for company. Phoebe

was very new to The Citadel and very young. She lived in a constant state of drama.

“You’ve been whipped, Diana. Poor darling, look at your bottom!”

“It was only eight with the cane, Phoebe.”

“But such marks… jeepers!”

Diana glowed. Phoebe’s continuing astonishments about The Citadel gave her a pleasant feeling of seniority. Phoebe’s skin was as well striped as her own, but the youngster was still being strapped tight for her corrections. She had yet to face the agony of keeping still to receive them. Her admiration for the older girls was as effervescent as her naïveté.

“Diana, we’re certain to be rescued, aren’t we? We’ve all been kidnapped… the police are bound to find us—won’t they?”

“Don’t count on it, Phoebe. I’ve given up hoping. This place has been here a long time.”

“Why do they keep you handcuffed, Diana?”

“I think it’s because I’m older. They think I need reminding of what I now am.”

“But, Diana, what are we?”

“Expensive whores.”

Phoebe was unabashed. “I asked about that, but they said I was far more than that. They told me what I have to do is a sort of therapy for the clients—Darling, isn’t it difficult to do things while you’re handcuffed?”

“Not really. I’ve got used to it. See, I can peel potatoes as well as you can.”

Phoebe giggled. “Everything’s crazy. I just can’t get used to being naked all the time and having my pussy showing.” She giggled again. “I don’t mind, not really, and I don’t mind being screwed. But all those other things…! Jeepers, some of these guys are kooks!”

“Don’t let anyone hear you say that.”

“I will so! The things they ask me to do—! I don’t care how the Sisters punish me!”

Diana sighed. This nymphet might have few inhibitions but the ones she had would earn her a lot of pain. It would be compassionate to make her understand how things were. But that was impossible. Diana remembered her own first days and weeks and the punishments that seemed to merge one with another. “We all say what you’ve just said, Phoebe,” she assured wearily. “But they break us down. They do all sorts of things to a girl besides whipping her.”

“They chain us in a dungeon, don’t they, and leave us there until we promise to behave?”

“Yes. But that’s not the worst. Don’t fight them more than you have to, Phoebe.”

Diana remembered the Rack. She would not tell Phoebe about the Rack, it was too awful. When the Sisters had first stretched her on it she had been sure everything was all over. But it had not even started. Her belly was concave and her breasts almost flat above the stark outline of her ribcage when they started to tell her what they could do with the hateful thing, and what would be required of her when she was taken out of its embrace. They had stood, gravely, surveying her stretched nakedness, their hands exploring and testing for tension. When they turned the wheel again she had been convinced of broken bones and torn tendons. But carefully, notch by notch, they had tautened her to the ultimate stretch in which she still remained whole. Then they had gone away, leaving her with wrists and ankles screaming in the straps and her whole being in deadly fear. She had been suspended like that for an hour, resting on nothing but air, held straight and flat by the inexorable tractioning of wrists and ankles. Beside her, the controlling wheel mocked, resting on its ratchet, ready for one more turn… or for release. But she could not touch it. She had been unable to touch anything. At the end of thirty minutes the Sisters had visited briefly to listen to her promises and pleadings. Solemnly, they explained about her intractability and how it was best for her to remain as she was for the full hour. After they had gone she screamed

and screamed, but no one came…!

“Do they enjoy hurting us, Diana? I say, should I throw this one away?”

“Yes, it’s bad. I think they get a little amusement out of how we behave when we’re being whipped. But I don’t believe they like doing the more severe things. They just see them as something we need and which they have to do.”

“But, Diana, don’t you or any of the other girls ever try to escape? They won’t talk to me about it?”

“We can’t escape, and they’re frightened. Look around every chance you get, and you’ll never find a window that isn’t barred or a door that isn’t locked—and we can be punished for even talking about escape. We’re not supposed to think about it. After you’ve been here awhile, you don’t.”

Phoebe tittered. “I’ll make one of the clients fall in love with me.” She asserted cheerfully. “Then he’ll get me out of here.”

There was a delightful resilience about Phoebe Diana envied. The youngsters would endure the Citadel’s training and emerge unscathed. But she gave warning. “You can forget that one too, Phoebe, all the clients have been warned. Most of them will report you if you really plague them for help. Then you’re horribly punished. Trying to escape is the worst crime we can commit. They won’t stand for it.”

“That means they’re scared,” Phoebe said shrewdly. “If they can keep all us girls frightened they’ve got a cinch.”

Diana sighed. It seemed every girl had to learn for herself, and she had not been any wiser than the rest. She recalled the escape attempt a week after her ’taking’. The escapee had been caught and publicly punished for all to see. No girl was allowed to NOT see. They were all paraded in front of and around the moaning nakedness of a girl who had broken the Code. The inflictions had, cleverly, been made to last several days without injury. The maiden who suffered them was now no different from any other of the Citadel’s inventory, neither more or less happy than her companions. Girls had a remarkable capacity to adjust.

“Don’t try it, Phoebe. What they do to you is too awful.”

“See, you’re scared too. I say, Diana, did you know they’ve got Felicia down in the vault room?” Phoebe giggled. “She slapped that horrible Mr. Giroux, and I don’t blame her. But now she’s being punished. Why don’t you go and visit, she’s all alone down there.”

The vault room was only half below ground level. It was a large and attractive chamber of ancient stone, a vaulted ceiling and numerous smooth stone pillars which may have been needed to support the masonry above, but which The Citadel used for the punishment of delinquent damsels. A day in the vault room was by no means the worst penalty a girl might earn. But to be tied exceedingly

tightly to one of the pillars for a whole day was not much fun either. Sometimes the vault room held several doleful young ladies, all suffering from ropes too deeply embedded in their flesh and from the gags which denied the solace of communication. Visitors were encouraged, for it was most shaming for a girl to be viewed in such naked helplessness with all her femininity accentuated by strictures that bulged breasts out and tugged tummies in. The Sisters spoke of the vault room as a place of quiet meditation, but the girls bound to the pillars thought of little else than how they were hurting.

Felicia cocked a doleful eyebrow and wrinkled her nose in greeting. The punishment gag prevented her enjoying the visit as she might have done. Diana had been tied to a pillar herself more than once so knew what it was like. Sympathetically she noted the unkind cords cutting Felicia's crotch on each side of the swollen labia beneath the pubic patch, and the pouting nipples on engorged breasts so strictured above and below their curves as to make breathing a painful necessity. It was all very familiar.

Diana would have been tempted to take a chance and remove Felicia's gag had not the Sisters foreseen this truant compassion and circumvented it by a padlock at the nape of Felicia's neck. The girls all found that padlock the final frustration in a doleful day. Diana defeated the silence as best she could by a kiss and a cheerful but one sided conversation as she played with Felicia's nipples. This was a

tantalizing pleasure for the prisoner but the only gift a visitor could give.

Diana dared not stay long. One more kiss and a pat on two flint hard nipples before she fled to groom herself for Mr. Swarthout's appointment, now only twenty-five minutes distant. A girl had to be immaculate and well composed as she knelt in submission to the man who would open the door of the room booked for his pleasure. The Citadel's standards of deportment at such times were extremely high.

She did not dislike Mr. Swarthout. He was a nondescript type who was usually uncertain of what he required of a girl. He was always polite and sometimes unintentionally cruel. Diana suspected he was torn between a wish to whip a girl's nakedness for an hour at a time or to enjoy an uninhibited carnal romp in bed. The hour's steady whipping was forbidden by the Citadel's Code, and he felt the fun in bed far too ordinary to justify a visit to the Citadel and the high cost of their girls. However, he had an unfailing appreciation of feminine nudity, especially when it was fastened uncomfortably, and a little boy's prurient curiosity about its component parts.

"Good afternoon. Diana, you are exquisite as usual."

"Thank you, Sir. I'm glad you like me."

The Citadel approved the title of 'Sir'. It implied respect

without possession. The girls were instructed to make a warm response to male enthusiasm. With this edict in mind, Diana brightly added: “I hope you’ve thought of something really bad to do to me today?”

“Well, not really… and you’re only joking, I’m sure.” Mr. Swarthout patted her submissive head. “But, to start, I think I’d like you to stand to attention with your hands clasped behind your neck. Oh yes, and your feet well apart please.”

If it was not for his hands, Mr. Swarthout could have been a voyeur, but he enjoyed the prelude of mauling the girl’s breasts and crotch. Diana stood rigidly as directed while he played out this overture to the main event. She had come to feel sorry for men in their eternal need to see and to re-assure themselves about female nakedness: they feasted on it with a terrible hunger.

“What do you say to a little suspension, Diana, before we… Well, just to start out with?”

“Of course, Sir, if that would give you pleasure.”

“You always give me pleasure. You are a very beautiful girl.”

She turned to get the soft wide straps for her wrists. Every room was completely equipped for a girl’s discomfort. But Mr. Swarthout’s exclamation halted her steps. “Great heaven, girl who did that to your bottom?”

“One of the Sisters, Sir. I was punished for bad behavior.”

“But it’s so—?”

“Yes, it’s very fresh, Sir. I was caned only an hour ago. It hurt terribly but I know I deserved it.”

“You girls…!” Mr. Swarthout shook his head in simulated amazement at such submission. “Now I’ll feel a brute if I whip your bottom on top of those marvelous stripes.”

“There are only eight of them, Sir, and my back has not been whipped recently. I hope you won’t whip me but if you want to I’m all here.”

“And very enticing too,” Mr. Swarthout agreed cordially. “But those handcuffs…? I’ll have to take them off.”

“Of course, Sir, that’s as you wish. But please lock them on me again when you leave.”

“Why do they put ’em on you anyway?”

“I’m not sure, Sir. I think they’re supposed to symbolize something I mustn’t forget. Being handcuffed all the time tells me I’m not a free girl… I never will be again.” She held out her linked hands, “I expect you have a key?”

Mr. Swarthout produced a key and fumbled with it. Any contact with female flesh caused him to breathe heavily, he was doing so now. “That’s why I always ask for you, Diana, you’re so sensible. Teenagers are a pain in the ass. Shall I

buckle the wristlets or would you like to?"

"You can get them tighter than I can, Mr. Swarthout, and tight is best for suspension."

"Wonderful girl!" Mr. Swarthout tugged and puffed. "I wish I was wealthy enough to purchase you. I'm damn sorry I can't."

"I'm sorry too, Sir."

Diana was not sorry at all. A life catering to Mr. Swarthout's erotic notions would be less satisfying than the Citadel itself. The Citadel did offer certain advantages… But a pixie impulse prompted her to ask: "Would you marry me, Sir, or keep me as a slave?"

"Well, I've never thought about that. Which would you prefer?"

"Every girl wants to be married, Sir."

"Yes, I suppose they do. But wives don't play games, at least the one I had once never would."

"I think I'd see it as an obligation, Sir. We could go out and around normally but when we came home I'd revert and you could do what you liked with me."

Mt. Swarthout was obviously seeing delectable visions. He even paused in the buckling of Diana's willing wrists. "Like I said, you're something special, Diana. I wonder if I

couldn't make a deal for you. I could manage a hundred thousand."

"One of the Sisters told me they could get many times that for me, it's all so impossible."

"It's not impossible at all. There's so damn much money around. If I had a spare million I'd grab you quick."

Diana sighed inwardly. To be sold to the right man would be every girl's dream, a dream with little hope of ever coming true. But Mr. Swarthout was not the right man. By the time he got around to the act of love he was always so excited by his small cruelties there was no satisfaction left for either of them. She clenched her teeth momentarily as the rope lifted her arms and then her toes left he floor.

"It must be tantalizing for you, dear, if your big toe is only an inch off the rug, far more so than if I raised you way up?"

"Yes, Sir, you think things out so cleverly."

"It's more intimate and you're just right to whip."

Diana wished he wouldn't talk about the whip, it was bad enough when it actually happened. She knew this to be one of the bad, bad moments. To be hung by her wrists demoralized a girl especially since she was stark naked. It stretched her it hurt her wrists and arms and shoulders with a steady venomous hurt, and it exposed her, it ex-

posed her cruelly. The men always told her how beautiful she was, hanging like this, but she could not see herself so did not know. All she visualized was a slender slip of female heavily loaded with breasts, buttocks and pubic hair.

“Would you like your feet separated by the spreader bar, Diana, or would you prefer to arrange them yourself?”

“I’ll spread them apart for you, Sir. I don’t mind.”

It was true, she had ceased to mind. At the start of her slavery the male clutchings and pokings had invoked only loathing and resistance. But the punishments had corrected that, and Diana finally conceded that the erotic stimulus generated by even the most crass caress was a welcome interlude in a feminine world. She had learned that these absurd men deemed it a macho obligation to excite a girl and bring her to climax at least once during the time he spent with her. The girls had been taught to writhe and moan in a flattering response. This manual excitation was apart from any more normal act of copulation they might essay as a grand finale before they went home. Dutifully, Diana opened her thighs in invitation to Mr. Swarthout’s eager hand. Even this small movement made suspension hurt a little more but that was the name of the game.

Conversation languished under Mr. Swarthout’s frictioning palm and questing fingertip. He was uncertain where Diana’s clitoris should be, so covered all the ground just to

make sure. Her pantings, which had been simulated at the start soon became real. Her climax was sufficiently dramatic to appease any anxious male ego. Obediently, she sucked her own secretions from a masculine finger.

“You respond so beautifully, Diana.”

“Thank you, Sir. And thank you for giving me pleasure.”

This was a “Submissive Session”. The Citadel had names for everything. Mr. Swarthout liked his girl to be obedient and grateful for whatever pain he chose to give her. Other clients wanted the girl to resist all the way so as to excuse them in subduing her by force. Others preferred a stream of tears and pleadings. Punishments had taught Diana all the techniques. A rapport with Mr. Swarthout was easily achieved.

“I think I’ll hang you up like this every time I come, dear girl, it emphasizes everything you have. It’s much the best way to have a girl.”

Diana longed to scream. Mentally, she gauged the kick to impact her heel in Mr. Swarthout’s solar-plexus. But the punishments had cured her of such feminine protests. It was best to smile.

“Yes, Sir. It excites me to know how helpless I am and the way you can do anything you like with me. I’m lucky it’s you.”

“You really mean that.” Mr. Swarthout oozed male conceit. “I’m going to whip you, of course, but it won’t be too hard, not more than you can bear. I’m becoming very fond of you.”

Diana set her best sweet little girl smile on her face and remembered the Citadel dictum that the longer you could keep a client happily talking the less time he would have left in which to give you pain with the whip and all the gadgets the men were forever trying out on shrinking female flesh. “And I think you’re nice too.” She agreed. “When do you want to start whipping me?”

This was another rule. If you made it clear you did not want to be whipped, then that was the first thing they would do. But if you breathlessly implored this male attention it satisfied their ego to delay the stripes on and on to keep you in suspense. Sometimes they did not whip you at all. Men were babies to be mothered.

“No hurry, dear. I’m enjoying you the way you are. I think it says little for a man if all he wants to do is whale away at a girl’s body and leave her all marked up.”

Diana felt things were progressing well. No whip, not yet, and no gadgets or outrageous bindings to contort her into a painful bundle. Most of the clients were not what the Citadel called “Whip Oriented”, and this was just as well for the girl’s skins had only just so much space for weals. But Diana knew this did not mean they hurt you less. Often

they hurt you more, and made you do beastly things besides The Citadel did not crater to men in search of a routine coupling. They saw 'The Act' as messy, vulgar, and not quite respectable. To them, the men who sought no more were unimaginative clods.

"That's what I admire about you, Sir, such a mature judgment."

Mr. Swarthout was busy sucking and biting her nipples so did not reply. One arm was round the bare back of the suspended nudity, his other hand played reverently with her pubic hair, his mouth went from breast to breast with strict impartiality.

"Oh, Mr. Swarthout, that's so wonderful and makes me feel so helpless! Oh… oh… oh!"

"You enjoy that, don't you, dear."

"You're so good at it, Sir. You've got me all… all—and I'm so helpless and can't do a thing."

Mr. Swarthout patted the hard taut muscles of her belly and wiped his chin and Diana's left nipple with a thoughtful hand, "I suppose the time's getting on, and I don't like whipping you in a hurry. I always think a good pause between strokes keeps you in suspense more and it gives us a chance to talk."

Diana watched Mr. Swarthout select the whip by which her

skin would be marked. It was a moment from which she always got a thrill of fear. No whip was kind, and it seemed silly to feel relief about any one of them, but Mr. Swarthout's choice would hurt her less than most. She sighed thankfully as she said, "You're always very kind."

Mr. Swarthout played pleasurably with the supple thong while his eyes devoured the triced up nudity which, for this little time, was entirely his, he was aware of blessedness, privilege and good fortune. There were men who would give years of their life to stand where he stood now. "I'm a self made man," he said slowly, "and I've never ceased to wonder about this place and about you… When I was twenty I didn't rate, but I'd have given anything I had —! I'm middle aged now… I think a man always resents what he didn't get when he was young."

"I wouldn't worry, Sir. Isn't it good, the way you and I are now? I've never thought of your age—don't you feel lucky about the Citadel, it gives you so much?"

"It's given me you." Mr. Swarthout slashed the whip across Diana's bare shoulders in a sudden venting of whatever emotion he was trying to express. "That one was harder than I intended." He apologized. "I won't keep hitting you that hard."

"I'm sorry I yelped, Sir. It really did hurt. You caught me by surprise."

“Nicked you under the armpit too, didn’t I! A girl’s tender there… I think it’s wonderful the way your legs flash to express your pain.”

“I’m sorry, Sir, I didn’t mean to—”

“No, don’t be sorry! You’re just too beautiful when I whip you, I don’t suppose I can ever tell you how heartbreakingly lovely you are. It’s why a man has to be a gentleman I could whip you forever.”

“Thank you, Sir. Like I said, I’m glad it’s you.”

He struck her again, etching a second red line across her back below the first. Solicitously, he asked: “Should I leave your bottom alone this time? I mean, its just been…?”

“Yes, it’s just been caned, Sir. But I think you’d enjoy a few strokes, so I think you should.”

Diana felt awkward, now, about kicking with her feet to assuage her pain. But it honestly helped, so she compromised by making the action below her hips as sinuous and lascivious as she could manage. She was grateful to Mr. Swarthout for the second blow, it was definitely less cruel than the first. She managed a belated: “Thank you, Mr. Swarthout.”

“Perhaps, instead of your bottom, there is something we haven’t done—up between your legs?”

The hanging girl caught her breath. She had wondered

how long it would take Mr. Swarthout to discover this normally forbidden delight. But, with her the Citadel did not forbid. She was adult and should be able to cope. Her labia was plump enough to accept the sear of the thong, her pubic area fully developed and well bushed. She had no grounds on which to protest but she did venture: “It’s an awful sort of pain in there, Sir. But if you’d like me to I’ll raise up one of my legs to give you access?”

“One leg? Is that the best way?”

“Yes, Sir, one leg at a time. You’ll see. You can whip me from different sides or even from the front.”

Mr. Swarthout watched in fascination as Diana demonstrated with first one leg and then the other. He could not know the fearful cringe of her suspenseful flesh, all he saw was beauty and a revelation of the contour’s of a girl’s cunt such as he had never known. He choked down a wave of almost unbearable desire, and asked huskily: “It’s something I want to do, Diana… terribly. You won’t think less of me?”

“Of course not, Sir. I’m just a girl getting whipped. But please tell me when to lift my leg?”

“I think now, please—?”

It was not easy. But Diana had been trained, the punishments had conditioned her. To raise her leg up and out to reveal in sweet nakedness her ultimate feminine secret so that it might be whipped to please a man was the thing she

wanted least to do. But, straining and gritting her teeth, she opened and revealed her crotch in contours she could suspect but could not see. The resulting kiss of fire drew from her dry lips a fresh wail of desolation more pitiful than Mr. Swarthout was accustomed to from his favorite flesh. His distress was real.

“I say… Diana, I’m sorry. Was it that bad?”

She did not hear. She was too busy straining at her straps and flailing with her feet as the pain burrowed deep. She envisioned her sex as cut and bleeding but was unable to look. Uncaring, she made her keening sounds of female anguish enough to cause Mr. Swarthout’s cup of sexuality to overflow. He was genuinely perturbed.

“Diana… please? I had no idea—?”

“It’s all right!” Her declaration was almost curt to stem his male concern. “I… I’m… Oh, I’m sorry! It’s just I’ve never been cut with a whip in exactly that way before. The pain was… Well, maybe it was shock too. Please forgive me, Sir.” She writhed for more moments in silence, her toes reaching for, but never finding, the floor so cruelly close. Piteously, she asked: “Would you like me to raise my other leg now?”

“Good heavens, no!”

“I think I should, Sir. If you don’t mark me each side it will only bother you, and the Sisters may think I complained.”

“No. Really, dear, you mustn’t—”

Deliberately, and watching Mr. Swarthout’s face, Diana raised her other leg, she raised it high and far, and for a few moments knew herself the stronger of the two of them. The man who was whipping her was completely under her spell.

“Whip my cunt once more, Mr. Swarthout.”

He obeyed. It was unthinkable that he should not. The streaking lash was pure venom: fire and hot iron and the cruelty of ice. Diana gave a repeat of the previous stroke. It was simple.

The man with the whip stared in reverent awe, much as Pygmalion must have stared at Galatea as his marble came to life. But this time there was no apology, only gratitude for a beauty most men could never behold. He drank it to the full, extracting every drop of this quintessence of the female until Diana’s struggles ended and she hung limp and glistening with sweat in the nude helplessness he had ordained.

“I shan’t hit you there again.” Mr. Swarthout said it with conviction. Then, under the compulsion of a flaring lust, added: “Certainly not today.”

“Thank you, Sir.” But she too was under the need of an addendum, so added: “I’m glad we did it. I think you needed to.”

It was a victory of sorts. Diana saw it as that. She had performed well. True, it was not the first time her crotch and her sex had been lashed. But Mr. Swarthout's cuts into her private place had hurt more than others, she did not know why and it did not matter. Now it was over and her belly was afire with an outrageous demand for sex. She wondered if Mr. Swarthout would lower her nakedness and possess it on the spot. She wished he would. She had received but few strokes and if she was to be properly whipped she had far to go.

"It was only two strokes, but I shall not whip your bottom today, Diana." It was the ultimate magnanimity.

"Thank you, Sir. I really am grateful."

"I will whip only your back, dear."

Again, the impulse to scream. To have to say a polite 'thank you' for having her naked back whipped! But this was the Citadel, and the Citadel's whips were far more escoriating than the one currently in use by Mr. Swarthout. "That will be nice, Sir," Diana said humbly, and felt a total idiot.

"I can't help feeling jealous about you, Diana." Mr. Swarthout took careful aim and circled his thong around the suspended waist with what he would have described as a 'moderate snap'. His eyes were hot as he watched the naked twist and sway of the helpless girl and heard the controlled exhalations of her breath. "I don't want any

other man doing this to you."

"I don't want it either, Mr. Swarthout. But I have to do what I'm told."

"Yes, of course, but I'm wondering if I can't make some sort of offer, an arrangement with the management?"

"You could ask one of the Sisters, Sir."

Mr. Swarthout cut a red line across the base of Diana's spine. It came close to the highest of the welts left by Sister Nona's cane, but blossomed into a quite different streak of anguish which, with a glow of proprietary pride, he considered far more aesthetic. "Am I hurting you badly, Diana?" he inquired cheerfully.

"Yes, quite a lot, Sir. I'm sorry I can't keep still."

"No, don't be sorry. Your motions are delightful." Mr. Swarthout made a leisurely circle of the hanging nakedness it was his privilege to whip. "I'd judge the marks you're getting to be only the three or four day kind. You'll have those purple cane ridges on your bottom a lot longer. Have you ever been bastinadoed?"

Diana's tummy curled. Always there was one more pain lurking. "The soles of my feet haven't been whipped, Sir." She informed brightly. "But it was done to some of the girls before I came. But it stops them walking…!"

The conversation and the whip continued on…

Chapter Two

The Novice

Sister Angela was never easily surprised. She watched the large denomination bills fall one by one on the polished surface of her desk with no more than alert suspicion. Her mild query left the Client relations surface unruffled.

“But, Miss Winton, have you not found our sessions adequate? You have favored us twice, I believe?”

Gloria patted down a final strip of currency and closed her bag. “The sessions were wonderful.” She assured briskly. “And this money… I’m not trying to be vulgar or offer a bribe. It’s just a gesture. It’s one most people respect.”

Sister Angela nodded slowly. These youthful enthusiasms made her feel older than she was. “The Citadel has never entered into such an arrangement.” She said tersely. “And as for the two years… you’d condemn yourself bitterly.”

“It’s something I want, something I can afford.”

Sister Angela took a second look. The girl had a quality, she was undeniably marketable. The names of a dozen men came easily to mind. Cautiously, she admitted, “Your emo-

tional tendencies are not unknown to us… Gloria. There are a pair of girls already on our staff. But they did not come to us voluntarily."

"Tina and April. I know. You kidnapped them."

Sister Angela enjoyed a brief vision of this brash and wealthy maiden stripped and hanging by her thumbs. Girls were such packages of impulse…! If you did not thrash them regularly they wore you out. "Ah, yes. You enjoyed them in a session, I recall. They are immensely popular."

"I would be too."

The girl was correct. Gloria Winton radiated the kind of sexuality men valued most, a quality hard to define but immensely valuable. Sister Angela quenched a startled protest, then watched in amusement as the nubile suppliant flung aside her clothes.

"You are most adequately beautiful, my dear."

In total self possession, Gloria Winton did a pirouette to bring herself into half profile, hands at the nape of her neck, hair cascading, breasts impudently pointing. Her eyes, coming to rest on Sister Angela's impassive features, sparkled in mischief. "I'm only twenty-two, Sister. I'll look like this a long time yet."

"You bear faint whip marks?"

"They happened the last time I was here."

“Yet I cannot see you as a masochist.”

“I think that’s just a name, Sister. I don’t have a name for what I am. I’m just Me.”

“You are asking for two years of imprisonment, without hope of escape, and for the pains and agonies implicit in submission.” Sister Angela examined the posing nude, her tone was dry. “You have shown nothing of the submissive to me. In fact, Miss Winton, you come through as an assertive young woman with money.”

The change was indefinable, the grace with which it was executed was superb. With a melting fluidity the lovely nakedness achieved a breathtaking metamorphosis to leave the watching woman awestruck as she gazed down at a kneeling maiden whose nudity was partly hidden by her hair, whose hands rested demurely upon her thighs, and whose head was bent in the sweetest of submissions.

“I am not free, Sister Angela. Please use me.”

The words were a husky whisper. They were followed by a deep silence, for there was no more to say. The woman looked down at the sweetest picture of submission she had ever seen; and was enthralled. After a long time the bowed nakedness whispered again.

“This is Me, Sister, the other was not.”

Sister Angela sighed, knowing herself captured by a beauty

she had rarely seen. Compassionately, she began the questions.

“Dear child, we are not really Sisters of anything. It is just a term we use.”

“I know, you’re the graduates.”

“No girl has ever escaped.”

“I know that too. It is one of my reasons.”

“The clients are often cruel. You’ll long to go home within the week.”

“And I won’t be able to! Why does that bother you, Sister?”

“Because I once wanted to go home. It was a long time ago.”

“I’ve thought about this.” The bowed head rose and gazed upon the troubled woman with feminine sympathy. “I’ve thought of trial runs or a month’s probation. But anything affecting the permanence or security of my imprisonment invalidates the whole thing. Don’t you see, Sister, it’s that which brings me here. I am offering myself to the Citadel because I know it will not let me go.”

“Child, there would be times when I would have to punish you.”

“Yes, I know. While I’m learning and adjusting.” The mischief was back at the corner of the lush young mouth.

“Spare the rod and spoil the girl! I won’t complain.”

“You would always be naked. We have a girl here who has worn handcuffs for seven months.”

The young eyes sparkled. “Sister, you are tempting me.”

“You are not a nobody. You are Gloria Winton. You cannot easily disappear.”

“You know I can, Sister. All the Citadel girls have disappeared. You have… arranged things. I have already disposed of myself. If loose ends crop up I’m sure you’ll cope with them for me.”

Sister Angela nodded. The Citadel was highly experienced with loose ends. This exquisitely submissive girl thing could easily vanish. It was in Sister Angela’s heart to further admonish and warn and, if possible, dissuade. But there was a serenity about Gloria Winton that made quibbling seem hypocritical. Assessing possibilities, she asked, very simply, “When?”

“Now. This moment.”

Sister Angela pressed a button.

The girl who answered was naked, clothed only in handcuffs which she wore with the same grace as nudity itself. She knelt to receive instruction.

“Diana, this is Gloria. Her surname was Winton, we can

dispense with it."

The kneeling girls assessed each other. Diana said a cheerful: "Hello, Gloria, welcome to The Citadel."

"She is here at her own wish, Diana. I am passing her to you because you are older than the others. You can give her the tour and have coffee or whatever you want while you talk. You must give her a sensible and sympathetic explanation of how we live."

"Yes, Sister Angela. Oh… I have an appointment in two hours?"

"That gives you ample time, dear. I think it would be nice if you take Gloria into session with you. The client should be pleased with an extra girl. If he is not, you can have him use his key and Gloria can find her way back to me."

"His key, Sister?"

"Yes. Get up, both of you. Diana, your hands—"

Gloria, trembling from extremes of emotion, watched Sister Angela unlock the cuff from an obedient right wrist. As in a trance, but knowing what to do, she proffered her own to see and to feel the shining steel bite it in an implacable circle of no escape. She asked no questions, she was adrift on a tide she had no wish to stem. The girl to whom she was linked was watching her in sideways amusement.

"There, the two of you can run along. Have fun." Sister An-

gela also was amused. She patted Gloria's flushed cheek. "I think what you're doing is rash and unwise. If you want me to unlock that bracelet, I will. You can dress and go home."

"Oh, Sister...!" Gloria Winton made an instinctive move to embrace the woman who was being kind, but was foiled by the weight of Diana's hand and arm. She did her best with the freedom she still had, her voice was husky. "You know I won't. But thank you, thank you." She turned reluctantly away under the gentle compulsion of a tug upon her wrist.

Diana was grateful. It was a change, and the girl was a delight. The Citadel had inured her to shocks and insights. Gloria was no more an enigma than any other girl, there was no mystery to unravel. "This is one of the rooms where we get punished." She explained with a hint of laughter. "It's not all that grim...! Come, sit beside me on this bench—you can probably guess what it's used for."

Gloria Winton mentally cataloged the devices designed to confine a girl or give her pain. She was shivering in a strange ecstasy beyond control. She was giving and receiving a bombardment of vibrations with her guide. In puzzled delight, she lifted her right hand. "Why these handcuffs, Diana?"

Diana raised her own cuffed wrist wrinkling her nose ruefully at the silver band. "There isn't any why, not really." She said cautiously, "They're symbolic. They've kept them

on me all these months because I fought them a long time after I was 'taken'. They're decorative and a constant reminder of what I am. Locking our hands together is Sister Angela's way of telling you the same message. With her it's part whimsy."

"All the time always—your hands fastened together…?" Gloria examined a new concept, fascinated.

"The clients mostly unlock them for me. That way I do get to stretch my arms. But they only do it because they want to fix me some other way."

"I'm getting the most delicious sensations out of being handcuffed to you. Will they keep us?"

"Gosh no! The client's almost certain to separate us when we go into session. The guy's name is Sands, he isn't young any more and he's a quaint mixture of benevolent uncle and Torquemada. He's quite charming… really."

"You mean he may torture us?" Gloria was breathless.

"Oh sure, but you never know. One session he had me just pose in front of him with my handcuffs. He's got a thing about handcuffs. They've all got a thing about—something."

The new girl played with her prisoned hand, clenching it, splaying her fingers, shaking it to make the single link respond. "Do you mind…?"

“No, go ahead. Savor it. I know the feeling, I’ve played with my handcuffs for hours, never quite believing they won’t come off.”

“But they won’t, will they?” Gloria was almost anxious.

“Nothing the Citadel puts on a girl ever comes off.” The older girl grinned. “You have to hope that fire you’ve got burning between your legs doesn’t get dowsed.”

“But, haven’t you got one, the fire I mean? I’d have thought any girl—?”

Diana shrugged, she was always shamed and irritated by erotic response. “It happens to me,” she admitted. “Never the way I guess you have it, but sometimes when I’m whipped in certain ways or my nipples are being punished. Mostly it’s the guy… the one who’s hurting me.” She shook her linked hand in distaste. “And don’t ask me why men like to hurt girls. That’s the oldest question in the world.”

Gloria Winton giggled. “It’s because they find orgasms too short. They want more, much more.” Her attention wandered, “That’s a pillory over there, isn’t it—have you ever —?”

“Yeah, I’ve stood in that damn thing for hours and hours—”

“These men who pay, they do that to you?”

“Gosh, no. They don’t get in here. This is where the Citadel punishes its naughty girls. If you get to be locked in that

thing you won't like it a bit. After an hour you'll promise anything to get out."

"Hmmmmm… and there's the stocks for our feet and there's the bar with the straps to hang us up by… Diana, I suppose you think I'm crazy?"

"Yes."

"Jeepers, just like that!" Gloria mused, "I expect to be sorry sometimes… but I just can't help it." Her gaze became searching. "Look, there just have to be ways of escape if a girl really wanted out…?"

"No girl ever found one. But try. You'll get yourself punished horribly." Diana's voice softened. "Watch the clients, they tell on us. They're not knights errant, they're mostly middle aged, there's damn few tall dark and handsomes."

"But you must have been walking around free, just handcuffed, when Sister Angela called—and we've passed other girls on this tour, they weren't even handcuffed?"

"Oh sure, the run of the Citadel is ours. They can't keep us chained or locked up because they want us to do the work around the place. I was in the kitchen when Sister Angela buzzed. But we can't get outside the walls. Maybe that's why they call it The Citadel."

"They've got you all so frightened you don't even try."

"Yes, I suppose that's so. But don't talk about escape, it up-

sets me, and if you talk about it to the other girls the sisters will get to hear of it and they'll punish you. It's not that they're cruel, it's simply because escape is a word best forgotten once you're inside. It bothers everyone."

"Mmmmmm, I haven't noticed any girls being punished?"

"I didn't want to show you. Dammit… on your first day?"

"You're sweet." The sensuous novice twisted in embarrassment. "But would you mind? Is there actually?"

"There's probably one in the next room, there usually is."

"Could we…?"

Diana shrugged again. She stood up, shaking the linkage on their wrists. Laughingly, she warned: "You may be sorry —!"

The girl stood in a cage, a three foot diameter of heavy mesh coming to a rounded cone above her head. She was naked, she was gagged, her hands were tied behind her back, wrists crossed and corded tight. Around her neck she wore a heavy collar, wide enough to tilt her chin. The collar held four rings, from each of which a leash tethered her to the framework of the cage with a sufficient tension to forbid contact with the mesh. She simply stood there, her body and feet free but denied advance or retreat. She was as much a captive to the collar as to the cage. She could not speak but wriggled herself invitingly and grinned above

the gag.

Gloria stood entranced. What she beheld was beauty to fuel her fire. Sensing enchantment, Diana held out a permissive arm and allowed her prisoner time and motion to enjoy. The girl in the cage shrugged apologetically.

“She’s gorgeous!” Gloria whispered the accolade in shy wonder.

“She’s frustrated to death.” Diana reproved. “Don’t you see, Gloria, the poor darling can’t do anything.”

“Well, no. But she’s—the whole thing—it’s so beautiful.”

“From where we stand… Yes, it is.”

The caged girl flung her head from side to side to illustrate her tethered helplessness. She could reach the metal mesh only with her toes, the rest of her was denied contact.

“It’s bad enough to have to stand like that all day,” Diana continued. “You get so damn tired and bored…! But the real punishment is the visitors. We can’t touch her. She can’t cuddle against the cage so we could play with her. Before they thought up the collar a girl could thrust her nipples through the mesh and then get her pussy where a finger could reach. But now…! Just look at the poor kid! And the gag! We can talk but she can’t. If you ever get in there you’ll hate every minute, and there’ll be a lot of minutes.”

“No I won’t. I won’t hate it.” The girlish assertion was re-

verant in awe. “If I could change places with her I would, right now.”

“Gloria, don’t be silly. A couple of hours the way Terry is and your fire would be dead and you’d be wanting to cry.”

“Then I’d cry!”

“No you wouldn’t. You wouldn’t know who was going to walk in to look at you. You’d hate being seen tearstained and messy and not able to do anything about it because your hands were tied fast behind your back. Honest, Gloria —”

“Well, well, our voluntary recruit!”

Diana turned. “Sister Nanette…! Sister Angela instructed me to—”

“Yes, yes, my dear, I know all about it. How charmingly that handcuff joins you.” Sister Nanette beamed at Gloria’s startled attention. “I’d say you are one of the most lovely creatures we have ever possessed.”

“Thank you, Sister. I’m so… I’m—” A shy free hand sought to cover pubic hair but was, ashamedly, withdrawn.

“You are embarrassed, dear. Get used to us gradually. We’ll make a lot of allowances.” There came a wide smile. “I overheard your wish to be inside Terry’s cage. How very sweet!”

“I’m sure you all think I’m silly.” Gloria held up her pinioned wrist with Diana’s attached. “But, so far, I’m loving every moment.”

Sister Nanette’s smile was only faintly grim. “I’d put you in the cage, dear, I’m sure Terry wouldn’t mind, but you and Diana have an appointment with Mr. Sands quite soon now. So Terry will have to stand out her sentence. Have you ever been whipped dear?”

“Not… well, not seriously.”

“It is possible Mr. Sands may wish to whip you, new girls are always exciting. I am sure you will have quite a vogue before the leveling off. Are you mentally adjusted to the idea of being whipped on your bare skin?”

“Yes, I honestly believe I am.”

“The pain will come as a shock nonetheless. Diana can probably give you a few pointers. Diana, dear, what are Mr. Sands inclinations?”

“He’s a gadget man, Sister Nanette, and he loves to talk.”

“Hmmmmm, I never cared for gadgets, they are usually absurdly impractical.” The Sister’s lips pursed at distant memories. “But Mr. Sands is probably as good an introduction to The Citadel as any. Please remember that disrespect to a Client entails heavy punishment. Your status, now, is no different from any of our girls. You are not immune.”

Gloria watched authority depart. She could not deny an accelerated heartbeat. She raised an eyebrow at the girl to whom she was chained. “They all have an iron hand under the velvet glove, don’t they?” she mused. “They almost have to. Should I feel scared?”

“I always feel scared before a session.”

Gloria nodded. “It’s the not knowing, and because they’re men.” Suddenly she beheld a vista of the two years of sexual enslavement to which she had sentenced herself, and repressed a shudder. “Surely a girl can soften ’em up a bit by wiggling her breasts and bottom?”

“Try it, darling. It never did me much good. The more I stuck my tits out the more things they thought to do to them, and yours are so gorgeous!” Diana gently patted an ivory curve. “Come along and get your feet wet.”

Gloria Winton knew the fire between her thighs undiminished. The scary cold fingers on her spine could not quench its flame or the excitement of heart’s desire. The girl standing naked in the cage nodded and shrugged. Gloria smiled back, then turned to obey the tug upon her wrist.

“I am overwhelmed,” said Mr. Sands heartily. “Such a plethora of pulchritude! I am honored.”

Mr. Sands was obviously not overwhelmed at all. He was a cheery bustling type, blandly middle aged and polished smooth. About him was an air of neat brisk competence.

He was neither short nor tall. Diana always felt he would describe himself as 'Just right'.

"Isn't Gloria lovely, Sir. She's just arrived."

"Indeed yes!" Mr. Sands bent and palmed the Citadel's latest pubic patch and the labia below. "Beautiful, beautiful…! We must think up something special—and those handcuffs! Charming, charming…!" He patted a virgin bottom with a damp hand and inquired, solicitously, "Are there any small tortures you particularly enjoy, my dear—the whip perhaps? Or do you dislike everything?"

While Gloria was seeking a diplomatic answer to an impossible question, Mr. Sands discerned her quandary and hastened to add:

"You don't know, do you! How silly of me to ask." He beamed expansively. "I'll relieve you of all decision. We can simply have a charming threesome together."

"Thank you, Sir."

"I'm going to strap Diana to the bar, Gloria. I don't see why you can't remain attached."

It was very simple. Diana placed her wrists where they must go. The handcuff on her left was pushed as far up as it would go to leave space for the strap by which her arm would be raised. Both girls watched the buckles tugged tight. When the motor whirred and the captive arms rose,

Gloria's right hand rose too.

"A nice effect." Mr. Sands stood back to survey the twin nudities still linked by handcuffs so as to compel Gloria Winton to stand close to the well pinioned Diana and to raise her right arm to keep taut company with Diana's left. His eye was assessing unusual possibilities. "And now... A small prelude."

Gloria looked at Diana's breasts, they were rising and falling rapidly in the suspense of expected pain, but knew her own equally responsive. In this, her first male encounter, Mr. Sands and the Citadel had placed her at a disadvantage. Diana was firmly anchored by both wrists stretched high. Her feet were still on the ground but she could do no more than stand and wait to be whipped. But Gloria felt silly and lost and surplus. She looked up at her right wrist and the encircling steel by which she was still inexorably attached to the nude girl awaiting the pleasure of her temporary master. Sight of the neat bond and its bite upon her skin flared her fire anew. But this was not as she expected. She swung around within the limited freedom she still had and protested. "Mr. Sands... Sir, I'm still handcuffed to Diana...?"

"Ah, so you are indeed." Mr. Sands agreed affably. "If you were to ask me nicely I might allow you to share some of her strokes."

"But, Sir, Diana's already been whipped." Gloria made an

ineffectual gesture with her free arm and wished she did not have to hold the other one up in the air. “I don’t think she wants to be whipped again today.”

Mr. Sands was entranced. Here was an unexpected piquancy. Smiling with pleasure he ran exploratory fingers up and down the older girl’s tractioned nakedness. “Hmmmm, nice marks. When was it you were whipped, Diana?”

“Five days ago, Sir.”

“Feel up to another whipping now?”

“If it would please you, Sir. Yes… of course.”

“This girl’s trained close to perfect,” Mr. Sands informed earnestly. “Think you’ll ever be as good?”

Gloria was annoyed. This was not as she’d expected. Mr. Sand’s whimsy was hard to cope with. She felt decidedly de trop. and fobbed off his question with an irritable: “I really don’t know, Sir.” Then watched, in shivery fascination, as their client selected a whip.

“You are a privileged girl, Gloria.” Mr. Sands asserted busily. “To have both Diana and myself to start you off.” He swung the snakelike lash, smiling at the startled girl with her one cuffed wrist.

It was pure shock. Until the last moment Gloria had supposed Diana the target of the thong, but it snapped around her own waist with a hair curling sound and the sear of fire. She cried out in disbelief and swung around defensively from her chained wrist. With her free arm she clutched her helpless companion, pressing breast to breast in a panting instinct for sanctuary while she glared across Diana's bare shoulder at the urbane gentleman who had administered the severest pain of her life.

"Lovely action," said Mr. Sands heartily. "Be a real shame to separate you."

Gloria looked at him askance. This was all wrong. When a girl was to be whipped she should be tastefully and effectively bound, strapped, fastened to hold her immovable and immaculate while her skin was esthetically marked. She was not supposed to be quaintly cuffed to some other maiden already buckled into a proper and receptive immobility. Long nurtured concepts were shattered if she was able to dance a naked jig of twist and turn with but a single hand locked up above her head. She was about to gasp these obvious facts out to Mr. Sands when she, shamingly, realized his prior knowledge. Mr. Sands was deliberately placing her at this disadvantage to confound her preconceptions. He would enjoy her leapings and her tugging back against her single small band of steel. There was also Diana's wrist to consider...! Silently, to herself, she uttered a vehement, "Oh shit!" The band of fire around her waist

burned warningly.

“The essence of slavery is the unexpected, my dear,” Mr. Sands explained happily. “Now, what I’d like you to do is detach yourself from Diana, make a convenient exposure of any part of your anatomy you wish, then ask me to whip you again.”

Gloria looked up her arm to the handcuff. She looked, woefully, at the whip. She thrust her belly tight against Diana’s warm flesh, reluctant to leave the comfort of its heat. Then, with the greatest effort she had ever made, reluctantly, she detached her own cringing nudity and thrust out her bottom as best her posture would allow. Mr. Sands cut his whip squarely across her back.

It was not fair, it was not right, it wasn’t… it wasn’t anything it ought to be! Chaotic protests found expression only in a wailing cry of shock that anything could hurt so much. Once more she sought the pathetic refuge of the girl who could not move.

“Is that posture of yours suggesting I should whip Diana instead of your lovely self, dear girl?” Mr. Sands surveyed his captives with a self satisfied eye.

“No!” The denial exploded as Gloria forsook the warmth of female contact and stood as far apart as her handcuff would allow. Her free hand was seeking, vainly, to assuage her wounds. Her voice was righteously plaintive. “If you

wish to whip me, Sir, would it not be more—?" She sought for the right word. "More proper to fasten me properly so I would know where I'm at?"

"Well, I'll be damned!" Said Mr. Sands admiringly. "I bet you had a lot of money before they brought you here?"

"That is my own affair, Sir. I came to The Citadel by my own request."

"Damned interesting—lovely body!" Mr. Sands examined possibilities. "Stick that bottom out again. This time I'll hit it."

Seething discontent, and with a last vexatious glance at her handcuff, Gloria obeyed. Her instinct was to refuse, but her wrist hurt bad enough to tell her to behave, but even the pert curves of her outthrust derriere spoke revolt. Mr. Sands struck it dead center to evoke one more vocal expression of pain and dismay. "I know what your trouble is, young lady," he said, nodding wisely. "You've been getting hot pants out of the books and magazines where a girl gets tied to a tree or strapped the way I've got Diana: all neat and tidy and pretty, pretty. Being cuffed by one wrist to Diana and having to stick out your bottom offends your sensibilities."

"I'm not a schoolgirl, Sir."

"Stick your seat out again, I'll give it another."

“And if I refuse?”

“Then I’ll give it half a dozen.”

Gloria protruded her small rump and looked anxiously over a bare shoulder in time to see the swift arc of the whip and feel the scald of its caress. She leaped erect, rubbing furiously. “You’re being deliberately unkind,” she panted, “making me all untidy and hurting me like this. That thing hurts unbearably.”

“Watch it, Gloria!” Diana’s warning was whispered but anxious. “We must never be rude to a client—”

Her words were lost. Gloria’s attention was absorbed in watching Mr. Sands strap a leather band round her ankle, it boasted a steel ring to which he snapped a tether from above. A moment later the whipped girl’s leg was high in the air to leave her standing on one foot and clutching Diana feverishly with a cuffed hand.

“We can get rid of that for you now, dear.” Mr. Sands unlocked the linking handcuff from both girlish wrists. “This should make a pleasant change.”

“But I—I—I can’t stand. I’ll fall!”

“Well, possibly. But you do have your hands.”

Gloria teetered and clutched at Diana’s secure helplessness for support. She looked at her raised foot in mute wonder that it was really hers. When she swayed dangerously, Mr.

Sands chivalrously eased her nudity to the floor where it lay on its shoulders while its owner gazed askance at a tethered foot, now well out of reach and most firmly strapped. “This is ridiculous.” Gloria gasped. “You have absolutely no right to humiliate me like this.”

“You look ineffectually charming, dear child.”

“I don’t. I look horrible, and all twisted and indecent, and I feel silly. Please lower my foot.”

“Your foot will stay where it is, Gloria. But I’m curious about the one that’s free. What are you going to do with it?”

Gloria blushed. She was well aware of using the thigh over which she still had some control to shield her crotch. She was pressing it tightly against any of her several surfaces possible, none of which helped much against the indecent exposure of her vaginal lips. She looked up at her wildly kicking member as it sought a resting place her upside down condition denied. She did not answer Mr. Sand’s question, her free foot was an embarrassment she knew not what to do with. Instead, she said protestingly, “I don’t think you’re being a bit nice… this is so unfair.”

Mr. Sands had fresh worlds to conquer. Without further ado he grasped the ankle of the foot in question and dragged it sideways to reveal, in all its pristine glory, the pussy and cleft of its owner. Thoughtfully, he placed a testing palm squarely upon the soft and swelling mound and

its palpitating flesh. “Pleasantly damp and nicely warm,” he commented kindly. “Would you like me to give this virgin place a stimulating massage?”

Gloria was furious, she was also frightened. To be nakedly upside down and to be able to view this violation of her secret flesh was an untidy indignity without precedent in her books and visions of B & D. It would have been blushmaking under any circumstances to suffer this coarse intrusion of a male hand, but she felt certain she could have endured it in the proper Citadel spirit if she had been conventionally bound. She longed most ardently for strictures tight and numerous enough to rob her of decision. To have a free foot and two free hands was an embarrassment she had never foreseen. There was nothing she could do with any of them, she was a beautifully disorganized jumble of feminine impotence. She was chagrined enough to cry.

“We did have that silken whip, quite a number of things…?” Mr. Sands was searching… “It’s the special one, Diana. You know, they call it the ’tits and twat’.”

“The lower left on the rack, Sir. It’s half hidden by the ’cat’.”

Gloria tensed. She guessed instantly what such a whip was for. Shamed and scared, she pleaded, “I’m sorry, Sir. Please forgive—”

“Nothing to forgive.” Mr. Sands assured her genially. ”Everything’s co-pathetic. All I’m going to do is whip your

cunt."

The crisp four letter word struck Gloria like a blow. It told her of unsuspected travails she had never even heard of. This kindly middle aged man was about to do things to her the lovely pictures and the exciting books had failed to mention. She felt certain some small measure of erotic fire would have heated her curly haired sex had she been spread-eagled in conventional helplessness. But, shabbily disposed of by a single ankle… It was all wrong. Inwardly, she cried out again and again, "No, no, no…!"

"You can keep your legs closed, dear." Mr. Sands conceded kindly. "But if you do I'll whip whatever other bits of you come handy. I won't stop, I'll just keep cutting away at you until you spread your legs—and I want 'em wide. Understand, real wide!"

Gloria clamped her thighs together more tightly than before. The instinctive shielding of her sex earned a stripe across her raised bottom with the conventional whip to send her into a whirl of arms and legs seeking escape from a degree of pain far, far, beyond her wildest expectations. Wide eyed, she watched Mr. Sands go to the rack and select the shorter but more wicked stock with the hard silken thongs. "No," she pleaded desperately, "Don't whip me there and with that. Oh… please! Diana, tell him he mustn't. I didn't come here for that."

Diana knew herself trapped. She did the only thing she

could think of. “Please, Sir, would you mind whipping me instead of Gloria?” She asked humbly. “This is Gloria’s first time, and I’m sure it’s a lot different from what she expected. And your session is really with me.”

Mr. Sands beamed. “You would like me to whip your breasts with the special whip, dear?” he asked helpfully.

“Yes please, Sir, I’d like you to whip my breasts instead of Gloria’s pussy.”

“Hmmm, that word ’instead’. I’m afraid the ’instead’ bit is out. Gloria gets her cunt whipped regardless.”

“Please, Sir, it’s all so new for the poor dear!”

Gloria was shocked. Here was a reality beyond her envisioning. That a girl’s breasts and sex could be whipped…! It did not seem possible. But she could not allow Diana to make such a sacrifice. Her voice came brokenly. “I’m sorry, Sir. I’ll do whatever you tell me. You mustn’t whip poor Diana on my account.” She allowed her free leg to separate itself and to swing far to one side, baring her sex to a degree she had never before attempted.

“There, is that how you want me exposed, Sir?”

“Well, well, two heroines!” Mr. Sands was vastly entertained. “I see no reason not to whip you both. I do have some amusing appliances in my bag… But perhaps we can use them later.”

It took an immense effort of will for Gloria to keep her leg extended. She was not yet quite open enough for Mr. Sands, so he pulled her free member as far out as pleased him, which was as far as it would go, then patted the inside of the thigh in approval. Running his finger up and down the soft flesh he inquired: “I don’t suppose you’ve been whipped just here, dear?”

“No Sir, I’m afraid I haven’t been whipped much at all.”

“But, in coming to the Citadel, you do expect to have your skin well marked.”

“Yes, Sir, of course. It’s just that I—”

“You were expecting stylized and photogenic bindings— Is that it?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Now, would you like me to start to whip your pretty little cunt and get it over with?”

“I’m scared, Sir. I know I’ll never be able to hold my leg way out like this. The first time you hit me… there, I’ll go crazy.” Wistfully, she asked: “Wouldn’t you like to tie it that way so I can’t?”

“Charming, charming! And so practical.” Mr. Sands ran the silk thongs across the maiden slit he was about to punish. “But, no. It will be an icing on the cake for both of to observe what that delightful leg does for itself. I suspect it is a

very versatile leg."

Gloria moaned inwardly. This obscene and disagreeable cruelty was going to be done to her and there was nothing she could do to stop it. Her suspended leg mocked, it made her as vulnerable as a hundred feet of rope might have done had Mr. Sands wanted to use such a satisfyingly conventional method of rendering her helpless. She was play, now, to emotions which made her angry with her own stupidity in surrendering herself into captivity and furious at the enforced humility of calling this silly man 'Sir'. She longed to tell Mr. Sands to smarten up and let she and Diana loose so they could all go and have coffee like a trio of human beings. But these were dreams. She looked up at her pubic triangle and wailed dismally: "Please don't whip me there, Mr. Sands. Please whip me properly—"

The small special whip cut her short as it cut her flesh. Instantly, Gloria Winton became a puppet on a string. Her leg flailed, her arms sought an expression they could not find, one of them tried to reach up to comfort this fresh wound in a place no wound should be. It succeeded only in fresh strain and a new posture of indignity.

"When you speak of being whipped 'properly', Gloria, you raise an interesting point." Mr. Sands separated the distressed female legs and, himself, tenderly rubbed the reddening path of the lash in his victim's crotch. "There, that's what you're trying to do, isn't it! Feel better?"

The whipped girl answered only by a choked sob. Her hands now covered her face in shame. Blandly oblivious to feminine pain, Mr. Sands continued. “A girlish bottom is the spot most suited for corporal punishment: the cane, the crop, the whip… or even a good resounding strap. A maiden back striated by the whip is superlatively lovely. But these portions of female anatomy have become hackneyed, they are routine to a point of boredom.”

“They hurt terribly, Sir,” Diana ventured timidly.

“Well, yes, I suppose they do. But it is an unimaginative pain.” Mr. Sands was warming up to a favorite topic. “But if you take the same girl and turn her round you find yourself with a vista of fresh and provocative delights. Since most damsel delinquencies are of a sexual nature we are now able to make the punishment fit the crime. If she has indulged in a coupling we may whip the place of penetration. If she has dallied with flirtations what could be more fitting then to whip her breasts! These twin curves and buds are a constant provocation as she augments their contours rather than confining them. For gluttony and intemperance there is the sweet soft belly which implores the lash fully as well as those conventionally approved areas on her other side. I trust you both see my point?”

The embarrassed silence was not one of consent. Mr. Sands sighed and, in an absent minded manner, took a hearty swing to splay the silken cords wide across Gloria’s ex-

posed sex. He stood and watched her frantic gyrations with a clinical eye. Diana watched, too. She was unhappy in her strapped helplessness and more concerned for Gloria than for herself. She felt Mr. Sands had let them both down. It would not have hurt him to indulge his notions in ways less likely to disorganize a novice. Knowing the request out of line, she hesitantly asked. “Couldn’t you whip me, Sir? And let Gloria watch?”

“Very well. Open your legs.”

The five strokes sweeping up into her crotch from below taxed all Diana’s strength of will to keep her thighs well apart to receive them. It was equally difficult to be brightly grateful with her “Thank you very much, Sir.” She relapsed into silence and heavy breathing.

“That was all my fault,” said Gloria wanly.

“It was nobody’s fault,” Mr. Sands explained expansively. “Just a matter of cause and effect. You two girls are a delicate instrument on which I could play simply by provoking your feminine sympathy for each other. You, Gloria, could now ask to be whipped so Diana was not.”

There was another gloomy silence.

“You are both sulky and feel ill used. If I was less experienced I would now harshly whip you both to restore animation and response.” Mr. Sands beamed. “However, I am going to concede Gloria’s wish. She will be dealt with aes-

thetically. You will change places."

Gloria was forced to admire her client's neat disposal of female torsos. Diana was released and stood meekly to one side while the trapeze bar was brought down to where the warm moist straps could accept Gloria's reluctantly proffered wrists. Gloria knew she should have felt the familiar heat, but it was absent. She was still untidy and in disarray. Her strapped ankle was freed to fall with a thump to the floor while, at the same time, the bar to which her hands were strapped began its steady and compelling rise, taking her arms with it towards the ceiling. Hastily, she scrambled to her feet, looking up in wonder, gasping as her arms and body stretched until she stood tip-toe. Her wrists told her she was helpless.

"Less offensive to your sense of nicety, my dear?"

"Well, yes… Thank you, Mr. Sands."

Gloria felt the fire, it was rekindling. Strapped and helpless, she was less free than before, her secret places no less vulnerable. But she was fastened in an understandable way and could be similarly punished. She was well aware, too, of the manner in which this semi suspension flattered her body, she was certain she looked exquisite. Looking down at her breasts she confirmed their response to the tensioning, and noted the hardening assertion of her nipples. This was better! Here was bondage with a capital 'B'. She made play with her hands, splaying her fingers, clenching her

fists against the straps. But the straps were as tight as any bondage could demand. Gloria rose higher on her toes, testing her helplessness. The deep exhalation of her sigh was of exultation.

Obedient to a nod, Diana took Gloria's place on the floor and raised one foot invitingly. Mr. Sands strapped its ankle and raised it a couple of inches higher than before. Thrusting at the floor with hands and arms, Diana adjusted to the stress. Her free leg, bent back at the knee, made no attempt to hide her sex. The furry patch and the damp slit were simply there on view like all the rest of her. She looked up at Gloria's wide eyed concern and smiled.

"I did make a purchase or two," Mr. Sands confided, "and since you're in this position it seems a pity not to use 'em."

The girls exchanged glances as he went to his bag. Diana winked. This was the Mr. Sands she had promised. She had no doubt she was about to be hurt but it was a diversion.

"They are not a bit glamorous, but I was in the stationers and there they were. Funny I'd never thought of them before."

Diana wished he had not thought of them now. They were two medium sized paper clips about three inches long. Their bite, wherever be put them on her, would be cruel.

"They're too severe for your nipples, Diana my dear. And, anyway, I have much nicer little bits of jewelry for them."

Mr. Sands allowed his gaze to focus on Diana's exposed and open sex. "But with a little care…"

The half suspended girl tensed. The mundane metal clips were familiar enough to know how wickedly they would bite female flesh—and such intimate flesh…! Her fists clenched in determination to 'be a good girl' as their genial tormentor separated the lips of her sex and worried a pair of open jaws back and forth into a contact he deemed properly aesthetic. Slowly, he allowed them to close.

Diana screamed. She could not help it. She managed to choke back a second peal of pain but beat her fists on the floor in a tattoo of agony. Her eyes were widely imploring as she stared up at what was being done to her.

"Quite severe, I imagine." Mr. Sands was now giving his attention to the opposite lip, the spring activated strip of metal finding its way well into the hot wet pungency of a female's secret place. "The final effect here is going to be remarkable… there!"

Diana screamed again, she screamed more than once. Then lay with breasts heaving and her pain wracked features covered by her hands, she moaned steadily.

"You see, Gloria, what perfect control the darling has. She is suffering a great deal of pain and handling it very well." Without warning, Mr. Sands struck the conventional whip smartly across the unsuspecting back of the girl with raised

arms. “I’m sure you wish to share her travail.”

Gloria’s toes left the floor. In involuntary anguish she lifted her nudity by her strapped wrists, kicking and twisting in shock. Mr. Sands stood back and surveyed his work with complacent satisfaction. Thoughtfully, he produced a camera and took pictures. Diana, moaning and writhing, choked out words she could not contain: “Please, Sir… Oh please…! Mr. Sands… Oh, oh, oh…!”

Mr. Sands appeared not to hear. With obvious intent, he turned his attention to Gloria’s nipples, teasing them with skilled fingers and wise frictioning with the palm of his hand. As he worked his eyes met hers at close range. “I’ll give you a preference, dear girl, the whip on that gorgeous bare skin of yours or some small discomfort to these sweet little buds? Which shall it be?”

“I… I don’t know.” Gloria tore away from his hypnotic regard to stare in desolation at Diana’s writhing nakedness on the floor and at the twin metallic horrors firmly biting the labia between her legs. Belatedly, she amended: “I think perhaps the whip…?”

“In that case it will be your nipples, my dear. Just one moment—”

The whip scalds were still potent on the tractioned girl as she watched the genial Mr. Sands rummage in his magic bag. She knew whatever she asked for would be wrong or

cynically denied. She gasped in fear and fascination at sight of the exquisitely jeweled butterflies now approaching her breasts.

“I suggest co-operation. If you struggle these little trinkets could be even more painful and less aesthetic. I am sure you are anxious for a proper placement—?”

As in a trance, Gloria extended her right breast as best she could against the tug of her strapped wrists. The objects in her master’s hands would have been innocently beautiful had it not been for the unobtrusive jaws and the hidden spring. A girl’s nipple, even when engorged by friction, is not large: the tiny mechanism hidden by the bejeweled wings was made in proportion, properly affixed it would not be visible. The helpless girl did not wish to look but, in a fascination she could not control, she strained to watch her nipple become a gaudy butterfly. She managed to accept number one with no more than a gasp and a hasty swallow, but when number two nestled into her other breast and its jaws clamped closed upon the aroused innocence of its engorged bud of flesh, she moaned in a wailing cry against a punishment she had not sought. Upon her rapidly rising and falling breasts the two butterflies scintillated as though gorging on the nectar of a girl.

Mr. Sands knew deep content, he sat back on a bench and enjoyably watched two naked girls fight their battle with the pain he had created. He was an artist resting after toil,

reveling in this visible exposition of his gift. He consulted his watch and decided to extend the session an extra hour.

In the room which they were permitted to share for that one night, Sister Nona came to say good-night and to bestow gifts which encircled girlish waists, bisected the female crotch and compressed girlish tummies hard and tight. When she had kissed them and locked them in, Gloria fingered the metal shield curved and clamped immovably upon her sex. “It’s a… a… It’s a—?”

“That’s right, darling, it’s a chastity belt.”

Gloria was still busy tugging at an immovable bond. “But why—why… in a locked room?”

Diana laughed bitterly. “It’s so we can’t enjoy ourselves with each other, that’s why! The Citadel wants us to keep our libidos intact for the clients.” She held up her hands. “See, I’m handcuffed again. It’s all part of a reminder.”

“We can’t do a thing, nothing! It’s so damn tight!” Gloria was still fingering her locked loins in disbelief.

“This is the Citadel, darling. Come to bed.”

Gloria cried herself to sleep on Diana’s shoulder. Memory of Mr. Sands attentions still burned scaldingly upon them both.

Diana shed a few tears herself.

Chapter Three

The Canyon Road

David Farrell now approached his sessions in a progressively potent need far beyond his original use of her as an attractive medium for the consummation of his art of Bondage. For him, Diana had become increasingly beautiful and more and more to be desired. His wish to bind her tight in the poses and postures which satiated his aesthetic hunger had in no way diminished as his love for her had grown. But was now a precious intimacy to be breathlessly shared in those limited periods during which the Citadel leased him her body and her limbs for cash. With hammering pulse, he now roped her stomach tightly to the upright of the cross to which her extended arms and well spread legs were already firmly strapped. It was his favorite pose for her, and one in which Diana no longer felt shame.

“I wouldn’t tie you like this, sweetheart, if you didn’t say we should. I’d be happy just to talk.”

“No, you must tie me.” Diana was vehement. “A Sister might drop in, they’re already suspicious of us. Besides, you love to tie me so I want to be tied. I think the way

you've got me fixed is gorgeous. Do I look pretty?"

"Ravishing. But why would a Sister—?"

"They don't approve of love affairs. They nip 'em in the bud."

"But how can they? I've paid!?"

"They can all right. Darling, tighten my left elbow a bit more. It's like having you hold me. When a girl falls for a client she's horribly punished and they never sell her to him again. After she's been punished they never see each other again."

David took a deep breath, surveying the Citadel's impregnability. "There has to be a way out of this, Diana? There must be?"

"If you've got a million dollars."

Irritably, he waved away the impossible. "I'm not a nonentity," he said without conceit. "I can pull strings and get access, but this damn place is impregnable. The Law just laughs when you mention the name, my Congressman says 'For Pete's sake forget it, that place is too embarrassing.'" David shrugged. "It all adds up to me having to get you out of here on my own hook."

"That's not possible! Oh, David!"

"Of course it's possible! Anything's possible." He looked at

her broodingly, his well chiseled features clouded in perplexity. “It’s something I have to do, and I’ll do it. I want you.”

Momentarily, Diana wished she was not bound. It would be nice to throw her arms around him and whisper words of comfort. Then to try and make him understand the impossibility of her ever escaping. The Citadel had her. Instead, she said unhappily, “David, I’m a prisoner here and that’s the end of it. Out there in freedom there must be a hundred girls you could be happy with without the danger of being killed.”

“They’d go that far?”

“There’s all sorts of stories about escapes. Someone always gets killed and the girls never get free.” She saw the consternation on his face, so added quickly: “It’s not that they don’t treat us kindly, I suppose they do. The Sisters will always try and be kind before they have to be cruel. They reject clients who might injure us.”

“Real big of ’em.” The male voice was grim. “And what’s this punishment they hold over your head?”

Diana made a restless motion against the timber to which she was bound. “Why talk about it, David. They whip us and chain us in a dungeon…! It’s never happened to me that way so I don’t know for sure.”

“But they have punished you?”

“Yes, but only while they were training me and I didn’t understand. I haven’t been punished in quite a long time.”

“But you’re always handcuffed when they send you in to me?” David scowled. “What d’you call that?”

“Oh, David, that’s nothing.” Diana laughed. “I’ve been handcuffed so long it’s become a sort of joke, and I’m so used to them—”

“It’s not a joke to me.” The man pursed his lips. “Sweetheart, how badly do you want to get out of the Citadel?”

“More than anything, but not at the expense of your life. David dear, we’re like a husband and wife where the wife has been sentenced to prison for years and years. All they can do is look at each other through the bars. They don’t talk about escape, they know it won’t happen.”

Silence fell on the private room. Diana knew the thoughts churning in her beloved’s mind. Pathetically, she made her words bright and coaxing: “David darling, wouldn’t you like to whip me or something…? I’d love you to!”

“Diana… !”

“Well, you loved to once. We mustn’t let falling in love spoil anything. I won’t be like the wife who doesn’t bother looking nice once she’s married.” She twinkled mischievously. “C’mon, do something naughty to me!”

Feverishly, David tugged at knots and buckles and took her

from the frame. On the floor, without thought of yesterday or of tomorrow, they made their love, using its physical delights to obliterate the agonies of frustration. For quite a long time escape was banished from their minds. When they came back into the world. Diana's first thought was eminently practical.

"David, darling, you must tie me for whatever time we have left."

"Because a Sister might walk in? To hell with her!"

"So I won't get punished, David. You're forgetting I'm still here."

"Oh, all right. What's the easiest?"

"Don't snap at me, David. Tie my hands together and suspend me that way. It won't be for long."

"Hell, no! That's torture!"

"No it isn't, I'm used to it and it's nice and authentic." Coyly, she added: "And I look very pretty like that, I know I do."

He obeyed her, in the manner of the martyred male forced to a domestic chore. When Diana's feet were above the floor he took her weight in his arms and kissed her savagely. Her lips, her nipples, and then below where he had entered. Finally he stood back and drank in Diana's hanging loveliness. "You're the most beautiful thing in the world," he told her huskily. "I simply have to."

“And what is it you have to do, Mr. Farrell?”

Sister Angela’s voice caught them unawares. She had entered quietly and stood surveying their consternation with amusement. She laughed. “But never mind telling me, I already know. Love is this world’s least secret emotion.”

“Please, Sister, don’t hold Diana guilty of anything.”

“Hush, hush, Mr. Farrell! Who spoke of guilt. It gives me great pleasure to see two young people happy together. I take it you are more than pleased with our Diana?”

“Of course, and—”

“We are all very fond of Diana. Mr. Farrell. We want no harm to come to her.”

“Yes, of course, Sister, may I release her, it will only take a moment.”

“No. Leave her as she is.” Sister Angela’s tone had resumed authority. ”We find it desirable to keep these girls constantly aware of their status, and she looks very beautiful as she is. You don’t mind your posture, Diana?”

“No, Sister.”

“You see, Mr. Farrell, she is beautifully trained. We could not easily bear to part with her.”

There was a silence in which three people shared a single thought. Sister Angela broke it with a gentle statement of

fact. “The poor darling must be punished, of course. You do understand?”

David Farrell was angry and at a disadvantage. “No, I don’t understand all this talk of punishments. I want to marry Diana.”

“I think you understand very well, Mr. Farrell, and so does Diana. The two of you have been discussing her escape.”

“So what!”

“We cannot tolerate such talk. It unsettles the girls and causes them heartbreak.”

“So you punish them out of kindness!”

“Don’t be angry, Mr. Farrell. Share our problem. Most of the men who come here seem to be shockingly lonely. They become attached to one of our girls and think they have fallen in love. They then make the most absurd proposals of marriage, of escape, of purchase… It gets the girls all upset and at odds with themselves. We punish them to maintain perspective. We cannot punish the client, but where we must we blacklist them from the Citadel.”

“You’ll blacklist me?”

“Not at all.” Sister Angela smiled placatingly. “We think you a desirable type, intelligent enough to listen to reason. Enjoy yourself with this charming girl and forget about talk of freedom for her. She no longer believes in freedom—Do

you, dear?"

"No, Sister."

"You see, Mr. Farrell—?"

"Diana can't possibly be happy here as a slave, or whatever you call your girls." David glared. "Look at her skin, there's whipmarks everywhere."

"Mostly fading, Mr. Farrell. I assure you the adjustment our girls make to pain and captivity would cheer you up considerably if you could see it with an open mind."

"Diana and I have a right to marry…"

"The rights and privileges of humanity are nebulous, Mr. Farrell."

"Oh, for Pete's sake don't pontificate. Look, Sister, put it in your language. I wish to buy Diana. How much?"

Sister Angela sighed. Overactive male glands had been a tribulation throughout her life. "If I believed you wealthy, Mr. Farrell, I would be prepared to quote a price."

"Dammit, Sister, I'm not a pauper."

"Can you spare a million dollars?"

"No."

Sister Angela shrugged. It was always the same: the man with the million had other girls in other places, he did not

buy from the Citadel. Gently, she admonished.

“Diana is worth a million to us, Mr. Farrell. But the two of you touch me. You are what my mother would have called ’nice people’. I will use my influence to lower Diana’s price. But I can see no hope of getting it below five hundred thousand dollars.”

David had never felt more ineffectual. Diana wanted to cry. She felt herself useless, hanging naked while a man and a woman bickered over her life. Brokenly, she said: “Go away and forget me, David, it’s hopeless.”

“And leave you to be punished! No way!”

“They won’t punish me severely this time. Ask Sister Angela.”

“They’ve no right to punish you at all.” David turned angrily to the watching woman, “What will you have done to her?”

Sister Angela shrugged. “A night or two chained in the dungeon, or a day or two tied to a post. Nothing drastic. Please don’t let us deal in dramatics.”

“Dammit, you’re speaking of my wife!”

“Diana is not your wife, Mr. Farrell. She belongs to the Citadel and the Citadel makes its own laws. Diana is subject to them, you are not. Perhaps you should leave.”

“Perhaps I should.” David’s voice was grim. “I’ll let Diana down and untie her—”

“Leave her as she is, Mr. Farrell. I have things to say to her after you have gone. She is suitably positioned. Kiss her and go.”

The Citadel and the authority of Sister Angela were heavy in the room. David Farrell conceded their victory. When he was gone, frustrated, angry and determined, Sister Angela turned grave eyes upon Diana’s suspended nudity. “Falling in love is very foolish anywhere, my dear,” she said gently. “Most of all so in the Citadel. There is no place for it here except in the sessions… If only these foolish men could be satisfied with the sessions…” Sister Angela paused, heavily, before asking: “I suppose you know this room is monitored?”

“Not really, Sister.”

“Well, it is. The session was recorded. All things considered, you came out of it well. Mr. Farrell was immoderate, you were not. But you do understand you have earned a punishment?”

“Yes, Sister.”

“It will not be severe, but you deserve something for failing to keep Mr. Farrell in line. You have allowed yourself to drift into an emotional involvement.”

“I’m sorry, Sister Angela. really I am. Perhaps it’s best if you don’t allow Mr. Farrell to come again.”

“That is a last resort. If we denied the Citadel to every moonstruck male we’d be out of business. If Mr. Farrell wants to spend his money we’ll accept it. But he must be told of the monitoring. One word of what he would probably call ‘rescue’, and the session will be terminated, and you’ll be punished. If he knows he can get you punished it may keep him within limits.”

“Very well, Sister, but I’d much rather—”

“What you’d prefer is of no consequence, Diana. I am now going to discuss an appropriate punishment for you with the other Sisters. In the meantime you may as well remain as you are.”

Diana gazed at the closed door in dismay. Closed doors were never good news in the Citadel. She might hang as she was a very long time before it opened again. That was the difference for a girl between the pains of a session and the disciplines of the Citadel. The former were a known quantity, they had an end, but the latter could drag on and on without seeming end. She cursed her own choice of suspension. It was ironic to think of David’s fingers binding her wrists and hanging her thus. It had started as a pretty conceit to please him but to be left suspended and alone would soon become a torture. Perhaps this was her punishment!

Diana knew there were worse things than to be strung up as she was. But suspension by her wrists was a constant and unremitting attrition on the courage of a girl, it wore you down with the pain and the total helplessness. If she was whipped like this she would lunge and writhe and dance and kick at empty air. But, for now, she knew it best to hang in passive resignation, any movement hurt her wrists or strained her shoulders more.

It was hard not to feel injustice over her pending punishment. After all, David Farrell was a client, and she had been adamant enough in asserting the impossibility of escape. But she had said she wanted to escape: there would be her crime. The Citadel might make her pay dearly for the admission. Sadly, she reviewed the things they could do to her, and wanted none of them. Suddenly, the thought of freedom became an unbearable desire. To be able to do as she wished and not be punished…! For girls beyond the walls it was the norm, for her it was an impossible dream. She flexed her legs in the air and wanted to cry.

The opening of the door came sooner than Diana had deemed likely. It disclosed a tousled head and a pair of pixie eyes which soon became two as Tina and April slipped into the room, a pair of naked nymphs on mischief bent. Eyes sparkling, they surveyed Diana's pained nakedness and rendered their own summation.

"You've got yourself in deep shit, darling."

“And all over a silly man… Ugh!”

Tina and April were not twins but had a tendency to act the part. Their inclinations were so similar that clients were apt to employ the two of them as a single unit of pleasure. Their insouciant delight in most punishments had got them nicknamed ‘The Masochist Marvels’. They were probably the only captives ever to defeat the Citadel, inasmuch as they were always a jump ahead in their joyous embracing of its rigors. The other girls viewed them with puzzled envy. They were much loved for being two rays of sunshine in a dark place.

“You two always know everything,” Diana said morosely. “Have you found out what my punishment’s going to be?”

“The Sisters are still nattering, and then they’ll have coffee. You’ll have to hang there a long time before we find out. We’ve come to give you an orgasm.”

“No! Please don’t.”

“Gee, you’re ungrateful. You’ll probably be locked in a chastity belt for a month, so you ought to take it while you can.”

“Yes, I know. You’re both sweet. But nothing’s right for it.”

“Yes there is: you’re helpless. So we’re going to do it to you regardless.”

Never had feminine helplessness been more graphic. Diana

could have kicked and writhed, but to what avail! And anyway, she had no wish to kick either of these douce damsels when they were trying to be kind. Ruefully, she looked down at the twin mops of hair as teeth and tongues took possession of her nipples and twin hands found mischief between her thighs. Soon she was gasping and, for a little while, forgot her punishment. After the explosion she hung limp and exhausted by the intensity of what the two nymphets had made her feel.

“We’re awfully clever with orgasms, darling.”

“We’re the best,” April giggled. “As long as there’s no chastity belts around. Chastity belts are unfair to girls.”

“Diana, did you really plan an escape with that guy?”

“No, we just tallied about it. Darlings, how’d you like to let my feet down on the floor while we talk?”

“Oooooo, we wouldn’t dare.” Both maidens contrived to appear desolated by regret.

“Please…?” Diana wheedled. “Just for a few minutes? I’m so damn tired… Look, you can let my feet down to the floor and keep my hands tied up there helpless so you can raise me anytime—?”

“The Sisters would find out, they always do—and then we’re in deep shit too. Just imagine, all three of us hanging in a row.”

“And besides, we like you that way. You look yummy.”

Diana sighed, the twins were unpredictable, capricious, elfin. But they were a lovable pair and good company. In her present plight they were a diversion she did not wish to lose. “I’ll come and tease you sometime when you’re hanging up like this,” she promised good naturedly. “Trouble with you is you enjoy it.”

“You other girls would enjoy it too, darling, if you weren’t always thinking about escape and all the fun you used to have before you got ‘taken’.”

“Why wouldn’t we think about escape?” Diana mourned. “What else is there… except the next client?”

“We don’t think about escape, Diana. Do we, Tina? We wouldn’t escape if they gave us the keys. We’ve never had it so good. Between us we had fourteen orgasms in the past twenty-four hours, we counted.”

“You’re a pair of lecherous mink, and you must be made of rubber.” Diana sniffed enviously. “I’m hating what’s happening to me right now but you’d love it. You’d be so hot between your legs you’d be trying to reach each other with your toes. Anyway, I want to go home and get married and have three children.”

“You just think you want that. You’d hate it… really!”

“Try me. I’d send my husband in here as a client to give

you a report. Look… please! Let my feet down for just one moment?"

The twins giggled and exchanged a lifted eyebrow communion. April said, slowly: "No, we won't let you down. We like to hear you beg, and you look so sweet and helpless… Would you like another orgasm?"

"No, but thanks anyway."

"Would you like to escape?"

It was not raillery. The air in the room was suddenly electric. The twins were smiling mischievously… waiting!

"Don't tease me about escape, please darlings…" Diana hoped they could not hear her accelerated heartbeats. "We shouldn't be talking about it."

"The monitor's off. We made sure of that before we came."

"So? I still don't want—"

"We've known how to escape for a long time, Diana dear."

They were looking at her with their bright, expectant young eyes, loving the sudden tensioning of her nakedness. Diana could feel the touch of their excitation. "I don't believe a word of it." She said flatly.

"It's just a case of knowing the right door and the right time and where people are likely to be. There's quite a few doors, of course—it's quite complicated. But we worked it

all out and we tried it and it works."

"You're putting me on? To get out and then come back—?"

"We told you, Diana: we know when we're well off. We only searched for the escape route for fun—and just in case."

"We'll let you out if you really want?"

"Because we like you."

"It's easy, Diana, when you know how."

"We think you're crazy to run away from the Citadel. But we'll do it."

Emotions crowded the mind of the suspended girl into a battlefield of doubt and fear. April and Tina were watching her in avid curiosity. For them, this was a wonderful game from which they would probably emerge unscathed. Diana asked the only question she could think of.

"When?"

"Now?"

"Yes… oh, yes! But please don't tease—?"

Tina went to the wall and the controls. Suddenly, Diana's feet were on the floor and April was untying chafed numb wrists.

Giggling, they took her by the hand.

It was a canyon road, narrow, winding, and not much traffic. As yet, Diana hid in the bushes when she heard the sound of a motor. Her first need was to pick the right rescuer or to find the right house. She could smell salt in the air, and guessed that somewhere ahead she would find the Ocean and the Coast Highway. Had she been clothed and with money in her pocket her escape from The Citadel would already be behind her as a solid fact. But, naked and penniless, her freedom was tenuous and breathless, a tender growth to be nurtured by the utmost care

The cars were tantalizing. By the time she had assessed them they were gone. A girl attired in nothing but the small towel the twins had giggingly purloined had to be cautious. Hairy males, bikers, hippies… she would be fair game for them. What she needed was a nice respectable couple—but she herself was not respectable. She would be viewed with suspicion, and would have to concoct some fiction about an unkind practical joke.

The towel provided only the minimum of decency, it would not keep her warm in the chill of night. She was naked in a strange place without friends until she could find money or a phone. Ahead, perhaps a mile or two, would be a busy junction with lights and people and the police. Her condition would almost certainly involve her with an inquisitive officer and, if the tales were true, he would simply pack

her up and return her from whence she came.

Diana shuddered at thought of the reproachful Sisters and the waiting punishment. It was frightening to realize she did not even know David Farrell's phone number or address. Steadfastly, she repressed the nagging thought of having acted hastily and without wisdom. She was free! She repeated the word over and over: free, free, free! But, somehow, it carried no conviction.

Here and there where the scrub thinned out below the road Diana had observed a boulder strewn wash on the canyon's narrow floor, in it was a trickle of water. Selecting a growth where she would be well shielded from view, she made her way to it and drank. Her throat was dry, not so much from exertion as from fear. It was while she was tidying her hair in the mirror of a tiny pool that a male voice made her apprehension real.

"Well, well—and very nice too!"

The naked fugitive cataloged him at a glance. He would be an environmentalist, a student of Ecology or a left wing dilettante out on a hike. Early thirties, expensive outdoor garments, his features proclaiming a superior brand of discontent. He was surveying his good fortune with obvious masculine approval. His question was heavy humor.

"Refugee from a nudist colony—?"

For a moment, hope flared. He was personable, he looked

like money, his voice was educated. On the debit side his stature was adequate to best her in a struggle. It would be foolish to run. Barefooted on the rocks she could be captured easily. The only other option was to be positive and polite.

“Gosh, I’m glad to see you! I need help.”

“You seem to be doing very well by yourself. Er, my name’s Catley. Wilbur Catley.”

She could tell he was wishing the towel would slip or that she would take it off. Diffidently, she introduced herself, and added: “I’ve been kidnapped. I’ve just escaped.”

“Really…!” The one word contained volumes of disbelief.

“Yes… really! Will you help me get to the City or a phone? I don’t have clothes or money.”

“Hmmmmm, possibly. Best tell me a bit more. Why not the police?”

It seemed pointless to be reticent. Diana told him, briefly, of the Citadel. Wilbur Catley was a good listener, but at the end of it was derisive. “Bit of a tall story, wouldn’t you say?”

At that moment the naked girl knew he would not be a friend. Defensively, she countered, “It’s true.”

“Does this Citadel place have a phone number?”

“I don’t know it. It’s private, not in the book.”

“Ahhhhh… I expect they’d be pleased to see you back?”

“Yes. But I’m not going. Look, will you help me?”

“Sure, sure!” He waved a placating hand. “Don’t get in a snit.” He stuffed off a knapsack. “There’s something I want to show you.”

The moment Diana saw the cord she turned and ran. Wilbur Catley caught her in the first six leaps. With her face buried in grass and fallen leaves and a male knee cruelly in the small of her back, Diana flailed her arms uselessly until they were gathered, one by one, and tightly crossed and bound with the thin lacings that hurt and were far more deadly than rope. She was then lifted and placed on her feet. The ease with which Wilbur Catley had made her captive was disconcerting. Panting, she faced him angrily.

“Don’t take me back there.” She pleaded desperately. “They won’t give you money. You may even be in danger.”

“O.K., O.K. I won’t. At least, not right now.”

Diana, twisting uselessly at bound wrists, knew herself beyond quibbling. Her suggestion was forthrightly honest: “Untie me. Give me an old shirt and fifty dollars, and I’ll… I’ll—?”

“You will anyway—sans shirt and cash. I’ve got you.”

“Wouldn’t it be nicer if I co-operated?”

“You will co-operate, or be thrashed.”

The tied girl knew the bitter humiliation of capitulation. “All right then. When you’ve… done it, will you take me to a phone?”

“Mmmmmm, maybe. Depends on how well we get along.”

It was not as Diana expected. She was picked up and carried along the dry creek bed to where a jeep and a tiny tent were secluded in the scrub. Once more on her feet, she watched him rummage for rope, then submitted to being leashed by her neck and tethered to a tree by a ten foot strand. “Sit or stand,” Catley said tersely. “You can’t get away.” He fixed her with a sardonic eye. “And look, no hysteria, no screams, no pleadings and no threats. I’m going to fuck you to a fare-ye-well. I’d be crazy not to.”

Seething in the ambient female frustration of being physically weaker than the male, Diana bitterly fought the twine on her wrists and shook her head fury against the rope collar which constrained her for the convenience of a man. Her only weapon left was guile.

“You don’t need to be so rough with me.” She stepped forward until her throat was snubbed. “This is absurd.”

“It’s effective.”

“Look, you’re civilized!” Diana faced her captor in puzzle-

ment. “You don’t have to do this to get a girl, you could get a girl anywhere, or rent one cheap—I’ve even offered…?”

He nodded. “That’s right. But don’t you see the piquancy of this. You’re in a sort of limbo. You can’t go forward or back. If I use you for a few days or a week or two: what does it matter.”

He was infuriatingly right. Diana saw and understood his reasoning. It held but one tiny hope that when he was bored with her he might take her to a phone or give her a few coins. Capitulating again, she said drearily. “Yes, I understand. But do you have to keep me tied?”

“Can you tell me any other way I can keep you around?”

She could not. Vexatious as it might be, Catley had no option but to keep her securely bound. Unhappily, she offered: “I could give you my word, a sort of parole? No girl wants to be tied up all the time.”

“Horse balls!”

“Do you want me to lay down now?”

“Well, well, the final surrender, eh. No, keep standing. I want a good look at you.”

Diana watched, in shrinking dismay, as he went to a willow and cut and trimmed a switch. “You don’t need that,” she said unhappily. “I’ll do what you want—I’ve been trained.”

“Ah, of course! Your mythical Citadel.” Catley yanked the towel from her hips and threw it aside. “Ah, ha! Real quality, aren’t you, my proud beauty. You’re a damn lovely female.”

She sniffed. “I know I am, but it doesn’t do me any good.”

Catley cut a swift unexpected blow to wrap the willow round one hip and across her recently bared bottom. The pain was atrocious and left the tied and naked girl gasping in indignant perplexity.

“That’s just to get your attention, sweetheart. There’ll be others if you choose to be difficult.”

“You didn’t need to do that to me. It hurt horribly.”

“Good! We now have a rapport. Now, one other thing—”

When thumbs and fingers clamped her nipples and squeezed it was one indignity too many. Instinctively, Diana lashed upward with a defensive knee. The thrust, more accurate and more severe than she had imagined possible, sent Catley into a writhing grasp of his genitals while the tethered girl backed against the tree from which she could not flee. In apprehensive horror she blurted out. “I’m… I’m sorry… I didn’t mean—”

She got only a venomous glance, and was forced to watch as the man worked his way through male agony until he stood erect and grim faced. Mutely, Diana awaited the in-

evitable flogging with the whip. She could neither run nor fight and would have to stand and take it or cower in the dirt as he marked her skin.

But the whipping did not come. The jeep yielded a hand ax, and with it Catley sharpened and drove stakes hard and deep into the ground. By the time the third wooden anchor had been pounded home Diana had divined their purpose. Desperately, she pleaded: “No, don’t tie me like that. It’s horrible. Look, I’ve said I’m sorry. You can punish me and hobble my ankles so I can’t kick again?”

Catley did not answer. His manner was grimly but complacently intent. He loosed Diana’s tether and forced her to the ground where she had little choice but to sit and watch her ankles spread far apart and bound to the waiting stakes. “Just as well you kicked,” Catley said with a return to his sardonic self. “I might never have thought of this.”

“Please, no. Not with my hands spread out and tied too…! Oh, please…? Let me sit like this with only my feet spread? I’m completely helpless.”

When he untied her ankles the distraught girl supposed she had won a concession. But it was only one more indignity. “Just thought of something,” he told her tolerantly. “Here, I’ll tether you to the tree again, and then I’ll be gone a few minutes… Nice and private for you round the other side of the tree… D’you understand?” Seeing her look of in-

credulity, he added: “Best have yourself a pee or whatever. Night’s coming and you could be staked out quite a spell.”

Speechless with chagrin, Diana watched him go. Once more he was hatefully right. Hating Catley and herself and the whole sorry mess, she retreated to the other side of the tree to which her rope was tied. Her prospects for the night made the act imperative. When her captor returned they had no need of words. Glumly, she sat down and spread her legs towards the waiting pegs. When each ankle was firmly tied her hands were freed and she lowered her back to the ground and spread her arms for the cords in Catley’s hands. Drearily, she said: “I’ve been tied before, it’s nothing new to me. But this is a beastly way to be fastened. If only you’d give me a chance I’d be a lot more obedient than you’d think?”

Wilbur Catley paid no heed. Carefully he tied each of her wrists to a distant stake. When he was done she was not too cruelly stretched but could move but little. She was a female facility ready for impalement.

“There you are,” Catley said with deep satisfaction. “Now we both know where we’re at.” He grinned. “And don’t think I’m not aware of good fortune in finding you. Quite likely the only such chance of my whole lifetime. This is the real thing, the way it should be. That emasculated farce of climbing into bed together is for the birds.”

“It’s a lot more comfortable.”

“Hell, girl, you’re supposed to hurt a bit—helps your secretions.”

“Look, Mr. Wilbur Catley, you’ve tied me so I can’t move much at all—sure, sure, I know why and what you’re going to do to me. But you’re not going to leave me like this all night, are you?”

“I’ve got a nice heavy rug, kiddo. You’ll be snug as a bug.”

Wearily, Diana pleaded: “I’m only a girl, and you’ve got me, and I’m helpless. But give me something to look forward to? Tell me you’ll let me go in the morning—?”

Catley stood and looked down at his prize. He had never felt more masculine, nor had his words ever seemed more reasonable. “I can’t think of any good reason why I should do that, Diana. Can you?”

“Decency… kindness?”

“Abstractions. Quite unreal.”

She turned her head and wept. While she was thus engaged he searched for a pillow and, thoughtfully, positioned it beneath the cheeks of her bottom.

The spread-eagled girl did not count the number of times Wilbur Catley used her body. He was immensely virile. But he fought a battle the woman always wins. Satiated and exhausted he crept to his tent and snored there in the dark. Unexpectedly, the naked girl helpless beneath the rug slept

too.

In the morning Catley granted her the welcome relief of tied hands, the tether on her neck, and the tree. Diana was too still and dispirited to fight or struggle. Without complaint she allowed herself to be freshly tied. He fed her with his own hands, not trusting her enough to free her own. In this intimacy she found the courage to ask: “Please let me go now?”

“No.”

“I didn’t mean without—” Diana sought for the right words. “I mean, have all the fun with me you want. I’ll try and be nice to you. Then, after, set me free…?” Striving for a light touch, she added: “Maybe you’d give me a quarter so I can use the phone if I can find one.”

“If I gave you a quarter where would you put it?”

She flushed. “You could let me have my towel back?”

Studying her intently, her captor went off on a fresh tack. Cheerfully he explained. “I’ve been thinking. There’s more to you than just a piece of tail. A guy who has you has options. At the worst I get a lot of free screwing, at the best I might make a lot of money.”

Diana listened while hope died. Her corded wrists and chafed neck told her plainly she could counter nothing this man might wish. All she could do was watch for loopholes.

“It’s a shame to waste those stakes. You look damn cute tied down to ’em and with a cushion under your little ass. I’m thinking of going down the road a way to the first phone and calling a few friends. They’d each be good for a hundred bucks to have a shot at you while I have you prettily spread-eagled.”

“Do it. Then let me go.”

“My, my, you sure do have a bug about freedom!”

Catley’s eyes narrowed. “Supposed I promised to cut you loose in return for a couple of good blow jobs, would you do it?”

“Of course. Right now if you wish.”

Diana was suddenly enveloped in shame. Catley’s opinion of her mattered not at all, but she did not wish to seem a whore. In mortification she sought to excuse her eagerness. “I told you about the Citadel. I had to do things there, all sorts of things. I was once as immaculate as any girl in town but when they ‘took’ me they taught me things… I was trained. I’m not an escaped whore but I’ll act like one to please you if it will earn my freedom and twenty-five cents.”

He should have been touched, but was delighted. “I could likely round up a dozen men to use you—after I’d had mine, of course. D’you think you could be nice to them?”

“Yes, they’d get their money’s worth.”

Catley nodded. His mind was obviously hard at work. “On the other hand,” he said slowly, “I’m a good mind to tie you into a bundle in the back of the jeep and go and see if we can’t find this place you’re supposed to have escaped from. It can’t be too far back up the road. You could guide me?”

“No! No… oh please understand I daren’t go back there. They’d punish me terribly.”

“If you don’t want to guide me I can whip you until you change your mind!”

“I know you can. I think I’d die before I went back there. Can’t you understand: that place is forever. You and your dozen men could all be through with me by this evening.”

“Yeah.” Catley chuckled. “I’m almost inclined to believe you. But if we ask around a bit as we go up the road someone’s going to know where this marvelous place is.”

“They’ll half kill me, and then there’s just years and years of slavery.”

“O.K. How about I take you home and keep you chained in my spare room? Your mouth and your pussy would make me rich in a year. It would be quite safe for me because you vanished long ago. Nobody’s looking for you. Far as I can see you’ve ceased to exist.”

It was hateful and impossible. A bit of cord round her

wrists and a rope round her neck delivered her into any of his notions. Conversely, a razor blade would grant her freedom. Diana had never felt more frustrated or furious in her life. But she knew for sure she was tired of this insensitive man. She had endured enough of him. In revulsion, she spat out. “Very well, I’ll guide you back to the Citadel. I don’t want to be an unpaid whore in your back room for the rest of my life.”

It happened, then, very quickly. Unleashed, she was on the ground watching her ankles corded to their stakes. Then Catley’s terse command: “Get yourself loose.”

“How the devil can I?”

“O.K., I’ll untie your hands. Then try.”

Bemused and suspicious, Diana rubbed chafed wrists and then reached for ankles and the stakes. But she was too competently bound. It was a case of so near and yet so far. Catley was pleased. “Good. You can keep your hands.” He stepped forward. “Use ’em to unzip me.”

Catley had thought it out well. Her tie was neatly designed to enable her to service men with her mouth. Possession of her hands would enable her to do a better job and there was no way she could use them to free herself. If normal sex was demanded she was fastened in a manner to make it easy. All she had to do was lay back, her legs were already an open invitation. As at the beginning of a gigantic

task, Diana unzipped the proffered pants and extracted the ready genital she must place within her mouth. It was while she was busy at her task she felt the ax. It had been kicked against her hip. When her master reached the throes of his carnal ecstasy under the skill of her tongue she clasped his limp hand and pulled him down to enable her to strike the flat of the ax hard against his head. Wilbur Catley slumped insensible at her side.

But she was not free. She could not reach the ropes holding her ankles. Once again frustration brought the tears. If Catley regained consciousness while she was still bound helpless his anger would be a fearful thing to face. Desperately, Diana reached forward with the ax extended. By a series of small chopping blows she severed a cord, then another. Within two minutes she stood nakedly free. She could recall no sensation in her life that felt so good. It took another two minutes to steal a shirt and a pair of briefs, then to find the keys... In an almost drunken exhilaration she drove the roaring jeep up the incline to the road. In the pocket of the shirt was money she had taken from the man she left behind. It did not bother her conscience in the least.

Diana considered options. She had no parents but there were a wealth of uncles, aunts, and cousins. There were also friends. But to any of these she would be an apparition from the dead. There would be endless explanations, there would be suspicion, and there might be the police. None would believe the police a hazard to her freedom. She re-

jected all of them to settle on the one male figure for whom she felt the greatest need. Somehow she must find David Farrell. With a phone book or a call to Information it should not be difficult. Her attire was barely respectable, both shirt and briefs were too large and her feet was still bare. But, in California these deficiencies would raise few eyebrows.

She had escaped! She savored the word over and over. She was free. The jeep and the money in her shirt pocket made this freedom real. Naked and penniless she had been prey to anyone or any circumstance, the world is not kind to naked girls upon a canyon road. But now she had substance. The jeep conveyed a delightful sense of normalcy, it would moreover take her to wherever her love might live. Gleefully, Diana pressed her foot down on the accelerator and gratefully sniffed the moist salt air from the ocean just ahead.

Chapter Four

Chains of Love

For both of them it was a time of discovery. From the moment he had opened his door to discover a bedraggled but starry eyed girl upon his step life had changed utterly for David Farrell. The girl, flinging aside her coverings, had nakedly enveloped him in a world of femininity such as he had never known. He was certain it was a world from which neither of them would ever seek escape. For Diana Ramsay those first hours and days had opened vistas she had never before seen, and imparted a knowledge of herself she had not previously guessed.

They had gone shopping.

The list was long and was compiled with giggles, laughter and the making of physical love. Bath of them were insatiable, but curtailed carnality enough to borrow feminine necessities from an intrigued neighbor so they could go hand in hand for groceries and glamour. Diana found something almost mystic in a return to panties and bra' and all the flimsy loveliness her contours flattered into vivid beauty. Satiated with the joys of being female, Diana

gave her love one more address. Reaching the store, David Farrell had turned a quizzical regard upon his love and asked simply:

“Why?”

“Because you’re you, darling.”

“But, Diana, after what you’ve been through…! There’s no way.”

She kissed her finger and placed it on his lips. “Hush, my love. What we buy is because I want it. You didn’t go to the Citadel to play pool… Or did you?”

David looked into her sparkling eyes, knowing his too were aflame. “You are a remarkable woman, sweetheart.”

“Yes, I am.” She twinkled mischievously. “I’ve been trained, y’know. You’ll find me very satisfactory.”

They visited three stores and took home three boxes in a state of mutual ecstasy. When the contents of the boxes were dumped in a pile on the living room floor they sorted out the handcuffs, the straps, the crafted leathers, the leg irons and the ropes. David bemused in a happiness few men know: Diana triumphant in her female wisdom. Her voice was tender.

“Possessing me must rob you of nothing, David.”

“But this isn’t the Citadel!”

“Yes it is. Yours and mine.”

“But Diana darling, you weren’t into this before they took you?”

“That doesn’t matter.” She grinned meditatively. “I suspect every woman is in it a bit without really knowing. Look, when you did things to me in the Citadel you never sensed me hating you…?”

“I’m ashamed of some of those things.”

“Don’t be. I gloried in them. Not because I liked the pain but because I could handle it and because it was you who hurt me.”

David Farrell was a sensible man. He recognized sincerity and humbly accepted love. To quibble about niceties of conscience or conduct would be an affront, a crass failure to separate gold from dross. Amusedly but with thumping heart he watched his love toss aside her costly clothes. Standing before him she offered handcuffs. “In front or in back?” she asked demurely.

“Neither. Get me cord instead.”

Trembling, she obeyed. She turned and crossed her wrists above the curves of her derriere. Then stood, smiling dreamily, as her lover tied them together hard enough to hurt. Her voice was husky.

“Cords are nice. They’re intimate.”

“Hurt?”

“Oh yes, nicely. Thank you, darling.”

“Can you get loose?”

“No. Not ever.”

David took her savagely. Passionately they made love, on and on and on. Diana’s bound hands deterred them not at all.

In the evening they dined in style at Alberto’s. Around Diana’s neck was a gem studded collar, locked by a pendant padlock. They did not notice the envious attention. They saw only each other.

Their lives gravitated into a natural routine, a rhythm. There was no economic need for Diana to work, so she did not do so. That time might come but for the moment she was absorbed utterly in her love. She found herself obsessed by a determination to give every inch and crevice of her mind and body to David. The Citadel had taught her of what men were driven to when they wives scorned what she now realized was a form of love play. If sometimes it hurt… So what! Pain was a small price for the adoration she beheld daily in David’s eyes. Woman was designed for pain, she bore it much more easily than Man.

It was understood they would marry, but not yet. To marry instantly would spoil something. They kept the thought of it

as a small treasure still to be explored. In the meantime, and in these first days of liberty, Diana savored freedom to the full. Like a suburban housewife, she shopped and explored, glorying in sunshine and communion. She met David daily for lunch to tell him excitedly of small feminine pleasures and adventures. In the evenings he placed her in the bondage of rope and chain and strap.

They denied a name to the room they converted into Diana's prison. It was simply The Room. She was not always kept in it. Often she would watch television with her master, handcuffed and legironed, on the rug at his feet, or artistically and tightly corded to a chair. There was also the hook David screwed into a ceiling joist. With wrists bound and raised to it Diana could be made to stand prettily to be admired as a statue of alabaster. At other times her wrists were bandaged and she hung high enough her toes could not find the floor. They invented make believe delinquencies for which she must be punished.

It was an endless honeymoon. In it, Diana found herself able to answer a query long active in her mind. A question first applicable to Tina and April but now relevant to herself. Did she have a new emotional need of the bonds and punishments placed upon her, by her own demand, by the man she was going to marry? How real was her need? How much of their carnal cruelties arose from the female instinct to immolate herself for love? Searching for truth, they abstained from her bindings for several days until Di-

ana herself dumped the accouterments into David's lap and wantonly requested a return to normal. From that time on, Diana's captivities and pains were not restricted to evening. But, here and there throughout the week, David would leave her in The Room so constrained as to make her thankful for his return at five P.M.

Their week-ends were pure recreation in the car: driving far enough out of the city to make it safe for David to tie her to a tree and use his camera for endless shots of his Damsel in Distress. They giggled endlessly over the discovery of fresh places and fresh objects to which Diana could be tastefully and nakedly attached for the focus of the lens. It was a hobby. Some people collected butterflies or stamps. One Saturday they walked down the incline from the canyon road to where Wilbur Catley had held her captive. Nothing was there except the four stakes still driven in the ground. Shivering at an evil memory but fascinated by the macabre, Diana stripped naked and arranged herself for David to bind fast. Memories crowded as the cords tightened. For moments she knew a recurrent fear. To lay a ghost she insisted she be ravished as she had been violated in that horrific night.

They experimented with bondage in the car. Diana would lay, naked and hog-tied, in the trunk for fifty miles, or be bound hand and foot on the back seat to pray no one saw her nudity. Mostly she sat demurely beside David with her wrists handcuffed before or behind and her ankles ironed

or bound. There were endless combinations.

Gradually as time passed, Diana found herself more and more often wearing handcuffs. David had purchased her an expensive pair of sleek black steel, and she realized they were doing for her now what the Citadel had made them do for her during her imprisonment. Then they were a reminder of her slavery, now they were a reminder of her love, their friction on her wrist was the touch of David's hand. She wore them often, as another girl might bedeck herself with bracelets. They laughed about it a lot, both of them erotically enamored of this linkage of her hands. Unless David locked them behind her back Diana considered them akin to freedom. They delighted in endless discussions of this bondage that was the mainspring of their life.

"I don't feel any need to understand it, David."

"Between us that shouldn't have anything to do with it. You love to whip a girl and I'm a girl, and I love you. I don't mind the pain, mostly it makes me horny. It's not as though you're flogging me with a cat-o-nine tails."

They gazed at each other in an amused dilemma. Diana tried again. "You're hesitant about doing it, darling, because you're a nice guy and keep thinking about chivalry. How about, every second day. I bring you a whip and a rope and say 'Please'?"

David Farrell raised her erect and took her in his arms.

“You’d really do that for me? You wouldn’t see me as a monster?”

Diana laughed and broke away. Clinking her hobbled feet to The Room and back, she handed the worshipping man a bandage, a rope, and the least lethal of their whips. She kissed him lightly and said: “Do it right, darling,” then proffered her handcuffed wrists.

They were utterly absorbed, Diana watching the unlocking of the cuffs and the bandaging of her wrists, David breathing heavily as he bound the girl he loved. As the tensioned rope drew Diana’s bandaged wrists higher and higher they shared a smile in total understanding. When her bare toes could no longer touch the rug and her leg irons dangled in a loose loop between her feet the suspension halted. The posture was an old one to the girl, she did not struggle. Demurely, she said: “Girls are supposed to look beautiful like this, do I?”

“Too damn beautiful for words, sweetheart.”

“And, hung up like this, I’m nicely available. You can whip any bit of me you want.”

David chuckled. He was standing back to admire his loveliest possession. “You needn’t think I’m going to whip your breasts or that cute little cunt.” He admonished. “You’re altogether too foxy for your own good.”

“But you could, David dear. Look how helpless I am. Next

time we go shopping let's see if we can find the right sort of whip for my naughty places."

"There's nothing naughty about your breasts, you delightful idiot."

"Grandma would have disagreed. She'd have called them saucy or wanton. I really think you should whip them just a little, dear?"

David Farrell struck the suspended nudity a sharp slash from hip to hip. Then watched in wonder as Diana curled and writhed but made no sound beyond an. involuntary gasp at scalded skin. He knew he was the most privileged of men. "That's the proper place to whip you," he assured cheerfully. "Those are the most impudent curves of all."

"Mmmmmm, that hurt beautifully."

"I suppose you'd like to be let down and ravished?"

"Later, darling, not now. I think it most important for you to whip me properly. It will sort of break the ice. If you want me to spread my legs so you can whip dear little pussy you'll have to take off my leg irons."

"Stop it! You're driving me crazy. A man can only stand so much of that sort of talk. I'm not sure you don't deserve this." David neatly planted a splatting impact across the twin curves he had described as impudent. They responded by a line of scarlet blush while their owner kicked

at the air to send her ankle chain into a musical protest. “I want you to remember you asked for this,” he reminded grimly.

“Yes I did, didn’t I! And you’re doing it so beautifully. I’m so grateful and I do love you.”

“I’m not sure you’re not putting me on. You’re certainly a crafty wench, and saucy with it, who’s found a way to deserve what she gets You’ve had a couple: what d’you say to a total of fifty?”

“David, noooooo! Fifty like those! Oh, wow!”

“Are you complaining?”

“Oh jeepers… Oh, damn! Noooooo, I suppose not.”

“What does that mean, you tantalizing mischief?”

“It means couldn’t we settle for twenty-five?”

“You’re bargaining, beloved girl. Surely you realize a Master can never bargain with his slave? Once he starts that he’s lost.”

Diana gave one more kick at her chain before hanging limply passive and surveying the man with the whip with a limpid eye. “I expect you’re right, darling. Go ahead and whip me. I’ll comfort myself with the thought I deserve every stroke.”

It was a beautiful game. Each was at the peak of sensitivity,

savoring the quintessence of eroticism. Diana hovered in a gorgeous blaze of pain, David beheld before him the ultimate dream of Everyman. When his whip had cut his love five times he lowered her nudity to the floor where they rolled and plunged and kissed themselves into satiety. Laying there in blissful content, Diana said, roguishly and without conviction, “Let’s do it again.”

They were very happy.

The Serpent entered their Eden on the evening of the next day.

Since Diana was naked and constrained in the manner of their after dinner communion, it was David who answered the ring at their door. A murmur of voices beyond the casual rejection of the canvasser prompted Diana to tip-toe her hobbled path into the bedroom in a prudent retreat to leave the living room vacant for any visitor David might choose to invite therein. Leaving the door ajar, she listened. David’s voice, stiff with male dignity came in loud and clear.

“I cannot believe we have anything to discuss—”

“But indeed we have, Mr. Farrell. I do implore you to listen to what I have to say.” It was the voice of Sister Nona.

To the naked girl behind the door the shock was like a

blow. This was the reality of a lingering premonition solidly lodged in a back crevice of her mind. Determinedly, she opened the door and minced her short captive steps back into the room.

“Good evening, Sister Nona.”

“My dear, how good to see you! And so charmingly restrained, even the handcuffs!” She smiled archly at her hostile host. “But then, of course, I could have guessed.”

“I suppose you’d better sit down.” David’s invitation sounded like a heavy concession.

“I’m not going back to the Citadel.” Diana’s assertion was equally uncompromising. “Oh, Sister Nona, why did you have to follow me here?”

“It was where we knew you would be, child—”

“So, all right, you have something to say.” David was terse. “Let’s hear it.”

Sister Nona sighed. She had not expected cordiality, and the two of them seemed so young and so naive. “Rome wasn’t built in a day.” She smiled winningly. “And I didn’t expect a warm welcome.” Her eyes sparkled. “I am well aware of the intractability of young women in love.”

“In that case why not leave us alone.” David was playing it heavy. “Don’t delude yourself that anything you say will cause this girl to go back with you.”

“Mr. Farrell, you are a valued client. We hope you always will be. But this young woman belongs to The Citadel. You have not purchased her, and The Citadel will not relinquish its own. It is safest for you both that she abandon this folly.”

“That’s a threat.”

“A warning. I don’t need to tell you of the power and influence behind The Citadel. It would be most foolish to fight it.”

“Sister, I can’t go back! I just can’t—a lifetime of imprisonment…! Can’t you understand, I’m free… free—! ”

“Are you, dear.” Sister Nona was dryly amused. “Aren’t those handcuffs on your wrists and leg irons on your ankles…?”

“Yes, but—!”

“I know, I know! You are doing it for Mr. Farrell. But let us be honest. You would not be so eager a captive had it not been for The Citadel, nor would Mr. Farrell have fallen in love with you had you met elsewhere.”

“Nothing we do is any of your business, Sister—”

Their caller waved David into silence. “You have enjoyed a marvelous honeymoon,” she said firmly. “We propose, now, one more week of your carnal bliss. Then, Diana, you must return to us.”

“I won’t… I won’t!”

“We suggest, Mr. Farrell, you tail off this relationship by frequent visits to Diana at The Citadels. She will be at your disposal according to our policies. In your case we are prepared to make a financial concession. A gesture of goodwill. There need be no heartbreaking farewells.”

“Diana and I are going to be married.” Sister Nona shrugged. “I suppose we could even concede that point. It does not matter to The Citadel whether their girls are married or single.”

“This whole thing is absurd.” David looked around the room as though in confirmation. “You and your Citadel! The damn place should be abolished.”

“And yet, Mr. Farrell, you were only too grateful for the service we provide.”

Diana was fond of Sister Nona. She understood the implacability of the Citadel and blamed none of its malignancy on the woman sitting across the room. She longed only for an unanswerable defense of her freedom. “But, Sister Nona, you can’t expect me to go back.” She wailed. “There’s the… the punishment.”

“What the Devil’s that?” David demanded belligerently.

“I escaped. Girls who escape or try to escape are punished terribly.”

“It is a deterrent,” Sister Nona interposed gently. “Any house must have its rules.”

David looked at Diana askance. “This damn punishment what in hell is it?”

“I don’t know. They never told us: only that it would be really bad. Ask Sister Nona.”

The Sister waved the punishment aside as of little moment. “The sentence is usually a week chained in the dungeon and a daily whipping of up to one hundred strokes total. They are not light. There are other lesser things…”

“That’s medieval.”

“Not really, Mr. Farrell. Punishments can hardly be designed for pleasure. Surely you realize The Citadel cannot tolerate escape. The girls must be made to understand it is unacceptable and best forgotten.”

“I’d have supposed it the only thing they ever thought about.”

“Diana will tell you differently. There are some who would not escape if they could. The Citadel gives them everything —” Sister Nona turned a searching eye on her former prisoner. “By the way, dear, just how did you manage to escape?”

“I can’t tell you that, Sister.”

“Ah, so there were others involved!”

“I can’t tell you that, either, and anyway you wouldn’t believe how easy it was. It just sort of happened.”

“Hmmmmm. As it happens, we know how you left The Citadel, my dear. It is hard to hide things from us.”

Her stomach curling in a sickly dread, Diana watched as Sister Nona extracted something from her bag. Fearfully, she extended her cuffed hands and accepted the two photos. One showed April and Tina hanging naked by their thumbs. The second revealed the two of them astride the hated ‘Horse’, its narrow brutal edge deep in their defenseless crotch. In both pictures their young heads were bowed in the weariness of pain.

“They are being punished for your escape, my dear. When not employed as you see them there they inhabit the dungeon. Their penalty for aiding you will continue until your return.”

David snatched the photos from Diana’s trembling fingers. After a quick scan he returned them to their visitor. “They mean nothing,” he said tersely. “You could easily pose those girls for long enough to take the shots. They would have to obey you.”

Once more the Sister sighed. “Diana will believe even if you do not, Mr. Farrell. I think that, within the week’s grace I have given you, she will return where she belongs.”

“Think what you like, do what you like: Diana stays with me.”

“Such nobility!” Sister Nona smiled in deprecation. “But has it not occurred to the two of you that, since we took her once, we can take her again?”

“That’s another threat.”

“The Citadel is very powerful.”

Diana was distraught and trembling. She fell to her knees and clutched her lover in distressful need. David’s fingers caressed her hair in a familiar gesture of love. It was the Sister again who broke a lengthening silence.

“Do me the small favor of freeing her hands please.”

When it was done, the now weeping nakedness was raised by gentle hands and fondly embraced until Diana’s freed arms returned the endearment and tightened in a spasm of forgotten tenderness. For a long time the two females exchanged affection until the older whispered “The Sisters love you, dear, you know that. So do the girls. Now I kiss you good-bye. But please come back to us… please!”

“Thank you, Mr. Farrell.”

“What the devil for?”

“For listening. Remember, we value your goodwill. We want you as a friend and client. Above all, we do not want

you hurt."

David Farrell saw his visitor to the door. He had nothing to say except abuse, and Sister Nona did not rate abuse so he kept silent. When the latch had clicked shut behind. The departed emissary he returned to his love and gathered a tear stained Diana in his arms.

Diana knew the heavy iron shackle locked on her ankle was a solid victory for The Citadel. So too was the long chain by which she was confined to the basic necessities of their home. Its links sang a mockery of her freedom as she walked in bored irritation within the limits they allowed. The rest of her was without restraint, but what she wanted was David Farrell, not the T.V. or the radio or the books… He had left her the phone, but she had called him twice already out of sheer loneliness, that was enough! Disconsolently, she threw herself into an armchair, crooked her chained leg over one arm, and relived their bid decision.

"Don't you trust me, darling?" Her query contained amusement.

"No, I don't! And you know why. Those two pictures got to you, and the threat about hurting me. I can see you being quixotic and traipsing off to that damn place to be a little heroine. I'm going to lock your ankle, but good! That way you don't have to make up your mind, I've made it up for you."

“Thank you darling. No handcuffs?”

“No. You’d best be free except to run.”

Diana was secretly glad but would not tell him so. Her mind had been a turmoil since the serpent had defiled their Eden. She had a claustrophobic premonition of dark forces closing in on their joy. She pouted prettily: “Darling, I’m going to be terribly bored.”

“You’ve been chained here other days—hands and feet?”

“Yes, but that was you and me. This chunk of iron on my ankle now spells Citadel with a big ‘C’. In this frame of mind I can’t possibly just sit, I want to go out and bash something or run five miles. I keep trying to forget Tina and April but I just can’t!”

“And thus the chain, sweetheart. Bear with it. Nothing’s forever. Between us we’ll figure out something.” He had kissed her and hugged her very tight indeed.

Diana kicked her chain. She was restless and at odds with the world. She tried to close her mind to the very real possibility of being once more kidnapped to be returned to The Citadel and her waiting punishment. She supposed she would survive the punishment: she was costly merchandise to be nurtured, not destroyed. But she was frightened of what she knew of an escapee’s fate. She had little doubt she would suffer it even though the Sisters might feel affection for the erring girl who must be made to scream.

She had never ceased to marvel at the ease by which she had been 'taken' that first time. She would be just as easy for them now. All girls were cruelly vulnerable.

It was not until David had gone and she was alone that Diana had realized what an easy prey she would be right now to any man who forced the lock. She imagined herself running from here to there, her chained foot impeding every step until she was forced to the floor and bound. She could be taken to a waiting car in a box, a basket, or wrapped in a rug. She would be gagged or doped. No one would know.

Her fears were heightened twice during the day by rattlings and bangings at the door. It was probably children or someone selling something but it sent her scurrying to the furthest link of her chain in an absurd but instinctive need to flee. When David returned home he was greeted by a wan and fearful maiden who clung and clung in an urgent need of male security. Recognizing the trauma of loneliness and the chain he took her out to dine.

It was gorgeous and wonderful and everything the feminine heart adores. The discreet lighting, the almost tangible smell of money, the incredible gowns, of which Diana's own was not the least impressive. This was living! She basked in David's regard and the covert glances of a dozen men. The Citadel retreated into the darkness until an oddly familiar male voice made it once more all too real.

“Miss Ramsay, I do believe! My dear Diana…?”

Startled, Diana looked up into the beaming visage of the genial Mr. Sands. He was obviously delighted and surprised. Without hesitation he deferred to David’s questioning regard. “My dear Sir, this is unpardonable, but may I join your table? I am alone.”

Diana had downed a cocktail. She giggled and nodded at her escort. “Mr. Sands is one of the nice ones,” she explained. “He was always very kind.”

“I am grateful, Sir—Mr. Farrell, isn’t it.” Mr. Sands was his usual redundant self. “I would not impose like this if I did not have something to impart.” He paused for effect. “Something that could be of vital concern to you both.”

“Miss Ramsay and I are going to be married.”

“Ah.” Mr. Sands contrived to make the small exclamation sound like a condolence for disaster. “Well…!” He directed his most benign beam back and forth between them. “I suppose that can’t be helped. Young people do it all the time.” He drank his cocktail at a gulp. “Since you share this, ahem, adventure I will share my remarks to you equally. I am inclined to prolixity so please be patient ”

They shared a smile. David was unbending, it was hard to remain annoyed with Mr. Sands for long. “You’ve got me all excited,” Diana confessed. “What’s the big surprise?”

“First the gossip. I was at the… The Place, and was shocked to learn of your… your—”

“I escaped.”

“Ah… Well, yes. Ha, ha, here we are, aren’t we! Bright lights and not a dungeon in sight. I expect it’s a nice change?”

“Very! I’m not going back.”

“Ah…! Well anyway I was bereft. I had lost my favorite girl. I had to fall back on that well meaning little trick, Gloria. But she’s not in your class, not at all. But she told me about you. I guess you left the whole place in quite a flap.”

“Did you see April and Tina?”

“Indeed yes. I was privileged to witness their punishment. They seemed most uncomfortable and decidedly unhappy. I gathered they were in some manner delinquent in your escape. Gave you a hand, eh?”

“Were they being beastly to them—they’re such darlings.”

“Well… that’s not for me to say. Suppose we skip the twins, I’m sure they’re a resilient pair, and get on to what I have in mind.”

“So long as it does not entail Diana’s return to The Citadel,” David said bluntly.

“Of course! I understand your concern.” Mr. Sands broke open a crusty roll with a considerable flourish. “How

would you like to be free of The Citadel forever?"

"I'm free now," Diana ventured, sensing more to come.

"Ah, but only in a sense. I am sure you are aware of the hazard of… of… repossession?"

"You think they'll kidnap me again?"

"Well, my dear, isn't that what you're thinking too?"

"Yes, I suppose so. They've already threatened—"

"And coerced over those two young girls," David added angrily.

"Ah, and there we have a situation in which neither of you can be happy or secure." Mr. Sands drank off another cocktail with the flourish of a master. "And that's where I enter the picture."

They looked at him, acutely aware of vulnerability. "Are you going to bail me out?" Diana asked coyly.

"Yes."

If Mr. Sands had their attention before, he had it doubly now. He was well aware of being the kingpin in this drama of their lives and was prepared to enjoy it to the full. "I have often spoken of my wish to purchase you, dear girl, and have always lamented the immense value the Citadel places on your head—Not that you aren't worth a million dollars but I simply did not have that sum free to part

with."

"That million dollars is nonsense. I'm not worth it."

"My dear girl, the market determines your worth, not you." Mr. Sands was at his benevolent best. "There are those who will pay that sum."

"What good does that do Diana, she isn't selling herself?"

"No, she is not. But at this juncture The Citadel would welcome a sale. They are, in effect, selling something they do not have. It's pure profit."

Mr. Sands had their attention. He radiated bonhomie. "I want you to consider this carefully. Suppose you got half of that million and The Citadel got the rest, there would emerge a bonus for you in that they would have relinquished title, they would have no further interest in you. No more kidnapping."

"But someone…? Wouldn't someone have bought me?"

"Precisely, dear girl. A Consortium of five friends have each subscribed two hundred thousand. I am one of them. The net result is the million to appease The Citadel and enrich you."

"But that's crazy! Five men…?"

"Not crazy at all. They already have the premises ready for you. You will be captive five days a week, tended by a lady's

maid already employed. Your week-ends would be free."

"But suppose I put in the first week, take their money, and refuse to go back?"

"That would not be wise," said Mr. Sands.

The girl and her love exchanged raised eyebrows in bafflement. Diana could not deny the accelerated beating of her heart. Mr. Sands had a way with him—and to be free of the Citadel...! She looked wide eyed at the intruder on their privacy and innocently asked: "What would be my duties? What would I have to do?"

"Exactly what you are already trained for, my dear."

"You mean... I'd be whipped. And... and... small tortures and... and sex?"

"That about sums it up."

"No deal," said David decisively. "If Diana has to be whipped it's me who'll do the whipping."

"A laudable sentiment," Mr. Sands agreed heartily. "She is a delectable subject. But there is a factor we must not overlook. Can either of you believe the Citadel has relinquished such a prize? When I was there I picked up certain hints indicating their conviction she would be back in their possession within a week or two. In that eventuality you have lost her for good."

“Mr. Sands, whose side are you on?”

“I strive to be an honest broker, Mr. Farrell. I am counting facts as they exist. Diana is not a free girl. She lost her freedom when The Citadel first took her months ago. This pleasant evening and her escape are only a brief interlude you will not be allowed to prolong.”

“But you want her for yourself?”

“As a member of the consortium, yes. I cannot, alone, afford her price.” Mr. Sands bestowed an avuncular smile upon the girl he was bargaining for. “But I would enjoy her one day a week. A wise man is content with compromise.”

“This whole thing is nuts!” David glared from one to the other of his companions. “It’s blood and thunder fiction.”

“I heartily concur,” Mr. Sands agreed blandly. “But if you hope to keep this young woman exclusively for yourself you will have to house her in a cage in the vault of a Bank… and even there—!”

Diana wanted to giggle, to weep, or to beat her fists against The Citadel’s walls. She was being discussed as a property, and that was what she had indeed become. She realized this more clearly than David could accept. Her loneliness in the days when he was at work had told her graphically how vulnerable she was. Short of being locked in an impregnable prison, she would be an easy prey. Their home would not be safe, locks could be picked or windows bro-

ken. Evading repossession would make her as much a prisoner as in the Citadel itself. Feminine curiosity and two cocktails prompted a query.

“Supposing your consortium buys me, Mr. Sands. What would my life be? Do you know?”

“You would be a prisoner five days and nights a week. A different member would enjoy you each day. The premises include a cell, a dungeon, a cage, and the usual room full of… gear.”

“A pillory and a whipping post and such?”

“Exactly. Nothing you are not already familiar with. When not in the company of the gentlemen you would be adequately controlled or made comfortable by the maid. She is a competent and likable young woman with whom you would have to reach an understanding about obedience. She is averse to a recurring wrestling match.”

“Would there be punishments? I mean real ones like what’s hanging over my head at the Citadel right now. If I did or said certain things would I find myself in trouble?”

“Yes, there would be rules. Slapping faces would not be condoned, nor would attempts to escape.”

“But it doesn’t make sense, Mr. Sands. I can just walk away any week-end and not go back?”

“Mmmmmmf not quite.” Mr. Sands patted her hand

paternally. “You’d be on parole. If you broke that parole you would then be under the same threat from the consortium as you now are from the Citadel. Don’t feel badly about it. Most lives are lived under varying compulsions.”

Diana sighed. There was an undeniable erotic thrill in knowing herself the carnal quarry of powerful forces. She toyed for a moment with the dream of David and herself alone on a South Sea Island, then jerked herself back to reality. “You’re offering me a choice of two imprisonments,” she said slowly. “You’re telling me I can never be free. If that’s so I might just as well go back to The Citadel right now. At least I know what it’s about… And I always liked the Sisters.”

“But you’re forgetting the week-ends,” Mr. Sands insinuated gently. “Or would you prefer Mr. Farrell to visit you at The Citadel as a cash client?”

“Oh… please… don’t—!”

“There is also the matter of the punishment awaiting you at the Citadel. No matter how fond the Sisters may be of you that penalty will be inflicted to its utmost severity. Believe me, I’ve known them a long time, and you’ve committed the unpardonable sin.”

“All right, so I don’t go back to the Citadel. How does your consortium take delivery of me?”

“The young lady I have spoken of will call at your home. You will accompany her wherever or however she demands. You will be obedient. She will show you a Photostat of our cheque and the memo confirming your sale by the Citadel. They will cease to be a menace.”

“Suppose we emigrate?” David asked disgustedly. “There’s a profitable deal I could grab in Australia.”

Mr. Sands shrugged impatiently. “Supposing you arrived there which would be doubtful. It would simply entail a long and disagreeable journey bound and drugged inside a crate for poor Diana. Let us spare the dear girl. Please understand the Citadel spans the world and, for them, her captivity is a matter of policy. They would see a principle involved.”

“Can we think about this?” David asked wearily. “You can phone us tomorrow.”

“I wish you would say yes to us now. I would make a call…”

“Tomorrow.”

“Very well, Mr. Farrell, I am in your hands. So is Diana.”

They watched him go, their evening ruined. On the way home their car was forced to the curb. As the ether soaked pad was forced tight upon her face, the last Diana saw of her love was a seemingly lifeless bulk upon the pavement. It all, then, became very dark indeed.

Chapter Five

Golden Handcuffs

“These are the heaviest we have, dear. I’m sure you didn’t expect the lighter ones?” Sister Nanette said solicitously.

“No… no, that’s all right, Sister.” Diana lifted a tentative hand to the wrist on which was locked what seemed like fifty pounds of metal. Probably the shackle and its links weighed no more than ten, but every part of her nakedness was similarly held, locked and chained. Only her neck was more kindly fettered: no maiden throat could have borne the massive load by which her limbs and waist was tethered to the stone. The recaptured fugitive checked back complaint but inquired, diffidently: “How long will I be kept chained in the dungeon, Sister?”

“You are not to know that, child.”

“And when will I be flogged?”

“Daily. There are too many strokes to inflict on you at one time.” Sister Nanette patted a bare shoulder and kissed a wan cheek. “It will make a break for you. It will get you out of this gloomy place for a while, even if it is painful.”

“Sister, will I be always heavily chained for the rest of my life… because I escaped?”

“Of course not. Don’t dream up such nonsense, Diana. You will endure your punishment and then go back to your handcuffs. I always suspected you enjoyed wearing them.” Sister Nanette took the frightened nudity into her arms and hugged reassuringly. “Your punishment, when it is done, erases the past.” She kissed dry lips. “Take comfort in that. Even when the pain is bad you must remember you are much loved here. We will be as glad as you when it is over.”

“And am I really to be flogged and… other things in front of the other girls… and maybe clients?”

“Of course! It is not you alone who is taught a lesson.” Sister Nanette hesitated. “I must leave you now, dear. I hate to see you in this place and so loaded with chain. You already know the loneliness of dungeons, we will try and ease it for you. No one wants to see you morbid or seeing ghosts… My poor dear girl, if only you had not been so foolish! ”

If only! Diana repeated the regret over and over long after Sister Nanette had gone and slammed the door bolts home with an intentional thud. But it was useless to lament. She had stolen her halcyon honeymoon and now she must pay for it. Obeying the dragging weight of irons she sank to the stone where she could dispose the heavy links for a partial easement of the punishing load. Dismally, she leaned back

against the cold hard wall and changed her litany to How long? How long? How long...?

They had reassured her about David, he was not dead. They spoke of him visiting her as a client but she wondered within her own mind, if he would do so. Such a visit and its inevitable parting would be an agony for both of them. Vehemently, she vowed to tell him to forget her, to not waste his life in a love affair with a chained girl captive behind stone walls and iron bars. And yet...? Diana shrugged away the speculation, it was something to which she could not yet adjust.

She had tried hard to drive away any thought of punishment. But it was hopeless, her thoughts always reverted so as to show her the fatal words in Capitals “The Punishment". She had dared to escape. Now she would be an example to all that escaping from The Citadel was something a girl must never do. In the past, escape had always hovered in the mind as a pale small hope. But now...? The chained and naked girl was positive that after The Punishment she would never think of it again. If, at this moment, she was offered the key to her irons and shown an open door she would reject both.

Diana played with her fetters. There was nothing else to do, and their weight and implacability was almost amusing. They would have held a giant, or a dozen giants, secure. Locked on her nakedness they made her a very small and

very helpless girl. The key to them had been hung on the opposite wall as a small grim emphasis.

When, after a long, long time, the door opened it was to reveal a surprise. Gloria peeped in doubtfully, then entered all the way. “I’ve got permission,” she said hurriedly. “Otherwise I wouldn’t dare. You poor, poor darling! But, mmmm, you look simply gorgeous chained like that.”

“I don’t feel gorgeous. Oh, Gloria…!”

“Yes, I know. You’re going to be punished. Or is this the start of it already? They put me in here one night but not with such heavy chains. It was groovy for the first hour. But after that… Wow! I say, darling, this place is really something.”

“Gloria, don’t tell me you’re actually enjoying it?”

“Of course I am. That’s why I came. That first time with you was a real bust and I wanted to go home. But since then my little pussy’s been hot all the time. After what’s happening to you I’m not even going to think of escape. I’ll put in my two years like a good little slave girl. Darling, this knowing there’s no way I can get out of here is a real cunt curler.”

Gloria was a delight. Diana envied her. True, she found small eroticism in the Citadel herself, and a consuming lust in bondage to her love. But the chains and the dungeon and the floggings were all too much. Her loins were as cold as the stone they must sit on. She doubted she would even

play with herself. Her spirit and her life was gone. But she valued company. Half heartedly, she asked: “Have you earned yourself any punishments, Gloria?”

“Have I ever!” Gloria Winton was suddenly starry eyed. She turned her naked back with a flourish. “Look what I got for kicking one of those idiots in a session! Twenty strokes, all hard, and all on my back because it hurts more.”

Diana viewed the fading stripes with an experienced eye. They must have been severe. She shivered. “Don’t tell me you enjoyed every one, Gloria?”

“Well, not really. I was secreting like crazy for the first few but then something went wrong and I screamed and screamed.” She grinned confidingly. “I’ve discovered it’s best to scream. It hurts less—I mean whatever you’re screaming about, and the Sisters like it. When a girl screams it shows they’ve got her full attention. I say, darling, was it very groovy sleeping with that guy, the client you escaped to?”

“It was the happiest time of my life. We were going to get married. Now they’ve ‘taken’ me again. I’ll never escape now, not ever.”

“And you’re going to be flogged and we all have a watch you get it. Darling, that’s awfully tactless of me: sort of gloating. But, in case it’s any help, I’ve asked about your

flogging. They aren't going to use one of those awful Cat things with bits of metal and knots. You'll get the regular whip but laid on extra hard."

"Gee thanks!" Diana could not repress bitterness. "And I only get a hundred strokes. Aren't I lucky!"

She was enveloped in a wave of nude female. Gloria was contrite "Diana my sweet, that was mean, I should have shut up about you being whipped. Lay back, dear, and let me get at you. I'll make you happy."

"You're sweet, but no. I just don't have what it takes."

"Once I get my tongue in your puss you'll love it, and I think we've got time… I can move some of these awful chains around."

"My luck isn't in these days, Gloria. We'd get caught for sure. Then they'd lock chastity belts on us… and they're so damn tight! I hate 'em."

"Gosh, you are in the dumps. Let me play with your tits!"

"No. I'd just get excited, we both would. And you'd bump your head on all this iron I'm locked into—and then a Sister would walk in because you've been so long."

"You poor dear. Gosh, you're down!" Gloria surveyed the chained girl in feminine sympathy. "And I can't do much to help, can I!" She suddenly brightened. "Tell you what, I'll ask the Sisters to chain me in here with you for company.

I'll tell 'em you'll get a trauma or something." She giggled. "Maybe they'll chain us both to the same wall."

"That will be the day! They're dead against anything lesbian. We have to be kept potent for the clients."

"Ugh! If they did chain me with you I suppose they'd have to unlock me whenever a client asked for me. Why don't we promote that idea with you? It sure would make a break, getting out of this awful place and all those irons—Darling, if we're not going to play I expect I'd better go. D'you mind?"

Diana lifted two heavily fettered wrists. "It's no use me minding about anything. Try and come again. And don't forget to slam the bolts—as if it matters."

Gloria's departure took away the sunshine, the light, and the hope. Without her blithe nudity the dungeon was bleakly cruel. Diana rested her head in her hands on top of her drawn up knees. She cried in spasms of grief for a long, long time. The dungeon did not care. She wept into the darkness and the night. Morning brought the twins.

"They told us to bring your breakfast, darling," said April.

"They aren't going to flog you until this afternoon," Tina contributed cheerfully.

"Gosh, those chains are beautiful, Diana! It must be hard work to move. They never chained us that heavily."

“Did that Mr. Farrell fuck you?”

“We’re terribly sorry you got caught again.”

“It’s all our fault. We shouldn’t have shown you that way out. If we hadn’t made you escape you wouldn’t have got taken again and you wouldn’t have to be punished—Darling, that flogging or whatever it is will be quite something! Doesn’t it crinkle your puss?”

Diana held up a chained hand to stem the tide of teenage chatter. “No, it doesn’t crinkle my pussy. I’m scared to death. But, darlings, what did they do to you? I saw some pictures…”

“Oh those!” April disposed of the pictures with any airy wave “That was the worst they did to us—except the flogging, of course. We didn’t like what those pictures showed at all. We didn’t secrete even the littlest bit. It was just pure Ugh! They made us hang by our thumbs for hours and hours, and the same with that damn horse thing cutting our cunts. It was so we’d look tired and hopeless in the pictures. We sure did, didn’t we.”

“Yes, you sure did. And they flogged you as well?”

The twins turned. Diana gasped and felt her stomach curl. Both the lovely teenage backs were lividly striped with the weals of a whip cruelly used. Soon, hers would look the same.

“We only got five a day for a week, darling, so it wasn’t all that bad. But we didn’t like it. Our pussies were dry as dust.”

“We both think we’d still be in the dungeon here if the clients hadn’t kept asking for us. We’re awfully popular, y’know.”

“We’re awfully glad to see you back. We both think that if they hadn’t managed to capture you again they’d have whipped us some more.”

“I bet you’ll miss Mr. Farrell fucking you?”

“Or is he going to buy you in sessions so he can do it here?”

“We don’t like men. We think they’re Ugh. We only let them get inside us when there’s no way out. We always ask them to whip us instead.”

“And we can’t escape now, not even if we wanted to. They’ve fixed those doors. They hurt us terribly until we told them how we managed. We don’t mind, ’cos we don’t want to escape anyway. But it would have been nice for you.”

“Gosh no!” Diana shook her head vehemently. “No more escapes for me, not ever! They hurt too much.”

“We’d give you a lovely orgasm, darling, but they told us not to. If we start to nibble someone will walk in. Sorry!”

They kissed and hugged and left it at that.

Diana's flogging was well staged. The Citadel boasted an impressive main hall with a platform on which girls suffered for their misdeeds. Today it held no gear, only the dangling trapeze bar to which her wrists would be strapped. Striving for every nuance of sensation, the Citadel clothed the penitent in a white sheet which she must wear in her solemn walk to her place of execution. It drew some delighted Oh's and Ah's from girls who had never been flogged, and from the several clients who had paid for the privilege of watching a girl's back wickedly wealed.

Diana herself wished she could have got drunk. She had been briefed in all she must do. None of it entailed help or force, she was on her own. She must be an obedient penitent who would offer her wrists to be bound and her nudity to be whipped. She was denied a gag. She was expected to scream lustily that novices might be properly impressed.

Covered by the white sheet, Diana Ramsay felt her walk down the Hall and up the platform steps an interminable journey under the burn of many eyes. On the platform, Sister Angela waited with the whips. Reaching the appointed place, the delinquent girt must loose and toss aside the innocent white of her shroud to reveal herself in total nakedness. Then to place her hands through the looped and waiting straps and to watch white Sister Angela buck-

led them as tight as her strength could make them. When her bound hands and strained arms compelled Diana to stand upon her toes, the motor stopped. Stretched, as a statuesque nude, she obeyed the ultimate humiliation of confession. Her voice filled the Hall with the clarity of resignation.

“I am to be flogged. It is because I escaped from the Citadel. I was well aware I should not do so. It is proper for me to be punished. Sister Angela will whip me. I counsel all of you never to attempt escape. Escape from The Citadel is not possible. You would always be brought back, as I have been brought back to be punished and to resume my life as one of all you girls.”

Sister Angela cut the whip across Diana’s naked back much harder than Diana had ever known. The agony was very terrible and much greater than her courage could endure. She screamed shamingly to tell them it was too, too cruel, that they should cut her skin with lighter strokes she might bear with fortitude. But Sister Angela paid no heed, nor did the wide eyed audience. Diana writhed and kicked and hurt her wrists in ways she could not control. Sister Angela’s whip wealed her again and again and again. Diana lost count. She almost lost consciousness but not quite. Two Sisters helped her walk back the way she came. They ironed her tenderly and left her alone in her dungeon to weep. Tomorrow it would be done to her again.

Diana lost count of her dungeon days. It was somewhere between seven and ten. The Sisters took her away from it finally for fear of trauma. Diana was far too valuable to spoil, they wanted no personality warp or blemish. They moved her on to the next phase in what is done to a girl so foolish as to escape. Diana had long since guessed the things yet to be done to her. Some she had suffered before, others were a new excursion into pain. All would happen before she was granted her handcuffs and a return to work. It was during this time that the wounds of her flogging would partly heal. Her clients must see only the bitter remnants of horror.

Diana did not often plead. She saw The Punishment as something inevitable to be worked through and endured in the knowledge it would one day end. But when she was taken to the small bare room she fell to her knees at Sister Nona's feet and waited. "Please, don't put me on there… don't sit me on the horse!"

"It is part of The Punishment, child."

"But it is so awful! I've been told—"

"Others have rested astride it for their day, Diana. So can you."

"Forgive me, Sister." Diana got slowly to her feet, ashamed of her lapse but unable to take her eyes from the sinister structure designed to give her pain throughout the day. She

had always wondered at the passive acceptance of prisoners as they walked to whatever fate their sentence had decreed. But she had been doing it herself, she would do it again now. To tussle with Sister Nona was unthinkable, and Sister Nanette was standing quietly by to render aid. She shrugged and said: “Please tell me what to do.”

They crossed her wrists behind her back and tied them tight. Diana stood quietly for it to be done, it was an old familiar resignation. Guided by an affectionate hand she stepped up on the bench and threw one leg over to stand astride the plank, on the edge of which she must rest her crotch. She watched in mute misery as the anklets were strapped tight and the ropes trailed off to either side and the waiting rings. Once more the hands were on her arms.

“You must sit down, dear.”

“But it’s just the edge! I… I can’t!”

“Yes you can, Diana We’ll position you. Rest your weight slowly, most of it will be on your feet until… until the end.”

It was hateful and obscene and made the punished girl feel silly. But there was not far to go. She lowered the cleft between her thighs to the edge of the waiting plank. Her hands were lost to her, she was dependent on the Sisters for support until her bound arms were raised high above her back to a hook already in readiness. Suddenly the Sisters were gone and her feet were whisked from the bench

and out to either side, their tethers drawn tighter and tighter as the sisters tensioned her legs and thighs to anchor her firmly on her painful perch. Diana was panting and striving to cope with a new and different and awful kind of pain.

“She looks so sweet. It is hard to believe—”

“Her arms a trifle higher, I think. She must lean forward for maximum effect. She must not sit back.”

They raised the sad bare arms that were already far too high. Diana’s body obediently leaned forward to balance the stress. Diana tried but could not move. She was held in the precise posture in which the edge of the plank could burrow deeper and deeper into her cleft. She was sitting squarely on her sex, unable to shift, to move, or to seek easement. She moaned in a desolation of disbelief that this was happening.

“Superbly horsed! The poor darling…”

“It’s an exquisite punishment for a girl. I’ve always found it fascinating. Such revealing stress…!”

Diana moaned and shook her head in bitter denial.

“You should have thought of this, dear child, before you ran away. We must leave you now. Do try and learn a lesson.”

The lesson was not hard to learn. In her wracked agony Di-

ana knew she would never escape again. She was the Citadel's and so she would remain. The pain worsened steadily as though from some white hot instrument within her sheath spreading its venom to every nerve and crevice of her naked beauty. She moaned steadily without pause.

The girl astride the horse lost count of time, there was no way of telling, and agony is deceptive. Diana believed she faded into unconsciousness for brief lapses as nature came to her aid with its own anesthesia. Unable to move her mind roved wildly in vivid dreams and nightmares, all of them with the central theme of no escape, never, never, never! Her sex, impacted by her weight, was a naming awfulness without any erotic comfort whatsoever. Sometime, after hours of lonely suffering, she had a visitor. It was the last one she expected.

It was David Farrell.

He was not alone but was flanked by two large men who watched him with respectful but wary eyes. Sister Angela was in charge. She too kept an admonitory eye on a young man whose face was lined and haggard with bitterness.

"We know, Diana dear, you will not wish Mr. Farrell to see you as you are but—"

"Go away… Go away! Don't look at me… Oh, not like this." The words poured out of Diana's dry lips in mortified

shame. To be seen like this by David, or by any man, was a punishment in itself. How could David love her again after seeing her so bent and twisted and obscenely spread! "Don't look at me, David… please… please—!"

"We deem it desirable for Mr. Farrell to see you in your punishment, dear." Sister Angela continued imperturbably. "Mr. Farrell, too, must learn his lesson. We must convince him our girls do not escape."

"Please take me off this thing then." Diana turned a tear wet face toward her love. "Just to talk, that's all. You can put me back after—" Her plea ended in a moan of anguish she could not control.

"I asked to see you. I would have bought a session—" David's voice was infinitely bitter. "I had to know you were safe."

"Mr. Farrell will always be welcome, Diana. I do counsel against a continuation of your love affair, it will give both of you only pain. But that is something for you to decide—"

"What do I have to pay to get her off that contraption?" David demanded fiercely.

"Please, Mr. Farrell!" Sister Angela sounded offended. "This is no attempt at extortion or ransom. The girl has been foolish and disobedient. She is being punished. Her punishment will run its course. I suggest you delay further visits until after that date. Punishments are shaming for a girl. I

am sure Diana wants no audience during her suffering."

"But look at her back! You've whipped her too?"

"Yes."

"What other horrors are you going to inflict on her?"

"They do not matter. She will endure them and they will pass. It is best now you say good-bye. You can set your minds at rest about each other's continued existence. You may kiss her if you wish. But, please, no heroics?"

Diana was glad her lover could not know the extra pain she forced her flesh to endure that she might turn and raise her lips to his. Their kiss was hungry, passionate, and short When her visitors had gone and she reverted to her lonely miasma of pain, Diana could still hear, over and over, David's furious whisper in her ear. "I'll get you out of this somehow, someway—!"

Her crushed crotch screamed more cruelly than before.

"We always fall back on the old tried and true remedies, dear," Sister Nona explained in a tone almost apologetic. "We have found peculiar contortions no more effective You see, here... your thumbs—We don't strap your wrists but there's these small soft leather loops...! They're as wide as the thumb allows and they tighten below the knuckle of each of your thumbs... like this."

"But, Sister Nona, isn't that fiction? It isn't ready possible to

hang a girl up by her thumbs—?"

"Indeed it is, dear. Young girls are slender and not overweight, and there are no clothes...! You are thinking in terms of your thumbs being torn from their sockets. Rest assured, it won't happen."

"But they'd never be any good again ?"

"Yes they will. Don't be silly."

Diana, unhappily, watched the tethering of her thumbs at each end of the bar. She had already borne so much she had given up believing she could bear no more. The Sisters wisely nurtured her hope that each fresh punishment would be her last, and one day this would come true. But as she suffered each of them...! She wondered if any girl had ever screamed or moaned so much, or had so often flung herself at a Sister's feet and begged for mercy. And now, to hang suspended by her thumbs as hour followed agonized hour...! Her nights chained in the dungeon had become a strange and morbid surcease. Apprehensively, she watched the familiar sight of her captive hands rising up before her eyes, then the wrenching of strained shoulders and tensioning of breasts as her toes sought, vainly, to retrieve the floor. When the words spewed out of her parched lips to tell Sister Nona how impossible this was that the pain was not bearable, that her thumb joints were being torn asunder, she discovered the kindly Sister had gone and closed the door. She hung nakedly alone.

In all Diana's punishments there were two constants, pain and time to think. The Sisters explained how important this thinking process was to her, and Diana came gradually to believe this was true. Her first days of tribulation held mostly an agonized longing for David. But the searing shame she had suffered by him witnessing her travail upon the 'Horse' had told her clearly of the Citadel's sundering of her love. She belonged to The Citadel and that was the end of it. She loved him for his assurance of rescue but knew it was no more than wishful thinking. David might be strong and decisive but he was a pygmy matched against the Citadel's massive power. The Citadel would hold her slave for as long as it had a use for her. She wondered dully if the extremes of agony in her punishments had erased her capacity for erotic arousal in the lesser inflictions of the clients and the wanton carnalities of Gloria and the twins. She envied them the heat behind their pubic hair. Perhaps when her sin was expunged and she was once more only handcuffed…!

A girl hanging by her thumbs has little cognizance of anything beyond herself and her pain, surprises are dwarfed by distress. But when Mr. Sands and Sister Nanette stood surveying her pendent nudity Diana knew a flash of hope.

"My dear girl…! I have just been in session with our old friend Gloria—and I thought…! Sister Nanette has been kind enough to allow me this visit. I have been greatly grieved—"

“I was a naughty girl, Mr. Sands.”

“Well, yes, so I understand. The Sister has told me something of how you must expiate your sin.” Mr. Sands was obviously entranced. “Really…! By your thumbs…! I had no idea!”

The suspended girl remembered their last meeting. Again she was engulfed in shame. That evening had been joyous magic, now she was naked and tortured. Bitterly, she retorted: “I had no idea either.” Then sarcastically added a redundant… “Sir”.

Sister Nanette pursed her lips. “You know better than that, Diana,” she admonished tartly. “You must be made to understand that any punishment, no matter how painful, can always be made worse.” Without ado, she clipped on each of the delinquent’s nipples those small cruel metal jaws the girls all hated. “Perhaps these will remind you to be polite.”

Diana moaned but did not protest. All of her was hurting. It was as though a bit more did not matter. She had not deigned to move when her nipples were bitten by the tiny teeth. She looked down at them now on the tips of her breasts, perky and beyond her reach. Quite possibly Mr. Sands was getting an erection. “I’m sorry, Sister,” she said humbly. “I forgot I’m so hurting…”

“Oh, please, Sister! Not on my account—?” Mr. Sands was radiating his usual benevolence. “We must make al-

lowances for her… discomfort."

"It does not excuse sarcasm to a client, Mr. Sands. Diana's nipples are reminding her of this."

"Ah, quite so. But perhaps I should not have inflicted myself. Seeing the poor girl like this I can understand she is in no mood for conversation."

"She is not a 'poor girl', Mr. Sands, she is only a foolish one."

"Ah, no doubt. But I wonder, for the short time I am here, could she have her feet lowered to the floor?"

"No."

"Ah, of course. I am being a nuisance. But perhaps…? Those things on her nipples…? As a favor to me?" Once more the Sister's lips were pursed in disapproval. But Mr. Sands's patronage was valued, and he was well liked. She removed the metal jaws from the suspended girl's breasts with the same firm competence with which she had put them on. Diana gasped a heavily indrawn breath and gazed down thankfully at two red and swollen rosebuds. "Thank you," she said dutifully. "Thank you both."

"She is so lovely like that." Mr. Sands sighed. "But I have never known her anything but beautiful. It is a source of sorrow to me, Sister, that I cannot make an outright purchase of Diana."

Sister Nanette laughed dryly. “You have mentioned it before. I am not certain, now, whether her value is enhanced or diminished by her silly escapade. The decision would not be in my hands. There is also the factor of her disgrace in the eyes of Authority. Being sold, for the large sums we demand, has always been considered an honor for the girl, and they usually approach their new slavery with optimism. But Diana’s escape is a black mark. The Citadel is human, it may consider her unworthy, and in any case… I do not believe any figure under a million—”

“Ah, dear me, what a pity.” Mr. Sands surveyed the naked girl longingly. “I had hoped her fall from grace might have worked the other way and made her available for a sum I could manage.”

“You could leave a written offer to purchase Diana with Sister Cecilia, Mr. Sands. She would ensure it received attention. It might be refused but it would not be scorned.”

“I had been thinking in terms of perhaps half a million?”

“I think I can safely say such an offer would be rejected.”

“Ah! Well, I suppose we must be realistic.” Mr. Sands walked slowly round Diana’s suspended charms. “My, my, you sure have whipped her, haven’t you!” He worked his way round back to pubic hair. “But I can see no injury. I am wondering if the, ahem, authorities desire a continuing severity of punishments for the girl? In such case I would

enter into a pledge—?"

"You misjudge us, Sir. When Diana's punishment is done she will return to being our favorite girl."

"Ah, indeed." Mr. Sands shrugged resignedly. "I must content myself with the occasional session with the dear girl. When will she be available?"

"She is not to know that, Mr. Sands. I cannot tell you." Mr. Sands gave the suspended bottom a paternal pat and was gone. Sister Nanette nodded approvingly as though feeling Diana was doing the best possible thing in hanging by her thumbs. Diana relapsed into a limp acceptance of agony.

"Doesn't she look sweet in there," April enthused.

"We've been locked in that little cage too, Diana," Tina assured happily. "It gets awful after the first few hours, all crunched up with your chin on your knees and your hands chained so they can't reach your pussy. How long have you been in there?"

"This is the third day, there's been two nights."

"You poor darling. They didn't keep us in there that long. Is it very bad?"

"If they let me out I don't think I could move," Diana confessed wanly. "I'm so damn cramped and I hurt all over. It's

a hateful little cage. It's far too small to hold a girl."

"Would you like to get out, darling?"

"Please don't tease." The nude captive pleaded. "Of course I want out. But look at the size of that padlock! And they won't tell me how long I have to stay in here. I asked Sister Nona yesterday if I could be whipped instead of being caged, but she just laughed."

"Suppose someone had a key, darling?" April held up a small metal object. "A key like this?" The captive Diana tensed against the bars, but her voice returned to resignation. "April dear, even if that key fits, and I can't imagine how you got it, you mustn't let me out. We'd all be whipped… or something beastly."

Tina held up another small scrap. "This one fits your wristlets, Diana dear."

"You're teasing me." Diana tried, fretfully, to move but could not. "Don't be unkind. But don't go away either, it's so good to have you to talk to. They've kept me alone the whole time."

"If we let you loose will you eat our dear little pussies?"

"Now I know you're teasing. But, yes, I would."

"How about us nibbling you for five lovely orgasms? Would we have to tie you down?"

“Don’t be silly. We’re all dreaming. And anyway, we wouldn’t dare.”

“We’d dare, darling. We don’t mind being whipped. We’re always being whipped for something. Here, let’s see if it fits.”

Diana watched breathlessly. She had hated that padlock steadily for two days, just as she had hated the metal round her wrists. She sensed vibrations. Tina and April were up to something. But, whatever it was, it could only lead to more punishment. “Even if you do unlock me I won’t get out of the cage,” she warned. “I’m too scared.”

“The Sisters will be so glad, darling. That’s the way they want us. We’re always scared, and terribly obedient.”

The padlock fell with a thud. The wristlets slid down Diana’s bare legs to the floor. Despite denials she ecstatically stretched her legs out beyond the opened door.

“Come along, darling.” The twins each grabbed one of her ankles and dragged her from the cage. Once she was clear of bars and chains they fell upon her like ravening young she wolves, pushing her back to the floor, their mouths avid upon her breasts and between her thighs. It felt so good to be possessed again that the captive of the cage made no demur as she was femininly ravished.

“Five orgasms,” Tina said solemnly. “See, we promised. Now we have to give you a bath.”

“Is my punishment over?” Diana scarcely dared ask.

“Never mind, darling. Just be a good girl.”

They bathed her, giggling over every nuance of femininity they could emphasize. No pubic hair or the lips below, no breasts and nipples had ever been more diligently soaped and laved. Before they were through with her the naked captive was panting with a lust too long repressed.

“She’s coming again, April.”

“Isn’t she gorgeously horny!”

“The Sisters will be so glad—!”

Diana let them have their way with her. If they all got whipped or put in the pillory… so what! This glorious bliss was worth it. The punished delinquent could not easily realize her limbs were free, all of her was free! She was not trammeled by a single bond. She wanted to sing and dance and leap. It would be hateful to be bound again—but no doubt that would be waiting!

“We have to paint your nips and your cunt, darling. You can watch us in the mirror.”

It was done. Her nipples and labia became outrageous. She was powdered and perfumed to a point of shame. Her hair was exquisitely arranged. The twins were enjoying her as they might have reveled in a freedom of their own. When they were satisfied they each took one of her unresisting

hands.

“Come along, darling. Be a good girl and trust us.”

The whole staff was there in the reception lounge. Several clients enjoyed a bonus by being present. They clapped on her entry and kissed and kissed her until she was breathless and her lipstick well smeared. Then Sister Angela made a speech, telling of how bad she had been and how good she was now and how they all loved her very much. Several clients made instant offers of sessions. Diana’s heart was full, she wept with joy when Sister Angela announced the end of punishment. The girls dried her tears and applied fresh lipstick. The Ceremony of a return to the fold was not yet over.

It was the most heart touching thing of all. Diana stood apart and waiting while Sister Nona opened the box. The breathless delinquent gasped at what she saw.

“Hold out your hands, Diana.”

It was an easy command to obey. This was the moment most of all in which the punished girl said good-bye to agony. She proffered her wrists with a fierce hunger.

“They are only gold plated, dear,” Sister Nona apologized. “But they are going to look lovely. Are you sure you want to wear them? You don’t have to.”

Golden handcuffs! It was incredible! It was wonderful! It

told vividly of love and of the Citadel's forgiveness. As Diana watched the sleek circlets possess and lock her wrists together she knew a great happiness. She saw the golden handcuffs as a pledge and as a prize, a bondage to wear in beauty and to flaunt in happiness. Quite suddenly she realized her loins were aflame with the old forgotten fire, her pussy was secreting and all was well again with her world. She held her cuffed hands high for all to see, her arms tensioning the single link by which her hands were joined. Diana Ramsay was happy.

It was quite a long time before she thought of David.

Chapter Six

Obedience

“You will look back at the experience and draw your own conclusions, Diana,” Sister Angela said equably. “You have had time. You have been a free girl for a week.” She smiled down at the gold on Diana’s wrists. “You love them, don’t you.”

“Oh yes… yes! I hate it when clients take them off so I can be tied.”

“Tell me, dear, do you feel… brainwashed?”

Diana sobered. “I don’t so much feel it as know it’s happened to me. And, anyway, I don’t like that word; I’ve been punished to teach me a lesson, and I’ve learned—”

“Yes, dear, go on.”

“It seems crazy but I’m glad I was punished. Sister Angela, is that being silly?”

“No, dear, simply realistic. What else?”

“It’s a beautiful feeling of belonging. I know where I’m at. I didn’t know before. And I don’t think about escape, not

ever. It's lovely not to even wonder about it any more." Diana pondered. "Escape seems such a silly thing now. I don't want it. I know I belong to The Citadel."

"And The Citadel, Diana?"

"It's sort of like a big Daddy, isn't it, Sister! And it's our home. Us girls have so much fun together—"

"Even with the chastity belts?"

"Well, yes… Oh, Sister Angela, I'm so happy. I'm going to try and make myself like Gloria and the twins."

The Sister laughed. "An erotic little masochist?"

"They're not really that, are they. It's a sort of erotic love play that never ends for them. I'm a little like that now—" Diana broke off, then, sheepishly, asked: "Sister, for a little while…? Could I be given clients who'll help me develop, to whom I can respond?"

"Very well, dear. For a little while."

"I think it's something that should be taught, if it can be taught. Can it, Sister? Oh, and thank you, thank you…!"

"There is a session awaiting you now, dear. It's why I've asked the questions. It's your Mr. Farrell."

Diana tensed. She looked at Sister Angela appealingly. "Please…? Must I? I don't think we should see each other any more."

“The other Sisters and I have discussed this, Diana. We think your affair with Mr. Farrell is something you had best put in its proper place yourself. It would be very easy for us to tell him you are not available. But he is here with his money, and we did promise him.”

“I’m so ashamed—the way he saw me last.”

“On the horse!” Sister Angela laughed. “You’re just being female. Go and give this nice man a wonderful hour or two and tell him what you’ve just told me. If you find yourself losing control just call me and I’ll have you terribly punished right in front of him. If Mr. Farrell is thinking about marriage and babies he must turn his attentions elsewhere, not come to the Citadel.”

“Sister, I’m frightened. I don’t want to.”

“It is our wish, dear. We have faith in your ability to handle it. One thing all us females must do is put our glands in their place. If we let them dictate to us we’re lost. We become simpering little mink with a hot belly and spread legs. Diana, that’s not for you.”

Diana felt that if Life was a person, that person would be watching her now with amused curiosity as she walked slowly to room number four where her love was waiting. It was a bitter thought that once she would have run. She could see only heartbreak in what she now must do.

“Hello, David.”

She was instantly in his arms, held fiercely, kissed savagely, her hands in their golden handcuffs crushed against his chest. With a brief and fleeting memory of Sister Angela's injunction she sank to the floor and gasped in ecstasy as she was pierced. It happened without any will or intent of her own. It just happened.

"David, do something with me." In happiness Diana was glimpsing disaster. "Hang me up. Tie me in some way you love."

"Hell, no! I didn't come—"

"You must. If you don't we'll be right back on the floor."

"What's wrong with that!"

"You know what's wrong with it. David dear we have to talk. Look, if you want something easy, I'm already handcuffed, hook them up above my head so I'm on my toes. Please… right now!"

"That will hurt."

"I don't mind. Do it. I want you to." Diana saw the longing flame in his eyes, and pressed her advantage. "It's the only way we'll talk sensibly, and we've got to talk, we've got to!"

"I've wanted you so damn bad—"

"David, you just must not go away hungry. Do the things you love… We can talk as we go. And I want you to whip

me—”

“Diana, stop that—!”

Diana smiled her female wisdom at the man she loved. Provocatively she proffered her locked hands. “Please…?”

“Gold handcuffs! Good gosh, sweetheart, have you been promoted?”

“Not really. I think they were to make me feel better after my punishment. I love them.” She gazed at David’s dubiety with an amused eye. “They work the same as any others. Hurry. Hang me up.”

David obeyed, but absently as though his thoughts were elsewhere. When his love was on her toes he looked up at the golden bonds. “They’re cutting. You should be tied.”

“I told you, I don’t mind!” The naked girl shook her head impatiently. “If I don’t have pain I’ll be back on the floor. Now whip me, anyway you like.”

David sighed but his pulse was thudding. In adoration of her beauty he walked round the loveliness of the naked girl who wanted her wrists to hurt because she loved him. Angrily, he exclaimed: “Diana…! Sweetheart… your back!”

“Yes, I know. I was flogged. It was part of my punishment for escaping.”

“But that was way back—!”

“Yes, but they healed nicely. What you’re looking at is marks, not scars. Don’t worry about them, whip me anyway.”

“No! No way—!”

“Between my legs then—or my breasts. I know you want to?”

“Of course I want to. But the thing I have to do first is get you out of here.”

“You know that’s impossible. I don’t want to talk about it—”

“That’s because of the way they punished you. They’ve… they’ve broken you.”

“So all right, I’m broken. But I still belong to The Citadel and I can’t possibly escape. You’ve been trying, haven’t you?”

David shook himself disgustedly. “Oh sure. Hell, I’ve been knocking at doors and making phone calls ever since they kidnapped you. All I get is laughs or shrugs or fatherly advice.” He chuckled bitterly. “Some of the bastards give me phone numbers as though all I’m after is a piece of tail. Good gosh, I’ve got a book full of numbers…”

“David darling, use one sometimes. I won’t mind, I’d be crazy to mind… with me in here.”

“No, I’ll come here every week until—”

“Until what?” Diana looked at him tenderly and shifted from one foot to the other. The handcuffs were indeed hurting her wrists but it was a nice hurt she adored. “David, you can’t get me out, and you can’t possibly afford this place every week, not the way they charge. You should not come at all—and don’t ask if I’ve stopped loving you. David… right now! Whip me!”

Her toes were suddenly off the floor, her legs clamping his hips as they strained and panted their way to orgasm with her nakedness close held in strong male arms and her handcuffed hands still tethered above their heads. When they at last uncoupled and stood free, sweating, breasts heaving, Diana again demanded. “There! I suppose we needed that. Whip me now.” Provocatively and enticingly she spread her wet thighs.

David looked at her with hunger unappeased. As though in desperation, he sought a whip and slashed hard up into her crease. Diana gasped and wailed: “Oh, darling…! Please more, more, more!”

The man whipped the girl to the extent of his carnal need. Each blow was cut up into the loins of a female who opened her legs again and again as in invitation to the phallus, not the thong. But it was the leather she received in stroke after cruel stroke upon her wet sheath until he who plied the whip threw it aside and once more took his prize thrusting hard into the swollen and inflamed lips he

had so wantonly thrashed.

“Feel better, David?” Diana grinned ruefully. “I do.”

Dazedly, he looked upon Diana’s scarlet loins. “I went crazy…!” He shook his head to clear it of the mists of lust. “But I’d do it again… You’re a witch.”

“Thank you, kind Sir.”

“But not ’till next time. D’you want me to whip you like that every time I come here?”

“Yes please.” She chuckled. “It would be a marvelous aphrodisiac in old age.”

“Hell, it’s marvelous now. I’m ready again, just thinking about it. The way you act—!”

Diana raised a wicked leg and cocked a saucy eye. “You want?”

“Of course I want. But you’re wealed enough. What I want most is you out of here.”

They were instantly sober. “That’s not going to happen, David.” Diana said forthrightly. “What we have to decide is whether we can stand these sessions.”

“Stand ’em! Of course we can stand them.”

“I don’t think we can, or that we should. We’d only torture ourselves over an impossibility. David, I have to say it: You

should find another girl."

"Did they whip you into saying that?"

"Maybe they did. But it's really The Citadel saying it for me. David, darling, I'm a prisoner here and I always will be. I've had to face this. Now you must."

"I'm going to get you out." David affirmed doggedly.

Diana shrugged. "If you can!"

He looked at her searchingly. "They really have broken you —"

Before she could reply she was once more gasping from the tongue of the frustrated male who was on his knees and drawing to his lips the scarlet patch of thigh and crotch he had so recently whipped. His face buried in her pubic hair, David Farrell's hands possessed the round cheeks of his love's derriere and drew them hungrily to his desire. Diana was helpless and did not protest. Soon she was moaning...

"You see." Diana said wearily after a long time. "You can do what you like with me. If I was free I'd belong to you utterly. But I am not free. This whole thing is hopeless, it will break our hearts. David, please...! I can't be ravished like this every week and walk back into slavery and be happy. It's no good for you either."

"I want it. I'll buy sessions. They won't allow you to refuse a session, will they?"

“I don’t know. I expect I’ll find out.”

They gazed at each other, each realizing what Diana had said. Then, without another word, David Farrell turned and left the room. Diana, still hanging by her handcuffed wrists, did not call after him.

“It’s my masochist day.” Diana looked up into Sister Angela’s wise and sympathetic eyes from where she knelt at the feet of authority. Deprecatingly, she added: “I think I made a mess of it. You’d better punish me.” She grinned ruefully. “I feel like that. I mean, sort of guilty and with a bad mark. Will you whip me, please?”

“To rid you of your guilt?” Sister Angela laughed. “You’ve been whipped too much already.”

“There’s still my breasts!”

“If we did not whip your breasts during your punishment, child, we will not whip them now.”

“But, Sister, I let him ravish me, over and over again! I feel like that carnal little mink you were speaking of.”

“So?”

“I loved every moment. I’m ashamed of myself.”

“So you want to be punished?”

“Yes please.”

“I won’t whip you. So what else do you suggest?”

Diana discovered she was unable to suggest anything. The Rack and the Pillory and the Horse all sent her to shivering. She wanted to be whipped because of the human communion entailed and because it set her fire to burning bright between her thighs. Again she was ashamed of herself: she did not want punishment at all. She was becoming as erotic as Gloria or the twins. She confessed this piece of self discovery to Sister Angela.

“Excellent! Now, since you’ve discovered that much about yourself, I will whip you—No, don’t stand up.”

Trembling like a novice, Diana backed away, still on her knees, while Sister Angela selected a cane. Beholding the wicked slenderness, her tremors increased. She wished she had kept quiet about her conscience.

“Extend your arm, dear, palm nice and tight. You must keep it like that without moving while I strike it three times. Then we will do your other hand the same way.”

“But, Sister—!”

“This will make you feel a lot better and won’t add any marks where they’ll be noticed. I’ve always thought it undesirable for girls to entertain clients when heavily wealed.”

“But, Sister—?”

For moments they gazed at each other, stricken. Suddenly they were laughing. In Diana's case the merriment was almost hysterical. "You're a humbug," Sister Angela declared cheerfully. "It's the sort of quasi nobility I indulged in myself at your age. Here, put this thing away. You don't deserve to be whipped. If I did anything to you I'd cram you in that little cage and make you feel silly and frustrated."

Blushing, Diana obeyed. The cane felt cruel, she was thankful for being teased. Six cuts with such an instrument across taut palms would send her to writhing on the floor. Sister Angela was a dear.

"If you wish, Diana, I'll lock a chastity belt on you for a week?"

"It would be no good, Sister. I'm so sexually satiated, and ashamed of my pussy I don't even want to play with myself."

"Not today, perhaps. But what about tomorrow?"

"Not ever. Oh, Sister, you were so right about it. A man came to see me… and all we did was fuck. There, that beastly word! But it fits. We didn't make each other happy —"

"I deduced that when I found you still hanging the way he left you." Sister Angela said, dryly. "Why didn't you call?"

"I was angry and punishing myself. Oh sure, it was very

silly."

"Did Mr. Farrell admire your golden handcuffs?"

"He was jealous of them. He thought I'd won them by climbing on some sort of bandwagon. I didn't want him to take them off."

Sister Angela nodded. "We wanted you to have that session, dear. Goodness knows whether it's done you any good." She smiled. "But, apart from a tender pussy, it did you no harm."

"Please, Sister…! No more…! David says he's going to keep on buying me. He says every week. But please, Sister, don't make me! It just tears me apart. It… it… Well, it sort of works against my Punishment. Each session would whittle away at what I learned."

"Are you sure? Might it not strengthen you?"

"If we got irritable and started hating each other, and I wouldn't want that. Please, Sister Angela, don't make me do another session with David!"

Sister Angela took the troubled young face in her hands and kissed the troubled lips. "I'll think about it," she promised. "It's always possible he will not come again." She patted a wealed round bottom. "Now, run along and join the girls. You can show them your lovely scarlet patch, maybe they'll envy you."

Pensively, the much whipped girl made her way back to the lounge. She fingered her handcuffs lovingly, they were far more precious than gold.

As day followed captive day, Diana found herself counting them in apprehension. When the seventh dawned she could liken her state of mind to that of an unwilling bride. She wanted something and she did not want it. Furiously, she sought sessions and as much pain as the client was willing to give. It was when she emerged from the third of these that she was pounced upon by the twins with the injunction to keep silent, to do what she was told, and there would come a lovely surprise. Good naturedly, she yielded herself to their eager young hands. They were obviously highly excited—and it was a welcome diversion.

“We have to bathe you, darling.”

“And make you beautiful. And it’s not for that nice Mr. Farrell either, so stop looking scared.”

Diana knew enough to ask no questions. April and Tina would let her in on their secret soon enough. In the meantime their bubbling exuberance was infectious.

“Your whipmarks are fading nicely, darling.” There were giggles. “And your pussy hasn’t been whipped for a week.”

“You mean, some client wants to whip me? Someone special?”

“You’ll find out, darling. Come along, we want to soap your pussy and get you all excited.”

“Suppose I don’t want to get all excited?”

“You haven’t a thing to say about it. You’re handcuffed and we won’t take them off, and anyway we don’t have a key.”

“And we have to make a special job of painting your nips, darling. We have to get the aureoles just right.”

“And a super hair-do.”

Diana yielded her nakedness to them happily enough. They were highly skilled in female arts, their wise small hands were very comforting. The twins were an experience at any time, and in a bathroom or before a mirror…! “I am going to be whipped, aren’t I?” Diana said complacently. “I can tell the signs. They like a girl sleek and lovely before they make her scream.”

The twins regaled her with giggles but no information. Soon, the older girl lapsed into sensuous pleasure under their erotic attentions. Something special was going to happen to her but what did it matter! If it was not one session it would be another. In The Citadel a girl’s life was measured in sessions. Diana hoped that if David came it would be at a time when she was being used by someone else for the rest of the day. She watched herself in the big mirror while Tina and April worked their magic.

“You can come along now, darling.”

“Gosh, you’re gorgeous! You’re so lucky.”

The girl was Diana’s own age, expensive, soignée, too beautiful for her own good, and totally at ease in front of the five Sisters. Diana wondered if she was a novice awaiting indoctrination. Would that explain her own painted nipples and sculptured hair…? It seemed unlikely.

“This is a remarkable day in your life, dear.” Sister Nona appeared to be the Mistress of Ceremonies. “We have gathered here like this, Diana dear, to tell you the wonderful news. You have been sold.”

Diana stood transfixed. The twins giggled. The svelte young woman smiled. Sister Nona continued her stately prose: “You will be flattered to learn that there are those who value you enough to pay the sum of one million dollars for your person. The Citadel is pleased. We hope you will be too.”

The shock was devastating, Diana’s reaction instant. “I don’t want to be sold,” she wailed. “I want to stay here.”

No one paid attention.

“We know this is a tremendous surprise, Diana, and we’ll make all allowances for the shock.” Sister Nona consoled. “This young lady has come to escort you to your new home. Her name is Amaryllis Huntington.”

“I mostly get called Amy.” The girl grinned companionably at Diana’s confusion. “I want you to call me that.” Taking the shocked cheeks in tender hands she kissed their owner hard upon the mouth to impart a charge of sexuality more potent than the naked merchandise was prepared for. From Amaryllis Huntington there radiated a female aura beyond anything Diana had ever felt. It was exciting. It was comforting. For the first time, the bartered girl felt reassurance. “Is it you who’s purchased me?” She asked in wonder.

“Sorry, but no.” Eyes glinted and sparkled. “But you’re going to see a lot of me anyway.” The eyes were suddenly cold. “I’m told you’re obedient?”

“Yes, I’m obedient.” Diana managed a wan smile. “Don’t worry, I won’t make a fuss.” She held up her golden handcuffs. “Besides, I’m wearing these.”

“The Citadel makes you a gift of them, dear,” Sister Nona announced grandly. “We know you love them, and they will be a memento of the affection we all hold for you.” She turned to their visitor. “If you would like it, Miss Huntington, Diana could sit with you in the front seat just as she is. It would be nice for you to talk. I can assure you she will make no attempt to escape.”

Diana saw the doubt flash into her escort’s eyes. With wry humor she suggested: “You can tie my feet and put a collar on me. I’m sure it’s hard to believe I won’t run.” She offered her best company smile. “And I won’t mind, not a

bit."

There were tears and hugs and good wishes. Diana worked her own weeping way through all of it. The emotion was genuine. The nude captive knew herself in partial shock, and refused to contemplate the morrow. But she knew for sure that had her escort been other than this lovely creature at her side she would have been sorely taxed to make the parting. Someone would have had to tie her, and tie her tight. In a welter of emotion she accompanied Amaryllis Huntington to the garage and the waiting Rolls Royce. The feminine hand on her arm was neither harsh nor tender, it was simply there. She had been sold!

In deference to a noticeable hesitancy in her escort's mien, Diana took a plunge: "Thanks for letting me sit with you. It's nicer than being hog-tied in the trunk."

Amy smiled. "The voice of experience, eh." She held open the door. "In you get, Diana. We travel in style."

"Look," Diana insisted. "I want you to tie my ankles. You have to drive, there's no sense you being worried." She settled herself in the seat and stuck her feet out invitingly.

"All right, I won't deny I'm as nervous as you are," Amy admitted. "This really is for the birds."

The rope appeared from nowhere. With it, Diana's ankles were most competently bound together. "You may as well lock my hands behind my back." She offered in a further

burst of comradeship. “Then you won’t have to worry about me at all, I won’t be able to do a thing, and I won’t mind. Honest, I won’t mind, and I’ll be quite comfortable” She made a wry grimace. “I’m very experienced about being… fastened.”

It was quickly and easily done. Diana snuggled nakedly into the soft upholstery. There was something amusingly familiar about the whole experience. She felt one up on Amy. When the Rolls emerged into daylight and pointed its hood towards an unknown destination she asked, coyly, ”Are we both crazy or is this happening?”

“We’re both crazy and it’s happening.” Amy turned a wry grimace to her prisoner. “You comfy?”

“Oh sure, I’m used to being tied. Who are you?”

Amy wrinkled her nose. “I don’t know who I am, not really. Not any more than you do. Believe it or not, you and I are both in the same fix.”

“No we aren’t. You’re free and you’ve got a Rolls Royce. And you must be very rich to pay a million for me.” Diana studied the lovely profile behind the wheel. “What do you want me for?”

Amy tinkled laughter. “How about servicing me?”

“Yes, of course. You won’t have to whip me.”

“How about men? It’s men who’ve bought you.”

Diana guessed instantly. “And one of ’em’s named Sands?”

“That’s right. He said you wouldn’t be surprised. He also says he apologizes for the delay. Seems like you had to be punished first? Gollies, you sure have been whipped!”

“Yes, I sure have,” Diana agreed absently. “But I don’t see where you fit in. Are you one of the consortium who own me now?”

“Gee, I love the way you talk of yourself as merchandise. That punishment must have been quite something.” Amy spared an amused sideways glance. “And no, I’m not an owner, I’m a slave the same as you.”

“You’re kidding?”

“No I’m not. The Group has used me for several years—my skin’s as marked up as yours is. I belonged to just one of them originally but they found it more convenient to buy shares. I’m as well trained as you.”

“I don’t believe it.” Diana gazed at the girl and at the car. “You’re no slave. What’s to stop you driving off someplace to freedom?” She giggled. “You could take me with you.”

“There’s no mystery about it, Pet. Suppose I stopped this car, untied you, gave you clothes and money, what would you do?”

“Are you telling me you escaped and were punished… horribly, and now you daren’t escape any more?”

“That’s what happened to you, isn’t it?” Amy’s laugh held only a tinge of bitterness. “Once is enough. But, anyway, the boys want a change, so they’ve bought you. I’ve been promoted. I get to look after you and run errands. But I’m willing to bet I’ll end up in a room with one or the other of them anyway from time to time. Men are ridiculous the way they hunger for us and for change. If our boys had the money they’d buy a dozen girls.”

“Why don’t they just kidnap one themselves? Why me?”

“Because you’re trained, broken if you like. You’re passive and submissive and obedient and doubly desirable. So am I. Men are lazy, they don’t want arguments or a full time wrestling match. We’ve been shaped into what every husband wants but never gets.”

Diana wriggled her helplessness in puzzlement. “But you seem so happy, so self assured? You can’t possibly—”

“Yes I can!” Amy grinned and imparted a flickering wink. “I live high on the hog, the whole consortium does, and so will you when they’re not making you moan. They buy me everything a girl ever wanted and give me enough sex to keep any girl at home. I won’t run away, I just won’t! If I did they’d bring me back, and I can do without another of those punishments I thought I’d die.”

“But don’t you want a husband and babies, Amy?”

“Only at odd moments when I’m locked in a cage or some-

thing weird. Mostly I tote up what's in the bank. The consortium makes regular deposits for our old age." She giggled. "It probably starts around thirty-five. By that time though, we may get the job of training the younger ones they buy or pick up. I'm told that's the way that Citadel place got started a long time ago. They claim it makes millions."

Diana was trying hard to sort things out. "You said you have to look after me, Amy? What's that mean?"

Amy shrugged. "Well, look at yourself right now: you're looked after. I'm a sort of jailer, companion and lover—guide and mistress. I'm allowed to punish you at my own discretion, and I will too if you make waves." The wise eyes glinted. "Or do you like being whipped by a girl?"

"Well… I'm not sure." Diana was ashamed to be too frank on short acquaintance. "Do you?"

"I don't know either. I've only been whipped by men. Sometimes I get the most frightful hots out of it. Will you whip me sometime, Pet, when we get around to it? We need not tell the men."

"Sure, if you don't get mad at me."

They looked at each other and shared a laugh. Diana felt a comfortable warmth, her fire was perking. It was unlikely she would enjoy the five men who each owned a part of her but she would enjoy this girl. Their ages were

compatible in a way the Sisters could never be. Cheerfully, she inquired, “The clients I’ve had to serve at The Citadel have taught me a lot. But these five men…? What will they do to me?”

“Thinking of torture, Pet?” Amy shrugged. “That’s what some would call it. But half the time they’re kind. They’re really five lucky S.O.B.’s. They can be whatever they like with us, kind or cruel or in between. But we must always be what they desire on that particular day. Once you get to know ’em it’s not all that hard.”

Diana sighed. It all sounded very familiar.

The carpet would have cost a fortune, and the chandelier, and so would everything else. There had been a degree of austerity about the Citadel but there was none in evidence in the consortium’s magnificence. From her first glance at the House and its grounds to the cocktail party now in progress Diana had been awed. Amy was right, if she did not get herself thrown into a dungeon she would live high on the hog.

The Party was a surprise. It was in her honor. True, she was still naked and still wore her golden handcuffs. True, she carried a tray of drinks and sandwiches as did Miss Amaryllis Huntington. But she was on display. The Consortium was proud of its acquisition and wanted to have a

look at its investment. The investment herself was scared by the presence, not only of five men, but also of five women, two of whom were wives. To Diana they were an unknown quantity.

“Smile and be brightly obedient, Pet.”

Following Amy’s light hearted injunction, Diana found herself scrutinized by a pair of sardonic middle aged eyes. “Golden handcuffs, eh! Don’t they bother you?”

“I’m used to them. I wear them all the time.”

“Hmmmmm… By the way, I’m Edwina Preston.” A short laugh. “My husband’s one of your owners—lot of silly nonsense.”

“It isn’t nonsense to me, Mrs. Preston, it’s terribly real.”

“Hmmmmm… Well, naked and handcuffed I suppose you don’t feel like walking out the door. But I think that’s what I’d do in your shoes.”

“I’m afraid I don’t have the courage.”

“I can understand that. I’ve been looking at your back and your seat: Someone sure must have thought you a naughty girl. Or was it just part of the boys fun and games?”

“I misbehaved myself. Er… these ladies? I’m not used to ladies like this… I mean, don’t you mind? About me?”

“Goodness, no! Gets the idiot off my back. He can whip you

and dear Amaryllis as much as he likes, I couldn't care less."

So much for Mrs. Preston! Mrs. Henniker was less amiable. "So they got themselves another one, eh! I've no patience with you girls, you deserve all the thrashings you get. I'd give you one myself if they'd let me." She emitted a barking laugh. "Damn crafty of Stanley and the rest, this splitting you into five. Gives him an out. If I want to baste your bum he can claim the other four wouldn't like it. I've had my eye on that Amaryllis canary for quite some time. I'll nail her yet."

"But we're not really free, y'know," Diana ventured.

"Free enough to make assholes of five men."

"If you could persuade them to give us our freedom..? We'd be forever grateful!"

"Don't con me, girl. And the day I get that pretty little Amy I'm going to get you too—"

"So glad to see you getting along so well." It was a male voice. Mr. Sands had appeared from nowhere. On his arm was a personable woman of indeterminate age. "May I present Miss Florence Emory."

Mrs. Henniker fixed Miss Emory with a basilisk glare. "You come to get your ass whipped?"

"Miss Emory is a guest," Mr. Sands suggested gently. "She

has been curious about our menage."

"Huh!" Mrs. Henniker selected a drink and a sandwich from Diana's tray and drifted off to other prey.

"I do hope you're happy, Diana my dear?"

"Oh yes, Mr. Sands. And thank you so much for buying me."

"Look here, why can't I get in on this act?" Florence Emory demanded. "How about I change places with Diana? You wouldn't mind, would you, dear?"

"Calm down, Florence," Mr. Sands cautioned. "You don't want to be naked and handcuffed in company—"

"Who says I don't! It would be a real gas." She looked around expectantly. "Something I've never tried."

"Maybe you haven't noticed Diana's back? It goes along with the rest, Florrie."

"Oh, I've noticed it all right, so has everyone else. Did you give her all those whip marks?"

"Er, no. She acquired them elsewhere for a serious lapse in conduct. You would not enjoy having your bare back whipped at all."

"How d'you know I wouldn't? Brrrr, it makes me all shivery, just thinking about it. Honest, I wouldn't mind trying it once?"

“Diana, explain to Florence how impossible—”

“You wouldn’t like that kind of a whipping at all, Miss Emory. It’s more awful than a girl can bear.”

“How d’you bear it then?”

Diana blushed. “We’re tied or strapped, or fastened some way so we can’t move… and naked, of course.”

“Hmmmmm, what other kind of whipping do you get?”

“Just a lighter one. They don’t hit us such hard strokes as the ones that wealed my back.”

“That kind give you hot pants?”

Diana blushed again. “The first few do, and there’s the afterwards—”

“Look, Albert, you simply must and you never told me—” Mr. Sands and his lady drifted away, Florence vehemently demanding. Diana suddenly felt tired and homesick and wanted to be back in the Citadel’s lounge with the rest of the girls. Being a naked serving wench was an unexpected tax on the nerves. But there still remained the Tableaux.

“But you’ve been promoted!” Diana exclaimed in puzzlement. “I thought I was the slavegirl?”

“Don’t take anything for sure, Pet. And don’t worry about this affair. I’ve had it before. I know what to do. I also know I can take it. They know it too, damn them.” It was a brief

moment of intimacy. It would not last. The two female possessions of the Consortium exchanged whispers and commiseration from wide and apprehensive eyes. “It’s a Show,” Amy explained. “They want something for the guests who’ve probably been expecting a lot more than a couple of girls carrying trays, even if one of ’em is naked and handcuffed. Well, Pet, I’ve been elected. I didn’t tell you in the car because I didn’t want your first day to be upset. Anyway, it’s going to be easy for you, you’ll be one of the audience.”

“They’re going to whip you?”

“Yes, a sort of ceremonial affair. It will all be very pretty-pretty. That’s why they call it a ’Tableaux’. I’m expected to put on a good show.” The Consortium did things right. It was a good show indeed. Diana found herself breathless in the chosen room. The men were half bored, they had seen it before, the show was for their ladies, and the ladies were most definitely agog. Some were nervous, others obviously uncertain and in doubt. But all were curious. There was an air of hushed expectation as they arranged themselves around the walls of the bare stark compartment which boasted no more furnishing than a bar running from wall to wall at a height a girl might just manage to reach. Miss Amaryllis Huntington was superb. When the chatter died she walked slowly to center stage, then turned to smilingly scan the avid eyes. In a warm friendly voice she informed, blandly: “I am going to be whipped.”

The indrawn breaths were audible, Diana's not the least of them. The room was utterly mute. "I am going to be whipped purely for your enjoyment, ladies and gentlemen." Amy might have been giving a report on the weather. "I have not been naughty, I have earned no punishment. But it pleases my masters to provide this entertainment for you. It is therefore proper for me to be thus publicly punished." The group were enthralled. Here was a new experience in stark reality! "I will be whipped on my naked skin." Casually, Amy shed the expensive feminine things she wore. She did this daintily, striving for effect. She folded each trifle to make a tiny and pathetic pile upon the floor, crowning it with her shoes. Gorgeously nude, she smiled once more at the watching eyes. "I have a beautiful body. It has not been whipped recently, its skin is virgin for your pleasure. I will be strapped securely with my bands above my head, but the rest of me will be free to writhe. My feet will not be bound. Your interest may be enhanced by whatever motions I cannot control beneath the lash. If my legs kick it will be because the pain is so great I cannot keep them still."

She had them captured, they were hanging on her words. Eyes flitted back and forth from her pubic curls to the serenely composed features of the exquisite nude. But Amy's words were nearly done.

"From time to time I will spread my legs wide to invite a stroke of the whip upward between my thighs. It is hoped

this may relieve any tedium you may feel in the more conventional whipping of my back."

If sarcasm was there it was finely shaded. The eyes of the audience remained intent upon the girlish nakedness soon to be striped scarlet by a whip. Amy took a whip from the wall and set it, with an upturned box. beneath the bar. She looked up, measuring distance, and positioned herself as well. She dropped her small verbal bomb with mischievous enjoyment.

"My owners have instructed me to request the pleasure of Miss Florence Emory to strap my wrists and to administer my whipping. Miss Emory…? If you please…?"

The spotlight shifted. Florence Emory giggled and blushed but managed to wriggle her embarrassment into view.

"I've never done anything like this. Gee-whiz!" She grinned around, self-consciously. "I'd no idea—"

"I'm sure you'll whip me very well, Miss Emory."

"Gollies, when I asked…! I mean, I never thought…! And that business between your legs. Unholy cow!"

"I'll try and help as much as I can, Miss Emory."

Scarlet faced, the would be whipper looked around in deprecation. "I bet I'll be just awful at it. But I will try. Please make allowances."

“If you can’t, I most certainly can,” said Mrs. Henniker from the wings. “It would be a pleasure.”

“And now if you’d strap my wrists up to the bar, Miss Emory?” Amaryllis requested politely.

With a sprinkling of “Oh dear—” and “Gee-whiz", Miss Florence Emory mounted the box and tugged determinedly at the buckles to imprison the two slender wrists Amy had helpfully thrust within the leather loops.

“Please take the box away out of where I can reach it with my toes, Miss Emory,” Amy directed in a bright but tremulous voice. “And will you please start whipping me anytime you like. I have been instructed to request you not to lash my breasts.”

It was too beautifully submissive for words. The strapped and naked Amaryllis was a sight to remember forever. Diana was sure she herself could never so impersonally play stage director to her own punishment with the whip. Amy was a cameo of perfection. Embarrassed but fascinated, Florence picked up the whip.

“Make it hard, girl. Thrash her properly.” Mrs. Henniker was right in there. “And stop looking so sheepish about it. You know you want to.”

With an awkward and ungainly swing, Florence Emory slashed the whip across the ivory shoulders of Miss Amaryllis Huntington. She stepped back and watched in won-

der the forming of a scarlet weal on bare and virgin skin. “Gosh, I’m terribly sorry,” she exclaimed ridiculously. “Gee-whiz, it’s made a red line across—!”

“Yes, it always does,” Amy said demurely, “thank you. Please whip me again.”

Florence turned. Her face was a study. “If I hadn’t seen this I wouldn’t believe it,” she said flatly. “Seems to me those marks are a bit much. I mean, I hadn’t expected—”

“Stop dithering and whip the damn girl.” Mrs. Henniker’s demand held a sneer.

With a wild and uncertain aim, Florence obeyed. This time it was the lovely twin curves of Amy’s bottom which took the blow, the tip of the lash snapping across an unsuspecting hip. The slavegirl squealed and kicked against the unkind pain. Amy’s nudity twisted and tugged against her strapped wrists. The cut had been severe. Diana knew all too well how it must have hurt, but was uncertain of the victim’s contortions—no doubt some were expected!!!!!

Florence Emory stood transfixed, drinking in both the pained nudity and the second set of weals, one across each of the impudent cheeks and another cruel upon a hip. Suddenly, she dropped the whip and turned to where Mr. Sands stood watching.

“It’s no good, Albert. I’m on the wrong end.” Miss Emory bestowed an apologetic grin upon those present. “What I

wanted was to change places with Miss Huntington."

The atmosphere was electric. The guests were getting their money's worth. Mrs. Henniker was equal to the occasion.

"Strap the silly bitch up alongside the other, Albert, and thrash both of 'em."

"That really was more what I had in mind." Florence was still apologizing. "But I meant instead of Amy. You could let her loose, she hasn't done anything."

"Please whip me some more, Miss Emory, you'll soon get accustomed to it—and I'd be ever so grateful," Amy coaxed. She had an uncomfortable feeling of deteriorating prospects. "Give me a couple more strokes to sort of get adjusted!"

"Oh dear, I don't think I can—"

"She's chicken," said Mrs. Henniker helpfully.

"I'm not either!" Florence snapped indignantly. "It's just it's not my thing. But I sure wouldn't mind trading places."

"And so you shall, my dear!" Mr. Sands was at his hearty best. "We all applaud your courage."

"You won't like it one little bit, at least I don't think you will," Amy interposed. "I'm sort of used to it, y'know—"

"Florence has made a request," Mr. Sands declared firmly. "Her request is granted." He bent a stern regard upon the

blushing masochist. “But, Florence, you’ll have to remove your clothes.”

“Well, I expect I’ll manage. Gollies…!”

“And, once embarked on this adventure, there will be no retreat. You cannot say you made a mistake and ask for release.”

“Jeepers, it’s so exciting, the way you say that.”

“Amy was to receive twenty strokes. They are now transferred to you.”

“Twenty…?” Florence was doing mental arithmetic. “Is that a lot?”

“About nineteen more than you’ll want,” said Mrs. Henniker.

“Don’t keep sniping at me,” Florence reproved the older woman. “You ought to be grateful for seeing me naked.”

“You don’t have half the figure of these two snippets.”

“It’s a damn sight better than yours,” Florence retorted, and began to undress. She was obviously embarrassed but determined.

Diana’s amusement was tempered by sympathy. She felt sure Florence was in for a shock. She no longer had the resilience of youth: her lovely erotic fantasy of a heated and palpitating pussy would evaporate somewhere around the

third stroke.

“With that nondescript bag of bones I’m damned if I’d take my clothes off,” Mrs. Henniker announced with relish. “A few stripes can do it no harm.”

“Please, please!” Mr. Sands beamed at large. “Florence, dear girl, you have nothing to be ashamed of. I am sure Mrs. Henniker is joking.”

“No, I’m not,” said Mrs. Henniker firmly.

“So I will now ask you to free dear Amy,” Mr. Sands declared hurriedly. “You can then take her place. Amy herself will both fasten and whip you. She is highly skilled. You will be in good hands.”

“For twenty of the best,” said Mrs. Henniker with further relish.

It was strange to be part of an audience. Diana knew it was she herself who should be whipped. But the Consortium was being kind on her first day. She watched, as fascinated as the rest, as Amy was freed and Florence was strapped. Standing there nude and with her hands bound high, Miss Emory did not indeed have anything to be ashamed of other than in being no longer a girl. Her unusually heavy black mass of pubic curls drew instant comment from the redoubtable Henniker.

“If you’re going to whip her cunt you’ll have to shave her

first. You can sell it for wool."

Florence Emory was undulating against the straps, savoring helplessness, a bare foot rising and falling. Diana could guess at a pussy heat beyond the norm. Florence was horny. Picking up the discarded whip, Amy caught her eye and winked. Apart from the task of whipping a nude woman she had much to be thankful for. The lash marks on her back and bottom burned fiery red.

"I'm going to whip you now; Miss Emory, are you ready?"

"Well… well, yes, I expect I am." Florence looked back over a bare shoulder with a wide and fearful eye. Beholding the whip in a ready hand she hastily turned back to gaze at the wall and stand tense and expectant.

Amy chose Florence's bottom, no doubt in sympathy. It hurt less on the curves of a girl's rump and was more apt to engender the right kind of heat than a cut across the back. It was a moderate blow. She dared not make it light.

Miss Emory left the floor, the impetus of pain contracting her muscles against the straps round her wrists. But she made no sound beyond the first startled gasp. Once more she looked back over her shoulder, this time in doubtful apprehension. Amy struck again, this time around her captive's waist. When the helpless nakedness ceased to writhe it managed to exclaim coherently: "I'd no idea! I really didn't have any idea—"

“Eighteen more to go,” Mrs. Henniker announced triumphantly.

After the next stroke, across her shoulders, Florence Emory conceded fleshly defeat. “I’m afraid I can’t stand it after all.” She apologized timidly, “I’m frightfully sorry.”

“But I’m afraid you have to.”

“I’m sure they won’t mind if I withdraw. Oh dear, I do feel so foolish—”

Amy delivered number four. As the whipped flesh responded, its owner’s cry was urgent. “Albert… please! I can’t possibly… A-L-B-E-R-T…!”

“I’m afraid Mr. Sands has left the room.” Amy’s regret accompanied number five. Florence abandoned the proprieties. She screamed. While she was still screaming Amy slashed five times in quick succession. Weals sprang lividly on pale flesh and Florence entered a world she had never dreamed of. When she panted her way into silence Amy resumed her duty.

“You have had ten strokes, Miss Emory. It’s time to spread your legs. If you like, you can just hold one up and off to one side.”

“I don’t like. It’s quite impossible.”

Wise in female frailty, Amy clasped the helpless nude and used her palm skillfully on a wet puss. The friction drew an

embarrassed retort. “I’m quite ashamed… It’s so wet… Really! I don’t understand.”

“Your pussy understands,” Amy said gently.

“Oh dear, I’m all burning up. Oh… really!”

Amy resumed her stance. Obediently, Florence’s right leg separated itself and rose… up… and up. The girl with the whip cut cunningly up into the breach, the thong bit with a wet splat. Florence screamed and screamed, but once again her leg rose to bare her secret place. Once more the thong cut deep into the softest flesh of all.

There was a massive break in the ranks. Mrs. Henniker advanced determinedly and snatched the whip from Amy’s startled hand. “Out of my way, girl, I’ll show you how to do this. You’re just tickling her up, she probably likes it.” She drew back, measuring distance with a vicious eye.

Florence Emory looked back in horror, her eyes wide in alarm. “Stop her, somebody. Stop her! She doesn’t like me __”

Diana was alarmed. Mr. Sands was gone. The blow Mrs. Henniker was about to deliver would do damage. The swing, already in motion, was of horrific force. Instinctively, she leaped and grasped an arm half way through its flashing arc.

“You little bitch!” Mrs. Henniker was outraged. She turned

her not inconsiderable weight and all her fury upon the handcuffed girl. “I’ll cut you to ribbons!”

“Hold everything!”

Mr. Sands was authority. He had returned quietly to witness an entertainment far in excess of that planned. Mrs. Henniker was recumbent on the floor. Diana sat on her feet and Amy on her chest while she fought wildly flailing arms, one of which still held grimly to the whip. From the bar above, Florence was wildly swinging, twisting and heaving in a hopeless but urgent need of freedom. At sound of the male command the two girls reluctantly disengaged to allow Mrs. Henniker to rise, like a large and ruffled hen, and shake her whip at the Master of ceremonies. “I’ll have their hides,” she announced grimly.

“They saved my life,” Florence shrilled. “That cow was going to kill me.”

The two slave girls kept a discreet silence. Each was aware of delinquency.

“I want all three of them properly thrashed,” Mrs. Henniker announced with finality. She was still smoothing and primping. “I’d have thought you’d teach ’em better manners. Slave girls indeed! They’re a pair of hoydens who need the lesson I’ll give ’em.”

Mr. Sands motioned for aid. Mr. Henniker was, fortunately, on the same large scale as his wife, whom he now took by

the arm. “Come along, Letty,” he adjured firmly. “You get yourself any more involved and you’ll have to join the club.”

“Keep her away from me.” Florence was still tugging and pulling. “She’s not safe.”

“It was a pleasure to have you with us, Mrs. Henniker,” Mr. Sands said, suavely. “Good-bye.” Having seen an irate wife and an amused husband to the door, he picked up the whip and pointed it at Diana. His command was terse. “Strap Amy up beside Miss Emory.”

It was easily done, the straps were there, waiting. There were also others. The bar would have accommodated half a dozen girls. Amy was entirely passive. The whip pointed again.

“How many did Florence get?”

“Thirteen, Sir.”

“That leaves seven to go. Give them to her. Then give seven more to Amy.”

“But, Sir, it was my fault—!”

“Quiet!” Mr. Sands raised a forbidding hand. “Seven strokes for Florence, seven more for Amy. Do it!”

“Albert, stop this! Unstrap me. A-L-B-E-R-T…”

Sensing inevitability, Florence turned her flushed face back

to the wall and maintained a sulky and choked silence while six strokes of the leather etched her skin. When the sixth had fallen she looked back quickly and pleaded. “Only one left. Hit me as hard as you can… I want to know __”

Diana obeyed. The audience watched the result crimson and the writhing contortions in reverent awe. There were handclaps.

“Now Amy. Come along, Diana, whip her.”

Diana whipped Miss Amaryllis Huntington with skill and finesse. The punished maiden stood quietly as the blows splatted on her skin. It was a superb exhibition of control. But on the last stroke she went wild in gyrating contortions of agony. Diana wondered if the display of writhing nudity was to vent pain or to give the audience a good show. It did not matter. It was done.

But it was not done! Mr. Sands was just, his voice firm. “Release Amy, please.”

When it was done and the released girl was rubbing her wounds and her wrists the commands continued. “Amy, strap Diana in your place. Give her seven strokes, all of them between her legs. Her back is too heavily marked.”

Diana was resigned. She was getting no more than expected. She arranged herself, the straps were warm and damp from Amy’s wrists. The whole thing was sadly famil-

iar. With resigned courage she endured the seven painful cuts, giving as few motions and sounds as her hurt flesh could contrive. Everyone seemed pleased. She had longed to tell of having been recently whipped between her legs, but what did it matter! They could have chosen the soles of her feet or the palms of her hands…! She wanted neither.

When she was loosed Diana slipped to the floor at the feet of the Master of ceremonies. Kneeling with head bowed she said, simply, “Thank you for my punishment, Mr. Sands. I deserved to be whipped.”

The indrawn breaths of admiration were as one. Mr. Sands raised her gently to her feet. “This is our new slavegirl,” he announced grandiloquently. “I think she’s marvelous.”

There was a round of warm applause. When it died, Florence’s plaint was anti climax. “Isn’t anyone going to let me loose?”

“Why should we?” Mr. Sands asked blandly. “You’re getting what you asked for.”

“I’m embarrassed. Albert, undo these straps.”

“No.”

“But I’m all naked—and marked!”

“So we noticed. Very nice effect.”

“Oh, A-L-B-E-R-T…!”

Chapter Seven

Slave Girl Sold

“I always associated this cage with being a naughty girl.” Amy shrugged and lifted her joined wrists. “Handcuffs always did go along with the cage, so they don’t mean much, and you wear yours all the time anyway. This is smaller than a cell, and there sure isn’t any privacy. But it’s just as comfortable, even if the rugs are on the floor, and it’s a helluva’ lot better than being chained in a dungeon.”

“Well, we were naughty.” Diana giggled. “I bet Mrs. Henniker is still mad at us. Will she be able to get us punished some more?”

“I doubt it. We belong to men. Our five owners are probably more mad at Mrs. H than we are.”

“I’m sure glad you’re in this cage with me,” Diana confessed. “I hate being locked up in anything alone. But I don’t see why you’re in here. I thought you got promoted when they bought me?”

Amy shrugged indifferently. “I did, but I don’t think it will make a lot of difference, and I don’t really mind. If they

stop using me I'd be lonely." She laughed. "I'm afraid I asked to be put in here with you. If they hadn't said O.K. I expect I'd have unlocked the door and come in with you after they'd all gone." Amy parted with a wry grin. "Fact is I'm hungry for a girl. One female slave divided by five males gets awful lonely for a girl who's got the same equipment as herself. There's been times, when none of 'em needed me, I sat with my chain and cried and cried."

Two naked and handcuffed girls sat and assessed each other in discovery. Diana's heart was warmed by this discovery of girlish loneliness, so different and beyond the solitudes of The Citadel. The Citadel had tended to have too much female communion rather than too little. Gratefully, she said: "You're terribly sweet. I hadn't expected—Amy, dear, can I? I mean, would you like...? I want to give you something and I haven't anything else to give."

They held each other close, giggling over the sorting out of handcuffed arms. Amy put her joined hands over Diana's head and was able then to hold her tight with Diana's linked palms flat against two naked breasts. It became a meaningful embrace without eroticism. They had found each other.

Sounds broke them apart. As they drew nearer they resolved themselves into the voice of Florence Emory. They were distinctly plaintive.

"Albert! R-E-A-L-L-Y...!"

Mr. Sands reply, if he made one, failed to reach the cage.

“Yes, certainly I showed an interest. But, gollies…! I’d no idea. I do think you’re carrying this a bit too far.”

The door opened. A bare and flustered Florence was propelled within by the authority of Mr. Sands male hand. Her wrists were crossed and tied behind her back, her cheeks were pink. When she saw the cage and its occupants she stood transfixed and wide eyed: “Good heavens! Albert, those two girls are in a cage. Albert, actually, in a C-A-G-E!”

“Keeps ’em handy, Florence. We know where they are.”

“And they’re handcuffed!”

“That keeps ’em knowing where they’re at too.”

“Albert, you’re not thinking of—I mean… You wouldn’t?”

“Yes I would, Florrie.”

“Oh, R-E-A-L-L-Y…!” Florence exhibited all the signs of an exceptional dither. “You shouldn’t take me so literally. All I said—”

“I know what you said, Florrie—a remarkable experience…”

“I wish to go home. Albert, untie me.”

“No.”

“Don’t say it like that! You make me all goosey. And I don’t

want to go in that cage. They're lovely young ladies but I'm all bare and the way you've tied my hands I can't touch anything."

"What did you want to touch, Florrie?" Mr. Sands was enjoying himself.

"Don't be disgusting! If you untied my hands I could cover bits of me… Really!"

Florence Emory was a delightful humbug, but the girls in the cage could share some of her naive consternation. For Florence it was undoubtedly a case of too much too quickly. Her blush seemed likely to become permanent. She never ceased to tug and twist at her bound wrists.

Two handcuffed maidens watched Mr. Sands unlock their cage. "In you go, Florence."

"I refuse. I can't possible. I've got no clothes on!"

"Neither have they."

"But they're different." Florence surveyed the contours of the cage with unfeigned curiosity. "They're… They're—well, you know what they are!"

"That's what you're going to be. Do you a world of good." Mr. Sands picked up his protesting guest and tossed her within the heavy mesh. His voice was crisp. "Amy, my dear, out you come. The Henniker has departed."

Diana watched the exchange of her fellow captives. Florence stood, tugging at her hands, while Amy stepped into freedom and was relieved of handcuffs. The cage door snapped shut and was padlocked. Mr. Sands nodded encouragement and threatened: “If you untie her hands you’ll both be sorry.” He took Amy by the arm in an affectionate hand and led her from the room.

“Well, I never—” Florence’s gaze roved her encirclement of metal. “I’m in a cage! We’re both in a cage!” She shook her head in disbelief. “Like a couple of dickey-birds.”

“It happens to slavegirls all the time, Miss Emory.”

“But we won’t be able to get out! I mean, we’re locked in!”

“I’m afraid that’s the general idea.”

Florence’s mental processes slowly digested imprisonment. “I’m sure you don’t take Albert seriously?” she inquired warmly. “I mean, about my hands? You will untie them for me?”

“I daren’t! Honest! If I do we’ll both be whipped.”

“Oh, surely not! Albert’s just playing a joke on me.”

“While he’s playing it, it’s probably going to be very real, Miss Emory. Amy and I have been prisoners for ages.” Diana spared a sympathetic glance. “You’d better reconcile yourself to being a prisoner too. There’s never any way to escape.” She laughed bitterly, “Believe me, I know.”

“You mean…?” Florence Emory’s gaze roved wildly around her limited horizon. “You mean these men could keep me like this for days?” She surveyed the infinite. “Or weeks?”

“Or months, or years! Yes, sure they can. They’ve got you same as they have me.”

“I only said how interesting it all was, and sort of sexy, and that I wouldn’t mind trying…?”

“So now you’re seeing how slave girls live.” Seeking to offer comfort, Diana added: “You managed your whipping wonderfully.”

“I thought I’d die. Gee-whiz, that hurts!” Florence turned about. “What are my marks like? Are they… sort of erotic?”

“They’re gorgeous, and whip weals on a girl are erotic, at least nearly always if they’re not too cruel.”

“Someone must have been cruel to you! Gosh, the way your back’s still marked!”

“I was punished for escaping. Escape is something they just won’t tolerate.”

Florence sighed. It was a visible deflation. “I suppose I may as well sit on the rug with you.” She conceded. “But I feel so funny, being naked and having no hands. Are you quite sure you won’t untie—?”

“Quite sure. I’m handcuffed all the time, y’know. Do make

yourself comfortable. We can make believe we're a pair of harem beauties awaiting the pleasure of our masters." Diana laughed shortly. "It's not too far from the truth."

"Really?" Florence settled her nudity as comfortably as she could and contemplated Nirvana. Her voice was hushed. "You mean… those five men? They can do whatever they want with us?"

"Absolutely."

"You mean, one of 'em could show up any moment and take one of us to bed?"

"Sure, or he could do anything else he wanted. These men aren't bastards but they get a charge out of hurting girls, giving us pain in erotic and sensual ways. It's not real torture, just half way there."

"Oh gollies, I'm getting all goosey again. Jeepers, just fancy…!" Florence contemplated an infinity of erotic delights. She made an apologetic grimace. "I expect you've figured I'm an awful fraud. I don't hate it in this cage, I love it, and I don't really want my hands untied. I've never felt more horny. Wow!"

"Being horny is part of the torture," Diana laughed. "They get us in the mood, then tie our hands behind our backs or lock a chastity belt between our legs. It's wickedly frustrating."

“A chastity belt!” Florence was beholding the ineffable. “Honest? A thing that locks on us to put our pussy in a cage?”

“Sure. But don’t ask for one. They fit so damn tight they hurt. They don’t even leave a crevice for a girl’s finger. But they do look cute.”

Florence was visibly moved. She was seeing visions. “When will the first man come for one of us?” she asked breathlessly.

“Probably tomorrow. I suspect we’re caged for the night.”

“No you’re not.” It was Amy’s voice from the door.

“I’ve made coffee and a sandwich.” She grinned at an entranced Florence. “You don’t get untied. Diana will feed you.”

Diana thrilled. This was the lovely girlie, girlie feeling girls adore. She fed her captive and laughed at Florence’s excitation.

“I’d come in with you, Pet, but I daren’t. I was told not to.” She giggled. “Mr. Sands says I have to be firm with you both. He emphasized the ‘both’. I think you can kiss freedom good-bye for awhile, Florrie. One of the men gets you for tomorrow.”

“A man! You mean, a man will take me… all naked and with my hands tied behind my back? Really and truly, a

man?"

"Aren't you lucky!"

"I… Ohhhh… Oh dear! Ohhhhhh… Mmmmmm!" Her features damp and scarlet, Florence Emory made a shocking confession. "I just climaxed… and I didn't do a thing! It's never happened before." She shook her head in bewilderment. "I think it must have been what you said."

They enjoyed her naïveté, her mystification. Florence's discovery of herself had come late in life but was all the more devastating for the delay. They talked of it until they slept. In the morning The Consortium presented Miss Florence Emory with the ultimate thrill of all.

"I am open to offers, gentlemen. This is an auction. Please bid as you see fit. The slave's name is Florence."

As usual, Mr. Sands was the M.C. He beamed from the podium and gestured to the trembling and blushing figure of a woman about to be sold into slavery. "Our merchandise is admittedly past her first youth but she is comely and immensely responsive. May I hear the first hundred thousand?"

Diana was tethered to the wall by a collar and chain, that was all. She suspected Mr. Sands was being kind in allowing her this witnessing of Florence's disposal.

Demurely, she stood trying to be inconspicuous. Amy stood

to one side of the blushing merchandise. Amy held a whip. Already she had been obliged to use it twice to overcome Miss Emory's maiden reluctance to being sold. This resistance to her fate was causing the nude parcel to twist distressfully at her hands tied behind her back and to become, unwisely, vocal.

"Albert… really! And please have my hands untied—I can't just stand here like this."

"What do you need your hands for?"

"Well…" Florence viewed the lounging group of prospective purchasers with an apprehensive eye. "I—I— Well, I could cover something."

"For instance?"

"My breasts… the way they're sticking out—"

"What about your pubic hair? Aren't you ashamed of that too?"

"Oh, really! Albert, I'm sure these gentlemen would much prefer me clothed. And, anyway, you can't possibly sell me like this."

"Two strokes, Amy, please," Mr. Sands requested blandly.

"That's not a bit necessary, Albert—Yowp—Wowwwwwww…!"

Florence danced and twisted under the two cuts with such

vigor and pink animation as to evoke an instant response from the male audience.

“One hundred thousand.”

The bid stopped the bound nude in her tracks. Florence ceased wriggling in pain and stared askance in the direction of the male voice. “Look, mister, if you want to pay that much, you can damn well give it to me.”

Mr. Sands nodded curtly, Amy implanted one more scarlet line on an already well striped derriere, Florence pouted and relapsed into a sulky silence. “That’s better,” he said jovially. “You will observe, gentlemen, the possibilities of entertainment with this delightful creature. One hundred thousand I am bid. May I hear the two?”

Diana shifted uneasily against her chain. She looked down at her golden handcuffs and realized how frighteningly easy it was to convert any female anywhere into fleshly merchandise. Up to this point, Mr. Sands treatment of his erstwhile lady friend had seemed tongue in cheek, an amusing charade to be ended whenever Florence’s tolerance for pain and shame had reached its limit. But now, looking at the intent faces of men, she felt the same sense of freedom lost which the implacability of The Citadel had imposed upon herself. Soon, Florence Emory would bid farewell to liberty in the same way. The bid of so huge a sum separated her from womankind and made her slave.

“One fifty!”

There could be no doubting Florence’s fascination. She had ceased to struggle and was viewing the bidders with shining eyed enchantment. Enough money made anything plausible, and for such a sum…!

“Two hundred.”

He was a lean executive type. Diana could envisage him impatiently taking time off from the office to acquire a slave, then hastening back into the fiscal fray. It was hard to believe such a man would find pleasure in the fluttery Florence. But men were absurd, all girls knew how absurd men were. She tried to shake off a presence of danger but the chill was there. The metal band round her neck was suddenly heavy and she wished it was not chained to the wall. But these occasional glimpses of hopelessness and helplessness were common to the slave, she knew them well. Shrugging against the mood, she returned her attention to the woman with bound hands and a blush.

“Sold at two hundred and eighty thousand dollars.” Mr. Sands’s announcement held a ring of triumph as though he too was amazed at Florence’s worth. He smiled benignly on an assembly which did not disperse.

It was neat and businesslike. An anonymous man wrote a cheque while Miss Amaryllis Huntington corded the elbows of Miss Florence Emory, then slipped a gag between

surprised lips and buckled it tight. Florence's subjugation was completed by a collar and leash by which she was led away in mute helplessness. She tried to turn to the two slavegirls she had so briefly known, but the stricture on her throat was admonishingly jerked. The last Diana saw of her was a pair of well trussed arms and wrists and a buckle tight over disordered hair.

The sale was over.

But it was not over. No one turned away. Mr. Sands remained expectantly poised.

"Twelve hundred thousand."

The bid was terse and decisive, the lean executive type was wasting no time.

Mr. Sands was at his most charming best, suave but gently apologetic. "You do understand, Mr. Kessler, the lady is not for sale." Kessler pursed his lips in a faint smile. "You bought her for an even million. I'm offering you a neat quick profit."

"But, my dear Sir…!"

"One million three?"

There was a tense silence. Mr. Sands, with a seeming reluctance, motioned to Amy. A minute later Diana's chain had been replaced by a leash to her collar and her hands had been loosed and rebuffed behind her back. She was led

to the same exposure in which Florence had been sold. She was trembling and wanted to cry. This was too, too much…!

“Gentlemen, you must make allowances—” Mr. Sands was perturbed. “This young lady has had no inkling. In fact, I myself—”

“You have my bid, Mr. Sands.” Kessler was adamant.

“Yes, yes, but please remember, our consortium is under no compulsion—in any case we would place a reserve—”

“Very well. I can estimate your reserve. I bid one million four on the person of Miss Diana Ramsay.”

As with Florence, the motions were quick and incisive.

Diana knew herself merchandise indeed as she stood passively while Amy joined her elbows and roped them tight. Her whisper was low and urgent. “Sorry, Pet, I have to do this. But don’t panic… don’t panic… I’ve got a hunch—”

Diana never learned what the hunch may have been. She was hustled to the garage, quickly gagged, and as quickly hog-tied in the trunk of a waiting car. When the lid slammed shut it was as though she had suffered a small death, a sundering of things held dear. Furiously she struggled but could scarcely move, the gag bit at her compressed lips, her beloved golden handcuffs bit her wrists under the tug of rope. Once more she was helpless on a tide she could not stem. Bitterly, she abandoned herself to tears.

“I’m afraid I’m a fraud, Miss Ramsay. I hope you’ll forgive me, but I’ve enjoyed this whole affair immensely.”

Diana could forgive no one anything. She stood, dangerously, on feet still tied from the journey. They were no longer roped to her hands but, otherwise, she was still as helpless as when bound in the trunk. She shook her head impatiently against the brutal bite of the gag upon her lips. To have to stand like this, nakedly before Kessler’s desk and Kessler’s amused regard was shame indeed, especially with tear stained cheeks and untidy hair.

“I’m sure you must be wondering.”

The bound lips managed inarticulate sounds, the trussed nudity wriggled to show discomfort and distress. The captive eyes gazed upon their urbane purchaser imploringly.

“It’s a bit of a long story, Miss Ramsay. It’s one you’ll find hard to believe.”

Kessler was suddenly much younger and much less the executive type. He was, boyishly, enjoying her breasts and pubic hair with a faint air of truancy. Diana suspected an imminence of apologetic rape.

“I expect you’re wondering where I got the money.”

Diana was wondering about everything. She had a great need of speech. Hopefully, she sent her head into motions indicative of a wish to be relieved of the gag.

“You’d like to get loose, wouldn’t you? And you hope I’ll take that gag out of your mouth.” Kessler was reading her with obvious pleasure. “But you’ll have to be patient. I’ve never owned a naked girl before, and I’ll admit to enjoying every moment of seeing you standing there, bound and gagged, to await whatever I decide to do with you.” His regard became earnest. “Believe me, Miss Ramsay, for a man it’s a magnificent sensation.”

Diana contrived a twist and a shake of her head eloquent of contempt. Then stood still because her elbows were hurting from the ropes. She had never felt more nakedly exposed.

“It’s an absolute storybook thing, and I don’t suppose you’d believe a word of it.” Kessler grinned amiably. “You really do have the most beautiful body—those breasts…! Even Playboy—!”

The Kessler of the auction had faded. He had become a good looking young man amusing himself by toying with a bound and naked girl who could not even ask a question or make a retort. Diana was more and more hating the gag. Uncaring of how shameful she must sound, she made pathetic nasal sounds of pleading.

“Well all right.” Kessler had allowed her to exhaust her incoherences. “Promise not to scream?”

No head had ever been nodded more emphatically.

Kessler grinned and placed a whip on the desk. “Just in case you don’t behave,” he cautioned. “And if you don’t watch your tongue the gag goes right back in.”

Diana nodded briefly. It would be heaven to speak She had no expectation of escape. She stood, tense and rigid, while the buckle was tugged and the wad taken from her mouth. Huskily from dry lips she said: “Thank you, oh thank you!”

Kessler brought water and held it to her lips while she drank thirstily. As though reading her mind, he said: “I’m sure your elbows are hurting, and I’d untie them if they didn’t protrude your breasts so beautifully.” His fingertips fluttered across the taut twin curves. “You really are a magnificent piece of female.”

“Thank you.” Diana said humbly. “If I promise to stick my breasts out the way you like, would you free my elbows, they hurt terribly?” She saw his incredulity, and added: “I’m a slave, y’know, I’ve been trained. I know the things to do.”

She heard the inhalation of his breath. “O.K. then, turn around.”

“I can’t. My feet are tied. Or should I hop?”

Kessler laughed at her earnest acceptance of helplessness. “You’re quite something,” he admired. “Hold still.”

For Diana it was a familiar agony, this peeling of indented

cords from wealed flesh, but Kessler's exclamation was instant. "Holy cow! Gee-whiz, Miss Ramsay, I'd no idea—!"

"Why do you call me that?" Diana was breathing gaspingly under the massaging of apologetic fingers. "I mean, so formal? Why don't you call me Diana? It's my name."

"Eh? Oh yes. Well never mind. I say, am I doing you any good with this—?"

"Oh yes, please don't stop. It's beastly for a girl having her elbows tied together. And please don't worry about me getting loose now. I can't possibly get out of handcuffs."

"That's another remarkable thing." Kessler was musingly intrigued. "A gift of golden handcuffs."

"How did you know they were a gift?" Diana's suspicion was involuntary.

"Well, weren't they!" He dismissed the question gruffly. "It doesn't matter. Look, just in case you fall over, how'd it be if I untie your ankles?"

"Oh, would you! I'd be so grateful."

"No shenanigans?"

"No! Honest… really, I can't do anything with my hands behind my back. Even if I did act up you could whip me and make me stop."

"Hmmmmm." Kessler sounded dubious of good fortune.

But he knelt and once more dealt with knots and the red brands of bondage. “There…!” He seemed uncertain. “I suppose I should ask you to sit down.”

“Don’t ask me, tell me. I’m a slave, or have you forgotten? And is this O.K. the way I’m sticking out my breasts?”

Kessler backed away, still holding the strands of rope.

“Perfect.” He said, almost in disbelief. “You’re too perfect for words. Dammit, you’re worth the money.”

Diana was still bewildered, but vastly encouraged by having her bondage reduced to handcuffs and collar and leash. She watched her new owner mix drinks at the bar then gulped greedily as he held a glass to her lips. It gave her the courage to ask. “There’s something strange…? This isn’t just the way it seems? Is it?”

“Eh!” Kessler chuckled. “How’d you guess? But are you—allowed to ask questions?”

“You must tell me the things I mustn’t do. I’ll obey you.” Diana grinned confidingly. “I’m not being humble or crafty. Slave girls simply try hard not to get themselves whipped.” Persistently, she added: “Please tell me what goes? You can punish me after.”

Kessler positioned a chair. When she was seated he held the glass again to her lips and made her empty it before he returned behind the desk. “Ever hear of a young man un-

expectedly inheriting a fortune?" he inquired casually.

"How nice for you! And so you bought me."

"Well, sort of—"

"It must have been a very big fortune? I don't think any girl's worth what you paid for me."

"You're worth it. Like you said: you're trained."

"Is that really why you bought me? You want a girl you can keep prisoner and sleep with and punish?"

"Sure, why not!"

"I'd have supposed a man would prefer a girl he could train himself. She'd come a lot cheaper, and he could whip her into his own kind of submission."

Kessler was still enjoying her, she sensed his curiosity, and was puzzled by it. Provocatively twisting against her handcuffs, she asked, demurely: "Do you enjoy seeing me bound? Would you enjoy tying me so I couldn't get loose?"

"Mmmmmm, it adds a dimension to your beauty."

"Does it thrill you to think of hanging me up and whipping my naked back?" She twinkled, "And my bottom?"

"You're putting me on, aren't you." Kessler nodded knowingly. "So, O.K., you want the rest of the story, and I'll give it to you. But it will be in my own way. Understand?"

Diana was unsure of him. But said a respectful: “Yes, Sir, I think I understand. Thank you.”

“So I inherit a fortune, never mind how much. It was enough to buy you and a good deal over.” His voice had regained its incisive note. “You represent every man’s dream. You’re perfect. You’ve had me so damn sexually excited through this interview…!” He surveyed her wryly and shook his head. “I don’t know why you’re surprised at your value. You’re exactly what most men dream about and never get.”

They sat and surveyed each other for moments of silence. Then, abruptly, Kessler said: “I wish to make a change, and to get you something… something to save a lot of words. I want you to sit just as you are.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“That ’Sir’ curls me up.” He laughed down at her. “And I’m not going to trust you on this one. D’you mind if I tie you to that chair?”

“Not at all, Sir. I’m used to being tied.”

He stood in thought, then brightened. “Damned remarkable the way you can make a person helpless,” he said as though making a discovery. “Just sit still.”

He used the ropes he had untied. Now he wound them round her ankles, tying each one separately to a leg of the

chair. The tie was tight and competently cinched. “Think that will keep you put?”

“Yes, Sir, I can’t reach down there.”

The blindfold was a surprise but she did not demur. This man was likable and reasonably kind. It would be foolish to disobey a master who might be easier to live with than the Consortium. Diana sat meekly, but with breasts extruded, while her eyes were bandaged with several folds of soft stuff to preclude all hope of sight. It was a strange feeling she did not care for.

“No more than half an hour, Diana. Can you handle that in the dark?”

“Yes, Sir.”

She heard him go, then sat in the dark, wishing and wondering. She made the usual exploration of her bondage but could not reach her ankles with her wrists cuffed where they were. She could certainly not get out of the handcuffs, and the collar and leash on her neck did not matter either way. Diana deflated her breasts and felt silly at having to sit thus just because of a couple of bits of rope round her ankles. Ruefully, she reflected that slavery was mostly an endless frustration, an endless reiteration of ‘I can’t, I can’t…’

Diana shifted uneasily. Perhaps Kessler had not gone at all but was quietly watching what she might do, or try to do.

She believed herself alone but could not be sure. It was easy to people darkness with ghosts. But Kessler was not a ghost! He was male and he was young: Diana suspected his interest in her was more sexual than erotic. He would bind her enough to keep her securely captive. That was all. Somehow she could not see him marking her skin with a whip. But most certainly he would keep her naked, the adoration in his eyes for her nudity was a message she picked up loud and clear. Kessler might never set her free or give her a girl companion in her slavery, but he would be better than the five middle aged men who had owned her yesterday. Complacently, the bound girl tucked away in her mind the femininly romantic conviction that if her captor fell in love with her she would emerge triumphant. After all, why not!

She sensed his return. He had made little noise on entry but he was there. Turning her bound eyes to the desk, she acknowledged: “You see, I’m still here. I haven’t moved.” She chuckled to please him. “I can’t move. I did try but you fixed me good.”

The silence was longer than it should have been. It was hateful to be blind. Belatedly, Diana thrust out her breasts and tried again. “I’ve been thinking, Mr. Kessler. I’m so glad you bought me.” She waited through another silence and added. “Honestly, I really am obedient, and I will try and please you.”

The naked girl felt scorched by eyes she could not see. She twisted her wrists within their metal bands. Hating the dark, she spoke again. “I guess you know I was owned by the Citadel and sold to the men you bought me from. There was a love affair in there somewhere… But that was hopeless. It seems silly now—”

Firm fingers dealt with Diana’s blindfold. She blinked up at a man’s intent regard.

It was David Farrell.

Chapter Eight

Escape

Diana Ramsay had no illusions about being tied tight against a post: sufficiently prolonged it became torture. Also, it was infuriating to stand erect and at attention like a soldier on parade. It seemed a mark of respect no naked girl in such a plight would wish to acknowledge. Tied tightly enough, she could not even lapse or sag when left alone. With tummy cinched and breasts outthrust she displayed her nakedness to the best possible advantage whilst unable to move an inch.

It had been a stormy and tear splattered interview which ended in a hurt and angry girl sulkily backing her bare flesh against the wood and declaring bitterly: “Go ahead and tie me, but make a job of it or I’m gone.”

“If I do tie you it will be tighter than you’ll like.”

“Who cares!”

Such foolish bravado! Diana was regretting every word of an argument in which she had said nothing right. Now she was alone and bound against a post and within a room she

had never seen before. She was in a strange house with a man who, himself, had become a stranger. She was also a prisoner, a prisoner in a way she had never been in any of her captivities. She supposed being tied to the post like this was a punishment. But a punishment for what! And, in any case. she had provoked it, almost asking for what she got. Fretfully, she tested her golden handcuffs for the hundredth time. They held her hands securely behind the post. If someone cut every rope she would still have to stand there captive. But no one would untie a single cord. They would bite deep at every private bit of her until a man, as angry as herself, chose to set her free. It was not an enviable prospect and night was not far off.

Diana knew herself beautifully tied, her shoulders crisscrossed, her arms strictured back. Her middle was a band of fire where the cinched bands of rope diminished her waist, and from these bands there were a couple of unkind cords cutting her belly and constricting the lips of her sex. David had been humane enough to keep them from entering the moist sheath he had loved, but they furrowed the female flesh to either side to bisect the twin curves of an innocent derriere and clamp it cruelly against the post. To make her exposure doubly shaming, Diana's feet had been dragged to either side and bound thus at ankle and at the dimpled knees to compel her to stand with her pubic bush marking the apex of well spread thighs, and feet which could support little of her weight. It was the bindings which sus-

tained most of her balance and clamped her nudity to the grin bulk of timber which held her fast.

Diana tossed her head fretfully and used her strength to exploit slack in search of comfort. But there was no slack, and comfort was a silly dream. From her shoulders down she was immobilized. She could flex her fingers and make motions with her head, that was all. Resentfully, she pictured David Farrell going blithely about his affairs in this new mansion his inheritance had provided. An even greater vexation seethed from an awareness of being prisoner! Her escape from The Citadel into David's arms had been a romantic delight, an almost fictional perfection of boy meets girl. But now he had purchased her as he might have bought a dog. He had arranged for her delivery, painfully bound and shamefully gagged, in the trunk of a car. He had exposed her nakedness to the gratification of a male friend she did not even know. Nothing had gone right, nothing!

"David! Oh, darling...?"

Diana's arms had reached, she had striven to rise in joy, but handcuffs and rope had held her nakedly sitting in the chair where Kessler had left her, blind. Of Kessler himself there was no sign.

"Hello, Diana."

The kiss on her forehead had been perfunctory, the tone of

his voice uncertain. He had taken Kessler's seat behind the desk in the manner of a man alert to hidden hazards in a difficult task.

"David, I'm all tied—?"

"So I notice." He might have been speaking of the weather. "I knew you'd be in good hands with Jim Kessler."

"Well, yes. I suppose he's nice. David, aren't you going to untie me?"

"Not right now."

It had been her first inkling of changed status, of something wrong between them. Bluntly, she had asked: "David, what's wrong? What have I done?"

"Nothing… nothing." He dismissed the matter with an airy nonchalance. "I've simply bought a slave."

"I'm terribly grateful—but could I be untied?"

Testily, David Farrell knelt and freed her ankles from the chair, then resumed his seat and watched Diana's vexatious motions against the handcuffs on her wrists. "They're permanent," he said, as though stating the obvious.

"Yes, I know. I wore them at the Citadel." She retorted irritably. "But this isn't The Citadel, it's You and Me?"

"Is there a difference?"

“D—A—V—I—D…!”

Diana got to her feet in uncertain indignation. Then, abruptly, sat down again. There was no use parading the carpet while her arms were handcuffed behind her back. The point was: what could she do or say! She felt silly and nude and ineffectual. Angrily, she asked the question uppermost in her mind: “Don’t you love me any more David? Weren’t we going to get married?”

“You don’t marry a slave.”

“David, stop this, it isn’t funny!”

“It’s not intended to be, Diana. You’re naked and chained, and that’s the way you’re going to stay the rest of your life.”

“Don’t be silly. You can’t possibly—!”

“Can’t I! The Citadel did.”

“Weld, all right then!” She fluttered her shoulders in frustration. “I wanted to belong to you, to be a slavegirl you could play with. I still want that. But this… this, what you’re doing, it frightens me. You could have done this to me at The Citadel.”

“I expect I should have continued with that,” David Farrell agreed soberly. “As you said, our love affair seems silly… looking back at it.”

She had hurt his pride. Men were absurd. “That’s not fair,”

she declared vehemently. “You had me tied up and blindfolded and I thought I was talking to someone else.”

“You thought you were talking to Jim Kessler. You mentioned how glad you were to belong to him.”

“David, you picked it up all wrong. You’re telling it all wrong. Give me a break… please!”

“I recall a couple of sessions I bought at The Citadel to visit you after your return there, after they’d punished you for escaping.” David’s voice was musing, colored by bitter memory. “You weren’t particularly glad to see me either time.”

“But, darling, the first time they let you see me sitting on that beastly ‘horse’ thing. All I did that other time was tell you how hopeless it is to beat The Citadel.”

“It sounded to me like a cease and desist—”

“David, stop this! Take me to bed. We’ll both feel better!”

He had taken her, savagely. Diana had lain beneath him on her chained arms. But the old magic eluded them, their coupling was a nondescript failure. Laying there with the man she had loved, Diana said, bitterly: “You might as well send me back to The Citadel or those men you bought me from. I think I’d prefer the Citadel.”

“Hell, you aren’t getting sent back anyplace. I bought and paid for you, remember?”

“It doesn’t matter.” Diana agreed listlessly. “I expect they’ll kidnap me again. They’re not likely to let you keep me. They’d honor the Consortium’s purchase of me but they won’t honor yours.”

“Wishful thinking?” It was a sneer.

“I adjusted to The Citadel.”

“They damn well broke you, and anyway, you’re half a masochist.”

“And you’re a man who paid money to tie me up naked and whip me.”

It was then he had taken her down to the room and the Post. Gazing at the threat of its stark simplicity, she asked flippantly: “For whipping or tying?”

“For today, tying.”

“Do I get tied to it as a punishment for answering back or to get you an erection?”

“I don’t know,” he said it wearily as though not caring. “Maybe if I leave you tied to it long enough you’ll get some sense.”

“While I’m getting mine I hope you get some too.”

They had stood and glared, each seeking a bitter retort they could not find. Then, breasts heaving, she had stalked to the post and thrust her naked back against the wood.

Diana Ramsay, bound to the post, guessed it past midnight before the light was switched on and David Farrell re-appeared. He surveyed her obvious signs of suffering, and said, in faint apology:

“I couldn’t sleep thinking of you down here.”

Frightened of words, she did not speak while his fingers tugged at knots. Thoughtfully, he unlocked one only of the golden cuffs, so that when the last rope fell away from wealed flesh Diana was able to slide, weary and helpless, to the floor as a pathetic bundle of punished girl. Without a word, David gathered her free hand and locked it back within its gold circlet. This time her hands were joined in front. In her dazed unhappiness she counted it a small victory. When he led her to their bed she fell instantly asleep in utter exhaustion, nor did he waken her until the sun was high. She made breakfast and they ate it without significant converse.

“I’ve done the dishes, David. May I have a bath?”

Diana took pains with her toilette. She was female enough to know the potencies of femininity. The perfumes and the cremes were there, she might as well use them as a weapon. Knowing herself beautiful, she asked in innocent

simplicity: “Do you want to tie me to the post again?”

“No, why should I?”

“Sorry, I thought I was being punished.” She hesitated. “David, what should I call you? I mean, is it David, or should I address you as ‘Sir’?”

“Don’t be silly. My name’s David.”

“I just thought…? If I’m a prisoner?”

“You are a prisoner and you will call me by name. Oh, and you will be tied—not the post but something.”

“Yes, of course. David, we didn’t do very well yesterday…! Do you want to fuck me again now before you tie me?” Another hesitancy, and then: “I’d like you to?”

“Sorry, not in the mood.” He was still cross and male and insensitive, his mind far distant from love. His tone was abrupt: “About those handcuffs—”

“Yes, David?”

“I’ll keep them on you all the time, back or front. But when you’re tied or fastened I’ll have to take them off.”

“Of course, David.” Diana shrugged and grinned. “But don’t worry, I won’t fight. I’ll always let you handcuff me.”

“Are you kissing my ass, or do you really like the damn things?”

“I’ve got so I like them. I’d feel lost—” She paused uncertainly. “I told you, they were a gift.”

“The good old Citadel, no place like it!” His sneer was back again.

“It wasn’t the Citadel, it was the Sisters who gave me the handcuffs. It was them who had them gold plated.” She held up the metal that joined her wrists. “Darling, don’t let’s argue about these. Don’t let’s argue at all. Maybe it would be best if you tied me up for the day… or whatever.”

The metal pole came down from above. It could be raised or lowered. At its bottom end a crosspiece contained the half circles into which Diana fitted her wrists to evoke a devastating snap as the heavy broad circlets closed upon them in a snug and steely grip.

“A girl could never get out of these, David.”

David Farrell adjusted the tensioning of her bare arms to his liking. “It’s the best thing I’ve devised for keeping your arms up in the air,” he conceded modestly. “It’s rigid and solid and exposes you without getting in the way of anything. Turn around, you’ll find you can make a complete circle.”

Diana obeyed. Somewhere above and out of sight the pole would be oiled in its collar. It turned soundlessly, a broad shaft within a machined bearing. She could not shake it or extract any concession at all save to allow her the full circle

turn to enable the captive girl to face any direction. It was a far more fearsome machine than the straps and bar by which a girl was usually secured to stand erect in full exposure.

“It’s wonderful, David, but sort of scary. It’s so—so—so—well, it’s a machine!”

He grinned and pressed a button. “Try and turn now.”

“I—I can’t. It won’t let me. It’s solid.”

“Damn versatile gadget.” David was pleased. “It’s my favorite pose for you, so you’ll be standing in it a lot. That’s all I have planned for you at the moment. Nice and simple.” He turned toward the door, but turned again. “Nearly forgot these. You need something to keep your mind off your beloved Citadel.”

Diana cringed. She hated the clipping of her nipples. To have to stand still with her hands high above her head while a pair of tiny metal jaws bit steadily at the pink buds on her breasts was a frustrating torment. She eyed the beetle-like horrors in David’s hand with infinite distaste.

“Oh, please, David, not those things, not my nipples!”

“Where d’you prefer ’em then?”

“I don’t want them at all.”

“May as well have ’em on your tits, then. It’s where they

were made for. You going to hold still?"

"Not much else I can do, is there."

The naked girl stood still. She knew the clips of old. If a girl wriggled it was easy for their bite to be ill placed to inflict small injuries and perhaps draw blood. It was best to stand still and allow the beastly things to be properly positioned. She could move but little. Nonetheless, she extruded a breast to receive its punishment. She gasped as the serrated jaws took possession of her most tender flesh. Then, without comment, advanced its twin to be similarly decorated.

"They look well on you, Diana. I always liked them."

"Thank you, David."

Breasts burning, Diana watched him go. The pain was hateful. She longed to plead again but knew it useless. Alone, she gazed down mournfully at twin torments she could not touch as they jutted perkily from her heavily nippled spheres. She tugged at her hands, they did not move, nothing moved except the impudent ornaments extruding from her chest, and all they could do was vibrate painfully. It would be best to stand very still, very still indeed.

The nude girl, captive to her clamped wrists, wracked her mind in a seeking of reasons and of prospects. But there was only chaos. Everything centered on David Farrell, but he had become an unknown quantity. Until her sexuality

had imposed its influence on him once again he would be unpredictable. If she had ever possessed power over him, it was gone! Perhaps he too was thinking hard, but in the interim would use her as a slave, or more accurately, as a prisoner subject to punishment.

It was hard to think coherently against the relentless burn upon her breasts. Diana knew it a feature of the clips that they gave a girl no respite. They were like live things venting animosity on the tenderest of flesh. They would keep her in pain until she was exhausted but their bite would continue, on and on...! Resolutely, she turned her thoughts towards the subjugation of a man.

Surely David must love her still! He must, he must...! But now there was the nagging query as to whether she still loved him. She could not deny the influences on her emotions of The Citadel and all those others who had possessed her in these past days. Nor could she close her mind to awareness of David's primary interest in her. He loved her bound, he adored her whipped, he was enchanted with her in chains. To a stranger he would seem a monster but the Citadel had taught Diana the lessons of bondage in human affairs. Some men wanted endless copulation, others climbed mountains, David Farrell found life's greatest thrill in a naked girl constrained by rope or chain, or a device such as the one now holding her immobilized in his favorite pose. Somewhere along the way she herself had become infected, presumably by contact, Diana had long

since ceased to deny the thrill, the quivering eroticisms, she found in the manifold restraints and punishments imposed by men.

David and she were matched, wanting the same thing. Why then this discord! Obviously, in spite of their shared sensualities, they were as subject to emotions of pride, resentment, jealousy and guilt, as any teenager who believed herself the object of a grand passion. It may have been a mistake to plan marriage. Slavery in chains was a far more potent bond than a certificate issued by a Government Department. Diana understood the possibility of David Farrell finding a greater satisfaction in his purchase of her body and the placing thereon of the bonds from which he gained so deep an emotional fulfillment. She felt certain that, at this moment, the last thing he intended to do was marry her.

Miss Diana Ramsay looked up at the apparatus by which she was compelled to stand, nakedly exposed, for the pleasure of a man. It was simple and immensely efficient. Clamped wrists were an innovation, they held her arms high with an exquisite implacability from which she drew the old familiar heat between her thighs. To be compelled to stand nude in this fashion because a man desired her thus was a turn-on strong enough to make her flare with desire. The knowledge that her desire would be denied simply doubled its intensity. Her ironed wrists made her a palpitating object of pleasure unfulfilled.

When David returned he brought a chair. Sitting astride it with his arms on the back he gazed at the naked girl with unfeigned enjoyment.

“Don’t mind if I look?”

“Be my guest. That’s what I’m for.”

It was not a good beginning. Rapport between them seemed a thing of the past. Diana knew his intent regard was centering on the metal jaws biting her nipples. She longed to ask him for forgiveness and the removal of the hated clips, but pride forbid. In any case, he’d refuse. She was sure of it. She stood in passive nudity, bearing the incessant scald on the points of her breasts, and tried to survey a horizon above the head of the seated male who owned her.

“Want those clips off your tits?”

“Of course.”

“Why don’t you ask?”

“I’m trying to be a well mannered slavegirl, David. I’m sure you’ll take them off when it pleases you.”

“Supposing I don’t?”

“In that case I’ll just have to wear them, won’t I!”

“Do they hurt quite a lot?”

“David, please…!” Diana stamped an ineffectual bare foot. “Don’t torment me, don’t taunt! I’ll endure your punishments and try and be obedient. Isn’t that enough?”

He laughed at her temper. “They really must hurt. But they’re too damn pretty to take off. Sorry ’bout that.”

Diana sniffed and moved resentfully against her raised arms. “Are you going to whip me, David?”

“Why d’you ask?”

“Well, aren’t I fastened in the position for it? That’s what this usually means.”

Unexpectedly, David Farrell lounged to where his slave girl stood and took the metal jaws from her nipples then frictioned the hurt scarlet buds to make Diana gasp in a mixture of agony and relief. Her response was heartfelt: “Thank you, David—” She gasped and swallowed. “Oh thank you!”

“Don’t mention it.”

He had resumed his seat and his appraising stare. Cringing under the intent regard, Diana added, petulantly: “You took them off because you’re going to whip me? Is that it?”

“Hadn’t thought of it. Not right now anyway.”

“What are you going to do with me, then?” The naked girl tossed an angry head. “Or should I have said ‘to me’?”

“I don’t have to do anything to you at all, except keep you prisoner.” The male voice was vexingly tolerant. “You’re a very costly package of girl, so you’ll never be given a chance of escape.”

“I’m flattered.”

David laughed, but there was no humor in the sound. “You’re mad as a wet hen. If you got half a chance you’d run. Oh, and since you’re so concerned about getting a whipping, I won’t disappoint you. You’ll get one all right.”

“How nice for me!”

“I plan to make it a ritual affair, something really severe, a sure cure for sarcasm.”

The ironed girl sniffed disdainfully but she was frightened. It was all so grim and humorless and wrong. “I gather I’m not giving satisfaction?” she asked stiffly.

“You know damn well you’re not. Who the hell wants a sarcastic bitch!”

“I suggest you sell me, then.”

“You’d like that, eh!” He laughed shortly. “But, about your whipping, I thought we might invite Jim Kessler to watch you get yourself striped. He finds you fascinating, he’d be an appreciative audience to your agony. You could play to the gallery—”

“David, stop this!” Diana could feel the start of tears. “Are we going to get married, or am I only a naked female you keep chained for your moments of B&D?”

“The latter.”

Diana Ramsay wept. She allowed her tears to flood and, savagely, dried them against her raised bare arm. When the storm had passed she muttered “Sorry. I’ll try and not do it often. It’s not every day I get a life sentence.”

“You don’t have one now.” The man’s gaze was somber. “Say the word and I’ll let you go. I’ll give you clothes and money—you can go.”

The pinioned girl stood tense in shock, sundered by hope and fear and disbelief. She looked up at her ironed wrists and found no faith in freedom. But suppose…! Doubtfully, she retorted, “Have you any idea how cruel it is to say… to promise—that?”

“You’ll get the whipping first, of course. Just a small return on my investment. The marks will remind you of me for at least a month.”

“Yes, of course…! And I’d try not to mind. I mean about being whipped that hard.” Diana shook her head as though to clear it of doubt. “Do you really mean what you’ve just offered?”

“You’ll jump at it, of course?”

“What else can I do. You don’t want me any more.”

“O.K., O.K., but I’m curious. What will you do? Where will you go?”

“I don’t know. Oh, David…!” The nude captive beheld little joy in freedom. She should have been in rapture but it had not happened. “Get a job, I suppose, and a place to live—” Dazed, she admitted: “It won’t sink in. I can’t comprehend.” Then, anxiously: “But I’m so grateful, so terribly grateful… If I can make it up to you some way…? If you find yourself wanting a girl to punish…? I’ll be willing… glad.”

“Thanks. But I wouldn’t advise that.” A silence fell between them until he added: “You’ll be whipped tomorrow.”

“Thank you.”

Unhurriedly, David released her. While she stood rubbing her wrists and wondering what to do with unfettered limbs he casually suggested, “There’s a simple and amusing little thing I got for you. I’d like to try it?”

“Yes, of course—anything!”

Diana refused to hope. Her mind was a turmoil which she thrust into neutral while she stood, naked and acquiescent, for the metal belt to be fitted and locked around her waist. She had expected pain but, except for being tight, it did not hurt. From the back of it hung a length of chain… The handcuffs were different, perhaps they were not handcuffs

at all. Two perfectly machined chunks of metal interlocking on the orifices ready for her wrists. Gingerly, Diana placed her hands for this fresh prisoning, and watched as the chain in back was brought forward between her thighs to rise over her pubic hair and pass through a ring in the front of the metal belt constricting her waist, from there it joined her hands, its last link finding lodgment as did her wrists when the two halves were made as one. There was an ominous click.

“Not as comfortable as handcuffs, but keeps you safer,” David said complacently. “Try ’em out.”

She hated them instantly. It was as though molten metal had been molded into a small rectangular chunk with her wrists inside. There was none of the latitude of links or the kindness of a cuff, her hands and forearms were clamped together at the level of her waist, and she could raise or lower them only as far as the chain, intimate within her crotch, and the ring in the belt would permit. Tugging at this strange bond, the slave girl discovered she could gain a link or two only at the expense of discomfort within the lips of her sex. She stood with her elbows held in at her waist and her joined hands clamped and chained a few inches from her navel. “I’d a lot sooner have my golden handcuffs,” she admitted ruefully. “But you’re right, I can’t do very much of anything. Are they to punish me or to just keep me helpless?”

David Farrell shrugged. “Could be either. How d’you feel in ’em?”

“Stiff and silly. I have to keep my hands right there as though I’m praying. Unless I pull the chain as far as it will go the metal hurts my wrists—there’s no give.”

“I like ’em. The effect on you is cute. They make you look prim and proper.”

“I don’t feel proper. I can’t cover much.”

“Don’t worry. The chain covers your cunt, and if you pull hard enough on it you can get your hands up into your cleavage.”

“I’m not complaining, David.”

“Good. You have the run of the house. You’re free except for that pubic ensemble. Amuse yourself. You don’t get whipped until tomorrow.”

“You mean I can just walk around?”

“Right. You’ll find you can’t get out. No need to chain your feet.”

“But… David…?”

“You’ll run into a surprise or two. I’ll apologize later.” He grinned in his friendliest expression yet. “Run along. You’re on your own.” As though to compel her to initiative he turned and left the room.

It was all crazy and not a bit the way it should be. Diana looked down at her ironed wrists, the ring and the chain and thought wistfully of her beloved handcuffs. If she took a deep breath the belt round her middle warned of increasing discomfort. Hesitantly, but with a thrill of excitement, Miss Diana Ramsay walked through the open door.

It was a lovely house. Her first steps took her to other rooms clearly designed for the discomfort and imprisonment of herself or other girls. But upstairs was luxury, a male luxury that, somehow, did not reflect the aura of the man she knew as David Farrell. But then… it was all so new even for him! The telephones she tried were dead, the windows too high or barred. The Pubic Ensemble controlled her with humiliating simplicity. When she entered the study, now partly converted into an office, she found herself face to face with Jim Kessler.

He was sitting at a desk, obviously involved. Around him was a small computer, an IBM, two telephones and a great clutter of paper. His welcoming grin was without surprise. He was still the odd cross between the decisive executive and the likable boy. “Hello, Miss Ramsay,” he said without embarrassment. “I’d like you to stand ahead of my desk so I can enjoy that harness you’re wearing. I put a bit of thought into that.”

Again the sense of something wrong, of pieces that did not fit. With only faint shame and small resentment, the naked

girl positioned herself for male pleasure. “I’m sorry—I didn’t know—I thought!” With her metalled hands clasped between her breasts, Diana felt sillier than ever.

“Not at all. You were supposed to find me. David’s gone home.”

It took the bewildered girl but a few moments to glimpse reality. Her naked impotence no longer mattered. “You mean…?” She gazed around the room and at the smiling man as though seeing both for the first time. “David isn’t…?”

“Rotten trick to play on you, I admit. But there was a worthwhile motive. We wanted your reaction. Actually, the impact should be just as valuable to you too?”

Diana looked from her harness to the man in the chair. “I’m lost,” she admitted bitterly. “Can you explain it all without being too damn cruel?”

“Simple! I inherited. David did not. It was some months ago, hence the functioning establishment. We thought you’d be suspicious.”

“Slavegirls aren’t allowed suspicions, Mr. Kessler, they get us whipped.”

“Gosh, you’re really cheesed off, aren’t you!” Kessler grinned. “I won’t let you sit down, you’re too cock hardening the way you are. But I think a drink is in order. I pre-

scribe brandy."

The costly potion fired Diana's throat and her courage. "Which of you two idiots do I belong to?" she demanded belligerently.

"Me." His eyes were keen for her reaction. "David and I have been friends since school. He got me interested in you and The Citadel just by his stories. It started out as a sort of ransom idea—I mean, to get you set free so you could get married. I could afford it, and I got a charge out of the whole romantic fantasy—"

"All that money…?"

He shrugged. "Seemed like a good investment. David got you as a wife or a slave, or maybe both. I got a vicarious kick out of the whole impossible adventure. Privately, I figured the money would never be all loss. If neither David or I wanted you, your resale value would be substantial." He grinned and winked. "If I could find the right Oil Sheik I might even show a profit. You really are a gorgeous piece of female."

"Am I? Naked and… clamped in a harness—untidy."

Kessler was amused by her dolor. "You're beautiful. You'll never wear clothes as long as I've got anything to say about it."

"So, I belong to you!" The brandy was still at work. "What

are you going to do with me?"

"David tells me he set you free. I'll honor his promise. Forget the money."

Diana's tug at her ironed hands was involuntary in surprise. She gazed searchingly into Kessler's amused regard. Her voice was weak: "I don't know what to say—you must be very fond of David—?"

"Fraternally, yes. Don't get… ideas."

"David said he'd free me quite soon… But, tomorrow, I have to be whipped…"

"Right! He wants to make a real ceremony of it, a ritualistic affair. A sort of Grand Finale. Hate me all you like, but I go along with the notion."

"Why should I hate you, Mr. Kessler? I'm grateful."

"It will hurt like crazy, won't it!"

"Well, yes, but—"

Kessler leaned forward earnestly. "Look, Diana, my main interest in girls, in you, is still to take 'em to bed. But David's fantasy, the slave girl thing, it reached out and grabbed me. I want a girl prisoner, I want her in bondage, I want to punish her…! Sorry 'bout that, but there's the truth of it."

"Why free me, then?"

He waved a deprecating hand. “To honor a pledge.”

“Am I being silly: I feel guilty… all that money and nothing to show for it?”

“After you’ve been whipped tomorrow you’ll probably feel you’ve earned it.”

“Oh, I expect I’ll scream and make a fuss. But slave girls get whipped all the time, we get over it and the marks fade. I’m so terribly grateful to you and David. I feel I want to give you something, something of… me. Being whipped won’t make me hate anyone.”

“You are quite remarkable.” Kessler was gazing at her with both approval and admiration. “You probably don’t grasp the tremendous import of what you have just said.”

“Thank the citadel. They trained me.”

“Look, when you’re free: Forget everything else and work for me! A plush apartment and a bigger salary than you’ve ever had. You give me a few days a week, a part time slave girl?”

“Why, of course I will!” Diana was trembling at her involuntary outburst. “I owe you so much.”

“I’d treat you horribly. I’d keep you locked in that thing that’s on you now, and there’s lots more. I’d whip you—some nights I’ll keep you over and have you in my bed. I’ll fuck you until we’re both exhausted.” He chuckled.

“Otherwise you can go home at five.”

“Mr. Kessler…!” Diana made her voice mischievously demure. “All you’ve done is describe one day in the life of a slave girl.”

Mr. Kessler poured two more brandies. Both were large.

It was strange to have her hands. Diana knew she would not have them long but their freedom was nice while it lasted. Her mind was busy with her script, determined to give her best in this last enactment of her slavery. Soon, she would be screaming. But in the meantime, and afterwards… afterwards! Her nakedness was trembling with more than fear.

It was the first room. The two men were waiting at either side. Head high, breasts pointing, Miss Diana Ramsay walked forward to her fate. Standing beneath the facility to which she would be fastened, she intoned:

“I am a slave girl to be whipped.”

She heard their separate gasps before the crisp voice demanded, “Why are you to be whipped?”

“To give pleasure to my Masters.”

“Are you pleased to suffer this pain?”

“Yes, I am pleased.”

“Raise your arms.”

The nude girl obeyed. Looking up, she beheld the metal column slide noiselessly down to greet her hands. The clamps at each end of the crosspiece were open. When they reached her level she placed her wrists therein. Her voice held infinite respect. “Please fasten me, Sir.”

Diana winced as the metal possessed her. Without pause she continued her prescribed role. “I will open my legs, Sir, so my cunt can be whipped. Please tie them apart.”

It was done. Her arms were lowered an inch—they wanted to see her writhe. In the same monotone she requested: “Thank you, Sir. Now, please whip me.”

Jim Kessler was aflame with passion. Diana’s recital of the simple script was femininly devastating. He longed to impale the spread nudity fastened as it was. But that would come. He possessed this loveliness, and knew it the supreme moment of his life. Heart pounding, he watched the arm swing back and the thong cut the air before it cut the waiting skin.

The weal was vivid. The girl who received it across the bareness of her back remembered David Farrell’s promise of severity. The sear of agony taxed all her fortitude to remain mute. The screams she would soon utter represented a small reserve of comfort to be cherished. For as long as she could she would hold them in check and find relief in

frenzied writhings against the bonds which held her securely exposed. The pain on wrist and ankle did not matter, the only thing that mattered was the whip.

David Farrell whipped Miss Diana Ramsay in the mood of a man traversing Paradise yet soon to leave its gate. In this springing to life of the scarlet bars upon the flesh of the woman he had loved he was savoring the quintessence of male ecstasy. The contortions of the whipped nudity were an orgasm beyond all others. When the punished prisoner began to scream he glimpsed an endless climax to desire.

Kessler was no hypocrite. He had been shown a new and vast panorama of sexual delight and was enjoying it shamelessly. This whipped girl straining against the bonds of his own devising bestowed an exciting dimension of beauty beyond anything he had dreamed. Of David's emotions he was less certain. The arm which, at that moment, bedded the leather on twin curves and slender hips seemed impelled by a frustration beyond the norm. He harbored a shrewd suspicion of his friend's traumatic discovery that the bondage of a girl meant more than love. David Farrell was besotted with the fantasy rather than the flesh. The excoriations he was etching on Diana's skin were but the fulfilment of a dream.

Diana herself was drifting in a world of pain. The first strokes had awakened in her a surge of lust, doubled and trebled in intensity by the watching male eyes devouring

her lunges and surgings against her prisoned wrists. This whipping cutting at her flesh was no worse than her Punishment at The Citadel. She would survive. While her skin was being scored by a man she had loved she concentrated on the single fact of an end, sometime the last stroke would snap across her nakedness and it would be over. Soon thereafter she would be free. As the fire within her loins died she replaced it with hope.

The inside of her thighs was the worst. The whip upon that soft flesh was so tender and so cruel. David whipped her there with sudden unexpected strokes, not often, but enough to keep her always apprehensive of the next while her back and bottom received the brunt of her punishment and the mounting agony misted her consciousness into a single blaze of fire in which she heard herself scream or yelp or moan with the detachment of a stranger. She wondered why the sounds she made were not always the same.

Diana did not comprehend cessation until David's arm was round her wealed waist and his lips hard on hers. His whisper was fierce. "I love whipping you. Do you understand…? I love it!"

"Yes, I understand." Her voice was weak.

His hand cupped her sex, the palm kneading the swollen labia, wetting itself on her secretions. A finger gently entered her sheath and ran its length testingly. "Here, right here… inside!" The male whisper was urgent.

Diana tensed in desolation. Her plea was as urgent as his whisper. “No! Oh, David, no! Don’t whip me in there!” She was panting. “Remember, you loved that place…!”

David Farrell backed away and gave Miss Diana Ramsay the cruelest stroke a whip can give a girl. The thong whistled up between her spread and well wealed thighs to bite into the cleft of her crotch and enter, with a wet sibilance, the secret place designed for love. As the girl drifted into the darkness she heard her screams from far away and knew that David was no longer there, not even to whip her. He was gone, gone, gone—and she was glad!

She supposed she was happy. A month had passed, and when Kessler asked, if she was satisfied with it, she assured him of felicity. But, in her heart, Miss Diana Ramsay was not quite sure. It was lonely in the apartment, and during the days when her master did not phone. But half her nights were spent with an ankle chained to Kessler’s bed and her libido satiated by Kessler’s lust. She wondered, wistfully, if those nights were not the best of her bargain.

They had allowed her to keep her golden handcuffs. She took them to the apartment and sometimes wore them there when she was alone. On free days she walked the streets and the stores and spent Kessler’s money. She knew herself in limbo.

Jim Kessler had soon discovered her preferences in bondage. Diana adored being bound or handcuffed, but hated

the stocks and pillory. She flared into horniness if her bottom was caned or cropped, but screamed without joy when her back was whipped. Kessler made certain she endured both. He loved her pout and sulkiness whenever he punished her in ways he knew she did not like. Diana did not complain. She often wondered if he was in love with her or whether their sexual feasts when her ankle was shackled of a night did not exhaust the intensity of his amour. But, anyway, it did not matter. Nothing seemed to matter much any more. She was a lucky girl.

Because it was their thirtieth day they toasted it with brandy before her arms were bound. They shared a lot of these small intimacies, and Diana felt certain they would have spoken of love were it not so easily possible to mistake the erotic delight of a whipped bottom or fettered feet for the grand passion. With fire in her throat, Diana Ramsay asked, whimsically: “What must I suffer today, Master?”

“Hands and elbows behind your back, sweetheart. And stop pouting. I’m well aware of your sentiments about your elbows. Today I’ve got a new clamp—”

“Oh, Master, those irons…! They’re so damn… final!”

“I’ll leave your feet free. You can roam the house.”

“I’ll be in agony—”

“No you won’t. And I’ll hang the key high on the wall here where you can’t reach. But you’ll know it’s there.”

It was understood that sometimes the slave girl must protest. Whether it was real or feigned, they both enjoyed it. Diana placed her hands behind her back and endured, in a haughty silence, the clamping of her wrists. But, between her legs, the fire was smoldering. It burned higher as Kessler compressed her arms and fitted the new casting above her elbows. It had been cunningly contrived to accommodate angles. It was heavy. The sound and feel of its closing caused the naked girl to emit an involuntary: "Mmmmmmm…!"

"Like it, Diana?"

"Of course I don't. It's unsporting. There's just no way I can get loose. With rope there's hope!"

"You love it. I can tell. Good-bye."

Kessler had kissed her and patted her puss. He might return in an hour, or she might have to stay clamped as she was until midnight. Diana cast a wistful eye upon the inaccessible key, then kicked a chair to the bar. Standing on it, she managed to awkwardly and painfully pour another glass of brandy. Drinking it was a problem, but she had managed it before and would again. Fortified, she faced her day.

The iron on her arms was heavy, the fit was snug. She was captive for sure and need waste no effort in trying to get free. With her fire burning warmly she went downstairs to

the rooms holding the machinery of a girl's pain. They held an endless fascination. Walking from one to the other with unshackled feet was a titillating exercise in itself. Reaching the end of the corridor she noticed the ring in the stone. It should not have been there. Why would a girl be chained there! In curiosity, she backed up and fingered the metal circle with ironed but inquisitive fingers.

The panel opened so easily Diana stumbled backwards through the false wall. Ahead of her was the light from barred cells which did not exist when the panel was closed. A girl could be prisoned here forever and no one would know! The captive heart thudded painfully.

"I'm so lonely. I'm so glad you've come, Master." The greeting was from one of the cells. It was the voice of Florence Emory.

"But, darling, he bought us both, and he's kept me here ages and ages, and I can't get out, and he doesn't fuck me very often—"

Florence Emory was naked. She had lost weight and was more attractive because of it. Her ankles were chained, her wrists were chained. There was a chain from her collar to the wall but it was long enough to allow her to grasp the bars and gaze delightedly upon deliverance.

"He's really rather sweet and he fucks so well. I've had the most wonderful time in this cell… and being tortured and

whipped and everything." She gazed earnestly at Diana. "But I'll be awful glad to get out of her and go home. I mean, enough's enough!"

"But, Florence, I don't have any keys."

"They're on the wall behind you. He hangs them where I can't reach, just to be mean. Please hurry."

"But, Florence, he's got these things on my arms, and behind my back—!"

"You can manage. Use your nose or something. Then pick 'em up off the floor. Then I can unlock you."

"But I don't need to be unlocked."

"Of course you do." Florence's chains were rattling in excitement. "C'mon, hurry! Get me free before he comes back. He'll whip us both if he catches us."

"I thought you liked being whipped and chained?"

"Well, so do you!" Florence retorted heatedly. "But please do hurry. Don't just stand there!"

It was soon done. A naked Florence, freed of all restraint, hugged and kissed with fervor. Diana remembered her own keys on the wall and, because Florence's urge for escape was contagious, allowed herself to be made similarly liberated.

"The only reason I want to escape is because he doesn't

know when to stop," Florence apologized while they were searching for feminine garments and money. "He's been absolutely sweet, the way he's kept me chained… and in that cell—and every few days he takes me to one of those rooms to be tortured—he's so clever."

Diana sighed. It would take a long time to explain, and the discovery of a second naked female in the house was food for thought. She enthusiastically admired Florence's whip marks, and found garments with which to cover them.

"And he's got the yummiest gadgets for a girl!"

"Florence, are you quite sure you want to escape? I think you'd better let me lock you back down there!"

"Well…" Florence's resolution wavered. "I simply must do some shopping and go to the Bank." She brightened. "I can always come back and see how he punishes me for escaping."

"Florence, you're an idiot. He may not want you back."

"Gosh, I never thought—" Florence was obviously thinking now. "Darling, if I let you chain me back down there will you promise not to tell?"

It was quickly done, and with an easy conscience. Florence belonged in a cell, it was the best place for her. Diana hung the keys back on the hook with the feeling of something beginning to yell.

“But, darling, those… those clamp things…? You’re free?” Florence was peering, pinkly and anxiously, through the bars. “I quite forgot—”

“But I didn’t, Florence. Bye-bye.”

“But he’ll punish me for letting you loose!”

“I’m sure you’ll enjoy every stroke, dear.”

Diana let the panel swing closed. It did so with a satisfying thud. Florence was safe, she could spend the day with a wet puss in erotic anticipation of punishment to come. Thinking hard, Miss Diana Ramsay went upstairs.

Jim Kessler’s slave was female and jealous. Florence Emory had been chained down there the whole time. The knowledge reduced Diana to the status of hired help. She dressed, she called a cab. At the apartment she told the driver to wait while she packed a bag. She put the golden handcuffs in the handbag she carried. The fare would be a lot of money. But she had no need of money…! In her first conviction in a long time, Miss Diana Ramsay carried her suitcase to the waiting taxi.

It was a long ride. Diana had time to think. One by one she ticked off a mental list the names of men: Mr. Sands, David Farrell, Jim Kessler, the Consortium—all were gone. None of them bequeathed her a sense of loss, her freedom was not of chains but of emotions. Her emotions were frayed and would need to heal. With an amusement, almost of

nostalgia, she looked down the canyon slope to where Catley had staked her to the ground and ravished her. But girls were resilient, they came back again and again. Their cunts were endlessly replenished. She paid the driver and tipped him contemptuously: he was a man. Standing atop The Citadel steps, Diana surveyed the view. There was no sign of life. She was alone. Without haste, she stripped, naked she fitted the golden handcuffs on her wrists and tightened them one notch too tight. It seemed only proper they should hurt. Resolutely, she rang the bell.

“Hello, Sister Nona, I’ve come home.”

Their hug was endless. Nona was Diana’s favourite. She gave the sister her golden key. Her voice was emotion charged as she pleaded: “Sister Nona, don’t ever set me free.”

“Darling child, we have heard—We have been so worried…!”

Soon, there were all the Sisters in the conference room. They clucked over the naked handcuffed girl like joyful hens.

“Dear child, you belong here. We love you.”

“Ridiculous men! They are absurd!”

Diana exuded love through misty eyes. “I’m so ashamed of it all… I want to be punished.”

“The darling wants to be punished, to be cleansed. Diana, dear, we know how you must feel. Of course we’ll punish you.”

“The thing is, she was bought and paid for.” Sister Cecilia was the practical one. “Is she free to come back to us?”

“Of course she’s free!”

“She’s told us—those men don’t matter. The Consortium sold her properly and they’re satisfied, Mr. Sands told me.”

“We should never sell girls, not girls like Diana. We don’t need the money.”

“Look at the darling—in the handcuffs we gave her!”

It was warm and affectionate and very comforting. Diana sipped coffee and nibbled sandwiches and was glad she’d remembered the golden handcuffs. It seemed incredible that she had once sought escape from this feminine felicity. She knew herself in a semi hysterical mood of abnegation but did not care.

“They punished me—those men. And they fucked me and fucked me. I want April and Tina to give me fifteen baths before you punish me.”

“Of course, dear. The little imps will love it.”

“And, in that punishment you gave me when I escaped, I hated the ‘horse’ thing worst of all, so can I have it?”

“Of course you may.”

“And if Mr. Sands or David Farrell want me for a session, will you tell them I’m not available… please?”

“They shall never have you again, Diana.”

It was a gorgeous feeling, its effect more potent than brandy. The twins ravished her delightedly in the bath, fingers, tongues and lips. Scented and immaculate, Diana Ramsay was delivered to the private office of Sister Cecilia. Even her golden handcuffs gleamed.

“You are undoubtedly our most beautiful girl, Diana. Our fees for your services will be doubled. We will make you exclusive. It will lighten your work load.”

“Oh, Sister…!”

“You are also our oldest girl: still a child but mature.” The senior Sister’s features were grave but her eyes twinkled. “I am impressed by your wish for the purification of Punishment. You possess wisdom.” Sister Cecilia actually smiled. “When your punishment is done with you will return to your duties for only four days a week, in the remaining three days you will be elevated to The Sisterhood as a novice. If your deportment warrants, and I am sure it will, you may reach the status of full Sisterhood in a couple of years.” The smile broadened. “I am your sponsor in this promotion, do not disappoint me.”

Diana Ramsay had no words. Instead, she wept the female tears of joy. The golden handcuffs clinked expensively as she dabbed at wet cheeks and tried to return The Sister's warm embrace.

Sister Diana!

It had a lovely sound.

The End.