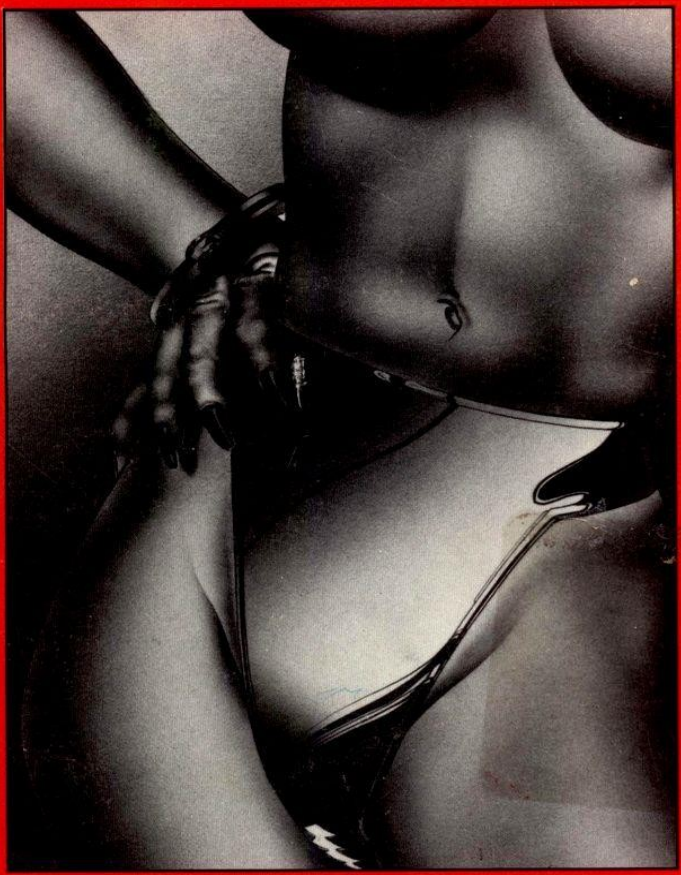
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PUNISHED PUSS



F. E. CAMPBELL

HIT 157

Punished Puss

by F. E. Campbell

HOM Inc. Los Angeles

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1

The Lady Ilena

THIS GUY HAS TO BE CRAZY He's crackers. He's gone around the bend somewhere. But the trouble is he's what Mother would have called a nice boy. If he hadn't captured me—that's what he calls it—and I had met him in a normal sort of way, I might've liked him. I suspect he's a bit too nice to have been interesting, but I really don't know him yet. I've only been his prisoner for a few days. I think the shock is as great for him as for me. Of course, he's a lot more comfortable on account of me having my hands tied behind my back: The suspense is the same for him as for me. Oh, damn, I wish I could get loose! I'd read him the darnedest lecture before I packed up and went home.

I suppose I'm partly to blame. I keep kicking myself when I think about it. But the country is so beautiful around here, and I was so happy with the sights and scents along my walk that his smile from the car sort of blended naturally, so I got in beside him and let him point things out. It was while I was turned away looking that he slipped the pad over my face and held it tight while I kicked and heaved and slipped into darkness.

Coming out of it was like you probably know: the hazy fuzz and the going back to sleep before you really wake up and realize something's wrong. With me, it was that I had lost my hands. It took me a little while to know where they

were. They were tied behind my back.

After the first struggle I lay still to take a deep breath and think things out the way you do when you discover the spare is flat or you've lost your passport in Paris. I was on a bed in a quite pretty bedroom: bright, cheerful, everything normal. I sat up and tried again in earnest. It was then that I got shock number two: I was naked.

I am neither a shrinking violet nor a stripper. The shock was real. Since I had been kidnapped by a young man, I had to suppose it was he who had taken my clothes. They weren't visible. I blushed. I also noticed the big mirror.

I was still woozy, but I stood for a moment and then went to look in the mirror. Except for untidy hair and the blush, I looked okay. Instinctively, I tried to get my fingers up to straighten a curl or two, but I couldn't, of course. So I turned around to have a look at the way I was tied. My wrists had been crossed and bound with thin rope. It was not the lovely thick stuff they used on the TV where the girl slips out of it in one minute flat. It was tight and thin and bit back at me when I twisted against its compulsion. It was the first time in my life that I had been tied. It was the oddest feeling.

It wasn't until then that I thought of the door. I backed up against it and tried one tied hand to turn the knob. It refused to open, but then I had hardly expected it would. So I went back to the mirror and started to work in earnest on

the job of getting my hands free. I know now how hopeless it was, but I didn't know it then. I worked up a pair of chafed wrists and a real sweat of anxiety in the blissful assurance that no bit of twisted rope was going to keep me prisoner. By the time I began to have doubts, I heard the door. I looked back over a bare shoulder at the same smile that had got me into trouble in the first place.

It seems really silly now, but I did what I did almost without volition. I leaped for the nearest corner of the room and thrust my naked body hard into the angle, facing the wall. I knew for sure he must not see my breasts and pubic hair. I waited, trembling.

"Charming!" He waited a breathless moment, then repeated his exclamation. "Yes—charming! You're absolutely perfect."

The defense of my virtue fell a bit flat. I risked another look. He was actually sitting on thy bed, enjoying the sight of my naked body. I tried to not let my voice sound the way I felt.

"Untie my hands, please."

"They have to stay tied. Are you feeling all right?"

"Not with my hands tied like this, and without clothes."

"You would like me to tie you some other way?"

"I don't want to be tied at all, you idiot. Untie me!"

This little exchange seemed to have got us off on the wrong foot.

His tone was condescendingly patient, as though I had a lot to learn. “I expect you’d like an explanation, eh?” he enquired.

“Yes, I would, but give me my clothes first.”

“They have been burned.”

“What!”

“You won’t be needing them any more, and the act seemed symbolic. As I watched them crumble in the fire, it was like the vanishing of your old life.”

I felt twice as naked. I tugged at tied wrists. I was scared. He seemed harmless but he wasn’t. There was something underneath, struggling to get out. I said the only thing I could think of. “All right, what do you want from me—sex?”

“Not now. Maybe if you have to be punished.”

There was a clue there, I was sure of it.

“I’m not a child!” I flared up. “You can’t punish me. And, anyway, why would you want to? Look, let me go and we’ll say nothing about this. I can wrap a sheet or something around me in the taxi.”

“How long do you intend to stand in the corner like a

naughty schoolgirl?"

"Until you give me something to cover myself."

"That's silly. I undressed you when you were unconscious. I've already had a good look at your front. Now I'm seeing your back. What else is there?"

He was right. I felt more foolish and more naked than ever, but my body hugged the crevice nonetheless. There was no way I could turn and face him.

"I'm not going to walk around naked for you," I told him vehemently. "If you won't cover me up, I'll just stand here."

"You'll get awfully tired."

"So, all right. I get tired?"

"I'll leave you alone for awhile. When I return, I'll expect you to stop being silly."

He actually went out and locked the door. I did a quick assessment, standing again before the mirror and working like crazy at my wrists. Why hadn't he used force? He could handle me easily with my hands tied the way they were. He could have dragged me out of the corner and had a good look at all of me. He made no sense yet, but there was still time. I felt a bit like a tasty morsel being savored before being eaten. One thing for sure—I had to get my hands free.

Still working away at the rope on my wrists, I went to the

window and got a surprise. The scene was pleasant English countryside in midsummer, but the house I was in was unexpected. What I could see of it made it out to be one of those old places built like a castle after they stopped building castles. I suppose it was hard for them to think of a big house without battlements, so they put them on. I suspected the proper name for it would be a manor house. It was beautiful and looked like my kidnapper must have money. A man who could afford a home like this did not need to kidnap girls. My mind raced with conjecture, my hands twisting steadily against their bonds.

There was a contradition. It stood out a mile. My abductor was not the type. He did not fit the house. He certainly did not act like a kidnapper. His interest in rape was minimal, but he had committed a crime for which he could be imprisoned for most of his life. Thought of the power I would have over him if lever got free gave me a thrill, but at that moment it was me who was the prisoner. I had yet to learn the duration of my sentence. Of course, I was still cherishing a hope that the whole thing was a joke and that I'd be back at the hotel in time for dinner. I was having no luck at all with my hands, so the hope was dim. His competence in tying me was another contradiction.

The turning of the lock sent me scurrying back to my corner, but it did me no good. The way he grasped my arm was almost casual, and he was surprisingly strong. I was plucked from my crevice like a clam from its shell and pulled out into the room. My captor got between me and

my refuse and turned me around to enjoy a full frontal view of everything I had been covering up all my life. When he released my arm and stepped back to look, I turned my back to him and stood there, panting, but he was having none of that. I was whirled around again and given a thrust to send me sprawling on the bed. The voice that snapped at me now held authority.

“Stay there! You can sit up if you want, but don’t turn away.”

“You’re shaming me.”

“Yes. It will pass.”

I sat up. It felt less wanton. But I was sure my breasts stuck out like beacons and my pubic hair was six inches long. The temptation to flatten myself face down on the covers was tremendous, or to make a run for the open door, but either way I would get his hands on me and I didn’t want them. With me on the bed, my captor chose a chair and made himself comfortable.

“My name is Christopher,” he informed pleasantly. “Don’t ever call me Chris.”

I glared at him. I wanted to scream or shed tears or beat my fists. I had never felt so vulnerable.

“Your name is Priscilla Hendry. You will be called Puss. I will call you Puss until I think up something better. Oh, and you’re an American tourist. I arranged to cancel your hotel

and pick up your luggage. When I saw you yesterday, I knew you were the one."

I didn't bother to answer. I just sat, wishing I could disappear. I had even given up twisting my hands against his cords. I felt lost and abused and far from home. I longed to weep.

"I only came by this place a year or so ago," he volunteered conversationally, as though I would be interested. "We had been poor relations all my life, and then a dozen deaths inside a few years made me the last of the line. I inherited the estate and quite a bit of money."

"Then you can hire a professional girl. You don't need me."

I don't think he even heard me. He went on talking, dreamily.

"My parents had known of the connection. They told me, never dreaming it would come true. As a kid, I used to build fantasies about knights and fair ladies. When I inherited all this and came to live here, I knew I had to make that dream come true."

"But I'm not your fair lady; I'm an American tourist who wants to go home."

"You're perfect—the raven-haired beauty of the legend."

I sighed to myself. Now I was to become a legend! But I kept quiet.

“The Lady Ilena was kidnapped by an ancestor of mine. He fell in love with her and got repulsed by her and her father, so he killed the old man and took the girl. He imprisoned her in a quite lovely stone chamber, high up where she had lots of light and a view. He was sure she’d fall in love with him.” He paused. “The chamber is still there, unchanged.”

“Keep it. I prefer the hotel.”

“You’ve seen the last of that hotel, you know.”

I picked up a menacing tone in his voice. It was there, underneath, laying in wait for me.

“That ancestor was an idiot,” I told him bluntly. “And so are you. Why don’t you sell this whole thing and emigrate to the U.S.? You might learn to grow up there.”

It was his turn to sigh. I expect his ancestor sighed too. Neither of them seemed to know a thing about girls.

“I expect I’ll have to do the same as he did. He punished Lady Ilena whenever she was rude or haughty or uppity the way you are now. He was certain he could win her over.”

“The guy was nuts!”

“He kept her chained, of course. Not so she couldn’t move, but just to break her spirit.”

“How long did he carry on this nonsense?”

“For years. That’s what made it a legend. Ilena died trying to escape. She fell from the window. The room’s way up. I’ve had the window properly barred, though.”

I shivered. I could just imagine the poor girl and a nitwit like this Christopher guy. I shivered again.

“Look, buster,” I demanded, “you’re not thinking of me to play this Ilena part, are you?”

“You’re here.”

That said it all. I could have cried in frustration, because at that point I believed all that was keeping me prisoner was my tied hands. If I could only get rid of the cords around my wrists, I thought, I could hit this dreamy-eyed ass over the head with a chair and go home.

Resentfully, I said, “You can’t possibly keep me prisoner for long. There’s the police and all. Don’t you realize what a risk you’re taking?”

“I’ve thought about it. It’s a risk I’m willing to take.”

“And I’m bound to escape sometime.”

“You must forget about escape. I expect it will take a bit of time, but when you do, you’ll be a much happier girl.” He gazed at me wistfully. “I’ll never allow you the slightest opportunity of escape. Like, now I’m not going to untie your hands. I want you to get the feel of being helpless.”

“You rotten son of a bitch!”

“Quite soon I’ll start punishing you for saying things like that. But it’s still early yet. I know you’re a bit put out.”

“I’m mad as a hornet! You’re making me hate you. If you’d met me at the hotel, I wouldn’t feel mad at you at all. We might have had dinner together.” I eyed him hopefully. “We still could—if you wanted.”

“I’m not that much of a ninny.”

“Well, you want feminine company. I’m offering it to you.”

“I have it now. I have you.”

“All you have is a prisoner.”

“That’s better than taking a girl to dinner and having her pick all the most expensive things she can find on the menu, then not even give you a kiss.”

“We’re not like that. I bet you’ve never taken a girl out to dinner, have you?”

“Never had the money—not till this happened.”

So I had a socially deprived malcontent on my hands! Or he had me. I looked at his nice smile, and the rest of him was nice too. I wondered how I would cope. I wasn’t hating him yet, but I had met the English middle class with all their hang-ups. It wasn’t going to be easy. In desperation, I slipped to my knees and begged.

“Please untie my hands—please, please!”

For a moment I thought I had him. He wavered. I was sure I looked pretty and appealing, head bowed and on my knees before my conqueror. I’d show him I was better than his rotten legend. I saw the battle in his face, but the wrong side won.

“You have to stay helpless,” he said. “I want you helpless. Every girl should be helpless for a year or two. It would do miracles for them.”

“That’s silly. How do you come to be such an authority on females?”

“I just know. And anyway, there’s the legend. I’m going to follow it.”

“It doesn’t seem to have done your ancestor much good.”

“If he’d had the window barred, it would’ve worked out. You’ll see.”

The crazy asshole! I longed to slap his silly smile off his face. I longed for my hands. I was denied both, so I slipped him a real zinger.

“All right, I’ll marry you tomorrow. How’s that? That’ll save us both a lot of trouble.”

His smile vanished. He looked sad and deflated. “You’re just saying that.”

“No, I’m not! Your Lady Ilena was hundreds of years ago. I’m different.”

“You’re spoiling things. All you want is to get your hands free.”

From his point of view, I guess he was right. My problem was growing by the minute. I got up off my knees awkwardly. Everything’s awkward when your hands are tied behind your back. I sat back on the bed.

“What you want is to condition me over a long period of time,” I said. “That must have been the thrill for your ancestor, and now you want to do the same with me. You want to break a girl down—make her humble and abject and anxious to please.”

“Yes, of course!” His smile was drifting back. “I knew you would understand.”

“But look, if two of your cricket teams decided on the play and the score beforehand, there’d be no need to play the game.

“You’re missing the real point, Puss. You’re talking pretty much as though you were free and had a choice. But you’re not free—you’re a prisoner. I can even stop you from talking. I’ll show you!”

“Never mind.”

That was as far as I got. He must have had the gag in his

pocket. I rejected his suggestion that I open my mouth. I kicked him in the stomach and fought all I could until he had me pinned down with a knee in my back. When he pinched my nose, I opened my mouth and he thrust something horrible inside, buckling the broad strap at the back of my neck. The band of soft leather clamped my lips, my mouth now full. He lifted me up the way I had been before and watched as I shook my head in a fury of rejection, making horrible little noises. I couldn't say a word.

"You see! You really don't have much choice about things." I glared.

He went to a drawer and returned with a slim yellow length of cane which he flexed back and forth for me to get a good look.

"A supply of these was imported from Singapore just for you, Puss. Starting tomorrow, whenever you are deliberately rude or flagrantly disobey me, you'll get six stingers with this across your bottom. You've probably heard the English expression—'six of the best.'"

I wanted to tell him that was for horrible little schoolboys, not for grown-up girls, but I couldn't say a thing. So I sniffed. A sniff can be very eloquent.

"It will teach you to be what I want."

I longed to kill him.

"I'm going to take the gag away now. It was just a demon-

stration. I hope you don't make me use it. I want us to communicate. But in a moment, when you can talk again, watch what you say!"

I kept still while my mouth was unstrapped. A lot of abuse had crossed my mind, but I wasn't about to utter a word of it. His rotten demonstration had sure enough had an effect of me. When I was well rid of the beastly thing, I even politely said, "Thank you."

"That's better. We do have to talk. Oh, and by the way, there is also a whip. The cane is for your bottom and the whip for your back."

"How thoughtful."

"That's sarcasm. Don't use it tomorrow."

He had used my first name twice. I decided to use his. "You know, Christopher, the girl you're trying to create will be an awful bore?"

"Why?"

"She'll be scared of saying anything that matters for fear of getting her ass whipped."

"Don't use that word—it's vulgar."

"Well, bottom sounds like diapers and Johnson's Powder."

"Nonetheless, that's the word you'll use." He was still looking at my breasts, entranced, while I sat and fidgeted and

gazed at the yellow strip he'd placed across his knees. "Aren't you curious about how I live here—the absence of servants and stuff'?"

"No."

"I live alone. If people knock on the door and I don't answer, they go away. The place gets dusty, but I get someone in twice a year. You and I have the place to ourselves. You'll be absolutely safe."

"You mean I won't get a chance at finding help. Christopher, you're being a real bastard with me. Don't you see—"

"That's another word you won't use."

"Why won't you give me a chance to like you, Christopher? The way we're going, I'm not getting to like you at all. You keep me frightened. Don't you realize you're robbing me of my life?"

"Your life will be much more vivid here with me."

"What—locked in a stone room with a barred window! And get my ass whipped whenever I say a wrong word—oops! Sorry 'bout that."

"You're not sorry; you said it on purpose."

For a moment I thought I'd get it right there. I was picking up vibrations. This guy might see the thing on his lap as a punishment, but what he really wanted was an excuse to

use it on me. He wanted to hear the splat of it on a girl's flesh and watch for the weal to come. I didn't see him as a sadist.

"You're treating me like a kid." He was following a train of thought. "You talk down to me. You think I'm naive. You don't even try to look for the beauty that's in what I'm trying to do."

"I don't think there is any. For you, maybe, but not for me."

He was not displeased. "That's what the manuscript said. The Lady Ilena refused to see. No matter what was done to her, she remained haughty and condescending. I can't call you haughty, but you've got the American way of looking down on us."

I passed on that one; I could see I was not going to win. So I asked, "I wish you'd take me out to dinner—it's time."

"Don't be idiotic!"

"It's not idiotic. If you'll take me out to dinner, I'll promise to come back here with you."

"You'd blow the whistle on me, and I couldn't really blame you."

"I'll make a promise not to. Besides, you'll be with me all the time."

"You could simply walk away."

“But I wouldn’t. My promise is worth something.”

I had him baffled. He wanted to take me out, I could tell. He nodded slowly and said, “If I put something very valuable in your bag, I could accuse you of stealing it if you make a fuss. You’d go to prison.”

“Sure, you do that. It gives you leverage. By the way, do I still have a bag?”

“I lied to you about burning your things. It made a good gesture. But I have them put away safely.”

“Wonderful! Is it a deal?” I could sense his conflict, so I added, “This is a lot more difficult for me than for you. I’ll love the dinner. But coming back, I’ll have to grit my teeth.”

Christopher sat still for quite awhile. My heart was thudding. Finally he rose and approached me.

“Sit still. I’ll get your clothes.”

I bathed and did my hair. I dressed. Clothed, I should have been confident and triumphant, but I was not. I found myself diffident and shy, like a girl on her first date. The glorious moment when Christopher untied my hands had been an ecstasy all too brief. I was trembling again. In his little car I was vividly excited and aware of freedom.

“Isn’t this nice?” I said. “Our first date. Thank you for taking me out to dinner.”

The poor chap was in worse shape than I was. He had had his dream safe. Now he was risking it all—and for what? So I asked. He thought it over carefully and answered haltingly.

"Because I don't want to you to see me as … what you would call a bastard. I want you to see me as I am—a decent sort who can be kind."

I stamped heavily on what I could have said. I wasn't going to blow things by accusing him. Instead, I said brightly, "This is a lovely countryside."

"Yes, isn't it?"

His trite remark told me what a job I'd taken on. By now he was probably regretting the freeom he'd given me. He was probably expecting me to leap out of the car and run. It's what I wanted to do, or maybe wait until we came to town and then go for the first policeman. But I couldn't see my promise as being done under coercion. I'd made it mostly to get my hands untied. In that light it was selfish, and I'd given my word without prompting. This going out for dinner was my idea. I couldn't see any way I should renege. It was crazy!

Christopher had chosen a sizable and well patronized pub. Some of them have marvelous dining rooms. This one was super. Seated and grinning at each other across the white linen, we got back to normal. I had a whisky and soda, same as Christopher. It's no use asking for your favorite

cocktail in these places. Mostly they've never heard of it and glare at you as though you're withholding foreign aid. But their food is magnificent, it really is. When we had eaten a bit, we both felt better.

"Doesn't seem possible, does it?" Christopher was fighting anxiety. "I mean, after this you'll go back to Wyngate House with me."

"Is that the name of that lovely old house?"

"Yes. It's the family name too. I'm Christopher Wyngate. How do you do?"

We laughed. His offhand humor made him seem more human. "It does seem sort of crazy," I agreed. "Will you want to tie my hands again?"

"Of course. You do understand, don't you?"

I understood all right. Regardless of logic, whatever had happened to his Lady Ilena was going to happen to me. I had become a legend. Common sense didn't count.

"Oh, sure, I understand," I said tolerantly. "Don't let's dwell on it. By the way, what was your ancestor's name—the one who started this whole thing?"

"Randolph—Sir Randolph, actually. He was a baronet. The title is not hereditary."

I would have liked to kick Sir Randolph where it hurt, but I

listened to a brief, animated discourse on the Wyngate family. I'd have listened to anything that diverted my captor from his favorite theme.

Christopher paused abruptly and asked, "Do you mind if I start calling you Ilena from now on?"

"Be my guest."

Before he could get going again on the fifth generation, there was an interruption. I liked the interruption. It was one of the nicer kinds of Englishmen, the sort with charm, good manners, and just so damn good looking he gets your heart to fluttering.

With the ease of liking and being liked, he asked, "Where have you been keeping her, you sly dog?"

"Ilena Hendry, Mr. Dick Travers."

It was so frightfully British and correct. I saw eyes narrow in a memory of my new name, but nothing was said except the expected.

"Sit down and join us, Dick. Ilena won't mind."

Christopher sounded as though he really meant it. Dick Travers took a quick look around and said, "Frightfully sorry, old chap, but I'm meeting Diane Heselton."

"Let's all sit together," I said quickly.

The four of us chatted happily. Tension fled. But I soon

realized we were not sorted right. I was palpitating over Dick Travers, and Diane was watering at the mouth over Christopher. Christopher was a catch all right—the house and all that money! There was a gleam in Diane's eye, and I was almost ready to suggest we trade places when I realized she was a platinum blonde and in no way eligible for the role of Ilena. Besides, Christopher wouldn't dare kidnap her; it was too close to home.

After we had eaten, we retired to the lounge for coffee and brandy. These lounges are another anomaly of English life. Everyone there had a lounge of their own and a drawing room and a study and all sorts of place to sit and sip. But no, the hotel lounge was the place, so you adjourned there to try and impress each other by mentioning large transactions and dropping names. A recent visit to the south of France is always good for points.

Diane Heselton ascertained I was American and consigned me instantly to outer darkness and snide jibes. But Dick Travers glinted my way frequently, and I glinted back. I was absurdly pleased to learn that he and Diane were not engaged. He was a lawyer. They call them solicitors in England. I could tell he was sharp. I could also tell that he was on to something. I expect Christopher and I were giving off vibes like crazy. Anyway, in spite of Diane, it was a very nice time. I had to wonder what they'd have thought if they'd known about me.

The mood lasted us halfway back to Wyngate House. But by

then Christopher's tension and my heartbeats clashed to a point where I simply had to put my hand reassuringly on his arm and say, "Please, don't worry. It's all right."

"You'll really go through with it?"

"I'm here, aren't I?"

"You have to be very special."

"Or very foolish."

"I know. Most people would say that." He gave me a sideways grin. "You know I've been nervous. You had every chance to try and escape. But I never really doubted you."

The big old house swallowed us up, but it was not a shivery place. I think the word for it would be benign. It was tolerant of human frailty. Christopher became the little boy again.

"You can stay in that bedroom for tonight," he suggested diffidently. "I expect you're tired."

I had to be puzzled about sex, so I bluntly asked, "Don't I have to yield a tribute?"

He didn't get it right off, but then he was flustered. "Please don't talk about it. This is not the time."

That was okay by me. When we reached the bedroom, I took the plunge instantly. Best not to think. Turning, I crossed my wrists behind my back and said, "There you are

—tie my hands again."

There was a pregnant silence before Christopher said, "I'm afraid you've forgotten to take your clothes off."

"Do I have to?"

"Yes, you do. You can't get into bed fully dressed."

I was back to square one. Stripping myself naked didn't seem any easier the second time. "May I undress in the bathroom?" asked hopefully.

"No, do it here—in front of me. I want to watch. You can go to the bathroom afterwards."

I thought of rebelling, but it was too late. I'd never have made it to the door. My heart pounding, I took off my clothes. I didn't do it with my back to him either. Being coy would make it worse for me and better for him. When I had put the last of my things in a drawer, I faced Christopher and stretched. I mean, what more could I do? I then went to the bathroom.

Coming back into the room was bad. There he was, waiting. He was running a length of cord back and forth from hand to hand. Sight of it made me shiver. I had already offered myself to be tied, and it had fallen flat. Now I had to do it again, and this time there was something portentious and terribly final about the act, but I went to him, gritted my teeth, turned my back, and crossed my wrists behind.

Nuts! Don't ask me to explain.

While I was being tied, there flitted through my mind all the applicable cliches, like "walking the last mile" or "crossing the Rubicon" or "the point of no return." The one I sort of liked was "the prison door slammed on the hapless girl." Maybe I made that one up; I don't recall reading it anywhere. But, towards the end of being tied, I realized my breasts were sticking out prettily, and I was standing very straight and erect, and I probably looked very pretty and appealing. I felt absurdly feminine and delicious. I can't explain that either.

"I don't want you wearing your wrists out, so I'll let you in on a little trick." Christopher held up pliers and a bit of wire. "I twist this around the knot and clamp it down. Fingers won't touch it. Takes a pair of pliers to get you loose." He put the pliers to work in back. He then turned me around, put the pliers in his pocket, and kissed me. "Goodnight, Ilena," he said, and then went out and locked the door.

I stood, alone and naked. I twisted my hands. It felt familiar and very, very hopeless now that I knew about the wire. I looked around the room. Everything was pleasant and normal except me and my tied hands. But they were not obtrusive. I couldn't see them unless I backed up to the mirror. I used them to turn off the light. It wasn't easy. It wasn't easy to get into bed properly either. I had to push back the covers with my feet, then insert them and my legs. I wiggled

down. While my bound hands were fruitlessly trying to cover my nudity, I fell asleep.

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Caned

THE MORNING FOUND ANOTHER ME. There was no clock, but it was probably early. I lay there drowsily, no longer trying to free my hands. Christopher's demonstration with the wire discouraged me. I was tied to stay. In the new fresh sunlight I bitterly cursed myself for being such a gullable idiot as to ever let myself be tied again after being free. But that was the past. If there is a good thing about a girl having her hands tied the way mine were, it's freedom from decision. I lay and savored it.

Christopher brought breakfast for both of us. He fed me mine. I was careful not to ask to be untied or set free. He seemed pleased with the whole thing, and I wasn't about to make him mad. He made me stand and walk around a bit so he could get the full effect of his creation. Yes, he made me do it—that's the word. If I didn't do as I was told, he could make me. It was that simple.

I enjoyed being fed. It was amusing. We managed a bit of small talk without contention. At the end of it Christopher asked, "Would you like me to give you a bath?"

It was a real zinger. He was grinning, knowing my thoughts, but it wasn't a lewd grin—just amused and curious. My angry negative died. I thought about tomorrow and the next day and the next. Sooner or later, I would

have to give in.

“Yes,” I finally said. “Thank you. That would be nice. I suppose it’s no good asking you to untie my hands so I can wash myself.”

“No use at all, Ilena.”

“If you’d give me my hands once a day, it would save an awful lot of bother for you.”

“It’s not a bother, it’s a pleasure.”

I was sure it was. So I’d have to get used to his hands on me. Such physical contact as we’d had up to then had not been unpleasant. His hands were not creepy crawly; they didn’t make me wince. I let him follow me into the bathroom. I stepped into the tub and looked expectant.

Christopher made a big thing of getting the water just right, then soaped me with a slightly vigorous confidence. He lingered a little on my breasts. When he moved down to lather my pussy, I asked him straight.

“Doesn’t this get you sexually excited?”

“Yes.”

He was right—it did. I could see. Mischief prompted me to ask, “And you’re not going to do it? I couldn’t stop you.”

“I told you not to talk about it, so don’t!”

I shut up. I'd find out about my captor and sex soon enough. He was either stuck with a middle class complex or was saving it up for some grand finale. Anyway, it was easy to slip him another poser.

"What about my hair? It'll need washing and fixing."

My hair was worse for him than sex. Christopher was stymied. Irritably, he said, "I'll think about it, but not now. Maybe I'll learn how to do it for you."

"Is keeping my hands tied that important?"

"Yes."

I knew it was so. I was fighting a fixation. I let it drop. I kept quiet while I was dried with a most expensive towel. When we got back in the bedroom and I stood, awaiting his pleasure, he said, in a faintly apologetic way, "I have a few things for you."

I was sure he did. My spirits fell. I was mad about my hair. I wanted to look nice for him, and you know how a girl is about her hair. But I just gave him my full respectful attention. "I want you to get used to being tied."

I stood like a dummy and watched him get rope from a drawer. I could well imagine Wyndham House had a lot of such drawers. "Your elbows, Ilena. They have to be tied."

"What on earth for! They can't go anywhere without me." Christopher conceded me a smile and said, "Turn around."

So I got my elbows tied. Because of crossed wrists, they couldn't be clamped tight, but he got them as tight as was possible. My response was immediate: "That hurts!"

"I'll loop several strands around so as to spread the stress."

"It still hurts. I don't see any sense—"

"Shut up! You don't have to see sense. You just obey!"

"Look, Christopher, I'm here pretty much by my own consent—"

"That makes no difference. If it got you privilege, the whole thing would fall flat. Your elbows don't hurt that bad."

I had to do another little walk for his approval. I felt stupid and awkward. Tied elbows made me walk funny, and my breasts stuck out shamelessly. If I was helpless before, I was ten times more helpless now.

"See what I mean, Ilena?"

"I suppose so." I fluttered my shoulders; it was all I could do. "If I ever get back to having just my hands tied, I'll be so glad I won't complain about them any more."

"That wasn't exactly—well, never mind. Ready for the tour?"

"Tied for the tour?" I quipped. "Yes, I'm ready."

"You look very sweet."

“I don’t feel very sweet. But thanks anyway.”

“There’s something else, Ilena.”

“Oh, shit, what next!”

The exclamation slipped out of me without control. Christopher visibly winced. For a moment I wondered if this was going to be my first taste of his lousy “six of the best.”

“I’ve warned you about vulgarity,” he tersely reprimanded. “Sorry! I really am. I’ll watch it.”

“Please do. I want our time together to be enjoyable.”

I almost told him how he could make it more enjoyable for me, but I swallowed that too. Helplessly, I enquired, “What was the something else?”

“Ah, yes! It will get you closer to the Ilena role. It’s shackles for your feet, or call them leg irons, or simply chains—whatever you find most agreeable.”

I had to bite my tongue on that one too. Christopher sure does give a girl a lot of openings. Lamely, I said, “Don’t let’s call them leg irons—that sounds horrible.”

“I know what you mean.” He opened another drawer and hauled out about a hundred pounds of links and iron bands.

“What—all that! For just my feet?”

“The chain between your ankles is quite long. Wearing them is actually no more than an affirmation of authority.”

“How nice!”

“That was sarcasm. I wish you’d curb it.”

“Sorry again. Look, Christopher, you want to take me for a long walk so you chain my feet together—isn’t that inconsistent?” My captor pursed his lips, no doubt praying for patience. I knew myself on thin ice. “Our tour will be leisurely,” he explained. “It makes for a wonderful opportunity to get you used to restraints. You’ll likely trip up a bit at first, but by the time we’re through—”

“I’ll promise to behave perfectly if you don’t—”

My captor held up a warning hand. “Stop right there. Your feet will be chained, and that’s the end of it. Stick one of them out.” I obeyed. I watched the broad metal of the band as it was locked safely on my ankle. Then I thrust my other foot forward. I’d gone past any point of argument.

Unthinking, I said, “Please hold on to my arm. I don’t want to fall.”

“Yes, good,” Christopher said quietly. “I want you to depend on me.”

It was an adventure. I fought yesterday and tomorrow in the excitement of walking with chained feet. It was like a party game. I was terribly intent and determined to carry it

off. If you want to know why, I suppose it's because I'm female and Christopher was the only male in sight, and I wanted to show to good advantage. I took my first cautious step. The chain between my ankles rattled in approval.

"There, you're doing fine." The hand that had held my arm now patted my bottom but hastily grasped above my elbow again as I trode on the swirling links. "Just take it easy," Christopher counselled. "I want you graceful and relaxed as you walk in chains."

What the hell! The whole thing's crazy. I clinked along under the guidance of the male hand until we got to the polished hardwood of the passage. After my first few steps, I stopped in disgust.

"Christopher, this awful clatter—the chain!"

"So what? It makes noise. There's no one but you and me."

He urged me on. And thus began my tour of Wyndham House. It was beautiful. It was mellow and benign. But it had seen too many generations come and go to care much about either of us. Old English houses have this impersonal quality about them. They are too big for intimacy. As though placating unseen gods, the English polish their floors and furniture until there is forever an odor of whatever polish they use. It greets you when you enter, daring you to leave a fingerprint on its hallowed oak. Ghosts walked beside us. I sensed Sir Randolph leering at me from the wings.

Out of all I saw, three things remain vivid memories: the dungeon, the room for punishments, and the chamber I am chained in now. Christopher showed them to me in that order. When he pushed open the door to the dungon, I hope he felt me cringe.

“I’m not sure anyone was ever in here,” he said doubtfully. “Bit gloomy, eh?”

If I had possessed hands at the moment, I would have clutched him. The atmosphere of Wyndham’s dungeon reached out tentacles to draw me in. But I had no limbs at all. I was just a helpless female body.

“Oh, Christopher!” I gasped.

“Gets to you, doesn’t it?”

“Christopher, don’t ever put me in there—please!”

“That bad?”

“Worse! It’s—it’s a tomb. I’d die. It’s full of ghosts.”

“Well, if you behave yourself …”

That was as far as he’d budge on the dungeon. I guessed he was only holding it over me as a threat, but I was still frightened. The punishment room, in spite of its name, was a relief.

“The room of punishment, Ilena. Maybe you’ll never visit it.”

“You mean … a torture chamber?”

“Does it look like that?”

I had to admit it did not. There was a clutter of stuff I couldn’t fathom and a few things I could. I hoped I’d never visit it, but I was sure I would.

“You’ve just had this whole thing made,” I accused.

“That’s right—brand new.”

“Waiting for me?”

“Don’t be morbid, Puss.”

“Well, you wouldn’t have made it if you didn’t intend to use it on someone.”

“Okay, you’re right. But remember, this is a tour. You’re not a candidate.”

“I bet I soon will be.”

“You said that, not me.” He chuckled. “Guilty conscience?”

Number three was the main course after the hors doeuvres. When my captor reverently opened the door to what he called Lady Ilena’s chamber, I gasped in disbelief.

It was pure beauty. The architect of Wyndham had found inspiration. The place was all mellow stone except for the huge barred window. Its ceiling was vaulted, its floor marble. In the center was a marble column, and from it hung

chains. I was ready to bet they weren't the shackles fastened on the Lady Ilena.

"I bet you had the hardware made specially," I accused.

"Yes. It's very special stuff. Like it?"

"The chamber is lovely. I see what you mean about it. You can't expect me to like the metal products." I paused. "They've been made for me, haven't they?"

"Yes."

"How do you know they'll fit?"

"I got Diane to give me measurements. She could have been Ilona if she hadn't been blonde and after my money."

So Christopher was not dumb. He had caught onto Miss Heselton's ploy. He had me curious.

"You mean you brought her up here and told her about the legend?"

"I didn't have to. The legend is well known around here. I told her the measurements were for a relative overseas."

I doubted Diane would have swallowed it. But it didn't matter. What did matter was the shackles on my ankles. I would walk and stumble a long way with them clinking and rattling and chafing my skin.

"Could I get my feet unchained before going back?" I asked

pathetically.

“You’re not going back.”

My heart almost stopped. So this was it—the moment of truth, the place from where there was nowhere else to go. It seemed to have taken me a pitifully little time to get there.

“One more day?” I pleaded. “Just give me one more day!”

“No.”

I was getting used to Christopher’s negatives. Dully, I said, “Very well then, I’ll try and be what you want.”

Nothing is all loss. To be chained I had to be untied. The peeling away of the strictures in my skin gave a moment’s hurt, but as I rubbed and massaged, the feeling was wonderful. I didn’t want to stop. Christopher stood and watched, amused at what I was doing, intrigued by what I was. He was getting a real thing about me, I could tell. Helpfully, his hands comforted one of my elbows while I worked on my wrists.

“Lovely marks. Better than bracelets.”

I looked at the weals. My retort was ungracious. “Well, if that’s what you like.”

“Don’t be angry. I want you to see their beauty the way I do.” Grudgingly, I looked again. I had to admit the effect

was vivid and erotic. My arms were etched with red circles. Christopher was so happy with them it was contagious.

“All right, they’re beautiful,” I conceded. “I hope they go away. I still wish you’d give me one more day.”

“Lady Ilena was locked in here right away after she was captured. We’ll stay with the script.”

“Even the suicide at the end?”

“She was trying to escape. Now there are bars—” He broke it off, grinning at me. “You’re just asserting yourself. I think you’re as interested in what you’re doing as I am. You wouldn’t be here if you weren’t.”

Damn him, he was right. I could have broken my word and been free. Nobody would have blamed me, not even Christopher. I stared at him.

“You mean dinner last night wasn’t just to please me? It was a test?”

“Yes, and it worked.” He chuckled. “And it was your idea.”

I had set my own trap, so I couldn’t complain. But he’d been astute enough to use it. Christopher was growing in stature. There was more to him than just an ingenious boy. To cover chagrin, I clinked my shackled way over to the marble column and its shining attachments.

“That’s not for you today, Ilena.”

I turned. Christopher was holding a chain. Intuitively, I knew what to do. I held out my hands. Reverently, my captor snapped shut a broad wristlet on each of my hands. The chain linking them was as overly long as the one connecting my feet. Fastened, I held up my prisoned hands for us both to admire. Again I had to concede Christopher's point. They were beautiful.

"Break you in easy, Puss." He was almost vibrating with delight. I thought surely he was going to do it then. But he had other ideas. "The bedroom helped you adjust. Now these chains …" Almost in apology for the delay, he added, "I'll put different ones on you tomorrow."

"You've got an erection, Christopher."

He blushed and changed position. "I wish you wouldn't say things like that. It's vulgar."

"I couldn't help noticing."

"Very well." His tone became pompous. "As of this minute, you start being liable to punishment."

"Oh, Christopher—really! What does that mean?"

"Whenever you offend me, you'll be punished."

"You mean that 'six of the best' nonsense? I won't even know when I'm stepping out of line."

"I'll type out a list of rules."

He was so eager and concerned. I didn't have the heart to make fun of him. Besides, I wasn't all that sure of how certain he might be about caning my bottom. Mentally, I still thought of it as whipping my ass.

"I guess that about covers everything," he said, picking up discarded rope, pliers, and wire.

We stood, facing each other, feeling awkward. I had a hundred things to say, but I couldn't manage a single word. Defeatingly, my captor raised one of my chained hands and kissed it gently. He then left. The huge door thudded shut. The outside bolts shot home with a crash. I had become the latest prisoner of Wyngate House.

I stood as I was for quite awhile. My mind crowded with condemnation. I had been foolish. There was something about these chains on me that spelt forever. It was possible I had bartered my life. I made play with my hands to watch their links curl and reform and pull tight. There was a strange absence of fear.

I clatttered over to the fatal window and clasped the bars. The view was sweet and comforting: pastoral, holding no menace, a charming English scene. I looked down. It was a long way to the bottom. Lady Ilena must have been desperate. I tried to feel her presence but got no vibes. The legend was really no big deal. That sort of thing must have happened to a lot of girls back then, and maybe it still does. Damn it, it happened to me! I should have been weeping,

but felt more like hysterical laughter.

The big bright chamber accomodated the huge oversize flat couch amiably. Lady Ilena might have slept on it. The thought held a thrill. A really lovely heavy rug was the only covering. It lay waiting for me in a crumpled pile. Yesterday I'd have thought of wrapping it around my naked body, but today I knew better. The couch was the only place to sit, so that's where I went. I played idly with the links of my chains. I twisted wristlets and anklets, but they were snug. If Diane Heselton had modeled for them, it would be a pleasure to see them fastened on her pretty white limbs, but that wasn't likely to happen. I sighed.

The bands and their links held a certain fascination for me. I couldn't keep my fingers away. They weren't more comfortable than having my hands tied behind my back, but they gave me a lot more freedom. Still, they were only for the day. I got up and went to see what I might get tomorrow. There was quite a lot of stuff attached to the column—things to hold me tight or to give me as much freedom as now. Surveying the walls, I saw heavy iron rings imbedded into the stone all over. The vaulted chamber was versatile. It could hold me captive in a variety of positions. It was then that I noticed the narrow door.

I thought of Pandora's box and Bluebeard's forbidden room. But what the hell! There was just one of those funny English latches you press down with your thumb and it won't lock. I used my thumb and peeked inside. It was a

simply gorgeous modern bathroom. It had everything. I stood rooted, fighting a hysterical urge to laugh. It was crazy. Lady Ilena must have turned in her grave or gone green with envy.

I went inside. Christopher must have enlisted more of Diane's aid. He could never have known about all the things in the cupboard and on the shelves. Everything was top quality. I was enraptured and spent the next two hours on my hair. It wasn't until I returned to the bed that I got the true sinister message. That lovely bathroom meant I need never leave this chamber again. If Christopher gave me a little food, he could just leave me there. Suddenly the metal fastened on me weighed a ton.

I got to wondering about the chamber and others like it. They must have originally been designed as a convenience by which someone could be kept around handy for when they were needed, or to keep them out of mischief. I could just imagine the wife or the kids being popped in them at times, of if you apprehended a lawbreaker, he or she could be kept safe until the law arrived. They must have been a real convenience, like the pantry and the toolshed. But, of course, someone was bound to see possibilities of punishment, and that's where they became prisons. I was still in a giggly mood. I easily pictured an argumentative wife emerging after a few days and nights, then well behaved.

But it could happen to me! And it was happening.

I sobered. But what could I do then? Except for punitive appointments, the place was bare. I had to entertain myself—keep from going stir crazy. The only thing I could think of was to take another bath. In the middle of it I heard the slam of bolts announcing Christopher's first visit. There was no lock on the bathroom door, so he came in and sat on the toilet seat, examining my soapy nudity with his usual enjoyment.

"Glad you found the place. I knew you would. Nice, eh?"

"It's a miracle! Oh, thank you, Christopher."

"Needn't let it clash with the legend. The alternative's vulgar."

"It must have cost a fortune."

"Well, yes, but you're the only extravagance I've allowed myself. You're worth every penny too. Didn't I already bathe you this morning?"

"It's just something to do. Christopher, what am I supposed to do with myself locked in here?"

He gave that one a bit of thought while enjoying the nudity I no longer tried to hide. The best he could come up with was pretty lame.

"Hmmmm … the lady Ilena made out."

"I bet she didn't. I bet she went hairy, same way I will if you

keep me here long enough. How about a radio?"

Christopher was shocked. I felt guilty. A radio would shatter all illusions.

"What about something to read then?" I asked hastily.

"But it's out of character!"

"This whole thing's out of character in this day and age. By the way, will water hurt these chains?"

"It's okay—they're stainless steel."

"They make an awful clatter in the tub. Won't they scratch the surface?"

"I won't take them off."

That was that. I knew finality when I heard it.

Lamely, I ventured, "It's terribly lonely in here. It's solitary confinement—in chains."

"So?"

"I never thought it would be like this."

"You haven't given it a chance. You've only been in here a few hours. You're thinking it'll get worse for you, but it could get better as you become accustomed to it."

"It won't."

“I’ve left that list of rules on your couch. You’ve broken a lot of them already.” Christopher paused thoughtfully. “There’s nothing like a punishment to offset boredom.”

Startled, I looked up. “You mean whip my ass?”

“There you go! You see?”

“Never mind. I’m not that bored.”

“But you are delinquent. Ilena, I’ve decided to give you your first punishment.”

He meant it! He was so damn solemn that I laughed.

“Oh, come on! This whole thing you’re trying to do is impractical.” I saw his hurt, so I hastily added, “I’ll go along with it and play it out with you if you’ll place a period on it. How about a week? I can stand a week.”

“No.”

“All right, a month. That’s more than most girls would go for.”

“No. I don’t have to bargain, Ilena. I’ve got you. You can’t escape. I can do whatever I want with you.” He gave me a lovely hurt look and pleaded, “Don’t you understand?”

“Yes, I know! The legend! Oh, Christopher!”

I got out of the tub and allowed him to dry me. He seemed to enjoy it, and he did it well.

“We’ll go to the room now.”

Yes, he was really going to punish me! I knew for sure I could never talk him out of this one. I was going to get my ass whipped. He gripped my arm and led me to my doom. It was an odd sort of contraption I couldn’t quite figure out. Christopher kicked apart a couple of planks.

“Step between these, please,” he said.

“I can’t—I’m chained.”

With a gesture of irritation, Christopher knelt and unlocked the shackles from my ankles. For a moment he looked at my hands in indecision, then unlocked them too.

Something snapped. I suppose it was my last straw. I didn’t think. I leaped for the door and actually got out into the hallway before he caught me, dragging me back inside by one arm while I beat at him with the other and screamed. We had the most wonderful fight until I was exhausted. He had me flat on my face, his knee in my back, and an arm twisting painfully in his firm grip.

“Give up?” he demanded.

I yelped and gasped until I finally I said, “Yes! I’ll do what you want.”

I scorned his proffered hand and got up by myself, feeling sheepish and tidying my hair.

“I had to do that,” I told him firmly. “I just had to. If you’d named a period, I don’t think it would have happened.”

“I understand. But it doubles your punishment, you know.”

“Yes, of course.”

It was like a nightmare in which you do and say irrational things in a most rational way. I stepped between the planks. Christopher pushed them together to imprison my ankles in small holes. There was a lock. I stood, helpless, and began to shiver.

The next was a pillory thing. Christopher grasped my hair —the lovely hair I had worked so hard on—and pulled my neck down into the waiting slot. I didn’t argue about my hands. I put them in the appropriate places. A moment later the yoke was lowered and I was a fixture.

“It positions you perfectly, Ilena. Struggle as much as you wish.”

As usual, he was right. My feet were clamped a foot apart. I was bent way forward to put my head and wrists in the stocks. The net result was to flagrantly expose my jutting ass. It was a perfect posture in which to be beaten.

Weakly, I asked, “Can’t I apologize or something—say I’m sorry?”

“No.”

Oh, shit! Him and his negatives! I was quaking in suspense. The cute exclamation about getting my ass whipped was about to come true. I pulled at what I was fixed in, but nothing moved at all.

“You started out with ‘six of the best’, Ilena, but now you’ve doubled it. Are you ready?”

Christopher rapped my bent, stretched curves with the cane. I was ready, of course. I didn’t bother to answer. I was the most competently secured young woman in the world. I screamed.

I was cut in two—sliced, scalded, flayed. The agony was worse than anything I had ever dreamed. I kept screaming without pause.

I managed to get a few creaks out of the thing I was fastened in, but that was all my struggles achieved. I simply couldn’t move. There I was with my bent bottom imploring another cut. It came before I’d stopped screaming over number one. I’d had two out of twelve. I knew I’d die.

After the third stroke, I managed to plead, “Please stop! Oh, Christopher, not so hard! Please!”

It was as though I hadn’t spoken. Number four sliced me instantly, and I went back to screaming. Five and six followed with measured cruelty. My master’s voice came to me through a haze of pain.

“It has to be hard, Puss. It’s no good otherwise.”

“But not as hard as this—not with me bent like this!”

The caning of my bottom continued. The strokes cut me one after the other, and I did not die. I did not lose consciousness or anything comfortingly dramatic. I simply screamed and screamed. Quite awhile after the twelfth cut had scalded me, I continued to make sounds. I was quite uncaring when I was released. I stood, numb and sobbing, while Christopher locked his lovely chains back on my wrists and ankles and led me back to Ilena’s chamber. My tears embarrassed him. I think my screams had unnerved him a bit and he felt ashamed. But he resolutely marched me back to my stone room, pushed me in, and slammed the door. I swear he made those bolts crash on purpose. I flung myself down on the couch and sobbed my heart out.

3

Heartbreak

AS USUAL, MY BOY WAS RIGHT. If a girl is bored, you whip her ass. It's sure fire. I sobbed away my pain. I couldn't soothe my weals properly because of the way my hands were chained. But I did my best and discovered puffed, tender skin like you'd never believe. I didn't bother with the mirror. I was too cheesed off. I lay there and cried, then slept a bit and cried some more. The shock and pain of my whipped ass and the fact that he'd actually done it to me left me washed out. I didn't want to think. I just wanted to sleep and not dream. I was a sad little prisoner.

You always feel better in the morning. I did. I went and had a bath. At this rate I'm going to be the most washed girl in the United Kingdom. I lay there and soaked my bottom. Before getting in the water I felt and fingered my wounded curves, one cheek at a time, with one chained hand. It was the best the chain permitted. I also backed up to the mirror to get a look. Holy cow! All that purple and scarlet out of twelve strokes! My poor little ass! It could happen again, and I was pretty sure it would happen again. That really bothered me. I didn't want to behave, but I knew I had to try. I also did my hair. I figured that if I was locked in here all the time, I could pass half of every day with bathing and doing my hair. My hair would be a real blessing. What a laugh that was!

Next I went to have a look out the window. It was a lovely English morning. The scent of flowers came up at me in the heat. It was beautiful, but it made my imprisonment in the tower chamber twice as real. I ought to have been out there with the flowers. I clutched the bars and gazed between them at lost freedom. I know that's a hackneyed pose, but you just do it anyway.

I was still there when Christopher arrived with breakfast. He looked at me uncertainly, not knowing what to expect. I suppose, having beaten a girl's bottom, you get varying reactions. I tried to be jaunty.

"Are you sure Sir Randolph shared breakfast with the Lady Ilena every morning?"

"How's your bottom?"

I turned and showed him. His response was a magnificent erection he couldn't hide. Verbally, he said, "I hope it's taught you a lesson."

"Oh, yes, kind sir, I'll be a good little girl."

Christopher looked at me narrowly and said, "I'm not so sure."

I dropped the banter and said, "It hurt something awful. Please don't ever do it to me again."

He didn't answer, so I knew he would whip me again if it served his purpose. In a huff, I accepted the pain of sitting

on the couch. My bottom didn't like it but what the hell!

"You really took it well," he said soothingly.

"I don't want to talk about it."

"And you've adjusted so well to the chains. It's pretty to see you walk and do things with your hands."

"I'm glad you're pleased."

"You're angry. I don't want you to be angry."

"I'd have thought you'd be pleased. Gives you an excuse to whip my ass again."

"Puss, you're deliberately—"

"Yes, I am. Sorry! I'm just blowing off steam. Did Lady Ilena get herself whipped everyday?"

"I refuse to punish you when you're in this mood. Let's eat."

We ate. I felt better. I drank two cups of coffee. Christopher was not all that happy with me. Contritely, I tried to explain.

"It's the loneliness, Christopher—being locked up like this. I'm afraid I'll get morbid. Whenever you come, I'll try and make the most of the time you spend with me."

"And being chained?"

“I don’t think the chains matter much. They don’t stop me from doing the few things there are to do. What bothers me is so much of not knowing—not knowing what you’ll do with me or how long you’ll keep me a prisoner. I really do wish you’d give me a date to look forward to.”

“Lady Ilena didn’t have a date.”

“In a way she did. Anytime she said yes, Sir Randolph would take her in his arms and waltz off to the church. He must have had halitosis or something for her to hold out like that.”

“We’ll work that story out.”

“How can we! I’ve already said I’ll marry you. We’re not going any place.”

Christopher didn’t have an answer. I could see he was getting angry. There was no use in me winning an argument and getting my ass whipped for it.

Quickly, I said, “We’re at cross purposes. Let’s drop it. Thank you for a lovely breakfast.”

“There’s a change for you today, remember?”

“Oh, sure. What is it?”

“If you’re ready, you can go over by the center pillar.”

I clattered my chains across the stone, then turned to face him in the most submissive pose I could think of, head

bowed, wrist shackles dangling.

“You needn’t look so hangdog, Puss.”

“Sorry, I thought you’d like it.”

It was simple: Christopher did it by installments so I wouldn’t have a chance to dive for the door. He removed the shackles from my feet and replaced them with others that had no connecting chain. Instead, a far longer chain trailed away to the pillar. Each was individual. When he had treated my hands the same way, I stood there with four separate chains attaching me to the stone column. As usual, he stood back and positively gloated over his creation. “Gosh, Puss, you’re gorgeous!”

“If I weren’t, I don’t suppose I’d be in this fix.”

“Would you mind stepping around a bit?”

I stepped around a bit. I clinked. I did several poses for him, hiding nothing of my nudity. Christopher stood, speechless with happiness. I’d never made anyone so happy in my whole life. His happiness infected me.

Reaction came after he had gone. I stood for a moment against the column. I lifted my hand and examined the shining steel around my wrist and the chain falling away from it in a cascade of links. It was old stuff I’d seen before. It was an emphasis on my captivity and had a photogenic quality that obviously pleased my captor. Cautiously, I stepped out into the room.

It was a good thing I had been cautious. My chains went taut and snubbed me all too soon, just short of the couch and way short of the door. The window was a forbidden temptation, and the bathroom door simply laughed at me. I tried this way and that, but only gained or lost a few inches. My captive status had taken a turn for the worse. The unkindest thing of all was that I had nothing but stone to sit on. I could sit and lean back against the pillar, but my poor bottom hurt something awful.

That's how I spent my day. I got angrier and angrier, and then more and more anxious for Christopher to come. When he finally came with supper, I was a very subdued little girl and anxious to please.

"Christopher, I thought I'd die."

He had me do the posing again, then put me back in the everyday chains so I could sit on the couch. I drank thirstily and ate like a horse. By way of making conversation, we had a laugh over Diane Heselton.

"They were the first to visit after I moved in—Diane and her mother. Very formal. I had to make them tea." Christopher sipped wine meditatively. "I could tell they were shocked by absence of servants, but the old lady's main interest was Wyngate House itself. She missed nothing—assessed everything. I bet she knows to a penny what the whole place is worth. Seems like there's a few old masters and a lot of Chippendale and Sheridan stuff. Very top

shelf." He chuckled. "They're still doing that here—marrying their daughters off to the best possible advantage."

I clinked my wrist chain for his benefit and raised my own glass in a fettered hand. "Don't tell me poor Diane wasn't right in there too?"

"She was there all right. She's got lovely breasts, same as you, and she kept giving me hints with them and showed quite a lot of nylon leg. Pretty much like a slave market except in my case it was me they were after, and the bids were all with what Diane had to offer. I might have fell for it if she hadn't been a blonde and I hadn't read the legend."

"Did the poor girl know she was competing with a ghost?"

"Not at the time. I've told her since. I've taken her out to dinner a few times. But I got Dick Travers to take her off my hands." Christopher sighed. "But, of course, he doesn't have Wyngate House."

I went to bed early. There was nothing else to do. Christopher didn't offer to stay and played checkers or get under the covers with me. He wanted my imprisonment to be as real as possible, so he couldn't spend a lot of time keeping me company. I sensed that he'd like to, but was up against his fool legend. Serves him right! Serves me right too.

Day three was the same as day two, only my chains were altered. I had to stand the whole damn time with a collar around my neck and a little short chain to the pillar so I

couldn't sit down. I couldn't do anything except one single step until the collar snubbed my throat. I stood and stood. Boy, was I glad to see Christopher come evening!

Day four I got to stand by the window. A long chain from my shackled hands to a ring in the wall. That was all. I could even sit down. I could certainly enjoy the view. I suspect Christopher was trying to make it up to me for the day before. I was really grateful. Isn't it crazy?

Day five is right now. I'm caught up with the memories. I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, but there is certainly a change today: no chains! Christopher must have read my mind. I was getting so sick of all those metal bands and links and not being able to move without a lot of noise, so I'm back to square one. My hands are tied behind my back and the knots safely wired. In a way it's not as much freedom, but I'm tickled to death about it. It shows how a girl gets conditioned. I don't like that. It scares me, but that's the way it is, and I'm busy thinking.

I've got to get out of this beautiful stone chamber. I can't possibly escape in here—not chained. I have to get somewhere where there's half a chance. I'll play it morbid and see if I can't break Christopher down to give me some sort of change.

"I cried a lot today, Christopher. It bothers me. It's morbid." He was instantly concerned. Men hate tears. They're scared of them. I could tell he was on the verge of saying Lady

Ilena cried a lot too, but he had the decency to keep quiet about his legend. “But are you hurting, or worried about something?”

“Just the loss of my life. I might as well be dead as locked in here.”

“I thought you said it was a lovely room?”

“It is. I just don’t want to spend my life in it without a break.” I looked at him, dewy-eyed, and said, “Christopher, you have no idea how I long to be out in the sunlight—the sunlight I can only see through the bars.”

“Yes, well—”

“And all day I’m so hungry for your company. I simply yearn for these little times when we’re together. I’m just so lonely!”

“Yes, but when you’re a prisoner—”

“But real prisoners in prisons are taken out for exercise, and all the girls eat together, and they work in the laundry and stuff. They’re not lonely the way I am.”

Poor Christopher—he was looking irritated and angry the way he does when his legend is threatened. But men are suckers for sobbing girls. I had got to him.

Slowly, he said, “I suppose I could let you walk around the house the way you are. No, that wouldn’t do! Your feet

would have to be chained."

"I wouldn't mind a bit. That's so wonderful. Oh, thank you, Christopher!"

"No, it wouldn't do." He waved the idea aside. "You wouldn't want to go back. You'd start this all over again, I'm sure of it. You'll just have to get used to being in here. I'll go easier on the chains."

"A little sunlight—please? You can leash me and take me for a walk like a puppy dog."

We both laughed over that one. He said that he would think of something for tomorrow. I could stop crying.

The leash idea seemed to be entirely practical. With my hands tied behind my back and Christopher holding a leash to the collar around my neck, we could have the loveliest walk. No one was ever around. Nobody would see. I suspected this was what he'd do, but I was dead wrong. I got my walk all right, and my feet were free, but the walk was short, only as far as a clump of assorted trees on his own ground. It was a lovely, sunlit place with the light coming down in shafts through the foliage.

"How's this?"

"It's lovely. But how—"

"I'll tie you to a tree for the day."

It was not what I had wanted, but I wasn't about to be ungrateful. I said another "Oh, Christopher!" which didn't really commit me to anything, but it pleased my master. Breathlessly, I backed up against the tree he had chosen. Christopher untied my hands, and I discovered that I could cross them again behind the trunk. It wasn't until he had tied them back there that I realized I had missed a chance to run.

"I'll clamp the knots with wire, Puss. No need to swathe you in rope."

"Thank you, Christopher."

He tied me enough—tummy, shoulders, ankles. I couldn't move much and told him so.

"You're getting what you asked for, Puss."

It was no use arguing. I tried to appear pleased and glad to be out in the air. I actually was. Christopher did his usual gloat and walked around the tree a lot to observe me from every angle. He's become a real connoiseur of a girl in bondage. Reluctantly, he went back to the house, with a promise to bring me a drink later.

Being outdoors was wonderful, but for the rest I wasn't too sure. I couldn't move enough to matter, and the ropes soon started to hurt, so I didn't do much struggling. I just stood against my tree, very erect and very naked, and prayed there wouldn't be too many bugs. England has a lot of

wasps and bees and things. It was a couple of hours before Diane Hesleton showed up.

Wow, what a shock! I could hear her coming, but I couldn't turn to look. Then, all of a sudden, there she was. She was standing right in front of me, her mouth half open, more startled than I was. My heart leapt.

"Good morning, Diane. Boy, am I glad to see you!"

"How on earth—"

"Untie me—quick!"

"But you're naked!"

"That doesn't matter—untie me!"

"Did Christopher do this? Is he insane?"

"Yes, it was Christopher. Get me out of here, please!"

"But you must be there for a reason." She looked bewildered. "Surely Christopher wouldn't—"

"Yes, he would. He has. It's because of some damn-fool legend."

"Oh, that!" Diane's laughter trilled among the trees. "Yes, I know about that. He's quite silly about it. Don't tell me that you are Lady Ilena!"

"I sure am, and look where it's got me. Untie me—please!"

“But you must have got into this by your own free will. I mean, there’s nothing criminal—”

“I’m just plain kidnapped. Call it what you like. He’s kept me prisoner since the night we met. Oh, please get me out of this awful place!”

“You look awfully pretty like that.”

“That’s what Christopher says. Call the police.”

“I certainly won’t! It would cause no end of scandal. But I have to admit I’m curious.”

I couldn’t be sure of her. She was playing with me and taking her time. In fact, she was loving every moment of my helpless nudity.

Doubtfully, she pondered, “I’m not a bit sure I should untie you. You and Christopher must have some sort of game going. I don’t want to be a spoilsport.”

“It’s my life. He’s been keeping me chained in some rotten dungeon.”

“You mean that lovely chamber where that girl was supposed to have been imprisoned?”

“Yes, you know it. How’d you like to be chained in there for the rest of your life?”

“But you’re not chained in there. You’re out here—tied to a tree!”

I realized Diane was not really being mean. She was simply obtuse and loyal to her class. I was an outsider and thus suspect. I struggled helplessly.

“Look, I’m desperate,” I pleaded. “I’ll say something I suppose I shouldn’t, but I don’t have time for niceties. I know you want Christopher, and, well, I don’t. You can have him. He’s a nice guy, but off the beam. Let me loose and help me, and I’ll be out of England on the first flight.”

We were suddenly two girls together, sharing a purpose. The wire and the knots defeated Diane, but she remembered the scissors in her purse. They were puny little feminine things, but she sawed and picked away until I was free. To me it seemed like a long time. I was scared Christopher would show up. I suppose it really only took fifteen minutes until the ropes were on the ground and my arms were around my savior. I was free! No more dungeons. No more chains. If Diane wanted Christopher, she could sure have him. Maybe she’d end up in that lovely stone chamber herself.

We were well on our way when we remembered my nudity. Diane giggled a lot as she took off her blouse and skirt. She also gave me her shoes. On this hot summer day her bra, panties, and bare feet would pass with no more than a raised eyebrow. I was quite respectable, if you didn’t look too close.

“But I can’t possibly take you home. What would Mother

say—arriving like this?"

But Diane was equal to that too. It appeared Dick Travers kept a small country cottage. It was close by. It got used on weekends and for parties. Blushing, Diane admitted to having a key.

I can't tell how good it felt to be free. I was getting a trembling reaction as I realized what I had escaped. Considering how silly I had been, I didn't deserve this, but I was getting it. I was genuinely thankful.

"What's it like to be tied up that way?" Diane asked curiously.

"Frightening and shockingly frustrating."

She looked at me shrewdly. "I've heard there's an erotic kick to it."

"There would be between two pople who loved each other. I've never had a chance to try it that way. Right now I never want to be tied or chained again."

She was still thoughtful. "I couldn't help noticing your bottom. Did Christopher do that to you?"

"It's his idea of a mild punishment."

"Punishment? What on earth for?"

"Mostly sarcasms. He's drawn up a set of rules. I expect he'd show it to you." I had a sudden vision of this girl

chained in the stone chamber as I had been. I couldn't help asking, "Diane, you're not taking Christopher seriously, are you?"

"Nothing you've told me has changed my mind."

"But suppose he locks you in there too, and puts chains on you, and makes you follow his rules?"

Diane giggled. "He won't; my hair's the wrong color. Besides, I know how to handle Christopher. And don't forget my mother. She'd be on him like a ton of bricks."

I shrugged it off. It was no longer my affair. Before slipping away to get some clothes and money, she showed me where things were kept. She also produced a package of that awful stuff the English drink and describe as coffee. She warned me not to open the door for anyone but her.

I boiled the water and made the coffee. All the time I kept telling myself that I was free—that I was going home. I even found the coffee tolerable. I sat and sipped in a roseate glow of happiness. I was shocked back into terror by some solid thumping on the door and urgent pealings of the bell. I crept to the window and looked out.

It was Christopher!

I was really and truly frightened. I knew I couldn't cope with him. I took my coffee and sat in a corner where he couldn't see me through a window. Fevently, I prayed everything was locked. It was a spine-crinkling experience to

know myself the prey separated from the hunter by only a flimsy kitchen door. I crouched and trembled while Christopher the predator went from window to window and door to door. He tried them all. I was petrified, like a fly in a spider's web. Even after the noise stopped, I stayed in my corner. I was positive if I peeked out the window, he'd be staring me in the face.

Diane laughed it off. She said Christopher was bound to come there looking for me. He'd probably go to her home too if he dared broach the subject of a runaway girl to her mother. Anyway, she had brought everything the two of us would need, and she had also phoned Dick Travers. When he arrived, he listened to my story with a lawyer's attention, and we all drank more of the synthetic coffee. It was beautifully cozy, and my heart went pitter-patter every time I looked at Dick. His summation after my harrowing tale showed how strong the caste system still is in rural England.

"You mustn't hold this against Christopher, you know."

"Huh! He's lucky I'm not going to the police."

Dick grinned knowingly. "They'd probably say it was your own fault. Are you sure it wasn't?"

I wasn't sure at all, and he guessed it. Indignantly, I said, "He beat me. Diane's seen the marks."

"But not brutally—not with his fists or a club?"

“Well, no. It was some fool English thing he called ‘six of the best.’”

They absolutely roared with laughter. I watched them plying their handkerchiefs for several moments before stiffly enquiring, “Did I say something funny?”

They explained, between chuckles, that to English ears it had indeed been hilarious. Seeing my hurt, they sobered and asked if I had ever read their Sunday newspaper, The News of the World. I had, and I began to glimpse their point of view. Jokingly, they assured me that if a girl longed to play the role of Ann Boleyn, she could certainly find a chap to play headsman and wield the axe. It would all be considered good English fun.

Once again I shrugged it off. It no longer mattered. They could play their silly games, and I would be safe back in the U.S. It was a good feeling. It was decided that Dick would drive me to Heathrow.

I was so happy. I was sure I was in love with Dick Travers, but there was nothing I could do about it except stay in England, and I was not about to do that. No way! Not with Christopher roaming around loose.

As we drove along, Dick explained how he and Christopher had taken a shine to each other while working on the estate details. This was how he came to be so sympathetic. He was half apologetic for not going and punching Christopher’s nose on my behalf. Seems as though Christopher

had been talking about the legend even then and asking if there were no dark-haired damsels in the neighborhood. I've forgotten just where it was in his discourse that I noticed we were on the wrong road.

"Well, how very silly," he said, pulling over to the side of the road. Almost before we had stopped, he said quickly, "May I have a look at your hands?" A moment later I was looking stupidly down at them myself.

They were handcuffed.

Dick Travers had been neat and quick; he had caught me by surprise. While I was still groping for adequate words, he thoughtfully clicked each cuff a little tighter to make them snug.

In a very English manner, he said, "Frightfully sorry, old girl, but I owe it to Christopher."

I wish I could have been heroic, but in that little car there wasn't room. When I tried to open the door, it wouldn't budge.

"Please don't be angry with me," my companion pleaded with genuine compassion.

"Take them off right now! Quick!" I held up my hands and had a good look at what he had fastened on my wrists. I had never seen handcuffs before. They reeked of police and thieves. My demand was urgent: "Get them off me—quick! They're horrible!"

Dick was very patient. He went over the whole thing again. I gathered that there was a code—a holy bond. You didn't betray a friend or steal his girl. I fell back on a good old standby.

"I'll scream."

"If you think you must."

I screamed. It was awful in that little car. I didn't do it again. "I expect you feel better. Shall we go now?"

"Where?" As if I didn't know!

"Wyngate House."

"So you're a bastard too!" I was close to tears. "I thought you liked me—wanted to help me."

Dick became the indulgent big brother, patting my arm and tilting my chin to kiss my sulky lips. My mind was computing my options like crazy, but I didn't have any options. Even without the handcuffs, I could be easily dealt with. I sat, fists clenched against steel bands, and fumed. Inside there was only terror.

"You've worried too much. Nothing's forever. I'll have a word with Christopher and put him back on the rails. So will Diane."

"Does she know you're doing this to me?"

"No, but she and I will have a talk. What I'm really asking

is for you to play along. Let Christopher work the thing out."

"I refuse."

"I know. That's why I got the handcuffs."

"Where did you get the beastly things?"

"You can buy them."

"You got them for me—for what you're doing?"

"Yes. When Diane phoned, I knew I had to."

I buried my face in my chained hands and cried. After a strained silence, Dick patted me once more and started the motor. I couldn't do anything in that small space, so I just kept right on crying. I hope he hated every tear I shed.

Wyngate House looked just the same, empty and waiting. It was now late afternoon. Dick Travers rang the bell a few times, but there was no answer.

"It's just as well," he said thoughtfully. "I really don't want to get involved."

"Dick, I beg of you—take me to Heathrow."

He answered me with a tiny key with which he unlocked the cuff from my my left wrist. In the solid stone portal there was a ring, a heavy iron thing, the use for which I could not fathom. A moment later I was firmly attached to

it.

Dick Travers kissed me and said, “Try not to hate me. Remember that you have two friends.”

He walked swiftly back to his car. I called after him, but he didn’t return.

4

The Triangle

I WAS DESOLATE—betrayed, shattered, frantic. I stood outside Christopher's front door like a parcel in the post waiting to be picked up. I looked at my handcuffed wrists and at the ring. In a frenzy of frustration, I beat my fist against his door and cried out my agony as though someone was listening. It was a cry in the wilderness, and it didn't help much. I would be there when Christopher came home, a delightful surprise. He would be pleased and relieved, and he would punish me terribly.

After awhile I sat down. I had to hold an arm in the air, but it was better than standing. Against the massive bulk of the house I'd be scarcely noticeable. Sometimes I got up and examined the handcuff again, pulling and twisting, but I knew it was no good. I could never get free of the hateful thing. To be held captive by just a single wrist was too, too cruel. As I sat down for the fifth time, I was sure Wyngate House was quietly laughing at me.

I sat and waited.

By the time my master showed up, it was getting dark. I couldn't complain of the sincerity of my welcome. His face was radiant. After a long, breathless pause, our greetings sounded trite.

"Good evening, Priscilla."

“Hello, Christopher.”

He asked no questions, just gloated. I got up and shook myself like a ruffled hen. The handcuff dominated the scene.

“Got a key to that thing, Puss?”

“If I had, I wouldn’t be standing here.”

“Of course, how silly!”

“Dick Travers dropped it through your letter slot.”

Christopher opened the door. Immediately after he unlocked me from the ring I jerked the cuff from his hand and fled. I got quite a distance, screaming like mad, before he grasped the cuff again and nearly pulled my hand off. It hurt horribly. I was easily controlled with it on the way back. I didn’t want a broken wrist. Christopher took me directly back to my stone prison. Safely inside, he unlocked my wrist.

“Take your clothes off, Priscilla.”

It was too much. I fought again. I was completely free. If I could have found a weapon, I’d have hit Christopher over the head, regardless of whether he lived or died. I was fighting for my freedom and perhaps my life. I made lunge after screaming lunge for the door. Each time Christopher dragged me back, he contrived to strip away a bit of Diane’s clothing. Finally, when I was nude and exhausted, he threw me on the couch. I lay there, panting. Nothing mat-

tered. My conqueror snapped the chains back on my wrists and ankles, and left me along. I was back to square one again. He made a fine slam with my dungeon door and the clash of bolts. I was surprised at how many tears I still had.

In the morning, I lay still, listless and without hope. When walked to the bathroom, the clatter of my chains mocked me. I didn't have the spirit for a bath or my hair. I hoped I looked awful for him. If I could have thrown my breasts and pussy away, I'd have done so, just to spite this young idiot who had made me prisoner. When Christopher opened the door and brought in the tray, I was sitting disconsolately on the couch in the usual way. I was ravenous. I looked in disbelief at the cup off coffee and slice of bread without butter.

"Is this all I get?" I asked.

"That's all. You don't mind if I eat, do you?"

Christopher brought himself just about everything. He proceeded to eat it with relish.

"Why?" I asked lamely.

"You have to be punished."

"Yeah, I expected that. You're going to starve me?"

"Prisoners about to suffer punishment don't get fed."

I nibbled my bread and sipped my coffee. I could see there

were no seconds.

Morosely, I told him, “My bottom hasn’t healed since last time.”

“It won’t be on your bottom.”

My skin crawled. I didn’t have to ask. I knew.

“When?” I asked.

“This morning.”

I finished my coffee and bread, then watched Christopher busy gorging himself. If my feet hadn’t been chained, I’d have kicked the tray sky high. I wondered if I could get through to the “nice boy” side of him.

“Christopher, I ask for mercy. Every prisoner has a right to escape, and I did have help.”

“Lady Ilena tried to escape often. She was always punished.”

“Why don’t you punish Diane too?”

“Because she isn’t my possession.”

“But you would if you could?”

“Of course, and she knows it.”

“Are you sure there’s nothing between you two? I picked up vibes.”

“We’re friends, same as with Dick Travers.”

“Diane would make a wonderful Ilena. She could shave her head and wear a black wig, or she could just dye her hair.” Mischievously, I added. “Head, eyebrows, and the other place.”

“Blondes don’t have much hair down there, not like you. Your pubic hair is gorgeous.”

“Please, Christopher, don’t punish me—not something awful. Maybe put me on bread and water instead.”

“You’ll be whipped.”

I cringed, feeling the bitter scalds. “That’s pure cruelty,” I said flatly. “I don’t think Diane or Dick would admire you for it.”

“I’ve arranged for Diane to come and watch,” he added hastily. “It was by her own request.”

I sat and stared, speechless with horror. Christopher meant every word. It was going to happen.

“Why can’t you show me a little mercy?” I finally asked.

“It would be false to the role.”

“I bet the Lady Ilena didn’t have giggling girls brought in to see her whipped.”

“We can’t know that. And, anyway, Diane is not a giggling

girl. She is sincerely interested in what you and I are doing. I had quite a talk on the phone with her this morning. She's really an intelligent young woman."

I hoped Diane would marry him but good. They deserved each other. She'd snare him sooner or later. This interest in my punishment would be just a part of her ploy.

"Marry her and let me go," I pleaded. "It solves everything."

"You're just trying for freedom, Priscilla."

"She'd let you whip her and chain her and lock her up. I'm sure she would return for Wyngate."

"You're being rude."

"Do I get punished for that too?"

"Puss, you're thinking things can't get worse for you, but they can. They always can. There's always tomorrow."

"Yes, and all the rest of my life. I know."

Bleakly, we stared at each other.

"You were a nice guy that day you picked me up and kidnapped me. You've been nice here and there since. We could have so much fun, but you're allowing the legend to turn you into a monster."

Christopher picked up the tray and left me alone again. He

didn't want to talk about it. Maybe I had scored a point. But he would still whip me—I was certain of that.

I had plenty to think about. In a sudden desire for motion, I got to my feet and walked slowly around my prison—the bathroom, the window, and around the center pillar. The chain connecting my ankles swirled like a snake. I let my shackled hands fall limply, the chain between hanging in a loop over my pussy mound. I was getting over my first shock about Diane. With her present, Christopher surely couldn't go overboard in this punishment I must have. Or could he? Were they two of a kind? I shrugged. It was something I would find out for sure.

I sort of savored this prelude to pain. It had an intriguing air of unreality. I decided not to fight when I was fastened. If I got Christopher all hot and panting, he would find it easier to lay on the whip across my back. If I was sweet and demure, it might touch his heart. In either case I couldn't escape, so I might as well make the best of it.

When the time came, he entered the chamber and asked, "Well, are you ready?"

I followed him like a lamb. I was certain it wouldn't be ordinary, and it wasn't. It was a triangle.

"They used it in the old Imperial Army," he told me proudly. "Mostly out in India."

I just couldn't resist asking, "Did Lady Ilena have one?"

“Possibly. There are no records. Your feet will remain chained until I have secured your hands.”

“Of course.”

I lost my metal wristlets, but got some of leather in exchange. There is something compelling in watching oneself chained or bound. It’s hard to believe it’s really happening. I watched as the broad soft leather was strapped around my wrists.

“Stand on the box, Priscilla.”

I stood on the box, wondering why he was calling me Priscilla instead of Ilena. But it didn’t matter. Obedient to his command, I raised my arms and slipped my wristlets within the maw of a waiting hook. Removal of the box from beneath my feet left me gasping and stretched. Only my toes made contact. While Christopher unlocked the shackles from my ankles, I protested.

“Christopher, I can’t bear this! At least let me stand properly.”

He didn’t answer. Instead, he grasped a freed foot and dragged it far enough to one side to strap it to one base of the infernal machine, then did the same for its twin on the other side. I now hung by my wrists, no contact with the floor at all, and my shielding thighs stretched obscenely apart. I could not look down to see, but knew my pussy was gaping widely.

“This is cruel! Please, Christopher, let me down. You don’t need me like this.” I choked out the thought uppermost in my mind. “Does Dick Travers know you’re doing this to me?”

“No, only Diane.”

“But you mustn’t let her see me like this. She would be embarrassed. It’s obscene.”

“I’m seeing you, Priscilla.”

“Well, you shouldn’t be. I shouldn’t even be fixed this way. It’s awful. I’m so stretched—”

“To me, you look very beautiful.” He made his usual leisurely tour of inspection. “If you’re worrying about your pussy, you can stop. It looks the same as usual, just a bit more on view.”

“It’s a lot more on view. Christopher, you’re not going to whip me like this, are you?”

“Yes.”

“But you don’t need to. This is punishment enough.”

Christopher continued with his gloats. He had all of me on view so had a field day. “You’ve got it wrong,” he said. “This is part of your punishment. You have to be taught not to run away.”

“Gosh, what girl wouldn’t run away from this sort of thing

if she got the chance? You're being terribly unkind."

"It's for your own good."

"Piss on my own good! I think you like hurting me. You're glad of an excuse."

Christopher winced at the naughty word. He's absurd. Then I'll be damned if he didn't kiss me very genttly and for far longer than he had ever done before. He repeated his thing about how beautiful I am, then patted my taut ass a couple of times and left me alone.

I twitched. It was the only movement I could make. I tried it again. It was really no more than a muscle spasm. I went berserk for a painful moment and got a creak or two from the triangle, but that was all. This was by far the worst that Christopher had done to me. Thought of yesterday's freedom was bitter gall.

Diane sauntered in.

We stared at each other assessingly. I knew she wouldn't let me loose, so I didn't ask, but there was a touch of pity in her eyes. She came and kissed me, then teased my nipples for brief seconds. Her voice was only faintly troubled.

"This isn't my idea, Priscilla."

"Was I just played with yesterday—to give Christopher an excuse to do this to me?"

“Goodness no!” Diane looked distressed. “You have to believe me, Priscilla. When you and Dick left, I was sure you were on your way. If it hadn’t been for Dick Travers’s quaint ideas about loyalty and friendship, you’d be safe in the U.S. by now.”

I moaned at the thought of coming that close. Wanly, I asked, “Do you expect to get pleasure from watching me being whipped and hearing me scream?”

Diane pinched my nipples hard in admonition and said, “That’s self-pity and sarcasm, love. I’m here out of curiosity. You have to admit this whole thing’s unique. My goodness, the way Christopher’s got you tied!” Her hand slipped down and cupped my pussy. “Has the silly idiot shown any interest in this?”

“No, not ever.”

“Something funny there. It’s not that he doesn’t like us, and he’s certainly far from impotent. Well, anyway, you won’t be having a baby.”

“I’m desperate, Diane. Can’t you persuade him to marry you and let me go?”

Diane giggled. “Well, not in time to stop what’s going to happen. Honest, if I could, I would.” Her gaze roved over my helplessness. “Will it hurt terribly? I’ve never been whipped.”

“You can’t have any idea of the agony.”

“You must be all curled up inside—the suspense.”

“Of course I am. Diane, please let me loose. Let me go. You easily could.”

“Oh, darling!” She clasped me and kissed me. The human contact felt good. “You know I can’t, and you know why. Please don’t hate me.”

Christopher returned. He was carrying a whip. I looked at it bleakly. Diane looked at it within wide-eyed curiosity. My tummy held a hundred butterflies.

“What have you girls been scheming?”

I had nothing to lose, so I blandly lied. “Diane would like to take my place. She’s curious.”

Big joke—they both laughed.

“Got used to the triangle, eh?”

“Being stripped like this is murder.”

“Should start to whip you then, eh? Sooner we start—”

“I don’t want anything to say about it.”

It was not a long lash. It did not wrap around me. It planted its full venom across my back. It was a new and explosive pain, but I clenched my teeth and closed my eyes.

The whipping of Miss Priscilla Hendry had begun.

It went on forever, but with Diane present it was a conversational whipping in which I got chances to stop screaming and pant my way back to mutter a word or two, aside from the pleading demands.

“The darling’s trying so hard, Christopher. You’re whipping her so cleverly.” Diane was breathless. “Really! I’m so grateful you asked me over.”

Sometimes I did not hear what was said—I was too absorbed with pain—but I remember once Diane came close and teased my nipples as I was whipped. In the middle of it Christopher chose to cut me up between my legs and plant a weal inside the softness of a thigh. It was a new and unexpected agony. I yelped and went berserk against my bonds. Diane stepped back in alarm. I moaned and moaned. In each was anger and terrible hurt.

“Oh, Christopher, that—a girl’s so sensitive in there.”

“One more inside her other thigh?”

“Oh, of course!”

I could do nothing that was not erotic for them. Every motion and sound as I was whipped must have been a delight. I was a gorgeous plaything in sufficient agony to make me interesting. I was a Barbie Doll endowed with nerve ends, all of them aflame.

After centuries, Christopher announced a halt in my whipping. It was bad news. I had hoped it was the end, but

whippings never end. They go on and on.

“I’m off for a drink. You two can talk. But don’t let her get to you with her pleas, Diane.”

I wondered if it was all prearranged. It didn’t matter. I was still panting and whimpering when Diane voiced a naive puzzlement. “Darling, I’m sexually aroused,” she purred, her fingers reaching tentatively for my nipple. “My pussy’s wet. I’m hot and horny.”

“Seeing a girl whipped affects most people like that,” I muttered.

“It does!”

“Why else would they sell those pictures and magazines in Soho?”

“I had always thought of them as filthy and degernate, but this isn’t like that.” She floundered for words. “This has a strange beauty. I’m not sure I can stand much more.”

“Oh, you’ll stand it all right, Diane. It’s me who may not stand it. I guess that I’m only halfway done.”

“Darling, before Christopher comes back I have to say this —”

I cocked an eye. There was in Diane’s voice something to ease my pain. Cynically, I retored, “If you want sex, ask him.”

“Priscilla, it’s not that, although I wouldn’t mind. And one day I will ask the idiot. This is crazy, but what I want most of all right now is to change places with you. I mean, I want to be strapped where you are and whipped.”

“Diane, you really must be excited. That’s what it is, you know: unsatisfied sexual desire.”

“Is that all?”

It was a question I could have asked myself. How would I know? My circumstances right then were hardly conducive to analyzing Diane’s emotions.

“I’ve felt these urges myself,” I said simply. “This whole thing is intensely sexual.”

The poor girl looked disappointed, as though she had made a great discovery and I wasn’t doing it justice.

Defiantly, she repeated, “I’m positively on fire. I’ve never realized what lust was before.”

“Ask Christopher to whip you after he’s had enough of whipping me.”

“I couldn’t possibly. He’d think I was vulgar.”

“Who cares what he thinks! To Christopher, everything’s vulgar. I bet that’s the reason he doesn’t fuck us: he thinks that’s vulgar too.”

“Oooh, darling—that delicious word! Do you use it often?

I'd never dare!"

I was suddenly smitten by the obvious. Talk about psychological moments! This was it!

"Diane, unfasten me. I'll strap you up in my place. You'll be waiting when Christopher gets back." I was breathless in suspense.

Her eyes widened, her body tense and exuding a special radiance. "Darling, would you? And I'd have to be all bare! Oh, Priscilla, it's the most gorgeous idea." Her face suddenly fell. "But I can't let you loose; you'd escape."

"So what?"

"Oh, I can't! Darling, I can't possibly let you go. Neither of the boys would ever forgive me."

"It would be the most merciful thing you've ever done."

Diane made another transformation, brightening with inspiration. "Darling, I've had the most wonderful idea. I'll unstrap your feet and chain them together so that you can't run away. Then I'll free your hands so you can strap me up!"

The little so-and-so! Chained feet would stymie me. Doubtfully, I complained to her.

"You wouldn't want to be stretched and all naked the way I am?"

“I would! I’m not a prude.” Almost savagely, she wrenched her clothes away until she stood totally bare. “See! Am I nice? I know we English girls never seem as lovely as you, but will I do?”

“Don’t knock yourself—you’re a beauty.”

I got a swift kiss and another shock. Diane unstrapped my feet, and I was once more able to teeter on my toes while she searched for chains. There was no shortage of the horrible things. She picked twin anklets joined by the shortest span of links. When she had locked them on me, I knew I wasn’t leaving Wyngate House. Diane giggled. “I don’t know where the key is, but I expect Christopher does.”

She stepped up on the box and lifted my hands off the hook. Diane’s demand left me no time to savor my freedom.

“Hurry, darling, before Christopher comes back—hurry!”

She held out eager hands. It was all crazy, but I didn’t stop to think. My chained feet made it hard to get up on the box, but Diane helped me, giggling all the way. In a couple of minutes I had her strapped exactly as I had been. She was panting and almost hysterical with excitement. I put the box away, then went and stood in front where the view was good. It was an intensely female view. I was surprised to see her pussy wasn’t gaping wide the way I had thought mine was. Girls are amazing creatures. Boy, was she ever exposed—wow! I blushed in retrospect.

It wasn't easy for Diane. Her mind was on having her bare skin whipped. She had forgotten the stress of being strapped within the triangle and stretched in all directions. I knew what she was feeling so I comforted her.

"I'll let you loose, Diane, if you want."

"No! Oh, no, darling!" She was a real little heroine. "It's a lot worse that I thought, but I'll manage. Will I sort of adjust?"

"When Christopher starts whipping you, you'll forget all about how you feel now."

"Oh, darling!" Diane was breathless and starry-eyed. My mention of the whip had set her off again. She was in a real dither of heat and looked close to orgasm. "Oooh, thank you for doing this for me."

"Do you want me to go or stay?"

"Stay, of course. Sit on the box. I'm sure Christopher will let you watch."

"Christopher will probably switch us back the way we were and punish me extra." I kicked my hobbled feet. "I can't even walk properly. You've made me a gift for Christopher. At least he'll be pleased about that."

I went close and teased Diane's nipples the way she had teased mine. Face to face, I studied her expressions. She scarcely saw me, she was so far gone into sensations I was

sure she'd be ashamed of tomorrow. Seeing her like this, I'm sure the British Isles would have excommunicated her or something drastic, but right then she could not have cared less. With the faintest of hopes, I went and searched for the key that could change my life. I was hard at it when Christopher returned.

I stood and blushed like a kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar. Christopher stood too, frozen in disbelief. When he stared at me, I simply shrugged. I went and sat on the box, giving him a demonstration of how securely my feet were chained. He walked around to where Diane could see him and he could see all of her. I'll swear he flinched.

"Oh, Christopher!" It was the best the poor girl could manage.

"What the hell!" He looked from one to the other of us and back. "Would you girls care to tell me what you think you're doing?"

"Diane wants you to whip her," I offered lamely. "She fixed my feet so I couldn't run away."

"That's all?" It was sarcasm plus.

I'll say this for Diane: She wanted to get me off the hook. Between panting and blushing, she babbled away enough for Christopher to get the picture. He digested it slowly. He tested my shackles to make sure he had me good. He kept looking at Diane's pussy, then away, and then back again.

“You don’t really expect me to whip you!” he demanded.

“Of course I do. Christopher, you absolutely must.”

“You’re making a vulgar spectacle of yourself. What would your mother think?”

“She’d say it served me right. Don’t be a spoilsport.”

“You have things twisted, Diane. Priscilla is being punished because she misbehaved. I have nothing to punish you for.”

“Come off it. Don’t be so pious. You know you love to whip girls. It’s your middle class background standing in the way.”

You might say Diane was fighting for her libido. She was coming on strong and rising steadily in my estimation. By all rights, her erotic impulse should have weakened against the pain of the triangle and Christopher’s diffidence, but it had not.

“You want something to punish me for, Christopher? How about this?”

I sat and hugged myself. I was forgotten. Diane then opened her mouth and proceeded to earn herself what she most wanted.

“You’re a hypocrite, Christopher. You use the world ‘vulgar’ to get yourself out of things you can’t handle. If you were

half a man, you'd have fucked Priscilla and me a dozen times. But you're too frightened of our hot cunts! You've got wonderful flesh and blood girls, but you go chase a ghost in a legend. I bet, if you did have the Lady Ilena chained up in that room, you'd be scared to fuck her too. You're a fraud, Christopher! Isn't it time you grew up?"

"Stop it!"

Diane had scored heavily. The man who had us both in his power glared, his features flushed.

"You don't know what you're saying," he said.

"Yes, I do, you silly ass! Look, I'll make you an offer: Marry me. That will please Mother to no end. In return, I'll dye my hair and let you chain me in your stupid room for half of every day, and you can whip me once a week. Wouldn't you say that's fair, Priscilla?"

"It's very generous," I agreed.

I had to be careful. I could neither fight nor run. Diane might want to be whipped, but I did not. I wanted them to settle it between themselves. I looked down at my fettered feet and could have wept in frustration. I got a sharp glance from Christopher.

"Keep quiet, Priscilla. I'll deal with you—"

"You can handle a helpless girl—big deal!" Diane wasn't yielding an inch. She really must have had a fire buring in

her belly for it to have lasted that long. Quite soon she might be a very sorry girl.

“I’m not going to whip you, Diane.”

“Coward!”

“It’s what you want, so I’ll punish you by not doing it.”

“You’ll never be a man, Christopher. I’m ashamed of you. I withdraw my offer. You can do without a woman. Buy yourself one of those inflatable imitations. The more expensive ones even have cunts. That way you wouldn’t catch anything.”

“Stop it, Diane! You’re being obscene.”

“I’d call this way of strapping a girl obscene. It was you who thought it up.”

“As a punishment.”

“Bollocks!”

Diane was doing fine. She had already said nearly everything I had wanted to say. Christopher was furious.

“You want to be punished,” he said, “and I’ll make sure you are—but my way, not yours.”

Poor Diane. If she hadn’t been strapped so tightly, she’d have wilted. I suspected her glands were returning to normal. Her sudden query confirmed it.

She shook her lovely blonde hair from her face and demanded, “What are you going to do to me?”

Christopher did not answer. Instead, he unstrapped Diane’s feet and shackled them together the same as mine. Then he freed her hands and said a peremptory, “Get out of here!”

I guessed what was coming. I stood and held out my arms. The leather was warm from Diane’s flesh as it was strapped tight on my wrists. In minutes I was back in the triangle and scared of what was about to happen. But there was nothing I could have done to prevent it. Christopher had both Diane and me helpless. Once a girl’s feet are closely joined, there’s not much she can do except claw and invite more punishment. It’s humiliating, but we’re simply not as strong as men.

“Let’s see, we were just halfway through with you Priscilla,” our lord and master said pleasantly. “That right?”

“If you say so.” I twisted unhappily against the straps. “Couldn’t you show a little mercy? I’ve had enough.”

“She’s had more than enough,” Diane said forcefully. “Forgive her.”

Christopher was no longer the smiling boy—the nice young man. I expect it was underneath someplace, but his command over two naked girls and the way he’d used the whip on me had been intoxicating. He was experiencing power and finding it good.

“You both wish to be forgiven?” he enquired with deceptive suavity.

“Yes, you can set us both free.” Diane kicked a shackled foot in irritation. “I’ve had enough of this cruelty. I was foolish to have gotten involved.”

Poor dear. Her glands were indeed letting her down. Christopher’s ironing of her ankles must have been disconcerting. It’s one thing to ask for something, but quite different to have it forced on you. Christopher’s voice continued reasonably.

“But it’s only a few minutes since you pleaded for the whip.”

“I was excited. It was silly of me. I’ve behaved foolishly in this whole affair. I should have let Priscilla escape. I will next time.”

“There won’t be a next time.”

Diane picked up the sinister hint and petulantly demanded, “Take these things off my feet!”

“You are going to watch Priscilla receive the second half of her whipping.” Christopher’s voice rolled sonorously. “You will watch in the full knowledge of getting the same yourself when she has had her last stroke. I want you to savor the anticipation.” His words became a sneer. “By then you’ll be sexually aroused again.”

“Christopher! Don’t be such a rotter. Anyway, I don’t believe a word of it. Let us go. Please let us go!”

For answer, Christopher found his whip and slashed it across my back. I screamed. I made the straps creak with my lunges. That was all. He lashed my nakedness again, with the same results. The second half of my whipping had begun. Diane sat on the box and watched in disbelief. Her shackled feet mocked us both.

My screams grew weaker, but the blows across my bare skin did not. Through a haze of pain I saw concupiscence claim Diane once more. What she was forced to watch soon had her panting. She kept shifting on the box as though her pussy was on fire. I expect it was. Christopher’s intoxication with the whip on female flesh almost had me unconscious before he decided I’d had enough. I was sort of hanging now—limp, head down, glistening with sweat.

“Think you’ll try and escape again, Puss?”

“No! Oh, no!” I’d have agreed to anything.

“Think you’ve learned a lesson?”

“Oh, yes! Thank you for whipping me, Christopher!”

Diane said not a word. She sat, striving to cope with inward tremors.

“A master’s work is never done,” Christopher sighed in mock sadness.

A minute later my feet were unstrapped and shackled together. Then Diane was raised from the box by the stern male hand. She seemed mesmerized. My whipped bottom planted itself, regardless of pain, where she had sat. Her warmth was a mere nothing compared to my own scorched skin. I actually needed to sit down, I was so weak.

“You’ll enjoy watching, Priscilla. It’ll be a pleasant change.”

It was a familiar ritual. Diane went through it for the second time in a glassy-eyed daze. I could see how wet she was. I wondered if she could keep it up through what she was about to get. I almost forgot my whipped back under the compulsion of what I was privileged to watch. Stretched by the straps, Diane acquired an out of this world loveliness. Her glorious golden hair was carefully swathed and put across a bare shoulder to fall upon a breast. It was the first invitation to the thong.

Diane did not scream as the leather bit her flesh. Instead, she convulsed in orgasm, making only the appropriate sounds. Christopher watched with neophyte curiosity. I hadn’t done this for him. It was new. He stood, entranced, while poor Diane fought the straps in twists and lunges until she finally fell quiescent but gasping. He sauntered to the rear and struck at her bare skin again.

Diane’s second orgasm was instant.

It seemed as cataclysmic as her first. As I watched her writhe and moan, I caught a glimpse of the pent-up forces

of propriety in her rural life. The poor dear must have been a bundle of nerves and glands all screaming for release beneath her cool exterior. I wondered what her mother would say if she had seen her daughter then.

It was an education for Christopher. He watched, breathless. I wanted to point out what he had been missing, but my whipped back robbed me of courage. I almost felt apologetic for not producing an orgasm for him. He'd be trying to figure that one out. I wondered if he realized what a jewel he had strapped there inside his triangle. Even an inept male would get results from Diane.

Diane did not scream while she was whipped. It seemed to take all the lashes Christopher planted across her skin to absorb all her pent-up sexuality. She produced yelps and strange little wails when he lashed the inside of her thighs. But she did not scream once. All her agony was demonstrated in orgasms. Christopher did not always stop whipping her to watch. Sometimes he whipped her with a fiercer intensity, and she responded with an agony all her own. It was fierce and savage and female. I don't think Diane felt the whip except as ecstasy. I wondered if Christopher felt cheated. At the end of it she hung as limp as I had.

I almost felt sorry for Christopher. He had wanted me, but he had not wanted Diane. Now he had us both. But surely he had the sense to let Diane go home. He was likely having a qualm or two about what Mrs. Heselton would say or do if she saw her daughter's back. I hoped the good lady did

and would come looking for him.

Having two female prisoners was almost hard work for this man who possessed us. Leaving Diane to hang within the embrace of the straps, Christopher picked me up and carried me to my personal prison. I was surprised by his strength, but too chastened by my punishment to utter a peep. I even put a bare arm over his shoulder. When he got there, he chained my wrists and ankles with the familiar shackles I had been prisoned in before. I suspect he was telling me something with them. But I just stood listlessly and allowed him to do what he liked. Boy, was I washed out with pain. When he went away, he even left the door open. I could not have cared less.

It was not long before Diane arrived. She too was carried, her bare arm around Christopher's neck as intimate as she could make it. She was as exhausted as I was, and allowed herself to be similarly shackled. She did not say a word. When Christopher went away, he treated her to the loudest slam of the door and the most ostentatious crashing of bolts. I saw her wince.

We stood and looked at each other's naked bodies, two chained girls in prison, terribly whipped and subdued.

"Oh, Priscilla. I'm so terribly ashamed," Diane finally moaned.

"Don't be. You never even screamed once."

“I didn’t mean that. I meant the other thing.”

I managed a laugh. “You discovered that you’re a girl. That’s all that was.” I clattered across and took her hand. “Come and sit on the couch. If a girl has to be in prison, this is undoubtedly the best place of all. Let’s enjoy each other. He’ll have to send you home soon.”

“No, he doesn’t. He’ll keep me here.” Diane pulled at her shackles in frustration. “I see what you mean about these things. Oh, darling, I’ve been such a fool.”

“But how can he keep you here? Your mother—”

“He found out last night that Mother’s gone on a visit to Menorca. She won’t be back for three weeks. I bet he’ll keep me prisoner the whole time.”

“You mean, you’re hoping he does, right?”

“That’s what makes me ashamed.” She managed a giggle. “I shouldn’t be feeling this way, or having those shameful spasms over any of this—should I?”

“Sure, you should. You’re one of the lucky ones. All I want is to be free. Diane, I’m so glad it’s you in here with me.”

“You don’t think Christopher will be mean and separate us? I couldn’t bear being in prison all alone.”

It happened naturally enough. I wanted to comfort her. I wanted the comfort of a warm body beside me. Our chains

were long. I lifted my shackles over Diane's head and drew her to me, breasts hugging breasts. She clutched at me in the same urgent need. Our chains got in the way of everything, but they stopped nothing. Without even speaking, we were soon entwined as girls have entwined throughout the ages, feeding on each other with avid lips and hungry mouths. Our moans blended, and as we rolled we failed to notice our whipped backs. I discovered I was a pent-up volcano myself. Diane was inexhaustible.

We went on and on in our age-old discovery. It was the first time for both of us. Without Christopher and his dungeon, I don't suppose it would have happened. At the end of several hours, it left us more exhausted than ever, but also very happy. We had rolled on our whipped backs and bottoms so much that we no longer cared. Diane had a gift for summing things up.

"I would never have dreamed it would be like this!"

I was tremendously happy to have her. I had expected solitary confinement. Now Diane would make my imprisonment bearable for at least three weeks. I lay on the couch, lazyily replete, watching my companion get up and do shuffling steps, making play with her wrist shackles to produce a lot of clink and clatter but not motion. It was the first time she had been chained.

"What's it feel like?"

"Darling, I simply don't know." Her cheeks were reddening.

“It’s having the same effect as watching you being whipped. I’m all aroused.” She turned to me guiltily. “Should being chained do that?”

“It’s not the prime intention.” I laughed at her. “Forget it. I’d tell you to come and lay with me again, but my mouth’s just too damn tired. I’d think yours was too.”

“Well, sort of, but I would try—”

“Diane, you wouldn’t marry this asshole now, would you?”

“Of course I would!” Diane’s eyes were suddenly shining. “This has been so much fun, and if we were married, Christopher could whip me whenever he wanted and chain me in here.”

“What about me?”

“I’d set you free the first day.”

“But I think he’s figuring on keeping me like this all my life.”

“I’d set you free anyway. Besides, I’d want you at our wedding.” Diane paused to consider. “I don’t think you should have called him an asshole. It’s not very nice.”

“What he’s done to me isn’t a bit nice.”

“But he hasn’t done anything really naughty. I mean, not the thing—the really naughtiest thing. In that he’s been a perfect gentleman.”

I didn't bother to argue. Diane and England have their own ideas, and they can keep them! All I wanted was to be on the plane bound for the U.S. and feel the wheels start to turn down the runway.

But that was just a dream. I watched dear Diane play with her fetters until she spoke again.

"What do girls do with themselves in prison? I mean, what about you and me?"

I managed a really bitter laugh. "If they're locked up by themselves, they go quietly insane. If they have company, like we do, they do what we've been doing, and they talk."

"Is that all!" Diane flushed. "I don't mean what you and I did wasn't completely wonderful, but twenty-four hours a day—"

"That's right. We can stretch it out a bit. We went at it hot and heavy. And we can always talk about the son of a bitch who's got us chained up like a couple of animals."

"Oh, darling, Christopher's not like what you said. And we're not a bit like animals. I think we look sweet in chains."

I sighed. I couldn't fight Diane's secretions. Bitterly, I said, "What about this other English gentleman? Won't Dick Travers miss you and be curious?"

"Oh, I forgot. Dick will probably visit us."

I sat up in alarm, suddenly aware of my nudity. If Dick Travers walked in, I'd be terribly glad but so covered in shame I would want to die.

"How on earth can he visit us?" I asked accusingly.

"Well, darling, I'm not nearly as silly as you think I am." Diane wrinkled her nose at me. "When I found you naked and tied to that tree, I had to do a lot of reassessing about dear Christopher. I knew if he'd do that to you, he might do it to me. It was the loveliest feeling. You know, simply gorgeous suspense. I knew about the legend and the color of my hair, but with men you never really can be sure."

"What's this got to do with Dick's visit?"

"I'm coming to that. You're so impatient!" Diane's voice became dreamy with longing. "You see, I discovered I actually wanted to be kidnapped like you. I was anxious to get you out of the way so I could be next in line. I was making plans to dye my hair when everything went wrong. I mean, Dick returning you—"

"Like an old shoe or a bad penny?"

"I wasn't going to say that. I've become terribly fond of you, Priscilla."

"I like you too."

We did some kissing and made a lot of chain noises. I almost had to use force to get her back on track. She picked it

up as though it didn't really matter.

"When Christopher phoned and invited me over to watch you get whipped, I was in a real dither. I mean, there were so many more aspects to Christopher than I had thought. So I wrote Dick Travers a note telling him what was cooking, asking him to come and insist on seeing us both if I didn't get back home sometime tomorrow." She giggled archly. "I simply had to allow Christopher one night."

"That means you can hope for rescue tomorrow evening."

"Well, if you want to put it that way."

"God, Diane, can you guess how much I envy you?"

"But if I go, I'll take you too, darling."

"Not against those two men you won't. You know how they stick together."

"When I show Dick our whipped backs, he'll take us right out of here."

"You want Dick Travers to see you naked?"

Diane sort of halted in full-stride, blushing. "Well, Priscilla, you've had a good look at me, and so has Christopher. I don't suppose one more makes much difference." She brightened. "Besides, darling, one of them it almost certain to marry me. I'll exchange your Dick for Christopher."

"If you can get me out of here, you can have both of them."

“Aren’t you a little bit in love with Dick?”

“Maybe—if he’d come to America.”

“He won’t do that, y’know. I think he’s very happy with his life.” Diane smiled encouragingly. “He makes quite a lot of money.”

“No one has enough money to make me stay in England.” I held up my hands and shook my chain at her. “Look at us! This stuff belongs five hundred years ago. Today it’s simply bizarre.”

“But it’s not forever, darling.”

“Not for you. Oh, Diane, if only you could set me free!”

“I will. I promise.” She enveloped me in chain and warm skin.

“I’ll absolutely make Dick Travers get you out of Wyngate House.” I added my chain to hers in a tangle of feminine love, but I could not believe in freedom.

5

Fettered Freedom

DIANE AND I WERE HAPPY TOGETHER. I found myself viewing Dick Travers's impending intervention with concern. I had no hope he could or would persuade Christopher to release me. That was asking too much of fate and English mores. But I was almost certainly going to lose Diane. Her whipped back would win her freedom, and Christopher would have to let her go home in time for Mrs. Heselton's return anyway. But I said nothing about these fears. I knew I had to enjoy Diane while I could. Christopher brought us food but did not linger. Diane giggled and surmised he was ashamed of our backs.

It happened in late afternoon. When Christopher came, he was alone. He ignored me but beckoned Diane.

"I want to talk to you," he said, holding open the massive door for her.

"I want Priscilla to hear what you have to say, Christopher."

"I don't. Now come along."

"Chained like this?"

"Sure, why not?"

Poor Diane. She was doing her best, but wasn't in much of a position to argue. But argue she did. "Christopher, I

refuse to leave this prison unless Priscilla comes too. I don't want you keeping her locked up here alone."

"You haven't a thing to say about it, and neither does she. Do you want me to drag you?"

Diane looked from one of us to the other. She lifted fettered hands to view them with disgust. "All right, drag me," she challenged. "I'll be damned if I'll simply walk out."

Christopher dragged her. It was frighteningly easy. It took only a brief tussle for him to get a grip on the links between her wrists. The rest was easy. When she fought and tripped on the chain between her legs, he continued to pull. The last I saw of Diane was a furious face, stretched arms, and her ironed feet trailing over the stone. The door slammed with its familiar sounds, and I was once again alone.

I had expected to be alone, but it was horrible desolation just the same. The manner in which Diane had been mastered was a demonstration of the efficiency of our shackles. They had the deceptive appearance of being symbolic, but when it came to the crunch, anyone could handle us. I kicked at mine fretfully and sat sulkily on the couch. I was back to square one with a vengeance and a whipped back to boot. I had no expectation of ever seeing Diane again.

Nobody came near me. Evening came, then night and morning, and I was still in solitary confinement. I clattered back and forth to the window. I bathed and fussed with my

hair. I was scared. It's a terrible feeling being locked up like that. I had to suppose I was being punished or that Christopher was softening me up for something. About noon he showed up with food.

We stared at each other like adversaries seeking a first advantage in speech. Keeping an eye on him, I started to eat.

After a minute, he volunteered, "I sent Diane home."

I had feared he might have just separated us and kept her locked up elsewhere. It was good news, but I just grunted at him.

"She didn't want to go without you—made an awful fuss. Dick and I had to lift her into the car. We made her dress, of course."

"Good for her!"

"You're angry?"

"I'm frightened. Christopher, I can't stand solitary confinement." He looked unhappy. "I've decided to have a talk with you, Puss."

"You talk; I'll eat. I'm starving."

"I mean, this sort of puts us back to square one—"

"So I noticed."

Christopher was finding it hard going. I didn't help.

“I didn’t plan for the way things have gone,” he said hesitantly. “I planned for you and me. I hadn’t the faintest idea about Dick and Diane intruding on our scene.”

“They don’t seem to have done me any good. I’m still here, and I’m still naked and chained.”

“You’re deliberately feeling sorry for yourself.”

“What girl wouldn’t?”

“Are you goading me to punish you again? I will, you know.”

“Sorry. Please continue.”

“With those two sort of hovering around it doesn’t seem practical to follow my original plan. Lady Ilena and the legend are pretty well obliterated.”

“Wonderful! Marry Diane and let me go. The color of her hair is no longer an impediment. You’d both be very happy. Honest, Christopher, I’m not kidding.”

“Priscilla, I’ve decided to ask you to be my wife.”

Just like that! He had really slipped up on me. I looked at him, trying not to register emotion other than disbelief.

“Well, aren’t you going to say something?”

“How would ‘no’ be?”

“You’re in a bitchy mood.”

“You have only to whip me to make me behave.”

“You’re still mad about being punished?”

“Christopher, you flogged me horribly, without mercy. How can you expect me to marry a man who’d whip me every day?”

“At the start you offered to marry me. I know it was only an attempt to avoid imprisonment, but the imprisonment is still there.”

I was painfully conscious of the truth in what he said. If I sent Christopher away angry, my prospects weren’t good. I was in one hell of a dilemma.

To gain time, I said, “I don’t see why you don’t marry Diane. She’s absolutely made to order. I’d always be a rebel.”

“I want you,” Christopher stubbornly reaffirmed. “Like you Americans say, you’ve got under my skin. Shut up about Diane.”

“How on earth can we get married unless you set me free?”

“I’ve thought of that. I can make arrangements while you still can’t run away.”

“No trust at all?”

“Should I trust you, Priscilla?”

“No, I suppose not. Christopher, it’s hopeless.”

“I’d willingly leave you as you are. You are very beautiful in this chamber. You were made for each other. But Diane and Dick have both agreed with you about you getting morbid and depressed. I wouldn’t want that.”

“Where could you take me on our honeymoon?”

Poor Christopher was flustered. “I hadn’t even thought of it,” he admitted, embarrassed. “Is it necessary to have one?”

“Christopher!” I looked at my captor askance. “You’d never give me freedom, I can tell. You’d keep me chained some way around Wyngate House. You would, wouldn’t you?”

“Well, you’d run away—”

“No, I wouldn’t! If I made the vows, I’d try to keep them. I’d try to make a good life for us both.” I felt like punching his obtuse nose. “Damn it, we’d have all the makings here!”

Stiffly, Christopher picked up the tray, his face betraying nothing. He slammed the door on me with the usual sound. I stood, naked in my chains, and looked at the closed portal for a long time. Now I had something to think about. Boy, did I ever!

Christopher left me chained alone in my prison for twenty-four hours. He never came near me. I had to suppose that I was now down to one meal a day and a brief discussion which would send him away mad. Sitting and playing with my links, like a nun with her rosary, I analyzed my chances

if I did indeed agree to marry him. There had to be a minister or a justice of the peace. I could appeal to him for help, but was sure Christopher would have that base covered. My other chance would be to make a quick dash somewhere in the proceedings. But I'd probably be married in a locked room, or my feet would be chained, or something like that. It was so bizarre.

Christopher had to win. Sooner or later, locked and chained in this chamber, I would agree to anything. But I decided that I would fight for whatever freedom I could chisel out of him. There was also Dick and Diane. Dick might be Christopher's friend, but surely there were limits to what friendship could stomach. I wondered how Diane would fight for me. She was my best hope. When, around midday, I heard the door being opened I was sifting tensely on the bed armed with resolution.

It was not Christopher.

But it might as well have been. It was another smiling young man who informed me gravely that he was the Reverend Eric Martidale, and that he would perform my wedding ceremony! He then came up with the most magnificent blush I had ever seen. I blushed too. Good god, what a situation!

"Please don't be embarrassed, Miss Hendry. Christopher and I are old friends."

Another old friend—that meant I was sunk.

“Christopher has explained to me your unusual inclinations.”

The son of a bitch! He had me foxed. I held up my chains indignantly and demanded, “You mean these!” I kicked my fettered feet for the reverend to see the chain swirl. “And this!”

“Well, yes, I know it is unusual.”

“Look, Reverend Martindale, I’ve been kidnapped, and I’m being held here against my will.” I stared him in the eye fiercely. “You have a duty to get me freed or to go to the police and have them release me.”

“Ah!”

It was the most noncommital sound a man could make. I stood up and turned to give him a full view of my whipped back. My breasts were heaving, my voice vehement.

“Christopher did that to me as a punishment for trying to escape. Please, Reverend Martindale, you must help me.”

“I have heard of such strange pleasures,” he conceded with faint disapproval. “I cannot say that I approve, but to each his own.”

“But I’m a prisoner—a real prisoner. Help me!”

“Quite so.”

That was the English way of saying they’re embarrassed or

don't want to answer. I put my heart into another plea.

"Get me out of here—please!"

"Er, quite so." He regarded me owlishly. "But I understand you have consented to be Christopher's wife, eh?"

"Well, yes."

"That's wonderful. I'm so pleased." The Reverend Martindale now had something solid he could cope with. "I'll just overlook these little idiosyncrasies of yours. Quite innocent, I'm sure. You seem to be a very nice girl."

My idiosyncrasies! I wanted to blast him and set him right, but I knew it was best to be casual.

"I'd be so grateful," I cooed with my best smile, "if you'd dissuade Christopher from having me constrained in any way through the period of the ceremony."

"Well—"

"I mean, I don't want to be married in handcuffs or chained the way I am right now."

"Quite so."

"Well, will you talk him out of it?"

"I will do my best, Miss Hendry." The Reverend Martindale worked his Adam's apple up and down a few times, then bleated like a baffled sheep. "My reason for this visit was

that, well, Christopher thought it best I should become used to your situation. I do agree, of course."

"Quite so."

He looked at me, startled like a man shot with his own gun. At the door he paused and looked back at my chained nudity.

"Well, really!" he ejaculated, as if offended, then fled from the chamber and locked it behind him.

I sat back down on the couch with my chains.

Christopher didn't hurry. He let me sit and stew. When he did come, he looked in at me sheepishly. "I hope you didn't mind the visit," he ventured.

"Oh, why should I!" I retorted bitterly. "I'm only naked and chained and held captive."

"Martindale's not a bad chap. I'm sure he understood."

"He understood what you wanted him to understand."

We stared at each other. Then, for some silly reason, we laughed together in a genuine rapport. The Martindale incident was just too absurd.

"Christopher, you're marrying me, but do you really love me?" I could see that he thought the question to be vulgar. I suspect he associated marriage with instant copulation.

“You shouldn’t ask such a question,” he admonished as though I’d spoken of something nasty in the toilet. “I’m very fond of you, but I don’t think you like me at all.”

“But I do like you! If only you’d set me free and stop punishing me for every little thing—”

I had said the wrong thing. I’d put Christopher back on track. Hastily, I tried to change the subject.

“Where’s the church we’re getting married in?”

“It won’t be in a church, Priscilla.”

“I will be wearing clothes or—”

But he would not be diverted. He went straight to the nub. “You tried to persuade Martindale to help you escape.” He eyed me sternly.

“Oh, shit!” My exclamation was heartfelt: “You must have known I would try.”

“I’d hoped you might not. You embarrassed him dreadfully.”

“Oh, all right! You’ve got your excuses. How many strokes?”

“I don’t want my wife marked any worse than you already are. Go over to the column.”

“And if I refuse?”

“I’ll drag you.”

I went to the column. I stood dejectedly while I was collared and chained. It was the six-inch chain to compel me to stand. Abjectly, I said, “I apologize. I’m sorry for what I did. Please don’t leave me like this too long.”

“You’d prefer to be whipped?”

“No, I wouldn’t. Thank you.”

After this ridiculous exchange Christopher left me to stand. I had to wonder if he was in his right mind. Marrying me and treating me like this. Standing chained against the pillar isn’t all that bad for an hour, but after that it’s awful! I lifted chained hands to finger the metal band around my neck and its beastly short chain. The situation was hopeless —standing there, unable to run and having to do what I was told. Hell, why not! It was no crazier than any of the rest.

Christopher released me when it started to get dark. I was petrified he’d leave me standing all night. I could kick myself at how abject and anxious to please I was when the damn collar fell away from my neck. I said the most heartfelt thank you and positively wolfed the food he brought. It was more than thirty hours since he had last fed me.

“We’re getting married tomorrow, Priscilla.”

I continued to chomp and, with my mouth fill, said, “Isn’t that lovely?”

“Diane has selected you a suitable dress and stuff.” Christo-

pher coughed and looked awkward. “Simply in deference to the Reverend Martindale.”

“You mean, you’ll take them away from me after he’s gone?”

“You’re not wearing anything now, Priscilla. Don’t be silly.” I had stood too long against the pillar to argue, so I asked the big question. “You’re not going to have me chained for my wedding, are you, Christopher?”

“Martindale brought that up. I had intended to have you simply handcuffed, but he made such a point of it that you’ll be free. However, the door of the room will be locked. Please don’t do anything we’ll all regret. After all, it is our wedding.”

How crazy can I get!

I felt better after the food. Alone again, wrists and ankles still well chained, I sat on the couch and contemplated my diminishing prospects. One by one, the doors to escape were being closed. If I made a scene at the ceremony, I’d be terribly punished afterwards, but I decided I’d do it anyway. I’d break one of them into defending me, and I could always refuse to make the proper responses. If only Christopher would have offered me freedom—but he had not. He was going to keep me prisoner even when I was his wife.

I cried myself to sleep.

Diane was a breath of sanity. Christopher had allowed her to come up and open the door herself. She left it wide. I felt better. When, giggling, she unlocked my shackles, I felt better still. We adjourned to the nice bedroom and honest-to-goodness clothes. But when I was dressed, I felt odd. I had been naked too long. We giggled about that, and then Diane slipped me what really mattered.

"Darling, when we're all gathered in the locked room, I'm going to pretend I have to go to the bathroom. When I have the door unlocked, you make a quick dash, and we'll both pop out and lock the boys inside. By the time they get out we'll be far away."

My heart flooded with gratitude. No man had come to my rescue but a girl had. It also thumped painfully in a slender hope. It was slendered indeed, but it was all I had. I repeatedly hugged the girl who had been my fellow prisoner. We got flushed and aroused. Then I went with Diane downstairs to get married to a man who was probably insane.

The men were impeccably dressed: white canation, the whole bit. The Reverend Martindale gave me his warmest smile while scanning my person for restraints. He was obviously revelied not to find any. I caught his eye and said an honest thank you.

I could tell Dick Travers was not happy. His lousy code had

got him into a spot he didn't like. Briefly alone with him, I whispered, "Damn it, man, rescue me. Take me away. I don't want to marry Christopher."

But Martindale was anxious to get the affair over with. Oozing goodwill, he commanded, "Now is the moment, everybody. Let us take our places."

We allowed ourselves to be marshalled and positioned. He cleared his throat and got on with it. "Dearly, beloved, we are gathered here today—"

Then Diane tossed her bomb. "I'm terribly sorry—" She blushed under disapproving male regard. "I'm afraid I have to go—oh dear!" In a burst of urgency, she demanded, "Christopher, the key—quick!"

Christopher handed over the key. It was a tribute to Diane's superb performance. She snatched it and ran for the door. Immediately after she hand the key changed to the other side I leaped after her into freedom. Diane turned the lock and we ran to her car.

Pear Tree Cottage was exactly right. It actually had a pear tree in the garden and wasn't far from the sea. It was a recent purchase of Mrs. Heselton, so no one knew about it except Diane. It even had a garage. With her little car inside, the whole place was anonymous. We giggled on our way in the car and didn't stop when we got inside. We were two tremendously happy girls. And I was free! When Diane tore at her clothes, I did the same. We didn't have to speak. It

was more than a reaction from tension; it was the instinct of girls together. We dived into each other's loins as into a perfumed sea.

Hours later, when I awoke, I had lost my left arm, and Diane was by the bed pouring tea. In England tea comes on all occasions. It is a stimulant in joy and in adversity. I think it must be the water. Tea in England is quite different from tea anywhere else. I looked down my left arm and discovered its wrist was handcuffed to the rail of the bed. Diane giggled.

"They're the pair Dick bought. I stole them this morning. I thought it best, darling. I hope you don't mind."

I ought to have been good at adjusting by then, but this one had me baffled. I didn't say anything. I just took the teacup Diane had stirred for me and blandly sipped. I felt wonderful.

Diane giggled. "I also stole your plane ticket. You don't have to go back to the U.S. for nine days. I want you to stay here with me."

I wiggled the handcuff. "I'll stay. You don't need this. I wouldn't leave you now on a bet."

Diane cocked an eyebrow. "I'll love you to bits, darling, but I don't want you tempted. If I keep you handcuffed, I've got you safe."

I'd latched onto vibes. "There's something else too, isn't

there?" I asked slyly.

"Well, yes." Diane was blushing. "You know how what Christopher did to you affected me. It started me off on something I don't want to stop. I would adore having you as my captive girl."

"I don't mind, Diane, if it makes you happy."

I really didn't mind. I was besotted by this entrancing creature and terribly grateful to her. Compared to the ways in which I had been kept prisoner, a pair of handcuffs seemed a mere nothing. I could look on them as a symbol.

"Do you want breakfast, or shall we make love again?"

"Let's make love."

We were outrageous. The whole thing was impossibly gorgeous. We fed on each other like hungry she-wolves. Somewhere in the scramble my wrist got detached from the rail and joined to my toher hand. I scarcely noticed. Boy, did we have ourselves a time! When I awoke again, I could smell breakfast.

I discovered how handcuffed wrists don't stop a girl from drying dishes. I found out also how they stopped me from getting dressed. Not that I much wanted to get dressed. When Diane forbid the idea and announced her intention of remaining nude, I was quite happy. The U.S. was off on the horizon, but not quite over the horizon. I was breathlessly content.

Diane and I laughed a lot over the three men we had locked in. They would get out of the window, of course, but not before we were well out of sight. Then they would look for us at Mrs. Heselton's house. After that they had nowhere to go. Diane summed it up. "They can stew for nine days. After you're safely away to the States, I'm going back and marry Wyngate House with its marvelous prison chamber."

I looked at her with real concern. "You mustn't. Christopher's nuts. I mean, he's really around the bend."

"I can handle Christopher. Mother will be so pleased."

"He'll be terribly cruel to you."

"I'll enjoy a little cruelty, darling. Don't forget Mother. She's my insurance policy. She won't let her little girl out of her sight for too long."

"But the way he whipped us both—the way we were marked!"

"Well, yes, but you saw what it did for me." Diane grimaced. "I suppose I ought to feel ashamed but I don't."

"But marriage! Good gosh, Diane, what about love?"

"There's no such thing, pet. It's just in the glands. You and I are as close to love as any two people are likely to get." She giggled again. "I don't pretend to marry him for anything else than Wyngate House and to get my bottom caned."

Diane had changed delightfully. I had been good for her. She didn't seem a bit English any more. I didn't agree with her about love, but Christopher could get any girl feeling that way, so I didn't argue with her. I thought wistfully about Dick Travers, but he had never done me any good either. Men ceased to matter in my mind.

Diane and I had two ecstastic days together. When we weren't making love or eating, we went for rides in the country. This meant that I had to wear clothes, which meant the handcuffs had to come off. Always before clipping them back on my ready wrists, Diane would ask, "Sure you don't mind?" I never minded. I wore the handcuffs night and day. But then it happened.

There came a knock on the door.

It wasn't like other knocks; it had authority. I stood on the landing above and peeked out, my ears alert. It was a policeman, a real old-fashioned English country bobby. He was frightfully polite.

"Miss Heselton?"

"Yes?"

"We have been advised that you are holding a young lady prisoner here."

"How absurd!"

"I have a search warrant here. Perhaps—if you don't

mind?" He stepped into the hall.

I was in a panic. I was handcuffed and didn't have the key. To make things worse, my hands were behind my back. We had done it that way for a change. But there was only one way a policeman would view my condition. Frantically, I tried to think of a hiding place, but a cottage doesn't offer much. I plunged into bed and wriggled the covers up under my chin. I feigned sleep.

"Ah!" It was a jubilant sound. They had done the rest of the cottage and how now come to me. The constable was bluff and hearty in his blue. "Perhaps if you could wake the young lady?"

I pretended to come awake and view him with shocked surprise.

"You are Miss Hendry?"

"Why, yes—"

"A friend—a guest?"

"I'm a friend of Diane's. I'm visiting for a few days. What on earth—"

"Quite so, miss. Would you be kind enough to show me your hands?"

"I've washed them, if that's what you mean."

"No, miss—just your hands, please."

What a jackpot! I looked pleadingly at Diane. She was as scared as I was. Desperately, I retorted, “I don’t have any clothes on. Would you be decent enough to leave me along with Miss Heselton for a ocuple of minutes?”

“No, miss. You don’t have to get out of bed to show your hands.”

It was no use. I knew it was no use. Disgustedly, I let him have it but good. I slithered out from under the covers and turned to give him a good view. I wiggled my captive fingers. “There, does that make you happy!”

“No, miss, it does not. You appear to be a prisoner. It confirms our report.”

“For Pete’s sake, man, do I look like a prisoner!” I turned back and gave him a full frontal view. “Diane and I toss a coin every day to see who wears these. It’s a game we play.”

“I cannot believe that, miss. Not with your hands behind your back.”

Diane and I exchange distraught looks. “It’s no use, Puss. He won’t believe a word of it,” she said miserably. “That son of a bitch Christopher—wait till I get near him!”

“Perhaps if you’ll make yourself decent, miss? I’ll have to ask both you ladies to accompany me to the station and make a statement.”

Diane unlocked me. The constable looked the other way

while I dressed. He then produced handcuffs of his own, horrible looking English things, which he cuffed onto my right wrist and Diane's left. We were marshalled to his car, a pair of felons facing penal servtiude.

Holy shit!

The inspector was somewhat more broadminded, but he made us make a statement which we both signed. We accused Christopher of malicious intent. We were then consigned to a cell.

I've never been in American prison or jail, but I had always supposed they were all bars, like on TV. But the horrible little box Diane and I were locked inside had no bars at all, just walls and a solid door. The door had a small square opening up top where they could look in and check on us. We couldn't look out. The window of the cell was way up, heavily barred, and the glass dirty enough to be opaque. We stood and glared at each other in desolation. It was the most awful feeling. Claustrophobic as hell.

"The beastly rotten cad! If Mother hears about this—"

"How can she help but hear about it?"

We collapsed on the narrow cot and wept on each other's shoulders. They had given us back our hands, so we could hug too. We were still crying when the little square opened and someone peeped in. Sure enough, a few minutes later a constable appeared with a tray. On it were two cups of

steaming tea and two small scones. We sniffed and dried our cheeks and said a pale thank you.

“Cheer up, ladies. They won’t have you for awhile yet.” He was chuckling as he locked us up again.

It was several hours before we were again in the inspector’s office. Christopher was there with his best shy smile. Officialdom was crisp. “On the advice of our informant here, Mr. Wyngate, we are prepared to lay no charges.” He glared up with an eye that spelled twenty years hard labor. “I can’t say I approve of what I have been told, but it seems a personal and private matter in which there has been a misunderstanding. You are free to go.”

What a relief! I don’t ever want to be arrested again. I was limp, and Diane was furious.

“Thanks for nothing, Christopher! Goodbye!”

“But you’re both coming back to Wyngate with me.”

“Please find some dark smelly place and drop dead.”

“Aren’t you curious how I found you? I figured it out myself. Mother used Dick Travers’s firm for the title transfer. I’m surprised it took him this long to remember. We thought it kind to allow you a couple of days to yoursleves. You know—get it out of your systems.”

“Get what out of our systems?”

“Oh, come, do I have to spell it out? Oh, by the way, did you know how easy it is to get into your cottage?”

Diane and I froeze in silence. We awaited the bomb.

“Some extremely valuable Wyngate heirlooms are secreted where you can’t find them in that cottage. Do you want to be charged with their theft?”

“That inspector in there would laugh you out of his office.”

“I’ve arranged for an anonymous stranger to call the police and tell them where they’ll find the loot. There are small bags of heroin and cocaine hidden too. I think that might interest them as well.”

We got into Christopher’s car. I longed to knock the smirk off the bastard’s face, but I was trembling. I pointed out the obvious. “If you have us put in prison for years, you’ll never get us. You’ve lost us both.”

“I’m betting you won’t want to go to prison.”

We drove in silence, computing our options. Halfway back to Wyngate, I said flatly, “No! Damn you! Have me arrested and be done with it. It’s better to go to a real prison than to live my life chained and whipped by you.”

“Christopher, why don’t you marry me and put an end to this whole stupid business? Let Priscilla go!” Diane pleaded wearily.

Christopher's voice was quiet and assured. "You will both surrender yourselves to me when we get home—no struggles, no fuss. You'll accept imprisonment." He turned to me. "It's Diane's house the loot will be found in. She'll get double your sentence. Think what it'll do to her mother."

I was still fighting angry. "Think what you'll do to us," I retorted. "You'll whip us terribly."

"Of course. You deserve it."

"And probably other horrible things."

"There'll be other punishments, yes."

"Keep your rotten punishments. I'd rather go to prison. You may as well let me out now. Stop the car!" I was panting and trembling at the same time.

Christopher did not stop. My anger cooled and was replaced by fear. Wanly, I asked, "Diane, what do you think?"

"Darling, he's got us. We don't have a choice."

I remembered her mother. Christopher could not keep her the way he could keep me. I remembered also that Diane would enjoy some of the punishments Christopher would inflict. Into my morass of indecision he dropped another bomb.

"I'll only keep you both for a week. You can go home to the U.S. on the flight you've got booked, Priscilla."

“I can’t trust you, Christopher. You would break your word.”

“No, he won’t, darling,” Diane said quietly. “Christopher, if you renege on this promise—if you hold Puss a single day after you let me loose, I’ll go straight to the police and tell them the whole story. You’re a kidnapper.”

Christopher laughed and nudged me jovially. “That suit you, sweetheart.”

“Don’t call me sweetheart—don’t ever call me that! Nothing about this whole thing suits me. I wouldn’t even trust you to let Diane go in time to greet her mother.”

“If you’d ever met her mother, you’d be quite sure I would.” Christopher laughed again. “Right, Diane?”

“He is right, darling. Mother is not someone to cross.”

“Okay, Diane, make him promise not to whip us.” I turned to our would-be captor. “You’re unbalanced over that damn whip. You ought to watch it. You could have a dead girl on your hands one of these days.”

“Nonsense!”

“But, Christopher darling, couldn’t you punish us some other way?” Diane wheedled in her sweetest tone. “You really did go a bit overboard with that triangle thing. Our pussies are still stretched.”

“Very well, no triangle for either of you. For the rest—no deal.”

“Thank you, Christopher.”

“You’re welcome. Diane.”

I didn’t say a word.

6

Forever Punished

IT WAS LIKE A RECURRING NIGHTMARE. I wandered through it sulkily, resentfully, and not at all sure Christopher wasn't running a bluff about his family jewels and whatever. But I had become fond of Diane, so I followed her back into captivity. I knew that for her there was a thrill, but I wasn't in her class in the matter of erotic arousal. I was just plain angry—not only with Christopher, but also with myself.

We were taken to the familiar bedroom and told to take off all our clothes. There was something obscene about us girls baring ourselves while Christopher watched, but we had gotten used to nudity. We stripped, then allowed our ankles to be shackled with the long chain that swirled as we walked. We were now back to square one with a vengeance. Briskly, our captor cuffed one of my wrists to the bed, then led Diane from the room.

Being alone didn't help. I tugged at the cuff and kicked at my chain. I sat on the bed. I had been neatly disposed of. But I did not have more than half an hour in which to ponder recriminations and regrets. When Christopher returned, he wasted few words and less time.

"Stand up, Puss."

I stood up. My hands were joined and raised above my

head.

Next I was blindfolded. “You’re not going to be hurt, Puss.” His voice was almost kind. “You’re blindfolded because I’ve got a surprise.”

Next I lost my chains. I wondered why he had bothered putting them on. He then raised my left foot and slipped it into something, then did the same with my right. I realized that I was getting some sort of panties, but these had weight. They were metal. He tugged and tugged until they were as high as they could go—harsh cold bands around the tops of my thighs and within my crotch. When the metal belt went around my waist, I began to guess. Christopher tugged and heaved. It seemed that everything had to be skin tight. Then the belt inexorably tightened until I shifted in unease and was on the verge of a yelp. Then came the click of a padlock.

My ankles got their chain back. My arms were lowered. But the handcuffs stayed on my wrists. The blindfold was whisked from my eyes and Christopher triumphantly said, “There!” I looked down at myself in wonder.

It was a chastity belt.

I got two reactions: The whole thing was too damn tight, and it was also a thing of beauty. The female in me was thrilled. It was steel bands and silver mesh. I suppose the mesh was steel too. It hugged my loins as though painted on. It covered my pubic hair and followed my groin almost

to my hip. A silver shield molded itself over my Venus mound. My pussy was in there somewhere, but a search with my cuffed hands failed to touch it. I looked my grinning captor in the eye and ejaculated, “You dirty rotten son of a bitch!”

“I thought you’d like it, Puss. Better than being chained to opposite walls.”

I walked carefully around the room. The carpet deadened the sound of my linkage. At first it was a strange, impossible feeling until my flesh worked itself into its new bondage. After that it was simply as though a stern, forbidding hand clutched my loins. The mesh was a part of me. The metal band around my waist caused my hips to sway outrageously. Christopher capped it with his usual “You’re very beautiful, Priscilla.”

“The creation is beautiful, I admit. Must have cost you a fortune.”

“It did, and it’s worth every penny.”

“Take it off.”

“You know I won’t.”

I used my hands again. I was obliged to explore one cheek at a time, but they told me my bottom was completely bare. It could be caned or sat on as required. A quick feel and a blush told me I could also use the bathroom without impediment. Even when I bent way down, the metal shield

followed my pussy back between my legs. As long as I wore this belt, my pussy was not my own. Christopher brightly said, “I’m so glad you like it. Come and see Diane’s.”

It was not until Diane and I were alone with our silver-sheated loins that full realization struck. The poor dear looked at me, absolutely bereft. “But, darling, we can’t do anything!”

“That’s the idea. Nothing to play with but our tits.”

“That’ll drive us crazy!”

“That’s the idea too. Come to the couch and we’ll see just how impossible these belts are.”

They were impossible. They were impregnable. Our pussies nestled beneath a shield of steel. They were not ours to play with any more. Diane and I clutched each other and wept in frustration. At that moment we were both sure the belts were worse than being whipped.

“He won’t take them off. He told me so—not ever!” Diane wailed. “It’s not fair, not on top of all the other things he’s going to do to us.”

“Like what?”

“We get whipped for sure.” I felt her nipples harden against my own. “I don’t know what else. He wouldn’t tell me,” she sniffed. “If I ever get to marry him, I’ll have Mother make his life so miserable.”

That was good for a giggle. Then we walked around our prison to see if something might not loosen and give a bit of slack. Nothing did. At the back of each of us a padlock hung pendent from the belt. They looked cute, hanging above our rumps. We did not bother with them much. They were hopeless. They were there to stay.

When Christopher brought our food, we ate ravenously, careless of the constriction around our tummies. The tea and scone in the police cell was all we'd had that day. He watched us possessively, once more the conqueror with two naked girls to do with as he pleased.

"I take it you've given up the idea of marrying either one of us," I said bluntly.

He shrugged. "Seems pointless now. My whole original idea has gotten properly mucked up. After I've punished you both and let you go, I'll kidnap another girl and start over."

Diane and I stopped eating and stared at our jailer in disbelief. How crassly absurd can a man get! I blurted out what Diane would have found difficult.

"You'll end up in prison, Christopher. Why stick your neck out? Marry Diane and you've got it made. She's everything you want except for the color of her hair, and she's willing to dye that."

"I enjoy a little punishment," Diane said apologetically. "We could have such fun."

“You’re not the right girl.”

“But you’re quite anxious to punish me along with Puss, aren’t you?”

“Don’t prod at me. If I was keeping you, I’d teach you respect. Half the time you talk down to me as though I were a kid.”

He was hopeless. I started to eat again, but Diane was wound up. “And these things you’ve locked over our pussies—”

“Don’t call them things—they’re chastity belts.”

“They’re cruel. They might be okay for a laugh, but you’re not going to leave them on, are you?”

“Yes.”

“It’s not asking much to let two girls in prison have a little pleasure. It’s no picnic being locked up and chained, and you don’t even want to fuck us.”

“Stop talking dirty. I’ve got gags that lock on, you know. Being a lesbian is horrible. Those belts will teach you both a lesson.”

We watched as Christopher picked up his tray and departed, a model of flushed male propriety. We winced at the sound of the door.

“Oh shit!” I said heartily.

“Mother will be so annoyed if the idiot gets himself put in prison,” Diane mourned. “Then I can’t marry him, and Wyngate House will stand empty.”

We collapsed on the couch and tried so very hard to make love, but it was just no good. Our pussies were in prison, just as we were. We didn’t dare touch each other’s nipples, so we slept.

“I’m not a bit sure this is any better than the triangle,” Diane said. “I suppose we should have known.”

She looked lovely and appealing with her cascade of golden hair and her white body hanging limply from her wrists. There was only ten feet between us as we hung suspended, our toes just off the floor. I knew that in looking at Diane I was seeing myself. Christopher had left us like this to savor what we were about to receive.

Dear Christopher had explained that, for starters, our bottoms would be caned. No particular number, just until he tired of slashing away. Our feet were free so we could kick. In the meantime, we could stay as we were, in suspended suspense. If the straps securing our wrists hadn’t been wide and supple, it would have been torture. It came close anyway.

“Our chastity belts will make his rotten cane hurt worse, Puss. Haven’t you noticed how it sort of bunches your bot-

tom?"

I had noticed. The lovely thing imprisoning my sex was so damn tight that I was forever aware of its clutch. The cheeks of my ass were beautifully compressed for the cane. The silver mesh had left them discreetly bare. Christopher was going to have himself a time.

"How many lashes does it take, Diane, before the pain stops being erotically exciting and you want to howl?"

"The first half dozen for sure, darling. After that it's a sort of lovely awful mixture. It's a shame you have to just plain hurt."

I didn't tell her there was a sexual heat for me too in the first couple, and in the burn when it was all over. I expect these responses are normal for any whipped girl.

Wryly, I suggested, "When you finally marry the silly ass, you'd better buy a kinder whip so you can keep your glow an hour at a time. Does being strung up this way do anything for you?"

"I'm afraid so—a little bit, darling. But I'll admit I'd be grateful to get my feet back on the floor. I think it's the before and after that really perks my puss." Diane considered in momentary silence. "I expect I shouldn't ever tell Christopher. If he gets to know what gives me pleasure, he'll stop doing it."

Who can tell about these things? All I knew was I was get-

ting so I adored Diane more and more, and Christopher less and less. Most certainly I didn't want my ass whipped the way I knew was going to happen. I'd do anything to avoid it. Gosh, I felt so naked. It was then that Christopher sauntered back in with his beastly thin yellow cane. His tone was briskly cheerful.

"Well, girls, ready for the cane?"

"Christopher, I'll do anything at all to avoid getting my ass —my bottom caned."

"You'll do anything I want anyway, Priscilla. You have no choice." Fire slashed my taut cheeks. "See what I mean?" He cut at me again, and the pain was bad enough to make me lift myself by my strapped wrists and kick like crazy. I was sliced again on the way down. My punishment had begun.

Christopher had it good. I don't suppose in the whole world there was a young man endowed with such power over a pair of naked girls. He caned our bottoms to his heart's content, pausing here and there for effect and to raise our hopes. Then he would continue. Diane and I swung and twisted under the cane. We kicked and yelped and often screamed. It was a lot different from the triangle where we hadn't been able to move. It some ways it was worse. There just isn't any way in which getting your ass licked that can be good. Diane soon passed over her limit of tolerance so she hurt and howled the same as me.

“You’re behaving delightfully,” Christopher said. “Such exquisite writhings! I particularly like the way you raise yourselves up by your wrists. Does it ease the pain a bit?”

We did no bother to answer. We didn’t dare say what we wanted to. We just continued with our pantings and moans. I never did manage to keep quiet for more than two strokes at a time. I’d will myself to clench my teeth and keep quiet and hang limp. But I could never keep it up. And anyway, what did it matter?

Christopher did not go back and forth giving Diane and me alternate strokes. He varied his inflictions so we never knew when it was our turn. Half the time we were too busy hurting to watch. In one of his pauses he gave us bad news.

“The cane is merely to warm you up, you know.” We answered him with gasps and groans.

“I’m not giving it to you too hard. You can stand quite a lot of this.”

“It’s too hard and too long. Christopher, please!”

“I’ll allow you an intermission before starting to whip your backs. If you stay away from insults and sarcasms, I might even let your feet back on the floor for awhile.”

What the hell was there to say? I mean, the bastard had us. He had us but good. I didn’t dare say a word.

Christopher finally stopped caning us. If my bottom looked

anything like Diane's, it was high time he did. Our seats were blazing, and our arms and wrists exhausted. It was pure ecstasy to get my feet back on the floor. I tried not to think about my back getting it next.

"I expect you'd like to be alone to compare notes." The smiling S.O.B. who had caned us half to bits placed the cane on a box where we could not fail to see it, then cheerily said, "I won't be long."

Through all of this I found it impossible to believe in going home to the U.S. I tried to comfort myself with the thought that the pain was only for a few days, and then I would be gone. But I put it to one side with my whipped back and turned my attention to my fellow captive.

"Christopher really is a twit," Diane sniffed. She had been crying. "Darling, can you get loose? I can't."

"I don't ever expect to," I said dolefully. "The idiot must have an inferiority complex a mile long, the way he doesn't trust us and never gives us the slightest chance of freedom. My seat's on fire in this damn belt. I suppose yours is too."

"Well, yes, darling, but Christopher didn't use the cane on our bottoms nearly as hard as he could have. If he had, we'd be in screaming hysterics now—or unconscious." Diane flexed against her wristlets. "He's really being frightfully clever. He just takes us to the brink, but not over the top. That way he can make our punishments last much, much longer."

“Don’t give him credit. He’s simply being a bastard.”

“Darling, don’t be unkind. I know I’ve been crying, and I howled as loud as you, but I can look forward to when he marries me and we arrive at just the right amount of cruelty I can handle.”

“Sweetheart, he isn’t going to marry you.”

“Oh, he just says that. I’ll get him. After you’re gone and I’m gone, and he can’t find another girl to kidnap, he’ll start thinking about me just handy down the road and come calling. That’s when I set Mother on his tail. We’ll be married in no time.”

“That’s the same as putting yourself in prison for life,” I warned. “He never knows when enough’s enough.”

“But, darling, you forget—I’ll be sleeping with him, and he’ll be doing you-know-what to me. That’ll tone him down and take the rough edges off. You’ll see.”

Poor Diane! But, for all I knew, she might be right. Trouble was I couldn’t believe in any of it. It was me who would stay a permanent prisoner in Wyngate House. I thought fleetingly of Dick Travers, but dismissed him because of the code. He saw me as Christopher’s property and would never encroach, not even if he wanted to. Dolefully, I shifted from one foot to the other, flexing my raised arms. The way we were was better than suspension but still no picnic. And things would soon be worse. Christopher had

returned.

“Ready to be whipped, girls?”

The son of a bitch sounded full of beans. Christopher had matured a foot since he’d first kidnapped me. I could see how having a naked girl around all the time might do that. Now he had Diane too. For Christopher, Diane was pretty much the girl next door. The bastard had it all!

“I’ll give you your first fifty strokes standing as you are,” he continued breezily. “I’ll expect some top notch writhing.”

We watched him pick up the cane and replace it with the whip he would use on us. I felt my tummy tie itself in knots. He took a lot of care arranging the beastly thing for us to look at while we waited to feel its bite. Neither of us said a word. We simply stared and trembled.

“For your second fifty lashes I’ll suspend you fully. You’re only nicely stretched now.”

The twerp was out of the door again before we’d gathered a thought to blast him with. After the slam of the door, Diane came out with the obvious.

“I bet that thing’s going to hurt.”

“Of course it will. Diane, didn’t you hear? A hundred lashes! Two lots of fity each! We can’t possibly stand that much.”

“We’ll have to. I can’t get loose. Oh, Puss!”

We stood in our stretched postures and viewed each other askance. Christopher was doing things just right to extract the ultimate cringe. I’ll swear that blasted whip had a life of its own, looking at us with malignant complacency like a mesmeric snake. I longed for freedom as I had never longed before.

Time passed.

“Christopher’s going to get us thoroughly tired before he whips us,” Diane mourned. “He’s really awfully clever.”

“So were those monks in the Spanish Inquisition.”

“He isn’t that bad, darling. There’s no hot irons or thumb screws or stuff like that.”

“Don’t breathe a word of them, Diane, or he’ll go straight out and buy them.”

“Oh, he wouldn’t!” Diane was still thinking in wifely terms. “But, darling, what’s keeping him? It must be hours since he first strapped us up like this. My wrists are still as tight as ever. I can’t slip a thing.”

Diane was right. It had been a long time. I felt a wave of the prisoner’s fear of something happening to your jailer so you stayed locked up as you were until you died. It’s a terrible spasm of pure horror you have to tread on quick before it grows. But I was getting tired, and fatigue breeds visions,

all horrific.

“Priscilla, he won’t give us a hundred, will he? He was only joking, right? Like leaving that beastly whip staring at us.”

Realization of our real punishment was slow in coming, but as the light began to fade, we knew there was something wrong. By the time the room was full of shadows and we had both shed fresh tears, we were sure Christopher was dead or enjoying a quiet laugh at our expense. The latter was the most probable, but we wished we knew. By the time it was dark, we were taking turns shouting for help, our vocals sounding eerie in the enclosed space. After awhile we realized we were the only ears to hear, so we fell silent. Sometimes we struggled hysterically, but that only hurt our wrists. We were foxed.

When Christopher finally came, he told us it was nine p.m. We had been standing with our arms up for eleven hours. We were so glad to see him that we were prepared to offer everything, including love and devotion. He had really had us going. He listened to us babble our nonsense, quietly smiling, but he didn’t loosen a single strap.

Instead, he produced brandy.

I wolfed all he would give me—great gulps on which I choked and came up for more. I was terribly thirsty, but the water came only as a chaser. On our empty tummies it was an instant drunk. When he had us properly looped, he confirmed our worst fears.

“It’ll help you sleep, girls.”

Our wail of anguish was in perfect unison. “Christopher, you can’t! You can’t possibly leave us like this!”

“Why not? Surely you prefer it to being whipped?”

“No, we don’t! Undo our straps. Please!”

“You mean, you wish to be whipped?”

We knew we were being played with, but the possibility of being left to stand as we were all night was very real and just purely awful. Abjectly, full of brandy, I declared, “If you want to whip us, Christopher, please do it quickly. Then undo the straps.”

Christopher unbuckled our strapped wrists. We folded to the floor like two limp rags. The way we both thanked him was a disgrace to womanhood, but what the hell! We gulped more brandy and panted out our exhaustion. When Christopher chained our ankles, we scarcely noticed and couldn’t have cared less. Locked in our prison, we sought the couch and each other. We fell to sleep instantly.

When we were fed in the morning, we were all sheepish and ashamed. I hoped Christopher’s arose from guilt. But Diane and I were both too lethargic for caustic comment. We allowed our hands to be chained with the heavy shackle and long span of links. I remember looking at mine stupidly and wondering why he bothered.

Food worked its usual miracle. Christopher regained his aplomb. “Let you off your whipping yesterday,” he said brightly. “You’ll get it this afternoon.”

We shrugged. We were really cheesed off.

“I’m going to have to remember the effect of standing with your arms up,” Christopher assured us earnestly. “I’ve never had two more chastened maidens. Any time you get uppity—”

“Go easy on us, Christopher,” Diane wheedled. “You don’t have to wear us out.”

“But there’s so little time left now.” He gazed back and forth at us earnestly. “And there’s so many more punishments I’ve planned.”

“But why punish us?” I asked, protesting. “After yesterday and what you’re going to do to us today, isn’t that enough? Couldn’t you go easy on us? We’re only girls, you know—not iron maidens.”

“I don’t want to hear it.” Christopher injected steel into his words. “No complaints. No whining. Silence on the subject. Understood?”

We shrugged again and looked down at our chains. He had us! “I’ll be merciful. It won’t be a hundred each, only fifty.” Fifty hard lashes could kill a girl, but I didn’t dare say so. We listened respectfully.

“Enjoying your belts?”

“You’ve just told us not to complain.”

“I take it you’re not enjoying them. That’s wonderful! I’m enjoying them. They fit you like a glove. Don’t see why you couldn’t wear them permanently.” He chuckled. “Baffle the boys, eh?”

“It ought to baffle you,” Diane said wistfully. “If you’d take them off, I’d do anything you want.”

He stuffed off the question and picked up the tray. “I’Il donate you this morning. Make yourselves beautiful. I do think a girl should look her best when she’s whipped, don’t you?”

We did as we were told. I suppose we wanted to anyway, and our bathroom had everything. But as I bathed and all the rest I less and less liked the prospect of walking meekly to that other room to be whipped. I didn’t want to be whipped at all. Yesterday had been enough. My bottom was still screaming. I voiced my discontent.

“Diane, I just can’t stand being whipped again. I don’t see why either of us should.”

She looked at me in dismay. “But, darling, what can we do?”

“You don’t have to do a thing except distract Christopher. I’ll do the rest. I’ll take the blame.”

“But, Puss dear—”

“When we hear the door, you bend over so all he sees is your scarlet and purple bottom. Will you do it?”

“Yes, but—”

I could ask myself why I hadn’t used the weapon of my shackles before. But I knew why. Sure, I’d thought about it, but I’d never had the nerve. I’d never hit anyone in my life. I’d been certain I’d blow it and get myself horribly punished. But something had clicked in my mind. Now I knew for sure I could hit Christopher over the head. I was a girl with a purpose.

It worked.

Christopher opened the door I stood behind. All he saw was Diane’s cruelly whipped bottom and the metal shield over her pussy peeping immodestly back between her thighs. When I clenched my fists and hit him with both ankle shackles at once, he fell like a log.

Diane straightened up and gazed at what I had done. I was busy searching my victim for keys. I found only one, but it fit my shackles. Within a minute we were both free. Getting no help from my horrified fellow captive, I wrapped my leg shackles around Christopher’s waist real tight, put in a couple of twists, then locked his wrists in what had been my anklets. My wristlets were far too small. It worked fine.

I had figured this whole thing for maximum advantage.

While I was still searching for a key that wasn't there, Christopher began to stir. I signaled Diane, and she ran to the bathroom. When she came back, she reeked of perfume. She must have poured most of it on her chastity belt. She was like a flower garden on a hot day, only more so. She carried a couple of damp face cloths. We lifted Christopher onto the couch and she arranged his battered head so it rested in her lap while she started to bathe away a hit of blood from a small cut. When Christopher came to, he found himself with his head and face in one of her best parts. I left them together for love to blossom, but I held onto the key while I went to dress. I wasn't all that sure about Diane in her present circumstance. I found our things and took my time dressing. When I went back, they were just as I had left them, except Christopher was fully conscious and very mad.

"Christopher would like to be unlocked, please," Diane said innocently. "He doesn't like the way you've fixed him."

"Good!"

"You'll never find the keys to your belts!" he snarled. "I'll never tell you where they are either. And if you go away and leave me in this fix, I'll make you so damn sorry!"

"You can't make anyone sorry, Christopher. Find yourself another girl, or get one of those inflatable rubber—"

"If I ever get my hands on you—"

“You won’t! By the way, this whole idea was mine. Diane had no part in it. She’s fond of you. It’s crazy but true.”

“I’ll make you so sorry, Ilena!”

“You’re hallucinating. You can call the rubber doll Ilena. Oh, and if you need help, I’m sure you can manage the phone. You can call your worshipful Dick Travers.”

“You’re forgetting the stuff in the cottage and the police!”

“I think you ran a bluff on us. I’m damn sure you’d never put Diane behind bars. I doubt if you could. You’d be laughed out of court.”

“Priscilla, I’ve loved you.”

“You loved Ilena—a dream. Forget it!” I raised my eyes to Diane’s worried face. “Come along, sweetheart.”

“Are you sure Christopher will be all right?”

“I’m sure. Kiss the spot and make it well if you want.”

She actually did it, then hurried after me. The poor girl was in a dither, but getting her clothes on was a tonic and so was the sunlight. We borrowed Christopher’s car to drive home. Once there Diane had no regrets and got the comfortable feeling it would teach Christopher a lesson. We giggled about the way he was fastened and how I had the key. I asked to be driven to Heathrow right away. She could have the key at the last minute just in case Christopher

hadn't managed to get loose. We were all giggly and excited and ready to go when Diane remembered our chastity belts.

"No. Don't let's take our time. I'll wear mine back to the States if I have to."

"But, darling, all that sitting! You'll be terribly uncomfortable."

"I'll put up with it. I don't feel safe in England. I want out."

"Priscilla dear, I've got a few tools."

You know how it is. Diane meant well and was absolutely right. "Oh, all right," I said. "Let's try and get the damn things off. But don't take too much time."

We stripped. Diane came up with the damnedest collection of pliers and screwdrivers and junk. We tried them all on that lovely mesh. It seemed like sacrelige. But the mesh and padlock laughed at everything. I began to suspect they were made of some special steel.

"Oh, bother!" Diane pouted in frustration, then brightened. "There's bolt cutters in the garage. They'll cut anything. Hold on."

She was gone in a flash. I should've gone with her. If I had, it might not have happened. The moment was destined to be one of those "if only" laments.

I suppose you've guessed.

I didn't guess the way I should have. When Diane didn't come back, I supposed she was searching. Then, when too much time had passed, I went looking. I forgot I was naked. I forgot the chastity belt hugging my loins. I stepped blithely into the garage. A damp sweet pad covered my face and was held there by strong hands. I fought. Boy, how I fought! But not for long.

I awoke in the stone chamber. It had been Lady Ilena's prison. It was now mine again. I was in no hurry to sit up. I would willingly have relapsed into unconsciousness. I knew I was in deep, deep trouble. As my head cleared I realized I was naked and the chastity belt had been taken from me. My hands were tied behind my back in the manner of when I was first captured. I got the impressions, one by one, and was surprised by none of them. Unhappily, I stood erect and looked for Diane, but she was not there. I was alone. I went to the bathroom, but she wasn't there either. The prison door was as implacable as ever. I went over and pushed with a bare shoulder, but it didn't move an inch. I tugged at my bound hands, but they didn't move either.

I sat on the couch and fought tears. It was too, too cruel. If Diane and I hadn't bothered with the chastity belts, I would now have been on a plane and safely away. We had underrated Christopher's resourcefulness. No doubt he had a second key secreted away and had not been far behind. We

should have been more cruel and fixed him good, but I would get no credit for my kindness. I was going to be punished most frightfully, I had no doubt of it. The U.S. had vanished into limbo again. Christopher would never give me the faintest chance of escape, not ever again. My hands bound behind my back were the first hint. They could not touch him. I twisted furiously against the cords, but it was only to vent my despair. I knew I could never get them free.

I longed for Diane with a most urgent longing, but I knew she was gone, along with my liberty. I doubted she would cause Christopher much embarrassment. He could handle her easily. But for all I knew she might be locked up in another room same as me. Wyngate House was not short on places in which to lock girls.

It was easy to guess my own fate. He would leave me alone here to stew myself into hysteria. I knew nothing for sure about anything except that I was going to be terribly punished. Christopher's hurt pride would ensure the worst possible whipping and god knows what else. I knew I shouldn't think about it, but what else was there for me to think about? Normal life was way off someplace where it didn't concern me. I wondered how practical it might be to try and take a bath with my hands bound the way they were.

Christopher left me alone the rest of the day and all night. When he brought food the next morning, I was laying on

the couch and he could see I had been crying. He dried my cheeks with his own square of cambric, then held the cup of coffee to my lips. It never even occurred to me to ask to be untied.

“Think you’ll escape again, Priscilla?”

“No.”

Christopher fed me. I ate. He lifted the coffee cup for me again and again. In between sips, I asked, “Where’s Diane?”

“Safe at home—back to normal. I don’t need her, you know.”

“Did you take off—”

“The chastity belt? Oh, sure. Neither of you need them now. It’s a pity—they looked nice on you. I may replace yours sometime for the effect.”

I ate steadily, plucking the food from his fingers or the fork like a squirrel. It wasn’t long before Christopher asked the inevitable question. “Are you at all repentant for bopping me on the head?”

“I didn’t want to, honest, but I was so scared of being whipped again. I really am sorry.”

“How sorry are you, Puss?”

“Sorry enough to kneel and apologize, if you want me to.”

“My, aren’t we humble! Yes, I like the idea. Do it.”

Hating myself, I obeyed. It was utterly demeaning, but I knew I’d do anything to soften him up, if that was possible. I got down on my knees, looked up appealingly, and blurted out, “I’m sorry I hit you, Christopher. I apologize.”

“Is that all?”

I swallowed hard. Memory of the triangle and suspension spurred me on. “I was a rotten little bitch to do that to you—I deserve to have my hands tied this way so I can’t do it again.” I swallowed once more and went whole hog. “I do apologize, and I promise I’ll be a good, obedient prisoner.”

“Well, I suppose so. Sit back up here, Priscilla.”

I got back into place and opened my mouth for the next bite. While I chewed, Christopher sneered. “Buttering me up, eh?”

“I’ll do anything for you to avoid being whipped. I’ll be honest about it—I’m frightened.”

“You figuring I’ll whip you for revenge or to teach you a lesson?”

“Both, I suppose. I can understand you want to do it, but, Christopher, I sure don’t want it. Is there some way—”

“I haven’t even said that I’m going to whip you.”

“But you are, aren’t you?”

“You better believe it!”

The American exclamation didn’t sit well on Christopher. Half the time he was still the smiling boy, but I’d given up believing I could cope with him. I belonged on the other side of the Atlantic. I tried again.

“Christopher, I ask for your mercy. Please forgive me. I’d offer my body if you wanted it, but you’ve said you don’t. I don’t suppose you know how that hurts a girl.”

“Oh?”

“I mean it. It hurts terribly. I’m offering you all of me, and you couldn’t care less.”

“You’re offering it to avoid punishment.”

“Is that so bad?”

“It’s cheap and vulgar.”

“All right, Christopher, go ahead and punish me. I can’t stop you. You’ve got my hands tied beautifully. I’m helpless.”

We stared at each other, at an impasse. He was the nice young man again and I was the silly girl who couldn’t understand him. Without caring, I asked, “Christopher, what’s ahead for us? Are we going anywhere?”

“We were going to somewhere, but you spoiled it. Then Diane and Dick got into the act.”

“Am I sentenced to imprisonment for life? With regular whippings?”

“I don’t want to talk about it. I’ll whip you this afternoon. I’ll take the tray now, but I’ll be back to get you ready.”

For something to do I walked around my prison. With my hands tied behind my back, I couldn’t touch anything or do anything. I admired the chains hanging from the column. I went in the bathroom and admired my pubic hair and the marks the chastity belt had left on my skin. Then I went to the window and admired the view. Through it all I fought a sense of unreality in knowing my nakedness would soon be fastened some way so a pleasant young man could whip my bare skin for as long as he pleased. It was unreal, but it would happen.

In a way it was a bore—anticlimactic. I let myself be led to stand before the odd looking set of stocks while my ankles were tied so I’d still be helpless when my hands were freed. Totally helpless, I fell to my knees, bowed my head, and desperatedly pleaded, “Don’t whip me, Christopher! Please don’t whip me!”

He lifted me back to my feet. “Don’t take on so,” he reproached. “I’ve never seen you like this.”

“I’ve never been this frightened.”

The thing designed to hold me was just a post and planks, a set of stocks, but it only had holes for my hands. My neck

wouldn't be imprisoned. Christopher opened it up. "I'm going to untie your hands, Priscilla. Will you put them in here where they belong?"

"Yes."

Christopher freed my hands. I immediately fitted my wrists into the waiting slots. He lowered the raised half to remove my hands from my sight and fix my arms well apart. I would stand. I could not go away.

"Neat, eh?"

"Very. Is this where I'll be whipped?"

"Right! I'll leave you to get used to it."

The hated wait with my tummy tying itself in knots. Alone and puzzled, I tested the thing in which my wrists were clamped. I could not move them; they were snug. I could not move the stocks; they were solid. I was held at the distance of my arms, unable to move forward or backward. But the rest of me was very free indeed. I was wonderfully exposed for the lash, but also able to writhe and kick most entertainingly to give Christopher an erection he would do nothing about. I wondered if a girl was expected to stand still while she was whipped! The whole thing was insidiously cruel in its simplicity.

I stood there in my nudity, my arms stretching straight out to the stocks, then disappearing as though cut off at my wrists. I fixed my fingers to reassure myself they were still

there on the other side. That just about exhausted my repetoire. There was nothing else I could do except shift my weight from foot to foot.

There was no more chitchat. When Christopher returned, he started to whip me right away with those careful, widely spaced strokes which extracted the maximum effect in my body's response. I'm sure I put on a good show, but I was too busy trying not to scream, and after that too busy screaming to pay much attention. I didn't even notice the punishment of my wrists as they took the brunt of my lunges and surges and twistings. I screamed almost every time Christopher hit me.

It was a cruel way to be fastened. There was something far more personal about it than suspension or the triangle. I stood there with my arms lifted and offered my body to be whipped. Christopher was right there beside me, in no way remote. It was like I stood passively and offered myself to his lash. We were so close. Sometimes he stopped whipping me long enough to run his fingers up and down my wealed back as though in wonder at what he found. Every so often he reached in from behind to cup his palm over my pussy, I suppose to see if it was wet. I didn't think to ask him for results of these testings. I didn't care. He had his usual erection.

I'm getting knowledgeable about being whipped. After the frist shock and the first screams, I realized I was not being whipped nearly as hard as Christopher was capable. It still

hurt like fury on my bare skin, but it was not what I had expected. I had expected an all-out flaying and a bleeding back, but it wasn't happening that way. I got no comfort from it. He was simply making it last longer. He had been whipping me for quite some time, and I was nowhere near passing out. But I hurt like crazy! I was on fire from my shoulders down to my ass. He left my ass alone. I suppose he figured it had been caned enough.

It had been a long time and I had been well whipped when Christopher set the whip aside to make another of his tests between my thighs. He was getting bolder at it, and I had to open my legs to help. I was grateful for anything that didn't hurt. When he spoke, it was the same old thing.

"I'm going to release your wrists, Priscilla."

I managed a pale thank you. I was really grateful.

"I'm then going to tie you. Are you going to struggle?"

"Oh, Christopher, I can't struggle! I'm played out. I couldn't say boo to a goose."

He lifted the yoke. My arms fell to my sides. I was limp and exhausted. Right then I was the most obedient female in the world.

"I want you up on this table, on your back. I'll arrange you."

I stumbled over and flopped. Even on my whipped back it

was glorious. Peace and no pain! Sure, I was apprehensive, but I couldn't fight. Anyway, it wouldn't have done any good. I just lay there all sprawled out, and allowed my nudity to be pulled around and bound. Wrists and ankles were spread. It seemed strangely conventional. Then I wondered if he was going to whip my front. I longed to sleep.

He pulled and tugged and looped. At the end of his efforts I was spread-eagle, with Christopher standing beside the table looking at me very strangely. When I caught on to what was happening, I laughed almost hysterically.

Christopher was going to fuck me!

We had another staring match. He was really worked up, breathing heavily. I told him what he should have guessed.

"You don't have to tie me, Christopher—I won't fight you."

"I want you tied."

That was that. I realized he was seeing it as a punishment. He would rape me. No doubt it would teach me a lesson. By his code, no nice girl could ever possibly want intercourse or get pleasure from it. Any way you took him, Christopher was always a problem.

I'm sure it was more difficult for him to remove his clothes than it had ever been for me, but he had nothing to be ashamed of. He had a good body, and tying me down to the table had kept his cock erect and rampant. Now that no

doubt remained as to his intentions, I tentatively suggested, “It’d be a lot better for you if you untied my feet, Christopher. I’d still be helpless.”

“What do you mean, better for me?” He gazed down at my center of interest suspiciously.

“I could help. A girl can, you know. Flat out isn’t the best way.”

“Help?” The word obviously held no meaning for him in this context. “You don’t have to be vulgar.”

I suddenly guessed. “Christopher, is this your first time?” He looked puzzled and testily retorted, “Of course it is! It ought to be yours too.”

My whipped back I was laying on cautioned me not to make further comment. I shut my mouth. I was then mounted by a grim-lipped young man as though he was searching for stirrups and a saddle. Without pause, Christopher Wyngate thrust hard at the enemy.

He missed.

I didn’t say a word.

He rammed again, and I had to bite back a giggle when I thought of the Shakespeare quote: “Once more into the breach.” His fourth jab got him inside me, but he proceeded to plow with some vigor that he slipped right out again. However, he was now experienced with my con-

tours and well lubricated, so I was once more lustfully impaled.

Christopher then immediately ejaculated.

I wasn't surprised, but the consternation on his face as he climaxed was something to see. Manfully, he fought his battle against vulgarity, lept up, gathered his clothes, and presumably went to the bathroom to wash away the stigma of his indiscretion. I lay there on the table, still tightly tied, with the terrible feeling that I was going to be blamed for the fiasco. When he returned, he was once more clothed and wore a scowl on his face.

"Why did you do that, Priscilla?"

"I didn't do anything. I'm tied, so I can't do anything."

"You messed it up some way."

"Oh, Christopher!" My voice rose to a wail. "If only you'd have told me what you were going to do, and if you'd given me a bit of freedom—"

"And let you knock me in the head again!"

"No! I could have told you things. I could have helped."

"That's nonsense. All the girl does is just lay there."

Poor little boy! I ached to be female and give him lessons, but a girl spread out on a table and tied down tight can't do much of anything. I was so damn helpless and frustrated. I

felt a tear escape my eye.

“Why are you crying?”

The tears then came in earnest. Between sobs and sniffs, I said hopelessly, “We’re so far apart, Christopher. We’re not even in the same world. We don’t talk the same language.” I sniffed away a pause before saying, “I’m no good for you. Why don’t you let me go?”

“You could if you wanted.”

“Tell me how.”

“You don’t want to know, and you needn’t think you’re getting away with this. You may as well stop crying.”

I realized Christopher wasn’t being deliberately brutal, but he was way off somewhere, not seeing me as I was. Fear made me tense against the cords. I was in trouble.

“You’ll be punished,” he said flatly.

I unleashed my tears again. Nothing mattered. This was my whole life now. Through my grief I heard my master mutter, “It’s no use crying. I’ll be back after I think up something appropriate. You can stay tied.”

He left me because he hated the tears. He ran away from his failure to cope with a female. But I knew he’d be back, and I knew I was going to get another hateful punishment. Suppose Christopher to comprehend a girl’s limits—just

suppose! I wasn't even sure my principal whipping was done with. There might be some more to come. Now he was going to sentence me to something else. As far as I was concerned, my caned ass and whipped back had already taken me to the limits. But suppose I'd only just started! Christopher was seeing me as indestructable. I was just a pretty doll.

I hadn't been tied just like this before. I wondered if he might have been careless—just one wrist was tied. I had a beautiful vision of tearing away my bindings and fleeing Wyngate House forever. I would avoid the tight little circle of friends and go straight to the police. They could put me in prison for being naked if they wanted to so long as at the end of it I was put on a plane to the U.S.A. I wanted to be in police custody, handcuffed and all. I was deathly afraid of England. I was sure that every road in the country would lead me back to Wyngate House and Christopher's whip.

I spent my period of waiting for my next punishment twisting and squirming. But the cords won, as always. I was still spread-eagled and naked when Christopher returned. He wasted no time. He freed my feet from the table, but left each ankle circled with a trailing cord. These he pulled up and back until he could tie them down along with my hands. Can you figure it? I'd never been in such a position in my life. I was looking up face to face with my pubic hair.

"Christopher, this is obscene. You, of all people—"

“It’s exactly what you deserve.”

“But I don’t! I’ve been helpless—”

“That thing between your thighs deserves it, and she’s going to get it!”

He was crazy!

He was shaking out the thongs of a new whip I hadn’t seen before. They looked cruel. I realized how beautifully I was positioned for what he intended to do. My legs were spread, my ass was off the table and curled back. My pussy was outrageously exposed, simply pleading to be loved or punished. I knew which it would be. I moaned.

“Please don’t! Oh, Christopher, don’t whip me in there! I don’t deserve it. I don’t, I don’t!”

Christopher mounted the table and looked down into my most intimate recess. I could guess how my pussy looked to him. The whip in his hands seemed like a live thing—waiting!

With an absurd self-righteousness, the idiot said, “I should have whipped you on this place long ago.”

Christopher Wyngate then proceeded to whip my cunt.

I may as well say it—it’s the exact truth. He aimed the thongs squarely into my most secret place, only a couple of feet above my eyes. I screamed in agony. Half the noise I

made was in anger and outrage. I mean, the position was horrible. And then to be down inside my thighs made it even worse. It was the absolute pits, the very end. While I was preoccupied with pain and screaming, a female voice interrupted the punishment.

“Stop it! Christopher, stop now! You ought to be ashamed of yourself.”

Christopher stopped whipping my crotch.

The angry female voice belonged to Diane.

She stalked into the room like an avenging angel and wrenched the whip from my tormentor’s surprised hand. She spared me a reassuring look.

“It’s all right, darling,” she comforted. “Christopher’s forgotten himself. He wasn’t supposed to—”

Christopher had got down off the table and was standing with his mouth agape. He seemed to be as shocked as I was glad. Diane still had the floor.

“You promised you wouldn’t be cruel to her if we let her stay your prisoner until the final day,” she reprimanded. “You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Christopher! Look at the poor darling—all tied up in a knot and covered with whip marks.”

“I did like you suggested,” Christopher said sulkily. “I did that thing—you know, making love. It was a disaster.”

“But it was your own fault, you bastard! And you’re whipping the poor darling’s cunt because you didn’t know how to fuck her! You incompetent clod!”

“But it was you who advised—”

“Christopher, you’re impossible.” Diane shook a warning finger. “Don’t get ideas about tying me up and making me your prisoner again. Dick’s outside in the car.”

“I promised I wouldn’t—”

“You’re not to be trusted where whipping girls is concerned.” Diane sounded like a stern stepmother. “You’ve been whipping Priscilla horribly, I can see. Come here!”

Christopher actually obeyed her. He walked towards her like a zombie. Diane, the English lady, had certainly come into her own. When they stood face to face, she unzipped his pants, calm and unblushing. What popped out lived up to the highest male standards and female hopes.

Possessively, Diane said, “Let yourself down on top of me. I’ll show you how it’s done.”

I was forgotten, still tied tightly. I had to strain like crazy to watch Diane’s technique. She was full of surprises. She had arrived minus panties and was soon minus everything else. She took my baffled captor into her arms and proceeded to introduce him to sex in the way I might have done if I hadn’t been tied up tight. It was a revelation. I don’t know where Diane learned it all, but she was good. She was bet-

ter than I could have ever been. But then, I didn't want Wyngate House!

Diane coaxed and cautioned and wiggled her ass in ways I had to admire. Christopher became the instrument by which she pleasured herself. He was soon glassy-eyed and panting, but she held his libido in check by some magic all her own. Despite hurt wrists, I watched her come to at least two orgasms before Christopher had got started on one. She was exactly what Christopher needed, if only the idiot could understand. I forgot the bizarre manner in which I was tied. I felt so privileged to watch.

I'm sure it was one of the most successful couplings in human history. When they both decided it was over, they sat on my table and panted their way back to normal. I didn't utter a word. I felt I was suffering in a good cause. I listened closely.

"I hope this has brought to your senses, Christopher."

Diane sounded compacently maternal, but she had really hit the nail on the head. Christopher made some odd sounds that might have meant anything.

"We may as well get married right away now. There's no reason for delay. Do you want me to dye my hair?"

"No, never mind. I've gotten used to it."

I was being ignored in the most indecent posture of my life, but I didn't care. What I was hearing was the best news

ever.

“Don’t think you’ll be deprived, dear. For half of each week you can do whatever you want with me. But the other half I’m going to be Mrs. Christopher Wyngate. Do you understand?”

Christopher appeared dazed. I could see how Diane’s introduction to sex had impacted on him in contrast to his fiasco with me. He was having roseate dreams of future bliss. Mechanically, he muttered, “Yes, of course. But what about your mother?”

Diane giggled. “We won’t tell her about the times when I’m your prisoner and get whipped and all that. The poor darling would never understand.”

“We’ll have to make arrangements about our wedding.”

“I’ve already made them. I’ve got the licenses, and I’ve talked to the Reverend Martindale.”

Christopher shook his head in bemusement. He was not himself. He was awed and cowed and jubilant, all at the same time.

“Diane, you’re wonderful,” he said reverently. “You’re amazing!”

“Yes, I am. Would you like to give me six of the best on my bare bottom now to seal the bargain?”

“I couldn’t possibly.”

“Don’t be silly. Of course you can. We’re as good as married, and I want you to do it. Here’s the cane—I’ll bend over.”

I was choking with laughter, my pain forgotten. This was priceless. Diane had got Christopher on the run. She bent forward and flipped up her skirt to reveal a bare ass and a peeping puss. Catching my eye, she winked.

Christopher viewed the delectable goodies in disbelief. He had been seeing a hell of a lot more of me, but it wasn’t the same thing. Diane was clothing this maiden sacrifice with a potent eroticism all her own. Christopher struck the exposed curves as though stroking a kitten.

“Christopher, you can do better than that. We won’t count that one.”

Inspired and admonished, Christopher struck again. This time he made a mark and got a responsive gasp. Each of his strokes became more severe than the one before. When Diane stood up after number six, she was red-faced and rubbing her welts in dreamy ecstasy. Her voice was like the cooing of doves. “Darling, I’m afraid we’re going to have to do it again.”

“You mean, you want six more?” Christopher was out of his depth.

“No, not the cane, silly. But it’s made me frightfully horny.

Let's get rid of these clothes. Just look at what my caning has done for you! Oh, Christopher, we're so lucky. We can do it in the same place."

Diane lay on her back and opened her arms. Christopher entered them like a traveler coming home. He was as rampant as before. I had to wonder where Diane had picked up her skills. Could it possibly have been with Dick Travers? I watched another successful coupling. I wished they had untied me first, but I couldn't complain.

They took a long time. I wondered if Christopher knew how lucky he was. I was hurting all over and wanting to be untied in the worst way, but I figured it wouldn't be long now. Not with Diane's star in the ascendency the way it was. When they finally stood up, she positively gushed, "Oh, Christopher dear, you're marvelous— wonderful! I'm so lucky."

The idiot was beginning to believe it himself. There was a trace of cock-sure strut about him. But Diane was looking at me.

"Darling, we must do something for poor Priscilla. Look at the awful way you've got her tied. Will you untie her or do you want me to?"

"Leave her as she is. She's being punished."

"But, Christopher, you don't need Puss now. You've got me."

"I don't to do things like that to you until after we're mar-

ried."

"But I don't mind."

"I mind." The old Christopher was creeping back. "With you and me things have to be perfect. I won't cheapen a thing. I won't hurt you until after we're married."

It was typical Christopher reasoning—crazy! But it was to Diane's advantage. I could tell she was fighting back retorts. Hesitantly, she said, "You're so thoughtful. I do love you for it. But we can't leave Priscilla—"

"Yes, we can."

"But I don't understand."

"It's simple: Priscilla is being punished. Priscilla and her punishments have nothing to do with you and me."

"But, Christopher—"

"She has a couple of days of punishment still to go. Then you can take her and put her on that plane she's forever talking about."

"But, Christopher—"

"Until you're my wife it's none of your business, Diane."

The poor dear was on thin ice, and we both knew it. But I wanted release so bad it hurt. I could hardly move. Anything I said from this awful posture could not possibly be

taken seriously. The cords held me as nothing more than an exposed pussy. I could almost stretch and lick my pubic hair.

“But what will you do to her?”

“You can see what I’m doing. I’m not finished yet, and she’s only had half her whipping.”

“But you’ll injure her.”

“Nonsense, she thrives on it.”

That one was too much. I exploded. “I don’t thrive on it—I don’t! I hate it! I don’t want to be punished any more!”

Diane spared me a brief glance. “You see, Christopher, the poor dear’s had enough. Besides, I want her at our wedding.”

“She can stay over an extra day.”

“But the way you’re treating her, she’ll belong in a hospital.” They stood and stared. I could sense the old hostilities creeping back. But Diane had won so much. I dared not allow her to lose now. It would be too cruel. And anyway, her victory was mine too if I could hold out the two days. I hadn’t believed in release before, but after what I had witnessed I could believe it.

Two days.

Weakly, I said, “Never mind, Diane. I’ll manage the two

days somehow." I swallowed hard and shifted against the cords. "I think it's wonderful about your wedding, and I want to come to it."

Tension relaxed. I could feel sexuality take over again. All three of us were naked. Not that I counted, but Diane certainly did.

She spared me another glance and said, "You're a sweetheart, Puss." Then, to Christopher, she said, "You can't possibly be too unkind. She's such a darling."

"Oh, all right."

It was a grudging concession, but he had made it. They gathered their clothes and went away. I could guess they had gone to the bedroom, but their exit caught me unaware. I was still tied, and my pubic hair still stared me in the face. It was too late to call out. I was still a prisoner, but with slightly improved prospects. I tried not to think of the two days, only of what would come afterwards.

It was too much of a stress to even try and free myself, all stretched and doubled up while the two of them were having the lovliest time on a comfortable bed. I worked with my right wrist for awhile, long enough to prove that it was hopeless. I wondered about Dick Travers waiting in the car.

It was then that he sauntered in.

I longed to die—to be invisible, or cross my legs, and to cover my breasts. I couldn't do a thing except continue to

be an obscene female object. But Dick was English, and the English will never admit to shock. He appeared not to notice my condition.

“Nice to see you again, Priscilla.”

“Hello, Dick. Do you think you could let me loose?”

“Untie Christopher’s cords?”

“Well, yes. Would you mind?”

There is something insidious about the way the English talk. First thing you know you’re doing it yourself. I added a bit of American graphics. “I’m hurting terribly, and I’ve been tied like this for so long.”

“Ah, yes. Where’s Christopher?”

“Upstairs in bed with Diane. They’re going to get married.”

Dick brightened perceptably. He really was a handsome chunk of male. He could have named his own price in Hollywood. “That’s the most splendid news,” he said, obviously sincere. “Diane will be the best thing in the world for Christopher. I gather he’s forgotten that legend business and the Lady Ilena?”

“Diane forgot it for him. Would you mind untying me?”

“Ah, quite so. Mind I’ll speak to Christopher first?”

I longed for America. An American male would have had

me loose in seconds. But here was Dick Travers anxious to do the right thing with an old friend.

Wanly, I said, “Don’t you have any chivalry over here any more?”

“Well, yes, but you must understand—”

“You can’t talk to Christopher while he’s fucking his wife-to-be. Please, Dick, it would only take you a minute to untie me.”

“Quite so. But you really are Christopher’s perogative.”

“I’m a girl who needs help, and you’re not man enough to give it to me. I’d think you’d be ashamed, seeing me like this.”

Dick dresses and looks a lot like John Steed in that old TV show, The Avengers. I almost felt sorry for him. He was so obviously torn between chivalry and friendship. I twisted and struggled to help him make a decision. Striving for maximum effect, I pointed out, “You can see what part of me he’s been whipping. If you don’t let me loose, he’ll come back and start whipping me more. It’s the only thing he knows to do with a girl.”

“But surely he and Diane—”

“Diane seduced him.”

Dick was visibly shocked by my choice of words. He and

Christopher were buddies. He would not free me. Disgusted, I accused, “If you read of a girl being as frightfully whipped as Chirstopher is doing—and on her bare cunt—you’d be nauseated. But you’re leaving me tied, even though you know.”

Christopher and Diane walked back in, arm in arm. They were dressed. It was suddenly old home week. Nobody seemed to notice me.

When they were about to leave, still chatting, I exclaimed, “I’m still tied! Please—someone untie me!”

But they were gone.

I cried. Why the hell not! I had watched three happy people leave, but I was still tied indecently and ready for my pussy to be whipped some more. Anybody could do what they wanted with me. I was helpless.

7

Unsatisfied Satyr

WHEN CHRISTOPHER RETURNED, he was still under the influence, a bit dazed, beholding visions of a naked Diane. He appeared to notice me for the first time.

“Hello, Priscilla,” he said mechanically.

“Hello, Christopher.”

Absurd! But the whole thing was absurd, especially the way I was fastened.

“I’m really glad about you and Diane,” I said sincerely. “She’s perfect for you.”

“Eh? Oh, yes, she’s wonderful.”

“Christopher, I’d be terribly grateful if you’d untie me.”

I don’t think he heard a word I said. He wasn’t really seeing me either. I’d have to be careful what I said to him.

“I just know you’ll be both be very happy,” I said brightly. “I want to wish you happiness.”

“Thank you. That’s very kind.” He managed to focus on me at last. He thoughtfully added, “That’s a marvelous way I’ve got you tied—very original.”

“Yes, isn’t it!”

“I’ll have to tie Diane like that after we’re married.”

“I’m sure she’ll love it.”

Having unloaded that bit of nonsense, we simply stared at each other.

“Christopher dear, please untie me for a little while. I need to rest and stretch. I won’t fight, and I promise I’ll let you tie me again.”

“All right,” he said after considering. “But I’m going to whip you some more first. I like whipping you in that position, and you are being punished, you know.”

I thought it best not to argue, but I cringed in anticipation when he climbed on the table with his beastly little whip and took up position.

Looking down at my open pussy, he said, “I had no idea girls were made like that—like you and Diane.”

I closed my eyes and tried to be brave, but it was no use. I handled the first few strokes okay, but then they got to me and I started to moan and yelp every time the thongs splatted into my crotch. I knew he could hit me harder, but it was still hard enough. I struggled and tugged without any real benefit. I was a helpless female package whose cunt was being whipped by a nice young man who was soon to be married to another girl.

Crazy!

The cutting little thongs seemed to bite and cut at me forever. But Christopher seemed to think he was doing me a favor. “There, that will do for now,” he said.

I was still panting, my loins scorching. I knew a great thankfulness when the absurd man stooped and tugged at my knots. When my feet were freed, I sort of unwound like a jackknife. It was glorious to lay flat out again. Christopher then untied my left wrist but not my right. I was still his prisoner.

“I’m not sure I can trust you, Priscilla.”

“You can if I give you my word. I promise I’ll let you tie me again.”

“None of this hitting me over the head when I’m not looking?”

“I don’t even have anything to hit you with, Christopher.” He untied my right wrist and, as I massaged it, I said, “Thank you Christopher. May I go to the bathroom? I promise I won’t be long.”

He was obviously relieved to see me come back and stand submissively before him. I was still comforting wounded wrists. I had no wish to sit down on my punished puss. He was still sitting on the table where I had been bound. He patted it invitingly.

“Sit down, Priscilla. I want to talk to you.”

“Would you mind very much if I just stood? I hurt terribly down below.”

Christopher had the grace to blush. I’m sure he thought me vulgar for hurting where he had whipped me, but he didn’t say so. “Diane says I’m unkind to you,” he blurted out.

It was the understatement of the year, but I submissively said, “Diane’s so sweet, and she’s very wise.”

“She says that what we did was no good because you were so tightly tied and it was my first time.”

“I suspect she’s right, Christopher.”

“If she was right, then I shouldn’t have punished you.”

My heart fluttered with premonitions. I excused my tormentor. “It’s over now, Christopher. You’ve punished me, and I don’t hate you or anything like that.”

“You’re such a beautiful girl. I’ve been looking at you and Diane.”

My flutter became a thud. Christopher was working up to something. I looked down at his pants in disbelief. Sure enough, he had another hard-on.

“It’s from whipping you,” he said apologetically. “It does it every time. I wonder—would you mind?”

The politeness was another English thing. It doesn’t matter whether you mind or not. They even use it instead of a

good honest “Get the hell out of my way!” Now it was a command to lay on my back and spread my legs. My mind worked furiously, sighting pitfalls. If we did it and it flopped, I would be punished. If it turned out to be a winner, it would divert his attentions from Diane. But I was still Christopher’s captive, so I had to make the best of it.

“Oh, Christopher!” I gushed. “Of course I don’t mind. It’s so nice of you to ask.”

Crazy, crazy!

I lay right down in his favorite place. I opened my legs and raised them up, holding out welcoming arms. I had decided I had best not let this one fizzle out. I might not have Diane’s skills, but I would still work at it. My ravisher became naked in seconds flat. He was about to plunge into my vacant sex when he beheld my swollen, scarlet puss. His reaction was idiotic.

“Did I do that?”

“Yes. You’re so clever. Never mind, though—come along.” I think he felt momentary shame, but it didn’t last. This time I was able to guide him within my wounded lips. He entered me with a tremendous sigh of fulfillment. Diane and I were getting the pent-up forces of Christopher’s entire life. Feeling him inside me, I could almost believe his whipping of my sex had been all for the best. I had two allies: Christopher had enjoyed enough sex to inhibit premature ejaculation, and I was working with a whipped cunt. It was no

time at all before I had a screaming orgasm, then another. Christopher was enraptured, his ego receiving the greatest tribute a woman can pay. We settled down to teach each other what we knew.

It went on and on. It became incredible, going into realms and reaching plateaus I had never even dreamed of. At times we screamed together. When we returned from the stars, I went to sleep beneath Christopher's weight and in his arms.

I remember him picking me up and carrying me to place me finally on something soft. I did not care. All I wanted was to sleep. I'd had a busy day.

I was in the bedroom, the one I'd first slept in at Wyngate. I sat up gingerly, still tender between my thighs. I stood up and made an amazing discovery: I was not attached to anything and nothing was attached to me. I was a naked girl but toally free of bonds. I felt doubly nude and not too sure of myself. Escape never entered my mind. This had to be crazy, but I simply didn't know. I walked around and admired my wounds in the mirror. Then I went in search of Christopher.

I didn't find him. I explored a lot of Wyngate House, but its owner was nowhere to be seen. Going back to the bedroom, I saw what I should have seen in the first place—a scrawled note left beside me while I slept. It was simple. It read: "You are wonderful. I want you." I was still pondering

the implications when Dick Travers walked in.

“Hello, Priscilla. Don’t you ever wear clothes?”

I hadn’t noticed my nudity, I had become so used to being unclothed. Blushing and with my heart thumping, I retrieved my bra and panties from the drawer, then put them on.

“Hello, Dick,” I said coolly. “Is that better?”

“Yes, thank you.”

“I’d have thought you’d like to see my breasts and pubic hair.”

“Please, Puss, don’t be angry.”

He was right—I was angry with him. More than once he had a choice between Christopher and me, and he had always chosen Christopher. I mean, I am a female.

“Has your master sent you over on an errand?” I asked frigidly.

“You are angry. It just goes to show the difference between you Americans and us.”

“Vive la difference!”

“You really don’t understand.”

“The fact is, we understand you too damn well. You could have been a hero with me more than once, and each time

you kicked my ass."

I enjoyed his wince, but his next words grabbed me. "Christopher asked me to drop by, Puss. He's over with Diane." He tried to share a smile with me. "He's really smitten."

"Good. They're made for each other. Did he say anything about me?"

"Well, yes, but I'm puzzled by something. He left you free. Why didn't you pack up and run?"

"I'm not really free. I gave him my solemn promise to let him tie me again after I've had a rest. I must have needed a rest, the way I slept."

"I got the impression that something happened."

"Sure, it did." I tossed him the note.

"Well …" Dick looked at me assessingly. "I can understand Christopher writing this, but I'm glad to say he put himself under Diane's influence again. I think he wanted guidance. I added my own few words." Dick paused awkwardly. "Surely I don't have to tell you that I've never approved of what he's done to you."

"But you never stopped him."

Dick Travers waved away my resentment. He was a man with a mission. "Christopher sent me with a message, or

are you too angry to hear it?"

"I'm not angry. I like you. I suppose that's the reason why I'm angry."

We shared a laugh over that one. "Christopher says he releases you from all obligations." Dick pasued. "He wants me to take you over."

I stood, tense in disbelief and wishing that I had heard this long ago. I let Dick have it brutally. "Does that mean it's you who'll be whipping me from now on?"

"Priscilla, please!"

"Okay, okay. Do you have a dungeon to chain me in?"

"You're being deliberately unkind."

I knew I was, but I wasn't sure what these two idiots might have hatched, and I was still gloriously free. I faced Dick boldly. "Well, what's the takeover?"

"I should tell you first that Diane thinks it's a good idea. She's all for it."

"Fine. Tell me about this good idea."

Dick visibly squirmed. He was a nice guy, but what he came out with then left me gasping. "They both think you should be my prisoner instead of Christopher's."

"How sweet of them. Why should I have to be a prisoner at

all?"

"They're afraid you'll run right off to the U.S. And so am I."

"You're all absolutely correct."

"Yes, of course, but that's the reason you have to be restrained."

"You mean, you'd use force on me? Like right now?"

"Yes."

I was assailed by that awful impotence a girl feels when she knows a man is becoming determinedly physical. It's not fair that men should be so much stronger than girls, but Dick added an amendment that helped. "We all thought it would be nice if you and I got to know each other better. We haven't had much of a chance."

"Fine. Invite me as a guest."

He squirmed again. "We all agree that we can't trust you."

I was winning this argument, but it could be leading me into losing the war. I liked Dick Travers. I had thought of him a lot while I sat chained in my prison. I had wanted him to play the knight errant, but he never would, and now I would have him to myself. Or would he have me? I wondered if it was worthwhile splitting hairs.

Cautiously, I demanded, "This restraint business—will Christopher lend you his chains?"

“You’ll agree?” He was boyishly eager.

“I didn’t say that. I asked what you’d use on me to keep me around.”

“I’d be quite happy with a pair of handcuffs.”

“Would you now! Front or back?”

“I thought we could vary it a bit.”

“Well, well! You’d actually unlock me sometimes?”

Dick managed a pained look. “Could we dispense with sarcasm, Priscilla? I’m dead serious about this.”

“What about clothes? Or should I say no clothes?”

“Do what you like about them. The way you are now would be a nice compromise.”

I sighed. My whipped sex burned. I was getting to much shoved at me too soon. I was glimpsing the possibility of flouncing off to America and leaving something behind I’d later regret. But something nagged at me.

“We’ve all come to take Christopher and his legend and his chains and his whip as facts of life. We’ve gotten used to him, and Diane’s almost the same. What is it with this place? And now you?”

“We live here a lot in the past,” Dick said slowly. “We grow up on stories of maidens tied to trees and rescued by the

knight in shining armor. Among adults it surfaces all over the place."

"You mean, there are girls chained up all over England?"

Dick waved a tolerant arm. "I won't deny the possibility." He grinned at me. "But it's worldwide. Your own country has clubs for its devotees."

I remembered things. Maybe I was being a bit naive. "But you!" I protested. "You're not a bit like Christopher."

"Same background, though. I expect a bit of him has rubbed off on me—touched a latent spark."

"You're all crazy! I'm as good as gone."

"Just try."

Dick said it pleasantly, but the steel showed through. He would willingly risk the crease in his trousers to keep me safe. I should have felt angry, but I'm female, so of course I didn't. I felt myself getting hot down where I had been whipped.

Even though I knew it a partial surrender, I demanded, "Will you whip me?"

"Only when you're a naughty girl."

He was laughing at me, his eyes crinkling. I was picking up tremendous vibes and he was too. Suddenly I was wondering why I bothered with all these questions.

Almost defiantly, I demanded, “All right, do it quick before I change my mind.” I held out my hands.

Dick did things graciously. He’d had the cuffs in his pocket, of course. He fitted the first one around my right wrist and clicked it snugly. I was glad to see they were the American kind and not those knobby English things. But then he turned me around and snared my left wrist to my hands behind my back.

“Am I that dangerous?” I asked icily.

“Get you used to authority.”

Dick tilted my chin and kissed me on my lips. It turned into a very leisurely kiss until I knew if I’d had arms they’d have been around his neck. It was the sort of kiss to tell a girl she’s appreciated. Dick put his arms around me instead and held me very tight. It felt so good. This guy was miles ahead of Christopher. I wondered if he would fuck me now or later. Or if he’d be too much of a gentleman to do it at all. Strangely, I was not concerned.

I was then overjoyed with the thought that I wasn’t going to be whipped. In the space of a few hours my life had taken on a new direction. Sure, I was still dazed and still handcuffed, but, compared to the way Christopher kept me, this was almost freedom. I snuggled into Dick’s car and didn’t look back. Wyngate House was a beautiful old place, but Diane was more than welcome to it.

Dick Travers lived in a dignified old house on a dignified old street in Rundle Town. But he could not take me there. He had servants and visitors, and a handcuffed American girl would be scandalous. We laughed about it and decided on his cottage in the country. I suppose, if you have to keep a girl prisoner, it was as good a place as any. But in talking of my captivity I found myself up against a strange quandry. I knew Dick and I were viewing each other with the idea of marriage. It hadn't been mentioned, but it was still there. It's always there between a man and a girl. But I also knew that if the handcuffs were taken from me and I was clothed, I'd make a quick dash for Heathrow Airport and the good old U.S.A. For me, Christopher had become England, and it was stamped with his malign influence. I wanted out, but I also wanted Dick. This led to the strangest conclusion yet.

I had to remain handcuffed.

I did not voice this conclusion, of course. The English are so damn reticent about things that matter. It was obvious that I should be a free guest, but Dick and I were boxed in. He simply had to keep me from running away, and I wanted to be kept from running. I twisted my wrists happily within the metal circlets Dick had placed upon them.

Crazy, crazy, crazy!

I am sure Dick could have coped more easily with a lion or a tiger. He could have put it in a cage and fed it daily, but,

without actually seeking the responsibility, he found himself with a real live girl who he wanted to treat with kindness but had to restrain from doing the hundred yard sprint. I stood demurely with my hands behind my back and watched him sweat. It was delicious. When he had huffed and blushed long enough about bedrooms and bathrooms and the kitchen sink, I told him bluntly to put my hands in front so I could make coffee.

He was delighted, but the whole business of me had become suddenly intimate. Changing my hands from back to front took on a blushing consciousness of male and female that would just about rank with changing my panties. Dick Travers unlocked and locked again the handcuffs on my wrists with sure decisive motions. But we were positively bombarding each other with vibrations at close range. This was something new for Dick.

“Are you sure you can, Priscilla?”

“Of course I can.” I bumped the percolator and cups with a fine busy sound. “Handcuffed like this, a girl can do almost anything. You’ll have to be careful.”

“I’ve never done anything like this before, Puss. I feel a bit of an ass.”

I should explain about the ass in England. Where it refers to a donkey, it’s okay. But don’t ever use it for what we sit down on. To do so places you beyond the pale. Cheerfully, I assured my nervous captor, “You own me now. You have to

look after me until I escape. Do you like your coffee strong?"

"Would you really escape if you had the chance?"

I faced him squarely. "Right now, yes. See if you can change my mind."

I watched his lips purse. I was a problem. But I was female and bitchy and determined to enjoy myself without mercy. "How are you going to dispose of me when you go to work?" I asked sweetly. "Or will you take me with you?"

"I've thought about that. No, I won't take you to work. You'll remove those two scraps you're wearing. They'll be locked away with all other feminine garments. Your hands will stay as they are. You can do anything you want. You can even escape if you want to bad enough to confront the English handcuffed and nude."

That told me a lot. Dick was holding me by a delicate thread, a thread I could break at the price of the most frightful embarrassment. He was clever. He was testing me. Brightly, I said, "I'm a good cook. How about I fix our evening meal?"

"I had intended on taking you to dinner."

"Like this?" I held up my hands.

"I'll consider a parole arrangement."

“You’ve got it. The coffee’s ready. Would you like some toast?”

We sat at the kitchen table, but not before Dick slipped me a cute little shock. He unlocked one cuff and snapped it to a ring in the wall at the level of my plate and cup.

Casually, he said, “I have rings set at strategic places around the house. Don’t suppose we’ll use them much. This is just a demonstration. I’ll release you.”

“No, leave it. I want to get used to these notions. I’ll manage.”

I managed very well. I sort of had a hand and a half. I simply couldn’t leave the table. I had a feeling this sort of thing wasn’t going to last. It would become too much trouble, but I didn’t say so. Delightedly, I was hugging the thought of being taken out to dinner. This was a definite promotion from Wyngate.

“I find you quite remarkable, Priscilla. You’re handling this so capably. I expect it’s because you’re American.”

“It’s because after Christopher this is heaven.”

“I find it hard to believe that of Christopher.”

“You can see the marks on me. Ask Diane. She got it too. The idiot was forever whipping me. He had some queer notion that it was the sure way to a girl’s heart. You ought to have him committed.”

“Diane will handle Christopher.”

I made my voice urgent. “Dick, please don’t ever let Christopher get his hands on me again. I’m frightened of him.”

My free hand was patted. Dick gravely assure me Christopher would never possess me again. A warm coziness settled on the cottage kitchen. I was very happy.

I hadn’t been taken to dinner since the night I met Dick and Diane. I was hungry for the atmosphere and the normalcy as much as for the food. I’d be proud of my escort, that’s for sure. But the getting ready—oh, Boy!

It appeared I was to have my own bedroom. I didn’t argue then, but saved it for later. The grim English wardrobe was full of things Diane had sent over, and so was the bathroom. Having exclaimed over them, I strolled demurely in my handcuffs.

“I suppose I should take these things off?” Dick said.

“Yes, I think so. I can’t dress with them on.”

“There’s the matter of your parole. It’s really a promise, isn’t it? Would you mind?”

Would I mind! I had to try hard not to giggle. Dick Travers the lawyer was peeping through. Without a trace of hysterics, I intoned, “I promise not to try to escape. I won’t embarrass you through dinner. Afterwards, I’ll come back

here with you and let you handcuff me." I glinted mischievously. "That will be the end of my parole. After that I'll escape if I get the chance."

English pubs have atmosphere. I wallowed in it. Their food is good. I gorged myself. I was in a constant stimulous of excitement because my hands were free. I was free all over. My pussy had stopped hurting and had become simply tender. I basked under Dick Travers's regard. I had it all. Quaintly, my promise was like the handcuffs, relieving me of decision. We had coffee in the lounge. This is an English institution, rather like a study in anthropology. The class frequenting these places is bizarre. Then we went back to the cottage for brandy. It was a perfect evening. Dick forgot to handcuff me.

Bedtime stared us in the face.

I was mean again, letting him flounder and enjoying every moment. Dick was obviously prepared for the event, but found it difficult in putting it into words. Up in my bedroom he managed to get started.

"I've given some thought to the matter of you sleeping safely, Puss."

"Yes?"

"I first thought of just handcuffs and locking the door."

"That would be nice."

“But there’s the window. I’d worry about you trying it and getting hurt. It’s a fair drop.”

“That’s sweet of you.”

“So I installed this chain. It’s a bit crude—just padlocks—and on one ankle only. It shouldn’t bother you too much.”

“I think it’s wonderful.” I looked at the long snake of links on the rug. There was no shackle. Dick had been right when he said he had borrowed none of Christopher’s stuff. “I’ll have to undress first, though, won’t I? Once my ankle’s locked I won’t be able to.”

“Eh! Oh, yes, I suppose so. Would you like me to leave the room?”

“Then I could jump out the window.”

We laughed over that, and he looked embarrassed. He had seen me naked before, but his inhibitions were still working. Forthrightly, I stripped. I did not do a tease; I simply undressed. Naked, I lifted my foot to the bed.

“There you are,” I said flatly. “Lock it.”

Dick was not a fumbler. I watched the links circle and the padlock snap. The bond was heavy and cumbersome, but served our purpose well.

By way of rubbing it in, I said, “Thank you, Dick. It’s lovely.”

“It’s not lovely at all.” He paused and looked at me with ap-

peal. “I suppose I should say good night, Puss.”

“I don’t see why you should.”

He got the message and was ready. He kissed me gently on my lips, a nice masculine big brother of a kiss, holding my bare shoulders.

“It isn’t easy, but I think it’s best,” he said firmly. “Good night, Puss.”

I let him get halfway to the door before I called out, “Dick! I don’t want you to go.”

“Please, Priscilla!”

“I’m frightened. I want you in bed with me.”

Dick Travers stopped and turned. I took a step towards him, but the chain on my ankle made so much noise I stopped, half ashamed. We both laughed.

Meekly, I said, “I’m not really wanton, Dick. I’m just a little girl far from home.”

He looked at me longingly. After all, I was stark naked. The battle he was fighting was evident on his face. He tried to say or do something, but the English in him won out.

Firmly, he repeated, “Good night Puss.”

A moment later I was looking at the closed door, but there was no click of a lock. I knew Dick was right. I wanted him

terribly, but I was glad he turned me down. His parents and mine would approve of his nobility, and it made him doubly desirable. But I was frustrated. I kicked at the chain on my ankle. I walked around the room with the links trailing, finding a wry satisfaction in knowing what I would do with myself. I would go to bed. That was what I would do, and that was all. I sighed.

I slept gorgeously.

I awoke when Dick was unlocking my ankle. I did the quickest dash to the bathroom and then to the kitchen. I was determined to make our breakfast. When he got in the way, I pushed him aside. He had forgotten to cuff me, and I didn't remind him. I wanted to get things between us as domestic as possible. It wasn't until we sat down to eat that he remembered.

"Damn it, Puss, I forgot your handcuffs!"

I held out my hand.

When I was safely attached to the wall, we both felt things were back to normal. Neither of us commented. We spoke of other things. The main subject soon surfaced.

"I have to go to my office, Priscilla. I'm not too happy about leaving you alone."

"I'm not too happy either, but just chain me and be on your way. What's the rhyme: 'Men must work and women must weep.'"

“It’s bit outdated, Puss. Any plans for the day?”

I laughed. Dick was so delightfully proper. He could have saved a lot of trouble by asking me to marry him right there, but I’m sure he thought I wasn’t ready, and he probably wanted another lawyer’s look at me too.

“What plans could a naked girl with her wrists cuffed possibly have?” I asked innocently.

“I suppose we could do that parole thing again. Worked through dinner last night, and it would make your day pleasant.”

“No!” I was suddenly scared. “Can you imagine the agony I’d go through?”

“That bad?” Dick put his hand over mine. “I’m willing to let you go free and take my chances. You don’t have to promise a thing.”

“But don’t you see that’s cheating!” I was surprised at the vehemence in my voice. “It’s like refusing to run a race for fear you’ll lose. No. We started something, so let’s finish it.”

Dick looked at me. For moments I thought he was going to refute our pact, but instead he laughed and shrugged.

“I think you like wearing handcuffs,” he accused. “Very well, Puss, you will stay a prisoner.”

Nothing had changed, and I was glad. I was still locked to

the wall and eating my breakfast with one hand. I felt things were going my way. I was going to get Dick, I knew I was. But it would have to be his way. I wondered if he'd bring flowers and kneel, or whisk me off to the Reverend Martindale neatly handcuffed. Blissfully, I did not care.

When it came time for Dick to go, I felt like a new bride faced with a dark abyss of separation. We kissed with fervor. He tried banter.

"Nude and handcuffed, Puss. Think you're safe against temptation?"

"I'll be here when you come home. I'm making dinner tonight. It will give me something to do."

"Sure you want to? I was going to take you out again."

"I want to. Dick, there's something—"

"Handcuffs too tight?"

"No, of course not. Has Christopher got a key to this cottage?"

"No."

"But Diane has?"

"Yes. She brought you here one day. Sweetheart, you don't have to worry about Diane. She's fond of you."

"It's Christopher who worries me. Suppose he takes the key

from Diane and—”

“He doesn’t know she has it. If you’re bothered, I’ll get it back.”

“I wish you would. I’ll never feel safe otherwise.”

I got kissed again and my bottom beautifully patted. When Dick did it, I thought of it as my bottom, not my ass. The English grow on you. I watched Dick’s car go down the drive, then commenced what I can only call an education. I did the beds. I washed the dishes. It was fun. If I had been in a hurry, the handcuffs would have been a bother, but I was in no rush. I wandered from room to room, dusting a bit, tidying. I phoned Diane, but there was no answer. Mrs. Heselton was not due back for a few days yet.

Then I faced the void.

It was bloody awful. I don’t think the handcuffs or being naked made a spot of difference. It would have been just the same if I had been the new bride and fully clothed. I was confused by what must have confronted millions of others when their new husband went off to work and left them alone.

Nothing!

Right there I knew why girls went to work or cheated on their husbands. They simply couldn’t exist in a vacuum. I knew it didn’t matter with me. I was viewing it academically, but if I ever got married, I knew that I had been

warned. A girl wants her man, but her man does not want her during the day. He's busy making money. I glimpsed a chasm.

Christopher came about noon. I heard his car. I watched from a safe window. He knocked and rang at the door repeatedly. It was as though he knew I was inside. I felt like one of the three little pigs with the big bad wolf outside the door. Christopher could easily break the lock or a window. I shuddered. Christopher had simply whipped me too damn much. He had taken me far beyond tolerance. I wondered if if he had Diane fastened some way in pain. Sure, Diane was different from me. Anyway, there was nothing I could do, fixed the way I was. After awhile his ghostly knocking stopped and he went away.

I loved making dinner. A woman needs to be doing things, preferably for a man. I hadn't yet got to thinking about children. I think young women are natural slaves. If we have the hots for a man, we'll do anything he wants and a lot he doesn't want. I felt gorgeously sexy and superior in my near possession of Dick. I hummed and sang and clinked my handcuffs, entrancingly happy. I phoned Diane several times, but there was never an answer.

Dick was enthralled. I expect he knew I could fuck, but that I could place a meal like this before him was a bonus he had not expected. I got kissed and patted and praised. I think it's a fact with a lot of young couples that the girl is primarily a sort of wall-to-wall fuck. She's always there,

and she's supposed to be always ready, but if she can cook too, look out! And I could cook.

We followed the same scenario as before. I no longer kidded myself that I wasn't waiting for Dick to ask to marry me. I damn near propositioned him myself. But with the English that would be fatal. Looking back, I suppose I might say that was the happiest day of my life. After Christopher had finished knocking at the door and gone away, there wasn't a dark cloud anywhere.

We sensed a mutual agreement. My ankle would be chained and I would sleep alone again. The morning was a repeat of the previous one. I watched Dick drive away and knew a glowing pride of possession and of being possessed. I suppose this is what being in love is about.

Christopher came about ten o'clock.

He must have got hold of Diane's key. He opened the door easily. Uncaring of nudity and handcuffs, I fled out the back into the garden. Christopher caught me before I reached the back fence. He dragged me back into the cottage by my hair. I'd never felt so damned impotent. It was hateful and frightening. Once inside the cottage he gave me no chance at all, but got me down and knelt on my back while he tied my elbows together so damn tight it made the cuffs bite into my wrists in front. I remember sort of gasping.

"Dick will kill you for this," I warned.

“No, he won’t. He’ll think you got loose some way and ran for Heathrow. I’ve got you Priscilla, so you might as resign yourself to the fact.”

“But you’re friends, and you’re taking what’s his! He wouldn’t do that to you.”

“I was tricked into giving you up by Diane. She used sex to get you and Dick together, so you are rightfully still mine, Ilena.”

“You cheating bastard!”

“Come on, Ilena.”

Christopher took me into the living room. We stood facing each other. He was triumphant and once more in command. I was dismally twisting my shoulders against bonds I couldn’t budge. It was crazy. I was desperately frightened, but I held on to my faith in Dick.

“Dick will check Heathrow. When he finds I wasn’t on a plane, he’ll come straight to you.”

“But you will be on a plane. I’ve arranged for a Miss Priscilla Hendry to use your ticket. The plane will have left before Dick can possibly get to the airport.”

I was clutched by icy fingers. I could see everything working out as Christopher desired. I looked down at my hands. They were pinched in tight against my tummy, the cuffs hurting. Christopher followed my gaze. “Have to leave Dick

those, eh? He'll wonder otherwise. He'll have to think you've done a Houdini on him."

I was tired from one struggle and couldn't hope to win a new one. I stood dejectedly while Dick's handcuffs were unlocked and placed conspicuously on the table. Then my hands were tied behind my back and the ropes around my elbows drawn up savagely. A tear trickled down my cheek, partly from pain but also from anger.

"Christopher," I begged, "I wish you wouldn't do this. It'll lead to nothing but trouble."

In some ways Christopher had grown in stature since he first kidnapped me, mostly in courage and decision and authority. But he was still the smiling boy, the nice young man. If I hadn't known what he would do to me, it would have been hard to be too frightened. But I knew. I could almost feel the whip cutting my skin.

"The only trouble will be yours, Ilena," he told me cheerfully. "That sex business threw me off track for awhile. I'm ashamed of it. Now I'll simply add it to the list and do it to you when I want, and you'll damn well make it good for me or be punished. No sulks."

"What about your happiness with Diane?"

"It's still there. I realize now that it's something separate from what I feel about you. Ilena, I'm going to break you properly."

“I’m broken now, Christopher. I’ll crawl if that’s what you want.”

He gagged me. I couldn’t do a thing. He tied my ankles and dumped me in the trunk of his car, then slammed it shut. In the dark helplessness, I cried all the way back to my prison. My name was once more Ilena.

To my stone chamber he chained my feet, but took the rest of the ropes to leave me free. His instruction was curt. “Use the stuff in the bathroom. Make yourself as pretty as you know how. I want you that way for punishment. Oh, and color your nipples scarlet.”

I was treated to the loudest door noises yet. I looked down at my feet. The chain between the shackle bands was shorter than it used to be. I could only walk silly little snubbed steps. I experimented by clinking over to the window. I was helpless. Looking out at the peaceful scene, I was tempted to disobey Christopher’s order, but what was the use? He’d only give me more pain for my trouble. Hating him, I clattered to the bathroom and went to work on myself. I painted my nipples as scarlet as I could. I figured Christopher must have read it in some book.

Because of my chained feet, I was carried to where I could place my wrists and watch the yoke come down and imprison them. I was now ready for the half of my whipping I had missed before. My ankles were left as they were. Any kicking I did would be quickly snubbed.

“Remember you have half a whipping coming?”

“Yes, I remember.”

Christopher struck me a savage slice across my bare shoulders. I was still choking and gasping when he said, “Like old times, eh?”

“It hurts more than you can ever know. Please tie me some other way. If I faint and fall like this, I’ll break my wrists.”

“So you have a good inducement not to faint.”

He lashed me again. I screamed savagely and heard the clash of links as my feet responded in futile kicks. Slowly, he struck my back again and again. For each blow I returned him the most horrendous sounds I could make.

Pausing, he pleasantly enquired, “Want me to fuck you after you’ve been whipped?”

Chirstopher’s use of the four letter word was like another blow across my back. Sometimes I used the word flippantly, Diane giggled at its mention, and Dick would never use it at all—but it emerged from Christopher’s lips as pure venom. His fixation about it being punishment had not died.

“You can lay on your wounded back, Ilena.”

“Whatever you want.”

He picked up my toneless lack of caring and whipped me

savagely as his reply. I have a blurred memory of writhing furiously and tearing at my locked wrists as I screamed against the whip I could not stop.

In the next pause, while I was still panting and sweating, I was casually informed, “Not a spot of blood yet, Ilena. You make an awful fuss.”

“Try letting me whip you sometime.”

The remark cost me two swift cuts and a reprimand. “You’re not broken, Ilena. How about saying your’re sorry?”

The asshole! But what what could I do but obey? Abjectly, I muttered, “I’m sorry I was a smart ass, Christopher, but please stop whipping me. Please!”

Two more searing flames scorched my skin. “I asked you to say you were sorry. You were not told to ask me to stop your punishment.”

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry.”

The pain resumed. Christopher was becoming an artist in hurting me all I could stand without keeling over. The pause helped, but it also gave him a chance to cut me down another inch. Fastened the way I was, there was no way I was going to get the female’s last word.

“You understand you’re back to total imprisonment, Ilena?”

“Yes.”

“Don’t be afraid to speak. You’ll only be punished when you’re what you called yourself—a smart ass.”

“Thank you.”

“At least I’m getting you partially trained. You may now request intercourse.”

It’s such a silly word. It took me a moment to catch his meaning. I knew what he wanted. “Please fuck me, Christopher.”

“Why should I?”

“Because you’re the best.”

He was just testing, playing with me. The whip continued to lattice my back with weals. Not until I got tottery on my feet did it stop. I still had enough wits about me to know what he wanted.

“Thank you very much, Christopher.”

“For what?”

“For whipping me wonderfully.”

I heard Christopher’s sigh of utter felicity. He was on an eminence few men ever reach. I can imagine how erotic I must have looked with my locked hands raising my arms and sweat trickling down my flanks and my skin criss-

crossed by the whip he had used. I was getting whiffs of my own musk and was sure he did too.

“You’ve been whipped, Ilena. That’s the beginning.”

“Yes, master.”

“Why do you call me that? You’ve done it before.”

“It sort of slips out. I suppose because it’s appropriate. I wish I could tell you it was an endearment, but it’s not.”

“What is it then? I like it.”

The bastard! Of course he liked it. Quite honestly, I explained, “You own me. I can never escape. I’m helpless. You can do what you like with me. You actually are a master—my master.”

“Hmmm, I suppose you’re right.” He unlocked the stocks to free my arms. He leaned against them to watch me gingerly feel for and rub my wounds. I was no longer conscious of being naked before a man. That had long since gone. All I cared for was to say the right words to earn myself as little pain as possible. Pleasantly, he asked, “Never hung by your thumbs, have you?”

“I forget.”

“We’ll do it anyway. Come along.”

I clinked behind him to the chosen room. I was told to sit on a box. I was given brandy—quite a lot of brandy. As I

sipped it under his stern regard, I wondered if other naked girls down through history had felt this same sense of unreality while waiting for their torture as men examined their bodies.

To rid my mind of visions, I asked, “Are you punishing Diane, or are you just keeping her prisoner?”

“A bit of both. I fuck her a lot too. Still awhile before her mother comes back. We’ll hold the wedding after her return.”

More incredulity. If it was a book, it would be called The Tortured Bride. Doubtfully, I ventured, “I’d be grateful for a visit with her, master.”

“With chastity belts?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Are your thumbs ready?”

“Could I have more brandy, master?” Hastily I added, “I’m not trying to delay, but none of—”

I got the brandy. Christopher was enjoying me. He once more had his favorite plaything. As I drank I tried not to think about my thumbs. I was sure it had to be awful for them and for me. Christopher didn’t look the part of a torturer. I don’t suppose he thought of himself as that. He was simply playing with his doll. Knowing I’d best not push my luck, I finished the drink and stood up.

“I expect you’d like to fix me, Christopher.”

It was funny, watching my thumbs noosed with soft leather bands. I suppose a cord would cut them off. I wondered if I’d ever use them again. We were standing close and I noticed his erection. After Christopher had whipped a girl, you could bet it would be there. Clutching at a straw, I whispered, “Wouldn’t you like to fuck me first, Christopher?”

“I’d like to, but I find it weakens a man’s resolve.” He remained absorbed with my thumbs.

I did not tell him that was the reason I made the suggestion. Perhaps he guessed. Christopher was growing up. Soon he would know more about sex than Diane and I put together. My heart began to thump as my arms raised and the bar with my thumbs attached at each end went slowly up before my eyes. First came the stretch, then the unbelievable moment of realization, and finally suspension. My toes could touch nothing.

I can’t claim to be an authority on torture, but I suspect there is always that first shock of knowledge you cannot possibly bear such agony. It’s like the first stroke of the whip. I heard my voice trying to be reasonable. “I can’t handle this, Christopher. I can’t, I can’t! Please let me down —oh, please!”

Christopher did nothing except admire me. He was very happy noting stressed tendons and concave tummy. He

gave particular attention to my thumbs and found them to his liking. I stole a quick glance up, but what I could see appeared defeatingly undramatic. I swung gently back and forth.

“Beautiful effect, Ilena.”

I moaned and moaned. I was scared to say anything. I was panting and sweating and becoming sadly aware that I could possibly stand what I was suffering. It was bad, but girls seem to be able to endure anything.

“You’ll be like that for quite awhile, Ilena. It might be best if you don’t struggle.”

He was telling me! I hung as limp as a wet rag. Even my moans seemed to hurt extra, but I couldn’t stop them. I wanted to scream, but I knew it would hurt a lot.

“I’ll drop by and visit you often, Ilena. I wouldn’t miss seeing you like this for the world.”

I allowed my head to fall forward and closed my eyes. I didn’t see Christopher leave. He pushed the door to remain wide open—in mockery, I suspect.

I hung.

Being alone in suspension is frightening. You feel sure you’re going to die, or come apart, or something else too terrible to think about. And there’s no one there to help. It becomes a case of simply enduring pain, a steady relentless

pain you can't escape.

Christopher came often, braving my pleadings which I poured out with a terrible vehemence at first, but which slowly died into lethargic silence as I weakened and realized their futility. There was no way he was going to let my feet down on the floor. I looked too lovely and was hurting satisfactorily. He dropped small conversational gems.

"They once hung girls like this routinely when they were to be whipped. The anicents seemed to feel the two punishments complemented each other. But don't worry. I won't do that too you. It's a bit too much."

"Thank you." Boy, was I humble!

On another visit he told me how he disliked blood or incisions. He said anything as crude as branding me with a hot iron repelled him, or pushing needles into my breasts to see how many they would hold. He said the latter was a favorite with Roman matrons. They used it on slave girls who dropped a bottle or something. Seems like the bitches got together for tea and made the girl kneel in front of them. Then they would take turns pushing in the slivers of steel. Christopher told me these things in a sort of academic detachment, but he managed to infuse into the telling the faintest of hints that they could happen to me.

I continued to moan and lost all track of time. All I knew was that my thumbs and arms were going to come off at any moment. I warned him about my impending loss, but

he just roared with laughter at such a crazy notion. It was not crazy to me.

I think I hung for about four hours. When Christopher lowered the bar, I went down with it to finally lay panting on the floor while he freed my thumbs. I was conscious all right, but I felt I never wanted to move again. I looked at my thumbs and started to cry. Neither of them would move.

Christopher raised me, but when I tried to walk, I tripped on the chain, so he picked me up and carried me to my prison. Then I had to stand while he fitted the chastity belt on me and locked it tight. I took snubbed steps to the couch and sat down. The simple act felt wonderful.

“Not bad for a return home, Ilena. If we run through your punishments like this, you soon won’t have any hanging over your head.”

“Just life imprisonment.”

I must have looked really down. Christopher produced a bottle and glasses. I don’t know what the stuff was, but I drank it anyway. I thought that if Christopher kept torturing me, I’d turn into a lush. While the fiery stuff revived me, he came up with an iron collar, a horrible heavy thing charged with menace.

“Chin up, sweetheart.”

So I’d got promoted to being his sweetheart! I tilted my

chin to allow the iron to circle my throat. It closed in back with a pendent padlock. It was brutally heavy. I thought it very unfeminine, but my master did not agree.

“It completes the ensemble, Ilena. It needed balance.” Cheerfully, he added, “It’s only a punishment. I probably won’t chain you with it, but you’ll hate wearing it.”

“Thank you very much, master.”

Christopher’s quick glance was suspicious of sarcasm. I wasn’t sure of it myself. For the iron around my neck, I felt only instant hatred.

“Watch your tongue,” he cautioned. “There’s a whip around here somewhere.”

I knew myself to be nothing, merely a Barbie doll with extra parts and bizarre equipment: chains on my feet, my loins sheated in silver mesh, cold iron around my neck. Undoubtedly, I would be an obedient girl.

“Yes, I’ll watch what I say,” I said meekly. “I’m sorry. I’ll try to be what you want.”

“I’m going to let Diane stay with you tonight.”

I motioned to my steel mesh. “Yes, I guessed. Thank you.”

The chastity belt had become routine. I no longer expected to find joy with a girl. She too would be meshed as I was, but Diane might tell me things.

I might have guessed.

When Christopher thrust his fiance in with me and slammed the door at her back, Diane was a duplicate of myself. She had shackled ankles, sheathed loins, and heavy metal around her neck. But there was one other thing: she was gagged. When I came to unbuckle it, I found it firmly locked. It would not move. We stood and gazed at each other in desolation. I could imagine Christopher laughing beyond the door.

We wrapped our arms around each other. Girl skin and willing lips felt good after what I had been through. After the embrace we turned each other around to examine Christopher's work. Diane was as well marked as I was, although she seemed proud of her weals. But our captor had missed the boat—he had forgotten to gag me. So I was soon asking questions and getting nods or shakes of Diane's head in reply. I told her my own story. What it all amounted to was Christopher having second thoughts.

Sex had hit him like a blow, but then he realized he could use us at any time if he kept us captive. He had gotten me back, and he could punish and screw us to his heart's content until Mrs. Heselton came home. In the meantime, he was on top of the world. He had two lovely playthings to use as he pleased. And even after Diane was gone he would still have me. It was too much to consider.

Diane was much happier than I in our current situation.

Her full-time imprisonment would end with her mother's return, but mine would not. She nodded that she would go tell Dick Travers where I was immediately after she was released. But in her eyes was a question I could not fathom. I sensed that my freedom might not be so easily achieved. Christopher was holding an ace up his sleeve.

We had our hands, and in desperation we used them on our nipples. But this only drove us wild with desire. The steel mesh locked over our pussies mocked our frantic touching. At last, defeated and horny, we cuddled each other on the couch and slept.

In the morning I lost Diane quickly. Christopher carried her away an hour before he brought my breakfast. He deigned to share coffee with me and chat.

"Pleasant night, Ilena?"

"That gag was cruel. You didn't need to—"

"She loves it. You know she does."

"Well, I don't." I looked at him doubtfully. "Do I have to be punished again today?"

"Of course. I've thought up something amusing for you."

I squelched sarcasm and asked meekly, "What is this one for, master? I've forgotten all the things that I must be punished for."

“I’ve forgotten too,” he said, laughing. “It doesn’t really matter. You are my property.”

I shivered. He was right—I was his property. But there was one burning question I had to ask: “You know Diane will go to Dick and tell him about me. What then?”

His nice young man smile beamed at me. “You don’t think a place like Wyngate House doesn’t have a hidden chamber or two, do you? There are sliding walls and panels and such. There’s also a lovely dungeon no one can ever find.” He laughed at the desolation on my face. “The more intense the search, the less desirable your accomodations will be.”

“Oh, Christopher, no!”

“Don’t fret. You’ll soon be forgotten. I’ll get Diane used to accepting your presence up in the stone chamber. I’ll chain her in there with you sometimes, and without a gag so you can gossip.” He grinned. “I’m not fussy about dungeons myself. I won’t chain you in one any longer than Dick and Diane compel me to.”

My spirits sank to a new low. I could not pick a flaw in Christopher’s reasoning. He had me. In a different way he also had Diane. Both of us were foxed. Idly, I wondered which of us he would fuck most often. At the moment he didn’t seem horny about me.

He took the chastity belt from my loins. It always seemed an indecent act, but I was glad to be rid of it. In its place I

was handcuffed and got a leash attached to my iron collar. Then he freed my feet. I stood, wondering, captive only to the cuffs. Suddenly the leash was savagely jerked to bring me almost to my knees.

“A reminder only, sweetheart. Any ideas about escape or giving me an argument?”

“No. Oh. Christopher, please—I’m helpless enough. I’ll do what I’m told.”

My captor was pleased. I was a good little girl, responding nicely. He led me from the house, picking up a bag on the way. As we crossed the garden I timidly ventured, “Haven’t we done this before?”

“Yes, but Diane messed it up for me that time. She won’t mess it up again.”

The tree was still there like a waiting sentinel. Without an order, I thrust my welted back against its bark and waited in docile acceptance of my fate. When Christopher opened the bag, I was more interested in its contents than he was.

“I can’t imagine anyone finding you this time,” Christopher said in a fine businesslike fashion. “But just in case, I’ve got this.”

It was a length of really heavy chain and a giant padlock. I had to raise my joined arms while it circled my tummy and was tugged tightly behind the tree. The lock snapped.

“Discourages casual visitors from setting you free. Take some real tools to get you out of that. Tight enough?”

“Yes, I’m very tight. Does it have to be?”

“Struggle. Try and get loose.”

It was silly, but I had to obey. I pushed and pulled at the chain. No way would it go down over my hips. It was well imbedded into the softness of my middle, and there it stayed despite my clawing with handcuffed fingers.

“That’s good. Don’t really need anything else.”

“I can’t possibly get loose, Christopher.”

“Yes. Pity you have to be punished, eh?”

I could feel it coming. I might have known. I lost my handcuffs. They were dropped in the bag instead of locking my hands behind the trunk of the tree. He then crossed my wrists and tied them with thin cord, the kind that cuts if you move. I didn’t have to ask why.

Roping me to the tree was a steady progression. I was already fixed to it immovably. What Christopher was doing now was only cosmetic and to hurt. Just the chain around my middle was nowhere near enough to rank as punishment, so then rope was tugged on me and into me everywhere. He even got a strand up inside my crotch on each side of my pussy. He also gave a lot of attention to roping my breasts, achieving a nice crisscross effect to make them

stand out more tautly than they already were. There were ropes over and across my shoulders too, dragging them back and making it painful to breathe. By the time he was through with me I was wearing almost enough rope to make me respectable.

“You look lovely as usual, Priscilla.”

“I’m sure I do. I don’t feel lovely.”

“No gratitude? Perhaps you’d prefer the thumb treatment?”

“I’m sorry, Christopher. It’s just that—oh, never mind.”

“No, please tell me.”

“Well, don’t you realize after an hour of this I’m going to be in agony? Every time I breathe a rope digs deeper.”

“Interesting. I’ll keep track of that as the day progresses. I will visit, you know.”

“Thank you.”

“You look a trifle wan.”

“Oh, Christopher, do you expect me to be laughing?”

“Well, no, I suppose we could say your dolor is a tribute to my skill. I’m flattered.”

“I suppose I’m here like this for the day?”

“At least. As a matter of interest to you, I’m having com-

pany. Diane and I are having drinks with Dick." He laughed as my face came alive. "I'll find an excuse to give him a tour of the house to make sure he knows you're not there. I've also told Diane of a particularly terrible punishment I'll inflict on you if she isn't a good girl. Incidentally, she doesn't know where you are."

My brief hope died. I could picture the three of them enjoying a couple of happy hours while I kept company with my tree. By then I'd be hurting bad, but I didn't say a thing. What could I say that wouldn't get me punished? My face would tell Christopher what I was thinking.

8

No Escape

AFTER CHRISTOPHER HAD GONE and left me alone, I tried to shift in my bonds but couldn't move. I knew it wise to go easy on the chafing. There would be enough of it before evening. I made my nakedness as limp as the ropes would allow. I was completely alone.

I was mad and frightened and altogether pissed off. Everything that mattered was so near and yet so far. If Dick only knew where I was!

My thoughts turned to Christopher. Was he insane? Or was he just the victim of atmosphere and his own fantasies? I could imagine Wyngate House comfortably laughing at us all in its perpetuation of an age-old past. Irritably, I blew away a fly from my nose, then huffed and puffed at another on my right nipple. It was almost beyond range of my lungs, but when I dislodged it, another took its place. A naked girl tied to a tree in an English forest in summer can expect a few insects. I'd get my share, and I might as well resign myself to their interest in my skin. I closed my eyes. I wished I could sleep.

I don't know how long it was before Christopher came. He cheerfully asked if I was hurting, and I said that I was, and that appeared to be that. He then checked the ropes with the avowed intention of tightening up any slack, but there

was none, as I hadn't struggled enough.

"Given up hope?" he enquired genially.

"Of course I have. Everything's hopeless. Can't you see what it's doing to me?'

"You look okay to me. In fact, you look very good."

"Christopher, can't you see what it's like to have your life taken away? I'm hurt everyday—a little more or a little less —and I know I can't escape. Can't you understand?"

"You're being dramatic, Puss." Christopher positively preened in front of me. "I've decided to be fair about myself. I'll fuck you and Diane equally. Should add a bit of color to your captivity, don't you agree?"

"Oh, Christopher, that's not a bit English. What's got into you?"

"It's the other way around. It's me getting into you girls. Should have done it from the start. You'd have felt differently."

I hated to think he was partly right but he was. "All right then," I said defiantly, "get me away from this tree and fuck me now. I could use a little comfort. Please? Pretty please?"

I did not get flicked. Christopher had used the forbidden word, but he wasn't at ease with it. I could sense myself close to getting punished. Beneath his bravado, sex was still

vulgar. Still, Diane was probably getting impaled ten times a day, so I was looking at a satiated conqueror. I could kick myself for feeling jealous, but what he did do was surprising. With Diane's own skill, he started playing with my nipples. I stared in disbelief.

"Christopher, don't! Please don't touch them."

"Why not?"

"You know what it does to a girl. It drives us up the wall. I'll get so damn horny!"

"I'd like to see that."

His fingers didn't stop their play. I couldn't move my nipples even one inch. I tried to look away and not think of what was being done to me, but I was soon breathing heavily and getting warm.

"Your face is getting a far-away look, Priscilla."

"So would yours if I did this to you. Stop it!"

"I own you. I can play with any parts of you I like."

"If you won't fuck me, then play with my pussy so I can climax. You've got me halfway there now."

"You mean you wouldn't mind?"

It was getting hard to keep my voice even, but I did my best. "It's a lot better than standing tied here all alone,

Christopher—so long as you make me climax."

"That's what they call an orgasm?"

"Yes, that's what it is. Oh, please!"

"Like this?" He got two fingers inserted into where my pussy was tied tight. He fumbled between my labia, but was defeated by his own ropes. By now I was desperate.

"Untie me. Please. Christopher, we can have the loveliest time on the grass. When we're finished, I'll let you tie me again. I promise."

"Go to all that trouble? Oh, come, you can't expect—"

I climaxed right then. I suppose it was a lot of things conspired to take me over the brink, and I had wanted it so damn bad. I gasped and moaned while Christopher had the good sense to keep right on teasing my flesh. When I panted my way back to a conversational level, he had gone.

I suppose it was a minor victory. It had at least made me lethargic enough to relax within my bonds and fall asleep. The ropes held me safe. When I awoke, quite a long time later, I found myself staring straight into Diane's agitated eyes. I was hurriedly kissed. Her message was a jumble to unravel later.

"Darling, I guessed where Christopher had you. I brought a knife, but he's got you chained so I can't get you loose, so I'll tell Dick. I'm sure he can cope." Diane looked at me un-

happily. “I suppose I should tell you: Christopher promised he’d brand his initials on you with a hot iron if I did what I’m doing.”

Diane’s presence revitalized me. Christopher could brand me all he liked in some abstract future, just so long as Dick learned where I was. He would need tools for the chain. I assured poor Diane she had done the right thing and that I was willing to take the risk. She kissed me, still unsure of herself, and ran back to the house.

But I was happy.

Christopher had been too clever. He had outsmarted himself and underrated the affection of girls, as well as their courage. I admit the threat of his branding me was still there, but I didn’t believe it would happen. Dick would make sure it didn’t. I fell into a lovely haze of roseate dreams.

I was dragged out of them by a common looking man with a common sounding English voice—most definitely lower class. Entranced, he was giving me a good once-over with appreciative eyes. I recognized him as a gardener I had seen from my prison window.

“Name’s Henry Ricks, miss. Mr. Wyngate sent me.”

“How do you do, Henry. I hope you have a key.”

My greeting had been satire, but the key in Henry’s hand was real. He was a class-conscious man who approached a

difficult task apologetically. “Been real kind to me, Mr. Wyngate has, miss. I hope you don’t mind.”

“Just get me free of this tree, Henry, and I won’t mind anything.” Henry seemed too good to be true, but I was willing to use him.

“It ain’t quite like that, miss. Just a minute, and I’ll show you.”

Even if there was a hidden kicker, I couldn’t see Henry doing me any harm. When the chain fell from my middle and my hands were untied I was euphoric. I gasped ecstatically.

“Thank you, Henry! You’re so kind.”

“Trouble is, miss, I got this here.” He held out handcuffs. “You’re supposed to wear ’em.”

It was a disappointment, but there was still room for optimism. I surrendered my hands without demur and watched them being cuffed. Poor Henry—the exercise of cuffing me had him sweating.

“I’m very well behaved,” I assured him, hoping for a chance to run. I couldn’t picture Henry as a sprinter.

“That’s a lot o’ rope he’s got you in, miss.”

“Yes, isn’t it? Do you have a knife?”

“Ain’t supposed to cut it, miss. Be needin’ it again. Hope you

don’t mind me seein’ you all bare.”

“One more won’t make a bit of difference. Have a good look.”

It passed him by. Henry busied himself with knots. When he had retrieved enough rope from my lower half, he thoughtfully leashed my collar to the tree.

“Just followin’ orders, miss. I’m told you’re apt to make a quick dash.”

My spirits fell, but hopefully I asked, “What did Mr. Wyngate tell you about me, Henry?”

“That you was a thorough bad lot and I’d best take no chances.”

“You’re going to take me somewhere, aren’t you? Where?”

“That’s right, miss, and you’ll find out soon enough.”

“Henry, have you ever owned a naked girl like me—had her all to yourself?”

“You’re kiddin’, miss. Things like that don’t happen to the likes of me.”

“They easily could. Take me, Henry—steal me away!”

The poor guy! He found my proposition staggering in its concept. He stared heavily at my bare breasts, trying to think. I tossed another log on the fire.

“You could have me all to yourself, Henry—do what you like with me. I’d let you.”

“Crikey, miss, that’s just what Mr. Wyngate warned—that you ain’t no lady, and that you’d bugger off first chance.”

“But you have me handcuffed, Henry!” I held my linked hands up or emphasis. “I can’t run anywhere with these on—and I’m all naked.”

“Don’t trust her—that’s what he said, miss. Guess he was right. You ain’t behaving well, miss. You’re bein’ real vulgar.”

“What! Because I offered to let you fuck me? Oh, Henry, come off it. You’d like to, I know.”

“That may be, miss, but Mr. Wyngate gave me twenty quid for this little job, and he’s always treated me real decent.”

“Not half as nice as I’ll treat you, Henry.”

But I had lost. I could tell from Henry’s face and voice. I had lost out to good old English propriety and caution. My new jailer was faintly admonitory.

“I wish you wouldn’t talk like that, miss—not while we got this little job to do,”

I was free. It felt so good. But Henry picked up the ropes and grasped my leash. He gave a warning tug and said, “Now, if you’ll come along with me, miss.”

What the hell else could I do! I followed where I was led. Henry's car was off the road and just inside the park. He raised the lid of the trunk.

"If you don't mind, miss?"

"You want me to get in there? Oh, no!"

"You can climb in there yourself, miss, or I can put you in." I climbed in. Henry tied my feet and then my hands down to them. I became a neat package. The lid slammed.

This was not my first such ride. In their way they're exciting—the naked maiden desired enough to kidnap, her destination unknown. Since my hands were down by my feet, I sent my fingers searching for knots. I couldn't defeat handcuffs, but if I could get my feet untied, there might be a chance. I was halfway through thejob and doing well when the car stopped and the lid was raised. We hadn't traveled more than fifteen minutes. Henry surveyed my work dourly.

"Like Mr. Wyngate said, miss, you ain't to be trusted." He finished untying my feet and helped me get back on solid ground. He never let go of my leash. Henry looked around and said the obvious. "This here tree oughta be about right, miss."

It might have been the same place as far a the looks. England is filled with bits of woodland they seem to have forgotten. Hope once more was shattered. I backed up against

the chosen tree. A moment later the chain was tight around my middle.

While I was being roped, I asked, “Did Mr. Wyngate send any kind of message, Henry?”

“No, miss. Just said as how you’d understand.”

The bastard! I understood all right. He had set a trap, and Diane and I had fallen into it. When she triumphantly led Dick to the old tree, it would be as bare as his search of the house. Christopher would pretend to be amused, and Dick would be unsure, losing all trust in Diane’s judgement. I would be tied in the new place all alone. I broached the latter subject.

“This won’t be safe, Henry. The wrong people will find me.”

“Ain’t likely, miss. Nobody comes here.”

He was busy tugging at my ropes and making a good job of it, copying Christopher’s pattern. Desperately, I tried again. “You’re crazy not to take me, Henry. I don’t want to be tied up like this. Take me home and I’ll be ever so nice to you.”

“She’ll tempt you like a whore, Mr. Wyngate said to me. Guess he was right. Anyway, I can’t take you home on account of I got a wife and kids.”

I groaned inwardly but kept plugging. “We don’t have to go to your place. I could give you a wonderful time here on the grass if only I was free.”

“I’ll bet you could, miss. You’d run like hell.”

I abandoned my whoring and fought simply for salvation. “You don’t have to tie me this tight, Henry. The ropes are hurting.”

“Don’t trust her none, he said. If she ain’t real tight, she’ll get loose. And after them offers you made, miss, he was right, eh!”

I thought that I must be getting old—losing my looks. First I was rejected by Christopher and then by his gardener. I fell back on the obvious. “But, Henry, the chain you’ve locked around my tummy would hold me. I can’t possibly get it off. You don’t need all these ropes.”

Henry paused in his work long enough to portentiously announce, “You’d best shut up, miss. I’ve had about enough of your lip, and that’s a fact.”

I shut up. I knew I was licked. Henry Ricks tightened his last knot and turned for the car. “I’ll be sayin’ good afternoon to you, miss. No hard feelings, eh?”

I watched his little car feel its way through the brush that shielded me from the road. It was a lonely road, and I was beyond shouting distance. If I was not to die against my tree, I had to hope Christopher knew where I was. For sure I couldn’t win.

There began for me then the most haunting experience of my life. The afternoon passed without me being able to get

any of Henry's work the least bit loose. The pain from his ropes slowly took over where the earlier pains had left off, but I had expected that. What I hadn't expected was the approach of night. I had been tied to the tree for hours and hours.

When night falls in the woods, it's an eerie feeling. You naturally turn towards home and the light and warmth and friendship. But I did not. I could not. I stayed tied to my tree while the daylight sounds died and were replaced by purely sinister noises. Ghosts were lurking among the shadows of the trees.

I was so damn helpless. As evening drifted into night, I had to wonder about Christopher. The other two couldn't find me, but he could, although he didn't come. I couldn't imagine he'd be mean enough to leave me tied and chained like that all night. I remembered his hints of an experiment. It would serve him right if, when he came in the morning, he found me a raving lunatic with my hair turned white. I almost wished it would happen.

Gee, I wanted to move so bad, to shift a foot—anything! I played a game of excuses for his failure to show. This or that had intervened. Finally, in the full darkness of the moonless night, I had to realize he wasn't coming. I would stand the way I was until morning, and after that I didn't know.

I had become a part of the wood, just like my tree. It had to

stand as day became night and the seasons passed. I was possessed by an elemental force for which there is no name. It became easy to understand the ancients and their gods. For them the night was alive with mysticism as it now was for me. All over the country people were hiding from the night in their houses. They were afraid of the night. They closed their doors and minds against it. But I had become a part of it. The night and I were one.

Dawn and the morning were small miracles I could scarcely believe. When the first ray of sun found me, it spoke of the night chill I had scarcely noticed. The air was hot again by the time I heard Christopher's car. He walked around me jauntily several times as though surveying the ruins.

"Still nice and tight, eh?"

I wanted to call him everything in the book, but I was scared and so very glad to see him. I'd have been glad to see Dracula.

"Why did you have to do this to me, Christopher?" I asked meekly.

"Bad?"

"Of course it was bad. It was terrifying. I can't move."

"Tell me about it."

I wished he would untie me, but I could tell he was gen-

uinely curious, so I told him as best I could about the night and the ghosts and how the ropes kept hurting me worse and worse. He seemed enraptured. I realized it was all right up his alley.

“I’ll put Diane out some night, see how it affects her.” He gave me his little boy grin. “Want to be untied?”

The sudden thought that he might not untie me must have shown in the horror on my face. Christopher laughed and began tugging at knots.

“Henry Ricks treat you okay?”

“He was a perfect gentleman, except for tying me to this tree.”

“Diane tell you about the penalty?”

“About getting branded? Yes.”

“Like the idea?”

“I’m too played out to even comprehend it now. Could you frighten me with it another time?”

He left the chain until last. It kept me from falling. When the padlock fell, I simply flopped down and lay on the grass. Panting and thankful. The weals where the ropes had been peeled from me were almost raw. For a couple of minutes I was too stiff to move. Christopher availed himself of the opportunity to handcuff my wrists behind my

back. I didn't care. I wasn't in a mood to attempt escape. All I wanted was sleep. When he dumped me in the trunk of his car, he tied my feet. That was all. He didn't bother to join them to my handcuffed wrists. I went instantly to sleep.

When I awoke in my prison, the sun told me it was afternoon. The rope on my ankles had been exchanged for the familiar shackles. My hands were free. While I had this much freedom, I bathed and did my hair. When Christopher came with brunch, I was more or less normal.

"You're very beautiful, Priscilla."

"You always say that—it's habit."

"No, really, that's why I can't part with you."

"It won't work, Christopher. Diane's going to get so damn jealous of you keeping me around."

"I can deal with Diane."

"Sure, you can, if you want her forever sulking and resentful—like me!"

"You're not always like that."

I shrugged hopelessly. "I wasn't like that when you untied me from that damn tree this morning. I'd have done anything for you just because I was grateful to be untied."

"But you aren't now?"

“Christopher, we can’t ever be natural. Most of my politeness is because I don’t want to be punished.”

He thought about it while I ate and drank. I suppose I had to be grateful to him for not starving me. He could have. I wondered if he missed that trick or was simply being kind. He poured himself a cup of coffee and chuckled. “Diane and Dick had a fine time searching for you. By the time they’d been out in the woods for awhile, Dick was looking at her sideways. She was really mad at me, but I’ve whipped it out of her.”

“That poor girl is always getting into trouble on my account. She’s going to tire of it, Christopher.”

“She loves every punishment,” Christopher assured me complacently. “It’s like a sponge, wiping away resentment. She howls a lot, the same as you, but always wants to be fucked afterwards.”

“How come you’ve got to like that word?”

“It makes girls wince. Watch yourself sometimes. Delightful!”

It could easily have told him right there what a first-class bastard he had become, but I didn’t dare. I was always off balance with these switches between being tortured and pleasantly socialized. If I hadn’t been naked and my feet shackled, I’d be like any other girl chatting over luch. Christopher got me back on track.

“I’m thinking of branding you tomorrow, Priscilla. I’ve got a craftsman making me the iron.”

“Thank you.”

“Was that sarcasm?”

“I really don’t know. But I was sure you’d want me to say something. If you want to know if I’m frightened or not, yes, of course I am.”

“I’ll fasten Diane so she has to watch. She’s really upset. Thinks it’s her fault. Wants me to brand her instead.”

“Has it occurred to you that you don’t have to brand either of us? Nobody’s twisting your arm.”

“Have to maintain discipline, Puss.”

He was so damn happy with himself and his ownership of two girls. I tried to put a dent in it. “You started doing that by whipping us. It always makes us obedient. Now you’ve moved on to torture. Where do you go next?”

He actually listened. “Yes, I know, and you’re right. After you’ve been branded we’ll all return to normal punishments. You may not believe it, but I’m very fond of you.”

“Then why press a hot iron to my skin?”

“Because I want you to wear my initials all your life, Puss.”

“If that’s the case, then you’d be branding Diane too.”

“I intend to.”

I wished I had kept quiet. With Christopher I could never be sure. When I had eaten everything in sight, I asked, “Do I get another punishment this afternoon?”

“No. I want you to rest and think about tomorrow. I’ll put Diane in with you before long, and I’ll let you both talk.”

I didn’t ask about the chastity belt or thank him, but I was curious. “Don’t you want to fuck me?” I innocently enquired. “You can, you know. I belong to you.”

“I don’t want you to ask that question, not ever,” Christopher warned. “I’ll tell you when I’m ready. Because of that you’ll lose your hands for the afternoon.”

I turned and put my hands behind my back. I didn’t much care. He cuffed me tighter than needed, but I didn’t care about that either. Christopher picked up the tray and left abruptly. My cuffed wrists told me I’d best watch what I said.

I don’t know what girls do in real prisons. I don’t think they get left along a lot unless they’re being punished. About all I could do was sit and think about tomorrow. I knew that getting letters burned into my skin would hurt more than I could possibly bear. Towards evening Christopher came and sheathed my pussy with the steel mesh of the chastity belt. But he took off the handcuffs. An hour later he ushered Diane through the door. She was carrying the tray

with our evening meal and walking carefully with short snubbed steps. Her sex too was sheathed and locked. The door slammed and we were two girls alone.

Diane put down the tray and we adored each other with breasts, nipples, and lips. We could consummate nothing, but for the moment we were satisfied as we were. There are times when a girl needs a girl so bad, and this was one of those times. She wasn't worried about Dick.

"He knows you haven't gone back to the States, darling. I told him everything. He'll be watching Christopher like a hawk. He'll get you out of here." She looked at me dolefully. "I'm terribly sorry about this branding thing. Christopher talks as though he's actually going to do it, and I doubt if Dick can rescue you in time."

It was infuriating. Fancy being rescued by the man you love a day after you've been branded by the man you hate —wearing the wrong initials for life! It would be a constant reminder whenever you made love or shared a bath. Oh, shit! But at least I was going to be rescued.

"I asked Christopher to brand me instead, darling."

Since Diane didn't appear to know, I didn't tell her that she would get it too. It was bad enough me knowing without spoiling her night too. After we had disposed of the food, we fed upon each other's nipples. We knew it was crazy, but it was all we had. We called each other frustrated spinsters and tried to make a joke of it, but neither of us

laughed much.

Christopher tied us to posts for our branding. He had decided on our shoulders, a C on one side and a W on the other. He was animated with pleasure in what he was doing, explaining that he would prefer the cheeks of our bottoms, but since he would be caning them regularly, he had decided to mark us higher up. We had nothing to say about it. He didn't break the news to Diane of her brand until after he had her safely tied.

We were made to kneel and hug our posts, one of our breasts on each side. Christopher used straps and buckles so as to get us as immovable as possible. Our arms too were one on each side of the post, but these and our wrists he tied with cord. It was a savage tightness. When he was done, he could burn our backs to his heart's content and we wouldn't move that portion of us that mattered.

I could tell Diane was thrilled by what was to be done to her. She wanted to bear Christopher's mark, whereas I did not. I wracked my mind to think of ways I could dissuade him, or at least delay it, but I could think of nothing. Hell, he owned me! If he wanted to burn his initials in my skin, why shouldn't he?

Christopher was immensely proud of the two irons he'd had made for our marking. He held them for our approval, a C and a W. They looked innocent enough, but they were not yet red. He also had a can of spray he assured us would

modify our agony, but having gone overboard on mercy, he placed the brazier squarely between us where we could watch the irons get red. He said he'd been reading up on it and the perfect brand was where the iron didn't have too much color.

"Either of you girls want to be gagged?"

"Yes, please," I said quickly. Diane elected to scream.

The gag Christopher chose for me filled my cheeks and compressed my tongue. It also sealed my lips with a soft leather band. I felt better with it strapped tight. My agony could not shame me now. I would make sounds, but they would not demean. Diane and I spent the next half hour watching Christopher with the bellows and the brazier glow with a red intensity until the moment came for the irons to be thrust within an incandesence of the coals.

"You'll be the first, Priscilla, as originally promised."

I could not answer. There was no answer. I watched the fire and what it held. When Christopher withdrew the C, I closed my eyes.

There are no words for it. A girl being branded is bearing the greatest agony she can ever know. As the smoking iron was held against my shoulder for the requisite seconds and the odor of my burning flesh smote our nostrils, I was glad of the gag. I screamed into it with every nerve and fiber of my agonized being. I screamed again and again. When I

stopped screaming and the cooling spray struck me, I knew with terrible certainty that I still had the W to come. I hadn't moved. I still couldn't move. I belonged to Christopher.

I heard Diane pleading for me—for Christopher to stop. She asked that he burn her skin instead—that it was all her fault. But our master's nice young man's voice was for me alone. "Only the W left, Puss. You're halfway through."

I got the W.

He held the hot iron close to my face first so I could smell it. He gloated. "I'm going to press it on you now, Puss." I screamed into the gag until I could scream no more. The cresol sprayed my burns with cooling balm. I did not faint.

I was branded.

Poor Diane. She had been forced to watch me, and now it was her turn. Through a dull haze of agony, I watched the irons reheated and the first iron withdrawn. I heard her scream most vividly and smelled the burning of her flesh. I heard it all twice. Both of us now belonged to Christopher. We could never escape this marking of our skin.

I'm a bit hazy about how we got back to my prison. I think we were both carried. The shackles on our ankles had never been unlocked. For some reason unexplained I was handcuffed. I think Christopher only possessed one pair, and I was the delinquent, after all. But chastity belts or not,

Diane and I were still together. We held each other and sobbed. We used the can of spray Christopher left with us. It helped a little. After awhile we plucked up courage to look at each other's burns.

Girls are crazy. We are absurdly erotic. The C and the W on our shoulders thrilled us to bits. A man had desired us enough to put them there. I suppose that was it. Or was it an overwhelming relief that the act of being burned was over and only the pain was left? I remember an absurd resolve that if Dick could not tolerate Christopher's initials on his wife's back, I'd urge him to brand me with his own initials on whatever part of me he chose.

Because I was handcuffed, I could put my arms around Diane. She held me close, and we used our lips on each other and then our fingertips. Whenever we felt the pain getting the best of us, we sprayed the brands again. After awhile it receded to an insistent ache. To boost our morale, we went to the bathroom and bathed and made ourselves as beautiful as we could. Cosmetics do that for girls. When we returned to the prison room, feeling more pleased with ourselves, the miracle occurred.

The door slammed open with a crash. Christopher backed in under the threat of a pointed umbrella in the hand of a small, middle-aged woman whose perky features were masked in outrage. Diane's horrified exclamation told all.

"Mother!"

Mrs. Heselton did not seem dismayed at what she saw. Her gaze swept over us in a flood of disapproval. “Outrageous! A pair of strumpets! It appears I have not come a moment too soon!”

“But, Mother—”

Diane could have saved her breath. She was ignored. Her mother prodded the crestfallen Christopher with the umbrella, and sternly ordered, “Get these ridiculous mechanisms off these girls and fetch their clothes. Hurry!”

Christopher appeared glad to depart. Mrs. Heselton turned her basilisk attention on me. “I suspect you’re the American hussy. I’ll deal with you shortly.” She diverted her wrath upon her quaking daughter. “You should be ashamed of yourself, young lady. You and I are going to have a long talk.”

“But, Mother—”

“Don’t ‘but’ me. I shall insist on this outrageous young man marrying you immediately. I hope you are not yet pregnant.”

We dressed in blushing shame, careful that she should not see our brands. Under the threat of the umbrella, Christopher seemed totally cowed. Mrs. Heselton was a survivor of those women who had sent the English male out to found an empire. No doubt the poor fellows had been glad to go. Mother’s next salvo was aimed straight at me.

“I will personally drive you to the airport, you transatlantic baggage. We don’t want your kind here.”

“But, Mother, it’s not her—”

“Silence, girl! Just wait till I get you home!” Diane’s mother turned her wrath upon a sweating Christopher. “As for you, Mr. Wyngate, you will obtain a special license and marry my daughter without delay.”

Christopher made inarticulate sounds of assent. Mrs. Heselton was exactly what he deserved. I longed to laugh. Instead, I hugged Diane and she hugged me. We mingled tears. Mrs. Heselton broke it up with her umbrella rapping at my shoulder. “None of this American emotionalism here, my girl. I’ll soon have you back where you belong. Come with me, Diane, you go straight home.” She turned to Christopher. “And as for you, come with me!” She sniffed most eloquently as she grasped my arm. I nearly said, “Up your ass, Mother,” but after all, I was getting a free ride to where I wanted to go. I began to feel happy. I never wanted to see England again.

Mother was a stern and cautious driver. Our progress was slow. She explained George Washington’s terrible mistake in not enlisting the aid of George II in drawing up the U.S. constitution. I scarcely heard a word. I was busy writing off Dick Travers and trying to ignore my brands. Both were a part of England, and I hated the whole place. At Heathrow I was given twenty pounds, told never to bother “decent peo-

ple" again, and set adrift among the Oriental and Asiatic occupation of England's major airport. I finally found someone who spoke English.

Real joy claimed me when we were allowed on the plane and I got a window seat and saw all the familiar emblems on the huge fins: TWA, Pan American, Trans World, and the rest. I was so thankful I was American and was going home. The brand would remind me of the nightmare tomorrow. But I would not allow it to spoil this glorious moment. I beamed a smile at the man who was now sitting in the next seat, stowing his briefcase underfoot.

It was Dick Travers.

"Diane phoned." He beamed right back at me. "I just barely made it."

Imagine my feelings! I mean, what the hell is a girl supposed to do? But I sure was cheesed off with England. So I asked icily, "Why bother?"

"Ah, like that, eh?"

"Of course it's like that—the way I've been treated, and you never even tried to rescue me."

"Wanted the shining armor and the white horse, eh?"

"I'd have settled for a lot less. I owe this freedom to an angry old woman who thinks I'm a tramp."

Dick recognized the description and laughed. The wheels of our plane began to turn. I felt wonderful.

“Visiting someone in the States?” I enquired.

“Yes. A girl actually. I’m going to ask her to marry me.”

“How nice for you. Suppose she says no?”

“Have to kidnap her. She’s kidnap prone—experienced in that sort of thing, you know.”

“Silly creature! Don’t tell me she’s American?”

“Well, yes. I’m emigrating there myself, you know—just for her.”

“She’s not worth the sacrifice. Just think—no tea!”

“She’s worth every tea bag in England. She’s a charming girl—quite delightful. She’s a bit put out with England and the English right now, but I think she’ll get over it.”

I was able to say, “I doubt it. Anyone tell you this charming girl has been branded on the backs of her shoulders with the letters C and W?”

“A mutual friend mentioned it. I intend to kiss the wounds every night for the rest of her life.”

“She wouldn’t have had them if you hadn’t been so slow.”

“I will atone, every day of her life.”

Dick was getting to me. The old magic was back, and he was so damn good looking. I was the envy of every stewardess. But, as I was female, I said huffily, “I do hope you enjoy your return flight tomorrow. You won’t like the U.S.A. No dungeons, you know.”

I don’t know how he managed it. I wasn’t prepared, of course.

My arm was simply resting on the seat, but its wrist was suddenly handcuffed, and I do mean tight. The twin cuff was clicked onto the armrest. This imprisonment of my hand was discreetly covered by a scarf.

“Take that damn thing—”

I suddenly paused. To make a fuss or vehement demands would attract attention. That was the last thing I wanted, and Dick knew it. Thin-lipped, I whispered, “Take it off, Dick. Unlock it.”

“No.”

I realized it was a bit late for another American Revolution. I was already captured. Urgently, I threatened, “I’ll scream.”

“Please do.”

I did not scream, of course. As a matter of fact, the constriction around my wrist felt good. Old habits are not easily broken. I had been a chained girl for so long that I

missed it. Instead, I hissed, “If you don’t take it off, I’ll show the stewardess.”

“And I’ll produce my credentials as a volunteer member of the Sussex Constabulary, escorting a prisoner under arrest.” Dick held a little booklet for me to see. For all I knew I might be authentic. After all, he was a lawyer. I wilted and looked down hurriedly to make sure my hand and its cuff was well hidden.

“Oh, all right,” I surrendered abjectly. “What do I have to do to get the damn thing oft?”

“Promise to marry me.”

“In that case, I’ll be handcuffed for a long time.”

“Bit awkward for you, dear girl—restroom and all that.”

“I can wait.”

I was breathing heavily and staring straight ahead. But I knew Dick was smiling at me with his small grave lawyer’s smile in a sideways grin, crinkling the corners of his eyes. I wondered if there was a place on earth I could go where a pair of handcuffs wouldn’t grab me. I tested with my hand, but it was securely locked.

“You’ll have to free me when we land,” I pointed out, laughing inwardly. “If you don’t, I’ll accuse you of kidnapping.”

“We both know you won’t do that, Priscilla.”

Damn him, he was right! I could envision the kerfluffle. No way!

But if only he'd let me have the last word. I'd been doing fine with the repartee until he captured my wrist. A girl in handcuffs is sadly handicapped. I sniffed and got huffy again.

"Isn't this what you English would call being a cad?"

"Indubitably." Dick slipped me the big word with satiric ease. "But all's fair in love and war, Priscilla,"

"I hope you realize I'm going to have to eat with one hand."

"I'll be glad to help. Butter your roll, slice your meat."

"Someone's bound to guess."

"But they won't know for sure, will they? Help relieve the tedium."

"You're treating me abominably, Dick Travers. I thought better of you."

"Oh, I do agree, Puss." He was now giving me his full attention. "How would it be if I unlocked that cuff! Would you then agree to marry me?"

I cocked my head, reasoning it out. "That's being smart ass. It's exactly the same proposition you made before, only different. Whether I'm handcuffed or not, I have no intention of marrying any man who's so slow in rescuing me

when I'm in trouble."

"No sense unlocking you then."

"Ohhhh … you! Don't you realize how frustrated you're making me? Really!"

"Sexually, I hope."

I sniffed. "You'd be too much of a gentleman."

"Not if we're married."

I sighed. It was hopeless. This chitchat was getting me no place. I might have got the best of Dick Travers, but a girl can't talk back to a handcuff. This one on my wrist was laughing at me, I could feel it. I decided to just shut up. Then, next time he asks, I'd say yes to his proposal. Damn it, the man is so terribly sweet.

I mean, what the hell else could I do?