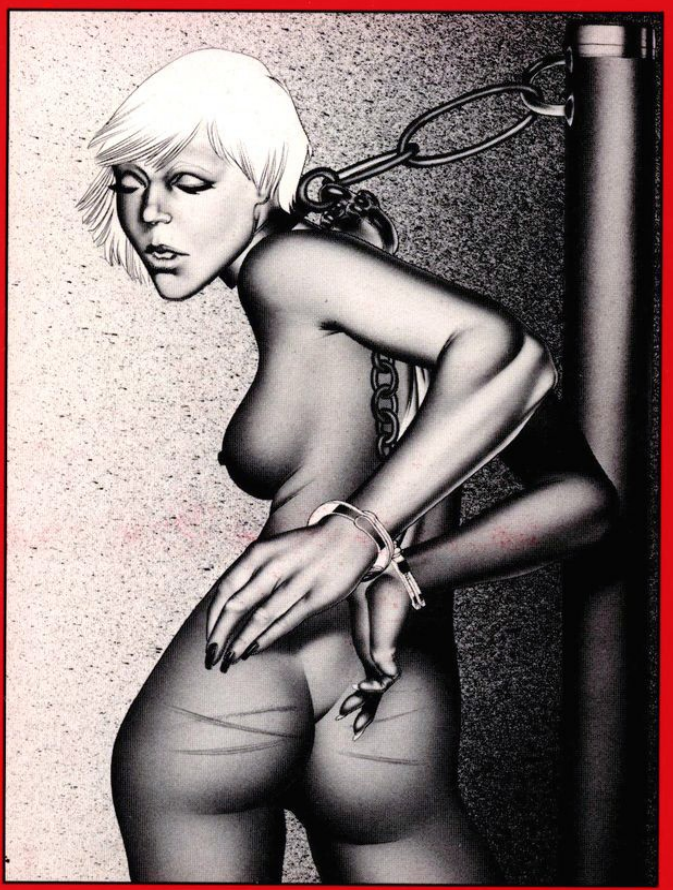
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JANICE LATIMER



F. E. CAMPBELL

HIT 155

Janice Latimer

by F. E. Campbell

1

Carnal Payment

NATALIE STEPHENSON worked late at the office. Her appointment with Denver Cartwright was not until 8:00 p.m. If she went home, she would only be restless, unsure about herself and what she must do. This was only her second summons to his apartment. The first had been a shameful misery of blushes, voiced resentment, even of pleading. But she held no cards by which to win a hand. She had listened to his instructions and, hating him for it, obeyed. She doubted her ability to sustain the relationship he desired. Something would happen—it had to. Cartwright would tire of her, or Janice would escape, or the authorities would get wind of what was happening on the island and take it into their hands.

It was impossible and intolerable, and there was nothing she could do about it.

She wondered if the other people at her office suspected anything. What had been done to her surely had to show, she thought. Or was she still the svelte and immaculate Miss Natalie Stephenson who ruled the rows of desks with severe competence? She wished she could talk to someone, but there was no one in whom she could confide. Janice was a prisoner on Cartwright's island, and that left only the matter of the man she was about to visit. Cartwright would talk to her about anything, but his conversation lacked

sympathy. He might only sneer. Anyway, Cartwright was a male.

She preferred to take a taxi. Ironically, the man she hated might drive her home. Cartwright was nothing if not civilized. Arriving at his apartment door, she took the black handcuffs from her bag, looking furtively up and down the broad hallway of the high tower. Breathing apprehensively, she locked the metal on her wrists and pushed the bell button.

As before, Cartwright wore only a dressing gown and slippers. He was very much at home. His first glance was at the handcuffs on her wrists, lifting her passive hands to ensure she had not cheated. But, if anything, they were a notch too tight. He nodded, satisfied, and then locked the door.

Natalie Stephenson walked diffidently into the lounge. It was a hateful business she would never get used to, especially the prescribed greeting.

“Good evening, sir,” she said, forcing out the shaming words with caution. “I have come to be fucked.”

It evoked the glimmer of a smile in the male. Cartwright enjoyed this woman’s shame.

“You are most welcome, Miss Stephenson,” he replied, tilting his head to mock her.

She stood awkwardly, still not believing what she had been told to do, but she met his glance coolly.

“You still insist on… that?”

“Of course,” he said with a grin.

Natalie nodded and shrugged. Hindered only a little by the handcuffs on her wrists, she deftly stripped herself of the garments carefully chosen for this repulsive rite. Naked she stood facing him in a blatant exposure, head up, hands behind her neck, feet well apart. She stood thus for his inspection for a minute, then went to the bar to mix drinks. Proffering his glass, she sank down on one knee.

“Your drink, sir,” she said huskily.

“Thanks. Get your own and kneel before my chair.”

Natalie drank rapidly as though the fiery stuff was water.

“May I have another, sir? I’m still not used to this yet.”

When she had filled her glass completely, Cartwright gave her a fresh command.

“Stand out in front of me while we drink. Keep your legs apart so I can see more of you.”

The blush she had held in now flamed, but she did his bidding, sipping at her drink to hide her shame.

“Am I allowed to inquire as to Janice’s condition?” she timidly asked.

“Eh? Oh, she’s fine.”

“She could be dead, and I wouldn’t even know.”

“I suspect you would not be doing this if she was.” Cartwright’s tone was dry. “Don’t stand there so damned stiff; the girl is happy.”

“How long do you intend to keep us under your thumb… sir?”

Cartwright waved carelessly. “Does it matter? I’m older than either of you. I’ll die first. Then you’ll be home free. I’ll do something for you in the will.”

“Gee thanks—half a lifetime!”

“Well, you asked. I’d stop worrying about it if I were you. Take me as I come. You may get to enjoy it.”

“You know I won’t.”

“You might if you forgot you were a lesbian. You don’t have to carry a torch.” Cartwright sneered. “I can tell you truthfully that you’re a damn poor lay,” he continued, holding up a silencing hand. “The only reason I bother with you at all is purely psychological. You’re a challenge. I’d like to break you down. Sexually, I mean. I can easily do it with a whip.” He waved the subject away. “Got yourself a new tongue?”

“I haven’t tried. Do you want me to lay on my back now and spread my legs?”

“I’ll tell you when. Better get yourself another drink and soften up that uncompromising rigor mortis. Get me one too, and when you kneel with it, do try and exude a little less hate. You may shatter the glass otherwise.”

Sullenly, she obeyed. In her tensioned antagonism, the first two drinks had induced little effect. She wished the liquor would take hold and ease her stress. She exerted every bit of control she possessed when she knelt and offered her master his glass. But, no matter how she tried, she would never achieve Janice’s natural grace in the submissive act.

“Do you want me to stand again so you can see my cunt?” she inquired hatefully.

“No. Do the submissive kneel. Sit back on your heels, but keep your knees far apart. It’s a nice effect and no strain on you.”

Natalie obeyed, but she was not sure the pose was less shaming than to stand. Cartwright could still see everything she had. Slowly, she allowed her cuffed hands and the drink they held to slip down and shield her pubic hair.

“Get them back up!” he exclaimed in anger. “You know better than that!”

“I’m sorry. I forgot.”

“You know damn well you didn’t. Look, woman, do what you please in that office of yours, but don’t ever try and manage me.”

Natalie's chained hands and the glass jerked up beneath her breasts. Her skin still bore marks from when this man had ordered her whipped. Memory of the pain was still vivid in her mind.

"I don't want you to fuck me," she said defensively. "But maybe you can understand how I'll always want to get it over."

"Why else would I keep you waiting, Miss Stephenson?" Cartwright laughed at her chagrin. "You're a pure delight to mortify. You should watch this lesbian nonsense; it makes you very predictable."

Natalie glowered. "Has it never occurred to you that I could be goaded too far? We all have our breaking points, you know."

"You haven't reached yours yet. If you weren't so damn hostile, I'd likely ease up. You irk me."

"And you irk me!" The kneeling woman shook her head angrily as though to clear her mind. "But, all right, I know I'm hostile, and I know it does me no good. Give me a chance. This whole incredible business is still so new to me. It's different for you. I suppose you've been whipping females and had them at your feet for years."

Cartwright laughed at her outburst, gazing down at her admiringly. Sardonically, he raised his glass.

"Here's to you, woman," he said sarcastically. "Don't think I

can't appreciate your finer points, but look, with all your indignation about being whipped, don't tell me you never striped our little sweetheart's skin yourself."

"That's different. I had a different motive."

"I doubt that. We all like to hear a pretty girl yelp."

"It's not a bit fair," the kneeling woman said thoughtfully. "It's always the girl who gets it. Even making allowances for eroticism and love play, it's still always the girl. Nobody ever thinks of whipping a man."

"That's what you think." Denver Cartwright chuckled. "Dammit, you're more naive than I thought. I'll get you a copy of an underground tabloid sometime."

"Oh, those creatures—perverts!" She tried to wave a hand in disgust but almost spilled her drink. "I have no patience —"

"What do you call being a lesbian?"

Natalie flushed. "You've got that word on the brain."

"It's part of the same family." Cartwright chuckled again at her vehemence. "You'd make a wonderful dominatrix."

"No, thank you."

"I know a senator who pays a girl regularly to beat his bottom. I could fix it up for you. Work out your frustrations on senatorial skin. He'd be grateful too."

“Men—ugh!”

“Dismiss us with one word, eh?” Cartwright shook his head sadly. “I wish I could dispose of the female sex that easily. I simply like ’em too much.”

“Well, you control enough of us.” Natalie sniffed disdainfully. “I can think of four right now. You must be unusually virile, or does having us whipped stiffen it up?” Natalie raised her cuffed hands. “Or is it these? I’ve wondered about the handcuffs.”

“You’re trying to pinpoint something, but nothing is that black and white, sweetheart.”

“Don’t use that word! I am not your sweetheart!”

“You’re not anybody’s sweetheart, Miss Stephenson, but what I started to say was that I adore females. I like ’em even better when they’re naked. When they’re naked and in some kind of bondage, I like ’em most of all. Beautiful women are like great works of art; they need their frames.”

“Huh! Are you trying to tell me that I’m handcuffed for a cosmetic effect—that you don’t get an erotic charge out of it?”

“Of course I get a charge, same as I do with your breasts and your—”

“Okay, okay, let’s just drop it.” She drained the last of her drink and set the empty glass beside her on the rug. “But

where's the dividing line between chaining us for effect and chaining us for strict utility?"

Cartwright shrugged indifferently. "They merge. But, for instance, if you came with me to the island for a weekend, I'd keep you handcuffed to discourage you from doing anything foolish."

"There's not much the damn things can stop me from doing. "

"In front they're symbolic, but behind you they are quite deadly."

"Oh, all right. You make the rules. Could we get this over with now?"

"No! I'll say when."

Natalie Stephenson motioned ineffectually, infusing weariness into her voice. "But if we're honest with ourselves, we always end up where we started, tearing off a girl's panties."

"You ignore the pleasures along the way. You've had a few of 'em yourself."

"Very well. But look, Cartwright, does our contract include an evening of conversation before fucking me?"

Amused by her dolor, Cartwright laughed. "You don't agree with me, but right now a good thrashing would do you a

world of good."

She did not flare in anger as he expected. Instead, she considered his suggestion gravely. What she said to him was startling.

"I'll agree to being thrashed if it can be a substitute for the act I came here for."

They sat in silence. Between them was a bomb of emotion, its fuse slowly burning. Natalie's offer had been impulsive, but she would not renege. Her heart pounded painfully. Cartwright was sorting out the implications in his head. He found it hard to keep a level tone when responding to her offer.

"What you're saying is that you'd sooner be whipped than be touched by me?"

"I don't know—I really don't—but I keep offering you my body in one way or another. Give me some credit for my efforts."

The man was thinking hard. The woman's angry offer had sparked a piquancy.

"We could amend our contract," he mused aloud. "Have it be my choice. When you get my summons, you wouldn't know whether you'd be whipped or fucked."

Natalie shrugged. "If you wish. I'm sure it would please you, and it doesn't matter to me. I lose either way." She

gazed up in confusion. “Forgive me. I’m not trying to be bitchy or smart. I come here to give you something—to make a payment. I mustn’t expect to win, not while you’ve got Janice.”

It was Natalie’s turn to be startled.

“On your back,” Cartwright demanded gruffly. “Spread your legs.”

“But I thought—”

“Do it!”

The woman obeyed and felt guilty relief. She must have been insane to invite a thrashing. It would hurt terribly, whereas this would only be disgusting. Gratefully, she disposed herself for male convenience.

Cartwright was grateful too. He had been in a mood to whip this exasperating woman, but now it was gone. He possessed her carefully.

“Isn’t this better than a girl’s tongue?” he asked slyly, thrusting hard deep within her body.

Irritated, she opened her eyes, and said, “They can’t be compared. Please get on with what you have to do.”

Cartwright raised himself, still within Natalie, and said “You’re a real ball-buster, Miss Stephenson. I’ve a good mind to both fuck you and thrash you.”

“Please do,” Natalie stated haughtily. “Then you can let me off the next visit.”

He thrust within her savagely, his phallus now a weapon.

The contentious bitch would screw up any relationship unless controlled completely. Fresh thoughts about whipping her added vigor to his breaching of Natalie’s sex. Soon she was gasping. A particularly brutal thrust made her cry out—but not in pain. He hammered at her steadily, uncaring of finesse.

The act completed, Cartwright commanded, “I think we could use two drinks, Miss Stephenson.”

“No, thanks. I don’t need another drink now that’s it over. But I will get one for you.”

“Maybe you should have one,” Cartwright said, now reclining in his chair. “You still have to be thrashed.”

“You’re holding me to that?”

“I honestly think it will do you some good. Now get those drinks.”

Miss Natalie Stephenson stood before her master, holding the two glasses, flaunting her nudity. She was surprised how easily she had become accustomed to having a man look at her like this. It was all a part of her humiliation, the breaking of her pride, the assault on her lesbianism. She envied Cartwright his enjoyment of her loss of face. She

could understand how satisfying that could be to a man. She wondered if her own conquest of Janice long ago sprung from any of the same seed, but put aside the thought as being absurd. Preoccupied, she mixed their drinks slowly, handing Cartwright his on her way back to her posture on the rug.

“Haven’t you forgotten something?” he asked.

Natalie stared up at him, puzzled. Her mind reviewed the bottles at the bar, the preparations. Suddenly it hit her like a blow.

“I forgot to kneel!” she blurted out, now aware of her error.

“Not too well trained, eh?”

“Well, I thought it was over. We’ve done it. I ought to be dressed and on my way home now.” Anxiously, she added, “If it means that much to you, I’ll do it over.”

“Think harder.”

“You mean you want to punish me for forgetting, as though I am a slavegirl to you? None of this stuff is in our contract.”

“On your first visit I briefed you on what to do, how to act. Serving drinks is part of it.”

“But not all this small talk, this analysis, your snide quibbling away at my lesbianism is not.”

“I insist on your time here being civilized. I won’t have you flouncing in and out like a duchess dispensing largesse to the unworthy. Getting the mark dealt with quickly is an old whore’s trick.”

“That’s what you’ve made me—a whore.”

“That’s nonsense.”

They glared at each other, breathing heavily. Natalie was the first to break the silence.

“If I agree to be whipped, may I consider our next appointment for my humiliation canceled?”

“Yes, okay. I thought we had already agreed.”

“And will it wipe out this offense that I’ve just committed?”

“No! Why should it? You’re bargain hunting.” Cartwright viewed her flushed and angry face with pure enjoyment. “Do it again properly and we’ll call it even.”

Natalie was on the verge of telling him where to put his drink, his kneeling act, and the whole shameful affair, but she had gone this far and decided not to stop now. Resentfully, she retrieved his glass and repeated her shaming obeisance. At the moment of her kneeling before the male she shed her sulkiness and contrived the act with infinite grace. She remained kneeling, her joined hands passive in her lap.

“Hmmm, there is a quality about you, sweetheart.”

“Don’t call me that!”

“Shut up!” Cartwright laughed at her sudden fear. “I’ll call you what I damn well please. If it wasn’t in the contract, we’ll add it. Look, Miss Stephenson, have you ever been whipped?”

“Of course not. You should know—”

“I don’t know. I don’t know much about you at all. I’m wondering what you know about yourself. I’m thinking of the easy way you’ve agreed to being whipped. It hurts like blazed, y’know.”

“I’m sure it does.”

Cartwright sighed. This was a very beautiful woman and very difficult to deal with.

“What I think you’re doing,” he said, “is trying to show me how much you hate having me fuck you on demand.”

“So?”

“Isn’t that cutting off your nose to spite your face?”

“That’s my affair.”

Cartwright looked down at the kneeling woman with amused concern. He tried again.

“Look at it this way, miss office manageress: You and I have

just fucked. You look exactly the same as before the act. I bet you don't feel any different either. But if you had been whipped, you'd be well decorated with weals and welts you'd wear for quite some time."

Natalie was angry with herself. She had foolishly gotten into a spot from which she could not withdraw without a shocking loss of face. The whipping suddenly loomed as an appalling agony she need not endure.

Stiffly, she retorted, "I'll wear them with pride. They'll remind me of what you are."

The man nodded, taking no offense. This woman was running true to form.

Puzzled, he asked, "Do you realize we both forgot the whipping you got on the island? Why is that?"

"You're right. I don't know why we forgot. I suppose it's that this time I have an option." She shrugged ruefully. "At least I did have. Can we stop pattering and get on with it?"

She was quite remarkable, walking beside him to his bedroom, then standing passively to have her wrists unlocked and bound, one to each of the uprights at the massive four-poster's foot.

"Back away as far as you can."

Surprised, she obeyed, arms straining against her new wrist tethers. Cartwright slipped a chair into the gap thus

made.

“I’m going to cane your bottom, Miss Stephenson,” Cartwright said easily. “Not a bad arrangement, eh?”

Natalie was shamingly conscious of her blush. She felt supremely ridiculous. The ordinary chair had turned a becoming pose into a farcical posture she could not change. She panted distressfully while her ankles were separated and bound to the legs. The top of the back bit unkindly into her bent middle. She could not move.

“A very lovely bottom, Miss Stephenson.”

She bit back a caustic remark and said, “I’m glad you like it.”

She then became silent. She felt as if she had become ninety percent buttocks. The poor thing was indecently exposed, perfectly postured for punishment. When she did speak, her remark was surprisingly Victorian.

“I’d think you would feel ashamed, treating a helpless woman like this.”

“Correction,” Cartwright said gently. “Not a woman, a lesbian—there’s a difference.”

She did not argue. She just stood, tense and awkward, her tied wrists hurting against the stress, her flesh flinching as the cane rapped the helpless curves in a tentative gauging of distance for the first blow. Natalie had a sense of unre-

ality about her predicament.

The flash of fire came, a searing scald. The chair creaked under the surge of her strength as she reacted to the pain. Her muscles and tendons fought but she scarcely moved. Natalie moaned gaspingly. This was not the careful caning of a young girl's bottom; this was a cruelty to match her womanhood.

Carefully controlling her voice, she inquired, "Must you hit me so hard?"

"I'm afraid so, Miss Stephenson. Nothing less would match your maturity." The male response was suavely rhetorical.

"It was utterly brutal."

"I'm sure you will find this one equally taxing."

Natalie groaned at the pain. She fought desperately, more as an outlet for anguish than with any real hope of escape. She bore five strokes without screaming. Then, as the cane paused, she felt the need to protest.

"Please! I've never known such agony—that's enough!"

"But we've scarcely scratched the surface—no pun intended."

"Please, you're hitting me full force. It's inhuman."

"I must say, I am pleased with that bind you're in. It does wonders for this bit of you I'm caning."

“I’m really sorry, but I honestly can’t stand it.”

Cartwright rapped the wounded flesh meditatively.

“As two slave owners, we should exchange ideas,” he said teasingly. “This tie I’m using on you now, you should remember it.”

“I certainly will. Please let me loose.”

“I was thinking in terms of twenty strokes, Miss Stephenson.” Cartwright’s voice was dreamy, and his cane continued its tentative taps, each evoking a feminine flinch. “Surely you expect no less.”

“They’d kill me. I’d lose consciousness. I’d scream.”

“The latter two are acceptable.”

“Don’t be hateful. Give me a break.” Natalie strained uselessly against her bonds. “And this way you have me tied, it’s murder.”

“Out of deference to pleasures shared, I’ll lower my sights to fifteen.”

“Ten more!” Natalie exclaimed aghast. “Honestly, you can’t comprehend this pain. It’s hellish. There’s no way—”

The screaming arc and the searing impact cut her short. Uncaring, Natalie screamed. She writhed and gasped in outrage and distress. The fire spread from her caned bottom to every nook and crevice of her being.

“I expect that caught you unaware,” Cartwright said blandly. “I must apologize. It was number six.”

“Not fifteen,” Natalie begged. “Please not fifteen like that! I beg you, make it ten!”

“I’ll come down to twelve. Never tell me I’m not a gentleman.”

“Oh, all right, but if only you wouldn’t hit me so hard—”

He cut her twice in rapid succession, and then twice more.

When Natalie had quieted her sounds of female anguish, Cartwright said briskly, “There! Only two more to go. Since they’re going to be extra hard and on a tender spot, how about a brandy and a rest before I lay them on?”

Her breasts were heaving, but her decision was firm.

“Thanks, but no. I’d like them right now, please. Get it over with.”

The man resumed his suspenseful tapping on wincing wounds.

“You appear to have some sort of fixation about getting it over with, Miss Stephenson. I expect it’s your office training.”

“Please…!”

He struck her savagely, the cane whirring viciously, its

splat upon her damp skin a fearful sound—once and then again. While she was still screaming, he took away the chair, releasing her ankles. Natalie stood naturally, pathetic and lovely with arms outstretched to either side. She sobbed quietly, absorbing her pain.

“Congratulations, Miss Stephenson.”

“You made me scream. I didn’t intend to scream.”

“What’s wrong with an honest scream?”

“I hate them.” She twisted her nudity unhappily. “They shame me so. They’re so childish.”

“They’re delightful. I expect you’d like to be untied now.”

“I sure would. I was afraid to ask.”

“I’d cheerfully leave you as you are—you make a truly lovely picture—but I expect you’d start mentioning contracts.”

Both of Natalie’s freed hands went instantly to her ridged, wealed bottom, rubbing cautiously but luxuriously. Catching Cartwright’s amused glance, she pulled them back, blushing.

“Please don’t stop,” he told her. “I’m sure it feels good.”

“Not with you watching me like that.”

“I’ll go out and look out the window while you massage

your wounds."

Cartwright actually followed his own suggestion. The naked girl surveyed his back doubtfully, then resumed the comforting attention of her hands, her exploring fingertips finding wonder in her wounds. After a minute she faltered.

"May I dress now?" she asked.

"Of course," the man said, turning from view.

"The handcuffs," Natalie said, holding them out to him.

"No need. Our session is over." Cartwright picked them up and handed them back to her. "Here, take them. You'll need them next time."

Naked, she held them in her hand as they went downstairs.

2

The Wage of Discontent

FOR JANICE LATIMER it was that hour of her punishment most difficult to bear. Recrimination and self-reproach came easily in the hour before the last. The last hour held the promise of release and was thus easier to endure. Now she was counting the cost of her earlier ecstasy and finding it too high. She had done this too many times since her first pact with Brigid. Yet, the witchery of finger and tongue still lured her back into the same trap again and again. What she needed was the presence of Denver Cartwright. A slave without her master is easily bored.

Janice looked up wearily as though to reassure herself of strained bare arms and snugly strapped wrists. It did not seem possible those two straps could hold her nudity helpless and suspended, her toes an inch above the floor, but it was so. This punishment would last the rest of the day. She did not know the time but guessed two hours still to go before the blessed relief of release. She sighed dolefully. No doubt it served her right. She could not blame Brigid for the housekeeper's cheerful acceptance of her offer.

"I've got pain to spend, Brigid. Are you buying today?"

“Sure, I’ll buy. But look, Miss Latimer, aren’t you overdoing this?”

“Sure, I am. In the afternoons I hate myself, but for the first few hours you’re so wonderful. You’re a witch.”

“If you’re hoping I’ll feel sorry for you and let you down ahead of time, you’d best forget it. I won’t. I’ll make you suffer every last minute. You’re a nine-to-five girl—eight hours.”

“All right, all right, I’m not complaining.” Janice matched Brigid’s smile and cocked an inquiring eyebrow. “But I am curious as to why you make me pay the penalty, or the price, or whatever you want to call it. You don’t have to, y’know.”

“I’m a bitch, that’s why. Patsy told you, and the master told you. Don’t you believe it?”

“No. You’re not a bitch, not with those hands and that tongue.”

“That’s the bait,” the housekeeper chuckled. “The punishment keeps you from bothering me every day. It’s been nearly a week now.”

“My shoulders and wrists complain so, that’s why. Brigid, couldn’t we vary it a bit? Whip me, or maybe tie me to a tree?”

“I’ll get you sick of this first. Besides, hanging you up makes

you real handy for what I do to you."

That was hours ago. She had accepted the older woman's explanation. Quite likely that was all there was to it. She had held out her wrists for the straps, anxious as always to reach the point where she couldn't change her mind. Once her wrists were on the bar and her toes off the floor no amount of pleading would undo what she had done. Brigid was inflexible.

Denver Cartwright spent less than half his time on the island. Janice wished it was more. As beautiful as the island was, it failed to sustain her interest beyond a certain point. If she could have had Patsy to play with it would help, but Patsy was a servant and was deliberately segregated. The rest of the islanders viewed Janice as Cartwright's personal prize and would have little to do with her. There were times when she considered her master's cynical offer.

"If you're really cheesed off, sweetheart, I could arrange some daily punishments for you. They'll make you feel good when they're over."

"Huh! Like in the field with a hoe, with a ball and chain on my ankle?"

"Just trying to please."

"Why can't you take me with you on the plane?"

"We've gone into that. Stop nagging."

“Wanting to be with you isn’t nagging.”

“Tell you what, sweetheart, I’ll have Brigid keep an eye on you. At the first signs of melancholy she’ll give you to Enrico to work in the field, but this time your quota will be less.”

“Denver, don’t be mean. I’m no good at that. I’d earn a whipping or end up sitting in those beastly stocks every night.”

The suspended girl sighed. She had been kissed and fondled and loved, and the subject had died. But her master had gone away, and here she was enduring a punishment she had asked for herself. It was every bit as painful as if someone else had sentenced her. Bleakly, she wondered if maybe his offer of a daily punishment was not a good idea. She wondered if she could coax Cartwright into something mild and easily borne. The utter bliss of release in late afternoon might be well worth the pain.

She was forbidden to ask questions about Natalie. She had to be content with whatever scraps Cartwright passed on. As time had passed she wished more and more that she could get word to her former mistress to tell of her belief that Natalie’s pact with Cartwright could be safely repudiated. She no longer believed Cartwright would whip her in the way and for the reason he had promised. There would be something ugly about it, and he was not that cruel. She had already got herself a whipping by seeking to send a

letter with one of the pilots. She did not try again. The master and his island held her totally.

Janice had been a slave too long, first to a mistress and now to a master. She knew her existence was governed by the threat of punishment but had ceased to care. Within the frame of her captivities she had known much happiness and was granted deep affection. She found no inconsistency in loving them both, or in bearing their punishments. The island was a paradise, and there was no snake in Eden. She had given up worrying about whys and wherefores. She believed her condition was unique. The thought pleased her a lot.

When it came time for her feet to be lowered to the floor, Janice made her usual lament.

“Brigid, I have to be crazy to do this—to ask you to do it to me. I’m half dead.”

“I’ll agree with the crazy bit, Miss Latimer.”

“Brigid, next time I come and offer a payment of pain for fun, please turn me down.”

“No, ma’am! You ask, you get it!”

“I’m so ridiculous. Whoever thought this up?”

“Don’t worry about it. You’re over this one already.” Brigid patted a bare shoulder maternally. “You’re a big strong girl.”

“Brigid, does Mr. Cartwright know we do this?”

“Not unless you tell him. I wouldn’t if I were you.”

“Goodness no! He’d hang me up for a week as a cure. What’s for dinner tonight?”

“For you, just bread and water. What else?”

“Don’t tease. I’ve had enough bread and water to last a lifetime. You have no idea how dreary it is until you’ve been given no choice. Brigid, why haven’t you whipped me lately?”

The housekeeper chuckled. “Haven’t wanted to. Fact is, I’ve got used to having you around. Getting fond of someone ruins lots of things.”

“That’s sweet. I don’t mind about you not whipping me. I was just curious.” Janice wrinkled her brow. “But if whipping me has lost its allure, how come you keep me hung up for the whole eight hours every time we do it?”

“Sweetheart, that’s something special between you and me.” Brigid gave a saucy bottom another admonishing slap. “When I get you suspended, I have the damnedest time bringing myself to let you down. You have no idea how lovely you are hanging up by your wrists. And that reminds me—hold out your hands.”

Without concern, Janice obeyed and watched as she was handcuffed. The act had little significance any more.

Cartwright wanted her handcuffed all the time, and that was an end to it. She was almost as adept with them on as with them off. If they were taken from her, she would miss them horribly. They were more than a symbol of her slavery; they were the touch of her master's hand upon her always.

Cartwright's absence was not allowed to prevent Brigid and Janice from dining formally. They did so daily, served by a bright-eyed Patsy, very much aware of Janice's nudity.

Intercepting the maid's hungry interest, Brigid laughed sardonically, telling the lust-filled girl, "Janice is not for you, Patsy. First, she is for the master, and after that she is mine." She turned to the slavegirl. "You remember that too, Janice. I've seen the way you two look at each other. If I ever catch you two…" She laughed the implied threat away. Casually, she suggested, "If you're bored, why don't you explore the island more?"

"It's lonely. Now, if you or Patsy would come—"

"Forget it. What you need is something to do. How about the field and Enrico?"

"That's not something to do, that's punishment."

"Well, sort of. I could make you change places with Patsy, but the master wouldn't like that."

"I don't see why he can't take me with him on these trips."

“You’d look sweet going around the city handcuffed.”

“He could take them off every morning and put them back on me every night.” Janice contrived her best little girl look. “I’d behave.”

“Maybe for one day.” The housekeeper regarded her charge affectionately. “The next day you’d fling yourself into the name of that what’s-her-name woman.”

“Not if Denver made my punishment awful enough so I’d be scared.”

“Sweetheart, hot irons wouldn’t keep you away from her. There’s no threat bad enough to keep a girl away from anything. She’s always certain, deep down inside, that she can weasel out of anything. Loving arms, a few tears… I don’t need to tell you.”

“Well then, he could keep me chained in the apartment. ”

“In that case, you’d be better off here. It’s a nice climate, and if sex is what’s worrying you, there’s always me.”

Janice grimaced. “I’m ungrateful. I’ve got it good here. I bet the slaves in the South felt like I do when they were emancipated.”

“I could tie you to a tree tomorrow.”

“I wouldn’t mind, Brigid.” Janice soberly considered the proposition. “But it would be sort of… contrived.”

“I like the idea. It would keep you out of my hair.”

“Let’s do it then.” Janice’s eyes sparkled. “The same tree—the one you tied me to before.”

“Mmmm—let’s not be hasty.” The housekeeper’s eyes held a glint of their own. “You’re bored, and you want a change. Let me think about this.”

“You’ve already thought of something.” The slavegirl was alert with interest. “Tell me what it is.”

“No, I won’t. You’ll probably hate it.” Brigid giggled at a secret thought. “I don’t know why it didn’t occur to be earlier.”

“Don’t be mean; please tell me.”

But it was not until two hours after dinner that Janice Latimer’s adventure began.

“I’m going to blindfold you, pet.”

The slavegirl’s interest perked. She looked at the black bandage in Brigid’s hand with curiosity. She felt heat rising.

From the tight darkness of the soft stuff upon her eyes, she breathlessly asked, “What are you going to do with me?”

“You know I won’t tell you. But before I change your handcuffs from front to back, tell me that you trust me.”

“Oh, Brigid, of course I trust you!”

Janice stood, quivering, while her hands were locked behind her back. They had not been thus fastened for a long time. It brought back memories. Brigid's strong fingers grasped her bare arm.

"It's quite a walk, sweetheart. I'll guide you. Relax, there's no sudden shocks waiting."

It was exciting. The hand on her arm reassured. Boredom vanished. Excitation was strong within her loins. In bright expectation, Janice walked to whatever Brigid held in store.

The sound of surf told the blind girl she was approaching the beach. Then there was sand between her toes.

"We're going to walk on the beach, Janice," Brigid told her. "There are no obstructions. Just walk naturally."

"You're going to tie me to that tree and leave me there all night, aren't you? I just know you are."

"Guess again, pet."

"You're not going to stake me out on the sand for the land crabs like in that Ian Fleming book, are you?"

"Goodness no! Or was that wishful thinking?"

They walked a long way until the captive girl ventured, "We must have walked halfway around the island by now."

"Pretty close. You'll soon know your fate."

The suspense was delicious. Janice trusted the older woman. She would not be harmed—maybe not even hurt. But that was open. A little pain added spice. The flare between her legs burned bright. The fingers on her arm commanded a halt. She was half turned and thrust forward, then told to stand. There came the clang of metal and the snap of a lock.

“I’ve loosened the blindfold,” the mistress said in an amused tone. “You can get it the rest of the way yourself. You’re going to love this.”

Janice listened to what she supposed was retreating footsteps, but could not be sure. She shook her head. Yes, the bandage on her eyes was loose but not ready to fall. She took a tentative step, then explored with an outthrust foot, discovering bars. Another half step and she was able to use one of them to rub her bandage against it, frictioning the loose knot until it fell loose and the dark folds fell away. She looked around in disbelief.

She was in a cage.

Janice recognized it instantly; she had seen it by the wharf. It was a cage used by divers to keep them safe from sharks, but the door now incorporated a massive padlock. She had heard its snap in closing and didn’t bother to test it. The bars on the cage were heavy and well spaced, but not far enough to give her any hope of slipping between them. She was a prisoner. The bars beneath her feet had been worked

into the sand and were out of sight. The surface above them had been smoothed for her convenience. She tugged irritably at prisoned hands—she could see need for freedom—but she was totally helpless and very much alone. Brigid was lost to sight. Janice did not call; it would only be a waste of breath.

She recognized the curve of the beach at its most distant point. She was utterly isolated on the loneliest strip of sand the island offered. Brigid would be laughing at her dismay. The captive supposed she was to be cured of her distaste for solitude. Janice looked around at the ocean on one side and the palm trees on the other. Her small prison had been placed well up on the sandy beach away from high tide. She knew herself safe, but, looking at the immensity of the sea, she shuddered.

Handcuffed and helpless, Janice's mind played host to visions. She knew that they were absurd. At least they would have been absurd anywhere else, but not here in the cage. She remembered the legend of the lovely Andromeda, chained to her rock to await the coming of the monster that was out there somewhere—waiting—perhaps already seeing its nude victim and smacking its lips. On her other side was the darkness of the trees in which could lurk unmentionable horror. Soon it would be night and her cage would keep her where she was, a tasty morsel for a roaming dragon.

The caged girl shook her head to rid her mind of silly fan-

cies, telling herself she was full grown and should know better. The sun was not yet setting, and she was indisputably in one of the most beautiful places on earth. Minus cage and handcuffs, she would be an object of envy, but the cage and her cuffed hands were terribly real, her solitude intense. It was obvious that as her original excitation died, she was going to be more bored than ever. Once more she could imagine Brigid's laughter. She was being taught a lesson. She kicked at the sand in frustration, connecting her big toe with the bar beneath. She hopped on one foot and said a hearty "Damn!"

Disconsolately, the captive girl tested all the bars. She did it by a backing up process. She tried the lock. Repulsed, she sat on the warm sand and leaned back again the metal by which she was caged. She knew she deserved what she was getting. She shouldn't have protested against good fortune. Another girl might have been happy all day with the surf and the sun and Brigid's cooking. Cooking? Suddenly the captive of the cage was aware of hunger and the total absence of either food or water. It was faintly disquieting, but she thrust the thought away. Someone would come. Someone had to come—didn't they?

Surprisingly, it was a naked Patsy who finally showed up. She slipped through the starlight, a slender wraith, panting and anxious.

"I bring you some water, Miz Latimer." She thrust a bottle through the bars. "Seems like you ain't gettin' nothin' to eat

till mornin'."

"You mean I'm here for the night?"

"'Fraid so. Don't ya git spooked none? Gosh, all dark and ever'thing!"

"Do you have the keys?"

"I ain't got nothin'. Brigid took mah clothes so's to be sure we both git horny, and there ain't nothin' we c'n do. What ya done to make her so mad?"

"Oh, darling, I haven't done a thing—except talk silly. Don't blame Brigid; I deserve this."

"I sure does wish I could git in there with you, Miz Latimer. I'm plumb scared out here alone."

"So am I, and I can't even hold your hand. Patsy dear, please feed me some water. My hands are tied behind my back."

Janice drank thirstily. She couldn't handle the bottle alone. What she drank would have to last until morning.

Satisfied, she asked, "Did she say why this cage and me are way out here?"

"'Cause it's the loneliest place there is, that's why. Gosh, I wouldn't wanna stay out here all night, and 'specially not in no cage. Miz Latimer, I sure does wish I could git you outta there."

“I wish you could too, Patsy. You sure do look beautiful the way you are now.”

“You as horny as me, ain’t ye? You’s beautiful too. It’s a damn shame we can’t git together. You want me to use my hand on you, Miz Latimer?”

“No. That’s sort of ugly. But we can kiss through the bars before you go. That’s all we’d better do now.”

It was a long kiss. Neither girl wanted the loneliness that must follow. It was Patsy who ended it. She backed away from the bars and picked up the bottle.

“I best run. Brigid tells me to git back right smart. I don’t wanna git whipped none tonight.”

It was always there—the promise of the whip. It governed their lives. Janice looked through the bars at the speeding slenderness. Patsy would be seeing her “ghosties” and fleeing to the sanctuary of the fort. As the girl disappeared around the bend, a terrible loneliness took possession of Janice. She wished now that she had accepted Patsy’s offer. Embers smoldered within her sex and she suddenly realized why her hands were behind her back. They were lost to her and could provide no comfort in this dark solitude. Brigid would be chuckling on that score also. Janice strained one hand forward, down her groin, but the handcuffs scorned her hopeless effort. She could touch nothing of herself that mattered. Angry with herself for her predicament, she scanned the scene before her. It was very

beautiful. If there were monsters in the ocean or among the trees, they were welcome to come and take her. She hoped the handcuffs would give them indigestion. She sank lower into the soft sand and went to sleep.

Janice woke early and had to wait a long time for Brigid to appear. The housekeeper wore an amused smile and carried a bag.

“Hi, sweetheart! The monsters didn’t get you, eh? I’ve brought your breakfast.”

“Brigid dear, does that mean you are’nt taking me back with you?”

“Wouldn’t go to all this trouble for just one night, pet.” Brigid unlocked the door. “Come on out for a minute.”

The captive girl obeyed with alacrity. She did not care if she never entered the cage again. Belatedly conscious of the wisdom of not complaining, she stood while her companion produced a second pair of handcuffs and cuffed Janice’s right ankle to one of the bars. Obedient to Brigid’s nod, she turned and was relieved of the bands around her wrists. Luxuriously, she stretched.

“Brigid darling, I’m sorry I was such a bore with my beefs.”

“Gave me an excuse for doing what I’m doing, pet. Now that you’re safe from running away we can have breakfast.”

“You know I wouldn’t run away. Besides, what good would it do me?”

“Well, maybe, but you’re going back in that cage, and I don’t think you want to, so it’s best that I keep you under control. ”

“Oh, all right, I don’t mind. It’s just so good to have you here. Please don’t hurry.”

Janice ate hungrily and happily. Her mistress ate too, eyeing her charge in amusement. There was a thermos of coffee.

The worst of her hunger appeased, the slavegirl asked, “How long are you going to keep me in this cage out here all alone?”

“You know better than to ask that, pet.”

“I suppose so. Well then, can I just be handcuffed in front?”

“No. I’m going to make sure you’re properly frustrated.”

“I don’t suppose you’d consider putting Patsy in with me, would you?”

“Your supposition is correct.”

They locked eyes and laughed, understanding each other.

“I’m never sure how far I can push you,” Janice admitted. “Right now I feel terribly vulnerable and submissive.”

“Good, you should be that way all the time. I won’t have a fight to lock your hands again, will I?”

“Of course not! Oh, Brigid, don’t you think I’ve learned things? I wasn’t rebellious before; I was simply bored.”

“Are you bored in the cage?”

“Horribly. That’s why I’m in there, isn’t it?”

Brigid waved a careless hand. “The nice thing about us is we understand each other. You’re the first of our master’s girls I’ve got along with. You may hate something, but you know why you’re getting it.”

When their meal was long past and talk had died, Janice forthrightly asked, “May I go behind a bush?”

“With hobbled feet you can.”

The captive girl shrugged. “Of course. Let’s play it all the way.”

“I’ve got a better idea, pet. I’ll tie one hand to one foot.”

It was surprisingly practical. With her left wrist cuffed to her left ankle Janice could do a bent-over walk. It was much better than the hop, skip, and jump of hobbles. One hand was completely free to attend to her needs. In docile compliance she allowed her hands to be once more locked behind her back.

Wistfully, she pleaded, “Is there any way you’d consent to

playing with me, Brigid?"

"No!"

"I just asked, that's all. I don't think I'm going to enjoy my day. Have you heard anything from my master?"

"No. He'll just come."

"I suppose you want me to go inside now so you can lock me in?"

"Any other suggestions, sweetheart?"

"No, I suppose not." Janice shrugged. "I'm in the middle of a bad time. I just have to sit it out. That's all you have for me, isn't it?"

"Don't play the martyr with me, pet. Sitting in this cage is better than wandering around not knowing what to do."

Janice laughed in mock bitterness. "So now I can't do anything except look at the scenery through the bars? And I'm supposed to be happy?"

"Sure, you're happy. You can't fool me. You're a very lucky girl—no decisions to make, and you get fed three times a day. I've handcuffed you so you can't reach your pretty pussy, so you don't have to wonder if you should play with yourself or not. Damn it, Janice, you've got it good!"

"I'm a pet in a cage."

“So what? You’ve got time to sit and think.”

Indeed she did! Janice watched the housekeeper walk away around the bend. She seemed to be forever watching retreating backs. But she had to admit to a delicious thrill in this capricious captivity. The cage within which she was locked was an incongruity here on this lonely beach. Brigid had unerringly hit upon a happy solution as to what she should do with her time. Time had been taken from her; she was caged in limbo. Even her hands had been taken from her and cuffed behind her back so that she could not give herself pleasure which her master would not approve.

She walked around the cage, testing the bars with a bare shoulder. She could never get out; she was firmly imprisoned. She chose her corner and her view, then sat down in the sand, leaning her joined arms back against unfriendly metal. For a little while she contented herself with the sight of sun and surf and the green verdure of the trees. The rolling waves expending themselves on the beach made a comforting sound which would later send her to sleep, but for the moment she would dwell on desire.

She wanted her master. She was shocked by her dependence on this man who had kidnapped her. Or was “stolen” a more appropriate word? She recalled a discourse in which someone deplored the dependence of pets upon those who owned them—the pathetic need of dogs and cats for close communion with the omnipotent human who kept them in a thralldom they saw only as a warm security.

She was a pet, a carnal convenience for a rich man. Cartwright would never marry her. She thrust the idea from her mind as a negative thought. There was a true warmth between them. They liked being together. She even secretly enjoyed his punishments, especially since most of them were terminated by him taking her to bed.

But Cartwright was with her on the island only half the time, and she could hardly follow Brigid around all day like a puppy dog. She was thrown too much to her own devices. She supposed herself highly sexed, blaming this compulsive urge for her return on the magic of Brigid's hands and lips and the price the housekeeper sardonically exacted for this joy. Janice was sure she could be very happy indeed if she was allowed access to Patsy's charms, but the luscious Patsy was forbidden fruit. She wasn't sure why, but supposed the prohibition arose from Cartwright's concern and distaste for a lesbian union whereby his own hold on his slave's affection might be jeopardized. Janice sighed. It all seemed silly. Ruefully, she supposed she was not yet a well-trained slavegirl. Perhaps her time handcuffed in this cage might take her another step along her path, but she doubted if any correction was as effective as the whip across her bare back.

Janice's day was an indolence in which she slept intermittently in the hot sun and allowed her thoughts to take her where her limbs could not. Patsy's visit with water was a repetition of the night before.

“You gettin’ sick o’ that cage yet, Miz Latimer?”

“Well, I’m in it, and I can’t get out, so I just sleep.”

“If you backs up against the bars, I c’n git my arms ’round you and play with yo’ tits some.”

“Oh, Patsy, I’d love it, but it would drive me crazy with longing. I wouldn’t be able to settle down again all afternoon.”

“Guess you’re right. Brigid’s bein’ real mean to you, ain’t she? She gits a kick outta sendin’ me out there all naked so’s we want each other. If the master comes back and finds you out here in this cage, he’s liable to whip her ass.”

“No, he won’t. It’s my own fault I’m in here, and I’ll tell him so.” Janice shrugged. “I kept pestering Brigid about having nothing to do, so here I am.”

“You ain’t got nothin’ to do in there neither.”

“That’s the point. I have to get used to it.”

When she returned in the evening, Brigid was more jocular.

“You ready to get out of there, sweetheart?”

“You haven’t the least intention of letting me out. I can tell from the way you’re grinning. So, no, I’m not ready to regain my freedom. I like it in here.”

They shared laughter, once again in understanding.

“No fun and games with that little minx I sent you at noon?” Brigid asked archly.

“That was cruel. Do you want me to pace all day in a dither of lust? That’s the effect a naked Patsy has on me.”

“If it generates your heat that bad, what effect do you think you have on me? The most beautiful girl in the world running around naked under my eyes all the time, and I can do almost anything I want with you. You’re far more of a cunt-disturber than Patsy.”

“I’m not that beautiful, but I’d love to service you, if you don’t mind me being covered in sand?”

“The master won’t like it.”

“I’ll be eating you, not him.”

They shared another laugh.

“You won’t get a thing in return,” Brigid promised severely. “I won’t even nip one of your tits.”

“I know—that’s okay. I’ve been a bad girl.”

The captive watched her ankle being chained to a bar. Then her hands and arms were suddenly free, and she clasped her mistress in an ardent embrace and fed upon her with an avid hunger. Both of them were surprised by the intensity of her need.

“I’m ashamed of myself,” Janice admitted afterwards. “But there are times when I want you so bad.”

She was kissed and comforted and fed. Finally the time came for her hands to be locked behind her back again. Janice turned and arranged her arms for the steel bands around her wrists, then stepped back within the confines of the bars.

“How much longer?” Janice asked hopefully.

“Maybe forever, sweetheart. It’s doing you good.”

The naked captive stood against the bars. A tear trickled down one cheek. She could not touch it, nor could she wave goodbye. She supposed she deserved what she was getting, but, with another night not far distant, she was by no means sure. Resigned to her fate, she sought the sand and arranged herself to await the dark. Her fire burned fiercely.

3

Ship's Slave

THE SOUND OF VOICES filtered through premature sleep. The captive girl in the cage started up into wakefulness, uncertain if she was still dreaming. A reluctantly opened eye told her the night was still young.

"I tell you, Amos, she's in a cage—ready and waiting." The voice was urgent and male.

The reply was from an older man, irritated by exertion, but equally interested.

"I'd like to believe you, Hank my boy. That Cartwright fellow has to be out of his tree, leaving her here this way. But if she's the way we think, she's a gift from the gods."

"The time before, awhile back when we were in the smaller boat, she was free and waving for attention. We should have picked her up then."

"Best to learn the facts, Rennig. Now we're wise to how Cartwright came into possession. He can't make a fuss."

It was not a dream. Janice sat up, startled, then stood to survey her visitors. She saw a youngish man, not bad

looking, and an older, bearded corpulence puffing from his trudge up the beach. Behind them were two other men, obviously the hired help. It was the bearded fat man who spoke first.

“Damn it, Rennig my boy, you were right—the girl’s a beauty. Here, child, what’s your name?”

“This is private property, and I am also private property,” Janice told them. “Please go away; you’re trespassing.”

“Don’t you want to get out of that cage?”

“No. I belong in here. Leave me alone.”

“That’s handcuffs there. Your hands behind your back?”

“The handcuffs are my own affair. Please go away.”

“She’s perfect, Amos. We can’t possibly pass her up.”

“And we won’t, Hank dear boy. What’s your name, girl?”

“Janice Latimer. Goodbye!”

“She wants us to go.” There were appreciative chuckles at such obvious absurdity. “What do we do—take her in the cage or bust her out of it? I’ve got a handcuff key.”

“For Pete’s sake, don’t use it yet. She’s perfect just the way she is. Simon, come here and work on this padlock.”

Janice knew herself to be easy prey. Unhappily, she watched the manipulation of the lock as it fell to the

ground.

“The man who owns me is powerful,” she told them. “He’ll make you regret whatever you’re going to do.”

“Who—Cartwright? Hell, girl, we’ll return you to him a better and wiser woman.” The fat man tilted his chin. “Name’s Amos Blanding. Ever hear of Athos Films? That’s me. And, boy, am I going to use you!”

Janice was soon out of the cage. It had given her no protection at all.

Lamely, she said, “I wish you wouldn’t do this to me. Nothing but trouble can come of it. Cartwright will follow you to the end of the earth for me. I know he will.”

“I can match Cartwright dollar for dollar, baby. That’s what counts. You ought to be glad to be out of that cage, and we’re not going to fuck you here on the beach.”

The ship was a beauty. Blanding must indeed have money. But if he was in the movies, that could mean trouble. And a ship would be like an island; she could not flee. She was hoisted aboard by willing hands that used her breasts and crotch as a convenience. The first thing she saw was another girl.

“There you are, Gloria,” Blanding puffed. “Look at her! You don’t have to risk your pretty skin again. With the two of you we’ll break every record at the box office.”

“I get all the credit, Amos?”

“Of course you do. This beauty doesn’t even want any.”

Janice felt the scorch of female eyes. They were viewing her as they might have examined a useful purchase. The girl called Gloria was herself a distinct beauty—petulant, assured, arrogant. She was Gloria Humbolt. Janice remembered the name.

As one female to another, Janice pleaded, “Please stop them! This will get us all into trouble.”

“They’re not going to kill you, dear—I won’t let them. At least not outside the sets.”

“We ought to get underway—get the hell out of here,” Blanding said. “Rennig, see to it. And you two take little flossie to the brig. Gloria, go down with ’em and talk to the girl before she goes into hysterics.”

It happened as though it was rehearsed. The brig door was a cruel slab of metal. The brig itself was a tiny prison against the hull. Janice’s handcuffs were removed and she was made to sit on a wooden bench. She viewed the pile of chains with a sinking heart. They looked terribly real, a fact confirmed by Gloria’s casual comment.

“Amos is a real stickler for realism, dear. They won’t come off without a key, and they’ve been made girl size.”

“But… but you can’t do this!”

“It’s already halfway done, honey. When you’ve snapped her last shackles, boys, you can leave us alone…”

Janice looked down at her nakedness in disbelief. Metal adorned her everywhere. There was even a collar around her neck and from it a chain.

“Stand up and test the weight, dear.”

Dazed, Janice obeyed. She found herself ironed at wrist and ankle, waist and neck. Her chains ran to a heavy ring-bolt in the wall. She looked at Gloria Humbolt beseechingly.

“But this is crazy,” she said, her voice betraying her fear. “I’m not a wild animal or a maniac. Look at me.” She raised her chained hands in wonder. “Look at all this stuff!”

“Call them irons, dear. You’re locked in the brig of a private ship, and the captain fucks you in the next sequence.”

“But, how can you—?”

“Haven’t you caught on yet, darling? We want you as a stand-in for me. I’ll be damned if I’m going to do some of the things Amos and Hank think up. You’re heaven-sent.”

“But I refuse. I won’t do it. You must let me go!”

“You’ll do it, dear, because we’ll whip you if you don’t. Oh, and I believe there’s a whipping scene somewhere in the script. The things they aimed to do to me—good god!” She grimaced disdainfully at male presumption. “I hope it

won't be too bad for you, and I'll make sure you're paid."

"I don't need money. I'm a—"

"I think you're a slave, that's what I think. You're going to be absolutely perfect, and we'll return you when the picture's done. You can give this chap Cartwright the money if you don't want it."

"When will that be?"

"There, you see!" Gloria exclaimed, pleased. "You're already adjusting. I'm going to like you."

"I'm not adjusting. I'm frightened. Now tell me why I have to be loaded down with all these chains."

"Realism! After you've been chained like this all night the camera will pick up your feeling of hopelessness. You won't have the least bit of trouble looking forlorn."

Dismally and very simply, she said, "I want to go home."

"You mean, back in that cage?" Gloria was puzzled. "You like to be locked in a cage and handcuffed? Are you some sort of masochist? It would be lovely if you were."

"Forget the cage. It's a long story. Just dump me on the beach, or I can swim from the ship."

Gloria was intrigued. "There's no way we'll turn you loose, but I don't see why we can't be friends. Tell me, did this bozo who had you in the cage always keep you naked?"

“He’s not a bozo, and I haven’t worn clothes for so long—”

The bereft maiden buried her chained head in her chained hands and cried. It was all too much for her.

“There, there, honey, cry it out,” Gloria comforted. “If it helps any, I can tell you I’ve been through this myself.”

“I bet you haven’t.”

“Yes, I have. The guy who made me a star made a deal with me first. I had to be his slavegirl for six months straight, always bound or chained, never a chance to escape. His big thing was to whip a girl. He had me wealed and welted all over. I’d have run and forgotten the movies if I could have, but he never gave me the chance. Then, afterwards, he truly made me a star, and I was glad. We’re friends now. I let him whip me once a year now, on his birthday, as a gift.” Gloria laughed without bitterness. “Men are absurd, but then so are we. Look, the man I’ve spoken of wasn’t Amos Blanding. Amos will whip you too if you make enough fuss and irritate him by holding up production. Actually, he’s a sweet old blowhard.”

“And the other man—Hank or something?”

“Hank Rennig. He’s the camera man on this trip. He won’t hurt you. To Hank we’re just bits of skin to be positioned and provide angles.”

“There’s this other thing they made a joke about. When and how do I get fucked?”

“See, dear, you are coming alive. The boys toss that word around a lot, but mostly it doesn’t happen.”

“I don’t suppose it does to you anyway.”

“Honey, I’m no different. Getting myself whipped and fucked got me my start, and I keep on doing it. If I can see it’s going to pay to open my legs, I do. It’s no big deal.”

Janice stood, looking down at the still seated movie star.

“It’s useless,” Janice said. “I can’t be your understudy. I don’t look like you.”

“You’d be surprised, honey. When the makeup girl’s finished with you—”

“You mean, she’s going to see me like this?”

“Relax, honey. She’s seen me that way, so why not you?” Gloria laughed at her companion’s dismay. “There are a lot more girls who get used as slaves than you think. What’s happening to you isn’t the first time it’s happened, you know.”

“But you’ve never sat in this hateful brig and been loaded with chains.”

“Yes, I have—only yesterday. Amos talked me into it, but when he insisted on keeping me this way all night, I told him they could get somebody else for the rough stuff. I don’t have to do it any more.”

“But I do?”

“Sorry, dear, it’s just one of those things.”

Janice stepped away from her until her chain tethers drew tight. “I can’t even reach the door,” she complained.

“Do you need to? You’re not going anywhere.”

“And you’re glad I can’t! You don’t care!” Janice stood, glaring at the girl whose skin she was elected to save. “This ship’s taking me somewhere I don’t want to go. I’m helpless. I expect I’ll get fucked somewhere along the line. And besides, there’s these people who’ll be worried to death about me.”

“Then they shouldn’t have put you that cage.”

Janice could imagine Brigid’s concern. She would be blamed for this fiasco and probably be horribly punished. It wasn’t fair. Nothing was fair.

“Okay, you’ve got me. I can’t possibly escape. So tell me these things you don’t want to do that I’m going to be forced to do.”

“Don’t be so dramatic about, darling. You’re already in the middle of the first one. They’ll shoot you in the morning. Then you get tied to the mast.”

“Oh, great! Aren’t I the lucky girl?”

“Then they hang you from the yardarm. I don’t see why

that one should take too long. They'll fake some of it and have you hanging way down so you're handy for the camera, but there will have to be one or two with you way up high. Ugh—I'd be scared to death."

"What makes you think I won't be?"

"Oh, I'm sure you will be, darling, but there's nothing you can do about it. The more resistance you put up the more the camera will love you."

It was all too plausible, and it would all happen, and it was Janice it would happen to.

"And every night I'll be chained in this horrible place?" Janice questioningly demanded.

"I'll needle Amos into letting you sleep with me, dear. He can write it off as another of my unreasonable demands. But I'd have to insist on your hands being cuffed behind your back. Would you like that?"

"Thank you—yes, I would."

"And we'd play games, of course."

"Yes, we'll play games."

"Well, well!" Gloria was eyeing the girl shrewdly. "Somehow I didn't take you for a lesbian. I guess you've been compelled to do things, eh?"

"That's right. I'm sure I'll enjoy your taste."

“Yes, you’re getting better and better. Would you find me a pleasant change after a man?”

“Would you mind if we didn’t talk about that?”

Janice was suddenly enveloped in a wave of femininity. Arms embraced her in ways her chained condition could not return. She stood in the hatefully small brig and allowed herself to be comforted.

Janice’s awakening in the morning was ridiculous. A sudden glare of lights, the whir of the camera, registering her shock. Then the impersonal attention of the makeup girl, and more cameras, on and on. Finally they all departed in a clatter of sound and fury. Janice found herself alone with a male member of the crew. He held a key and her own handcuffs awkwardly.

“I’m supposed to show you around, miss. Do you mind if I unlock them chains?”

“Gosh, no. Why would I mind?”

“Well, miss, I have to handcuff you after.”

“Go ahead.”

He eyed her uncertainly, alert for tricks. Prudently, he freed her hands first and fitted the familiar handcuffs upon her wrists. Then he loosed the shackles from ankles, waist, and neck in a metallic clatter. The two of them eyed the resulting pile of links in wry amusement.

Janice summed it up. “All that iron for just one girl!”

“This is the movies, miss.”

“I slept in them all night, and I couldn’t get them off. There’s nothing make believe about those chains.”

“Well, miss, if you’ll just come this way—”

The bathroom, the cafeteria for breakfast, and then the ship. At the end of the tour her guide said diffidently, “Guess that’s it, miss. You’ve got the run of it.” He hesitated. “I wouldn’t cross or get too smart with Mr. Blanding, ma’am, or even Miss Humbolt.”

“Thank you. Can I bribe you to help me escape?”

His grin and shrug denied her. “It’s not possible, miss. Look around. Where could you escape to?”

Janice had already looked. They were surrounded by an empty ocean glittering blue in the sun. It was as beautiful as the island and just as hopeless.

She wandered in search of Gloria and asked, “Could I have something to wear, please?”

“You look so sweet in those handcuffs, darling. There’s a pile of panties on the bed. Try one.”

“Thanks. Is that all I’m allowed?”

“I’m not sure you’re even allowed that, dear. Everyone

likes you as you are. Being naked doesn't bother you that much; I can tell."

"I've been naked for so long. But now… all these men!" Janice tugged up the unfamiliar covering for her pubic hair and felt overdressed. "What awful fate do I save you from next?" she asked dolefully.

"I'm not sure. I think it's that yardarm thing or hanging you over the bow anyway. Since you have to do 'em all, dear, the sequence doesn't really matter, does it? But don't get mad about any of it. Be nice to Amos."

But Amos Blanding was not nice to her. Confronting each other on the deck, he instantly demanded, "Who told you to wear that Victorian frumpery? Take it off!"

Janice did not argue. She was still frightened. Reluctantly, she bared her sex and stepped out of the brief protection. "I'd like to wear something," she ventured timidly. "Maybe a wraparound?"

"Don't be absurd. You were born to be naked. Superb figure. And anyway, it's convenient. If anyone wants to fuck you while you're aboard, I don't want any fuss and bother about it. Just lay down or bend over, or whatever. Understand?"

"Yes, I understand."

As though bestowing largesse, he added, "You look damn pretty in those handcuffs. You wear 'em beautifully. You're

a natural."

"Thank you. When can I go home?"

"You can't. Shut up about it. You may as well come with me. We're about ready for the plank scene. It's a honey."

Rennig and the crew were tailing off a sequence with Gloria Humbolt. The throbbing engines stopped. What happened then made the handcuffed girl long to flee. It was a long and massive plank which, with professional skill, the crew thrust out over the open sea and anchored at its base. The rail was removed to leave an ominous gap.

"Get the idea, sweetheart?"

Janice got it all too clearly. She was going to be made to walk the plank. Flatly, she said, "I can't do it. No girl can. There's sharks—!"

"Look again, baby. Simon's there with a gun. Ain't no shark getting by. You just don't think about 'em."

Janice was possessed by hands. The cuffs were taken from her wrists. Her wrists were then taken and crossed behind her back while the makeup girl was busy with her face. A scarlet flower was pinned in her hair for piquancy. Twisting in a new helplessness, she complained, "You've tied my hands far too tight. It hurts."

"Won't be tied long, baby. Don't beef. We're putting a boat overboard now to pick you up."

The tied girl looked down at the water. It was no longer beautiful but full of menace. Sharks and all the legendary monsters gazed back at her from the depths. In pure terror she turned to Amos Blanding. “No! Oh, no! Please… don’t make me!”

They tied a flowered silk around her hips and thrust her forward. Cameras whirred. A boathook prodded her in the back but she evaded it and turned, her bound hands twisting. “You mustn’t! You can’t possibly! Not with my hands tied! I’m so helpless.”

The cameras sang happily. This was perfect. A pirate hand reached into focus and dragged the flowered drape, tearing it away from maiden loins. Janice gasped in outrage and tried to kick, but the boathook was now joined by another, thrusting at her where they could, uncaring of hurt. Step by reluctant step, she was driven to where the rail had been. Below was a depthless ocean alive with horror, ahead was the plank.

“No… oh, no! I can’t, I can’t.” Janice looked back over a bare shoulder, wailing her fear.

Nobody answered. The boathooks were more insistent now. Her bare feet were on the awful plank. She tried to anchor them, balking, but she knew herself lost. The boathooks were insistent, threatening her balance. She could only go forward, fighting their compulsion. She neared the end. The thrusting allowed her space to turn.

“Help me! Somebody help me, please!”

A cruel thrust caught her half turned hip. Despite her determination not to move she took a step, a step into air and space. As she fell forward and screamed, the green water reached up to receive her nakedness. She hit its surface with a resounding slap and screamed again before she sank. The cameras missed nothing.

It was terrifying. Treading water furiously, Janice tugged at her bound hands in direst need. It seemed forever until male arms reached in and found her and dragged her into the boat. She lay there in a great thankfulness, coughing up water, heaving, and then weeping in a storm of mixed emotions.

Back on deck, she stood, dripping and forlorn, to receive her accolade. “Perfect, perfect, baby. Marvelous footage.”

Amos Blanding patted her back paternally. Gloria hugged her and whispered a fervid “thank you” into her ear. Janice felt only slightly better. The makeup girl held brandy to her lips.

“Can she lay off the rest of the day?” Blanding asked to no one in particular.

“Hell no,” Rennig said. “We’re still behind schedule. She’d best do another today.”

“She’s badly scared.”

“That’s the way we want her. No girl could act that good.”

“Well, all right, but let’s give her an hour first. Get herself together.”

“If you want to go easy with her, we can do that scene with her tied to the mast. All she has to do is squirm.”

“But we were going to get the weariness effect by keeping her there all night.”

“So what! We tie her this afternoon, should be that much better. I can get the footage of her fighting the tie. There’s a few other bits. It’s a good idea.”

“Okay, okay. Daisy, feed the kid more brandy and jolly her up a bit.”

The two men departed, arguing. No one asked Janice’s opinion or preference. She felt like excess baggage as she sipped the brandy a solicitous makeup girl held to her lips.

“Drink this quick, Miss Latimer. I’ve got to go.”

“But—”

The brandy gagged her. Janice swallowed avidly, gasping.

Weakly, she protested, “My hands are still tied behind my back. I need them.”

“No, you don’t, dear. I mustn’t untie them, and I’m sure no one else will.”

“But they tied me too tight!”

Brandy drowned her protests again. When she finished gasping, she was alone. Daisy was a busy girl. Dismally, Janice tugged at wet rope. She was certain it had shrunk into her skin. The rest of her had quickly dried in the sun. She longed to do something with her hair, but that was just dreaming. She seated herself on a hatch and reviewed her plight. At the end of several minutes she realized it all came back to how long they would keep her here and use her. Would they then cast her adrift in a small boat, or put her ashore in some foreign place? Above all there was the question as to whether they would release her at all. She could well see her value. They might keep her prisoner for years.

Most frightening was their failure to see her as a person. She was a well-shaped female body capable of desired response. Such kindness as they vouchsafed her was only to stem the hysterics to which her ordeals gave her every night. And, above all, she could not escape. This was a captivity exceeding all others. Her bound hands were now hurting terribly. The sun could not combat her gloom.

When they came for her, she had already decided not to resist. If they wanted her to act, she would do her best. Her resolution was encouraged by the whip in Blanding’s hand. He showed it to her in benign goodwill, then set it aside. His voice was deceptively smooth.

“We want you to put up a make-believe fight. If you don’t help us out, you get your ass whipped. It’s up to you. Understand?”

“You don’t need the whip. I’ll do what you want.”

“Better be safe than sorry, eh?”

Her hands were freed. While she massaged the weals a brutal hand reached between her legs and grasped her sex. She turned in fury and kicked. Without prelude, the battle was on. Janice Latimer fought sincerely and honestly as a pair of make-believe pirates dragged her to the mast. She wanted to scratch faces and damn the whip. She spit at their grinning faces and tried to knee their groins.

Such an uneven could have but one ending. Panting and exhausted, she ceased to fight as her back was pulled hard against the huge spar and a rope circled her waist. It was not until then that she realized that hungry cameras had recorded every heave and kick. They were focused on her now in an avid delight at her glare and heaving breasts. Janice stared back defiantly and tensed against the circling ropes.

The cameras waited while she was bound. An effect was sought by those who plied the cords. The lens would demand a vividly visual bondage and that’s what it was going to get. Amos Blanding knew what he wanted. “Her feet a bit apart and her arms dragged well back, boys,” he encouraged enthusiastically. “Baby, you get a bonus for that

battle."

Janice Latimer did not answer. She was too involved with hands and ropes and being unkindly postured. The mast was too huge to enable her arms to encompass it, but her hands were pulled as far back as was practical and firmly tied. The same for her feet, they were secured just far enough apart so she could conceal nothing. Seemingly random ropes crisscrossed between her tits and over her shoulders. They served no useful purpose but were highly photogenic. When her captors had done with her she could move but little.

"Pretty, damn pretty. Better get a bit of this, Rennig, while she's still pissed. Look at those knockers!"

The cameras whirred. Everyone seemed pleased. As the crew drifted away, Gloria kissed her hotly, tongue meeting tongue, and whispered another "thank you" in her ear. Then she was alone again.

It was only the middle of the afternoon. To stand thus until dark and then on through the hours of the night was a daunting prospect. What infuriated her most was this convenient disposal of her person. They killed two birds with one stone, got her safely out of their hair, and set in motion the increasing fatigue and pain she would provide their camera as the hours slowly passed. Janice struggled enough to gain whatever comfort her bonds would concede. She then lapsed against them and gazed wistfully out

to sea.

The naked girl tied to the mast was uncertain whether to be pleased or chagrined by the crew's lack of interest in her bare body. There was a constant traffic to and fro, but all she got from them was a nod or a wink. They had seen nude girls a-plenty and had become jaded. Gloria Humbolt herself was close to nude all the time and completely so when the script called for it. She discussed this when she stopped to chat.

"I really am grateful, darling. I'd hate to have to stand there the way you're doing with your pussy and your titties all showing. The boys are used to seeing naked girls, but when you can't move or hide a thing… really!"

"Gloria, please, don't let them keep me tied this way until tomorrow morning."

"Will it be that bad, dear? I expect you know."

"Of course it will. They've tied me so tight."

"But you do look so beautifully lovely, darling. I don't think I can possibly persuade them. Amos is quite pleased."

"I bet he is." Janice made such motions as she could. "Y'know, I don't believe any of you realize what a beastly time you're giving me, or how you're messing up my life."

"But, Janice dear, we rescued you from a cage! That couldn't have been much fun in there, was it?"

Why tell them her story? It would only confirm their conviction of her availability. Sulking, she retorted, “I wanted to be in that cage. There was a good reason. I want to go back.”

“But, precious, you can’t possibly. We need you.”

It was quite hopeless. They could not see her as she was. She supposed a couple of thousand years back when slaves were an everyday fact this was the way they were used. Girls must have been bought and sold, given as gifts. Wanly, Janice asked, “Two or three hours like this and I’ll look worn and haggard enough, and there’ll still be lots of light. Have them shoot the scene. Then take me to bed with you?”

“Oh, darling, you simply mustn’t take on so. You’re doing splendidly and Amos will soon let you loose.”

“Where?”

“Oh, do you really want to go back in that cage?”

“Yes, I do, and handcuffed the same way you found me.”

“I’ve been wondering…” Gloria played with two helpless nipples in an absent-minded fashion. “How would you like to be my permanent understudy? You do these rough bits so well.”

“No.” Janice tried to move her nipples out of range but could not move them at all. “Please don’t get me sexually

excited if I have to stay like this. Please stop what you're doing." Placatingly, she added, "It's not that I don't like you; you've been sweet and I'm grateful. But I want to go home."

"To that cage?"

"It's not that. Please try and forget you found me in a cage. But I can't be a part of all this, of your crew. Amos would be scared I'd go to the police our first time in port. He'd have to keep me locked up, so what's the difference?"

Gloria's fingers gave the captive nipples a final pinch and fell away. "It's sort of a silly mix-up," she agreed. "But if you gave me your promise, I think I could manage Amos."

Baffled, Gloria went her way. The girl who remained against the mast resumed her meditative scan of the horizon. As seemed usual with her condition, she need make no decision. The ropes cutting her flesh imposed a decision of their own. When night came, the casual visitors of the day vanished to leave the bound girl utterly isolated in a starlit ocean. She wished she could appreciate its beauty, but she was hurting now. She was stiff, and the ropes had sunk deep into her skin. Ruefully, she recognized the validity of Blanding's belief that by morning she would indeed provide his cameras with a maiden forlorn and bereft of hope. Her only companions in the night were the gentle throb of the engines, the sigh of tropic wind, and the creak of rigging. Resigned, she drifted into sleep. The mast held her tight.

There was much discussion as to what sequence to shoot next. Freed from the mast, hands tied behind her back, she was allowed the privilege of being present while her pains were debated. It was unreal.

“The yardarm shots won’t be that hard with a zoom. We only need tie her hands.”

“She’ll swing around a bit up there. Should we pad her wrists?”

“Now, with this shot of her at the prow, do we do her as a sort of figurehead—arms and feet well back and her tits out—or suspend her way up front from the spar?”

“We’ve forgotten something,” Rennig interposed. “There’s this big flogging scene. We’ve been saving it for last, but that’s crazy. If we use the right whip, she’ll be well marked, and we just as well have the benefit of those marks in the other things we do to her. They’ll be vividly authentic.”

There was general approval. Expansively, Blanding asked, “And what do you think of that, little lady? The man’s a genius.”

“You mean you’re going to flog me for real?” Janice was horrified. “It hurts like crazy. You’ll have me screaming my head off!”

“Well, of course.” Blanding looked only slight annoyed by feminine foolishness. “You know that’s the whole idea.”

“But it’s terribly cruel!”

“Hush, hush, baby.” He bestowed another of his paternal pats to bare skin. “You mustn’t say things like that. We’ll only keep you triced up and do the actual flogging for as short a time as possible. I don’t suppose the whole thing will take half an hour.”

“If you flog me for thirty minutes, I’ll be dead!”

“Here, Gloria my dear, you take her.” Amos gave the bound surrogate a gentle shove. “Poor kid doesn’t know what she’s talking about. Make her attend to your do-funny while she calms down. But don’t you dare untie her hands.”

The star’s bedroom was a relief. The two girls stared at each other from different sides of a fence. “I’ve never been whipped,” Gloria admitted. “Is it that awful?”

Vehemently, the bound girl told her how awful it was. Then she wailed, “But I’m going to be flogged! That’s—”

“That word was in the script, darling.” Gloria kissed her hungrily. “But I’ve seen the whip they’re going to use on you. It looks like an ordinary kind of whip. It doesn’t have bits of lead and things like those old cat-o’-nine-tails.”

“But I don’t believe this!”

“Oh, it’s going to happen, darling.” Gloria’s reassurance was brightly cheerful. “If they’d been obliged to use me most of

it would be faked. But faking a whipping doesn't come out good at all. I let them try. This way, with you, is going to be absolutely marvelous."

"You mean you approve?"

"We do have to take the rough with the smooth, dear. I've done an awful lot of things I wasn't fussy about. Don't worry, it can't possibly last all that long."

There it was again: the taking her for granted, using her body. They would tie her up and whip her and tell her how pleased they were with her screams. All in a day's work. But not for her! Their ignorance of the agony entailed made it certain her pain would be outrageous. And she couldn't tell them! There was no way.

"They won't mind you crying, dear. It will all work in with the script."

"But, Gloria, I don't think you understand—"

"I understand you're making an awful lot of fuss about an itsy-bitsy whipping, dear."

It was hopeless. They would whip her in the same unfeeling exuberance as with all the rest of the horrors she must bear. No debut she would survive. At least she had been whipped enough before and would not go to her agony as a virgin.

There was a lot of fancy dress. Janice was given a loose

shirt to be dramatically torn away to bare her back for her flogging. An unusual diffidence became evident. Amos explained what was hoped for.

“The script says you’re haughty and disdainful, honey. The pirate chief has sentenced you, and it’s beneath your dignity to fight. That’s a real zinger, eh?”

“Is it any use asking you for mercy? You’re doing something terribly wrong.”

“Now, sweetheart, don’t embarrass us.”

They were impossible! Her chin well tilted, the pirate’s prize walked haughtily to her martyrdom. The cameras whirred in jubilation. Amos Blanding stood in awe, unaware that sensible girls about to be whipped do not add to their travail by heroics. Janice could think of nothing to be gained by a tussle, only lumps and a gleeful male handling of her breasts and pussy. Reaching the slanting lattice of the rigging, she raised her arms to be bound.

While her wrists were corded tight to the taut ropes, Janice faced the ocean and the horizon. Steadfastly, she gazed upon it while she was made helpless. The cameras ground away steadily, seeming to rise to a crescendo when a rough hand stripped away the shirt to render her naked for the whip. It was old and hackneyed stuff, but wickedly compelling. How strange it was to stand thus in beauty and without pain but knowing of the agony to come. Amos had even provided the roll of a drum. The tied girl closed her

eyes and clenched her teeth.

They adored the whip marks as they sprang into crimson across the whiteness of Janice's back. Much ado was made of closeups and angles. She was implored to look back fearfully, and this she did in order to assess the whip. But mostly she stood straight and slender and tall as the thong whined its way to implant its kiss upon her skin. They whipped her bottom too, but the weals by which it responded pleased them less than those above.

"Just her back," the pirate chief ordered equably. "Space 'em so they show."

The pain was as bitter as she expected but no worse. After the first proud acceptance of her fate, Janice plunged, and writhed as she felt inclined. The cords held her—she could escape nothing—but it made the awfulness of pain more tolerable to kick and struggle and make noise. It also made Amos Blanding a very happy man. When the last stroke had marked her, they left her tied and discussed their triumph.

"Absolutely justifies everything."

"The girl's a miracle."

"Put her on staff, Amos. She's worth a fortune."

"Hell, why pay her? You've got her; keep her."

"Gloria, how lucky can you get! But I'd have loved to see

you up there like that instead of her."

"I'm sure you would." Gloria Humbolt's retort was cold. "But you're dreaming. That'll be the day."

They went their ways. The whipped girl was forgotten. She was a prop to be forgotten until next time. Janice thought of calling a reproach after them but reconsidered. There were worse things than standing as she was. Surely they would do nothing more to her today! She looked up at tied wrists.

She was safe!

After a long time it was Gloria who came. "Gee, darling, you look like a positive knock-out like that. I can just see the posters."

"Thanks. I'm glad someone likes me."

"Like you, darling! Why, they're raving about you. We've all been drinking double whiskies in your honor."

"Nobody brought me one."

"Oh dear, we didn't, did we? And I bet you could use one. Just a moment, darling. Stay as you are."

"Stay as you are"? What choice did she have. It was typical. They were not brutally cruel, but kindness did not set well with them, except perhaps with Gloria, and hers was mixed with self-interest. But Janice gratefully gulped the

undiluted potion soon held to her lips. It was as much the warmth of female companionship as it was the liquor which helped her.

In between swallows, she asked, “Why do I have to stand here like this? Are they going to whip me again?”

“Of course not, darling. I’m afraid everybody sort of forgot. But Amos says I can take you to my cabin for awhile now. Would you like that?”

“Gosh, yes.”

“Dear, it seems so silly to call one of the men, but if I let you loose, will you promise to let me tie your hands right quick?”

“Sure, I will. If you’re nervous, you can tie my feet first. Then I can’t fight.”

“How clever, pet. I wouldn’t have thought of that. But don’t let’s bother. And anyway, there’s no rope handy.”

If it was not for the confinement of the ship itself, Janice might have taken advantage of Gloria’s innocence about a slave’s response, but it was useless to make an enemy without profit. In passive docility, she allowed herself to be freed and then immediately crossed her wrists behind her back to be tied again.

“You’re so sweet, dear, the way you do this sort of thing. You must have had so much experience. I’d be blowing my

top or having hysterics. There's no way I'd offer my hands to be tied like you're doing for me now."

"You would if you were whipped enough."

"If that's the secret, don't tell Amos. He's difficult enough to handle as it is. Oh, and in case you're wondering, I was a girl scout. You won't get loose, love."

Janice could easily agree. Gloria's tie was tight and firm and authoritative. Its knots were cunning. The bound girl twisted against them only momentarily. She was helpless. Obediently, she let herself be led to luxury.

"We'll have enough time for you to look after me properly," Gloria said matter-of-factly. "But I can't possibly manage you. You won't mind, will you?"

"Of course I'll mind. Why no time?"

"They're going to do that yardarm thing with you pretty soon. They're fiddling with ropes and things now."

"But I've just been horribly whipped!"

"Well, yes, dear, but they won't be touching your back. My, my, it's really a glorious night. Back up to my mirror."

Janice winced at what she saw. She was vividly marked. That her weals had been immortalized on film gave her no comfort at all. She was all too well aware of helplessness. Obediently, she knelt and raised her lips to the pubic curls

Gloria had laid bare. They were sweetly scented. She hoped that what her tongue was questing would taste as good. Resolutely, she set to work.

Everyone except Janice herself was delighted with her whipped back. The cameras featured her weals in every angle possible as she was led to the dangling rope of her next ordeal. They could have profited with a greater mileage from her wounds.

Their chatter had ceased to bother the naked girl. They were simply overgrown children who had lived too long in a world of fantasy. All she wanted now was to be used and released. She had to be grateful for this fresh binding of her wrists. The rope was soft, and there were many loops, but they were cinched tight, tight, tight before being attached to the dangling menace from above.

“Up she goes! All the way.”

It was frightening—the receding of the deck and upturned faces as she was drawn up and up and up. The ship seemed tiny and the sea immense. Her swaying suspension ended when she was level with the crow’s nest and the camera therein. She did not have to worry about expressions; her plight provided them as she swung back and forth with the motion of the ship, a motion greatly enhanced by her being close to the top of the mast. It was a hateful thing to do to a girl. With all her heart she longed to see Gloria hanging as she hung now.

It was a routine sequence. After her flogging everything seemed tame. When released, she stood passively for what came next. Nothing mattered.

“The light’s good. Get her out on the spar.”

Suspended from the utmost point of the ship, Janice went up and down rhythmically with the waves. On the downs her feet got wet and she thought of sharks. But the cameras were soon satiated and she was taken back aboard to listen to an irritated Amos Blanding.

“The bastards! I’ve been in radio contact with the board. They’re nervous. The sons of bitches are glad of what we’ve got out of little flossie here, but now they want her back where we picked her up. Seems like this Cartwright has influence. Damn!”

Janice, naked, wet, and her hands still tied, listened to their reaction to the news.

“We got good mileage out of her.”

“No use beefing.”

“And she did save my skin, darlings…”

It transpired that the ship had traveled in slow circles while she was used. The ropes were taken from her and replaced with her own handcuffs behind her back. When the island came into view and then the cage on the lonely beach, her heart threatened to choke her in her throat.

Everyone kissed her before she was taken ashore. They loved her dearly now. Gloria wistfully summed it all up: “We’re going to miss you, darling.”

They pushed her in the cage, closed it, and locked the door. They went away. Janice stood and watched the ship until it disappeared beyond the earth’s curve. It was only then that she realized two things. One was surprise, the other horror.

She had not been fucked.

And suppose nobody thought to look for her in the cage!

She could not get out!

4

Twin Surrender

NATALIE STEPHENSON was annoyed. She hid her annoyance from the office, but it followed her there and nagged her throughout the day. Each morning she backed her nudity up against the mirror and examined the marks of her whipping by Denver Cartwright. They were fading rapidly. Her wounds came close to being ordinary, but sight of them each morning sent her to work with what her girls would have described as “hot pants”. She recognized her need for a girl. She disdained utterly the use of her finger, seeing it as an admission of defeat. But the personnel department had recently hired only sweet little tidbits with husbands or boyfriends. She missed Janice terribly. Need of her was a constant ache in her loins. A phone call from Denver Cartwright brought her frustration to a pause.

“I’d like you to come over. I’ve got something of interest.”

“It’s of no interest to me. You know what you can do with it.”

“You have a one track mind. Open it up a bit, Natalie.”

“Don’t call me Natalie. I’ll do as I please with my mind, and

my humiliation with you is not due for a couple of days yet."

"Look, you silly bitch, I want you to come. I want to give you something, and it's not my genitals. You lesbians see a phallus even over the phone."

"I'll come on the appointed day, not a moment sooner."

Natalie took one more deep breath with which to annihilate the male, but the line clicked dead. She sat, holding the receiver, hating the man who was the cause of all her disaffection. But in her bosom was an increasing growth of curiosity. It took thirty minutes for her to call him back, her voice colorless under control. "I must apologize. I'm afraid I was unnecessarily rude."

"You usually are. Think nothing of it."

"You wished to see me… about something?"

"This is my cue to tell you you've missed the boat, but I won't be that mean. I still have the object I spoke of. Come and have a look at it."

"Must I arrive in handcuffs?"

"No. Like you said, it's not your day."

Natalie called a cab. In twenty-six minutes she was pushing the hated bell and in a state of breast-heaving trepidation.

"How about a drink, Miss Stephenson? You look as though

you need it." Cartwright oozed charm.

"I do not need it, and if I accept one, it will be only because I'm trying to be polite."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, sit down!" Cartwright exclaimed impatiently. "Surely you hate me enough to be informal. Look, I'll pour and I'll serve. Make a nice change for you."

She yielded initiative, accepting the glass as though certain it contained cyanide. She took a sip and swallowed. "You have something to tell me? It is about Janice?"

"Not really. She's very well, by the way." Cartwright regarded her amiably. "You're tense and stiff. Are you sure you wouldn't like to take your clothes off?"

"Don't be disgusting."

"There's nothing disgusting about you with your clothes off. You're a very lovely woman."

"Thank you. Now, may we get down to business?"

"It's not exactly business. By the way, how are you finding your whip marks?"

"They're fading rapidly. You'll see for yourself in a couple of days. You may as well know—I find being whipped altogether too painful and degrading. I'd like to revert to the original humiliation you force on me."

"You mean, you prefer to be fucked?"

“I know you use that word for effect. It’s brutal. But, yes, I suppose that’s what I’m trying to say.”

“Okay by me. Fucking a lesbian is an experience all its own. Not that you don’t loosen up a bit—”

“Please! Two days from now you can humiliate me as much as possible, but our contract—”

Cartwright sighed. “You’re quite something. But if I fuck you enough,” he said, “I’ll make you a human yet.” He rose. “Come along. Let’s end your suspense.”

Natalie’s ruffled sensibilities made her oblivious to everything except suspicion. When Cartwright threw open the door of bitter memories, she was totally unprepared.

The nude girl stood in the center of the room. She glared at them above a gagged mouth, teetering on bound feet, but she was held erect by a roped neck tethered from above. Her wrists were tied behind her back and her elbows banded to join them in close embrace. She shook her head vehemently and made inarticulate sounds.

“Her thinking’s a bit negative,” Cartwright said casually. “But she’s only just been acquired. If I remove the gag, she has a tendency to be tedious. What do you think of her?”

For the first time since her loss, Natalie felt the hot surge of a positive excitation. The girl was lovely, all her curves, her pubic hair full of feminine promise. For a minute Natalie wallowed in excitement.

“But I don’t understand,” she finally said.

“She’s my gift to you.”

“I still don’t understand.”

“I stole Janice. Now I give you this girl. Salves my conscience.”

“But she’s bound—unwilling.”

Cartwright read from a scrap of paper: “Karen Copeland. Age twenty-one. New in the city. Unemployed and looking for a job. Comes from a small town in Wisconsin. She’s an orphan, without friends or associates here. She’s perfectly designed to vanish. Nobody will look for her.”

The bound nudity provided further spasms of discontent, her shoulders weaving against their tether. Natalie’s mind was revolving rapidly in a battle between desire and prudence. “If we untie her, she’ll go berserk,” she protested slowly. “So what good is she?”

“Oh, come now!” Cartwright studied her indecision in surprise. “You can easily change her with the whip. Surely you know that.”

Natalie’s heat was a steady burn. The girl was a beauty. Resistance had always added spice, and it would again, but she refused to appear eager.

“I’d like to take the gag out of her mouth. What she says or

does not say will be a clue to what she is."

"Why not? But you do it, Natalie. She's yours."

For the first time since her loss of Janice, she felt the ageold thrill of possession.

While her fingers dealt with the buckle, Cartwright said forcefully, "Karen, we don't want to hear about the police, or kidnapping, or your relatives, or a boyfriend. Forget it. It's no longer real for you. You start anew from this moment on."

The expected flood did not come. Eyes assessed. The freed mouth worked itself back to comfort. Then, an educated voice. "There's nothing for me to say, then. Perhaps you two should tell me." The girl twisted strained shoulders. "Is it necessary to keep me tied like this?"

"You may have something here, sweetheart," Cartwright observed easily. "Sounds intelligent. She'll react well enough to a few thrashings."

"I've asked you before not to call me by that term of endearment, and I do not have this girl, not yet. But I do agree about the thrashings."

The bound girl's hazel eyes flickered back and forth between her captors. Her voice was still firm. "I'm not a lesbian, and I do not intend to be. You know what you can do with your filthy tricks." Her anger flashed from Natalie to Denver Cartwright. "I expect you can hurt me enough to

make me do what you want, but I'll promise there will be no joy in it for me."

"Bravo!" Cartwright clapped in gentle applause. "There's a wonderful potential here, Natalie. If you don't want this girl, I'll take her to the island."

"Haven't you enough females there already?"

"That's not the point. I can't turn her loose—she'd raise too much of a stink."

"Why not keep her and use her instead of—"

Cartwright laughed at her eagerness. "No way, sweetheart. What our contract gives me is far more than a piece of ass. Forget it."

"But you could satiate yourself on her."

"I said forget it. Do you want her or don't you?"

Heat in her belly told Natalie Stephenson the answer. She had quibbled only to save time and face. Karen Copeland was infinitely to be desired. The girl would require a great deal of training, but this was something she would relish. "I'll take her," Natalie said decisively. "I suppose I owe you thanks."

"Don't strain yourself, dear lady. She's already packaged for delivery. Want me to carry her down to your car, or shall I drive the two of you over?"

“Stop this, it’s nonsense!” Karen Copeland was writhing against the chafing rope around her neck. She was cruelly helpless but fighting down fear. Her hostility focused on the older woman. “You’re wasting your time taking me home,” she said bitterly. “I won’t do what you want, I just won’t. If you’d let me have a choice, I’d prefer to be raped by a male.”

“Delicious, eh!” Cartwright was intrigued. “I’ll expect a progress report when you’re over in two days’ time. I’ll carry her for you. We can use the private elevator. I own the building. Oh, and she’ll heed her gag again.”

Karen Copeland sat, still painfully trussed, on the couch and strove for a rationale. Her kidnapping had been easy and simple. The gift of her person to the woman surveying her from the opposite chair was bizarre but also essentially simple. She had scoffed at such tales of innocent maidens in the wicked city. But it had happened. She knew herself in dire peril of disappearing, of losing identity, of never being heard from again. She took a deep breath and tried once more.

“I don’t know either you or that man. I haven’t seen the outside of the two buildings. I can’t lead anyone to you, or identify you. There’s still time to let me loose.”

It was the flutterings of a newly caged bird. Natalie smiled indulgently. There would be more of the same until the

poor child exhausted hope. She could end such plaintive efforts any time with the whip but felt no urge. It would be amusing to test Karen's store of self-control. She noted the cruelty of cord in maiden flesh, and asked gently, "Would you like me to untie your elbows?"

"Oh, would you! I'd be so grateful." The child was suddenly warm and human. "If you'd untie me altogether—"

Natalie untied the joined elbows, massaging the scarlet indentations in the sore skin. The girl was insistent. "Thank you, that's wonderful!" A pause. "I haven't screamed or made a fuss. It's not that I haven't wanted to—"

"Of course, dear. Coffee or brandy?"

"I don't have any hands—"

"I'll look after the cup. I do have to keep you tied, you know. "

"Yes, I suppose you do. Oh, I think coffee, please."

Natalie held the cup to eager lips. "How long has that man had you a prisoner?"

"Just since this afternoon. Some men grabbed me and held something over my face. When I regained consciousness, I was naked and tied. Nobody's seen me naked before. It is for sexual reasons I've been taken, isn't it? I mean, it can't possibly be for money."

“Sexual, dear. I hope you won’t make too much of a fuss.”

“I have to make what you call a fuss. I suppose that means you’re going to hurt me a lot with whips and things… ?”

“Why do you have to make a fuss?”

“Because!”

“To salve your conscience, I know. You’re bound to lose the argument.”

“But it’s dirty and disgusting!”

“Have you ever tasted another woman, dear?”

“Good gosh, no! Don’t be horrible!”

She was delicious, so secure in innocence and the strength of not knowing. Every step she must be led would be a joy.

“I do understand, far more than you think,” Natalie said slowly. “I know how you want to be whipped, how you’ll be better afterwards.”

“There won’t be any afterwards. Please stop talking about it. ”

“That means you want me to whip you, dear?”

“That isn’t it at all. You twist things. Are you some kind of sadist? All this talk about whips—”

“A whip is much the kindest, dear.”

“It’s a horrible perversion, and you don’t look the least bit like that.”

“I’m not. But let me give you your first lesson, Karen. Then you’ll understand what we’re talking about.”

It was all an excitation. The double checking of tied wrists and the freeing of bound feet. It was amusing to see how the big four-poster confirmed the youngster’s worst suspicions. Easy to see also the debate in the virgin mind as to whether to kick and struggle or allow her feet to be retied.

“I’m not going to resist, I can’t with my hands tied.”

Natalie turned the slender nudity face down, spread the long bare legs and tied the trim ankles firmly to the footboard. With her hands already bound behind her back, Karen was extremely helpless. She was looking back and up in fascinated disbelief.

“I can’t get at your back properly now, dear, so we’ll start with your bottom and thighs. I’ll use a thin riding crop.”

“Please! Don’t do this to me. I don’t deserve it.”

“You can stop me anytime, dear. The decision is entirely yours.”

“No, it’s not. It’s you who’s—”

The sentence was broken by a peal of shock as Natalie’s crop cut a scarlet path across the twin cheeks of Karen’s

helpless bottom. As an introduction to pain it was severe.

“Don’t! Don’t hit me again, that was awful!”

It would be best to give the girl no time in which to regain her poise. Far better to disorganize her totally at the start. Natalie cut shrewdly at the proffered curves which now bounced and twisted wildly in a futile evasion. She thrashed steadily. When a turned hip caught the blow its owner screamed. After twelve unkind cuts Natalie paused. “That’s a dozen, dear. Do you wish me to continue?”

“No, no! I can’t bear it. Stop!”

“Well, have you something to say?”

“Oh, that! Of course not. I won’t—”

Natalie resumed. Blow after blow, cut on top of cut, the nude beauty writhed. At the count of thirty the would-be mistress stopped, appalled. The girl sobbing, emitting small moans of distress.

“Have you anything to say to me, Karen?”

There was no answer, just more tugging at bound hands.

“I’ve given you thirty strokes, dear. That’s quite a lot. Do you want me to go on whipping you some more?”

Again the anguished failure to reply. Biting her lip in vexation, Natalie decided to give the girl time to think. Quietly, she turned and went away.

Natalie made coffee and drank two cups in an irritated urgency. She was annoyed with herself for marking Karen as badly as she had. She had misjudged her approach. Something more subtle might have been the answer. Now all she could see was the pathetic figure of the helpless girl and her welted seat, and all she could hear was the pathetic sobs. She knew she had lost the impetus to continue the punishment in the same place.

She missed Janice Latimer so terribly. She would never find so ready a mouth or such spontaneous devotion elsewhere. The office imposed its daily grind. The last thing she needed was a hostile presence in her home. Karen was luscious, but to whip her into submission seemed likely to demand a severity of cruelty she found distasteful. If thirty wicked strokes had achieved nothing, then what would it take? Dejected, she went back upstairs.

The lovely face was turned away, the breathing still heavy.

Natalie grasped a handful of dark hair and turned the head so that the captive eyes must meet her own.

Crisply, Natalie demanded, “Well?”

The girl’s eyes closed and she turned her head away.

“Do you want me to continue whipping you?”

The silence that followed was devastating. The girl was clearly prepared to be beaten to death. She had given up struggling for freedom.

Patiently, Natalie said, “Frankly, I’d like to stop whipping you right now, but if you insist, I can go on. At least now you know what the pain is like.”

Karen remained mute and unmoving. Her beaten skin was like an accusing eye.

Irritably, Natalie added, “You’re being a very silly girl.”

She waited a moment for a response, but the girl on the bed neither moved nor spoke. In angry frustration, the mistress picked up the crop and delivered the worst stroke yet across the center of the already punished bottom. It was an extremely vicious slash.

Karen Copeland’s breathing changed to spasmodic gasps. She leaped against her bounds, but then subsided into a palpitating immobility. Her new owner watched breathlessly for a sign, a sound, a motion, anything—but there was nothing. Lips pursed, Natalie went to the bathroom, stripped, washed, and perfumed her pussy. Returning to the bed, she thrust a bare leg down on each side of the tear-stained face buried in the cover. She lifted the captive head by a handful of hair and thrust her pubic patch beneath. Slowly, she closed her thighs over the still-damp cheeks, shifting to position herself for the unwilling mouth.

“What are you going to do now?” she asked Karen.

To Karen the experience was devastating. She had expected the whip, but now there was this to contend with. The last

frightful cut had come close to achieving Natalie's desire.

The pain had been so outrageous that the bound girl had considered surrender, but this was something new. She had never come this close to another female's secret place before. Suddenly her face was buried in fragrant fronds, her own lips embraced by those of the plump mound she could not evade. She heaved and struggled uselessly against the cords, her captured head seeking vainly to escape the vise of feminine thighs. But they were clasped tightly. Her nostrils were filled by a heady perfume and a female pungency of musk she herself exuded when the mood was right. She inhaled deeply, as though seeking what reward she could. She then selected a moist lip, made sure she had a mouthful, and bit down hard.

Natalie yelped in shock and pain. Using Karen's hair as a handle, she dragged up the lovely head and rolled away from intimacy, her hands clasping her crotch, fighting the venom of the bite. For anguished moments she stood beside the bed, clutching herself, willing away the receding agony.

Karen Copeland was appalled by what she had done under the compulsion of impulse and instinct. Helpless and apprehensive, she awaited punishment, expecting no less than to be flogged into unconsciousness. What she had done was unforgivable. But it was impossible to retract. Now she would pay!

But the storm of anger did not come. Instead, a tight-lipped mistress untied the bound ankles and retied them tightly together.

“Get down on the floor! On your belly!”

Shivering with fright, the captive obeyed. Even tightly bound, it was easily possible to slither to the rug. Unforgiving hands lifted the bound ankles and pulled them back to the bound hands to rope the bowed girl into a hogtie.

Imploringly, the helpless nude said the only thing she could think of: “I’m terribly sorry. I shouldn’t have done that.”

“I’m going to bed. If you make noises to wake me, I’ll resume your thrashing.”

In the dark, Karen’s fingers sought vainly for knots, but there was no escape for her. She would stay as she was throughout the night. Perhaps this was her punishment. She wept. Exhausted, she finally went to sleep.

In the morning Natalie herself was ashamed. She had ceased to hurt and had only a slightly swollen lip as evidence of Karen’s teeth. She blamed herself for pushing the girl too hard too soon. If she told Cartwright of the incident, he would find it funny. She gazed at the anxious bundle of girl so tightly bound but did not smile. The contest between them was still unresolved. If the night had brought no weakening of Karen’s intractability, there still remained the day. She herself must go to the office, but the time

would be put to good advantage. She freed the bound ankles and hobbled them with chain, then untied the hands.

“You can look after yourself now. I’m going to make breakfast. If you give me trouble, you’ll be sorry.”

In another mood it would have been amusing to watch Karen’s first efforts to walk with hobbled feet. Her face betrayed perplexity with the short chained steps she must make to the bathroom. She was cruelly stiff from her night in bondage and altogether docile. She said a hesitant thank you, but that was all.

Over breakfast, Natalie said, “We still seem to be on opposite sides of the fence. Are you sure you won’t come over to where I am?”

“You know I can’t. Please don’t try to make me.” There was an awkward pause. “But if you want to punish me for what I did last night, I’ll understand. I’m really sorry about that.”

“Wasn’t being hogtied all night punishment enough?”

“Well, yes. I’d be grateful if you’d treat it that way.”

Another pause. “Is there any possibility of you letting me go?”

“No.”

“I do realize how, with my feet chained like this, I can’t

possibly win a tussle with you. It's nice having my hands, but I know I'm still a prisoner."

"Good. That's the only sensible approach. I was expecting you to fight. Why can't you be sensible in the other thing too?"

"I don't know. It just isn't in me to do that."

"You'll come around, you know. It's just a case of how much you want to suffer first."

"I'm terribly sorry."

"So am I. You do know, don't you, that I work? I'll be away all day."

"Yes, I know. That means you'll have to—"

"Yes, I have to make you helpless, or lock you in a dark cupboard. I'm afraid I don't have a cell."

They looked at each other in a wry acceptance of an unsatisfactory condition, a quandry unresolved. They both knew the moment was critical, a time of decision. Instinctively, Karen shielded her arms behind her back. Then, with a rueful shrug of resignation, she extended her hands to be bound.

Watching the careful imprisonment of her wrists, she asked sadly, "Am I being sensible? I honestly don't know."

"Sensible. This would happen to you regardless of what

you did, unless you've changed your mind…"

"You know I can't." The captive's voice trailed off in frustration. "This all seems so fruitless."

"No, it's not. It may take a long time, but eventually you'll see."

Karen watched the binding of her hands in a slowly dawning comprehension. The nylon rope was soft and there were many loops of it. These were drawn tightly around her wrists by another single binding in between. Then there was a rope drawn from above, at its end a hook. When the hook nestled between her wrists, there came the whir of a motor and, in a mesmerized fascination, she watched her hands rise up before her face, higher and higher until her arms were stretched taut and she stood on tiptoes.

"But you're hanging me up by my hands!" the girl protested in shock.

"Not yet, dear. This is a last appeal to reason."

"Please don't ask me to do that awful thing again."

The motor whirred once more. Karen's toes left the floor. The motor stopped. In her agitated concern she swung like a pendulum. Her eyes were wide in the shock of something unforeseen.

"You're not going to leave me to hang like this all day?" she

asked incredulously. “Not naked and helpless?”

“Yes—unless you make an immediate decision.”

“But this is torture!”

“Not really.” The mistress sighed. “But I’m glad it’s you and not me.” She kissed an anguished cheek and palmed a very dry pussy. “I’m not going to urge you. I think a day like this may do you good. I’m sure you think me heartless, but think again as to what you’d do in my place. You’re being terribly difficult.”

Karen watched the departure of the woman who held her in thrall. Her throat seemed choked on things to say, but she voiced none of them. They were all not quite right. By the time she had gathered her wits she was completely alone.

It was outrageous and impossible! Karen looked up at her bound wrists. There was no way she could free them or get them off the hook. They hurt, but she could understand now the reason for the many strands. A single one would destroy her hands by evening, but with the many loops she would survive. She was in the hands of those who knew what they were doing. She kicked her feet within the tolerance of the chain by which they were joined. It had not been removed. It did not matter. Within minutes she knew her best recourse was to remain perfectly still. Any kind of motion increased the stress on her wrists and shoulders. Ahead of her stretched hours and hours, her day

seemingly endless. And then… at the end of it…!

She found it hard to hate Natalie Stephenson. The woman was mature, educated, and cultured. There was nothing vulgar or cheap about this woman who held her prisoner. Karen wished she could understand the desire by which Natalie was motivated. It was filthy and unnatural and altogether beastly, but Natalie was none of these things. Evidently there had once been a girl who was totally amenable to her desires. She did not yet understand the relationship between her present owner and the man who had taken her from her kidnappers. There was a peculiar mutuality blended with hostility. She shrugged the man and woman away. Certainly if the man had chosen her, she would have been truly ravished by now. But with Natalie she was still virgin. Was this good, or did it simply mean an endless string of punishments such as she now suffered?

Karen switched to the other possibility. She could surrender and yield her mouth to a vile service. She would then be done with pain but not with captivity. She could see Cartwright's point—they could never let her go. In this way the kidnapper was as much a victim as she herself. Money would have sundered them, but here and now she herself was the prize. In a way, possessing her was like having a tiger by the tail. She sighed and looked down at flattened breasts and concave tummy below an exaggerated rib cage. Suspension was a strange experience. It changed a girl's shape. She wondered if it would change her mind.

A steady increase in the pain of wracked shoulders and bound wrists was to be expected. The passing hours would improve nothing. Karen could conceive of no way in which so utter a helplessness could be achieved with such a minimum of bonds. A few loops around her wrists and here she hung, her big toe an inch from the floor, in the most frustrating impotence she had ever known. She could do nothing to help herself. She let her head fall forward between her raised arms. It was all so utterly hopeless.

Suppose she said yes and did the thing Natalie wanted—what then? She must still be kept a prisoner. She could never be trusted. There would be a closet or a chain by day and the mistress' bed by night. Even with compliance it could never be much of a life. She would be a perpetual prisoner. Her bonds might be light, but they would be real. On the other hand, she surveyed her present condition. She could not possibly endure day after day like this, and there was still her virgin back to whip. There was an inevitability about her back. It was so very much there!

Again and again she relived the imprisonment of her face between soft thighs. In all her past life she would have viewed it with horror, but it had not been horrible. She had bitten the lip of Natalie Stephenson's vagina more from the dictates of conscience than actual wish. It was what, presumably, Grandma would have done.

Karen judged it afternoon before the full implication of her suspended state entered her consciousness. She supposed

all captives like herself drew comfort from the knowledge of surrender. They gave in to their captor and were released, or their pain ended. But if she reached that point now, it would do her no good. She must still hang as she was until the mistress returned. Then, when her feet were once more on the ground, she would find fresh courage. She had endured the day, so why capitulate now? She was her own enemy, and the hours and days stretched on and on. Natalie's strategy was understandable. She would be worn down by the succession of lonely days. Karen looked ahead and saw only defeat. If her back was whipped, she would be lost. It was demeaning to know how close she had come to surrender while her bottom was being whipped by the riding crop. She must give Natalie no hint. Resolutely, the suspended girl used her will to drive speculation back into the shadows. She was being punished, that was all. Sometime her punishment must end. She closed her eyes and invited the painless shadows of unconsciousness.

The confrontation at 5:30 p.m. was fraught with doubts and anxiety for both the older woman and the younger girl. When Natalie entered, she tried hard to hide her hope, while Karen tried equally hard to disguise the weakening of her resolve. Neither spoke. The mistress fetched water and held it to dry hot lips. Karen drained the glass.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome."

The absurdity of their formal exchange was typical of all their communication. In different circumstances they might have laughed. Natalie decided on a casual indifference. The girl would expect release. Her whole being must crave it after the day with her feet on the floor. Release seemed the next most obvious move, so why not deny it? It might prove to be the last straw. Instead, she fetched brandy and raised it to the captive mouth.

“Drink this, dear. You may need it.”

Karen knew fear, but gulped greedily, then gasped, “Aren’t you going to let me down?”

Natalie raised an eyebrow and asked, “Why should I? You look very lovely stretched like that.”

“But I’ve been like this all day.”

“You have, haven’t you? You’re so brave. I admire you immensely, Karen. Have you found suspension difficult?”

“You know how terrible it is—you must know. I beg you, let me down.”

“Don’t be a silly girl. You’ve only hung there nine hours. If you’re going to be difficult, you’ll have to get used to days like this—and nights.” Natalie gave time for her words to sink in, then added, “I have things to do, but I won’t be gone for long.”

Panic surged within the bound girl. She was going to be left

as she was. All the brandy had done was to revive dulled sensibilities. Now they screamed for relief. Every nerve and sinew of the suspended girl cried out in protest against another endless span of hours as she was. Surely Natalie could not be so cruel. Somehow she must be made to understand, but there was no way. Karen knew herself more utterly helpless than she had ever been. The tears came easily and were wet on her cheeks when Natalie Stephenson returned. They were gently kissed away by the mistress.

“Haven’t you anything to tell me, silly girl?”

“No.” Tears welled anew. “I could easily say yes just to get my feet back on the floor, but when I tried to do what you want, I’d only make a shameful mess of it. You’d hate me even more.”

“I don’t hate you at all.”

“I’m sorry. Honest, I’m very sorry! But I’m simply no good to you. That man kidnapped the wrong girl.”

“You’ll stay as you are all night rather than say yes?”

A moan of desolation, then she whispered, “You don’t give me any choice. You can do what you like with me.”

Natalie sighed, aware of defeat. She touched the button and watched the nude loveliness sink down and slowly crumple to the floor. It stayed there, unmoving in an ecstasy of relief.

“Thank you… oh, thank you,” the girl whispered sincerely.

The mistress stood and watched. The girl was exhausted, making no motion to free herself of anything. She lay there, breathing heavily. Natalie knew that now was the time to raise her back into suspension and then to leave her to hang and think, but it was too much like torture, an unsporting act she would despise herself even if it drew the desired affirmative answer. Instead, she stooped and freed the bound hands.

“I’m making dinner. Come to the kitchen when you’re ready. Don’t forget your feet are still chained.”

Natalie walked away, and the girl upon the floor did not move for several minutes. Then, very slowly, she raised herself up on one hip, massaging her wrists, rubbing stiff arms and shoulders still protesting her weight. Then she got to her feet and used her short linked steps to take her to the bathroom and a bath. Nothing had ever felt so good.

Natalie Stephenson had to admit a modicum of charm to the man who held her in thrall. Cartwright helped her off with her coat and made them drinks with a genuine good-will, and for the first time in her life she wanted to talk to a man. However, there was the contract and preliminaries to deal with first.

“I expect you’d like me naked?”

“If you please.” Cartwright studied her as she stripped. “I find you increasingly attractive, Natalie. Where are your handcuffs?”

She bit her lip in vexation. Her mind had been too full of other things. She had forgotten to clasp them on her wrists outside his door.

Flushing in her nakedness, she stammered, “I—I’m sorry… I forgot. They’re in my bag.”

“You may put them on. Shall we say five strokes for your delinquency?”

Natalie flushed a deeper hue, cursing her nudity by which he could see the extent of the spreading pink. “Yes, I suppose that’s about right for me,” she admitted in mortification as she fitted the black circles on her wrists and clicked them tight. “Do you want me to bend over now?”

“No. I want you to know you have ’em coming. I’ll lay them on you after we’ve had our chat and you’ve mixed a drink or two.”

“I’d chat a lot better if they were over and done with.”

“You’ll get them when I’m ready, not before. How’s the girl?”

“I’ve wanted to talk to you about her. That’s the reason I forgot to handcuff myself outside the door. Denver, I think the little so-and-so’s got the best of me.”

“Impossible!”

“Not really. She’s got a tremendous strength of will, and she genuinely hates what I want her to do.”

“Good for her. I don’t think much of it myself.”

“Well, it was your idea that I take her. Frankly, I haven’t been able to cope. I’ve been a real bitch, but she just will not say yes.”

“You thrashed her?”

“I did that first thing. I’m not sure it wasn’t a mistake. I cropped her seat until it was purple and I hated to look at it. She’s a very lovely creature.”

“Yes. What else?”

“Nothing very imaginative. I chain her to my bed at night and suspend her all day while I’m at work. She’s quite pitiful when I get home, but she won’t give in. She isn’t rubbish, and I haven’t wanted to do anything worse to her. I don’t want her broken and abject. I want her to love me. The capacity is there.”

Cartwright studied her intently enough to maintain her blush. “Take it seriously, can’t you? I’m lucky to possess a full-fledged lesbian. You’re an interesting study.”

“Your possession of me is limited, Cartwright.”

“Sure, sure… terms of our contract. Go mix us both another

drink. See if you can serve it properly without earning yourself five more."

Natalie could discount his hatefulness. She was becoming accustomed to her weekly travail. Soon she might cease to blush over being naked before his amused regard. As men went, Cartwright was bearable. She knew she could be in the power of much worse. Stony-faced, she took their glasses to the bar, then knelt in full humility to proffer his refill. She gave it all she had.

"Your drink, master."

"Well, I'll be damned!" Cartwright grinned in surprise. "Something's done you good since you were here last."

"I expect it was the whipping you gave me."

"You know you don't believe that. But about Karen—what's your next move?"

"I don't have any. I'm wondering if you wouldn't take her to your island and return Janice to me?"

"That's out. I'm in love with Janice."

"She's only prey of your harem—a concubine."

"Forget Janice—she's mine." Cartwright studied the kneeling nude. "How would it be if I take you and Karen both to the island?"

Natalie's answer came too quickly. "I'd have to give up my

work, my job, everything."

"You've considered it," he said, laughing shrewdly. "The things you mention wouldn't matter. You'd become a slavegirl, cared for totally the same way as Janice."

"You either have immense confidence in your virility or you're a glutton for slavegirls, Cartwright."

The male voice became meditative. "There's a thing with a lot of men you girls don't understand," he said slowly.

"Take me, for instance. I find a tremendous enjoyment in the beauty of a naked girl. I'm not even sure there's anything carnal about it. The way you are now is the very quintessence of loveliness."

"But you still want to whip me?"

"Yes, and I intend to. I'm not sure that has anything to do with it, although I don't pretend to have all the answers. It's as though all the beauty of this world and this life is wrapped up in you—you, Karen, Janice, Patsy, Brigid… and all the others. I simply can't get enough of you. A man who's overdosed on beauty has died."

His sincerity touched her, and no woman is offended by being told she is beautiful. Natalie looked at the man sitting before her and knew him more complex than she had assumed.

In an unusual reaching out, she asked, "Have you realized

that lesbians think the same way? Our adoration is not all for the hair between her legs."

Cartwright nodded, pleased. "Would you actually wish to come to the island?"

Natalie Stephenson raised her hands to display the handcuffs on her wrists. "And these? They'd come along too, I expect?"

"Of course. You'd be a slave. Janice is always handcuffed. Karen would be too." Cartwright continued his intent regard. "I could easily have you kidnapped. Believe me, you'd disappear as surely as Janice. But it would please me to have you as a willing captive. That's what you are right this moment, y'know."

"I'm not willing; I'm coerced."

"You came, you stripped, you handcuffed yourself—that's enough. With females there's no use being a glutton for perfection."

"Huh! I'm not going to your island, Mr. Cartwright. But if I did… would you allow me access to a girl, or a girl to me?"

"No."

"Not much inducement."

Cartwright laughed at her honesty. "I hope to infect you with enjoyment of the normal act—of being impaled by a

man between your legs."

Natalie surprised herself by grinning at a mental picture. "Keep you busy, wouldn't it? I'd be only one of a half dozen all craving your favors."

"I'd enlist help, dear lady. I could arrange a male line-up at your bedside, with you tied down naked and spread-eagle for maximum effect."

Natalie sighed. "I don't know why I don't hate you more. You strip me of everything."

"That's the purpose of these visits, sweetheart."

She did not correct him on his use of the term of endearment. Instead, she asked, "Can I have another drink before you whip me?"

"And me too." Cartwright held out his glass. "You managed it beautifully last time. Try for a repeat."

It was easy now. She knew her performance superb. Natalie resumed her kneel and sipped more slowly. "We've been talking nonsense," she said soberly. "What about Karen?"

"Oh, I'll take her back. A dozen rapes and she'll become human. I have the advantage over you there."

"Yes. I wish it wasn't so. But you're right. Your hard cock will be more persuasive than my tongue."

“I don’t see the girl as a problem. It’s you who intrigues me, Natalie. I’d like you on the island. You do have half an inclination, don’t you?”

“I suppose I do. It’s the playing with fire thrill, but mostly because of Janice.”

“Janice is not for you.”

“I know, I know. You’ve made that plain enough, so I’m not going.”

“But suppose you are? Suppose I relieve you of decision? Suppose on one of your visits here I don’t unlock your handcuffs?”

Natalie tensed, immobilized by a vision. How easy it would be! There would be a fuss over her disappearance for two or three days, that was all. She would be on the island, chained and beyond decision. With as many females as there would be there she need not take Cartwright’s interdict too seriously. There would be ways, and she would catch glimpses of her darling. Temptation was hot within her loins, but the office manageress surfaced.

“All you want to do is break down a lesbian’s will—to make me crave your cock as I crave Janice’s cunt. No thanks!”

“It would happen very naturally. You would need to do nothing. Without fanfare you would cross over into a new life.” Cartwright continued as though she had made no protest. “But I will admit to wanting your consent.”

“That’s crazy!”

“No, it’s not. Give me credit for not wanting to brutalize you. Only the first decision need be yours. You will never make another. I want you to say yes. You can say it now.”

“I’d have to be out of my mind.”

“You would dwell in one of the most lovely places in the world and in great luxury.”

“And punished constantly!”

“Have your times in my house been that unpleasant? Transpose them to our own island in the sun and a bevy of beautiful girls.”

“Who I’m not allowed to touch! And don’t tell me you wouldn’t be forever whipping me or turning me into a public spectacle in the pillory or some other humiliation.”

“You would be the least bored woman in the world.” Natalie, kneeling, stared up at the male in distress. “You make it sound so damn plausible. I wish you’d stop. You’re unsettling me. I’ve got enough on my mind—paying you my dues and that damn girl! You’ve got me into a fine old fix.”

The kneeling woman looked down at the handcuffs she wore. They were a symbol of her condition; they served no other purpose. They proclaimed her as a possession of Denver Cartwright. Up to now she had worn them as a hu-

miliation necessary to his male pride for the weekly duration of her homage, but if her wrists must wear them always, what then? The thought, coupled with his enticements, conjured up strange visions.

“Get up now,” Cartwright continued. “Bend and touch your toes—knees straight.”

Natalie obeyed, for the first time uncaring, positioning herself for the crop without protest.

“Five strokes, Miss Stephenson?”

“Make it ten if you want.”

She was instantly appalled. What absurd pique had driven her to such bravado? She prayed Cartwright would laugh it off, but his polite acceptance was softly grateful.

“Thank you, Miss Stephenson. Ten it is.”

She must endure them without moving and without a scream. As the blazing strokes began, she told herself that she had asked for it and the least she could do was bear her punishment in a manner the male would be forced to admire. Natalie clenched her teeth, braced her knees, and entered a realm of agony lasting all too long. The blows splatted wickedly on bare bent flesh. Several times she moaned.

“I have to commend you, sweetheart. That was a memorable performance. You never cease to surprise me.”

“Thank you… sir.”

“Never thought I’d give you the extra, did you? That will teach you to be a smart-ass.”

“Thank again… sir.”

“Well, don’t stand there trying to rub your ass. Plant it on the rug. I want to fuck you while it’s still hurting.”

“You’re so kind.” This time her tone was bitter. “I’m a very lucky girl.”

Natalie sank down and disposed herself in what she now thought of as a sacrificial position. The male entered her gently in one long slow thrust. The pain from her cropped bottom turned into a flaming conflagration within her sex. She was suddenly panting in a surprising urgency. The male serviced her with a wise and knowing skill.

In the drowsy aftermath there came a male whisper in her ear. “You’re getting good.”

She feared to answer, ashamed of her thudding heart against his chest where it flattened down her breasts. The whisper came again. “Remember Patsy?”

Natalie answered mechanically. “Of course I remember. She’s so sweet. I envied your possession of her.”

“She is yours, twice a week, on the island.”

“What did you say!”

“You heard me. I’m giving you something. All I want from you is a single word.”

Natalie refused to think. She was drugged with emotion, still afire with an unappeased desire. She said the word with a terrible finality and heard herself say it as if from a distance.

“Yes.”

The thrustings within her sheath began again. She surrendered to them and forgot all else.

Later, and once more kneeling, she said reflectively, “I should have known. A woman does not have the strength. I’ve given myself to you, but may we not talk about it until it happens? I’m scared to death.”

“No talk, and I want you always a little scared.”

“Yes, master. I’m going to call you that to get myself into a proper frame of mind about what I’ve done. But there’s that poor girl. I’d better go and break the news and let her back on the floor. May I leave now?”

“Of course. Phone me when you have her ready, roped, and resigned. This should prove quite interesting.”

They kissed in a strange affinity. Natalie ran out of the house. Arriving at her apartment, she went instantly to the suspended girl. Karen hung as she had hung before, but her face lit up at the sight of her mistress. The words burst

from her mouth, drowning out what Natalie had been about to say.

“I’ve made up my mind, mistress. I can’t stand any more of this… and all the other things you can do to me. I’ll do what you want. I’ll be what you want. Honest, I’ll try and make you happy. You will teach me, won’t you?”

The world slid from beneath Natalie Stephenson’s feet. She gazed upon the suspended nude with an infinite longing. Karen Copeland had learned to await release with patience, but as she watched she was forced to wonder if she had done something wrong.

The mistress wept.

5

The Surplus Slave

JANICE'S FIRST THANKFULNESS for being once more in her familiar cage soon turned to irritation. Blanding, Rennig, and Gloria had meant well in returning her to where they had picked her up, but she fervently wished they had forgotten the handcuffs or had cuffed her hands in front instead of behind her back. They had, moreover, cuffed her far too tight. The metal circlets hurt and made her ten times more helpless. Soon her irritation turned to fear and then to panic. Why, oh why, had she not the sense to tell them what they did not know? That the cage was abandoned, that no one might come near it for days—if ever. That, locked within it as she was, she could face a slow lingering death from thirst and starvation. She pounded again and again with her bare shoulder at the padlocked door. It did not move. Leaning against the bars, she wept a frantic storm of tears.

It would have been better to have remained on board of the ship. Sure, they had subjected her to outrage, but she was none the worse of it. If they had kept her prisoner, she could have taken the pains and discomforts they imposed. Gloria was a dear and Blanding too in his own way. The

horrible little brig with its chain would be better than a slow starvation in this cage. Why had she been so foolish!

The tears brought relief. Her bruised shoulder told her to leave the bars alone. Janice twisted feverishly against the metal by which her hands were joined, but that was a waste of time, and it hurt, so it was best left alone. She must resign herself to helplessness and simply hope for rescue. Curiosity must bring somebody sometime—if she was still alive. Her mouth was dry from fear and actual thirst, but she was not hungry. Fear would defeat hunger for the time being.

Night brought its usual magic. Starlight and surf! Janice stared at it through the bars and paid it her usual homage of awe. She was no longer afraid of monsters from the ocean. She would have welcomed one who might have smashed the bars and given her a chance to escape, but that was fanciful stuff for the likes of Patsy. It was not for her. Without seeking sleep, she slept.

“How you git in that there cage, Miz Latimer?” Patsy’s voice was outraged by the impossible. “And the door locked an’ all?”

The captive woke with a start. Flooded by thankfulness, Janice sat up, then scrambled to her feet. There was a flood of greetings, of questions and answers, before Janice asked, “But why are you here? And at this time of night?”

“I couldn’t sleep none, Miz Latimer. I been thinkin’ ’bout

you. Somethin' told me to come. I'm sure glad to see you." She giggled. "But I ain't half as glad as Brigid's gonna be. She been figgerin' on gittin' her ass cut to bits when the master comes and hears 'bout you and the cage and ever'thing. That's why she left it here, so's he could lock her up in it after he's wailed her good. She figgered he'd wanna do that."

"We won't tell the master. It wasn't Brigid's fault; it was mine."

"Well, maybe. But Brigid's loaded down with guilt about it. She's gonna confess right off when the master comes. I thinks she's hopin' for the best whippin' of her life."

"Let me out, and I'll go and talk to her."

"I can't let you out, Miz Latimer. Ain't nobody trusts me with keys. I'll run back and git Brigid."

"No, don't!" Fear had clutched once more. "I couldn't bear being alone again. I'd think up all sorts of horrors."

"But don't you wanna git loose?"

"Yes, but not at the risk of being left alone again. You don't know what this cage feels like on the inside, and I'm handcuffed."

"You sho' is. But I gotta go sometime. Ain't nobody gonna look for me out here. I promises I won't be long."

Janice watched the lithe slenderness speed back down the beach. She fought back panic with its dreams of scaly horrors, or the return of Athos Films to carry her away in triumph. But it still seemed a very long time before the starlight yielded a jubilant Patsy and a glowing Brigid. Greetings were ecstatic, explanations a jumbled rush of words. The exchange of her locked hands from back to front was a small detail Janice scarcely noted. When they got back to the fortress, they shared a single bed and intertwined in joy. For a single night Brigid was a girl.

Janice woke late to discover herself still handcuffed and naked, with an ankle chained to Brigid's bed. She sat happily and waited for release. After the ship's brig this was glorious luxury. Later, with Patsy off on her duties, Brigid unburdened a guilty conscience over toast and coffee.

"Janice, I want you to lock me in that cage down on the beach."

The handcuffed girl paused in the buttering of her toast to regard her troubled companion with an amused, cocked eyebrow. "What on earth for? I mean, why would I?"

"It was a crazy idea. I should never have put you in there."

"Yes, you should have. I was mooning around, bored and discontented. It was just what I needed."

"But to isolate you way down there—unprotected!"

"Well, how were you to know about those film people? And

anyway, everything's turned out just great."

"If it hadn't been for one of Patsy's silly notions, you could be sitting in the cage still, starving. I can't forgive myself."

Janice eyed her companion with concern. It was evident that Brigid wanted to be taken seriously. Helpfully, she ventured, "But anyone who's discontented in this beautiful place deserves that cage. That's what I was—a discontented brat."

"But suppose the master had returned while you were gone! Can you imagine what he'd have done to me? I'm supposed to be in charge."

Janice could imagine. Brigid would have had a painful and tearful time explaining the loss of the master's favorite slavegirl. She patted Brigid's arm consolingly. "But he didn't come. So let's not tell him, okay?"

"Everyone knows. There's no way he won't find out. He'll put us both in the cage for a week."

"That would be fun, Brigid."

"No, it wouldn't. He'd fix our hands so we couldn't do a thing. Look, dear, I really want you to lock me in there. That way he won't be so mad at me, and maybe I won't get whipped as well."

"But when I explain—"

“Then you’ll be lucky if he doesn’t punish you too.”

Some logic was now discernible, but Janice could not imagine Brigid naked in a cage with her hands cuffed. “But you run things,” she said. “I don’t know—”

“Patsy knows. She’ll love it.”

They eyed each other, smiles trembling on luscious lips. Janice shrugged in resignation. “Well, I suppose there’s no harm in it if that’s what you want.”

“It’s best for both of us, dear. I know.”

Thirty minutes later the two of them set out along the beach. Janice held handcuffs in her already handcuffed hands. She felt ridiculous. But Brigid was resolute, stepping out determinedly.

It was then that they heard the plane.

Long afterwards Janice was able to laugh at their dismay as they turned their delinquent steps from the beach towards the air strip. They fell back into their normal roles. Giggling, the slavegirl handed Brigid the extra set of cuffs. “Here, you take these. I can’t hide them. We won’t need them now.”

Excited and happy, Janice watched the plane settle to a stop, saw the door open and the steps come down. Then one of the pilots came out. There came a considerable pause during which Cartwright did not appear. But then

came the figure of a girl, clad only in panties and bra, her hands and arms tied behind her back with rope, her ankles joined by chain. She stood, blinking in near helplessness in the sunlight, until the grinning pilot picked her up and carried her down the steps and across the tarmac to where they stood. He placed the near naked girl on her feet and handed Brigid a large manila envelope. “See you later,” he said cheerfully and headed back to the plane.

The newcomer surveyed them brightly. “My name is Karen Copeland.” It was a pleasant, educated voice. “I think I’m some sort of prisoner, but please read your letter. I think it tells you what to do with me.”

“Isn’t the master coming?”

“Oh, that man! No, he didn’t come. I think he just wanted to get rid of me.”

They returned to the fortress and more coffee, suiting their pace to Karen’s hobbled steps. Three female minds were busy with speculation. While the coffee perked Brigid read her letter.

“I bet your name’s Janice and yours is Brigid.” The newcomer looked at Janice’s handcuffs admiringly. “I think that’s the way I’m supposed to be kept. You are a prisoner, aren’t you?”

Janice had forgotten her status. “Yes, I suppose I am,” she admitted ruefully. “On this island a girl forgets.”

“I believe the letter says I can be untied and this beastly strain taken off my ankles. I’m so tired of it.”

Brigid, still reading, nodded. “That’s right. You can untie her, Janice.”

Understanding pain, Janice tugged at knots and peeled rope from red indentations in their visitor’s skin. She heard the gasps and saw the wincing.

“I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. Just get me untied. They didn’t need to tie me that tight in the first place. I’m not dangerous. Handcuffs like what they have on you would have been much nicer.”

“They don’t stop a girl doing much unless they’re behind her back.”

“Well, anyway, I’m so grateful to be untied.” For a minute their visitor massaged wealed skin, then kicked a chained ankle. “Can anything be done about this?”

Brigid tossed over the previously redundant handcuffs. “Put these on her first. Here’s the key to her leg irons.”

Janice opened the cuffs, embarrassed, but the girl on whom she must lock them held out willing hands. “I’m not mad about them, but if I have to be restrained… I think they’re cute.”

The metal clicked its victory over slender wrists in a snug

intimacy their owner could never escape. Karen held them up to admire.

“It’s so good to know these are all I have to endure,” Karen enthused. “You act as though you don’t even know you have ’em on.” She looked down as the chains fell from her ankles. “Gosh, that’s good! Would you mind if I ran up and down outside? It’s been so long since I’ve had my feet.”

They watched her leap and stretch, each with their memories. When she returned she was glowing. “Mmmmmm, coffee!” She looked at Brigid with concern. “May I know what the letter sentences me to?”

“Nothing much. You have the run of the island same as Janice. The rules are you get punished if you try to escape or if you disobey me. I can do anything I like with you. Understand?”

“Yes. But that doesn’t include—”

“Seems like you’ve got some sort of grudge against lesbians, eh?”

“It’s not a grudge, it’s a conviction.”

“The master, he feels the same way, but for some reason he says we can break you down any way we please.” Brigid laughed at the suddenly clouded features. “You may as well know that all of us here eat each other when we get chance, but in case you’re worried, we won’t flog you into lapping our slits.”

“I suspect I’m sort of de trop, aren’t I?”

“There’s lots of room, honey. We don’t get in each other’s hair.”

“I can see that, but I think I’m a nuisance. You see, this Mr. Cartwright had me kidnapped as a gift for someone else, but she was a woman and a lesbian, so I wasn’t much good. He seemed terribly busy so he sent me here to get rid of me.” She grinned in apology. “It seems that once you’ve kidnapped a girl you’re stuck with her. You dare not let loose because she’d go straight to the police. I can understand it’s a bit of a problem, but it just leaves me wishing I could escape. I don’t suppose there’s a chance, though.”

“Janice has been looking. She never found one.”

“I can see how safe an island is for keeping girls. A we sort of members of a harem?”

They told her what they could of her predicament, and Brigid added, “Letter says you have to be naked, same as Janice.”

“Yes, of course. They kept me naked there. I only got these two little bits because of the pilots. I’m accustomed enough to not having a thing on. I hated it at first, but a girl gets used to things. Here, I’ll get rid of them.” Karen deftly stripped and stood before them, nude. She was very lovely.

“Who did that to your bottom, girl?”

“Oh, that was the woman I mentioned. She was trying to make me say I’d do that horrible thing for her. I think after she’d done it to me she felt ashamed. I never did get my back whipped.”

“I’ll remedy that if you give me an excuse.”

“I’ll try not to. I know I have to try and make the best of things, and this is such a beautiful island.”

They walked out into its beauty—two girls, both handcuffed and naked. Karen interspersed exploration with questions. “That woman and you—the man uses you? You’re both concubines?”

“You may be one too.”

“Hmmmm, look, you appear to be resigned to it, but I’m not. I simply have to escape. I can’t possibly spend my life walking around an island wearing nothing but handcuffs. What’s my best chance?”

“There aren’t any. There’s a boat, but we don’t know how to navigate it, and we don’t have the key to its motor. Don’t try the pilots of the plane. They’ll only report you and get you punished.”

“This punishment stuff—it’s for real?”

“It’s terribly real. If I were you, I’d forget about trying to escape.”

“You can if you want, but I just can’t.” Karen clasped a bare arm. “You’re sweet, and I can understand the state of mind you’ve fallen into—you’ve simply given up hope but I won’t do that. I’ll get back into the world if it kills me.”

They encountered the two pilots of the plane, grinning at their handcuffed nudity. As always, they were faultlessly polite. Karen instantly ignored Janice’s warning, facing the two and demanding, “What do I have to do to persuade you to get out of here?”

The men exchanged amused glances. Annoyed, Janice told them, “I’ve warned her about talking to you. Please don’t get her into trouble. She doesn’t deserve to be whipped her first day. Don’t tell Brigid, okay?”

“Lady, you know the rules. We get paid to keep ’em. And if this girls been warned…”

“But it’s so hard for her to believe in all of this! It was hard for me too. I got whipped first thing.”

“So?”

“Please don’t get her punished. If you make a report Brigid has to whip her; she has no choice.”

“We don’t have a choice either. We have to be honest wit the boss. That’s the deal. This young woman may as well learn the ropes same you did, same as Brigid, same as young Patsy.”

“That was a blooper,” Janice said. “I told you how they were. You can’t believe any of it, can you? It’s all too strange, and the island is so lovely.”

“You mean, I get whipped just for that?”

“Both Brigid and I warned you.”

“But all I did was ask!”

“You asked them to effect your escape—you’re right. They could do it if they would, but you’re forgetting that their jobs depend on being true to the master.”

“They’re aiding and abetting a kidnapping.”

“You could tell that to the judge—if there was a judge.”

“Well, I’m not going to let things stop me. Where’s the boat?”

Janice sighed. Karen was a force. The girl was burned up with a moral indignation at her lot, but the boat would defeat her, so there was no harm in her seeing it. She led the way to the wharf.

“Isn’t she a beauty!” Karen was enthralled. “They won’t punish me for looking, will they?” She climbed aboard, agile in spite of linked hands. “Come on, Janice, I’m going to make sure.”

Janice shrugged. She followed, but sat on a hatch cover and watched Karen poke and pull. It would be nice if the

newcomer settled down and accepted her enslavement. It took this experience to tell her how deeply she herself was immersed in her own slavery. She wished Cartwright had come. She missed him. An island overloaded with females could spell nothing but trouble.

“If we could find the ignition key, I could run this thing,” Karen declared decisively. “There has to be some way—”

“There isn’t. Don’t bother. I don’t need a whipping.”

“Goodness, dear, they’ve sort of broken you in, haven’t they? You’re not even trying.”

“Being broken in is painful. If you refuse to listen to me, you’ll find out.”

“Poor darling. I hate to see a girl so resigned. Don’t worry. Just leave things to me. I’ll get us out of here.”

“More likely get us chained in a dungeon.”

With a view to getting her enthusiastic companion out of the way of temptation, Janice took her on the beach tour. The whole circle was no great distance, and there was the cage. It would make an amusing story, but instead of being horrified, Karen was enraptured.

“But it’s so romantic, darling! Out here alone with the sun and the surf and the stars—and the chance of something tall, dark, and handsome coming along.”

“You’re dreaming.”

“And those movie people? Are you sure they won’t come back? I don’t see why you didn’t use them to escape. I would have.”

“No, you wouldn’t. They were scared of the Cartwright name. They didn’t want to offend him. I think they’d have kept me otherwise.”

“That’s romantic too. You should have talked them into it.”

“Look, Karen, I’m in love with Denver Cartwright. I think he likes me. And what girl wants to be flogged or put in iron or hung from a yardarm every day?”

“But with such a motive—gosh, I wouldn’t mind. Did it hurt much?”

“Horribly.”

“I bet it wasn’t any worse than what happened to my bottom. I thought I’d die.”

“Well, maybe not, but twice a day every day and you’d soon be in tears and want to go home, and they wouldn’t let you. At night they keep you chained in a beastly little brig.”

“You just didn’t handle them right.” Karen’s eyes were shining. “But I don’t suppose they’ll come again.” She turned her attention to the latticework of bars. “Gee whiz, just look at that cage! And stuck way out here. It’s abso-

lutely gorgeous. Come on inside, I want to get the feel."

Janice was suddenly afflicted by claustrophobia. She was sick of the cage. Its seeming innocence was deceptive. She shivered at the thought of another incarceration. "Go ahead," she said irritably. "I've had enough of those bars."

Karen tripped lightheartedly within. She closed the door on herself and fingered the padlock hanging open from its hasp. Then she prowled the small circumference, holding this bar and that in her fettered hands and peering through the bars at the island's loveliness.

"Just think of this place in starlight," she breathed wistfully. "Don't tell me it wasn't a wonderful experience!"

"You picture monsters creeping up out of the deep dark sea to eat you. I was scared silly."

"Because you were alone?"

"The whole thing, Karen. You feel like what you are, a tiny little naked nothing who's lost her hands and is whirling through an immensity of space."

"Mmmmm, it sounds better than that chap who climbed a pyramid and slept up there alone under the stars."

"You can have it."

"Janice darling, lock me in."

"What!"

“It would be a tremendous thrill. I mean, the motives are so different from someone holding a club over your head and forcing you inside and locking you in. Darling, please do it.”

“It would serve you right if I did. Come out of there.” Janice shivered. “Those bars give me the creeps.”

“Brigid can’t whip me in here.”

“Karen, a girl can’t evade a thing on this island. The island wins every time. What the—!”

It was too late. A giggling girl had reached through the bars and used the padlock herself. She was safely locked within and was laughing at her perturbed companion through the bars. Her voice bubbled gaily.

“There! You wouldn’t do it, so I did.”

“But I don’t have a key! I can’t get you out.”

“That’s the spice, darling. The next move is up to Brigid.”

“She’ll whip you for sure now, and a lot harder. She’s got a thing about this cage.”

“Well, it’s a risk I take. Darling, do try and persuade her to leave me here all night. I don’t want to be let out until tomorrow morning.”

“Just like that? You’re giving the orders? Suppose she leaves you here for a week?”

“She has to get me out of here to whip me. Then I’ll refuse to go back in.”

“Sweetheart, you’re out of your mind. Nothing’s going to work the way you want it. I’ve got a feeling you’re going to be a very sorry little girl.”

The feeling intensified as Janice walked along back to the fort. It was an innocent enough prank, but Brigid and the cage were not to be trifled with. Her steps quickened.

It would be best to get the girl out of there, whip her, and send her to bed.

The housekeeper’s greeting was grim. “The pilots both told me. Where is the silly little bitch?” She listened to Janice’s story without humor and said, “There’s only one thing to do with her. You go get a jug of water while I find my whip.”

Carrying the jug with joined hands was surprisingly awkward. The whip would have been easier, but Janice forbore complaint. No doubt she deserved some punishment for letting it happen.

“Are you going to whip me too?” Janice asked as she trotted along beside her tight-lipped companion.

“You know I’m not, but I probably should.”

They were greeted by an insouciant nude. “What—refreshments already!”

Brigid wasted no time. She unlocked the cage and dragged its occupant into the open. She unlocked a cuff. A moment later a surprised young woman stood facing the bars, her hands secured to one of them above her head. Helpless, she looked back with her first sign of apprehension.

“I suppose those bastards told you?” she inquired sulkily.

“They are not bastards, and yes, they told me. You must enjoy being whipped, dear. You positively asked for it.”

“Every prisoner has a right to try and escape.” The tone was defiant.

“And every jailer has a right to whip that prisoner’s ass. In this case, it will be your back, dear.”

“You haven’t any right to whip me. I—owwww… oh, wow!”

Karen’s self-righteous complaint was lost in her squeal of dismay as Brigid’s whip cut her squarely across her white shoulders. Janice watched the formation of the scarlet line and the rise of puffed flesh. Unhappily, she ventured, “She’s new, Brigid. She doesn’t seem to grasp things too well.”

“She will when I’m done with her.”

The lashes were severe. The watching girl cringed with each. The helpless nakedness chained to the cage used every evasive tactic her loose tether made possible. The cage was not high. Her hands were locked only just above her head. Karen backed and swerved and made half turns

against the handcuffs, but achieved no more than to get a lot of herself whipped needlessly. Finally, realizing her error, she pressed her breasts hard against the bars, flattening herself against the lick of the thong. She moaned a steady intermittence of pain.

“Are you going to try and escape again, dear?”

The whip did not cease for the question. The answer came between moans. “No! Oh, no! Not ever!”

Ten more strokes left their scarlet lines before the next question. “And will you be locking yourself in a cage again?”

“No—oh, never!”

Ten more awful cuts came. Then Brigid asked, “What about obedience, dear?”

“Yes! Yes—I will, I will!”

“Well, in that case, perhaps we can say that’s enough for now,” Brigid said easily. “You’re just a silly girl, and here’s a couple of extra hard ones to remind you.”

They were viciously hard. Janice winced. The girl whose back they scored stiffened against the cage and pealed forth a good old-fashioned scream for each. Brigid stepped back and surveyed her sweating and quivering prisoner with satisfaction.

“Think you’ve learned a lesson, dear?”

“Ooh… oh, yes! I’m terribly sorry.”

“Want to walk home with Janice and me and be forgiven?”

“Would you! Oh, I’d be so grateful, I’ve been so silly.”

“Good. You’ll stay here in the cage.”

The sobbing nude made no demur when her hands were taken from above and she was roughly pulled back inside the cage. Even when she was made to kneel on the opposite side and her handcuffs looped around a lower bar and snapped shut on her wrists, she said nothing. Karen remained kneeling, her hands embracing a bar, while the mistress went outside and motioned to Janice.

“You,” Brigid ordered. “Get inside.”

There could be no denial. Brigid had regained her status as queen in the king’s absence. Janice was not surprised. She had escaped the whip, and a night with the sobbing, very helpless girl might be amusing. She shrugged and stepped within the tiny barred prison. The door clanged shut. She turned in time to see the padlock snapped. She met Brigid’s eyes. They understood each other.

“There’s enough water for both of you until morning. Enjoy the scenery.”

Brigid walked briskly away. Janice watched the receding

back longingly. She was in prison again, a prison with a view and a sobbing girl within its bars.

“I’m—I’m so sorry I got you into this,” Karen said.

“So you should be. We could have had a lovely time together instead of this. I hate this damn cage!”

“You did tell me. It’s all my fault,” the girl said, more tears welling in her eyes.

“All right, all right, so it’s your fault! I couldn’t agree with you more, but now we’re both locked in here for the night and the rest of the day.” Janice’s breasts were heaving in indignation. “I wish you had listened to me.”

“I will next time. Oooohhhh…!”

Janice looked down at the kneeling girl and felt a wave of sisterly pity. Karen’s bare back bore testimony to suffering. It was well latticed by weals. Tenderly, she sank down beside the textured nakedness and kissed two lips hungry for sympathy. “It could be worse,” she consoled. “At least you’re going to get your starlit night.” She kissed the girl again. “Seems like I’m going to get it too.”

“I don’t want it any more. I want to go home, and so do you.” It was another wail of guilty grief. “Oh god, she hurt me terribly with that whip!”

“I’ll lick your wounds for you, dear.” Janice suited action to words and tenderly kissed a weal.

“Why has she cuffed my hands like this? I can’t stand up.”

Janice could make a shrewd guess but did not voice it. Instead, she consoled, “It won’t stop you from laying down and sleeping, dear. You’ll see.”

“I want to hold you, but I can’t.”

“Lay down and stretch out, dear. You can. Your hands will stay between the bars. Brigid hasn’t been too cruel.”

Wonderingly, Karen obeyed. It was surprisingly easy. She sighed in relief and rested her cheek upon an unstretched arm. The tempo of her breathing quickened as warm lips and wise fingers played upon her punished back. The sensations were acute. She wallowed in them gratefully.

Janice found pleasure in giving pleasure. She did so skillfully, wondering if the girl beneath her fingers guessed the final outcome. She could believe it unlikely and was glad. She was aware of tremendous power.

“When we get out of here, will we go back to the way we were?” Karen’s voice was husky and subdued.

“I expect so. I can’t think of anything else we need punishing for.”

“I can see why you’re so resigned. I won’t be silly any more. I didn’t know it could hurt so bad. It was awful.”

“Always remember the whip, Karen. I do. It keeps us sensi-

ble."

"Sensible means resigned and without hope, doesn't it?"

"Stop that! It's self-pity. Think of the good things we've got on this land. Oh, and by the way, when my master comes, you won't see as much of me. He demands my time."

"And your body. You let him fuck you, I can guess."

"Don't be like that, Karen. There's something between men and women. Surely you know that."

"It's all so beastly—what men do to us girls, and what some girls do to each other." There came a self-righteous pause. "I don't expect none of this to not happen on this island. I know I'm here to be used. But I won't be willing."

The girl was difficult. Janice paused in her attentions. "The main thing to remember," she advised slowly, "is that you're exactly the same girl after these things have been done to you as you were before. Nothing has changed. I've often believed the ragged faces of whores come only from a guilty conscience over the years. The act they perform for money is the most natural one in the world."

"Are you saying you're a whore—without payment?"

"So is every wife. Forget the whole thing, sweetheart. Think of the starlit view you're going to get after awhile—and there's always me."

“What do you mean by that last bit?”

“You know perfectly well what I mean. I’d let you play with my body if you had hands, but since Brigid took them I’ll play with yours instead.”

“I don’t want you to do that.”

“Okay, I’ll stop.” Janice stood and went to the opposite wall of bars. “There you are, all on your own.”

“But I don’t want to be! Please go on doing what you were doing. It was lovely. It’s got me so relaxed.”

“What’s the difference?”

“Oh, you mean… with that other thing?”

“Yes, tell me the difference.”

“What you talk about is a sexual deviation.”

“Because it feels good?”

“You’re trying to trap me. I don’t see what soothing my whipped back has to do with that other beastliness.”

“Turn over and I’ll show you.”

The whipped girl was halfway over when she lay back on her breasts with a decisive thud. “No, I won’t,” she said defensively. “I know what you’re going to do. I don’t want those parts of me touched, not even by a girl.”

“Okay, then, tell me the difference between your two sides.”

“You know the difference! One side has only my back and my bottom, the other has my breasts and my pussy.”

“Is this your pussy?” Janice thrust a hand from behind between moist thighs and palmed the helpless girl’s plump lips. She kneaded them for a minute, despite struggles and indignation. When she retrieved it, the palm glistened damply. Holding it before anguished eyes, she demanded, “What about this!”

“I don’t know why it does that, but you’ve no right. You’re taking a mean advantage because I can’t defend myself. Please don’t do it again.”

“Darling, you’re being ridiculous. You’re quite unreal.”

Karen sniffed unhappily and twisted vainly at her handcuffs. “I don’t care. I just don’t want my parts played with. I don’t try and play with yours.”

“Parts? Oh, darling, that word went out a century ago. If we want to be polite these days, we speak of nipples, breasts, and our cunt.”

“We don’t. That last word’s horrible. I hate it.”

Janice felt irritation. It spoke in her voice. “But, Karen, do you actually expect me us to be locked in this cage all night and not touch each other? I’m now making a declaration of

war on prudery. You're quite helpless, Karen, so I'm going to take the mean advantage you mentioned and do what I like with you."

Janice felt no guilt, only a primitive joy as the girl handcuffed to the bars bucked and kicked and heaved. It was an unfair contest. She had only to place a hand anywhere on Karen's nudity to spark it into frantic motion. She did this for a long time, looking down in lustful admiration of the living beauty she controlled. Or more accurately the naked girl whose wrists had been handcuffed by Brigid in such a way as to render her an easy prey to lesbian lust. Finally the struggling slenderness subsided and was still, panting in exhaustion. Janice flipped the supine curves over onto their back and sat astride them, her own bare bottom feeling the tickle of the pubic patch below.

"That's better," she said demurely. "What are you going to do now, dear?"

Karen did not move. Her lips were a sulky pout, but she said nothing. Her eyes were evasive. Between Janice's weight upon her middle and the compulsion of the cuffs, she was helpless, surrendering her virtue in a make-believe martyrdom all her own.

Janice Latimer remembered a bit of French philosophy to the effect that a woman responded according to the skill with which you played upon her, like a finely tuned musical instrument. She played on Karen now, her fingertips

possessing nipples already hard and erect. From the very first touch, the girl who owned the captive breasts gasped and closed her eyes. Later, when the predator girl thrust apart the captive legs and nestled between, her mouth discovered a warm, wet welcome within the pungent sheath. Thereafter, the moans and cries from captive lips became an enigmatic sound, a maiden moan in a wilderness of discovery, a paean of pleasure too great to bear in silence.

It was a long time after Janice had plucked the pubic hairs from her mouth that she said, “I think you’re a humbug, Karen.”

“I’m not. I didn’t ever want this to happen. But I’m helpless, so my conscience is clear.”

“But you’re so beautifully responsive! You’re as hot as—” Comprehension suddenly dawned as Janice looked down at petulant lips. “What you were scared of was that you knew you’d like it. You think once you get started—”

“I know it’s mechanical—friction and all that. The body responds. I’ve always known about myself, and I’ve had to fight against becoming a hot little pushover. Oh, Janice…!”

“You little idiot. I’m going to give you the night of your life. We’re locked in here, so we may as well make this damn cage pay off. Don’t tell me you don’t want me to do it to you again.”

“I do want you to. I’m on fire! That’s what I meant about

me. And now you've got me started!"

"You're quite something." Janice laughed delightedly. "You're glad you're helpless too. You're glad I have enough freedom to do as I please with that lovely body of yours, and you're glad we're locked in this cage and can't get out."

"Well, yes, but—"

"What do you like most or least—girls or men?"

"I'm scared of both."

"But you're so forceful otherwise. You positively invite trouble and punishments. I think you've never outgrown the little girl fear of a mouse running up your leg and getting into your pussy."

"All right, then, do it to me all night long, as much as you like. Wear me out! But please, please don't tell anyone…?"

"Okay, silly, but you're going to have to do it for me too."

"How can I, like this?"

Janice laughed. "I'll sit on your face, dear. Leave the positions to me. I can push my feet through the bars if I have to." She gazed down at the tumescent pubic patch. "And now, young lady…!"

The night came upon them in all its starlit brilliance. Karen was allowed to kneel up and revel in all the scenery beyond the bars. "I'm so glad it was you," she said reflec-

tively. “I’ve always known it had to be someone sometime. You’re wonderful!”

“Don’t you wish we were out of this cage and down in the surf?”

“Well, yes, but we’ll be able to, won’t we? Tomorrow or whenever. Brigid won’t keep us in here, will she?”

“She just might.”

“Well, anyway, you and this starlight are the most beautiful things that ever happened to me.”

It was then that they saw the smudge upon the water. A dark object was taking shape.

“It’s a boat!” Karen’s voice was charged with excitement. “Don’t you see it? It means escape!”

Janice saw it, but she also saw two naked girls, handcuffed and locked in a cage. Along with excitement, there must be fear. They were cruelly vulnerable. She dismissed all ideas of the film people. If they had returned her before, they would not seek her out now.

“It’s coming straight at us. Shouldn’t we shout? Can’t you wave or something?”

“They’re still too far out. Look, Karen dear, this may not be good news. Look at us! We’re simply pleading to be raped.”

“I don’t care. They can rape me all they want so long as

they take me back to civilization and off this island."

"But you were just saying how lovely it is!"

"I know, but it holds me prisoner, and I don't want to be a prisoner."

Janice could not be bothered with Karen's quaint logic. She was in the grip of a dark premonition. They were about to be invaded by men, and men could want but one thing from a naked girl.

"I can hear voices and a motor!"

It had all happened before. There was a frightening inevitability. Janice stood, pressed against the bars, clutching them with ironed hands and staring between them at approaching fate.

"They're speaking English. Oh, Janice, I'm so excited!"

Janice could only wonder why they had come back. It was undoubtedly the film crew. She could detect Rennig's voice as the boat was drawn up on the sand. Soon, three pairs of male eyes were staring at them approvingly through the bars.

"They keep you in here all the time, honey?"

Janice did not answer Rennig's caustic query. She watched him deal with the padlock and open the door which no longer spelt freedom.

“I’ll be damned! There’s two of ’em this time.”

“Take ’em both, boss?”

“Well, now, let’s take a look. Hold still, baby.”

Rennig and his handcuff key were bent over Karen’s wide-eyed kneeling nudity. His companion watched. Seizing her chance, Janice leaped through the open door and fled. They caught her easily and dragged her back to stand before Rennig’s amused regard. Without thought or reason, she kicked him solidly in the groin and fled again. Once more she was captured and dragged back to the tune of laughter. Handcuffed wrists made her easy to control.

“Bitch!” Rennig slapped her cheek a resounding blow as she was held for his attention. “If you hadn’t been barefooted…”

He left the rest unsaid and dragged her back against the bars, using her handcuffs to lift her arms above her head to lock them there. She stood, totally exposed, to watch what was happening.

Karen was being loudly vocal with pleadings, promises, and explanations. No one paid attention. Her hands were dealt with in the same manner as Janice’s. The two girls stood side by side, exposed to male approval.

“We don’t need two. This new one’s worth a look. Which one will it be, boys?”

Opinion was divided as to physical attributes.

“We already know how good the first one is, boss,” a male voice reasoned.

“Yeah, we know. She beefed the whole time. Besides, she’s still Cartwright’s.”

“I thought we had decided not to let Cartwright’s name stop us?”

“Yeah, but if we don’t have to rile him, we won’t. This new one’s a honey, and she’s young too.”

“Sweetheart, did you say you wanted to act in the movies?”

Karen assured them, with deep sincerity, of her thespian ambitions. “And if only you’ll get me off this island and set me free somewhere sometime…?”

“Sounds like her price is right.”

“Please take me and bring Janice too.”

“One of you’s enough, baby. This is goin’ to work out damn fine.”

Their decision was easy. They would take Karen and leave Cartwright his special prize. They cuffed their new possession with her hands behind her back and her elbows trussed with rope and led her from the cage. It was hardly movie star deference, but Karen’s eyes were shining.

“What do we do with the other one, Rennig?”

“Leave the silly bitch as she is.”

“But she can’t sit down. She has to stand all the time.”

“That’ll teach her not to kick men where it hurts.” Rennig slammed the cage door and padlocked it again. “Good night, sweetheart.”

Janice watched them leave. Karen managed to give her one stricken glance before being led away, still wondering why they didn’t take her friend too. In a remarkably short time the men, their new captive, and the boat became only a dark spot on the sea, and then they were gone.

Janice cursed herself for kicking Rennig. If she had kept her foot on the ground, she might now be in a position to sleep. As it was, she must stand all night and would still be standing when Brigid came in the morning. She was grateful for male tracks in the sand. Without them her story might seem fiction. Once was bad enough, but twice was unbelievable! She twisted around to gaze up at her handcuffed wrists. They were tight and secure and firmly around a bar. There was no hope for her—she would have to stand and stand. She turned back into her pose of martyrdom, hands above her head, and leaned wearily against the cage. The locked door mocked her. What did it matter?

Janice’s disgust with her situation was soon modified by a realization of some profit. Karen was gone, possibly never

to return. She did not dislike Karen, but the girl's persistent lesbianism and her determination to escape made her a difficult companion. She had lost nothing. Probably Cartwright had lost nothing either. If the film crew kept his recent acquisition, he might be as pleased as she herself. This reasoning made her feel better and the night ahead not so long. She settled back against the bars to wail. Brigid would be happy too.

6

NATALIE

NATALIE STEPHENSON could not deny an erotic thrill in the handcuffing of her wrists outside Cartwright's door. The possibility of them not being removed at all added an element of Russian roulette to already over-burdened emotions. Without intending to, she had discovered a greater and greater personal involvement in Cartwright's use of her each week. She was ashamed of the pleasure she derived. After the Karen incident she had not bothered to hunt another girl.

Cartwright had been adamant about Karen. The girl must go to the island despite her change of heart. In the end Natalie had said goodbye to the girl without regret. She had been difficult and nothing between them had jelled. No doubt the island would take care of her. The fact that she would end up on the island herself one day was a secret thought she tried to examine only in her bedroom, quivering between the sheets.

Denver Cartwright's greeting was as warm as ever. Natalie removed her clothes and stood before him. Then she poured the drinks and served him as a slave must serve.

“Is it this time, master?” The query was mischief and was understood as such. She would never be told until the final moment. Kneeling, her drink held daintily in handcuffed hands, she added diffidently, “I’m sorry about that Karen affair. I know I blew it, but I don’t know where.”

“Maybe you wanted to blow it.”

She shrugged and said simply, “Perhaps. I really don’t know. It doesn’t matter; she’s gone.”

“She’s on the island. You’ll be there too, sometime. Maybe by then the girls will have her conditioned for you.”

“I thought you didn’t allow—”

Cartwright laughed. “Unless I imprison them all in separate cages, I can’t stop them. Let ’em enjoy themselves. You know, when the cat’s away—”

“The mice will play.” Natalie finished it for him. “I find it hard to believe I’ll soon be one of the mice. Or are you going to keep me locked up separately?”

“I think I’ll let you wonder about that, sweetheart. The lady in the dungeon—it would make a nice title for a story.”

“What will Karen’s life be on the island? I wouldn’t think she’d be happy with your bevy of lesbians, or should I call them sex-starved girls?”

“The latter. They’ll make her happy. They will also whip

her little ass for as long as it takes." He laughed. "They won't have your finer sensibilities or compassion."

"All right," she conceded with much interest. "They break her down—what then?"

"I'm not sure," Cartwright admitted. "She doesn't matter. If I could sell her to the right people, I would."

"A brothel?"

"Of a kind, yes."

"Is that what you'll do with me eventually?"

"No."

"May I ask what my life on the island is likely to be? I am interested, you know."

"You will be whipped. And you will be loved. You'll be chained in a dungeon, and allowed to roam completely free."

"That's not so different from right here."

"Yes, it is." He handed her his empty glass. "There's no dungeon for you here. You only get whipped when you make an ass of yourself, and I only fuck you once a week."

"You could easily remedy all those things."

His gaze was searching. "You really don't want to go to the island?"

“I won’t back out of our deal.” She held up her handcuffed wrists. “I can’t, can I? You’ve got me already. But I will admit to thinking about Janice. She’s there, and you know what’s between us. On the other hand, I can see she and I fighting for your attention. I wouldn’t want that.”

“We couldn’t have been this frank with each other a few weeks ago,” Cartwright said comfortably. “You’ve thought it out shrewdly enough. I could generate some delightful reactions by playing one of you off against the other, never allowing you to communicate. On the other hand, you’ve just interested me in something. Suppose I provide the whip, the dungeon, and the love right here? You’d have to ask.”

The naked woman kneeling on the rug shifted uneasily. Cartwright’s thrusts were penetrating, piercing her core, leaving her always stripped bare. “I don’t have the courage to ask for those things,” she admitted forlornly. “I wish I was more on top of things. I’m sorry.”

Cartwright was enjoying her. He gazed down, almost with affection, at the kneeling nude, then dropped his bomb. “Suppose I say we’re quits? I call all deals off. You’re free, white, and twenty-one, and little Janice won’t be whipped on your account, not ever…”

“No! Oh, no!” The words were out before she could stop them They left her panting and in disarray. They had told this man far too much. Belatedly, she realized their mes-

sage to herself. “It’s the loneliness. I can’t bear the loneliness. I feel so sorry,” she whispered in apology.

Soberly, he said, “I have a whip for you. I have a cell too. As for love, why not let is happen? I’m going to fuck you this evening, but that’s not love, although sometimes it’s the start of love. Okay?”

“Yes, whatever you want.”

“Why such abject surrender?”

“I don’t know, Denver—I just don’t know! I have to be out of my mind.”

“Or discovering it for the first time, eh?”

“Perhaps… whatever.” Natalie set her glass on the rug and buried her face in her hands. Her voice came in a muffled wail. “Please don’t send me home tonight—please!”

He did not send her home.

Natalie’s next day at the office was delicious. It was like having money in the bank and being able to pay all the bills owed. She whispered, again and again, “I’m going to be whipped, I’m going to be whipped.” In the early afternoon she phoned him.

“Cartwright here.”

His voice thrilled her beyond words. “This is Natalie. Please whip me as much as you want this evening.”

“Very well. You have a date.”

“And, Denver, please keep me prisoner for the whole weekend. Your cell… ?”

“Yes, of course. Anything else?”

“Yes, there’s something else. Please fuck me until I can’t stand it any more.”

“You’re on.” The line went dead.

Natalie stood in a strange ecstasy of fear until one of the stenos interrupted her with questions. As she gave the answers, she wondered what the girl would think if she knew. She was absurdly happy in decision. Nothing made sense, she least of all. But who wanted sense? She turned her attention to her work.

The handcuff ritual remained potent. Cartwright might make any day the day. She cuffed herself and knocked.

“Hello, lonely lady.”

“Hello, master… sir.”

They laughed at the titles she bestowed. Natalie stripped with more finesse than usual, then spread her nakedness more blatantly for his enjoyment.

“Hold that pose, girl. I want a good look at you. You’re positively glowing.”

“It’s my new hairdo, especially for you. Or maybe I’m becoming more wanton. Do you want my legs further apart, or can you see everything?”

“Just as you are. You’re almost too perfect.”

“Then I’m too perfect to whip.”

“Trying to weasel out of it?”

“No. I won’t weasel out of anything with you. But I’m curious. Does seeing me like this generate sex or sadism?”

“Both, and in that order. But we’ll do the sadism first.”

“That’s a hateful word.”

“You used it.”

“Yes, I suppose I did, but in the future may we call it whipping my bottom? It may not be my bottom you whip, but it has a nice sound. I feel safe with a whipped bottom.”

“Okay, I will whip your bottom.”

“And now the usual, master?”

“Yes. I’ve come to enjoy it.” Cartwright chuckled. “I can foresee the future in which we discuss politics before you kiss the whip.”

“You’re going to whip me ritualistically?”

“Yes. A nice touch, don’t you agree?”

“Oh, by all means! Prolong my agony as long as possible.”

“I’m so glad we’re in accord on that, sweetheart. Since you’ll be whipped often I’ll think up a number of refinements. Kissing the rod is a bit passé.”

Natalie performed the now familiar task. Proffering her master’s drink, she knelt in such a way as to allow him a full view of all her charms, nor did she hurry. She was in the grip of the feminine immolation compulsion like a nineteen-year-old. She knew she was beautiful. She knew also that in this knowledge she was happy.

Surveying his thrall reflectively, his voice shadowed his thought. “You’ve come a long way, sweetheart. I never expected it.”

“Huh, neither did I! I can’t pretend to explain myself. I’m ridiculous.”

“Simply a case of deferred womanhood. Look, Natalie, aren’t you nervous about what you’ve let yourself in for?”

“I’m scared silly. It’s lovely.”

“Once I start with you I won’t stop. You’ll get it all.”

“But that’s implicit in the whole thing, isn’t it? That’s why I’m getting these sensations up and down my spine.”

Cartwright laughed. “I think that means you’re ready. Come along and be whipped. I won’t brief you. We’ll let things flow.”

The handcuffed girl saw the suspension bar hanging from the center of the bare room. Her heart was thudding more demandingly than ever before, every particle of her being alive with sensation. On the floor beneath the two-foot bar lay the whip. She was sure it was alive, watching her with unblinking snake’s eyes. Trembling, she picked it up. Cradling the snake by which her back would be wealed, she proffered it in supplication. “Please whip me, master.”

The man’s pulse raced with a fury of desire but that could wait. This woman and what he would do to her would not. In a dazed recognition of good fortune, Cartwright strapped Natalie’s wrists, one at each end of the bar. Then he raised her to stand taut and stretched, her feet still on the floor.

“I won’t suspend you. I want you with some freedom of motion.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“I think you get a charge out of calling me that now that you’ve gotten used to the idea. Feeling bare?”

“Terribly.”

“There won’t be any rules while it’s happening. Make as much sound and motion as you want, or be as stoic and

stand still and keep quiet."

"Thank you." Natalie flexed testingly against the straps. "I won't try and be a little heroine. Please whip me as it pleases you."

The whip was terrible, but Natalie had known it would be. The first stroke upon her bare flesh petrified her in shock. With the second she screamed. When the third curled around her waist she lifted herself in agony by her strapped wrists kicking wildly at space. The fourth cut up between her legs teaching her to keep them closed.

"Feeling it, sweetheart?"

"Intensely. "

"Your reactions are exquisite."

The snake possessed her lovingly. Once, while she was in a blaze of pain, it was held to her lips and she kissed it fervently as though to assuage its venom. But it accepted the tribute of her lips and continued its slow rhythmic snapping at her flesh. The awful pain was her goodbye to something she had cherished, but she did not care about that either.

"Had enough, Natalie?"

She longed to scream her affirmative. But that would not be right with Cartwright. Instead, she whispered, "Only you know that, master."

The snake sought her again. It was a wise and versatile snake, biting her vulva, her breast, or her back impartially as she twisted and writhed from strapped wrists. Her screams varied with the placement of its bites. When the biting stopped, Natalie stood with breasts heaving and a body glazed with sweat.

“You are remarkably beautiful like that.”

It took her longer this time to assemble her simple thank you, but she managed it with grace. She was panting heavily.

“Not going to ask me to stop?”

“No.”

Cartwright set aside the whip and slowly circled the trembling nude. “You did marvelously.”

“You mean… it’s over?”

“Don’t sound so disappointed. Remember, there’s always tomorrow and the day after and so on.”

She was flooded by all the good feelings of relief. She had not owed a debt, but she had paid one and the feeling was gone. Taut and erect, she awaited her disposal.

“That was not the worst whip, Natalie, nor did I wield it as hard as I might.”

“I believe you. I’m grateful.”

Cartwright stood in front of her. He placed a fingertip on each of her nipples. The twin touch, once revolting, now flamed in desire. “I find myself compelled to hurt these. Do you mind?”

“No, I don’t mind. Go ahead.”

Her acquiescence had been without volition, utterly female. Natalie viewed the small clips with curiosity and was femininely glad they were not ugly. She gasped in sudden agony as each was clipped upon a nipple but made no protest. She closed her eyes, absorbing their relentless burn, then opened them again to look down at the invasion of her breasts where the bits of metal possessed themselves of her nipples like angry beetles.

“We’ll have another drink before your imprisonment.”

“That would be nice.”

“You will be much preoccupied with pain, but you will not allow that to affect our conversation. When I free your hands, you will not use them to remove what I have placed upon your breasts.”

“Very well, sir. Please fuck me, sir.”

“You mean, with the clips on you?”

“Yes… oh, please!”

He lowered the bar and unstrapped her wrists. She sank

instantly to the floor, spread herself wide, and held up her arms in invitation. The beetles on her breasts were rising and falling as she breathed heavily. Cartwright took her gratefully. When her orgasm was at its peak, he swiftly plucked the beetles from their feast. The whipped woman had never screamed more satisfyingly.

Natalie knew herself in a state of pure euphoria. Sensation had been piled on top of sensation. It was a most satisfactory feeling. Aware of burning breasts and back, she performed their ritual of the drinks. Kneeling before the man who had whipped her, she gazed at his amused regard and sipped avidly. Pausing she said, wonderingly, "I'm going to prison. It's the strangest feeling."

"I've often thought it must be unreal," Cartwright agreed.

The kneeling girl nodded. "I've thought about it too and wondered why we girls don't fight our imprisonment more."

"I suppose the enormity of what's about to be done doesn't seep in instantly. Are you going to fight me?"

Natalie held up handcuffed hands. "It's already too late."

"I could take them off."

"No, never mind. I suppose there's the answer. You're going to lose, so why bother."

"But about yourself, sweetheart. You'll only see me three

times a day when I bring you food. I'm not going to chat with you through the bars, y'know."

"Sure, I expect to be bored stiff after the first thirty minutes. But you'll take me out to fuck me and whip me."

"I can perform both those services for you right in the cell, and I will. You'll not get out of there."

There was no denying the thrill. Smiling, she held up her hands again. "What about these?"

"You could just as well wear the handcuffs. They look good on you. But once you're caged I'll take 'em off. That way you'll get the full frustration. It must be the devil of a feeling to have all your faculties but be unable to open that locked door. You'd best make yourself another drink so you can step inside with head high and shining eyes."

Busily, from the bar, Natalie asked, "Has it occurred to you how terribly lucky we are?"

"I think of it daily," he agreed soberly. "Money makes miracles."

"May I fix this drink to make me tipsy, master?"

"Why not! You'll still be locked up when it wears off."

She giggled. "And you… sir?"

"Just the normal dose, thanks. All I want is to see you kneel and present it. Could just as well use an empty glass if it

didn't make it easier for you."

"I haven't dropped one yet. That first time I was sure I was going to spill it on you! How terribly would you have punished me?"

"The question is academic. I suspect it's prompted by pure eroticism. How's your courage now?"

She held up her drink. "One third of a glass to consummation."

"Well, hurry it up. I have a tremendous urge to see you behind bars."

"Aren't you going to fuck me again first?"

"Does a judge perform that service for a condemned woman? Come along."

Natalie rose, eager but frightened. She downed the last of her stiff potion and wailed, "It hasn't worked yet! I'm still sober."

"It probably won't. You're all hyped up. And now if you'll kindly walk through this door?"

In handcuffed dignity she obeyed and then moved on down an unfamiliar passage. At the end she gasped. "Why, it's real! Just like in the movies!"

"It's very real. They all look much alike."

“And it’s got a little window way up there for some light!”

“Prudently barred, of course.”

“And a bench for me to lay on, and the plumbing.”

“A girl could spend her life in here without any need to leave.”

Again the shiver. What was about to be done to her was crazy. She should flee, but it was far too late for that. Natalie surveyed the three concrete walls and the bars with mixed feelings. She saw Cartwright pull open the heavy metal door.

“Your cell, madam.”

She walked inside. If she had been wearing clothes, it might have been called a flounce. The door closed on her with a most satisfying clang and snap of bolts. She turned.

“Your hands, please.”

“Oh, yes.” She pushed them both between two bars for his convenience. When she drew them back they were minus metal. She was gloriously free.

“Enjoy.”

Natalie stood and gazed at where Cartwright had been. There was no one there. She was alone. She stretched luxuriously, then went and tried the door. Her utmost strength failed to make it move. Assured of imprisonment, she

scanned her prison.

The small high window provided only a bare sufficiency of light. The plumbing was austere and equally minimal. She blushed at its absence of privacy. The bench was all right to sit on but promised a hard night. Natalie was in a place of punishment. That it also confined her seemed incidental. Cautiously, she lowered herself to sit on the hard wood.

The hard bench was unkind. The captive did not sit on it long before rising and ruefully massaging her wealed bottom. Natalie rubbed it vigorously and with pleasure. She also nursed her whipped sex. An erotic wish drove her to regret that Cartwright had not impaled her while the hurt was fresh.

Natalie was an intelligent woman. It pleased her to savor to its fullest this situation which fate had thrust her into. Life was short and these were sensations to remember. She already felt the malignant influence of the little cell. There was nothing benevolent about its hard austerity, no trace or feeling of a big sister doing this for her own good. To be locked inside a place like this was a purely punitive thing to endure. It was a punishment as well as a confinement. Morbidly, she considered her feelings if she had no hope of release, if her sentence made certain she would sit in this cell as the years rolled by, looking through the bars her most vivid experience. She shuddered and caught sight of panic and hysteria. She must close her mind to such images. She must now allow an interesting and hopefully

erotic experience to be her introduction to insanity.

It was terribly real. She had only been locked up for a little while but was already thinking with a prisoner's mentality. Her sentence lasted only until Monday morning, but Monday morning seemed eons away. And then? The question was inevitable. Suppose Cartwright did not free her then! She was totally in his power, and he could do with her as he liked. Their contract called for her eventual enslavement. Was that really so different from what was happening now in the cell? She knew it was. Within an hour of being locked inside, Natalie Stephenson desperately wanted out!

She should have insisted on a clock. Not knowing the time made waiting doubly difficult. All she could do was wait and wait. Her whole existence now was dependent on someone else—the male. Whether Cartwright fed, fucked, or whipped her, his coming was vital to her survival. She had little hope of being fucked without also being whipped. Cartwright would inflict both to strike a balance. She hoped he would not feed her at the same time. She was already thinking of herself being fed in the same way as animals in a zoo.

When, after what seemed like several centuries, Cartwright finally came, Natalie could not hide her joy. He cocked an amused eyebrow as he observed her obvious happiness in seeing him.

“I get the impression you’re pleased to see me, dear lady.”

“Oh, Denver, yes! Oh, yes, yes, yes!”

“That bad?”

She gazed piteously through the bars. She was choking with things to say, but they all emerged at once. “Denver, you can’t understand. Being imprisoned in this cell is pure bloody hell.”

“What’s wrong with it?” He looked around as though searching for scorpions or rats. “You’ve only been in there for three hours.”

“You mean three centuries! Denver, I can’t stand this.”

“Oh, come now! It’s just claustrophobia. Is that your trouble?”

“No, it’s not! It’s just that—that it’s simply unbearable. I can’t possibly go on like this, locked in here all alone.”

“A touch of self-pity, sweetheart: Cheer yourself up by thinking what it would be like if you were in here for twenty years.”

“Don’t say such things! Aren’t you going to open the door and come in with me?”

“Hadn’t thought of it. Actually, there’s no need.”

Natalie stared at him aghast. Her response surged from her

breathlessly. “But you must, you must! I need you! Fuck me or whip me—do anything you want but come inside. Oh, please!”

Cartwright eyed her shrewdly, then unlocked the door and took her in his arms. He patted her head gently as she sobbed against his shoulder. “It’s the first shock,” he said kindly. “Maybe it wouldn’t have hit you so hard if you were nineteen. It’s a long journey from that office of yours to this cell. Takes a bit of adjusting.”

She clung to his strong maleness as though drowning in her own tears. Her plea came brokenly. “Denver, I want out. Please let me out of here.”

He did not answer. His growing silence spoke a louder negative than his lips could have done. Her voice came desperately. “Let me out. Oh, Denver, you must!”

“I’ll let you out on Monday morning.” His hand continued its soft caress of her hair. “Hush now. Be a good girl.”

Some of his strength seeped into the sobbing girl. His presence and concern was immensely reassuring. The prospect of him locking the door on her again seemed slightly less horrific. She sniffed and said, “I can’t bear being alone. People go mad being locked up alone.”

“You won’t go mad. Here, I’m going to handcuff you again.”

Apathetically, she backed away and held out her hands. When they were locked together, she asked, “Does this

mean you're taking me outside?"

"No. It means I'm leaving you in here. But the handcuffs will be company for you. You're used to wearing them when you're with me. You can play with 'em. You'll find it helps."

Natalie thought that it was absurd. But it did not matter. In the cell she could be tightly bound and all it would mean would be some extra discomfort.

"Why did you come?" she asked.

"Just a bit uneasy about you. Good thing I did. Lunch is still an hour away."

"I don't want any lunch."

"Refusing to eat is a punishable offense in prison."

"Then punish me."

Cartwright laughed at her self-martyrdom. "Go and sit on the bench."

She reluctantly obeyed. She watched him leave and close the door on her, heard its locks thud home, then saw him wave and go away. She sighed, but her desolation was not as acute as it had been. If he was coming back to feed her in an hour, she could try again. She supposed an hour might be possible to bear. She looked down at the handcuffs on her wrists. She raised them to her lips and kissed

them lingeringly and lovingly. She did not analyze her act. She supposed it was simply that the metal bands upon her wrists were a link with someone else, another human. She didn't feel quite so alone.

Natalie spent her hour devising expedients by which she could prey upon Cartwright's conscience or goodwill to get herself out of the cell. In humorless honesty she recognized she was locked in because of bravado, and she had made the contract with him. None of that helped, though. She desperately wanted out. But she could not think of any rationale which would touch her jailer's heart. Cartwright was shrewd and could not be easily deluded. She was still searching for ideas when he returned.

"You made it okay, eh?"

"I'm still locked in here if that means anything."

"Well, you're an hour closer to Monday morning. Cheer up."

"Denver, this is wasting a little chunk of my life, and there's all the other weekends. Please let me out."

Cartwright put the tray beside her on the bench. He closed the cell door and leaned against its bars. "Look, sweetheart," he said seriously. "We have to stop these importunities of yours. I won't have you pleading every time I show up. What do you say to a penalty?"

"Why ask me? I'm only a prisoner."

“Suppose I whip you every time you beef?”

“Yes, of course. It’s the obvious thing. Do you want to whip me now?”

Cartwright gestured in disgust. “It’s evidently too damn obvious. I think you want it. No, there has to be something else. The most obvious thing is your dislike for the cell. The best deterrent it to keep you in here extra time. I’ll phone your office and make your excuses.”

“No!” Natalie sprang erect, facing him, cuffed hands clenched into small fists. “No! No! No!”

“Looks like that might be the answer then, eh?”

“You won’t do it yet, not just the way I’ve been acting. Please!”

Cartwright cocked a quizzical eye. “I should but I won’t. Think you can handle it now?”

“I’ll try. I expect I’m just being silly.”

“We’re both to blame. It’s not your thing. But we’re into it so we may as well see it through.”

“Why use the plural?” Natalie asked bitterly. “It’s me who’s locked in here.”

“You little idiot.” He laughed at her wan features. “Don’t you realize I’d sooner have you outside with me to talk to? I’m boring myself stiff with a lot of paperwork to fill in the

time."

The prisoner was slightly cheered. She turned her attention to the tray but soon pushed it aside and drank the coffee. "I don't suppose prisoners are allowed brandy?" she inquired wistfully.

"No, they're not."

When Cartwright picked up the discarded tray, she pleaded hastily. "Please don't go yet!"

"Sorry, this is not visiting day."

"Fuck me then—please?"

"That's a privilege. You haven't earned it yet."

"How the hell can I earn it in here?"

"By exemplary behavior. You can start when I bring dinner."

"I don't want you to go. Please stay. Whip me or something as an excuse."

"You've been whipped once today, that's enough."

"No, it isn't! Whip me again. I want you to."

"That's what you want, sweetheart?"

"Are you going to whip me?"

“I’m giving that some thought. You don’t really want to be whipped, do you, sweetheart?”

Cartwright was right. The naked girl against the wall cursed her eagerness to invite pain. When she got it, she could not bear its awfulness. But Cartwright had set her adrift on an uncharted ocean of sensations. She had lost control. Fresh horizons beckoned alluringly, but she knew not how to set a course. In the meantime she hurt.

“No, I suppose I don’t want to be whipped,” she admitted gaspingly. “This is terribly uncomfortable.”

“You’re enjoying my company as a reward.”

“Well, yes, but—”

“You’d like me to leave?”

“No!”

She was ashamed of how explosive she had made her negation. It told him everything. Her nakedness was multiplied. Natalie wondered if she would do or say anything right again.

“Let’s have some worthwhile conversation,” her master said brightly. “What would you like to talk about?”

“How on earth can I make small talk when I’m hurting and hung up like this? The only thing I want to talk about is getting out of this… oops!”

“I’ll forget you said that, sweetheart. You really are trying.” Cartwright ostentatiously nibbled a sandwich. “I’m wondering if during your next few hours of boredom it might help to leave you just as you are. I mean, give you something else to think about.”

“No!”

Cartwright chuckled. “That no of yours really packs a punch.”

“I hoped it would. I don’t want to stand like this for hours and hours. Please, Denver?”

“You make a delicious supplicant. Do that one over.”

“Please, Denver.”

“Perfect. Deserves a reward.” Cartwright rose and plucked her from the hook with frightening ease. He set her on her feet and handed her the last sandwich. “Here, you eat this one.”

Natalie obeyed. In between bites she rubbed her wrists in handcuffed frustration.

“Come here, let me do it.”

The girl went to her master. She could have purred with pleasure as he pushed back the metal cuffs and massaged where they had bitten.

“Learning any lessons from all this?” Cartwright asked

sardonically.

“Yes, I suppose so.”

“How old are you?”

“Thirty-two. Why?”

“That fool job of yours. People speak of you as though you’re middle-aged. You’re really just a pullet. What I’m doing to you knocks years off. With that body you could pass for twenty-four.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“What’s the thanks for?”

“Because I’m female. And I suppose for taking me off that hook. I wasn’t enjoying it.”

“Think you can make it now, sweetheart?”

“I’ll try. I’ve been silly, I know I have.”

Cartwright kissed her, patted her tender bottom, and went away. She stretched out her nudity upon the hard bench and compelled her mind to think of pleasant things. Monday would come.

7

No Escape

KAREN COPELAND had been a girl of strong convictions. Her sojourn with Janice in the cage had been a revelation. Now, in her second kidnapping, it seemed probable that Athos Films would further liberalize her attitudes.

Karen shrugged off her appalling circumstances of the moment as being only a part of what to expect in films. She was, in fact, thrilled by her prospects. After all, when her work for her captors was done, they would surely release her—wouldn't they?

"It isn't exactly a bed of roses, kiddo. We only want you for the rough stuff. The other little dame looked after the feature with Gloria Humbolt, but on this trip we're doing a sex and sadism special that will be lucky to get itself a rating," Amos Blanding said. "The way things are, we don't have much choice but to keep you prisoner."

Karen was standing naked before him, still handcuffed as Rennig had fastened her. "I know you kept Janice a prisoner, but you don't have to bother with me," she assured him. "I can't tell you how grateful I am that you've kidnapped me. You don't need to keep me handcuffed."

“They all say that, honey.”

“But I mean it. I’m thrilled to bits. I’ll do whatever you want of me, and then you can let me go.”

“Hmmmm…”

The sound was non-committal, but she was sure he meant well. She continued to glow. Freedom could only be a matter of a week or a month. She was so lucky. Brightly, she promised, “I’ll work real hard at whatever you want me to do. I’m so grateful for a chance in movies and to be rescued from that island.”

“You ain’t going to like some of it, baby. I just bet you ain’t.”

“I’ll take the rough with the smooth,” she assured him. “You will let me go at the end of it, though, won’t you?”

“Oh, sure.”

“That’s wonderful! Can I have these cuffs unlocked now?”

“No, you can’t, and you’ll spend tonight in the brig. Get you in the mood.”

“That’s sort of a prison place, isn’t it? Janice told me about it. Will I be put in irons?”

“You sure will, honey.”

“You have no idea how that sounds: ‘in irons’! Oh, wow!”

Blanding viewed his new recruit anxiously. “You sure

you're feeling okay, honey?"

"Oh, because I'm so pleased about being put in irons? I've been trying to tell you—I'm different from that other girl. She hated the whole idea, but I know I'm going to love it. Now, about these handcuffs…?"

"If you're going to love this whole thing, babe, you'll love them handcuffs. How about you shut up?"

"Oh…! Well, I hadn't looked at it that way. I expect you're right. I won't mention them again."

"I'm always right, kiddo, and you'd better believe it."

After that it had been the brig and the irons. Karen had not struggled or complained. She remained passive while Daisy unlocked the handcuffs and loaded her with iron. Karen was grateful for something feminine in an all-male crew.

"I'm terribly excited."

"I can see you are. Don't get carried away." Daisy clicked shut a shackle and went on to the next. "You better remember on this ship we really get used."

"I'm expecting that. Here, do you want my wrist?"

"You ever been fucked? I mean, you're not a virgin?"

"Oh, I'm expecting that. Yes, I've had that done to me. I don't like it, but I know it's part of being in the movies."

“Hmmmm.”

“I’m so glad it’s a girl who looks after me,” Karen told Daisy. “You will, won’t you?”

“Oh, sure—most of the time—unless you get violent. Then the men will handle you. Look, you’re properly ironed now and I have to run.”

Obviously, Daisy did not want to be questioned. Karen wondered why. But in the excitement of examining her chains she soon forgot.

Morning brought a whole new deal.

“We have to make shore. There’s only your stateroom we can use here now. It will do for the kidnap scene and the rape.” Rennig was preoccupied with plans.

“Well, get on with it then.” Blanding was expansive. “But, damn it, surely we can get some other footage out of this ship! It’s costing enough to rent.”

Karen, naked, hands cuffed again behind her back, listened breathlessly. She was in. Athos Films might not be quite the same as Paramount or MGM, but it had cameras and a makeup girl. Both had been used on her before breakfast, catching her sleepy in her chains.

They got on with it instantly. Daisy worked on her face and hair. Men appeared. Rennig’s instructions were concise.

“You’ve been grabbed, honey. We do the car shots ashore. Right now they drag you into this bedroom. Your hands are just right the way they are. Daisy, put something on her for the boys to tear off. You fight like crazy. You know you’re going to be raped and you don’t want it. Scream, kick, go berserk, kick ’em in the nuts.”

“But I really don’t want to be raped.”

No one heard. She was roughly seized by male hands and dragged to the room of her dishonor. Karen found herself in the grip of her old abhorrence of carnal contact. A gang rape was not what she had expected. She put up a battle that met with executive approval, but ended up with her hands released, then cuffed again to the bedrail above her head. After that, the use of her body became no problem to the men.

“Even when they’re inside you there’s no need to stop kicking,” Rennig said. “Number one camera, get the close-ups of Henry’s dong as it thrusts into her—attaboy!”

The men were naked now. Henry was ready and immense. Realizing herself its prey, Karen stared at its dimensions in stark terror. She tugged at chained hands. Her vocal protests were drowned in ribaldry.

“Best not give her her hands, but she can look after two of us the way she is.”

Karen’s efforts to kick had lapsed. She was much preoccu-

pied with an immensity of penetration. It had no sooner fully impaled her than another monster was offered for her attention by a man astride her breasts. He dragged her head up by her ears until, by some volition she could not control, it was well within her mouth. The instructions were explicit, leaving her in no doubt what she must do. She had no choice but to obey. When one man had exhausted himself within her, another took his place. Her ravishment was continuous, taking no account of her own frictioned orgasms. It went on and on.

Athos Films had a sideline in pornography, and Karen Copeland was their newest star.

“The difference shows. She’s a damn-sight better than any girl we pay,” Blanding said complacently.

Rennig agreed. “The cameras pick it up—all her fear, her resistance. She doesn’t have to act about being screwed; the boys do that for her. If we tie her right, we can make her a three-way girl.”

“This isn’t what I bargained for,” Karen said, standing before the desk. She was devastated by what had been done to her. “You have no right to do this to any girl. It’s rape. You can go to prison!”

“That explains your handcuffs, honey. Didn’t want to tell you too soon.”

“But you didn’t do this to Janice!”

“Went back for her, didn’t we? Got you instead. Luck of the draw, kid. Some girls would pay a lot to get what you’re getting. Henry’s famous all around the world.”

“But to be kidnapped, and then this… !”

“Not kidnapped, sweetheart—just sort of grabbed you. And you didn’t get raped—you just had a good time with the boys.”

“I feel foul—horrible. Put me ashore, please?”

Rennig gagged her. Karen could not stop him. She knew utter helplessness, spilling tears of frustration, her mouth wadded full, her lips compressed. Straps back across her cheeks were bitterly tight.

“We won’t hit port until sometime tomorrow,” Rennig said. “I suppose we could figure out another sequence or two on the ship.”

“It would help with the costs. Think up something.”

“Could have Daisy do a scene with her. She has the body.”

“And she’s experienced.” Blanding laughed. “Is she ever! How about having the two of ’em out on the plank doing a sixty-nine before they have to jump to a watery grave?”

“Could get some of the same effect by having one hung by her hands and the other by her feet. Tie their tummies together tight.”

“Yeah, that’s a good one. Do it. Better have Daisy right side up; she’s on staff.”

“Good. To fill up Karen’s time I suggest we tie her down spread-eagle over a hatch cover. Make her available to anybody. I can have a camera there full-time to pick up any worthwhile action.”

“What’ve we got to lose? That about looks after our little lady until we hit port. Get her going.”

Karen aimed a kick, but Rennig saw it coming. He grasped her ankle in mid-air and jovially inquired, “What are you going to do now, kiddo?”

She could do nothing, not even voice her anger. She was hustled to the dangling rope. When Daisy was summoned the makeup girl was only slightly petulant over her role. Her only response was a brief “Aw, shit!” The men had been right; Daisy had a body. Nude, she allowed herself to be suspended by her hands. Her advice to Karen was curt: “Don’t fight ’em, kid. Roll with the punches.”

Suspending Karen upside down was no big deal either. It happened quickly. After the two naked girls had been raised and lowered to position them to perfection the gag was taken from Karen’s mouth.

The upside down girl could not instantly adjust. As her middle was roped and cinched hard against Daisy’s navel, she became demandingly aware of her companion’s pubic

hair, then shockingly conscious of her own as her lower lips were spread wide and suddenly invaded by Daisy's tongue. A jocular hand reached between Daisy's legs and grasped suspended hair to drag it forward and up into a pungent crotch.

"Get with it, kid."

Karen moaned and obeyed. Her need to bring Daisy to orgasm was urgent. Only by so doing could she be released. Karen worked frantically at a task she had sworn never to perform. The cameras whirred happily.

It was a long time before Rennig was satisfied. Orgasms came and shuddered themselves into oblivion until Daisy's vocal complaints and Karen's moans finally drew attention.

"Let 'em down." Rennig sounded bored. "We'll get a lime good stuff out of it. God, Daisy, you sure do bitch."

Daisy shrugged. Her hands untied, she slipped back into her clothes without concern. It had been only a minor incident in her day. She looked down at Karen, still sprawled on the deck as she had been lowered, ropes trailing from her ankles, her wrists still handcuffed behind her back. "Thanks, kid. You did a good job on me… all things considered."

Enviously, the prisoner of Athos Films watched the makeup girl depart. How wonderful it must feel to be free! She no longer believed in freedom. Even if Athos eventually

granted it, she would be soiled beyond redemption. A key fumbling at her handcuffs made her aware of what came next.

It was no use struggling. There was a willing male for each hand and each foot. The hands stretched her wide and cruelly open. Then they roped her wrists and ankles. The hatch cover made a convenient altar on which to bind a naked girl.

“We’ve got her taut as a bowstring.”

“Use her that way for awhile. She goes back in the brig tonight anyway. A good stretch won’t hurt her.”

They used her in more ways than she would have dreamed possible. The studs were more ambitious than Rennig had contemplated. Karen was untied and tied again. It was a fun thing, this possession of a girl whose complaints did not matter. Never had a girl been bound and impaled in so many postures or used her mouth in a more avid vision of release.

But she could not deny her own intense physical pleasure in some of what was being done to her. Her flesh was female.

There comes a limit beyond which even professional studs must tire. Karen’s ravishers finally reached it and allowed her to rest.

“Damn it, she looks sweet enough to have another go at.”

“Aw, c’mon, Henry, what we all need is a drink.”

“Why not one for her? She’s earned it.”

“How can we pour it in with her tied down that way?”

Strangely enough, it was Amos Blanding who did for his captive girl what others had failed to do. He arrived with a tall cool drink. “You gotta feel sorry for them guys honey,” he said as he raised Karen’s head and held the drink to her lips. “All they see of a girl is her two holes, a couple of tits, and a mouth. They miss all the rest. There’s times I figure they miss out on the best of you gals, but I guess that’s because I’m not as young as I was.”

She drank gratefully, then coughed as the fiery stuff burned its way down.

“Should have told you, kid. I made it strong. Figured you’d need it.”

“Please untie me.”

“Now, now—you know better than that, sweetheart.”

“But there’s no need to keep me tied or chained or anything. I can’t escape from this ship!”

“You might do something foolish, girlie, and like I said having you prisoner all the time keeps you in the right frame of mind so the camera will pick it up. You’d be surprised at what cameras can see.”

“Well, yes, but this is terribly uncomfortable.”

“Don’t look that bad to me, honey.”

“I never bargained for all this sex stuff. It’s beastly.”

“Fact of life, baby. You’ll get to like it.”

She saw the chasm. But it was one she had to cross. Her voice trembled. “You are going to let me go… after?”

“Did I say that?” Blanding professed to think back. “Hell, sweetheart, by the time we’ve finished this picture you wouldn’t leave us if someone paid you to.”

“I want my freedom. I want it terribly. Please give it back to me.”

“There, there.” Amos patted her affectionately and pinched her nipples. “I know just how you feel, and that’s exactly the reason we have to keep you tied up during the days and in the brig at night.”

Blanding ambled away, anxious to escape her questions. But he had brought her a drink. It was her only comfort. She stirred restlessly against her bonds, but was too dispirited to fight their clutch. Everyone on the ship had either seen or used her orifices. What else had she to lose? If someone changed her tie, it might be for the worse.

Daisy sat beside her languidly. “Cheesed off, I bet?”

“I’m frightened. They aren’t going to let me go, are they?”

“Figure it out for yourself, kid. They can’t afford to have you running loose and blabbing all over about Athos Films.”

Karen had already reached the same conclusion. “That’s why they returned that other girl to the island then, instead of letting her go.”

“That’s right, honey. You’re stuck with each other.”

“That means years and years of being fucked?”

“Not all that long.” Daisy laughed at her dolor. “You put a few pounds on your hips and you’re out. But we’ll make sure you don’t overeat.”

“But all this horrible sexual stuff—is that all there is?”

“It’s a porno flick. But they’re going to get a bit of heavy drama into it as well. There’s a scene where you get flogged until you break down and say you’ll spread yourself out for the grand duke. The script spreads your whipping out for a long time. Then, when you surrender and they untie you, there’s a real heart throb as you shyly ask his preference and posture yourself to please. They probably won’t have to use glycerin for your tears.”

“I don’t see why you can’t do it and get paid.”

“Look in a mirror when you can, sweetheart. You’ve got twice my looks, and don’t ever forget it, you’re no charge. In porno they pinch every penny.”

Karen surveyed her future. She didn't have one. The best she could hope for now was to be returned to Cartwright's island. Yesterday she would have loathed the thought. She did not now. The island and Janice Latimer had taken on an unexpected allure. Listlessly, she asked, "Is it you who fastens me in the brig tonight?"

"If you're thinking of making a fuss, I'll get the men to do it."

"No, I won't make a fuss. I'll do whatever you tell me to do. But do you really have to put all those irons on me?"

"Them's the orders, kid. Every last pound. Amos is quite likely to drop in and gloat over you. If he finds anything missing, it's my ass that will pay."

Left alone, the prisoner slept. She had been roughly used, and the hatch cover was more comfortable than the brig. Passersby paused to admire her pubic hair. It was a peaceful time before the irons.

"I want her legs pulled well down on each side of that horse," Amos Blanding instructed. "Her belly's well cinched. Now, if you draw her ankles back and strap 'em to the same band… Her hands are easy. Pull 'em back and handcuff 'em under his neck. That stretches her so everything shows."

Karen could well agree. She was painfully stretched. It was

also her first time on a horse. She was back to back with the animal. She did not care if she never saw a horse again. Her most immediate concern was the outrageous exposure of her crotch. Her sex was atrociously open to anyone looking over the horse's rump. She could not move. But the thing to which she was cinched would provide motion enough for both. Again, Amos's exhortations impinged.

"When the girl's tight and safe, someone give that horse a crack on his rump so he absolutely leaps away with her."

"A bareback ride," a male voice quipped.

"So, okay, she's bareback—bare-assed too. You, Bert, take off after her with that lariat. Make a good chase and give the jeeps every chance for close-ups."

Karen gasped and continued to gasp. She was bound to thirteen hundred pounds of muscle and sinew which the slap across its rear had converted into an alarmed projectile. The thunder of its hooves was dramatic. Off to each side were the jeeps, cameras already busy with her predicament. One edged back to secure the rear elevation by which her shame was exposed. She had no doubt the sequence was going well for everyone but herself. Karen was scared.

The rider with his rope slowly fell rearward as per the script. The jeeps closed in for close-ups, hungrily zooming in on chafed wrists and taut breasts. Karen already knew what lay ahead. It was the Indian band, waiting content-

edly for female flesh to rape. They had it good.

Her horse was tired and well satisfied to be halted by redskin hands. The savage faces examined their prize with approval. Athos had gone all out on paint and feathers and they were hard to recognize. Caustically, the bound girl supposed she might tell them by their genitals.

It was a gala day for Athos Films. Inspired, Rennig had an Indian buck mount Karen's steed before she was untied and raped on its back. His friends held the animal still while the strange copulation was consummated. A man less well endowed might have been at some disadvantage, but not this stud! The unwilling equestrian was bitterly glad she was too tightly bound to give him help.

After that first impalement she was freed and became common property. They laughingly contrived to lift her forward over the horse's head so as to leave the handcuffs on her wrists intact behind her back. Then she was splayed, bent, twisted, and bowed in such ways as to give the erect organs and the greedy lens every benefit. Hands were tied behind her back so she could not fight. Mostly she saw little other than the bone-like objects she was forced to take within her mouth.

When that sport was done, Karen was relieved of handcuffs, and her wrists and elbows were bound tight with rawhide—so tight that her forearms met as one. Her neck was noosed and she was led in triumph to her unknown

fate. The tether from her neck to the rider's hand was wickedly real. Everything was wickedly real. No one paid her the slightest attention.

The teepees and the stake were already prepared. Amos Blanding was in his glory. Like all the rest, the stake seemed dauntingly authentic.

"Tie her to it real pretty, boys." Amos considered his captive assessingly. "I like the way you got her now. Shame to lose the way her tits stick out. Tell you what—back her up and tie her arms to the stake, then sort of tether her neck and her ankles. We want her to writhe a bit when we get to the torture scene."

"My elbows are being tortured now!"

Karen's outburst was ignored as though in bad taste. Rope circled beneath her arms and dragged her back against the post. She was well secured. Rawhide bit even at her neck. They loosely hobbled her ankles, no doubt wanting her to kick.

"You're going to be burned after you've been tortured, so look as scared as you like. A few screams wouldn't hurt," Amos enthused. "Sorry about the torture. We'll tone it down; as much as the cameras will stand for. Don't worry about being burned. We can get you out of that by using smoke."

The Indians danced around and around. Playfully, they

lashed her with willow switches that hurt her horribly and sought her secret places. The splinters in her breasts were simulated. The fun went on and on until she was thankful for the billowing smoke.

“Look, Karen, we have to escape. I bet your mind’s full of it now that we’re on land, even if you don’t know where.” Daisy’s voice was patient. “So that’s why I’ve got to put these back on.” She held out the handcuffs. “Turn around.”

Karen obeyed. It was useless to fight. Passively, she put her hands behind her back and felt the familiar bite of metal.

“Come on, I’ll give you a bath. You need one.”

It was pleasant to be tended to. If they wanted her handcuffed, they could damn well do the work.

“Am I going to be put in irons tonight?” she asked listlessly. “We’re not on the ship.”

“No, we’re not, but that makes it all the more important to hold on to you. I think you have to wear the whole works.”

“Daisy, please help me escape.”

“No way, baby. Amos would have me flogged.”

“But aren’t you an employee?”

“Makes no difference, he’d still do it.”

“Is there one of the men who’d help? He could have me,

use me, do what he wants with me."

"He's doing that and getting paid for it already."

"It's hopeless, isn't it? Everyone wants me as a prisoner. I've never felt so helpless."

"Well, that's the way you are, pet, and it's best that you realize it. Being fucked isn't all that bad, but I do have to admit the guy who hatched out the script thought up some dillies. Now, tomorrow, for instance…"

It appeared she was the rebel daughter of a noble house, captured and brought before her judges. Then she was stripped, her wrists crossed behind her back and thus bound. She was condemned, but it so happened she held a secret she must disclose or face torture. Since she knew no secret it was easy to play the role. Her tied wrists were looped by rope and drawn high up behind her back.

"You must tell us, child. It is useless to resist."

Karen was sure it was. She would have told them anything but had nothing to tell. Instead, she said, "I hope you know this hurts."

"She is obdurate. Up one more inch."

The extra inch made it worse. Blanding's assurance from the rear did nothing to help. "She can stand complete suspension, just so long as you do it to her gradually. When her feet are off the ground, you have to be careful she

doesn't get jerked to dislocate her shoulders."

When she was raised again she cried out in distress. "Please, please, don't do this to me!"

"That's just right, honey, you're doing fine."

She was not doing fine. She was in agony, and there was only more agony ahead. When her feet left the floor, she could not believe it was true. She knew herself hideously contorted. The pain was exquisite, and she heard Blanding's voice from a great distance. "Wonderful, wonderful!"

She sought the shadows but they would not come.

8

Pirate's Prize

FOR JANICE LATIMER the night was long. Through the bars of her cage she viewed the beauty of the starlit beach, but wished only that she was free. For an impromptu effort, Rennig's revenge was remarkably effective. She could not escape the handcuffs, and as long as they held her she must stand. Whenever she slipped into slumber her knees buckled and her wrists cried out in pain. She watched the sun slowly defeat the stars and the day possess her cage. But Brigid was a tardy riser. Still she had to stand. When the housekeeper finally appeared, her reaction was inevitable.

"Where's that little bitch? And what the hell are you standing there like that for?"

Brigid listened to her story with an initial disgust, rapidly modified with silver linings. Her summation was brief. "If our master doesn't wail both our behinds, this could be good news."

They shared laughter. "But I'll have to radio him the news. He has to do something about the girl. It's not safe to have her running free and babbling about this island and us.

Once he has a girl here safe he has to keep her. Running loose back home she'd be a threat."

"I wouldn't," Janice said, examining her enslavement.

"You wouldn't. Patsy wouldn't."

Brigid chuckled. "When did you pass over the line, sweetheart? I bet you don't even know."

The truth was startling. Janice could name no day on which Cartwright and his island had come to possess her loyalty, but it had happened. She had a mental vision of herself laying a charge with the police. It was too absurd, something to laugh at. It must have happened the same way with Brigid and Patsy. "You're right," she admitted slowly. "None of us would break this up. Karen might but not us. Why do you keep me handcuffed, then?"

"The master wants you handcuffed. And anyway, you know you love it."

Janice grimaced at one more truth. "So, okay, I adore them, but not the way I'm wearing them right now."

"I'm tempted to keep you that way all the time. You look delectable."

"I'll change places. You'd look delectable too. This is a flattering pose for girls. But, gee, I'd like to sit down." Janice's eyes were sparkling with mischief. "Seems to me you wanted to be locked in here not long ago."

“A piece of feminine nonsense. I’ve gotten over it. Now we have this Karen affair to worry about. The master doesn’t have the feeling for her he has for you.”

“Brigid, if there is any guilt knocking around about the damn girl and someone has to be whipped for it, let’s share the whole thing.”

“Hmmmm, you really are a sweetheart. Want your hands down?”

“Brigid, I’m not posing for a statue, y’know.”

The relief was almost worth the travail. The prisoner stretched joyously before turning and offering her hands again. Brigid cuffed the passive wrists in a thoughtful mood. “Back to normal, honey. Let’s have breakfast.” She made herself comfortable beside the bars and opened her basket.. “I’m joining you today. Here’s the big thermos.”

“Aren’t you going to let me out?”

“Hadn’t thought of it. Why would I?”

“Well, for one thing, I want to go behind a bush.”

Brigid sighed and produced the padlock key. “The usual penalties if you play the fool. Hurry back.”

How strange and wonderful it all was. This island of girls beneath the shadow of their master. The punishments that only sometimes happened but were always waiting. The

handcuffs, the cage, and way off in the past a memory of Natalie. And the future…? The future was Denver Cartwright.

When they had drunk the last of the coffee, there came a vacuum of wry amusement. It lasted long enough for them to tell each other a message with their eyes. Brigid broke it. “Get back in there, chicken.”

“Going to lock me in the cage again?”

“Right.”

Janice looked her wistful best. “I’d sooner go home with you.”

“No, you wouldn’t. Get your little ass in there.”

Looking back through the bars and the locked door, Janice stuck out her tongue in derision. “Wherever you put me I’ll simply go to sleep. I’m so tired.”

Before she turned the bend, the housekeeper paused and waved. The captive in the cage motioned with joined hands, then sank gratefully to the warm sand. The dreams came instantly.

They stood in the sun on the hot beach, a line of naked girls. At the foot of each of them lay the small pile of clothing they had been forced to shed before their hands and

arms had been bound behind their back. The prospective purchaser was complaining of it now.

“’Tis an old trick to make their tits stick out. Tied hands is enough.”

“Not for this lot. There’s life in these girls. Best I’ve had for some time. You’re lucky to get first chance.”

Janice stood and cringed in unfamiliar nakedness before the leering eyes of the men. She had been stripped immediately after capture so that her worth could be assessed. But, after the pawing and the crudities, her clothes had been contemptuously flung back. She had hated dressing in front of their amused attention as much as she had hated to taken them off to make herself bare. Then had come the irons in the ship’s hold, and now this. Her elbows were on fire from the tight rope and her neck was chafed by the noose of hemp from which a tether trailed down her back across the crease of her bottom. But she was prepared to be obedient. She had seen a girl flogged.

The men busy around them on the beach were a rough and nondescript collection of pirates. The two principals now debating the disposition of the female cargo were not much better. The girls had been told bluntly that they had best sell themselves. Those who failed to attract a buyer became the common property of the crew and would be used until they could be used no more. The rest were merchandise whose only hazard was a whipping if they made a

nuisance of themselves. The word “nuisance” covered a wide range of things, leaving them only the option of obedience.

Janice Latimer hated it all bitterly. But she stood as she had been told, hoping to please and thus be bought. She knew herself the most beautiful female in the line, but the bargaining was shrewd.

“There’s them that prefers good nature to good looks, Mr. Barnes.”

“Come off it, Quincy. They’re a fine lot and you know it.”

“Oh, aye. I’ll give ye the hundred guineas a head this far, but what we have here…” A rough hand grasped a tether and dragged a shrinking nudity from the line. “Bad teeth and sagging tits! Give this one to your boys.”

The rejected maiden fell to her knees and thrust her head against Quincy’s leg. “Buy me—please buy me!” she pleaded. “Mr. Barnes, please make him a price on me.”

“Okay, how does fifty guineas strike you, Quincy?”

“Good enough. Stand her back in the line.”

Janice was last in line. The approach was breathless for her, but she was frightened. Barnes knew her worth, and her worth might be too high. Quincy’s shrewd lewd eye examined those parts of her she had kept secret all her life.

“This one’s a beauty.”

“I’ll grant ye that—she is.” A hard hand turned Janice around to examine her back. “She’s not been whipped, eh?”

“She’s got intelligence. She’ll do what she must. She’ll give you no trouble.”

The hand turned her back to face them. “If she’s that many brains, she’ll be forever looking to escape.”

“Give her no chance. You’ll soon have her sold. She’s ransom material to boot. But I’ve no time for it.”

Janice faced them with a hint of arrogance. “My family will pay for my release, far more than you can get for selling me.”

“Oh, aye. A month’s sail to England and a month back.”

“You could deal with the governor at Port Royal.”

“And stick my head in the lion’s mouth! Nay, not for me.”

The captive girl sensed absence of hope. Best therefore she be sold. Her eventual purchaser might be open to reason. She did what little she could to aid her vendor. Stand erect, tummy taut, breasts far out, chin high. For good measure she separated her legs a trifle more than need be. When modesty was stripped naked, nothing mattered much any more. Bound as she was she could hide nothing. Best then to show what she had to good advantage.

“Don’t suppose a hundred buys this one, eh?”

“One thousand guineas, Quincy. You can easily get double that.”

They bargained in good humor, each sensing profit. It was strange to listen to their disposal of her body and have naught to say about it. She heaved a sigh of relief when she was sold. It was one more step on a road she was determined must take her back to freedom.

They were untied and told to dress. The blacksmith had set up his forge and anvil and was waiting. One by one the girls were ironed. It was a week’s journey to where they would be sold, and it was best they be rendered as near helpless as was practical. Wrists and ankles shackled, the two being joined by a span of links to keep their small fists below their navel. They were carried aboard their new and temporary home by willing arms and lowered below decks through the black orifice of a hatch. When Janice was jostled forward, Quincy noted her glance of loathing and her quick, pathetic scan of sun and sea.

“Don’t like it below, eh?”

“It’s a hellhole. I hate it.”

“D’you want to stay above enough to shed thy clothes?”

She bit back her ready retort. She had been naked before all of them a few minutes past. She had been stripped when captured. What had she to offer now that they had

not already seen?

“Yes,” she managed to say. “I want it enough for that.”

Quincy lifted a surprised eyebrow. “You’re not ordinary stuff. I’d not give thee the option if I thought you’d leap the rail like some of ’em’s done in the past.” He grunted cynically. “Lose me a good set o’ irons.”

“You’re right, I won’t. I want to live. I don’t want to be naked… but I am grateful.”

“Huh. How the hell we gonna get you naked wearin’ them irons?”

Janice shrugged. “You can take me back to the blacksmith or you can tear my clothes off my back. I’m not sure they matter any more.”

“You’re a cool one.” He tossed her his knife. “Here, sit on the hatch cover and cut off what you can’t handle. But everything comes off—understand?”

“Yes, I understand. I’ll be as bare as any woman’s ever been.”

The ironed girl sat as directed. It gave her hands the slack in their chain they needed. She was surprised by what she could manage. Pirates evidently intended their captives to tend for themselves.

“You didn’t think to stick this between my ribs, eh?” Quincy

asked, taking the knife back.

“It never occurred to me. Should it have?”

He slapped an appreciative knee. “I like you, girl. Pity I can’t afford ye. Pity, too, I’m past my prime.”

Janice stood, hands clenched against her chains, and asked “I was wondering—how do you deal with a girl ironed as I am?”

Quincy guffawed coarsely. “If I’d the rod, lass, I’d bend ye down and take ye from astern.” He swept carnality aside. “Now that ye have the run o’ the ship, lass, what d’you intend to do with it?”

“I can sew if you’ve things to mend.”

“Aye, that I have. And the boys will love thee if you do the same for them.” He chuckled at a thought. “The poor bastards will be going around with hard-one all the time you’re on view.”

The short voyage was a brief interlude she would always remember. They locked her in a tiny brig at night. But her days, especially when she sat down, gave her a relative freedom. When the time came for her to mount the block to be auctioned, she did so with mixed feelings. A captured girl had only a slight chance of winning. Beside the auctioneer, she stood in tautened chains and faced her would-be purchasers defiantly. There was some applause.

It was then that she saw his face and blushed in shame. From that moment on Janice Latimer had no delusions as to her fate.

Brian Falkland's men deposited his purchase in the center of his plantation house lounge and discreetly departed. Janice faced him now, much as she had faced him from the block. Her voice was bitter.

"I suppose this must be the happiest day of your life," she said.

He inclined his head politely. "Indeed, yes. I'd thought you safely back in England after you'd put the coarse colonel properly in his place."

"We were beset by pirates."

"So I gathered. May I compliment you on your exquisite figure? You must remember, I never did get to see it."

"Can you get no white girl other than me to buy her body from a pirate?"

"Alas, no. Not in these parts. I did try to import one. I even offered marriage, but the lady was not receptive." He sighed. "By the way, that offer is now withdrawn."

Janice stood in fury, hands clenched against the chains, consumed by anger and humiliation. To have been purchased by Brian Falkland was a fate undreamed of. It was bizarre, a chance in a thousand. She would have preferred

Quincy. This man before whom she stood would subject her to every shame imaginable. He would take a cruel revenge for a slapped cheek and icy words. Immoderate in defiance and hurt pride, the ironed girl spat at him. “You’ve got me naked and chained. I suppose you’ll have me whipped too!”

“I am debating whether to mark your pretty back myself or have a slave do it for me while I watch your performance at the whipping post. I’m inclined to invite a small select audience to enjoy your shame.”

He was capable of doing it. The heart of Janice Latimer fell. She had lost fate’s toss of the dice. Brian Falkland would never let her go, other than perhaps to some dismal brothel after he had satisfied his revenge. But his revenge could go on and on, keeping her forever in the throes of humiliation and shame. The pain came last on her list of tribulations. She was sure there would be pain enough. But a captive girl might find sympathy for pain in a manner she would not for the other more hateful and more personal afflictions. Coldly she retorted, “I am sure I’ll scream most adequately for their pleasure… and for yours.”

They could spar endlessly in verbal hate. Both knew it. Both would be polite and correct, taking a macabre satisfaction in the incongruity of free speech in dire captivity.

In the end the man would always win. Janice Latimer

would be whipped. The whip would emerge tirumphants always. In a voice as cold as her own, Falkland said, “You stink of slavery. I’ll have you bathed and your hair attended to. I want you beautiful for punishment.”

A black woman attended her, saying nothing but looking at her with deep dark sympathy. Janice’s irons were not removed. They too were bathed, rattling hatefully in the tub as she turned and twisted for the soap and the laving of her skin. Much time was lavished on her hair so that she emerged scented and exquisite. She was taken to the menace of a huge double door which opened for her shuffling approach. A hand against her back propelled her forward, her irons clinking metallically at each hobbled step.

“Miss Janice Latimer,” a flunky announced. The assembly turned to view her with approval. Seven men and two women were looking at her. In pure horror the naked girl stared back at their polite regard. Her fists clenched and tugged at chain which allowed her to cover nothing. She stood fully revealed and fought her instinct to turn and crouch in a corner, hiding what she could. She knew she was blushing.

“Ah, Janice! Do come in, my dear. Allow me to introduce…”

Falkland was the perfect host, his hand attentive on her arm. The names slipped through her consciousness. Their eyes burned her skin. Rather than cower and cringe, the

ironed girl made polite responses to their greetings. The men bent and kissed her shackled hand as though it were free.

“Miss Latimer has done us the honor of consenting to be whipped for our pleasure after dinner, ladies and gentlemen.”

The outrageous statement generated a bitter protest, but Janice choked it back. In this company it would evoke only laughter. The only points she might score would be to retain dignity and stare them down. The hand on her arm steered her to the chair held and waiting.

She was flanked on each side by middle-aged men whose speech was as florid as their complexions. Janice lifted her chained feet upon a rung of the chair and tested the slack of her chain. She would not eat elegantly or without the clink of metal. But the handicap of her irons would no doubt add a piquancy to the meal for her companions. Falkland did not miss the opportunity of pinpointing her shame.

“Miss Latimer is contemplating a career in slavery,” he announced pleasantly. “Her acquaintance with irons is fairly recent. I am sure we can make allowances for so charming a guest.”

Janice wanted to die but was well aware of the durability of girls. Her mortification was diverted by a voice to her left. “May I compliment you on your breasts, madam; I find

them quite magnificent."

"Thank you."

She spoke the words mechanically, aware that silence would give offense. A grave voice at her right took her another step into shame. "Have they ever been properly whipped, dear?"

"I was not aware women were whipped… in front." She made her retort as icy as she dared.

"But, yes, we whip our Negresses frequently on their breasts. Their seats tend to become insensitive."

"And your cunt, Miss Latimer? Has it been lashed?"

They were enjoying her flaming cheeks. With difficulty she held her voice even. "I am afraid I have never been whipped, sirs. Mr. Falkland has made me his prisoner and intends to have me whipped this evening." She looked from side to side in cold detachment. "I fully expect to disgrace myself."

"But a most piquant situation, don't you think?"

"For you."

"But you are a lady of breeding, are you not? For you to be tied to a whipping post and lashed—I find the prospect diverting!"

"I find it terrifying."

They patted portions of her gently in a fatherly fashion. “And after your flogging, my dear, will you be put to work in the fields or used as a house slave?”

“I presumed I would be chained in a dungeon.”

“Oh, come now. Brian has more imagination than that. I would advise the fields. It’s a fine healthy life for a girl.”

Slavery! Janice had not contemplated the drudgery of enslavement. She had at first expected to be bought by a lecherous male and taken to his bed. Brian Falkland had shattered that vision with revenge. She had seen only the drama of his settling a score. Physical labor, probably with her ankles ironed, was a destiny she had not foreseen, but which would be perfect for his purpose. Listlessly, she said, “I have no idea what Mr. Falkland intends to do with me. Possibly his revenge will be appeased by whipping me tonight. Why don’t one of you gentleman purchase me from him?”

“You flatter our charm and our pocket books, madam.”

“Having vented his spite upon me he may sell me cheap. I am sure after the whipping I am about to receive I will become a most obedient and willing slave.”

She could tell their enchantment. Perhaps something would come of it. There was no harm in trying. Janice realized how her only opportunities lay with other men who might buy her and take her from Falkland’s malign atten-

tions. If she was sent to the fields, there would be few contacts, only the overseer and his whip.

The approach to Janice Latimer's whipping was decorous. Once more her owner proudly took her arm and led her from the room, then from the house and into the wide open space where a post awaited her. It stood there starkly —a blunt upright and a stout crosspiece at the top, at the ends of which were the shackles for her wrists. The mere sight of it was daunting.

But first there was the blacksmith with anvil and hammer. Falkland stood courteously aside while the rivets were punched from Janice's irons. When the last of them fell away, his arm possessed her again and led her to the post.

"Enjoy your whipping, Miss Latimer."

Before she could reply, Falkland was gone. His place was taken by a massively muscular black woman, stripped to her waist, her manner brisk. "Up with them little hands, missie. You knows where to put 'em."

Janice knew. Within moments her wrists were fettered to the bar to make her stand tautly erect, facing the ugly wood.

There was no ceremonial stripping; she was already nude.

"You may commence. Do not draw blood."

Falkland's command was a thunderclap, followed by the

lightning of the first blow across her bare back. Janice tensed and shuddered at the pain of it, clenching her teeth, pressing her forehead hard against the thing to which she was fastened.

“One.”

Someone was counting. It did not matter. She had not been told how many strokes she would receive. She supposed it would be a great many. After the second stroke she welded her body to the wood for what protection her breasts and belly might derive, but her hands and arms were stretched away, her armpits cruelly exposed.

It was frightening. Janice had supposed from Falkland’s reference to blood her whipping might not be severe, but these scorching sears upon her skin must surely cut! Such agony must inevitably be accompanied by blood! But she could not see herself. She could only guess. Agonized and terrorized, she clung to silence for her first ten strokes. There was then an intermission so that gloating over her whipped flesh might be prolonged by commiseration.

“You are a proud girl, and brave.”

“Congratulations on such endurance.”

“Not a single scream. I find that remarkable.”

Brokenly, she gasped, “Do I bleed?”

“Of course not, child. You heard your master’s order…!”

Then Brian Falkland whispered, “You could have been among the audience, Janice, instead of at the post.”

“I prefer the post.”

It was a rash defiance and would cost her dearly. But, for the moment, drinks were being served. Falkland took one from a passing tray and held it to her lips.

“No humanitarian motive,” he said. “Only to increase your awareness, Miss Latimer.”

“How many strokes must I bear?”

He did not answer. Instead, he said with a touch of flippancy, “You are young. Your marks will soon fade. We can then have another of these delightful functions. It will be something for you to look forward to out in the sugar cane.”

“You’ll make me labor in the fields?”

“Go on say it—‘like a nigger’. Yes, that’s part of what I have for you.” He tilted the glass again. “You have endeared yourself to our guests. They are already speaking of your next whipping.”

“I don’t see why you don’t whip me and sell me. Would that not be revenge enough?”

“My dear child, there is not enough money or enough years for my revenge. Besides, I intend to enjoy you carnally. I

hope you are properly flattered."

"I expected that from whoever bought me." She sneered. "I had supposed it the only motive for my purchase."

"Finish your drink, Miss Latimer. Our guests are waiting."

The whip cut at her again and again… and still again. The searing cuts were endless. Behind her came the black woman's voice. "Open your legs, honey—open 'em real wide." She supposed it best to obey, but still she heard the insistent voice. "Back away from that post, little missie. Git that little ass out."

It was her first scream, as much from outrage as pain. The thong had cut upward into her exposed crotch. Her vulva burned. Her hips weaved in agony and her feet kicked at nothing, but she held the pose and was rewarded by a second stroke more vicious than the first. From then on, Janice Latimer ceased to strive for silence. When a scream rose to her throat, she pealed it out to an appreciative audience. After any particularly shrewd stroke there was polite applause.

It ended when the thirtieth lash marked her skin, but Janice was still not released. Like an impaled butterfly, stood against the post and sobbed, her skin glistening, her breathing labored. The company gathered around, fingering her wounds and anything else they fancied. When she winced they patted her approvingly, and that also hurt. Finally the men departed for brandy, but the two women re-

mained behind. The girl locked to the post was surprised to discover they were mother and daughter.

“You can’t possibly get free, can you, dear?”

Janice stared back bleakly. “Would it matter if I could?”

“I can’t remember when I’ve enjoyed a whipped girl more, dear.”

“I’m glad I gave you pleasure.”

“I think she’s being sarcastic, Mama. Gee, I’d love to whip her.”

“You can ask her. Falkland, Nancy. He may allow you to give Miss Latimer a modest whipping sometime.”

Nancy sniffed. “He’ll have her well booked up for the men, and she’ll earn punishments.”

“Maybe he’ll let you whip the soles of her feet. I’m sure you’d enjoy that, dear.”

Nancy brightened. “I’ll ask him. I bet she’d scream!”

“Always remember, Nancy dear, that there’s a lot of things you can do to a girl besides whip her.” The mother turned to Janice. “Nancy is so impulsive about things like this. You see, it’s very seldom we get a real white girl to punish out here. Lots of blacks, of course. Sometimes I whip Nancy just out of desperation.”

“Mama!”

“Don’t sound so indignant, dear. Miss Latimer won’t be shocked.”

“But she’s a slave! And us talking like that!”

The girlish exclamation hurt almost as badly as the whip.

It imposed a bitter realization. She was a slave and did not merit a white girl’s confidence. Not a free girl like Nancy! Janice watched them saunter back to the house. Soon they were out of sight, and she still stood alone at the whipping post. She looked up at each of her chafed wrists. The bands around them were snug and tight. They had held her easily, no matter how she had tugged and pulled. They held her now. It was hard to contemplate a life in which she would always be in some way bound.

The black woman who had whipped her was the one to take her to her master’s bedchamber. Her advice sounded like it was learned from long experience. “You best make him happy, missie. Don’t never pay a gal to be sulky. Git the way he wants you an’ make like you love every poke.”

The preparations for her nuptials were simple. They consisted only of a collar, locked around her neck, and from it a chain to the wall. The chain was long and left her free to pleasure her master.

“You can’t git loose, missie, so don’t you try. You only hurt yo’ neck. Massah liable to be ’while before he comes.”

Alone, the whipped slave tested her bonds. It mocked her searching fingers. She shrugged. She lay across the bed and went to sleep. When she was awakened by Falkland's command, she followed the black woman's advice. She made him happy.

The pillory was hateful. Janice Latimer loathed it with all her being. It was a punishment that went on and on, exposing every bit of her and wearying her with its interminable standing. The pillory was her penalty for failing to meet her quota in the field. That meant one day in the sugar cane and the next standing as she now stood. The alternation could go on forever. She would never meet the quota, not ever. It had been set high enough to ensure she would not. She watched Falkland's approach without hope.

"An appealing picture, Miss Latimer. You are uncomfortable, I hope."

"Intensely."

"May I compliment you on your performance in bed last night? It excelled your first effort."

"I'm glad I please somebody. I certainly don't please your overseer."

"Ah, but he does not test you in bed as I am privileged to do. I should warn you, though: Your prowess will gain you neither freedom nor marriage."

“I didn’t expect it would. Mr. Falkland, is there any way I can get out of this horrible contraption? Something I might say or do?”

“Alas, I’m afraid not.”

“I’d get on my knees for you if I could.”

“A delightful thought. We will incorporate it in our love-making.”

“I can never meet my quota in the cane field. Does that mean that I must stand like this every second day of my life?”

“Unless you can think of some more appropriate penance.”

As usual, they were sparring. It was no better than a bitter repartee. Falkland would always win. He made the rules. Without emotion, Janice said, “You’ve broken my pride. I can’t go on like this. I’ll do or be anything you want if only you’ll stop punishing me.” She twisted unhappily “I don’t expect you to give me my freedom, but couldn’t you keep me just for sex?”

“Interesting offer coming from you! You’d be a runaway the first day.”

“My ankles are chained now. You can leave them chained always and keep me naked, if it pleases you.”

“No whip or cane field, eh?”

“I’ve paid a big price for slapping your face. Hasn’t it been enough?”

“You’ve only started to pay, Miss Latimer. Your marks are fading well. You’ll soon be ready for another whipping. Our guests have inquired after your health.”

Janice changed her weight from foot to foot, weaving her captive hips in frustration. “Why won’t you leave me hope?” she asked despondently. “A little hope would keep me alive. As things are for me now I’d be better off dead.”

“Ah, dear lady, for you there is neither death nor hope. You will go on living, and you will live on my terms.”

“Please, sir, I beg you!”

It was useless. Janice Latimer watched her owner walk away. Before he was lost to sight the tears started from her eyes. That night in her sexual homage she paid full tribute upon her knees to the man who used her as he wished. It was total abasement.

On the day on which she was given her next punishment Hilda, the black woman, put her in the box.

“Massah say no pillory fo’ you today’ Miss Janice. Guess he don’t want you gittin’ too miserable.”

Janice looked at what awaited her and bleakly asked, “Do I have to get in that thing? Will I be any better oft?”

“Make fo’ a change, honey. You sit on the edge and swing yo’ legs over, chains and all.”

Her shackled feet did not matter. Janice found herself seated, knees up in what was actually a cage, the top rim of which was on a level with her neck. When she leaned back, her neck nestled in a half circle slot. Her day’s travail began to take shape. It was further clarified when Hilda slid another slotted half circle to caress her throat.

“That makes sure you don’t walk off someplace,” the black woman said good naturedly. “Now this here one looks after yo’ hands.”

Janice watched another board slide along the groove. In this one were two much smaller half circles. Dismally, she raised her hands and inserted her wrists. One more board slid forward to engulf them in wood. A far larger one completed the ensemble, closing the whole top of the barred cage. It was firmly clamped.

“There, missie, now you just sits down.”

“But I can’t stretch my legs! I can hardly move at all.”

“I didn’t say you sits easy. You just sits. Anybody that wants c’n git a good look at you through the bars.” Hilda chuckled. “But you don’t git to look at yo’self. All you gits a good look at is yo’ hands.”

Hilda was right. Woefully, Janice gazed at her hands. They protruded uselessly in front and to each side of her face.

They could not touch her, nor she them. Her wrists and her neck were solidly enclosed in wood. She struggled but did not even shake the cage.

“Hilda, have I got to sit like this all day?”

“That’s the idea, missie.”

“It’ll drive me insane!”

“That’s what my little nigger gals say when I puts ’em in there. They can’t play with themselves no how.”

“But I don’t want to play with myself. All I want is—ohhhh, Hilda!”

But Hilda was gone.

The room was still. The boxed in girl struggled and twisted uselessly, getting only chafed skin from her efforts. She made play with her fingers and watched them as though they belonged to someone else. She thought of the pillory and wondered if she would be better off locked in its embrace. Ruefully, she knew the day would answer that query for her. At this moment they seemed remarkably the same, a punishment by immobility. Instead of tired legs she had a chafed bottom. It was already complaining from her cramped posture. After an hour Falkland came.

“You are looking charming, Miss Latimer, but slightly ridiculous.”

“Thank you.”

“You are uncomfortable, I hope.”

“Yes, I would just my discomfort adequate. How long must I endure this?”

“For the day, of course. You would not expect less, would you?”

“What I’d like to expect is a sensible quota from that damn overseer.”

“A delightful fantasy. Hilda is kind to you, I’m sure.”

“Yes, she’s sweet. I couldn’t be imprisoned or whipped by kinder hands. Thank you.”

“You are very sweet yourself, my dear.”

Brian Falkland bent down and planted a kiss on surprised and captive lips.

Janice awoke with a start.

Denver Cartwright’s face was very near her own.

9

Damsel in Despair

“OH DENVER!” Prisoned hands rose to cup the smiling male face. “Kiss me again. I’ve just had the most awful dream.”

He kissed her most adequately. “And I was the villain?”

“Gosh, no! He was horrible.” Janice shuddered. “It’s those damn fool film people, giving me ideas. Oh, master are you back to stay?”

“For awhile. I have a visitor for you.”

Natalie had stood off to one side. Dressed, with arms handcuffed behind her back, her face was radiant.

“Darling!”

They uttered the endearment in unison. Bewildered and still under the influence of her dream, Janice looked at Cartwright and asked, “May we… ?”

“A kiss only, then stand apart. I can’t trust either of you.”

Cartwright must have opened the cage door before waking her. Janice slipped through it. Awkwardly, because of their

handcuffed condition, the former mistress and the former slavegirl embraced. It a was long, long kiss.

“That’s enough—back to normal,” the male commanded decisively.

They broke apart and looked enquiringly at their owner. It did not occur to either of the girls to dispute his command.

Janice was still anticipating Brian Falkland’s whip. Getting back to normal was strangely difficult.

“Back to the fort, girls. I’ll have this damn cage dismantled. It seems to have caused nothing but trouble while I was gone.” He captured Janice’s eye. “I’m not sure which one of you to whip.”

It did not matter. Cartwright could whip Janice as much as he liked and she would still be happy. The miasma of the dream was fading fast, with it the whipping Falkland had given her.

“If I’m to be whipped, could Natalie whip me?” Janice asked.

“No. You’d want it everyday.”

Janice made a moue of resignation and turned to her mistress. “When do you have to go back to the office, darling?”

“She isn’t going back,” Cartwright said curtly.

The slavegirl sensed strange undercurrents, something she

had not been told, but she was content to wait. Whatever it was, it had to be good. The master's curt command demanded her full attention.

"I've heard Brigid's story about that damn cage and Athos Films. Now tell me yours."

Lightheartedly, Janice obeyed. She spoke as much to her mistress as to the male. She confessed her own absurdities, then told of Amos Blanding and Rennig. Lamely, she finished, "I'm afraid they got Karen."

"They may have her, but they won't keep the damn girl," Cartwright said testily. "Really, the things you girls think up when there are no men around!"

"Please don't blame Brigid," Janice pleaded. "She kept me handcuffed all the time, just the way you said. Look, I'm still handcuffed. It was me who badgered her into the cage. If only I had kept quiet!"

"Janice wants to be whipped," Natalie interjected quietly. "I know the signs. You may as well whip her, Denver, or she'll give you no peace."

"I intend to." Cartwright's assertion lacked force and anger. "Or would you care to do the job, sweetheart?"

"No, she belongs to you now. You do the job."

Something was most certainly different. There had been a change. Janice searched her companions' faces but found

no clue. She sensed a need for caution. She had no wish to be whipped too hard, and there were limits to the tolerance of masters and mistresses. Innocently, she inquired, "Why are Natalie's hands tied behind her back?"

Cartwright grunted. "Good question. Guess I figured she'd grab ahold you and not let go." He turned to Natalie. "Want 'em changed, sweetheart?"

"Whatever you wish. I really don't mind."

Something was most definitely wrong. Janice looked from one to the other of her companions searchingly but found no clue. Minutes later they were in the fort and confronted by the housekeeper.

"It's okay, Brigid. It's me who gets whipped."

"Did I say that?" Cartwright asked with good-natured curiosity. "As far as I can see, you both deserve it. Have Patsy clean this girl up and deliver her for dinner." He turned to Natalie. "Come along, you. We have things to talk about."

Patsy was agog with excitement but knew nothing. She was, however, full of conjecture. "Them two's up to somethin'. Gosh, Miz Latimer, I can't get these handcuffs off. I'm sorry."

"They don't matter. What are they up to—the master and Natalie, I mean?"

"They acts romantic. You notice the way he calls her

sweetheart an' she don't complain? I always thought she was a—"

"She is a lesbian. Don't worry, I'll find out." Janice's focus was on something more personal. "Patsy dear, I think Brigid and I are both going to be whipped. There's really only you to do the job."

The maid giggled. "Gosh, I'd sure get a charge outta whippin' Brigid's ass, but I wouldn't dare do it. She'd have my hide after we was alone again."

"Not if Mr. Cartwright ordered you to."

"You mean, it might happen?"

"Yes, really! I don't think he wants us whipped terribly hard. That's why I think he'll make you do it."

"Oh, wow!" Patsy soaped and raved gleefully. "Wouldn't that be somethin'! But I wouldn't want to whip you, Miz Latimer."

"Don't worry about me. I deserve it. And I give you permission."

"Gee, you's really outta this world," Patsy said in admiration. "You is a sweetheart, just like the master was callin' that woman. Look, I just got time to wash and fix yo' hair 'fore dinner."

Janice sighed happily. It seemed a constant condition of her

various slaveries that she be washed and polished for some special occasion at a master's behest, sometimes as a prelude to pain. But this evening was going to be wonderful—she knew it would be! She preened before the mirror. She was a slave any man would be proud to own.

In the bedroom a master and a mistress confronted each other in rueful amusement.

Dolefully, Natalie Stephenson said, "I haven't the heart to tell her."

"I was about to say the same thing."

They laughed in contemplation of their dilemma.

"I suppose we could get Patsy or Brigid to break the news," Natalie said. "Patsy would love to, I'm sure."

"Too sneaky." Cartwright looked at the nude beauty on his bed. "I can make you do it, y'know?"

They laughed over that too, until Natalie said thoughtfully, "You're going to have those two girls whipped, aren't you? Suppose we tell Janice the news halfway through?"

"A counter irritant, something to take her mind off her back? It's an idea, but the poor kid will be tightly tied. Doesn't it have the flavor of an unfair advantage?"

"I suppose it does. I love her so much, Denver. Maybe you

shouldn't have brought me to the island. Maybe I should be back home in the cell."

Natalie Stephenson's memory flitted back, as it did constantly, in wonder over her occupancy of Cartwright's small prison. She was thoroughly ashamed of her first hysteria and grateful to her master for correctly assessing it. Had he released her then, during those first tearful hours, she would have been forever shamed and forever wondering.

It wasn't until after she had been fed and left alone for the night that objectivity returned. Sitting handcuffed and naked on the bench, gazing at the bars, she reflected ruefully on her behavior of the afternoon and her two days of imprisonment still to come. She realized her enemy was boredom. A punished girl is too busy hurting to be bored, but to be simply caged and left alone was the real test. A girl might surrender in the cell far more easily than if hung by her thumbs. Torture offered the drama of heroism. The little cell offered nothing at all except a vacuum in which she must exist, living entirely within the boundaries of her mind.

Being honest with herself, the caged woman realized that most of what people called freedom was cluttered with trivia, a concern about things that did not matter: the switching on and off of the TV, deciding what to have for dinner, a debate about appropriate clothes. But here in her cell she had no need of clothes and would probably never

need them, unless she was allowed to go out in public. Cartwright's preference for nudes would govern what she wore or did not wear. And there was the telephone. The cell routed the phone utterly and told her how unimportant the device truly was. One by one, she examined and discarded the trappings by which we clothe ourselves with superficial "needs". The cell did it for her, stripping her bare, leaving her nothing but the security of the bars.

Natalie Stephenson, sitting naked in the cell, hands joined as though in prayer, could glimpse the logic of the holy men who isolated themselves in solitary contemplation of the universe. They had swept away the impediments of life, just as the cell had swept them away for her. It was not something she would voluntarily have done herself. She countered her fear of its austerity by remembering Monday morning.

The bench on which she must sleep was a sly punishment. It denied comfort. The holy men would have approved. Full length and nude upon its surface, Natalie discovered herself to be all hips and ribs and shoulders. The hard wood rejected even the softness of her breasts. She was still seeking to come to terms with her couch when she fell asleep, her cheek resting prettily on her joined hands.

Morning brought the modest diversion of a wash. The prisoner found herself thankful for any activity bearing the hallmark of necessity. She discovered the small squares she had thought to be face cloths were actually towels, too tiny

to serve as coverings. She could imagine Cartwright's quiet smile as he placed them there for her use. Once more she was frustrated by having no clock. She suspected this absence of time awareness would prove one of her greatest tribulations. When Cartwright appeared with breakfast, it might well have been midday for all she could tell.

"Didn't hear any screams."

"I'm proud of myself."

"Got a bit of imprisonment under your belt now. You've got a stake in here. You'll soon be halfway."

"Yes, but, Denver, I get the strangest sensations and think the oddest thoughts in here." Her eyes fell on the tray. "Why didn't you bring enough? We could have had breakfast together."

"Jailers don't eat with prisoners, sweetheart. It simply isn't done."

"But we're not like that. You could if you wanted."

"You'd better believe we're like that—until last thing Monday morning."

"Oh, all right, be mean to me." She drank her coffee gratefully. "What am I supposed to do with myself today?"

"I understand Hindu prisoners find comfort in contemplating their navels. In your case, I'd look lower down."

“Don’t be horrible. You look at it. Here, I’ll open my legs for you. Wouldn’t you like to use it after breakfast?”

“Why not now?”

Natalie instantly set aside the tray, but was halted by his sharp command. “Hold it, girl! You’re forgetting your status. You’re in a no-privilege prison. You should know I was kidding.”

Cartwright’s prisoner wrinkled her nose and resumed her meal. “It’s your loss as much as mine,” she said tartly. “I hope you’re bothered all the time I’m in here by carnal thoughts of my availability. Gosh, what some men wouldn’t give!”

“You’ve become utterly wanton.”

“Whip me for it.”

“Do I detect a tone of hope, my dear?”

Natalie sniffed. “Jailers don’t call their female prisoners ‘dear’ and ‘sweetheart’.”

“I can’t always revert to ‘hey you’.”

“No, please don’t. I like it. A girl in a cage needs a little something. When are you taking me to your island?”

Cartwright did not answer, nor did he prolong his visit beyond time for her to eat. Then he took the tray, kissed her, and deliberately slammed the door on her with a needless

clang. He turned the lock for maximum effect and was then gone. But they had set a light-hearted tone to carry her through the day. Natalie no longer saw her cell as a monster eating segments of her life. The cell was giving her something in return.

But the something had no name.

Her week at the office proved to be Natalie's greatest ordeal. It dragged on and on. Time was more laggard even than in Cartwright's cell. It was not that she wanted the cell again, even though she would most certainly get it, but only that she wanted Cartwright. She wanted to pull the trigger again in their game of Russian roulette. Something might happen. Something would happen. In the evenings, after work, she would sit with her handcuffs on and think back to her imprisonment. She had to be careful never to click them more than one click. It was difficult to remove her hand at that point, but beyond it she would be trapped. Cartwright held the key. She would die of shame if she had to admit to him this small erotic indulgence.

The week passed. Her weekend came with its feast of carnality and the serving of her sentence to the male. Through it all she had hoped for a statement of some sort, but Cartwright said nothing. He became her jailer again with suave efficiency, and she became the model prisoner. It was not until the middle of the following week that it happened. At midday they met on a crowded street, both of them surprised.

“Lunch?”

“How nice. That’s where I was going.”

Cartwright gave her no choice. His own was expensive and exclusive and very private. All through their shrimp cocktail she was aware of his intent regard. When the dishes had been cleared away, he said abruptly, “I want to marry you.”

Breathless, she gathered her wits. She had sensed something hovering but never this! Desperately she wanted to act her age and not be the silly fluttery girl his words her created. Levelly, she met his regard and asked, in a voice trembling only slightly, “Do I have anything to say about it?”

“No.”

In another man it would have been arrogant and brash, but at the end of the week he would possess her again and she would do his bidding whatever it might be.

“I’d love to marry you,” the former mistress said. “Thank you for asking.”

“It won’t be tomorrow. Present yourself as usual on Friday evening.”

Natalie was surprised, but it was in keeping with what he was and what her life had become.

“Yes, sir,” she said simply.

They did not even kiss.

Natalie’s hands were trembling enough to make it difficult to handcuff herself outside his door when Friday came, but as soon as Cartwright opened the door, things fell into place. He kissed her hard, her locked hands compressed against his chest. She stripped. She served their drinks. She knelt adoringly.

“Changed your mind?”

“You know I haven’t. My kiss told you.”

“Nothing else has changed either. You’ll be whipped and fucked and locked in the cell for my pleasure.” Cartwright chuckled. “It may not be that often—the whipping and the cell, I mean—but they’ll continue.”

“Of course. I want you to whip me tonight before we make love.”

“I had intended to. We think alike.”

“May I ask why you want to marry me? You possess all of me already.”

“I’ll be damned if I know!” He grinned his frank admission. “Leave it at that. Maybe it’s because you’re a magnificent piece of tail.”

“You know that isn’t the reason.”

“Maybe because of your reactions when I whip you.”

“That isn’t it either.”

“You’re blushing, sweetheart.”

“Well, you do call a spade a spade, y’know. It’s something I have to get used to. Will you whip me light, medium, or hard?” She held up an empty glass. “I’ll fix these according to what I’m going to get.”

“If you don’t cheat on the mix, I’d say three drinks should do it.”

“I read that as modestly hard.”

“You won’t even feel them. It’s the marks on your skin I want.”

“Liar.”

“Add one more for that.”

Natalie drank her drinks and went happily to where the bar awaited her wrists. This time there were no straps, only cord. She watched as she was bound, her eye critical for fault, but there was no fault. Her wrists were tightly, neatly, and implacably bound. She watched them rise and her arms stretch high. It was all comforting and familiar and as it should be. It was only when she was halfway through her whipping that she remembered they had not yet named the day. At that moment it did not seem to mat-

ter. Later, with scorched skin and satiated sex, she tripped lightly enough through the fatal door into her small prison. Everything was marvelous, even accepting handcuffed ankles as an additional tribulation to test her sincerity. She lay down but not upon her back.

Jolted out of the reverie of her remembrances, Mrs. Denver Cartwright heard her husband's voice. "Okay, Natalie, I'll tell her. It's probably up to me." He grinned. "After all, I do own you both. Come along. I suspect we're overdue."

Janice was sparkling. The man and the woman had never seen her more lovely. It was as though their return and the promise of the whip had been a heady stimulant on which she was riding high. She clinked her handcuffs playfully.

"I refuse to think of what's awaiting me after dinner," Janice said. "Please don't remind me."

They did not remind her. Anxious to end the suspense, Cartwright waited only until after the soup before he gently broke the news to Janice.

"Janice sweetheart, it's time we told you," he began. "Natalie and I were married yesterday."

What does a girl say when her world is shattered? Janice could only stare stupidly and exclaim, "But I wanted to marry you! I thought you wanted me!"

"We'll always want you, sweetheart."

The stricken girl picked up his use of the plural. It was like a gratuitous blow. Still dazed, she muttered, “But why?”

“We’re closer in age, and we discovered we have a lot in common—more than we dreamed.”

“But she was my mistress! We gave that up so I could be your slave.”

“You’re still my slave, don’t ever forget that.”

“What’s Natalie then? You’ll still keep her handcuffed?”

Cartwright chuckled. He knew that Janice was only being female. “You surely don’t expect any marriage of mine to be ordinary, do you, sweetheart?”

“I am not your sweetheart! Don’t ever call me that again! I’m only a slavegirl you can kick around.” Her plaint became a wail. “You won’t even be able to sleep with me any more!”

“I haven’t slept with you much in the last couple of weeks anyway.”

“That’s only because you wouldn’t take me with you. If you had taken me along, none of this would have happened.”

Ruefully and silently, the master admitted the truth of her assertion, but whatever he might have said was shattered by Natalie’s command. She was once again Janice’s mistress.

“Janice, behave yourself! You’re throwing a tantrum.”

The slavegirl sniffed but sat erect, her voice sulky. “You can’t punish me; you’re handcuffed the same as I am. And anyway, I’m already going to be whipped, and I’ll hate every stroke of it now.”

“Perhaps that’s just as well, dear. It’s supposed to be a punishment. You’ll report for it at the proper place and at the proper time.”

Janice angrily leaped to her feet. “Oh, don’t worry, I’ll be there!” She flung away her napkin and flicked away an errant tear. “Please excuse me.” She stamped haughtily to the door, her chin held high. She paused long enough at the portal to deliver an icy finale. “You’d better whip me extra hard. I’m sure I deserve it.”

The man and woman at the table looked at each other ruefully. Cartwright summed it up: “Did I blow that?”

“No. The poor darling had to blow her top sometime.”

“That stern authority bit of yours did the trick.”

“Don’t forget, I know her well. She’s seething with resentment and hurt pride, but by the time she’s been whipped she’ll have shifted half of what she feels. Along with resenting us, she’ll be mad at authority.”

“You sure we ought to whip her?”

“Oh, definitely! I’m wondering if you shouldn’t have me whipped at the same time to show her you don’t play favorites.”

“I just whipped you a few days ago.”

“I can stand another—for a good cause.”

“I’ll be damned!” Cartwright exclaimed with deep feeling. “You girls…!”

The horizontal timber was massively strong. The vertical posts by which it was raised would never buckle. The short rope and the hooks hung from it in silent promise. Brigid was the first to walk to her master and offer rope with which to bind her wrists. When Cartwright lifted her, it was she herself who positioned her bindings within the curved metal. When released she hung suspended, her toes only a couple of inches from the sand.

Janice came next, her head still high. She examined the horizon while her hands were tied. She was breathing quickly, meeting no eyes. Obediently, she looped her bound hands into the hook and, in her turn, hung in taut readiness for what must come.

Natalie undressed before startled eyes. She presented her rope. In two minutes she hung between the others. Staring at her former mistress in puzzlement, Janice retorted, “You don’t need to do this on my account.”

“I’m doing it on my own, dear.”

“I don’t see why.”

“To salve my conscience, pet.”

“I didn’t know you had one.”

The mistress refused to pick up the gauge. She looked at Cartwright and nodded briefly. The master motioned to a breathlessly waiting Patsy. The thong sang its gleeful song and impacted squarely across Brigid’s firm round rump. The housekeeper made no sign or sound of pain.

A delighted Patsy worked up and down the line of suspended nudes. Whatever portion of themselves they presented was where she struck. No one screamed, but it wasn’t long before sounds of anguish manifested suffering. The master watched carefully for signs of favoritism, but Patsy was a wise girl. She may have had her own wishes, but she plied the lash impartially. Three pairs of female legs kicked and squirmed beneath her attentions. Three pairs of ripe lips emitted what sounds they must when the pain became too great. The quiet air was alive with gasps and moans but none screamed. Patsy worked very hard for a long, long time.

When Cartwright lowered them, their hands were not untied. He noosed their necks, one to the other, and handed Patsy the final tether. “You know what to do,” he said tersely.

“I sho’ does,” said the happiest young woman on the island.

Patsy waved her whip. “Come along, ladies, en’ don’s give me no trouble!”

Cartwright watched them until they were out of sight. Then, chuckling, he returned to the fort. He was proud of his wife.

The trio of captives had no doubt about where they were going. Patsy made great play with her whip, but there was no need for it. The tiny coffle of nude girls stepped into the cage without complaint and watched themselves locked in.

“If you use yo’ teeth, it’s purty easy to get them ropes off,” Patsy advised. “I sorta wish I was in there too. You gals have yo’self a good time. But the master tol’ me to hurry back. I s’pect I’m gonna git fucked!”

They watched as she sped away. Undoubtedly she had the last word.

Brigid refused to be dolorous. “So we got ourselves whipped,” she said without concern. “You girls can stay tied up if you want to, but I’m getting myself loose. And you know what I’m going to do then!”

Natalie and her slavegirl knew. Their teeth sought the bindings on their wrists. It was not long before all three were only a contorting pile of female limbs and torsos on the sand. When the housekeeper awoke in the early morning, she smiled knowingly. The mistress and her slavegirl were fast asleep in each other’s arms. She let them lay and

again sought sleep herself. It had been a long time since a man had whipped her. It felt real good.

At breakfast, constraint could not compete against hot coffee. Sheepish, beneath her master's questing gaze, Janice humbly muttered, "I'm sorry. Anytime I get sulky please have me whipped."

"Will do, sweetheart."

"Same goes for me," Natalie said, holding up her linked hands. "Patsy put these on us first thing. She's a wonderful girl. Made us put our hands through the bars before she opened the door."

Cartwright was preoccupied. When their meal was done, he announced without enthusiasm, "I have to go back to the city. May take a week. Natalie will come with me."

No one said anything. There was really nothing to say. There was always an air of inevitability about Cartwright. He was a force. With Patsy and Brigid busy with their own affairs, it was a very personal parting. Janice was alone to say goodbye. She was abundantly kissed and hugged.

"It's only a week, darling."

"Yes, seven days. I'll be here waiting."

The slavegirl waved handcuffed hands at the departing plane. Janice stood for a long time after the plane had disappeared, a lonely figure on the beach. Thoughtfully, she

turned and walked back to the fort. She sought out Brigid.

“They’re gone.”

“Sure, they’re gone, honey. Now, look, I don’t want any tears, and I’m a busy woman. I also have a sore ass. So, if you don’t mind…?”

Janice trailed away. She walked to the wharf and sat on the boat she could not use. Tiring of that, she made her way inland to the field where she had been made to work and had worn the ball and chain, but that was lonely too. Disconsolately, she walked around the island, spending a nostalgic hour in the cage with the door wide open. There was nothing else to do. Once more she searched for Brigid.

“Brigid, I’ve got pain to spend. Are you buying?”

The housekeeper paused in what she was doing. “You mean you want that after yesterday and last night?”

“I’m lonely and down in the dumps.”

“Look, girl, we’re not going to start that nonsense again.”

“It isn’t nonsense. The first part of it’s lovely.”

“It’s nonsense to me today. Go find Patsy.”

“She’s busy too. Besides, she’d be too embarrassed.”

“Then I’m embarrassed too. No way! Now run along.”

She was a nuisance. She knew she was a nuisance. No one

wanted her. In a huff, Janice Latimer returned to the beach and sat on a rock surrounded by sand. Sometimes the surf would come in far enough to lick her bare toes. It was pleasant and relaxing. Far out on the horizon was a black dot.

She dozed briefly. When she awoke, the dot had most definitely become a ship, a ship heading straight for their dock, but turning short of it with a clang of bells. Figures on board waved their arms. Finally some of them heaved a sizable object over the side. More bells clanged and the ship headed back out to sea. The object in the water was swimming toward shore—a girl. After several minutes Karen Copeland trudged up onto the sand. Janice was no longer bored.

“Karen!”

“Oh, Janice darling, I’m so glad it’s you! Gosh, am I glad to be back!”

“I thought you wanted to escape.”

“Well, I did, but there was no way they’d let me. They were scared of somebody—Cartwright, I guess. Did you see the way they threw me overboard? The sharks could have got me.” She held up handcuffed hands. “Thinking of those sharks helped me swim in these.”

Slowly it came out, the whole sordid story. Janice looked aghast at a body marked far worse than hers had ever

been. From time to time Karen interrupted her narrative to exclaim, “Gosh, I’m glad to be back here!”

“But didn’t you want freedom?”

Karen waved freedom away with an airy gesture of linked hands. “Freedom’s just a dream, darling. I’ve given it up. All I want is to never see that boat and those bastards again. God, have I been fucked!”

“Would you like some coffee, Karen?”

“Let’s sit here for awhile first. Will that woman of yours want to whip me or something?”

“No, why should she?”

“Well, I’m so used to being whipped or tortured for everything. I’m going to soap and wash my pussy ten times a day forever. Ugh!”

Animatedly, Karen recounted more misadventures. As she listened, Janice realized the pure chance by which it had been this dark vivid girl and not herself upon whom Athos Films had perpetrated its horrors. Soon she was cradling a dark head upon her lap and they were both shedding tears. They were discovering the ancient secret that loneliness is the amalgam of love. Janice told of her own disaster, then listened to more of Karen’s story.

“It was porno, Janice, just straight porno with enough cruelty to add a bit of spice. I thought they’d never stop whip-

ping me."

"And you were so glad to go. I remember when they took you from the cage."

"I must have needed my head examined, but who'd have thought? Darling, what happened to you? They left you standing with your hands locked up above your head."

"I had to stand there all night, that's what happened. Brigid was real mad in the morning when she found you gone."

"Do you think I'll be punished now by anyone?" Karen asked anxiously. "I mean, will they think anything was my fault? I'm so damn tired of punishments. Athos called 'em sequences, but all they were was another whipping, another fucking, or some lousy torture."

"And you hated the sex so much?"

"I'm cured now. It's just one of those things. When I think of the way I fought back at that mistress of yours, it's just crazy! Gosh, I've had more things inside me, and I've been inside more things! Darling, do you have any mouthwash?"

There could be no denying that Karen was a far more interesting companion now than she was before. Instead of debasing her, Athos Films had refined and matured the latent femininity in this dark-haired maiden. Janice found herself looking at the girl with an entirely fresh interest. Impulsively, she said, "Come along, I'll make the coffee. When you're rested, I've got something in mind."

It was very pleasant. Brigid allowed herself to be persuaded. When it was done, Janice took the housekeeper to one side and whispered. Brigid shrugged and went her way, but she was smiling.

“Let’s take a walk, Karen.”

They sauntered along the beach, two naked girls alone on an island in a sunlit sea. Somewhere in their future was a master and a mistress, but for the moment their destiny was their own. Karen was still vividly under the influence of recollection.

“They used four guys on me at one time! Was it that way—”

“Gosh no! There was Gloria Humbolt—”

“Oh, her! I heard a lot about her. A prissy bitch, wasn’t she? They couldn’t fuck her so they didn’t want her. They wanted me! And they got me—and for free!”

“Darling, you keep using that word. There was a time when you wouldn’t have dreamed—”

“You mean ‘fuck’?” Karen laughed. “You’re right. I never would have used it before, but if you’ve been fucked the way I have, the word loses its impact. I’m just so damn glad it’s over. I want to fling that word in their faces: fuck, fuck, fuck! Maybe I can get it out of my system.”

“And the other?”

“Oh, you mean girls! Well, I was made to eat poor Daisy until I couldn’t face another meal. Have you ever been tied with your face buried in a girl’s crotch?”

“And you still hate it?”

“Shit no! A girl gets used to anything, darling. That’s why I’m so glad to be back with you. Those bastards taught me something. You started it that night in the cage when they came and took me, but they carried me a lot further. Don’t you understand, darling, although I’m happy to be rid of them, they did teach me a lot? I’ve grown up!”

Janice recognized the proposition and found it sound. For the previous thirty minutes an idea had been germinating. “But how did this all leave you?” she asked. “Submissive or dominant?”

“Submissive!” Karen cast the term to the winds. “There’s no way I’ll ever again bow to any son of a bitch. I suppose Cartwright will whip me into obedience here, but that’s something I can’t help.”

“Suppose there was a way around it?”

“There isn’t. I’m stuck with the way I am.”

“Look, darling, you were kidnapped as a plaything for Natalie because I had been stolen, but Natalie’s got herself married to our master now. That leaves both of us unemployed.”

“So?”

“It’s terribly boring on this island alone. Since Cartwright has to keep us here—or thinks he has to—he’d be pleased if we were happily occupied.”

“Peeling potatoes?”

“Don’t be silly. How’d you like to whip my bottom?”

“I’ve never thought about it.”

“Well, think about it now!”

They stared at each other, Karen in a dawning realization. “You mean, me dominating you?” she asked incredulously.

“Yes. It’s the way I’m made. I’m no good on the other side.” She laughed at her companion’s doubt. “Forget that I’m the experienced slavegirl with the seniority. See me as I am: a girl who longs to be owned.” Her eyes twinkled. “Even when it hurts.”

“You mean, you’d belong to me? I could do what I liked with you?”

“That’s right.”

“What about Cartwright? He owns us both.”

“I think he’ll go along with it,” Janice said. “Besides, I think he’s a busy man right now. He’ll be glad to get us out of his hair.”

“You mean, I could make you eat me anytime?”

“Anything you want. You’d have to whip me sometimes, of course. Even the best of slavegirls need discipline.”

Karen’s face became intent. She meditated in silence, then swept her cuffed hands in a circle. “You’re offering me all this… and you?”

“That’s right.”

“It’s stupendous.”

“It is, isn’t it? I can probably persuade Brigid to unlock your handcuffs so you can handle me. She won’t unlock mine.”

Their saunter had reached the cage. It stood there, lonely and beckoning. Janice could swear the barred prison had a life of its own. Its door was invitingly open.

“Go inside,” Janice said.

“But why?”

“Do as I say. It will be the last time.”

Karen went inside the barred cage. Janice followed, fitted the padlock, and pressed it shut.

“I belong to you now, Karen. Do what you like with me.”

“But we’re in a locked cage!”

“Does that matter? Brigid will let us out this evening. In the meantime…”

Handcuffs made it awkward, but they took each other in their arms.

When Brigid came for them, they were both asleep.