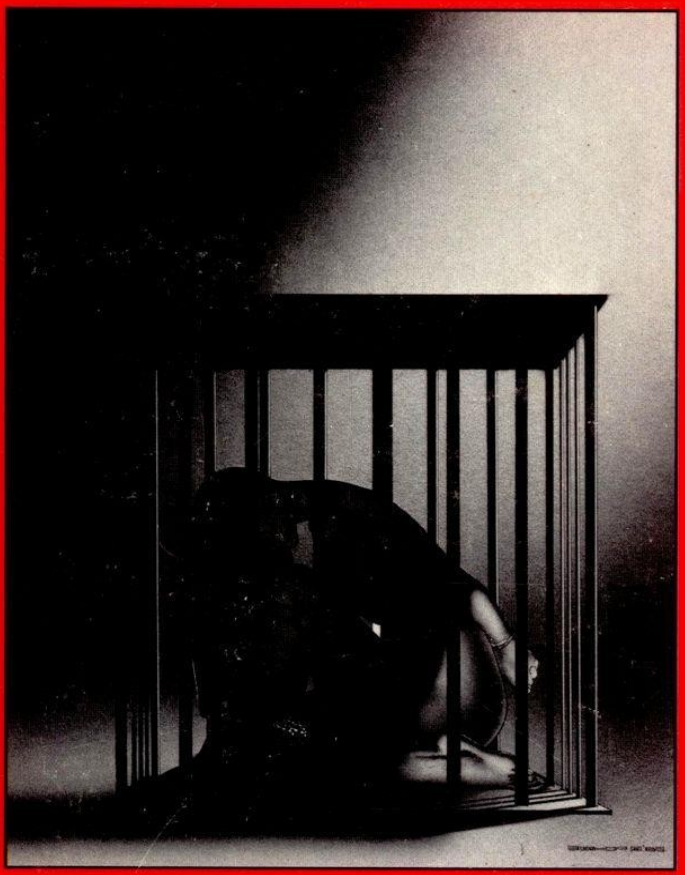
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F. E. CAMPBELL

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1

The Collar and the Chain

THE COUNTRYSIDE WAS A DELIGHT, and so were the little towns with their streets shaded by sycamore, maple, and oak. Upstate New York is beautiful in the summer. Anne Menton trod the accelerator as she pondered the big delight toward which she drove. She knew only vaguely of her Uncle Hilton, but if he had willed her an old house on one of the shaded streets, she was prepared to be grateful. Her mind dwelt lovingly on curtains and drapes and ancient oaken.

17 Maple Wood Drive was all she hoped, and the bright young man who opened the door was more than she had bargained for. He was altogether too neat and shining for Maplewood Drive. His smile gave the impression of waiting just for her.

“Mr. John Lennox?”

“Miss Anne Menton?”

They laughed together and shook hands. John Lennox’s voice was undiluted New York. “Lovely area, eh? Magnificent old house. You’re a lucky girl, Miss Menton. May I call you Anne?”

“Of course. And that makes you John. Am I late?”

“Right on the button. Anyone tell you you’re a damn good looking girl?”

“A lot of men have. I get spoiled. But never mind me. I’m so damn excited about this house.”

“Of course. But how about a sherry before we start the tour?” His eyes sought hers engagingly. “You did say you were unmarried?”

“I said that in my letter.” Anne accepted the drink, preoccupied, her eyes roving. “Why, the place is furnished!”

“Your uncle lived here during his last years.” Lennox laughed. “I gather he changed housekeepers regularly. I wish I’d met the old boy. The office handled his affairs.”

If her Uncle Hilton had enjoyed his last years, Anne Menton would not complain. She drank the sherry faster than was polite, then followed John Lennox into wonderland.

“It’s all too perfect.” Anne was breathless.

“I knew you’d like it. You’d have to be a clod not to. Think you’ll take up residence?”

“It would be an awful drive twice a day.”

“I suppose it would. But don’t let’s be negative. There’s still the garden, the garage, and the downstairs basement. Not a termite in sight. The garage is newer than the house, but it is attached. There’s a door to connect. You’ve parked your

car on the super driveway out front, so you've had a look at that. There's some very fine shrubs…"

In her mind, Anne was already calling it her dream house. She supposed she would become accustomed to ownership, but the thrill would remain. She followed her guide, only half registering his realtor-like enthusiasm. The summer sun was a benediction.

"Even the basement has been done over. No mildew, no funny smells. The whole downstairs is developed. Would you mind amusing yourself down there while I make a phone call? Be with you in a jiffy."

Downstairs was a bonus: clean, new, functional. But it was nothing to linger over. When she came to the last closed door, she saw only that it was slightly bigger and a lot heavier than the others. She turned the handle in blithe unconcern and went inside.

In times to come she would know this moment as the division of her life.

There were five of them: naked girls, each staring at her with a different expression. The concern she saw in each matched Anne's own as she beheld the iron collars on the slender necks and the chains trailing to the wall. Each nude girl could come six or eight feet to approach her, but that was all. In a panic, she turned back to the door, but it had closed behind her with a solid click. The sounds of John Lennox and his phone call had vanished on the other side.

Anne faced a smooth surface: no handle, no knob, no lock, nothing!

“Welcome to the club, honey.”

“Did he get you with the legacy trick?”

“He’s the smoothest operator. I really fell for him!”

Anne turned. Her heart was thudding painfully. The three exclamations had been cruelly graphic. There was instant disillusion. The collars and chains upon the girlish necks were more eloquent even than the words.

“You mean, what you’re saying—”

“That’s right, we were all kidnapped—and now you too!”

Dreams die hard. Hope lingered. Anne Menton looked from one to the other of the naked captives. All were young and beautiful. All were captive to their chains. Her question faltered.

“You mean Mr. Lennox is some sort of swindler—I haven’t inherited the house? Why would he do this? Why are you chained and naked?”

The laugh was short and bitter. “White slavery, that’s why.”

“We can’t escape this chain and collar—we simply can’t.”

“Buyers come every evening and take girls away. None of us have been here for more than four days.”

“I can’t believe a word of this!” Anne blurted out, clinging desperately to reason. “They don’t have white slavery any more. How did you get to be without clothes—and those collars on your necks?”

“You’ll believe it when somebody buys you, sweetheart.”

“We have to collar ourselves. He’s got the damnedest system. See that open collar on the wall? It’s waiting for you.”

“That’s ridiculous! Why would a girl put that on herself?”

Anne’s question was answered in vivid simplicity by one of the collared maidens. The girl turned to display a bare back cut and wealed by a vicious whip. The white skin bore a lattice of scarlet and purple to evoke Anne’s gasp of dismay. The captive’s warning was passive in resignation.

“I refused, just the same as you. Look what it got me! In the end, I did it myself anyway.”

“But you’ve been flogged!”

“Yes, and it hurts worse than anything you ever dreamed. Don’t fight it. There’s nothing any of us can do.”

“He traps us one at a time. It’s so damn simple I could scream.”

Five pairs of sympathetic eyes stared at Anne, and she stared back, trying to believe what she saw and what they said. The whole thing was just too bizarre, as far removed

from 17 Maplewood Drive and the nice Mr. Lennox as the North Pole. It was some sort of game—it had to be!

“We’d like to save you from being whipped,” the young voice said urgently. “But if Jenny’s back won’t convince you —”

“Honey, we’ve all stood where you stand now. Lennox has a continuing process going. Each new girl faces what you face and makes her own decision.”

“You mean you all voluntarily chained yourselves?”

“All except Jenny. We’re not stupid.”

Anne let the implication slide. Her first shock over, she was now looking at her companions with a more sympathetic eye. Their stark nakedness had repelled her at first glance —so many breasts and patches of pubic fronds—but if they had made themselves bare under duress, well, that was different. She beheld them now for what they were: nice girls who probably worked in banks and offices and stores, each of them a different personality. Their varying expressions held one thing in common: compassion. These girls had stood where she stood now, each reacting in her own way. In her they relived their own dilemmas. Her voice still faltered.

“I don’t think I can possibly do what you say. It’s against everything I am.” She paused, distressed. “Look, I’m still free. Can’t I do something—get you loose?”

“Can you think of anything?”

She could think of nothing. She was as impotent as they themselves. The only purpose of their collars and tethers was to prevent them from laying in wait for John Lennox and then jumping him in unison. Apart from the humiliation of the metal band and its links, they were as free as she herself. Anne fumed back to the closed door, searching for a fingerhold, then beating on it in a desperate anxiety of anger.

“It’s no good, honey. Undress, put your things in a pile by the door, then lock that collar on your neck, and let’s sit and talk. You being all upset isn’t doing any of us a bit of good.”

It was all so plausible, so easy for John Lennox. It was as though she would hand her naked body to him on a plate. Anne’s whole being rebelled against such passive surrender. After awhile Lennox would open the door and there she would be, naked and chained, awaiting his pleasure.

“I can’t do it! There’s no way I can do that to myself,” she said, looking from one compassionate regard to another. “I know you mean well, but it’s so wrong. We have to fight!”

Behind Anne’s back the door opened. She fumed and backed away. It was the same John Lennox but with a difference. The difference was a long, slender riding crop. His smile was as bright and cheerful as before, and so was his voice.

“The girls didn’t manage to persuade you, Miss Menton?”

Beneath his regard, Anne felt almost silly in her clothes and freedom. Somehow John Lennox contrived to make the five naked girls seem normal and she the anomaly. Anne found herself forcing her voice to fight her battle.

“This has gone far enough, Mr. Lennox. Free these girls and allow us all to go home. I personally would not press charges.”

The pain was exquisite as the crop sliced Anne’s bare legs beneath the hem of her dress. It was an agony such as she had never known. She found herself doing an absurd little dance. Her demand was equally futile.

“Don’t do that! It hurts horribly. You have no right!”

Anne danced to a rain of shrewd blows upon that part of her most bare. The male voice remained casual.

“Anytime you wish to undress, Miss Menton, please don’t mind me. And there’s also the collar, of course.”

She flew at him, trying to claw his face, but the crop beat down her reaching arms. Anne Menton had never known such bitter, awful pain. Sobbing, she backed away until stopped by the wall. The man and the crop stood between her and the door.

“Well, Anne?”

“I’ve never stripped naked in front of a man—never! Please don’t make me now.”

“Your companions could say the same. Now strip!”

“But why must you have us naked?”

“Because I’m going to sell you, you silly bitch. The buyer wants to see what he’s getting. Take those clothes off—now!”

“But couldn’t I do it when—you know, at the time, if it’s really necessary?”

“Ah, we progress! Stop arguing. You’ll strip in the end, you know—just like the others. I don’t mind your back being bloodied. Whipped girls sell very well.”

It was hopeless. John Lennox had an answer for everything. He also held the crop and possessed male strength. Anne no longer thought of escape, only of preserving herself from pain. But to be naked like the rest—for this male and even the girls to be able to look at her bush and her firm, ample breasts—was just too unreal.

Wanly, she pleaded, “All right, but please don’t watch, okay?”

“I will watch. You will strip. Remember, don’t sulk. I will not tolerate pouts and petulance.”

Anne faced defeat. The girls had been right. She could have

saved herself wealed skin if she had passively accepted what she now must accept anyway. Under the amused stare of John Lennox and the commiserating glances of the captive girls, Miss Anne Menton removed her clothes. She tried to do it without shrinking or theatrics, but she could not control the pink of her cheeks and its spreading tide. Making herself totally nude before six people was simply unthinkable, but she did it manfully, refusing to think or meet with the watching eyes. Without waiting for the inevitable command, she picked up the open collar and its chain. She fitted it resolutely around her neck and pressed it shut. It closed upon her throat with a click to make her wince.

“Congratulations, Miss Menton. Allow me to wish you a satisfactory sale.” Lennox picked up the discarded clothes and shoes, then left his inventory of female flesh to their own devices. The door slammed shut.

Anne fought down her own hands which sought to cover her most private parts—parts of her person she had never dreamed of displaying in public. Dim lights and sheets had seemed natural to the occasion. But now she had been left nothing—nothing at all!

“Don’t feel bad, honey. We’re all girls together. That bozo’s just a fact of life. We have to put up with him.”

Anne fingered the snug collar around her neck. It made her feel helpless. She could go nowhere and do nothing. The

chain mocked her. If there truly were purchasers, they could view her as they pleased. She could stand or sit or face the wall. She could not win.

“The mattress is yours, honey. Roll it up and sit on it the way we do. At night it’s enough to keep your hips off the concrete.”

Anne obeyed. She hated to think the crop had made her docile, but its agony had been devastating. Miserably, she conceded, “I guess I owe you all an apology. I should have listened.”

“Don’t feel bad. In the end it will make no difference. All six of us will soon be sold. For each of us that sale is the bottom line. Our life starts then. What’s gone before doesn’t count now.”

Anne sat as suggested, her fingers still busy with the band upon her throat. She had not tested either the chain or the collar, but why should she bother? If she was free of them, she would only be back to square one again.

For something to say, Anne asked, “Who buys us?”

“All kinds. There was even a woman. I wish she had bought me. I’d sooner be a lesbian’s slave than belong to most men. They’re mostly middle-aged and paunchy. Lennox himself is the only heart throb, the son of a bitch! I bet he’s making a fortune out of us damnfool girls.” The speaker snorted in disgust. “I wish I had V.D. You can bet your boots we’re all

going to be fucked to a frazzle."

A dismal feminine voice added, "Unless we get bought by a kook. Then it's not his prick, it's his whip. We don't have much to look forward to."

The six girls talked. Anne could well understand their state of mind. Unconsciously, it would become hers as well. The girls had been transported back in time to a Babylon slave market. There would be huckstering over their disposal. Sooner or later, a man would lead them away. Cash would change hands. If they demured, they would be whipped. Taken to their new home by their new owner, they would spread their legs and accept the thrusts of his phallus. What else was there for a girl who was a slave?

Lennox served a meal and exchanged the covered pail they were obliged to pass around in lieu of plumbing. The food was good and the coffee hot. John Lennox was his usual cheerful self. His manner seemed to indicate normalcy. Six chained and naked girls in his basement was no big deal to him. He joked and winked impartially. Gnawing at a chicken leg, Anne discovered herself to now be one of the girls. They were all equal; there was no seniority. They managed wry humor as they ate and drank to the music of their chains. It was impossible to move without evoking response from the links by which they were tethered.

"If I ever get out of this, I'll never take my clothes off again."

“For sure I’ll never put a collar and leash on another dog.”

Anne realized that six together was better than one alone. They sustained each other in a situation so desperate she dared not think ahead. But their eventual fate was in all their minds. They were naked girls waiting to be sold. Their plight was an excerpt from fiction that had become wickedly real. A man would buy them, and what then?

The most articulate of the six summed things up bleakly as she sipped coffee. “We’ve been stolen out of life. We’ve been robbed. We no longer have a husband, children, a nice home, or neighbors. The best we can hope for is to be somebody’s pet, kept safely chained and ready for his use. It could be a woman too. A woman came and bought a girl a couple of nights ago. I’m not sure which I would prefer. Women can be such bitches, and there’s only one reason they would want us.”

There was an established ritual at the end. Each girl pushed her plate and cup as far towards the door as her chain permitted. Lennox took no chances of being jumped by his angry inventory within the limits of their tethers.

“We pass on to each other what we have to do,” a captive mourned. “The bastard has everything figured. He could keep us like this forever if he wanted.”

“He must sell four or five of us every week. I wonder if he ever runs out of girls.”

“He’ll trip himself up sooner or later. But that won’t help us after we’ve been sold.”

Anne wished she had something useful to say, but she could think of nothing. Adding lament to lament was a useful release, but that was all. She longed to tear and rend and scream. Instead, she played with the hated iron circlet around her neck and fingered its links hopelessly. When the first buyer came, she was glad for the diversion.

He was a dapper little man who had made money but never made a girl. Anne could almost feel sorry for him that he was forced to purchase one. He peered at the six nudities, entranced.

“Up girls, on your feet. Show yourselves.” Lennox was brisk. He used his crop as a pointer, but it also spelled out disobedience. “You’ve got a good selection to choose from tonight, Mr. Pilsner.”

Hating the subservience, Anne did as the rest. She stood and gazed at Mr. Pilsner without interest. Mr. Pilsner was a very dull little man.

“Good. Now turn around.”

Mr. Pilsner surveyed the assorted backs and buttocks with approval. He made an obvious comment. “Some of them have been whipped, Lennox.”

“Had to—keeps them in line. The marked ones hold the most interest for some.”

“And the most trouble.”

“Get yourself a whip, man. No problem.”

“Could you turn them around again?”

Six bare backs turned to become twelve breasts and a half dozen bushes of pubic curls. Feminine hands clasped themselves demurely behind bare backs.

“Spread those legs apart, girls. Liven it up.”

“You appear to have them well trained,” Pilsner ventured doubtfully. “Could you get each of them to say something to me?”

The pointing crop picked Anne. She blushed and fought to control her voice and what it said. She made her response factual and cold. “Good evening, Mr. Pilsner. My name is Anne Menton. I have been kidnapped and chained here against my will. And I am foolish enough to disobey. The whip compels me to obedience.”

John Lennox’s eyes narrowed. But she had said nothing Pilsner did not already know. The pointer moved to the nudity at Anne’s left. One by one, the girls gave their verbal tributes. When the last pale voice died, Mr. Pilsner made his choice.

“That girl there.”

“You like the whipped back, eh?” Lennox was amused.

“I’m supposing it taught her to be sensible.”

“That it has.” Lennox tossed the chosen maiden a key. “Unlock yourself, then come here and bring me the key.”

Slowly and fearfully, the purchased girl obeyed. Anne could tell she was scared and had no wish to leave her five companions. Handing back the bit of metal which had spelled release from the collar her eyes roved in an agonized search for an impossible rescue.

“Turn around, and put your hands behind your back.”

Handcuffs glinted and clicked. The merchandise was safe. Lennox wasted neither words nor time. “You can tie her to suit yourself for transit, Pilsner. I expect you’d like to do the binding in your own way.”

“Yes, I would. Thank you.”

“She’s yours now. Grab a handful of hair and bring her along.”

Anne stifled laughter. Pilsner was obviously embarrassed. But he manfully grasped a handful of the maiden’s hair, and the trio then departed. The door was slammed shut behind them.

“I wonder how he’ll treat the poor kid.”

“He looks harmless. I can’t imagine him doing—well, you know.”

Anne realized they would never know each other's fate. Chained in this room, they were merchandise, but once through the door and with a man's hand in their hair they were enslaved, their lives sundered. With the others, she arranged her chain and sat back on her rolled mattress. Which of them would be next? But it didn't really matter. Nothing mattered any more at all. There was only escape, but they would never have the slightest chance of that.

From the start there was never a doubt as to Joshua Bristow's choice. Anne knew. The big man—heavy and hearty and unabashed—allowed Lennox to put the five girls through their paces, but after the show was done he immediately pointed out Anne.

"That one there. Hell, Lennox, she stands out a mile."

It was impossible to repress a thrill. Anne remembered stories of slave blocks and bidding. This was much the same. Evidently, Lennox had a one price policy which the buyers already knew. She and her owner exchanged stares. Joshua Bristow was not what she would have chosen, but there was vigor and life in him. He was a man who could undoubtedly get all the girls he wanted, middle-aged as he might be. He was not buying her as a last resort. No doubt she would learn the answer. Between them in that stare had emerged a strange rapport.

Unlocking her collar and letting it fall, Anne wondered

about the girl who would wear it next. She handed Lennox the key and passively turned her back. She shrank from the thought of handcuffs, but as they were clicked coldly around her wrists she saw their convenience. She was now more helpless than she had ever been. A huge hand grasped her hair. There were no good-byes.

In the office, she stood quietly to one side as Bristow wrote the check. The huge amount was devastating but imposed its own thrill. If a man valued her that much, how could she not be flattered? Anne's fingers were busy with the metal on her wrists. It was something new to play with.

"I got me some string, Lennox. Nothing like good twine."

"As you wish, Bristow. Handcuffs go along with the sale."

"Okay, we can click 'em on her in the car. Don't you worry, little girl, you ain't going to get loose. When Uncle Josh ties a gal, she stays tied."

It was easy to believe. Anne bit her lip as her wrists were crossed and swiftly bound. The twine cut. Strand after strand of it took her into a more certain helplessness. She could not restrain her gasp.

"That hurts horribly! Please don't make it so tight."

"Supposed to hurt, gal. Ain't got you safe if it don't."

This was the way it would be now. No one would pay attention. She would be used as desired and might as well

save her breath. A loop of twin around her elbows evoked a squeal.

“You don’t need to tie me there,” Anne said. “I’m no escape artist.”

“Shut up, kid. We do this my way.”

Anne kept quiet. The twine bit hard and would bite harder still. It hurt too bad to even think of wiggling. No doubt that was the reason for its use. A girl bound with twine would cherish no hope of escape. For her, freedom was only a word. Mute, she was pushed to the garage and the waiting car. Neighbors would see nothing. Lennox’s trade in girls was perfectly planned.

The entwined maiden had expected to be a bound bundle in the trunk, but was pleasantly surprised when her owner’s hand aided her to the front seat and the handcuffs clicked on her ankles.

“It’s dark, Lennox. She ain’t going to give me no trouble. All anyone can see is bare shoulders. May as well talk to the gal now that I got her.”

It was an expensive car, the seats cushioned to absorb painfully bound arms. The handcuffs on her ankles completed her helplessness. As they slithered silently out into the road and down the avenue, Anne kissed escape goodbye and turned her attention to the man behind the wheel. Bristow picked up her foremost query instantly. His guffaw

was derisive.

“Sure, honey, I’m going to fuck you first thing and get it off your mind. Can’t have you worrying about will I or won’t I. You’ll get it good. What’s the next question?”

“How long will you keep me prisoner?”

“As long as I want. Don’t get no ideas, though. I can sell you in a dozen places. Might even make a dollar.”

Bristow had the engaging quality of the brutally frank. Anne was only frightened of him in the female sense that he was much bigger than she. She was willing to believe she had drawn as good a prospect as Lennox’s prison room might provide.

“You’re taking me farther out in the country,” she pointed out. “I expected the city.”

“Oh, I’m a city guy all right, but I got me this little place where I can do what I want. You ever been tied naked to a tree?” Bristow laughed at her discomfort at the question. “Of course you ain’t! Silly question. But you’re going to be now. I got a liking for such stuff. Ain’t nothing better than a pretty gal, but she’s a damn sight prettier along with a bit of rope.”

“Is that why my elbows are tied so horribly?”

“They hurting?”

“Of course they’re hurting—they’re hurting bad.”

“Well, that’s real good, honey. You had a lot of fucking?”

Anne sensed he was trying to shock her. She made her answer casual. “About the average, I suppose. It’s hard for a girl to avoid it these days.”

“But you ain’t no pushover?”

Anne picked up the anxiety in his tone. She laughed. “Gosh no! But would it matter? Or did Lennox sell me as a virgin?”

They shared a chuckle. “You’re taking this mighty matter-of-fact, young lady. Get kidnapped often?”

“I’ve been wondering about myself too,” Anne admitted slowly. “I ought to be howling my head off and going berserk, but this twine you’ve got me tied with hurts so bad I don’t want to move. And as for howling, I don’t seem to want to. I think what’s happened to me is so impossibly awful I’m numb. Now you’re going to rape me?”

“Take another look, sweetheart. Did you get beat up?”

“Well, no,” she vehemently added. “But Lennox whipped me when I refused to undress.”

“But he stopped when you undressed?”

“You’re trying to tell me I haven’t been brutalized, and I suppose you’re right. I expect I’ll do everything you say,

and for the same reason. I'm scared of what a man's hands can do to me. I'm afraid you've bought a very tractable girl."

"I've bought a very rational girl."

"Thanks! Now, if you don't mind, what about that tying me to a tree bit?"

"Don't have to be a tree, honey. A man can tie a gal to most anything. Don't suppose there's a damn thing some gal ain't been tied to at sometime."

"To keep her prisoner?"

"Partly. Mostly, though, it's for the visual effect. Keeps you from getting bored too. You may find you love it."

"I can't see much to love about it," Anne said indifferently. "But I don't suppose it will hurt more than my elbows do right now."

"Go easy on the nagging. I could get tired of hearing about those elbows of yours."

They drove for awhile in silence. Anne, chagrined, realized she was crying. She couldn't touch her tear-stained cheeks or anything else.

"Caught up with you, eh?" Bristow's dry comment held a touch of sympathy. "Poor little girl—kidnapped and cruelly bound, on her way to be raped. I can guess how you feel."

“It’s all happened to me just today.” Anne was now sobbing in earnest. “It’s just too much—”

“Go ahead and cry. I’ll use a Kleenex when you’re through. Crying is good for a girl, so long as she doesn’t overdo it. Look, honey, I may whip your ass, but you’ve got my word that I won’t knock you around.”

“Thank you. I expect you’re being kind.”

“Oh, I’m a real bastard,” Bristow snorted. “I’ve bought me a naked girl, and she wants to go home. Do you realize I haven’t touched those lovely tits of yours or that beautiful bush?”

“I expect you’d get around to them.”

Bristow slowed and dabbed at Anne’s wet cheeks. His touch was surprisingly tender for such a big man. “You tired?” he inquired amiably.

“Yes, but that must not interfere with your pleasure.”

“You’re talking about fucking, ain’t you? Girls go haughty as hell when they talk about it, like they’re really doing a big favor for the guy.”

Anne tried to shift, but only gasped in pain. “Well isn’t it?” she asked doubtfully. “It’s everything a girl has to give. When you take it from us by force, we feel robbed.”

“Guess you got a point there. I’m still taking it, though. Got

to keep you gals from getting uppity. Don't take much kindness to get a gal to thinking she's on top. I've had to whip every girl I ever had. Not for meanness, but just so she stays in line."

"You won't really have to whip me, will you?"

"I think I got me a sweetheart. If that guy Lennox had assessed you right, he'd have upped your price. He's no businessman. Oh, and about you being tired, I'll put you to bed when I get you home. The rape can wait. There, I made us a rhyme."

Bristow was a puzzle. Anne found herself guilty over liking him. Surely no girl should like a man who held her in the condition she was in now. She was bound, naked, and in pain. Even if the rape was delayed until the next day, it still awaited her. She didn't yet hate this man, but perhaps she would. She believed herself lucky he had bought her. Bristow was better than a timid or sadistic man, or a lesbian woman. He was reassuringly male and uncomplicated. It appeared, too, that his enjoyment of her body was not urgent. At first she had felt cruelly vulnerable in this tight bondage, but most of the menace had dissolved. Only the pain was left, but she had been forbidden to mention it.

"Go to sleep, honey. We've talked enough for right now."

The car rolled on.

Anne Menton slept.

2

Cottage Captive

THE SCENE WAS IDYLLIC, a magic blend of trees and shrubs, green grass and blue sky. Anne Menton saw herself as the only serpent in Joshua Bristow's Eden. In such a setting a naked girl was an anomaly, especially when she was tightly tied to a tree. When Bristow made a promise, it was kept.

Anne had slept in a cell, handcuffed to a cot. At breakfast she had worn the same circlets on her wrists.

"Handy, eh?" Bristow asked, chuckling as he clicked them tight. "Prudent but painless."

"I can still run."

"Not with me around, you can't."

They had found an easy camaraderie. Anne was thankful that repartee oiled the frictions of her slavery.

"Are you going to keep me handcuffed all the time?" she asked pertly. "Shouldn't my legs be ironed too?"

"Don't kid yourself I don't have a set," Bristow advised. "We'll get around to 'em. But today it's the tree. Remember the tree?"

"I didn't really believe it, but, okay, you have a tree, and

you're going to tie me to it. Is this how you're going to keep me around, by tying me up?"

It was a modern cottage on a sizable acreage. Anne realized she could be kept here indefinitely without anyone's knowledge. Hopefully, she looked to Bristow for his answer.

"Hell, girl, there's a dozen ways I can stop you from taking a powder on me. Give me time—you'll sample 'em all."

"Please don't do something horrible with me, like a dungeon or a dark closet. I couldn't stand that."

"I got 'em, honey, and if you rile me enough, you'll go inside." Bristow surveyed his new possession paternally. "But I don't aim to be treating you that bad. It's really all up to you."

"I'll remember what you've said," she said soberly. "And now… the tree?"

Bristow had chosen an eight-inch trunk. His first act was to unlock one cuff, back his naked prize against the tree, and then lock her wrists again at its back.

"In case someone comes along and unties you, you'll still be safe."

"Then why the rope?"

"Hell, never mind why! It pleases me, that's why. After I've

had you for awhile you'll understand."

It was the strangest of sensations to be thus exposed in the shadowed sunlight beneath the tree. The handcuffs were a shattered hope. She could never escape handcuffs. Anne had nurtured a secret notion of wriggling free from rope. Given enough time alone it might have been possible.

"Disappointment, eh?" Bristow read her mind. "No wriggling loose." He chuckled at her blush. "You'll still be here when I come to get you. Now let's do a little fancy weaving job."

It was fancy for sure. Rope was tugged tightly into every female contour she possessed. Anne flushed a deeper hue when two strands split her nether lips and nestled themselves wetly inside her most tender and secret place. It was the only time she demurred.

"Is that necessary, Mr. Bristow? Do you have to? I won't be a bit more secure."

"Goes with the ensemble. Keeps you awake to being what you are."

Anne pouted silently as the tension of the ropes welded her nakedness more and more firmly to the tree. Cuffed hands behind the trunk would have been enough to compel her to stand there at Bristow's pleasure, but these cords were something else again. Every feminine curve of her was tightly strictured: her middle, a carefully crisscrossed bind

around her breasts, strands over her shoulders. All were tugged thoughtfully tight. The strands within her vaginal lips were no exception. They were ruthlessly tensioned back to the trunk. His work completed, Bristow cut shorter lengths of cord and used them to cinch his work so as to leave neither space nor slack between girl flesh and that to which she was bound. He stood back and admired what he had done.

“Pity you can’t see yourself, Anne. You’re a pretty picture.”

“I can’t twitch. I can’t even quiver. Is that what you want?”

“You’re perfect. Never took the time to do a job like this before.”

Anne moved her head fretfully. It was the only motion she could make. “I guess this means something to you,” she conceded wearily. “I wish it did to me.”

“Give it time, honey. You may come around. Either way, that’s it.”

“I’m going to hurt terribly after awhile. Even now, when I breathe. Is that what you want for me? Honest, I’m trying to understand.”

“Your breasts are magnificent. The rope frames and accentuates them. Sure, you’ll be hurting more all the time. Take it as part of the deal.”

Anne already knew about her breasts. They seemed to her

the most prominent feature of the scene. Rope made them arrogant and thrusting. Beneath them her rib cage was sharply defined by the bite of strands indenting her waist.

Slowly, she said aloud, “All the time you’re gone you’ll be thinking of me here like this. Will it give you a sense of power—an erotic thrill?”

“Both. You’re getting the idea. It’s what I paid for. You’re an expensive hobby.”

“I could suggest a way you could save money.”

It was one more bit of wry humor shared. The two of them seemed to gloss over the grim facts of her plight and end in a chuckle. Anne was both annoyed and thankful.

“I’m onto you,” Bristow said. “Don’t think I don’t know. You’re taking this better than most girls would. You’ve got a coolness about you.”

“I’m not frigid, if that’s what you mean.”

“You know it’s not. But I’m testing that out this evening. While you stand against that tree, I want you to know your famous rape scene is scheduled for later on today. Maybe you’ll get a wet snatch from thinking about it.”

Anne knew he was closer to the truth than he supposed. But she countered with, “That’s a ridiculous word for the part of me you mean.”

“Snatch? Name a better one.”

“Sure, I know they all sound either silly or indecent. Call it what you like.”

“How about a cunt? There’s a snap to it.”

“If you wish.”

Anne could well believe it a word Bristow would frequently use. From him it would not be vulgar, merely a jocular reference. She shrank from asking him to call it a pussy. Pussy had served well enough up to now, but its day was gone. Her life now would be starkly explicit. Right now her nakedness was staring, bare and shamed, straight at this man who had bought her for cash. Bound into immobility, Anne was discovering how much of feminine speech depended for emphasis on a shrug or gesture with a free hand. She had been robbed of body language and was painfully aware of the loss. Words left her lips, but seemed a dull and stilted semblance of free expression. But she was no longer free. She supposed that in time she might get accustomed to the loss.

“Doing some thinking, eh?” Bristow patted her cheek. “You’ve got the time for it. I’m leaving now, and you won’t know when I’ll return. You can keep tabs on the sun for the time—it’s all you’ve got.” He studied her face. “Look, I don’t want you getting frightened. There’s nothing here to be frightened of. You’re just a tied up girl waiting for her owner to come home. Savvy?”

“I’ll be frightened. I can’t help it. I don’t want you to go away and leave me like this. I’m sorry.”

“That’s the way it is, sweetheart.”

Anne’s back was to the cottage, so she had to strain her neck to watch his departure. Bristow was soon out of sight and sound. His captive shook her head in disgust and frustration. She tensed and strained, but could not move. However, because of the handcuffs on her wrists, Joshua Bristow had left her arms unbound, perhaps from a sardonic mockery. But Anne’s fingers could play with the steel circlets on her wrists, they were the key to her condition. If she could free her hands, she could free the rest. But the metal bands were snug to the point of hurting. She could finger them fretfully and find a bitter frustration in this locking of her hands. But rope would have hurt more. It was a consolation.

She knew her enemy was time. The hours would be slow. It seemed impossible that she would not be discovered by someone, but the cottage was at her back, and trees and shrubs kept her from seeing or being seen. After a blushing debate with herself, she essayed a scream and a pitiful cry for help, but her voice lost itself in a pale wan echo in the foliage. Anne did not cry out again. There was something frightening in its futility.

The naked captive girl was certain Bristow would be envisioning her thus and getting his jollies from the vision

throughout the day. She realized he was more complex than he seemed. She had expected to be kept his prisoner in a locked room where she would always be available for use. She had not dreamed of a bondage such as held her now. But she wryly admitted to herself that, until the pain of the cords bit at her in real earnest, this tree in the sunlight was preferable to the locked room or a barred cell. She longed to struggle but felt sure she would endure longer if she did not.

Roped to her tree, only Anne's mind could rove. She assessed her chances of rescue and concluded them nil. She had been neatly extracted from her world. Her vanishing would be utter and total, just one more girl who had mysteriously disappeared. It would be cynically assumed she had run away with a man. Ruefully, she realized how close to truth this was. But the man had run away with her, that was the difference. In the end, the results might be much the same.

Was Bristow a mystery? Probably not. But how long would he keep her? And what then? Anne was puzzled and annoyed by her failure to hate him. Her scar of him was minimal. They laughed together with surprising ease. It was because there was so much of him and all of it so intensely male. Little Mr. Pilsner could never have evoked the same feelings in her. But Joshua Bristow had about him a reassuring strength. A girl in Bristow's arms would be comfortingly protected. That the girl might at the same time be tightly bound as she was bound right now was a

new concept in Anne's life with which she had yet to cope. She could guess her fixture to the tree was only a beginning. She recalled her bindings in the car. Obviously a girl could be confined in many ways. Using her imagination, Anne could think of many ties in which Bristow could keep her in a helpless captivity. There was even the slightest of excitations in the thoughts.

To the naked girl, the sun moved more slowly than the insidious pain of too tight rope. Anne's breasts and shoulders felt it first. She found herself taking shallow inhalations against the cut of cord, but every stricture in her flesh slowly exacted its toll. It was not agony, but here and there the rope burned and scorched to become a ceaseless nag. Resolutely, she turned her thoughts elsewhere away from the hurts. They were a part of her day. Bristow had promised it. It was as simple as that.

Bristow returned to find his captive girl asleep. Anne was so closely woven to the tree so as to make sleep an easy possibility. She could not sag or fall. Her head bowed forward in surrender to her need, that was all. Her owner stood, quietly drinking in the loveliness he possessed so totally, noting the indentation of rope in flesh and the limp hopelessness of helpless hands.

"Still here, eh?"

Blinking back from slumber, the woven girl managed only a single word. "Please!"

“Hurt bad?”

“More than I believed possible.” Awakening awareness prompted a pathetic plea. “Please untie me, Mr. Bristow.”

“Okay. I’m a bastard, giving you this on your first day. But you sure do look sweet, like every ill-used heroine that ever was. It’s going to hurt as they come off. Sorry.”

“I don’t mind, so you set me free.”

Thoughtfully, Bristow unlocked the handcuffs first. But when the tied girl sought to raise her hands to her face, she instantly desisted. The motion hurt too much. Listlessly, she allowed her arms to remain limp as each stricture was peeled from her flesh.

Anne acknowledged its parting with a moan or a gasp of indrawn breath. When the last rope was taken from her, she looked down in wonder to see herself still bound by scarlet lines and bands upon her skin. The effect was bizarre. When she sought to step away, she stumbled and would have slumped to the ground had not Bristow swept her up in one effortless gathering and carried her away. Anne did not struggle, and she did not demur or question. She was content in the most pleasant pain she had ever known. She would wear some of her rope burns for a long time, but she did not care.

“Brought home some stuff to eat. It’s good. Bet you’d like a drink and bath first.”

“Could I? Oh, thank you!”

Bristow dumped his wealed burden on the couch in the lounge. He mixed drinks and handed hers with a flourish. Setting his own aside, he said, “Something else I bought too. Man’s supposed to bring a gal something.”

Anne was too tired to even think of protest. She sipped gratefully and watched with true curiosity as Bristow fitted and locked the irons upon her ankles. “I’ll be giving you a good deal of freedom at times,” he said without apology. “These are a bit of insurance I’ll have on you.”

“Of course.”

“Don’t bother you none?”

“They’re a lot better than being tied up. Thank you.”

“You’re one in a hundred. Most girls would blow their top.”

“I’m too tired and tender for top blowing, and I’m grateful you untied me.” She kicked a shackled foot to make its links jingle.

“Honest, I can understand what you’ve just done with my feet. These things you’ve locked on me seem very practical.” Anne glinted over her glass and added, “For people like us.”

“Think you can walk to the bathroom?”

“Sure. I have to learn sometime.”

Bristow followed her hobbled progress. More than once his hand steadied her arm. Once again they found themselves sharing laughter. He drew her bath and told her gruffly to take her time.

For Anne it was another new dimension. The shackles joining her feet made what seemed a tremendous clatter on the enamel of the bath, but she felt grateful for them. They had brought her privacy and a limited freedom. She considered hobbling across one of the surrounding fields with her feet thus joined. The idea seemed ludicrous. She turned her attention to the array of bottles and flasks. It would appear Joshua Bristow liked his girls well scented and perfumed. Perfume would be appropriate to the act still to come, but she refused to think of that either. Victorian maidens could blush and swoon all they liked, but she would not.

Anne had been captive only two days, but she found it strange and exciting to be walking on her own without watching male eyes. Her steps were short and wary, but she would adjust. She reveled in a relative freedom. She had refrained from draping a towel around her hips. She was certain Bristow would snatch it away. She had been sentenced by life to be a prisoner. She had also been sentenced to being at all times naked. It was useless to revolt at what she could not change.

Bristow was ready for her in the kitchen. Everything smelled good. Anne realized she was hungry, but her

owner was ready for her in more ways than one. “Here, sweetheart,” he said cheerfully. “These won’t stop you from eating.”

She held out her hands and watched the metal lock them close. Once more she knew it useless to complain. She would wear the handcuffs as pretty bracelets.

“Got to strike a happy medium for you,” her owner confided as they took their places at the table. “I can’t ever let you forget you’re a prisoner. If I let that happen and you got rambunctious, it would be worse for you than wearing what I’ve got on you now. Get the idea?”

“Sure, I do. Thanks for explaining. Maybe everything will make sense to me in time. I’ve never been a captive before. What’s the right word for me—slave girl?”

“Pick your own name, honey. As long as I’ve got you, I don’t give a damn.”

Anne ate busily. But she was female. Soon she asked, “Mr. Bristow, may I ask questions?”

“Fist off, drop the mister bullshit. Call me Josh.” He grinned across the table. “Ask all you want. I don’t have to answer.”

“Well, suppose I displease you in some way—not that I’d do it deliberately—would you punish me?”

“Took you awhile to get around to that. I’ve been waiting for it.”

“Well, would you?”

“Sure, I would. Figure it out for yourself, honey. If you break the rules, you pay the price. Call it discipline.”

“But what form would it take?”

“Eh?” Bristow looked startled. “Hell, girl, I’d whip your ass.”

Anne blushed. She was trying hard not to be aware of chained hands and ironed ankles. Now another, more personal part of her anatomy had been sprung upon her.

“Isn’t that simply a figure of speech?” she asked doubtfully.

Bristow guffawed. “You won’t think so when I lay a crop across your pretty little rump.”

Anne gulped and swallowed. She had asked for this—it was her own fault. Better to let sleeping dogs lie. But she was under a feminine compulsion to know why.

Blushing harder, she asked, “That would be my punishment would it? You’d whip my bottom?”

“And your back, and any other part of you I fancy. Between you and me, love, there’s no end of ways to punish a gal. Don’t worry yourself until it happens, though. Behave yourself and maybe it won’t happen at all.”

Anne knew she must be content. Punishment was a possibility she had to figure on in anything she did or failed to do. It was best to know. “I don’t see you as a man who’d be

mean to me for the sake of meanness," she asserted forthrightly. "In the context of being a prisoner, I feel safe with you."

"And so you should. Finish your supper." Bristow winced in make-believe lewdness. "We got things to do."

She allowed herself to be led to a bedroom. Surprised, she watched the unlocking of her hands and feet. She stood totally free—naked but free.

"Get on the bed and spread yourself out. You and me—we're going to do this right."

Anne gazed in dismay. It was more a couch than a bed. There were no covers, only a smooth surface. At each of the four corners there waited a strap and buckle attached to a very short chain. The intent screamed aloud. Anne swung back to face the man who would soon ravish her.

Eyes wide in urgent appeal, she pleaded, "But you don't need this! It's theatrical. I'm not so silly you have to tie me down."

"But that's the way we do it, honey."

"But it's horrible—demeaning. The way I'd be strapped out would be obscene. Josh, we're both mature adults. Can't we do this sensibly?"

"What you mean is do it your way—the good old suburban way. No, honey, we can't. That's kid's stuff. You've been

calling it rape all along, so, okay, you get strapped down and raped. I'd have thought it would ease your conscience."

"I don't feel guilty. Why should I?"

"Damned if I know, but you've got a honey of a blush."

"Well, after all—"

They stared, Anne exuding vibrations of hostility and outrage, and Bristow complacently amused.

"Go ahead." He motioned to the couch. "Get spread out there."

"I refuse."

"In that case, try that cupboard over there. Bring me what you find."

Anne half guessed, but had to be sure. A cold hand grasped her spine as she beheld the solitary item the open door revealed. She had no experience with riding crops, but it looked wicked. She reached in and grasped its limber length as she might grab a snake. It was unthinkable it could be used to cut her skin. But this was undoubtedly what Bristow meant when he spoke of whipping her ass. Disgustedly, she let the hateful thing drop. Petulantly, she turned to Bristow.

"Very well, I yield. You don't have to use that thing on me."

"Oh, but I do!" Bristow laughed at her startled disbelief.

“You forgetting about the very thing you were asking? About getting yourself punished?” His tone remained entirely amiable. “Well, that’s what you’ve just done. You’ve disobeyed and you’ve questioned my methods.”

“But they’re impossible orders.”

“You just agreed to them.”

“Well, yes, but under duress. But I did not agree to being punished as well. That’s altogether too much.”

“Best go get the crop before you get in any deeper.”

She had trapped herself, boxed herself in. She had nowhere to turn. Bristow would refute her easily. Anne wondered why Bristow didn’t use his superior strength to strap her down as he desired. Presumably, he had some sense of order. Her disobedience must be punished to uphold his rules. In a fine flare of injustice, Anne once more grasped the crop and turned to offer it to the waiting man.

“On your knees, sweetheart.”

She had read of such nonsense. Sulkily, she obeyed, holding up the crop for him to take.

“Now kiss it. Remember, you’re kissing what will mark your skin.”

Anne kissed the rod by which she would be chastised. It was like going back in history a hundred or a thousand

years. Once more she humbly offered it to the male at whose feet she knelt. This time it was accepted.

“On your feet.”

They stared again. This time Anne’s breasts were heaving in apprehension. This game had become vividly real. Shamefully, she realized she had not feared intercourse with this man, but she desperately feared the crop he was bout to use on her bare skin.

“How do you want me? I mean—”

“Hurts more when you’re bent over, girl. But let’s be merciful this first time. Lay on the couch—face down.”

She was naked on the couch and that much closer to what would happen to her in the end. She looked back over a bare shoulder. Bristow’s answer to her look was terse.

“For fucking you get strapped down. For whipping your rebellious little ass, well, let’s see how you handle it.”

When Anne saw the swing of her master’s arm, she buried her face in her hands and closed her eyes. The sudden agony of the crop across what Bristow had called her ass was as unbelievable as all the rest, but she had resolved against surrender and tears and screams. Anne gritted her teeth and held tight for the next blow. When it came, it sliced her cheeks viciously. She moaned and gasped, but did not scream or move. She could rise and beat her fists against this huge man who was so intent on whipping her

skin, but to what avail? She had lost a battle she should not have fought. It was best to take her medicine. After the fifth cut across her flesh there were no more.

“Let you off easy. Only five strokes.”

“Thank you.”

Anne was angered by her gratitude. But five was a small number. She had expected more. She did not know how she would have borne them, but she no doubt would discover that another time. If she had been punished once, she would certainly be punished again.

“What do you want me to do now?” she asked humbly.

“Like I told you to begin with, honey, spread ’em. Now you’ve got a hot ass to rest on.”

He was being deliberately uncouth. He had a gift for it. Without a word, Anne obeyed. It was the hardest thing she had ever done to rest most of her weight upon her scalded bottom and spread her legs obscenely wide. But she did it, closing her eyes so as to shut out the offensive sight of her exposed sex.

“Open those eyes. I want you with me in what we do, not off in some finale. Let’s get your cunt accustomed to fresh air.” First Bristow drew her feet apart and buckled each ankle tight. Anne felt certain her lips must also be separated by the stress. Obediently, she extended her arms for the buckling of her wrists. Loss of hands and feet left the

cruelly exposed girl a modest latitude. She could move. Nothing hurt. Anne twisted against the chains, testing her limits. She gazed up at the smiling man who had made her helpless.

“Well?”

Bristow pointed. Both his finger and voice were stern. “Don’t you dare say it, honey. You come out with that old ‘hurry up and get it over with’ bit and I’ll turn you over and whip your ass again.” He sat beside her on the bed. “There’s never going to be any hurry up between you and me.”

“I hadn’t even thought of saying that.” Bitterness entered her tone. “You must be getting a wonderful sense of power out of having me like this.”

“Sure am. What about you?” Bristow’s hand reached down to the apex of her spread condition. “Easy way to find out.”

It was the first time Bristow had touched her in such a way. Anne Menton had wondered at his forbearance, but there was nothing ordinary about him. Now, as his big hand cupped her waiting sex, she inhaled in an involuntary gasp. She had steeled herself for this torment, but it was still potent.

Stiffly, she said, “I don’t suppose it’s bone dry, but I don’t think it means a thing.”

Bristow exhibited a palm glistening with her most female

secretions. His grin was infuriating. “You’re right, honey, it ain’t dry. It’s damn good and wet. If you want to say it don’t mean nothing, I’ll take your word for it.”

Anne had a fleeting vision of her associates at the office. Suppose they could see her now! They would not believe their eyes. It was hard enough for her to comprehend her own plight. She could imagine rape perhaps, but not this leisurely shaming of her sex. The man beside her on the bed made a gruff demand. “Want to talk, sweetheart?”

“What on earth would we talk about—with me like this?”

“Same as if you were sitting in a chair.” Bristow was unperturbed.

“Don’t tell me you’ve bound me in this obscene posture to hold a conversation.”

“Sure, why not! Have a little foreplay while we chat.” His surprisingly light touch traced mischief across her nipples.

“Please don’t feel you have to do that.”

Even to herself her words sounded stiffly spinsterish. Bristow swept them into limbo with a short barking laugh. “You girls are quite something when it comes to a bit of pleasure. Do you realize how ritualistic you are? Dinner and wine. His place or yours. He cops a feel. You surrender elegantly on his bed.”

“It isn’t like that at all!”

“You tell it then.”

“Well…” Anne floundered. “I don’t want to talk about it.”

“I bet you don’t. I bet you too that none of the guys who fucked you ever had the enterprise to tie you down.”

“I should hope not!”

“You hope! Shh, girl, you’re responding.”

“No, I’m not! I told you that means nothing.”

Anne flushed and shifted petulantly beneath the male fingertips. But she could evade nothing Bristow could do. Angrily, she realized he was filching her female responses. Her body would betray her. She stared at the ceiling, evading his regard.

“Look here, Anne Menton, do you realize you behave a lot more like a woman when I tied you to the tree this morning? You weren’t the least bit prissy.”

“That was different.”

“How?”

“You were fastening me so I couldn’t escape. A prisoner expects that. There was nothing sexual there.”

“That’s horseshit, and you know it.”

“I wish you’d stop what you’re doing.”

“Doing what? Say it!”

“Teasing my nipples. It excites me.”

The male fingertips continued their silky frictioning. Bristow was jocularly sardonic. “Doing you a world of good, honey. You’re getting all pink and bothered.”

Anne’s response was an irritable tugging at the four tethers holding her helpless. Her plaint was as flushed as her features. “I hope you realize you’re being damned unchivalrous.”

“Got you where I want you. That’s what you’re really saying. What’s happened to that cute kid I’ve been sharing laughs with?”

Anne was lamenting her too. She had handled the kidnapping and the binding so well. Now she was blowing a valuable rapport because of sex. Sex always spoiled everything. It was a messy affair a girl never coped with well. There had been intercourse in her life. She had been pierced often enough. Occasionally, there had been some pleasure in the act. She could guess at Bristow’s caustic disposal of a word like intercourse. Chained down as she was now, it seemed an effete affectation.

The fingertips had gone. Bristow was emerging from his clothes as a magnificent chunk of male. He had no reticence about anything. He waved his rod in her direction. “See what I’ve been saving for you, love.”

His lingam was the biggest she had seen, but Bristow was the largest male of her experience. Anne was not afraid of what he would thrust inside her. Guiltily, she knew her sheath had readied itself for its reception. Looking at the male organ to which she was subject, she stiffly said, “Proud of it, aren’t you?”

Bristow entered her slowly. Instantly, she knew he would be a gentle and competent lover. Tensing at her chains, she knew too how right this man had been. Being chained spread-eagle as she was added mightily to this moment. She would strain feverishly at her bonds throughout their coupling and would find joy in their denial. Miss Anne Menton knew herself possessed by a master. Only once in their union did Bristow speak.

“Fight, sweetheart. Fight with everything you’ve got.”

Anne fought in ecstasy.

It was not over. Bristow stayed inside her belly, mingling their sweat, resting on his elbows so that his weight was not oppressive.

Anne’s lips kissed him back in a passion tinged with shame. But a girl could not become a frigid spinster simply because she had been kidnapped and sold. Kidnapping had nothing to do with what was happening to her, other than to yield her a magnificent lover. She closed her mind to everything but the moment which was now. Soon the shrewd, wise motions within her body would begin again.

There was no end, but with Bristow why should there be? Anne knew herself owned by a giant, and giants are strong. She writhed in total abandonment against the leather bands strapped around wrists and ankles. She flexed and tugged and gloried in the manner she was held. She discovered a pagan pleasure in this spreading of her thighs and invasion of her crotch. It was a splendidly satisfying rape she hoped would never end.

The night lengthened into a hot, panting eternity. Anne had no memory of its end. When she woke in the morning, she was still strapped and chained and spread wide upon the bed. But she could shift enough within the tolerance of her fastenings to ease her aches and comfort her wealed bottom. She would have drifted back to sleep if her master had not appeared.

“Ten-thirty, pet. Time we were up and around.”

Bristow unfastened her feet, confining them again in the leg irons of the day before. Then her wrists were unfastened, and she was rifled erect.

“Take a bath, kid,” he said, slapping her bottom and kissing her cheeks. “But move that little butt. I’m making coffee.”

Anne was glad of the absence of post-mortems. Words could spoil something they would cherish. In an urgency she did not bother to analyze, she tripped twice over her chains on her way to the kitchen.

Bristow was busy at the stove. His sardonic query was tense. “Feeling guilty?”

“Oh, sure. Go ahead and laugh.”

It was their only mention of the night before. Anne resisted the temptation to tell this man he could have possessed her far less expensively if he had courted her in the conventional fashion. No matter the approach, men and women always ended up in bed. But she saw pitfalls and was aware of uncertainties within herself. Would she always be chained down for their couplings?

“Wondering what to do with you today, honeybunch.”

“Do you have to do anything with me? You’ve chained my feet. Isn’t that enough?”

“Come off it, sweetheart.” Bristow openly laughed at her simulated innocence. “You can’t run, for sure. And you have to take short steps when you walk. But you’d be out on the road thumbing a ride thirty minutes after I’d gone.”

“Oh, all right. Haven’t you got a long chain or something? I don’t relish being tied to another tree.”

“Sweetheart, you’ve got nothing to say about it. Don’t go getting ideas.”

Anne flushed, angry with herself in allowing their intimacy of the night to engender unwarranted hopes. Bristow was right. She was still his captive, and there was his thing

about chains and ropes and straps and girls. She could not expect to change their deep-rooted fetish overnight, and she had best give him no inkling of such an intent.

Sincerely, she said, “I’m sorry, Josh. I was out of line. Do what you like with me.”

“That’s better.”

“This is terribly new to me. It hasn’t been a bit easy.”

Bristow took her apology for granted. She was a female thing subject to whims, her own as well as his. “I want these days of yours to offer us both a bit of spice. I’m going to contrive some of them so you think and maybe actually have a chance at escape. This way we won’t either of us get bored.”

“Isn’t that dangerous? For you, I mean.”

“That will depend on how dangerous you are yourself, Anne my girl.” Bristow grinned amiably. “Keep me on my toes. Ain’t nothing worthwhile without a bit of risk.” He mused and nibbled toast. “I won’t give you clues. You’ll have to figure your chances yourself.”

“I’m wondering if I should say thank you.”

Anne took her wonderment into the sunlight with Bristow’s hand on her arm. “Get you out into the sun and air while the weather holds,” he said practically. “There’s a few old buildings. Place was once a farm. There’s a shanty on a

barn and some bits of sheds. Someone must have kept some big dogs once—there's a kennel."

Anne immediately saw the heavy mesh and more recent construction, and guessed how she would spend her day. There were three heavy new padlocks on the equally heavy wire door.

"These on you first, sweetheart."

She accepted the handcuffs on her wrists as a matter of course. When her master opened the door, she clinked her way into the cage. She turned and watched the door close upon her imprisonment and the padlocks snap. Today was not one in which she was likely to escape.

"Bit easier than yesterday."

"Yes, thank you."

They stared. Then laughter once again claimed them, banishing formality. Anne clasped fingers full of wire mesh with chained hands and joked, "I'd bark and beg for you if I knew how."

"Maybe you'll learn. Practice this afternoon. I have to run now, sweetheart. I'm late already."

Anne watched him go. She sensed a sort of husband and wife thing about their relationship. But that was absurd. Wives were not kept cuffed and ironed in cages. The thought lingered. A married pair, prone to mischief, might

well think up something like this. She set the thought aside as pure whimsy, then looked around at what there was to see. It was little more than the day before. She could see a bit of the old barn and one of the sheds. No doubt she would make a more intimate acquaintance with them before long. She had no wish to be bound in or to see these ancient relics of honest toil, but what she did or did not want would count for nothing. She had no desire to be locked in this kennel, but there she was, caged as one of the puppy dogs it had once confined.

Idly, the captive girl made a tour of her meshed prison. It was a short tour. The kennel run was about eight feet by fifteen—heavy mesh on three sides and above. The top was only inches above her head. The fourth side was the wooden frame of what she supposed would be called the dog house. Proper entry was from outside where she could not go. But from the concrete up there was an orifice by which the hounds had come and gone. She supposed she could find shelter by wriggling inside if the weather turned bad. At the moment it held no allure.

What Anne did next was a routine duty, a foot-by-foot inspection of the wire. She tugged and pulled, but found no weakness anywhere. She reached up and swung her weight from the mesh above, but nothing gave. This entertainment exhausted, she sat drearily and leaned back against the wood of the shelter. She was a caged bitch. She rolled the term over in her mind. If she got the chance, she would spring it on Bristow.

She knew so little. She would learn more of Bristow, but as of that moment he remained an enigma. How many girls had he bought and made captive? Or was she the first? Would he truly give her chances to escape, and would she perceive them? Three days ago she had been free. This was unreal.

She saved sex until last. She refused to deceive herself about the cataclysmic effect on her of Bristow's good-natured virility. He had taken her into a realm she had not previously entered or even suspected. He had conquered her utterly. But it was a sexual vanquishment. When the leg irons had been replaced on her ankles, she returned to being simply a captive girl. She suspected her incarceration in this cage, handcuffed and ironed, might have a greater significance for her captor than the act of love. Speculatively, she toyed with the handcuffs on her wrists. But they were only pretty bracelets which stopped her from doing certain things, the same with the leg irons on her ankles. Neither held more significance than that. She remembered her writhing within the grip of chains upon the couch, but dismissed her thrill as purely sexual. It had nothing to do with being handcuffed in a dog kennel.

Anne was secretly pleased with the way in which she had adjusted to being owned. She was not so much a captive as a possession, less a prisoner than prize. True, she was allowing her sale after first being kidnapped to give a semblance of legality to an outrage utterly beyond the law. But it shifted Bristow's purchase of her into a realm of logic

she could not defend but which was very real.

The purchased girl was so absorbed in silent debate it came as a shock to realize she was no longer alone. Beyond the wire mesh a boy and girl stood surveying her in curiosity and delight. They were eleven or twelve years old, obviously rural. The boy made verbal his discovery.

“Look, Jinny, it’s a girl! And she ain’t got no clothes on.”

“There’s supposed to be dogs in that there cage, not girls.” Jinny appeared to be an adherent to convention. “She didn’t ought to be in there. What’s them things she’s wearing?”

“Them are chains, silly. Betcha she’s a prisoner!”

“She’s bare naked, Albert. You shouldn’t ought to be looking up between her legs like that. Best we go. You know we ain’t supposed to be here.”

“You’re a fraidy-cat. Hey, miss, what you doing in that there cage?”

It was a situation she had hoped for, but now that it was here Anne found herself shamed and apprehensive. These rustic urchins were not the rescuers she would have chosen. In any case, they couldn’t cope with either the padlocks or the wire any better than she herself. She chose the other approach.

“If you’ll go and get your father to come get me out, I’ll give

you some money."

Albert snickered. "Gals what's naked don't have no money."

"And they're not respectable either," Jinny said.

"Ain't no way I'm telling Daddy we been over here. He'd whip my ass."

"We been told to stay away," Jinny confirmed.

"Well, if you won't tell your parents, will you tell the police I'm here like this? You could phone—"

"We ain't having nothing to do with no cops," Albert affirmed decisively. "Daddy don't like cops neither."

"There's a reward."

"We don't want no reward, and we don't want our butts tanned neither," Jinny retorted vehemently. "I bet you been a real bad girl."

"Why don't you stand and come over to the wire?" Albert suggested lecherously. "Can't see you proper like you are now."

"You ain't supposed to see her at all like she is," Jinny reproved. "Come on, let's get outta here before we get in trouble."

"Ain't never seen a growed up gal naked, and neither have you, Jin. Now's our chance to get a good gander at this one's

tits and pussy."

Anne's spirits plummeted. She could understand why these children wouldn't help, but they might not easily go away and leave here alone either. She felt like a goldfish in a bowl under their prurient curiosity. Crouched as she was, most of her interesting female parts were shielded by arms and legs. She shrank from the exposure of facing them against the wire. Firmly, she said, "Why should I? You won't do anything for me."

"She's a bad girl," Jinny warned severely. "She wouldn't be in that cage and all chained up if she hadn't done something. Let's go."

"Aw, stow it, Jin. I ain't missing this chance. Guy who owns this place is away all day. She can't do us no harm in that cage."

"Them's handcuffs on her wrists," Jinny said sagely. "It's police that got handcuffs. They'll be coming back for her, and we'd best be gone then."

Anne's mind had been busy. There was no sense in being ashamed and prissy about anything any more. If her nakedness was a useful weapon, then why not use it? "I'll come and stand by the wire if you'll promise to call your father or the police," she offered unhappily.

"Okay, come on over," Albert said. "It's a deal!"

"Albert, that's real bad, and you know you can't—"

“Shut up, Jinny! You come on over, miss. Don’t pay no attention to my dumb ol’ sister.”

She knew it was a forlorn hope, but it was all she had. The children would probably renege, but they might easily indulge in unguarded speech which others might pick up. Listlessly, Anne stood, then clinked her way to the wire. Facing the young avid eyes, she raised her arms and clutched the mesh at a level well above their heads.

Jinny and her brother stood, wide-eyed and slightly awed. The intensity of their regard made their subject blush. What the three of them were doing was obscene.

“Ain’t the way I figgered,” Albert said breathlessly. “She’s a lot better. You aim to grow up like that, Jinny?”

“She’s awful beautiful, all right—all those things she’s got that I don’t. Gosh, I don’t think we oughta be looking.”

“Bullshit!” Albert declaimed grandly. “I want to suck them tits. You don’t mind, do you, miss?”

“Yes, I do. Anyway, you can’t get in here, and I can’t get out, so forget it.”

“Don’t need to, miss. You press hard against the wire and your tits will come through.”

What a wretched pass to come to! There would be no coping with this perky child. Disgusted, Anne let her arms fall and turned away.

“You’re being silly,” Anne chided. “Forget the whole thing. Just go. If Mr. Bristow catches you here, you’ll be in trouble.”

After a moment’s hesitation Albert turned and started walking away. Jinny followed him out of sight. Anne’s sigh of relief had scarcely left her lips when the two children returned, dragging a garden hose. Triumphantly, Albert said, “You going to do what I say, or do you want a long cold shower? With this here hose I can spray you long as I want.”

Anne moaned inwardly and knew herself without defense. Caged and chained, she was totally at the mercy of this brat. No matter where she went within the confines of her wire prison, the cold jet would find he flesh without hindrance. She would spend the rest of her day soaking wet, her hair a mess, and puddles of water everywhere. Urgently, she made her simple plea.

“Please don’t do that. It’s not fair. It would be a cruel thing to do.” She turned to Jinny. “Please don’t let him—please!”

“Get your tits through the wire, miss. That way you stay dry.” Albert leered. “Won’t hurt you none. Bet you’ve had your tits sucked lots of times.”

It was total defeat. Anne guessed if she chose the hose, the only way she would stop its spray would be to give in to Albert’s demand. Either way she would face the shameful humiliation of yielding her breasts. Hating everything, she

resumed the total exposure of her pose and pressed hard against the mesh. First one nipple and then the other made its intrusion through the narrow space. She had to wriggle and thrust shamelessly to achieve the desired position, but it proved more easily done than she had supposed.

“Come on, Jinny. One’s for you.” Albert was elated.

It was all the bad words she could think of. Anne stood rigid and soiled as avid lips and demon tongues used what she offered through the wire. She wished her nipples would refuse to respond, but they betrayed her as usual. It was as though they reached out for the torment of the tongues. As though to punish her more, excitation took possession of her loins and spread in mounting heat until she could not control her gasps. Sensing victory, the children doubled their efforts. In the throes of exploding into unwanted climax, Anne broke away and turned her back as spasm after spasm shook her to the core. She felt hideously shamed before the wise young eyes.

“Come back, you! Come here!”

Anne scarcely heard and did not heed the angry young command. She retreated to the wooden wall and crouched against it in a useless effort to hide her nakedness. She felt degraded and doubly bare. To protrude her nipples again through the wire was unthinkable.

“You better get back here right quick.”

“You better do as he says, miss.”

The prisoner in the cage scarcely heard her tormentors. The suddenly icy spray caught her unaware. Anne squealed in shock and outrage. Striving uselessly to shield herself with chained hands against the jets and sprays Albert aimed at her, she faced the children indignantly.

“I did what you wanted! You’re being cruel!”

“You didn’t come back when you was told. Now you get it.”

There was no sanctuary, but the nude fugitive from the hose sought every recess of her cage in vain, like a trapped animal seeking safety. Wherever she went the water followed until her hair was soaked and she trod in puddles with hobbled feet, over which she constantly tripped. In desperation, Anne boldly faced the source of her distress, thinking to shame them or stare them down. But Albert changed the spray to a fine hard jet which actually hurt her face, her breasts, and her sex, all three of them the most obvious targets a boy could be expected to choose. With a sob of outrage, the soaked girl turned her back.

“You little assholes! What the hell are you doing!”

The male bellow stopped the jet instantly. When Anne turned in surprise, the hose was expanding its flow into the opposite corner of her cage without a guiding hand. Albert and Jinny were in full flight. A burly, black-browed, middle-aged man stood in their place and stared in

amazement at the dripping nude behind the wire.

“Please turn that awful hose off.”

Dazed, he departed. The water stopped. On his return he retrieved the hose and set it aside.

“Them little brats give you trouble, miss?”

“Yes, I’m soaked. Everything’s soaked. Could you please get me out of here?”

“You mean, outta that cage?”

“Yes. I don’t suppose you can do anything about the padlocks, but you can cut the wire.”

“Gosh, miss, that’s Mr. Bristow’s dog kennel!”

“I know, but he doesn’t have any dogs in it—he has me!”

Anne’s visitor took stock of the situation. He seemed obtuse and certainly cautious. “Wouldn’t do no good,” he pointed out doubtfully. “You’d still be handcuffed and with them things on your feet. I don’t have no key.”

Anne had never felt less alluring or more miserable. While she talked, she was sluicing water from her skin and wringing out her hair. Wherever she trod there was water. Her only friend was the hot summer sun. Desperately, she pleaded, “Please help me. Couldn’t you find some tools?” Hopefully, she added, “I’ve been kidnapped. I’m being held a prisoner against my will.”

“I ain’t messing with Mr. Bristow, ma’am. No way!”

“Well, will you call the police for me and tell them I’m here?”

“Calling lousy cops is something I wouldn’t never do. Cops is trouble.” He smiled ingratiatingly. “You’re drying out real good, miss. It likely won’t be long before Mr. Bristow is back.”

“There’d be a reward if you help me.”

“Yeah, I bet!”

Anne had never heard more explicit disbelief. She had only one card left to play. She put it on the table. “If you get me loose, I’ll be very nice to you. I’ll let you do whatever you want with me.”

“Hell, miss, my old lady does that! And it don’t get me in no trouble with the neighbors. You got mighty pretty tits, but I best be going.”

“Please! No! Don’t leave me in here like this. Please help me.”

Anne’s urgency lost itself in the summer air. Dejectedly, she watched the father follow his children. It had been an ugly interlude, nothing more. Her objectionable visitors could so easily have been her liberators. Their blunt refusals were hard to understand. Bristow evidently had influence. Dolefully, she returned to the business of getting herself

dry. Being handcuffed did not help. In an hour the kennel and its captive were back to normal.

The prisoned girl wondered if she was two-faced in having striven so hard for freedom from Bristow's captivity, yet been so glad to see him on his return. Immediately after he opened the door she was in his arms, sobbing out her story of abuse.

Joshua Bristow was amused and unconcerned. He patted Anne's bare back comfortingly while noting the hose and the pools of water. "I'll get ahold of Rennick and make sure he keeps his kids away from here," he said grimly. "I'll make damn sure of it!"

Anne perceived a pitfall. "I suppose I ought to confess that I tried hard to persuade them to set me free. Is that bad?"

"It's natural."

"Will you punish me?"

"Think I should?"

"If you want. I mean, I'll understand." Nobly, she added, "I expect you should."

"You want me to. Think I don't know?"

Anne nestled closer within his big arms. "So, all right, I feel guilty." She sniffed. "You've got me so turned around I don't know where I'm at." She sniffed again. "If you'd set me free

but wanted me to stay, I'd be glad to. Honestly, I would. I wouldn't run away—not ever."

Bristow did not answer. But Anne felt him tense and instantly divined the fault in her offer. She sought to mend the flaw. "Okay then, keep me handcuffed. I don't mind handcuffs. The leg irons too if they please you."

Bristow carried her to the house.

3

Sequestered Girl

ANNE'S PUNISHMENT WAS SIMPLE. Soft bandages encircled her wrists and were pulled tight. By them she was suspended from the kitchen ceiling, her toes a foot above the floor, while Bristow made their dinner and talked.

"An hour of that should just about cover your crime, honeybunch."

"Thank you."

Anne gasped the simple acknowledgment. This stress was new to her. It was frightening in its utter simplicity. She had found a simple thank you a useful way to cover an awkward hiatus. Her feet were still reaching for the floor in disbelief at its denial. She looked up at her suffering wrists and knew them lost. Almost her greatest shock was to be thus punished in the kitchen of the cottage. "Tortured in a Kitchen" flitted through her mind like a newspaper headline.

"Hurt, sweetheart?"

"Yes! Oh, yes—my arms!"

"Gets worse. But you'll get used to it."

It was crazy! Out of this world! The trite exclamations remained silent on Anne's tongue. She wanted to suffer in si-

lence, but Bristow wanted to talk.

“Every wife ought to be hung up in her own kitchen once a week,” he said expansively. “They’d do some heavy thinking.”

“I’m not your wife.”

“Might as well be. I’m thinking of that offer of yours.”

“You didn’t accept it, not even when I said that about the handcuffs and things.”

“You always miss the point, kid. Handcuffs are wonderful if you want to get out of ’em, but if you wear ’em like bracelets you can take off anytime, they got no magic left.”

“It’s hard for me to talk to you, Josh, hung like this. Words come out in gasps. But what you’re saying is you want me always trying to escape, but that I’ll always be chained so I can’t.”

“Sort of—like a prisoner looking for escape.”

“But then you punish me, like now. Josh, this is awful.”

“You asked for it, remember?”

“That was because I was so happy to see you. Oh, Josh!”

“You don’t get those little toes of yours back on the floor until your hour’s up.”

“Yes, I know. I’m sorry.”

The suspended nude was aware of the kitchen clock, but wished it was not there. Its hands seemed to scarcely move. She was already feeling sorry for herself and would feel sorrier. She was totally unprepared for what Bristow did now. Without preamble, he unzipped his pants, lifted her higher, then lowered her slowly upon the impalement of his phallus. Anne was too startled to speak, and when she found words, she did not utter them. Apart from what she felt within her crotch, her wrists and shoulders sang their own song of joy. Bristow absorbed her weight as though it was a feather. Slowly, he raised and lowered her to his desire. Shamefully, Anne's bare legs rose to encircle the male, her thighs clamped hard. She wished she had her hands, but they were still somewhere above her head and would come no lower. She closed her eyes and went on a journey into a rose-colored land.

She did not wish it hadn't happened, but when her owner was done with her, it was doubly hard to once more hang suspended on her own. It was a beastly punishment she must not earn again.

Its nagging stress was an unceasing travail. Bristow washed his hands and returned to his culinary affairs.

"I bought me a slave," he said nonchalantly.

"You've got one. Look at me!"

"A guy doesn't figure a girl he keeps chained and hog-tied is going to fall in love with him."

“I haven’t!” Anne’s hot denial floundered. “I—I… well, I don’t know what state of mind you’ve got me in, but you ought to be grateful.”

“You’ll be wanting a baby next.”

“That’s silly. If it’s any comfort to you, I can say for sure I’d escape right now if I could.”

“Never pay no attention to what girls say when they’re being punished.”

“Oh, you—you—”

“Real bastard, ain’t I?”

“Josh, please let me down!”

“No.”

“If you understood girls the least bit, you’d know I didn’t mean that about asking to be punished.”

“Then why’d you say it? Just took you at your word.”

“Take me at another word—let me down.”

“Uppity as hell, just like a wife. Want me to crop your little ass again?”

“I don’t care!” Anne bit her lip. “That’s all you think about. You think whipping my bottom cures everything.”

“You sure it don’t?”

“Yes, I’m sure.” In a sudden panic, she exclaimed, “Josh, no! Please don’t. I’m sorry if I irritated you. I’m not feeling all that happy myself. I’ve been hanging like this for hours and hours.”

“Twenty-five minutes to be exact.”

“Well, all right then, twenty five minutes. But you’re going to whip me—I can tell.”

“Thinking about it.”

The suspended girl felt appallingly bare. The last thing she wanted was the riding crop, that and being hung up in the kitchen like a side of beef. Bristow brushed close as he moved back and forth, but kept his hands to himself. She had displeased him and waited uneasily.

“Crop your ass in a minute, honeybunch. You don’t mind waiting—you ain’t done nothing.”

He would pile on the suspense. Of course she minded the waiting, but could think of nothing to extricate herself from the contretemps. Busy with his hands, Bristow continued his reflections.

“You mean to tell me that if you get loose sometime, you’ll come in and get my supper instead of running like hell?”

“Not if you use that crop on me I won’t.”

“You trying to bargain?”

“Josh, the way you’ve got me, I couldn’t bargain about anything. But, sure, I’d love to make you supper if you didn’t always put me in the wrong. I’m sorry I like you. I apologize.”

“Got you mad, eh?”

“If you keep on getting the best of me this way, I’m going to cry. Have you any idea how frustrating this is to be hung up and simply dangle like some… some thing!”

“Rough, eh?”

“You know it’s rough. Josh, please, can I say I’m sorry and then we can start over?”

“No.”

Anne sniffed. She was going to get her bottom cropped for sure. What she had to worry about now was how many strokes, but she dare not ask. She wished she could carry off her punishment and its pain and indignity in a fine haughty disdain. She would probably swing like a pendulum under the blows and feel more ridiculous than when he had cropped her derriere that first time. Silently, she vehemently exclaimed, “Oh, shit!”

Left alone, Anne knew where Bristow had gone. He returned, flexing the hated instrument between his hands. He cut the air and laughed at the flash of apprehension across her face. The naked girl tensed and held her breath.

“Ain’t telling you how many, love.”

The pain was atrocious. Without conscious volition, Anne found herself a puppet on a string, dancing a jig to the tune of agony. She leaped and writhed, drawing and lifting herself on the tether from above, raising and kicking her legs. She did not want to do these things, but suspension bestowed logic. Her feet could not touch the floor anyway, so what did it matter? Bristow watched in glowing admiration until the naked girl relapsed back into passively hanging by her wrists.

“Damn good show, Anne. Should have you hanging every time I crop your seat. Marvelous action.”

“I’m so ashamed.” She was trying hard not to cry.

“Nothing to be ashamed of. You hurt, so you kick and hop around. Let’s try it again.”

Anne steeled herself, but it was useless. When the scald cut at her again, she danced the same dance to the same tune. Secretly, she knew it helped. It was as though her contortions exorcised the demon of the crop. She closed her eyes and readied her courage for number three.

It did not come.

When she opened a cautious eye, it was to see Bristow busy at the sink. He appeared to have forgotten her.

Desolately, she pleaded, “Please don’t drag it out, Josh.

Don't torment me."

"Two's enough, honeybunch. You've had it."

"Oh, Josh!" Anne was incredulous. "Thank you! Oh, thank you! I expected at least six." She shook her head against tears. "I'm terribly grateful."

"Give you the other four if you want."

"Oh, Josh…!"

"Thought I'd ask. Ain't nothing like a girl getting her bottom whipped to pass the time. First thing you know, your hour's going to be up."

Anne looked at the clock. Still ten minutes to go. The sixth part of one hour stretched out interminably. She felt a compulsive need to fill the vacuum. Her shoulders and wrists were complaining urgently. Inconsistently, she faltered. "If you wouldn't hit me so hard, I'd ask you to up the time. One every couple of minutes would keep me from thinking and wishing."

"Sorry, love, only one speed."

She might have known! Bristow would never allow her to set the pace. Everything would have to be on his terms. She bit her lips in chagrin and wished she had kept quiet.

"Well, reached a decision yet, pet?"

Anger and loathing of her suspension got the best of her.

Anne almost spat out the retort. “Very well, do it.”

“Crop your ass? On my terms?”

“Yes.”

“Gal, you’re crazy!”

“I’m just so sick of hanging up like this.

Bristow shrugged and motioned with a hand. “I’d let you down now, sweetheart—you’ve done pretty good, I’d say—but I can’t let you fox me. Understand?”

“Oh, sure, I always understand. I’m a very understanding girl.”

“And sarcastic to boot. Well, honey, you asked for it.”

In the two-minute intervals between the blazing pain, the suspended girl surprised herself and Bristow by the diversity of gyrations she contrived on the end of the rope. There was no freedom for her and no release, but she filled each of the crop’s pauses with acts and sounds of which she would later be ashamed, but at the moment speeded the hands of the clock as nothing else would. It took five wicked strokes, but when the crop ceased its impacts on her skin, the hour of her penance was over. When her feet were back on the floor and her hands untied, she threw her arms around the man who had punished her and sobbed out her pent-up emotion on his shirt. She had lived weeks in the space of an hour.

When Bristow took his slave girl to bed, he handcuffed her left wrist to her left ankle. It stopped her from doing nothing except escape. They laughed over it a lot, then made their love. Bristow took Anne into new and hidden enchantments. When they slept, she did so with her wrist and ankle still joined. If a chance to escape had ever existed for her, it was now gone. In the morning he broke the news.

They were in the drowsy aftermath of sleep when Bristow abruptly asked, “Ever hear of Hetty Coppick?”

“No. Should I?”

“One of the world’s richest women. Got a lot of character.”

Anne sensed disaster. Her female instincts were bombarding her with messages of alarm, but she kept her voice even. “What about her, Josh?”

“I’m lending you to her for awhile.”

“Why? I’m not a lesbian. And anyway, are you tired of me?”

“You’re going to get a course of training.”

“Josh, what on earth!” Anne tugged at her fettered hand and foot. “It’s this, isn’t it? I’ve not been able to relate to ropes and chains the way you want?”

“Can’t expect too much of you, sweetheart. You’ve done pretty good. But Hetty’s place will get you on track in a way

maybe I can't."

He sounded forlorn. Anne longed to comfort him and find comfort herself. She sensed an abyss, something to be repulsed. She was sure she could never get either a master or a mistress she would feel for the way she felt for this huge man. "Please!" she begged. "Don't send me away to someone else. I want to be here with you, but if you don't want me any more, then set me free. Give me back my freedom."

"No. And I don't want to hear any more about it. I bought you—you're mine."

"Then keep me."

"I own you. I'm loaning you out to be trained. It's that simple."

The quaintly cuffed girl knew herself on treacherous ground. "What is this Hetty's place?" she asked doubtfully. "A whorehouse or a jail?"

"You hit it close, honey. It's a jail—a real honest-to-goodness jail."

Anne stared in disbelief. "It can't be!"

"It can if you have enough dough, and Hetty has it. She's like me. She sees girls the same way I do—in ropes and chains and pretty cages. She'll be an education."

“I don’t want an education. I want to be your girl, right here and now. Tie me up every day and be happy with me.”

“Sorry, love.”

Anne gazed miserably down at the shining steel linking her wrist and ankle. It seemed impossible that such trifles could dictate her life, but it was so. A handcuffed girl could never be free save by the grace and sanction of whoever held the key. Her longing for freedom was now thrice as strong in light of what Bristow said. But freedom itself was more remote. She shivered.

Bristow bridged the awkward gap with words. “Hetty calls her place the I.S.G.” He chuckled. “Stands for Institute for Sequestered Girls. Suppose it’s as good a name as any.”

“But the authorities! She can’t keep her own private prison!”

“She’s doing it, sweetheart. Owns a heap of land. Got her jail right in the middle, far from any road. Nobody bothers Hetty Coppick.”

“But the imprisoned girls! She can’t possibly—”

“Sure, she can. Gets them the same way I do—and for the same reason.”

“It sounds horrible. Josh, don’t send me to a place like that.”

“You need the experience. It won’t be forever, honey.”

“Keep me with you, please! Or set me free. I beg of you, Josh.”

“Honey, let it lie.”

“Josh, I’m being abject. I do whatever you tell me. I’m getting so I think the handcuffs are fun.” Anne gazed at her owner. “It’s the other thing that’s bothering you. It’s the way I’ve come to feel about the big guy who owns me. The moment I said I wouldn’t run away, even if I was free, that’s where I blew it. Josh, that’s truth, isn’t it?”

“Sure, sure, you’re probably right.” Bristow was embarrassed. “But don’t knock the I.S.G. It could give you a whole new perspective.”

“No, it won’t. I’ll hate every moment, and I’ll always be trying to escape.”

She saw his nostrils flare and his eyes light up with interest. His tone was one of relief. “That’s it, honey. You just spoke the key word. Slaves and sequestered girls are supposed to want to escape.

They’re supposed to always try to escape every chance they get. That’s what makes this whole thing valid—what ties it together.” Josh paused heavily. “This love business ain’t in the picture. I’m real sorry.”

They went to breakfast in a somber mood. Bristow cuffed

the limp wrists and ironed the unprotected ankles, defeating a period in which Anne might indeed seek to make a run for the freedom she had offered to reject. To Anne, the I.S.G. was as much a presence on the table between them as the food itself.

"Phoned Hetty last night, sweetheart." Bristow made no pretense of forced cheerfulness. "She don't spend all her time at the I.S.G. She may not be there to meet you. But she's got a couple of females who run the place like clockwork. The work's all done by the prisoners, even the clerical stuff. The clerk's leg-ironed same as I got you. Hetty's set up the damnedest penalties for escape attempts."

"A real fun place." Anne's voice was bitter.

"Best be polite for the two girls who are in charge. They're not bad lookers. Don't rile them none. Hetty calls them all sorts of names, like wardresses, instructors, jailers, disciplinarians. You take your pick. She brought them in from some real correctional institution. Them and their natty uniforms set the tone for the place. Gives me the shivers."

"What do you think it'll do to me!"

Bristow ignored the bitterness Anne put into her words. "Hetty is having you picked up. I think she's got a special vehicle," he informed tonelessly. "Everything is patterned on the real thing right from the start. It's so perfect it's more real than real."

Anne could not fail to note the deference bestowed on Joshua Bristow by the smartly uniformed female with the van. She called him sir with marked respect. She was introduced to the new feminine convict as Wardress Charity. The name seemed incongruous. Charity was a quality the lady did not exude. But she treated her new charge with impersonal efficiency. She unlocked one cuff and handed her hesitant prisoner a white T-shirt.

“Regulation dress, Anne. It’s all you’ll get.”

Anne knew it instantly as a tease. It accentuated an almost indecent exposure of her breasts. It was tight and stretchy, and was emblazoned front and back with the I.S.G. logo. It’s principle affront to whoever wore it was its coy failure to entirely hide the girl’s pubic bush. Tugging it down, Anne realized her sex would be frequently on view. The handcuff was now replaced on her wrists, and she was ready for transport to serve her sentence in this strangest of all convictions.

“Don’t look so glum, sweetheart. It’s going to be all right.” Bristow was again his gruff hearty self. He kissed her soundly and patted her still bare bottom. “I’ll be keeping tabs on you with Hetty.” Embarrassed, he left her alone with Wardress Charity beside the van.

“In here, young woman.”

When the side door of the van slid back, it revealed a backseat well back from that the driver occupied. Seated

on it was a girl wearing the same T-shirt, the same handcuffs, and the same leg irons as Anne. In addition she was gagged, her eyes wide in questioning above the soft leather band across her lips. Her leg irons were clipped to the floor of the van, as were the handcuffs on her wrists, with a longer chain which allowed her to raise her hands knee high. Beside her, on the floor, there awaited a second set of such fixtures for Anne.

“I’m told you’re a sensible girl, Anne. Gags are regulation during transit.”

The tone was crisp, the muting object already in Charity’s hand. Feeling utterly condemned and without hope, Anne obediently opened her mouth and accepted the blunt rubber prong above her tongue. She clamped her lips as directed for the tightening of the soft band by the buckle at the nape of her neck. She knew this loss of her last freedom as her introduction to the Institute for Sequestered Girls. Her shocked eyes found sympathy mirrored in those of her fellow convict on the seat.

“Please sit beside Jennifer, Anne. The company will be pleasant for you both.”

The step was beyond the tolerance of the leg irons, but the shortfall was compensated by a pair of unexpectedly strong hands from Wardress Charity. The now mute prisoner was hoisted and thrust upon the seat beside the helpless Jennifer. A moment later her leg irons were similarly

clamped down with the center link of her handcuffs snared by chain so as to compel her hands to a demure resting in her lap. Anne had never in her life felt more impotent. They could traverse city streets and none would guess the cargo of the van. The wardress patted a bare thigh reassuringly.

“You two lovebirds are quite safe. Take it easy and relax. The ride takes about an hour, and I’d advise you to spend the time contemplating your new status as prisoners. As of now, you’re starting a new life. I’ll advise you also to forget notions of escape. There will be no escape for either of you —not ever.”

The dictum was easy to believe. Anne tugged at her tethers. Her gaze sought the girl beside her. They exchanged expressive shrugs of silent helplessness. Both tried to speak, but made no sound. But for what they had to say a pair of shrugs said it all. Charity laughed at their discovery of hopelessness. She started the motor. Anne thought of the cottage and Bristow, and wanted to cry. Jennifer’s cheeks were already stained by tears.

It was indeed a time for thought: One shocking realization followed another. Anne knew herself a convicted convict. She knew also the girl beside her had been snatched from life as she herself had been. Both of them were chained and gagged in the same way, shockingly helpless. It would be possible for Charity to park the van outside city hall, and they would simply sit there mute and immobilized to

await her pleasure. If this was a sample of I.S.G. security, it was for sure they would never escape.

Silent communion was frequent between the two ironed girls. They shared a similar condition. Each could pull her hands back enough to hide her pubic hair, but their nipples laughed at subterfuge and proclaimed themselves flauntingly against the friction of the T-shirt's elasticity. Anne wondered if her companion was as accustomed to nudity as she herself. She would have chosen honest nakedness in preference to the scanty scrap she was forced to wear.

Escape was a thing she need not consider. There would be none.

The van imposed the implacability of a prison, and she already felt the awesome isolation from the male. She might never see another man and would not again know the wonder of a male between her legs or the hot thrustings of passion. She knew convict girls used their fingers, but even that could easily be denied if she was chained in certain ways. She was robbed of life. Anne wondered if Bristow really understood the sterility to which he had sentenced her. She doubted that he did. All he would understand was that I.S.G. would keep her chained and bound until she recognized the condition as normal. Even that posed a question: Would he take her back? She wished she knew.

The approach to the Institute for Sequestered Girls was

discreet. The van turned off the road onto a sparsely traveled track. It was not until they approached the wire fence around the stark brick building that a sign proclaimed the three words and nothing more. Within the wire there was a high brick wall and a heavily barred gateway. It was opened by a black girl whose feet were hobbled. She saluted smartly as they passed. Charity stopped the van at the main entrance and detached her charges from the van floor. The tone was still briskly impersonal.

“Out you get, girls. Straight inside.”

They could not disobey. They were helpless. But before passing into the shadows, each newcomer looked wistfully back at blue sky and what little they could see through the bars of the closed gate. The prison possessed them. There were other barred doors which Charity unlocked and clanged shut with obvious relish. Each metallic sound lowered Anne’s spirits one more notch. Eventually, they stood before a desk in an austere office.

“Two live bodies, Amity. Sign here.”

It was absurd and frightening. The woman who signed the slip was almost a clone of Charity herself. She sat back and surveyed the new arrivals.

“Give you any trouble, Charity?”

“None.” Charity chuckled. “They didn’t have a chance. Want me to remove their gags?”

“No. We don’t need them cackling. They always say the same things. Keep their mouths strapped through reception.”

It was the first false note. Prisons did not gag their inmates. For the rest, it was much as Anne had seen before on TV. A bored girl, also with hobbled feet, took their pictures, front and profile. Next they were taken to a bathroom where their handcuffs and tiny T-shirts were removed. They soaped themselves as Charity sluiced them with a hose. While they used the rough towels to dry themselves, Charity instructed them further on the I.S.G.

“Leg irons are permanent. You’ll find you can’t fight much with hobbled feet. For sure you can’t run. Act up, and I’ll use the crop on your pretty skin. At I.S.G. we expect instant obedience. What’s more, we get it!”

Anne was sure they did. A girl as helpless and vulnerable as she felt now would be an idiot to rebel and get her skin marked up by the crop to no good purpose. She had noticed the wicked instrument hanging from Charity’s belt from the start. It would always be there, waiting. The iron bands around her ankles felt as though they weighed a ton, and they were there to stay. She toweled vigorously and wiped away a tear, then slipped back into the I.S.G. body stocking and held out her hands to be once more joined. Next came disinfecting and finger printing. Both were ridiculously unnecessary, but each in their own way diminished her further as a person and reduced her to a mere number.

“And now the cells.” Charity made the announcement as though announcing costly gifts. “Come along.”

A passage. One side a wall, the other side a row of six cells. Three sides of each was masonry. The fourth, opening to the passage, was heavily barred, as was its door. Charity opened the first of the narrow confinements and motioned Jennifer inside. Slamming the door behind the dejected girl, she admonished, “Don’t dare touch that gag. Wear it until I take it from you.”

The wardress marched Anne to the last cell in the row and repeated the formula. The chained and gagged maiden stood mutely within the tiny space and watched herself locked in. Charity nodded noncommittally through the bars. Anne felt desolation settle like a pall.

There was a narrow cot, a washbowl, and a toilet, all depressingly institutional. It took all her willpower not to tear away the gag, but the crop of Charity’s belt was still vivid in her mind. Instead, she took such short chained steps as the cell permitted. She clutched the bars and tried to look beyond, but there was nothing to see. Defeated, she sat upon the cot and wept.

It was Amity who unlocked the door. She and Charity were by no means alike except in age and strength, but the uniforms made them twins. She used the same impersonal authority. “Come here, Anne. Turn around.”

It was such relief to be rid of the gag, the prisoner could

not forbear a polite thank you. Breathlessly, Anne waited.

“Your hands.” The handcuffs were taken from her wrists, and then Amity tersely commanded, “Off with your shirt!”

Naked, the prisoned girl was turned about, her arms grasped, and her wrists crossed behind her back. The explanation was factual. “I am tying your hands with cord, Anne. You have already been told you will be kept helpless, but, with the new girls, we try to avoid them becoming morbid by the use of various restraints and mild punishments. For instance, this afternoon you will be whipped.”

“But I haven’t done anything! Why—”

“Exactly. Our punishments at I.S.G. are not conventional.”

While the captive girl stared bleakly at the illogic of her future, she bit her lip against the cunning tug and stricture of the cord as it wound and bit unkindly into her wrists. When it was knotted, she knew she could never free her wrists from its authority. Pushed back, she turned and waited in passive expectancy.

“Hurt?”

“Yes.”

The wardress nodded, pleased. Anne had not poured out a dammed up torrent of protest. Adopting an easier tone, Amity became conversational.

“Naked, bound, and chained! Do anything for you?”

“It makes me wish I was free.”

“Yeah, I suppose. You’ve already had some of this.”

“Yes. I was purchased by Mr. Bristow.”

“You still belong to him, Anne. Miss Coppick’s not here to explain that end of things. In the meantime, you belong to Charity and me. You will address us both as ‘ma’am.’”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“You’ll think we’re mean, but we won’t let you get bored.” Amity eyed the bound nakedness speculatively. “This affair of yours with Mr. Bristow—where did you get to with him?”

Anne wanted to say it was none of Amity’s business, but was suddenly overwhelmed by the enticement of a feminine ear. Tearfully, she told her sorry tale. Ending pathetically, she said, “I suppose it’s no use asking you to give me back my freedom.”

“You know it isn’t. Anne, that guy’s an asshole.”

“No, he isn’t.”

“You ought to be damn glad to be among girls. There’s not a prisoner in the I.S.G. over twenty-seven. Charity and me, we’re in our thirties. The news isn’t all bad, you know.”

“I’m not a lesbian, and I honestly do wish Josh had kept me with him at his place. I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be. We’ll use you as a lesbian if we wish. We’ll use compulsion so your pretty little conscience will stay intact. Does being whipped do anything for you?”

“It hurts, that’s all. Sometimes it hurts terribly.”

“Well, you’re still new. Bristow only had you for a few days. He gave up easy.”

“Anyway, I wish he’d take me back.” Anne twisted painfully against her corded wrists. “If it’s at all possible, please tell him how I feel and that I’ll do anything—anything at all.”

“Honey, girls have been doing anything at all for men right since the beginning. It never changes a thing. Men are still assholes. Did he keep you naked?”

“Yes, always.”

“Much the best. But we’ll put the little stocking over your tits once in awhile to maintain appearances. Miss Coppick thinks those jerseys are cute. How’s it feel the way I’ve got you? Your breasts are so vulnerable.”

“Well, yes, they are, aren’t they?”

“Sure. It’s part of the hands behind the back thing. Does wonders for any girl. Keeps them respectful too. Right now we’re both thinking how I could pinch those pretty little tits

until you howl and you couldn't stop me."

Anne twisted defensively. "But you aren't, are you? Oh, please don't! I'm so mixed up now."

Amity laughed. "Okay, I won't. Not right now anyway. By the way, you'll be given your hands sometimes. You'll be given work to do after we get used to each other. The leg irons will keep you behaving. Did you notice that girl with me in the office?"

"The typist with her ankle chained to a ring in the floor?"

"You saw her, eh? It's a sample of how we use the girls. If you can type, you'll most likely sit there yourself. But I.S.G. is not a big place. At the moment we have fourteen girls here. That's about the average."

Fourteen girls, all robbed of their freedom, without even the privileges accorded slaves; Anne saw the desolation of the young lives and shivered.

"It's not as bad as you see it right now, Anne. We let you share a cell sometimes, and there's a slow turnover of the girls themselves. Miss Coppick doesn't keep them forever."

"You mean, she gives them back their freedom?"

"Hell no! Don't get excited, honey. She passes them around as gifts to deserving friends." The wardress grinned at the disbelief on her prisoner's face. "Before I wipe that look off your puss, I want you to stand at attention. Face me. Make

it stiff and stick your tits out."

It was demeaning but easy to obey. Anne did as she was told, blushingly aware of breasts and hair and female curves. She also adjusted her features to a respectful attention.

"That's better. Should have put you at attention in the first place. A girl like you is an absolute cunt-heater standing like that. Does a lot for me, and I don't mind admitting it."

"Thank you, ma'am."

"You're welcome." Amity nodded in approval. "But about Miss Coppick. It's a damn nice idea when someone on their birthday or at Christmas gets a crate, and when they open it there's a naked girl inside, neatly trussed and gagged. By the time she's ready to be a gift, the girl is well broken and behaving. Often they are glad to get into that crate. Means they got another shot at the merry-go-round."

"But what on earth would anyone do with a girl?"

"Hell, I'd suppose you knew. Miss Coppick's got a lot of friends. Some of them share her interests. Mr. Bristow, for instance." Amity's eyes twinkled. "Or me and Charity. She doesn't send girls to senators or congressmen."

"But I still don't—"

"It won't happen to you, honey, not unless Mr. Bristow gives the word. But there's a lot of folks around who al-

ready have a girl chained or in a cage or somewhere around the place. It's more common than you think. All you need is money, or a job like mine."

"But aren't any girls ever released?"

"Chin up, honey! Chest out, knees stiff! That's better. How the hell can you release a girl? Figure it out yourself. Set her free, and the first thing she'd do would be go and raise a stink with the cops."

"But girls get old and—"

"We haven't got that far yet. Maybe the time will come when there'll have to be a compound for the middle-aged and up. But that's way off. You've got more immediate things to worry about. Think about the whipping we're going to give you as your welcome to the I.S.G. We give it to every new girl—you're no exception. Bye for now."

Under the spell of authority, the bound and naked girl continued to stand in the stiff and revealing pose Amity admired. But, realizing she was again alone, she now relaxed and for a change leaned against the bars of the locker door. Amity's visit had given her things to think about, but had changed her condition not at all. However, it had been a human communion from which she took heart. The cords deep in her wrists seemed less punitive because of the woman who had put them there. Even though it hurt, Anne could not refrain from twisting her crossed wrists in much the same manner as she forever

sought freedom from the steel cuffs. It was an instinctive animal reaction, like pacing the bars of a cage. But the way Amity had bound her taught a new lesson in helplessness. There was something intimate about the cords that handcuffs lacked. Handcuffs in front came close to freedom. They were largely symbolic of a condition. Even behind her back she had been able to wriggle and stretch to contrive useful motions. But this was not so with Amity's rope. Her crossed wrists had no leeway at all. They rested above the curve of her bottom and this was the end of it. If she insisted on trying to free herself, it was no more than a means of circumventing the ennui of imprisonment.

The captive of the cell wondered why she was not more apprehensive over the promised whipping. She had no doubt she would receive it. Amity had made no idle threat. It was not that she was accustomed to such a punishment. She had no idea if it would better or worse than Bristow's cropping of her bottom, the weals of which were still vivid on her skin. It was significant no one had commented on them. Evidently, such marks were commonplace at the I.S.G. Half ashamed of such presumption, she knew she hoped to carry off the infliction with prideful insouciance. If the strokes were not too hard! But, since it was a punishment she could not change, it was best not to dwell on it. Its time was close enough without anticipation.

The only bright spot Anne could see was the recognition of Bristow's possession. It obviously set her apart. She would hurt no less for it. Perhaps they would be harder on her

because of it. With her they would be working towards a change of heart, or of understanding, or of whatever else they chose to name Bristow's demand upon her psyche. Anne could envision no change in herself at all, other than to become more humble and servile beneath the whip. But that was not what Bristow sought. Determinedly, Anne assessed the effect upon her now of this tight binding of her wrists behind her back. She shrewdly guessed the binding was not by chance. But, try as she might, she could raise no erotic excitation at all. She remained a tied, chained girl who wanted out.

It was Charity who eventually smiled at the waiting prisoner through the bars. Her tone was almost arch. "Guess we got ourselves a bit of unfinished business, Miss Menton."

"Are you speaking of the whipping I'm supposed to get?"

"Well, well, all cool, calm, and collected."

"I'm sure you'll soon cure me of that, ma'am."

"Oh, I sure will. Have you been whipped much?"

Anne turned and wriggled her hips. "I got these marks. They were put on me with a riding crop."

"Yeah, I noticed. What I'm giving you will be higher up. Balance you off nicely. I'm curious, though. Why aren't you pleading not to be whipped?"

“Because it wouldn’t do me any good. Or would it?”

“Sure makes a difference, those few days of being a prisoner you’ve had. You’d be surprised the way the new girls carry on—tears, howls, threats. But mostly they plead for mercy. When it’s their first time, they’re scared shitless.”

“There’s an informality about your speech now, ma’am, and with Amity,” the tied girl ventured timidly. “I’m grateful for it. Is it because of Mr. Bristow? I mean, his owning me.”

Charity was amused. “Yeah, I guess that’s partly it. But Miss Coppick wants every girl to get started off with stern authority. If we talk informally to you now, it doesn’t mean you’ll hurt less. In fact, we intend to give you a real bad time.”

“But why? What I mean—”

“Honey, there are girls who are like punishing a log of wood. Then there are the opposite who go into screaming hysterics just from a promise. But you’re one of a rare breed. I bet it’s the reason Mr. Bristow bought you. It’s as though you were especially made to be punished. Make any sense?”

“Not really. I’m afraid I’m terribly ignorant.”

“You won’t be when the I.S.G is through with you. But you’re one of those girls who radiates sex even when they’re thinking about boiling potatoes. But you’re shooting

off other vibrations too. It's like you're saying, 'Please whip me, please whip me.' I know it's not what you're really wanting, but I'm telling you the way it is."

Anne contemplated this picture of herself as seen by others. It was not reassuring. Her query followed naturally. "Does that mean you have to punish me twice as much as the others?"

"It's not a case of have to, honey. It's a case of us wanting to. You're like a delectable dish we long to eat; we don't want plain bread."

Anne sought a rationale. Somewhere in this jungle of reactions was the one Bristow wanted. If only she could find it! Hesitantly, she asked, "These punishments aren't really punishments at all, are they? Aren't they hurting me just for the sake of hurting? I mean, hurting me gives you or someone pleasure."

"You're getting warm, honey. Bristow never tell you that?"

"I messed things up with him. If only he'd given me a bit more time!"

"Don't fret, Anne. The I.S.G. is going to do its best for you. By the time Miss Coppick is through with you, you'll be that idiot's dream girl. If I were you, I'd say piss on him and take Amity and me." Charity laughed at Anne's bafflement. "Look, honey, we've got work to do."

"I'm sorry, ma'am. I talk too much. Please take me to where

I get whipped."

Charity's pleasure was evident, and so was her puzzlement. Her voice held a touch of awe. "Anne, what you just said; don't you understand how remarkable it is? There's not another girl in the I.S.G. who'd ask to be punished in just that way."

Anne let it lie. She knew herself in the current of a stream of events she could not halt. Charity's grasp of her bare arm was actually comforting. What did it matter if she was being led to a place to be hurt? At this moment the two of them were girls together.

"There it is, honey. Our punishment room."

Even without words, the place proclaimed intent. Anne looked around the big, well-lit room and knew she should be afraid. There were two different kinds of stocks, ropes from pulleys, two posts, and around the walls were rings and chains. There was a table and a bench. All screamed of pain for girls. But dead center, as though awaiting her arrival, was the post against which she would be whipped.

Charity untied Anne's hands and allowed her a moment in which to rub the red indentations Amity's cords had left. Casually, she suggested, "I bet you know where to put your wrists."

Anne knew. She went to the post and stretched out her arms to either side. The metal cuffs were correctly placed.

She put her wrists into each and stood tensely while the wardress clicked them tightly around the uncomplaining skin.

“A girl can be locked facing the post as you are, Anne, or she can have her back to the post and face me.”

The fastened girl got the message. Aghast, she demanded, “You really mean—”

“You guessed it. A girl’s breasts can be whipped the same as her back.”

Anne sighed. She supposed she was the lucky way around. For her breasts to be whipped was an unthinkable horror. For the moment she concentrated on her back. It felt outrageously bare. She flexed her arms, and the metal cuffs bit back and laughed at her thoughts of escape. Quivering, she wanly said, “I’ll try and not make too much noise.”

“Make all the noise you like, Anne. This place is used to it. Shall we get started?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Twenty strokes. I’m telling you the number so you don’t panic.”

It seemed a lot. Compared to Bristow’s five or six, it loomed horrendously. But Anne had never heard of a flogging of only five lashes. It was hard to think of what she was about to receive as anything less than a flogging. It was a beastly

word, but she could not rid her mind of it.

“Hold your breath, honey.”

She would never know if it was good advice or simply a taunt, but Anne held her breath, then expelled it in a gust of agony as her back became aflame with fire. It was a different pain from the crop. But what did that matter? It was all she could do not to scream. She heard her own voice, a most polite voice, exclaim, “I can’t stand it, ma’am! It hurts so bad! Please!”

The second stroke cut short her plaint. It was as though she had not spoken. The anguish of it thrust her breasts hard against the upright, which split them asunder to either side. Feverishly, she tugged hard at her ironed wrists. From her lips there came a wailing cry of pure pain. She heard her voice again. “Please! No more! Oh, please!”

The thong streaked her bare shoulders, snapping beneath a bare raised arm. Anne’s armpit screamed its indignation at an infliction never before known. Charity’s voice came through a mist of desolation. “You see, Anne, you say you can’t handle it, but you handle it well. Here is number four… and now… number five. There, you have received one quarter of your allotted punishment.”

The whipped girl thrust her forehead hard against the wood and sobbed. She would make no pretense of heroism. What was the use? She knew now she could not carry off this welcome whipping with insouciance. It was un-

bearable. It was cruel. It was everything it should not be. But if she had endured one quarter of her punishment, might she not survive? In the face of what she had already borne, she would be forgiven nothing. In the pause Charity was now permitting, Anne whispered, “Please, ma’am, isn’t there something I can say or do? This is too awful.”

“Nothing, Anne dear—nothing at all.”

It was implacable. She was ironed fast, a prisoner of the post as she was a prisoner to the I.S.G. At that moment Anne caught a glimpse of what prison meant to the fourteen girls. All were sentenced, and for none was there the faintest hope of escape. They would go their chained ways from day to day, bearing their stripes and knowing, as she now knew, there was nothing they could do or say. They were condemned.

“The marks of a whip across a virgin back are very lovely, Anne. I’ll space yours as best I can, but there’ll be some overlap.”

The lash sought Anne anew with its excoriating venom. She was moaning steadily, flinching and yelping as each blow found her flesh. Sometimes Charity deliberately cut a fresh mark across the already streaked bottom. After number fourteen had impacted her innocence, Anne unashamedly screamed again and again.

It was finally over. The whipped girl had lost count. All she knew was that the blows had ceased. She stood against the

post, using it for support, her arms outspread but dragging at the irons. Against the greater anguish of her back and bottom, Anne was in no mood to heed the plaints of her wrists within the steel. Panting and sweating, she sought to collect her wits and a returning awareness. She moved slightly in surprise as female fingers traced her wounds.

“You have a beautiful smell, Anne. It is the smell of pain, but each girl is different.” Charity’s voice was an entrancing whisper. “Now don’t fight.”

In passive uncaring, the naked whipped maiden felt the shackles open and her arms fall. She was turned around, and the handcuffs were relocked upon her wrists. She now had her back to the post, facing her wardress. Suddenly and shockingly, she remembered.

“No! Oh, no, no, no! Charity, not my breasts!” Anne’s plaints trailed off into a long moan.

Charity laughed. It was a silvery laugh out of keeping with the room. She kissed two captive nipples and two captive lips. “Hush, child,” she admonished. “You have had your punishment.”

It was not possible—it just wasn’t! But it was happening. Still in her daze left over from agony, Anne left the separation of her legs and the hot face hard pressed within her within the apex of her thighs. Charity was kneeling, and her seeking mouth was making its clearly felt course towards her prisoner’s sex. Anne moaned when two lips met

two lips. They were very different lips, and one pair had a tongue. Thereafter, she simply moaned. From time to time, her ironed wrists tugged—that was all.

It was new and was filling her with disbelief. It should be a man, not Charity or any other female. Anne moaned and tugged. But agony had taken her far along a road, and Charity's tongue and lips were much skilled. As with the pain, the helpless nudity surrendered herself to the hungry mouth eating avidly within her crotch. She was helpless, her arms stretched wide. The post claimed her. She belonged to Charity. Nothing mattered any more.

When the prisoner of the I.S.G. came back into the world, she was alone. She raised her head and sought to retrieve her hands, but they were still held fast. Accepting this as a matter of course, she allowed her mind to roam. Anne wondered if what had just been done to her made her a lesbian. She felt guilt. She should have hated every lick of the female tongue, but she did not. Desperately, she longed for Charity to come back and do it again.

Charity returned. She was smiling quietly. Without a word, she blindfolded the maiden whose arms were held outstretched. Anne was in total darkness when the whisper and the kiss came. "You're the most delicious little prisoner the I.S.G. has ever had, Anne." Then there was a silence and another hungry mouth. Anne tried to close her legs, but they were drawn apart. She did not try again. She knew this fresh mouth was not Charity's. When it was done with

her, there came another and another and another. In her darkness, the ironed nudity trod her own golden road into the sunlight. Anne was aware of making sounds and of pain in her wrists. But she did not care. The magic of the mischievous mouths possessed her totally.

It was glory, glory, glory.

4

Prison

THE I.S.G. DID THINGS RIGHT. The exercise yard was perfectly patterned with its dauntingly high wall and heavily locked doors. But there the resemblance to the real world ended. Since Charity and Amity were the sole authority, it was obvious that fourteen healthy young women could overpower them with ease. Guns would be useless; you do not kill your assets. Quaintly, each girl was well aware of her value in Hetty Coppick's world. Control was maintained, therefore, by ejecting each inmate into the yard naked, ankles ironed, and wrists cuffed behind her back. The nudity was so they could be more easily whipped into submission should they prove difficult.

It was Anne's first meeting with her fellow prisoners. She was quickly surrounded as a new focal point of interest and bombarded with questions and advice. From the melee she retained vivid impressions. Each girl was a Playboy centerfold in shape and features. They had all been kidnapped in various ways, except for the two who had been sold directly to Hetty Coppick by stepmothers who wanted them out of the way. Several had been abducted with a view to immediate sale. The rest had been neatly extracted from their world by Hetty Coppicks' own organization. All had been indoctrinated into lesbianism, and several coyly admitted to having been taken to the

punishment room the previous day and compelled to silently feed upon the outspread nakedness of a new girl shackled to the post. It had been done to all of them. Animosities were pointless.

Anne was surprised by the ease with which she and the rest adjusted to their nakedness, their ironed feet, and cuffed hands. They moved, talked, and sought each other out with the greatest of ease and naturalness. Some had been Hetty Coppick's prisoners for as long as two years. None expected ever to escape. She met and talked with Jennifer with whom she had shared the van. But she was just a girl like all the rest. Because of the brevity of contact with each other, each girl existed in a sterile isolation Anne found daunting. They were given this hour in the sun each day, but their only other sharing of each other came about from whatever lesbian antics the wardresses devised.

There were no rebels, no dark whisperings, no plans to scale the wall. The girls were conditioned by their irons. They were at all times kept helpless by some sort of metal bond they could not sever or unlock. Their punishments were by caprice. But this too had become commonplace and undeserving of comment beyond humorous allusions. The girls of the I.S.G. were examples of tenacious survival. Anne was forced to wonder to what degree their enforced lesbianism contributed to their cheerfulness in an unnatural confinement.

Hetty Coppick appeared to be the girls' favorite topic.

When in residence, she prowled the passages in an inexhaustible satisfaction with her possessions. She gloried in her prisoners, studying their every motion, their tricks of speech, their attitudes. Each prisoner was, for Hetty Coppick, a storehouse of eroticism. Exhibiting some small trait of personality could earn a girl any one of many punishments. Hetty Coppick could be inflamed by the toss of a head or the motion of a hip. She worked out her erotic arousal upon girls who often did not know in what way they had offended or appealed. All the girls agreed it was far better to get their mistress excited than to sit tied in a cell alone.

When the recreation was over, the girls were returned one at a time to whatever fate the I.S.G. had in store. Anne was left until last. It was Amity who led her from the yard.

“Feel better or worse, Anne?”

The convict girl knew it was not a silly question. She answered thoughtfully. “It told me the hopelessness of getting out of here. The effect of that wall is devastating.”

“Want to go back to your cell?”

“Gosh no!”

Amity laughed at the emphatic negative. “Want to work in the kitchen?”

“May I! Yes, please.”

Anne realized how far she had fallen to make working in a prison kitchen something to be desired. Willingly, she allowed herself to be led on her short hobbled steps to where a couple of other convict girls were performing domestic duties without visible evidence of enthusiasm. One ankle of each was shackled to a ring in the center of the floor by a chain only long enough to enable them to perform their allotted tasks. Without fuss, Amity unlocked Anne's leg irons confining her now by a single chained ankle. The handcuffs went also. The new girl at I.S.G. was ready to go to work. Amity patted a bare bottom and departed.

"Welcome to the chain gang."

"Watch out we don't tangle. With three girls we spend half our time walking back and around."

They were a genial pair, but cynical from long imprisonment. They gave Anne potatoes to peel and warned her that none of the kitchen cutlery would sever their chains or influence their locks. Their names were Doris and Natalie. They told Anne not to bust her ass.

It was better than the cell. There was no denying the fact. Anne's spirits brightened. She suspected the I.S.G. was aware of the hazard of morbidity and hysteria with girls incarcerated too long in the isolation of a cell. Such imprisonment was, in itself, a punishment. Hetty Coppick's problem would be to keep her girls in suitable subjection without diminishing their personality. She would need her

girls very much alive and very much aware for them to provide entertaining screams or the doe-eyed appeal of extreme discomfort. But, through all these speculations, Anne was vividly conscious of the metal band locked around her ankle. It did not hurt—it inhibited nothing except escape—but it had a personal quality as though it was someone who watched, someone who would snub her back into submission if she transgressed too far. For the second time since her captivity, she felt an erotic heating within her loins. If Bristow had been available, she would have admitted it to him. He would be pleased. In the I.S.G., it would be commonplace. Sex hovered insidiously in every cell. The punishment room reeked of sex, as did the yard full of naked girls.

"You're wearing your jerseys," she complained to her companions. "Why am I naked?"

Doris sneered. "Does it matter? Amity just probably forgot."

"Everything they do is designed to throw us a curve," Natalie explained helpfully. "Nothing stays the same. Punishments are purposely inconsistent. But don't you ever dare complain."

"Get your little ass cropped." Doris chuckled. "What I sit down on has got so tough from being beat, it doesn't hurt all that bad any more. I haven't told them that, though. Best not make admissions."

"This Hetty Coppick," Anne ventured. "I can't see how she

gets her money's worth out of this place. The girls don't cost her much, but the prison sure must. She doesn't stand and gloat at us through the bars, does she?"

"I've had her do that to me," Doris admitted. "Girls and iron bars are real potent for her—the girl on the wrong side, of course."

"She's forever experimenting," Natalie added. "Almost anything that holds a girl helpless or makes her a prisoner, even if it's the smallest thing like thumbcuffs, turns her on. She'd get a charge out of the way the three of us are now, chained by only one ankle while we prepare supper. She kept one girl in a strait jacket for a whole week once. Out in the courtyard there's a short pillar about five feet high. Your ankle gets chained to it by about three links. So what are you going to do? You simply stand. If you fall or try to get down, you end up hanging upside down."

"Ever hear of a guy named Joshua Bristow?"

Both girls laughed at the simple question. "Sure, we have. We used to call him Hetty's boyfriend. They're two of a kind. They likely don't get married because they're both so filthy rich."

"But does he ever come here?" Anne was suddenly tense. "Does he come looking at us through the bars?"

"Sure. Hetty gives him carte blanche. After he's looked us over, he picks a girl and takes her to the punishment room.

It's the usual thing there. We've all had the works. There was a story he wanted to take a girl home with him, but Hetty refused because she was afraid he'd let the girl escape."

"When was he last here?"

Natalie shrugged. "Can't be sure. A few weeks maybe."

Anne had a momentary vision of herself tightly bound within her cell and Josh Bristow surveying her helplessness from beyond the bars. It would be the ultimate frustration. But she resolutely set aside the vision and with it the memory of her magnificent master. It was Bristow who had sent her to the I.S.G, and she had no assurance he would get her out. His power over her destiny was awesome. Truly she was owned.

"We may as well tell you straight, Anne, this place builds a defensive mechanism in most of us, it's good old sex. But it's more than the normal thing. We can't get the normal. Men have been taken from our lives as though they did not exist. First, it's the lesbian thing, which we all accept sooner or later. But there's something else. Do you get the hots when you're whipped?"

There it was again. It infiltrated everywhere. Anne caught sight of Bristow's logic in sending her to the I.S.G. Diffidently, she shrugged and admitted, "There's been odd moments when there's been a flash of something. But mostly it simply hurts and I just hate it."

“Well, okay, honey. What you have to do is enlarge those flashes of something into pure pleasure—erotic excitement, if you like. You don’t have to worry about frustration. There’s tongues all over the place.”

“I’d a lot sooner have a man.”

“So would we all. But in prison you do the best you can with what you have. Honey, I don’t say we all enjoy being whipped—we don’t—but we find enough sexual excitation in it to make the sort of whippings we get bearable. We don’t often get well and truly flogged.”

“It felt like a flogging to me yesterday.”

“You’re building a resistance all the time, Anne. Stop doing that. You absolutely must. Look, each of us are chained here by an ankle. How’s it grab you?”

Admission was still an embarrassment, but Anne made one. “Yes, all right, I felt it, and I’m still feeling it. If I had pants on, they’d be hot.”

“Good for you! Hold on to it.” Natalie chuckled. “I’d offer to cool you off, but we’re not supposed to be happy in the kitchen, if Amity or Charity walked in while we were at it, she’d whip us to bits.”

“You said the whip didn’t bother you?” Anne accused questioningly.

“So, all right, it hurts bad when it’s hard enough or you’re

scared. I'd be scared for fear I'd get put in isolation."

"Isn't that what our cells are?"

"Not half as bad as the real thing. You're in the dark. I go nearly crazy after an hour."

Anne was grateful to the kitchen and the girls. She was even grateful for the chain on her ankle. She was learning from all of them. More importantly, she was learning about Bristow and what she must become to get him back. But it was puzzling and disturbing as to why he bothered with her when Hetty Coppick had a prison full of girls whose libidos were erotically attuned to his tastes. Why hadn't Hetty made him a gift of a maiden who adored being bound? Anne shrugged it off. It was all too new and too impossible. Anyway, men were crazy with their notions. But she was owned by such a man. She kicked her chained ankle purposely for effect. The resultant glow in her sex was reassuring.

Anne's meeting with Hetty Coppick held elements of humor. The days had passed and she was becoming accustomed to being a prisoner in the I.S.G. She had not found happiness, but Amity and Charity had given her such a mixture of pain and pleasure so as to make life bearable. It was the I.S.G. receipt for life in the I.S.G. Without it, the prison would have destroyed them all.

The two girls with hobbled feet surveyed Anne through the bars. One held up a key. “You’ve been picked for a present. Gosh, you’re lucky.” The key unlocked the door.

“You’re not going to fight us, are you, darling?”

Of course she would not fight. To be picked for a present was the same as being paroled. Almost. At the very least she would escape from the prison and its dreariness. For Anne Menton, a dazzling hope sprung into life. “Who am I being given to?” she demanded excitedly.

“We don’t know that. They never tell a girl. We have to tie your hands and arms. Please don’t make a fuss.”

“I won’t, honest. How do you want me?”

The two girls took away her irons. “We have to give back the keys.” They tittered. “Now put your hands behind your back. Oh, we almost forgot! First take off your jersey. You have to be naked.”

The naked prisoner stood trembling while she was bound. The girls were skilled. No doubt they had tied girls before, or been tied themselves enough to know. Anne’s hands were placed palm to palm and tightly bound, then her elbows. Her elbows hurt, but she did not complain. A collar was locked around her neck.

“The collar is just for effect, darling. I expect whoever you’re going to has a thing about collars. Everyone who owns us has a thing about something. Gosh, look at the way

your tits stick out. We must have done a good job with your arms. Do they hurt a lot?"

"Yes. Aren't they supposed to?"

"Well, I guess so. Anyway, you look gorgeous. When you stand up out of that box—"

"Box!" Anne looked bewildered.

"For shipment, darling. You get shipped in a box. Come along."

It was nice to walk without her feet being snubbed, but bound elbows imposed their own discipline, dampening optimism. The littered storeroom did not help, and the wooden crate was heavy with intent.

"In you go, dear. We'll help you over the hump."

Standing within the confines of the box, Anne felt foolish and bewildered. The straps by which she would be immobilized were plain to see. When they were tight upon her nudity, she would not bounce around. On another box a gag waited for her mouth.

"What the hell are you girls playing at!"

The demand was startling; the voice was new. The bound girl in the box fumed in alarm. Standing in the doorway was the figure of an extraordinary woman. It was easy for Anne to guess her name.

“This isn’t the girl, you idiots.”

The two maidens thus addressed looked at each other in dismay. “But you said the new girl, and Anne here is the newest.”

“Don’t be ridiculous. I said Pugh, not new. The Pugh girl’s the redhead. Go and get her.”

Hetty Coppick stared at the nude captive of the box. Her look was keenly appraising. “So you’re Josh Bristow’s girl, eh? Here, let me give you a hand out of that crate. I’m not going to untie you; you carry joined elbows well.”

Anne was helpless enough to be glad of Hetty’s strong arm. When they stood apart, they exchanged appraisals. Hetty was amused. “My hairdo is Arabian. Nights, that is. The scarlet basque is Frederick’s. I forget where I got the black fishnets. I’m an unconventional woman. You’ll get used to it.”

“How do you do, Miss Coppick? My name is Anne.”

“My, my, aren’t we formal? I know about your name. You look like a nice girl. Why the hell can’t Josh handle you?”

“Oh, he can handle me,” the bound girl assured earnestly. “I’m afraid the problem is psychological. I fall short someplace.”

“Oh, that!” Hetty was amused. “Men are absurd. But he sent you to the right place. I’ll whip some knowledge into

you. Enjoying the I.S.G.?"

"Well… not really."

"Don't look so scared, dear. Sure, I bite, but not right now. You've got two nice breasts."

"Thank you. I'm sure they're sticking out, but that's because of—"

"Yes, I know. Nice effect, dear. I like it. But about your breasts—you may wish you didn't have such dowsers by the time I've whipped them both."

"Well…"

"Sure, I know. That's a hard one to answer. Josh didn't shave your cunt, eh?"

"No. Should he have?"

"Suits some girls if they've got a neat slit. You'd be okay. But it's sort of a shame to get rid of that verdant bush. Josh whip you?"

"He called it cropping my ass."

"Oh, sure, I should have guessed. Josh dearly loves a neat, tight bottom, and you've got that in spades. I'm going to enjoy you. What have the girls done to you so far?"

Anne was searching for answers when the two trustees returned with Miss Susan Pugh, the redhead whose destiny

was to be a gift. She was as naked as Anne, and bound in the same way. Her eyes were shining.

“Hate to part with you, Sue my dear, but it’s in a good cause. You’re not likely to hurt any less where you’re going, but you’ll get loved a lot more than I have time for.”

The mistress kissed the departing prisoner and pushed her down within the crate. Hetty waved grandly to the waiting attendants. A sad small voice came up from below.

“Thank you for letting me go, Miss Coppick.”

Hetty winked at Anne, who had a distinct feeling the departing prize might be less happy than she now supposed. Anne moved forward and peered into the crate to behold a fate which might be hers one day. Miss Susan Pugh had become a gagged and well strapped bundle of breasts and limbs and hair. Anne wished her well, then stood back for the closing of the lid.

“Homer’s going to warm her butt first thing before he screws her,” Hetty said sagely. “Never did get around to giving the sweet thing the attention I’d have liked. Ah well, she’ll have a good home, and there’s no way she’ll ever escape.” She waited until the two of them were alone before saying, “I should do something to you just so we can get acquainted. Make me an offer.”

To Anne, Hetty Coppicks’ insouciance held pitfalls. “You mean I should be punished?” she asked hesitantly.

“Sure, we can call it that. Actually, I’m simply being a bitch. I’d like you prettily gasping with pain as we talk. Suggest something.”

It was a royal command, but it was the last thing the still tied slave girl wanted. “Were you thinking of whipping me?” she ventured.

“Another time. Something simple for now. I’m kinda pooped.”

Anne sighed. She suspected she would be sighing a lot from now on. “There’s a pillory in the punishment room,” she offered hopefully.

“Hmmm… That doesn’t really hurt. You wouldn’t be doing any gasping for about ten hours. But it’s a kind thought.”

“You could sort of suspend me until I was just on my toes.”

“It’s an idea. I’ve got a better one, though. Been hung by a single hand yet?”

“No, I’m afraid not.”

“Well, don’t apologize, honey. You’re about to give it a try. Come along. I can just about handle that.”

Anne wondered if she would ever adjust. They threw you curve balls, but expected you to field them with bright competence. She was going now with this extraordinary woman to be given pain as though the pain was a light

snack handed to her on a plate. Her arms were still bound, and her elbows were hurting. She was never in a position to argue. She supposed that what Hetty Coppick was about to do to her was reasonably humane by the standards of the I.S.G. But a free girl would be having hysterics or calling the police. She thought of Susan Pugh in the crate. Her elbows would be hurting too. But Anne Menton would have gladly changed places.

“Are you picking up anything at all from the things we do to you here at I.S.G.?” Hetty sounded forever cheerful. “Do you ever get hot pants?”

Anne plunged. “I hope you won’t punish me, but I don’t feel the way you’re thinking enough to matter. Mostly I simply hurt and want to go home. Would it be any use asking you to give me my freedom?”

“What bothers you most?”

“Being in prison.”

“I take that as a compliment, dear. I’ve tried to do a job on the I.S.G. Looks authentic, eh?”

“It is authentic. I’m a convict girl.”

“Well, here we are.” Hetty Coppick gazed around the punishment room with approval. “Everything’s ship-shape. I have to untie you. Are you going to be sensible?”

“I’m always sensible. It usually gets me so I hurt.”

“That’s right, Anne dear. It’s going to hurt now. Just look at your lovely wealed skin, and you haven’t been tied up that long!”

The naked girl stood in what she hoped was a suitably passive pose, offering bits of herself as requested. “This is what I mean about prison,” Anne explained diffidently. “Escape is so impossible with all this stone and brick and iron bars we don’t even try. Whatever you tell me to do, I’ll do it like a zombie. I never used to be such a doormat.”

“You mean like now, Anne?”

“Yes. I just stand while you tie me so I’ll hurt. It’s absolutely unnatural. I’m ashamed of myself.”

“Yes, dear, go on.”

“I’m scared you’ll punish me for talking like this. But I really am trying to understand this whole thing. But you’re going to hang me up like a hunk of meat in a butcher’s shop. I won’t be me, won’t be Anne Menton at all. Am I making any sense?”

“Anne my dear, what you’re saying is simply a realization you’re an imprisoned convict girl. That’s all. All you’ve lost is freedom. You’re still you, and it’s the same with the others. If you want to fight, you should do so. Martyrdom wouldn’t sit well with you. Go berserk if you want. Amity and Charity and I can handle tar bums. You’d be surprised.”

“So I’ll never ever be free again?”

“Don’t play that tune too often, love. It gets tedious.”

Anne watched her hand and then her arm raise up. There came a tug at her shoulder to make her raise up on her toes. It was extremely uncomfortable. She felt sure she looked silly.

“Needs a little something,” Hetty mused. She thoughtfully looped Anne’s left ankle and right wrist, drawing them together behind her back to leave her tottering on a single set of toes, supporting herself from above by one tied wrist that was already hurting. She gasped in dismay and saw Hetty’s eyes light up with pleasure.

“That’s about right,” the owner of the unique prison judged, surveying with approval the maiden ensemble she had created. “Not rough enough for you to scream. I’ll get me a chair.”

Anne was much preoccupied. She doubted her capacity to provide chatter or bright response. It was the same old story. She hurt and was sure she would hurt more. All of her was stressed, and where the rope bit hard her flesh complained. At the moment it was taking all her concentration to affect a balance. In some ways this was worse than straight, honest suspension.

“You look beautiful, Anne.”

Hetty’s tribute was undoubtedly sincere. She was being

cruel to a naked girl in her power, but there was no cruelty in her voice or her enraptured regard. She beheld this strained, stressed girl as something ineffable others would not see. She settled herself comfortably in her chair.

“Be interesting to strap a dildo inside you,” she said affably. “Girls are quite wonderful in their possibilities. I always try and make my girls understand how wonderful they are. Not easy when they’re as prison-conscious a you.”

“Please… please don’t.” Anne was gasping. Not for Hetty’s pleasure but because she could not help it. “This is awfully difficult. I’m not sure I can cope.”

“You’re coping just the way I wanted, dear. Trust Hetty Coppick when it comes to getting responses out of young females.”

“I’m not that young, and I’m hurting, and do you think you could let my foot back down on the floor?”

“No, don’t be silly. If you get querulous, I’ll whip you. We can leave the dildo for now and have ourselves a nice talk.”

“Yes, Miss Coppick, and thank you.”

“Address me as ma’am. I suppose you’re thanking me for delaying the dildo. Well, don’t bet you won’t get it. Ever had one up your pretty little dooey?”

“I’m afraid not.”

“Nothing to be afraid about, love.” Hetty beamed. “Now what we’ll start off with is your impressions of my I.S.G. Come on now, I don’t care how you gasp and stutter, but come up with something.”

The naked girl, standing on one foot, arm raised high, longed to scream, to beat her fists, to shout rejection, but Anne Menton knew herself in the hands of a mistress of pain. Hetty would demand get her pound of flesh. Unhappily, Anne blurted out, “It’s a prison, ma’am, and it scares me. The way you’ve got me fixed now scares me.”

“Why?”

“Because you could keep me like this longer than I can bear.”

“What would you say to thirty minutes?”

“Probably I can make that. I’ll sure try.”

“Don’t have much choice, do you?” Hetty commented dryly. “How about all day?”

“I expect I’ll lose consciousness, and the rope around my wrist would cut off circulation. My hand’s getting numb already.”

“Well, I’m not going to tell you how long you’re there for, my pretty little innocent. What I’d like now is your guess about me and my I.S.G. Take your time.”

Sure, there was lots of time, and all of it would hurt. But this was what Hetty wanted. Incongruous as such conversation might be, Anne knew herself stuck with it. But she could think of little to say that could not get her punished. But that might be the name of the game. How could she know! Hetty was still an enigma. Miserably, Anne told the truth.

“Ma’am, if I was free, I guess I’d say you were a woman who liked possessing girls who had to do what you wanted, girls you can do anything you like with. The I.S.G. does something to a girl. It’s sort of monolithic. We feel entombed in it. But this is just me. I don’t know about the others.”

“Think you’d be more interesting to me if I didn’t keep you in a prison?”

“I don’t know, ma’am. I think we’d be more interesting to ourselves.”

“Even if you got punished more?”

“Well… yes, I suppose so.”

Hetty laughed in delight. “Don’t worry, I’m not making you an offer. Look, I’ll tell you about me. It’s simple. I adore girls. I think girls, during a few years of their lives, are simply gorgeous. But not when they’re free. A free girl is a pain in the ass with all her notions and the value she places on her cunt. But, think of it, in my own private prison I

possess twenty-eight breasts—no, it's twenty-six with Susan gone. I've got twenty-six breasts of all shapes and sizes and textures, and thirteen pouting little cunts to go with them. Staggers the mind, don't you think?"

"Yes. I'd never thought—"

"Money does it. I'm lucky. But it's a lot more than flesh I want. Girl flesh is sweet, but it could become cloying if there wasn't something else. That something else is power. The twenty-six breasts have to do whatever I want every day." Hetty paused and sighed with pleasure. "Power enables me to train these sweet bundles of animosity, resentment, and down-right hatred that walk handcuffed through the main gate of the I.S.G. to begin their new lives. Give this a bit of thought. Aren't the inmates who've been here awhile a lot nicer young women than when they came?"

"We're scared not to be what you call nice."

"But you couldn't say they were broken?"

"The prison does that to us. Like I said—"

"See! What you've just said justifies the I.S.G.!" Hetty Coppick exclaimed triumphantly. "Painless conversion. My prison works."

The half suspended nudity perceived the points. Under happier circumstances, she could have agreed more readily than now. "The way I am now isn't a bit painless," she

complained. “And I’ve been whipped.”

“So what! Bristow cropped your bottom.”

“Well, yes, he did, but he was a man, and it was all so different, and he used to punish me outdoors, and there wasn’t all this brick and stone.”

“You suffer from claustrophobia, dear?”

“I don’t think so.”

“I’d whip it out of you if you did.” Hetty’s tone became earnest. “Honey, any time you feel down in the dumps or can’t handle things, you get word to me and I’ll come give you a good thrashing. Works wonders, cures all your girlish troubles.”

“Ma’am, would you be willing to let my foot down flat on the floor and whip me a little instead?” Anne asked wistfully.

“Didn’t think I was being that rough on you.” Hetty’s eyes became shrewd. “You’re not making a good deal, you know. Did your little whatsit get hot from what you ask?”

The naked girl, enduring her strange conversational punishment, blushed. She knew if the mistress tested, her hand would come up wet. Her own horrified reaction to mention of the dildo had sparked a tiny fire which was now burning with a greater insistence. Even as she uttered it, her reply sounded silly. “Yes. I’m terribly sorry.”

Hetty was delighted. “You little idiot, what’s there to be sorry about? I’ll have to phone Josh.”

“No! Please don’t—”

“Why the hell not?”

“Well, I’m not sure I know, but—”

“Anne, you’re ridiculous. But I like it.”

The punished girl was unsure if she had won or lost a point. She quavered. “I’d be so awfully grateful if you’d let me down, even just for a rest.”

Hetty Coppick was always unpredictable. Smiling at some thought of her own, she did as her pained prisoner asked. She loosened Anne’s ropes, then resumed her seat to watch as the surprised girl stripped away her bonds and rubbed her new weals. What happened then may have surprised the mistress herself. Tears welled from the slave girl’s eyes as she threw herself at the feet of the seated woman. Clutching Hetty’s knees, she sobbed, “Thank you! Oh, thank you! I’m so grateful.”

The mistress stroked the bowed head, playing with the silky hair of the girl who was one-thirteenth part of her possessions in the I.S.G. She patted the bare shoulders but said no word. Anne sobbed happily.

The two of them found a feminine communion without words. It was a moment Anne would remember. When she

had sobbed her way into silence, she found herself about to express more thanks, but changed its triteness for something she thought more suitable. “I really mean that about being grateful. I think you’ve been kind. I won’t mind if you punish me some more—honest.”

“That’s what I’m going to do, sweetheart. Up on your tootsies.”

Anne rose, wiping her cheeks with the back of her hand. “I’ll try and not be silly, ma’am.”

“Doesn’t it occur to you that you’re absolutely free? There’s not a rope on you.”

“Yes, but I hadn’t thought about it—not like that.”

“Why don’t you put up a fight? Run for it?”

“You’d beat me in a fight. I bet you know all the holds.”

“You can’t be sure of that.”

“Suppose I did win? There’s still all those bars and doors, and there’s Amity and Charity. They’d put me in solitary for a month.” Anne made a hopeless grimace. “I bet I’m a disappointment for you, ma’am.”

“No, you’re not. I see in you what Josh Bristow saw. It’s there. You’re a honey of a slave girl.”

“I never saw myself that way, not when I was free.” The prisoner thought back to a time, eons past. “I always saw

myself as contentious and likely to argue. That day when John Lennox captured me was not a bit easy. I wanted to fight."

"But you did not fight?"

"Only because he had a system with me and the others that made fighting sort of silly, like looking for trouble."

Hetty laughed again. "All of which goes to show you as a sensible girl. How shall I punish you now?"

Anne was uncertain. She liked Hetty, but that made her feel guilty. Surely it was wrong to like a woman who held you in prison. She spoke without thinking. "Why is it called punishment in the I.S.G.?

Mostly, it's not punishment at all. It's hurting a girl to get her reactions."

"And you react gorgeously, dear. How about standing you in the stocks?"

"That's the same as the pillory, isn't it? You said it didn't hurt enough."

"See, you're being sensible again, reminding me I'm inconsistent. But you've been hurting the way I've just tied you—you made quite a fuss—so now we'll have something different. But first, there's something I really must do. Just a moment."

Anne had never used a dildo. But she could certainly recognize one. The simulated phallus her mistress held was enormous, and there were also straps. Hetty laughed at the expression on her captive's face. "Don't look so thunderstruck, sweetheart. There are actually men this big, you know."

"I don't believe it."

"Well, let's hope you never find out. Here it is, and there's some lubricant to make it easier. Don't bother with the straps. I'll tighten them up on you. Go ahead. I'll watch."

"Oh, please!" Anne looked disgustedly at the things she held. She longed to hurl them against the wall, but she did not dare. "Please don't look. I'm going to be so terribly embarrassed. It's like… well, it's like watching a girl while she's—"

"Do it, and stop arguing."

Hating all she did beneath the watching eyes, Anne anointed the huge head of an object now highly personal. Then, feeling herself one immense blush, she separated her labia with one hand and advanced the male thing towards herself in the manner of a threatening weapon. She felt the postures imposed by what she must do unflattering. She longed for privacy. When the huge make-believe penis made its first penetration under the hesitant pressure of her hand, Anne was more than ever sure she was attempting an impossibility. But, catching Hetty's

enraptured stare, she twisted and turned the offensive weapon, changing angles and applying more lubricant, until indeed the penetration within her sheath became a firm reality.

Then, inch by inch, it buried itself within her.

At the base of the dildo was a pad or shield. When this pressed against her widely spread lips, Anne fumbled with the straps. But Hetty joined the fray and tugged and pulled until the prisoner of the I.S.G. stood erect with her loins and hips harnessed and a band tightly strapped around her waist between her legs to nestle within her crotch.

“Looks good on you, Anne. Stop worrying. How’s it feel?”

“I don’t think I can walk.”

“Nonsense! Give it a try.”

Anne discovered she could walk. She also discovered she would not walk far without coming to an orgasm. But she completed the circle and came back to stand before the woman by whom she was owned. “You girls!” Hetty scoffed. “You could take an elephant if you had to.” She chuckled ribaldry. “I’ve always felt sorry for the suburban wife who never gets more than four inches. I’ve tried them all out in my time. None of them’s as exciting as a good girl’s tongue.”

Once more, Anne was hurting. It was not real pain, but the harness was most intimately strapped within her flesh. It

was tight, tight, tight. It compressed and constricted her concave belly to cause her hips to weave in an exaggeration of a streetwalker's seduction. The strap holding the male thing tight within her was cruel in its severity. Feeling some verbal response was expected, she quavered. "If you hadn't made me do it, ma'am, I would not have believed it possible. I feel all sort of funny inside."

"So you should. You'll have a few orgasms before you get unstrapped. Now what are we going to do with you?"

"The pillory, ma'am."

"Ah, yes. Well, that's easy. Hustle your butt over there and get into place when I lift the yoke."

Without enthusiasm, Anne did as she was told. Under the Coppick hands, the yoke rose like a huge, inviting jaw. The naked girl placed her neck in what seemed a tiny half circle. She arranged her hair, then adjusted her wrists within the waiting slots. The yoke was lowered to encompass the three parts of herself. Anne Menton surrendered. The fit was snugly perfect as though made to measure. Hetty snapped the lock. "It was made for a girl, Anne. It's useless for a man. Not that I'd want one. Getting any sensations?"

"It's tight, and I'm helpless."

"I can see that, you little idiot. I mean down below."

"I'm afraid I'm going to have an orgasm."

“No use being afraid of it. You’ll have a good many before I’m through.”

The nude in the stocks was still trying to test and sample a new punishment. It was not a punishment that hurt yet, but after hours and hours she knew it would. It was demeaning to stand thus exposed and so utterly helpless. It was also scary in its division of her person. By far the largest part of her was sundered and lost to sight. It was somewhere in back and most shockingly vulnerable. Hetty’s last question seemed inappropriate in view of the monstrous phallus imposing waves of erotic sensation one after another. How could she separate them? Anne felt certain her harnessed hips were behaving outrageously back there where she could not see. What Hetty had done to her had taken control of her senses beyond her ability to stem the tide. She was beginning to gasp.

The impact of the flagellum across her buttocks cracked like a gunshot. Its agony was instant and horrendous. But it flowered Anne’s loins into full blossom. Within the pillory’s grip she writhed and twisted and tugged as a series of involuntary spasms tore at every part of her being, wracking her into agonized ecstasy as though she was in an act of coitus with the implacable engine into which she was fastened and tightly locked.

The sounds of the captive’s undesired ecstasy gradually stilled to bring silence to this room of punishments. As Anne’s gaspings and moans quietened, Hetty Coppick’s eyes

shone brighter and her contemplation of the beauty she had created more intense. When her prisoner in the stocks returned to an interest in things within her limited range of vision, she found her owner sitting comfortably where they could converse.

“Nothing like a good crack across the ass to take you over the top, dear. Was it a good one?”

“Wonderful. But I’m so ashamed.”

“Oh, for Pete’s sake, what now?”

“Well, all naked and fastened like this—it’s like that in back there isn’t me at all. It was like all those sensations were by proxy. But that’s so silly.”

“No, it isn’t. I find that interesting.” Hetty was pleased. “There’s something about the pillory other girls haven’t managed to explain the way you’ve done. You’re a good girl, and don’t say thank you again or I’ll whack your ass.”

Anne was vaguely comforted, and with Hetty in full view her bottom and the rest of her was safe. She could not even look at the woman in the chair without straining her neck against the smooth and polished clutch of wood, but it did not hurt. Not hurting was what counted in the I.S.G. She was still very much aware of the dildo within her sheath. It would work on her steadily, never allowing surcease from its insidious frictioning of her innermost secrecy. It possessed her in much the same manner as did the stocks.

But as long as it was inside her belly, she would be unable to differentiate its sensations from the other more subtle heat with which Hetty was concerned. No doubt there would be other impacts of the limber strap upon her innocence.

“Be patient, dear. I’ll beat on your bottom some more, but not right at this moment.” It was as though Hetty read her thoughts. “I think that’s the nicest thing about the pillory: it leaves a girl so open back there to absolutely everything.”

“Yes, ma’am, it sure does.”

“What would you like to talk about, dear?”

The kindly query was one more surprise. Hetty was full of them. The helpless prisoner took instant advantage. “I’ve been wondering how long you’d like to keep me at the I.S.G. Have you any date in mind for my return to Josh Bristow?”

“Good god, girl, you’ve only just arrived. You’d best forget about Josh for the time being. You’re not ready for him. In any case, I’ve a good mind to convert you. Girls are wasted on me. Not that I have anything against Josh; he’s rather a dear.”

The girl with neck and wrists tightly clasped knew herself no closer to an answer and certainly no closer to freedom. At the I.S.G., freedom was abstract. No girl prisoned more than a month any longer believed in it. The I.S.G. was forever. Anne shivered within the embrace of the wood.

“You’re bored with me,” Hetty accused.

“No, I’m not! No, really!”

The denial tumbled out of captive lips in urgent haste. To call Hetty Coppick a bore was nothing short of lese majeste. Pain would follow.

“I’m nothing but a silly old woman prolonging her youth by feeding on helpless girls she keeps in a cage.”

“Oh, please! You’re putting words in my mouth. I never even thought such a thing.”

“Perhaps a few strokes with the crop, dear?”

Anne might have known! Hetty was baiting her. She was having her fun. Anne was locked in the pillory to provide the essential female flesh. Woefully, Anne agreed.

“Of course, ma’am—if it would give you pleasure to crop me.”

Hetty got up and kissed the captive mouth. “You do come up with all the right answers,” she commented. “Now, when you came up with that answer about cropping you, did you feel the heat?”

There had been something—something engendered by helplessness and the shamed request to be beaten. She and Hetty had reached rapport. Undeniably, there had been a flare beyond and apart from the dildo’s thrust. Wanly,

Anne admitted, “Yes, there was something—something I couldn’t help.”

“Still there?”

“Yes. Talking about it keeps it alive. Please, I’d be so grateful if you’d take out all that dildo from inside me.”

“Don’t be silly. With it in you, the crop will bring you to another climax.”

“But it’s so huge, and I’m bent a bit into this thing. It keeps me in a sort of dither.”

“Good. The crop is exactly what you need. On the other hand, I have the flagellum right here. It makes the loveliest splat when it contacts. Okay by you?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

The flare struck again. This conversational gambit was doing it. Anne shifted from foot to foot uneasily as her mistress disappeared from view. Anne became shrinkingly aware of that portion of herself back there waiting. She gasped. Exploring fingers were busy testing the harness on her loins. A strap was tightened, then another. She could swear the dildo advanced an inch.

The flagellum was a burst of fire. The yoked girl cried aloud in shock. It was hard to believe so much pain came from a strip of leather eighteen inches long. The harnessed loins weaved, and the slender hips were eloquent of pain.

Hetty paused for the pain and heat to take full effect within the writhing nudity, then struck again. The feminine nakedness, held fast in the pillory's grip, yelped anew and moaned its advent into climax. The woman with the strap stood back to admire her work, then walked slowly around and around the implacably held slenderness of the girl she herself had locked within the stocks. Hetty knew herself the most fortunate of women. She always prided herself on her awareness of wealth. To own a prison full of girls was, she felt certain, unique in the history of the world. She drank in every nuance of what she now beheld in sight and sound. Anne was rewarding her owner lavishly with gasps and spasms, with moans and writhings, with the twistings of prisoned wrists and captive neck. The girl was a most satisfying subject deserving of permanent captivity. But Bristow was a friend, and anyway, she owned a dozen more and would be getting others. The I.S.G. was designed for fifteen female prisoners. Hetty's own heat flared at the thought. Each girl she arranged to have abducted was lush and loaded with response. They were douce with the original sweetness of the first Eve who was the mother of them all.

As Hetty slowly circled the preoccupied maiden she had whipped and brought to climax, her mind drifted back to the first time and the first girl to be led, chained, from the van into the stark newness and sterility of the I.S.G. The atmosphere was stringent with the odors of mortar, ce-

ment, and paint. The contractors had finally left only the week before. Amity and Charity had been its only life. She had borrowed one of the uniforms in order to blend into the scene and watch the making of a convict girl.

June Travers had been a natural. She had been the first in the great experiment, and Hetty had found it hard to pass her on as a gift. She was still an inmate: inured to captivity, only slightly petulant in punishment, cleansed of any notions of escape. June Travers never mentioned freedom any more. Outside, prior to being sequestered, she had been arrogant and demanding, as lovely blondes are apt to be. Society adored them, and they allowed themselves to be adored. For June, the handcuffs and leg irons had come close to being traumatic. She ceaselessly tugged and kicked at the new metal she was forced to wear on wrists and ankles in a sulky conviction she could get them off or someone would unlock them for her. She had also been much preoccupied with striving to stretch her prison jersey down to cover her silky sex. It was not that she was unduly chaste, but she knew it a marketable asset which should never be uncovered free of charge. With its aid, she intended to marry well. Had Hetty Coppick not sequestered her, June would certainly have achieved her goal.

The leg irons had snubbed June Travers at every step from the van to the desk. She had been gagged for transit, but when her mouth was freed, so also was a torrent of haughty indignation. She mentioned the police, prison, penalties for kidnapping pretty girls, her father and family,

and there was also a boyfriend or two. The real crux of her concern was that no one treated June Travers like this and got away with it.

Hetty smiled at the memory of the young blonde's face at the crop's first cut. Hetty had aimed at the lower curve of the twin cheeks revealed beneath the tight jersey. She had slashed both of them with a most satisfying splat. For a moment, June had stood, frozen in disbelief at the pain, the indignity, and the outrage of her flesh. All the emotions crossed her blonde features one after another. After that had come the striving to appease her weals with hands joined and no longer her own. For a minute or more June Travers had become an untidy motion picture of kicking legs and hands, striving to be in two places at once and, above all, to tug her jersey down below where it was prepared to go. The three uniformed women had watched their first recruit in keen delight. This was what the I.S.G. was all about.

"If you will free me and allow me to go, I will forget this outrage."

June had surveyed them from her twisted posture in trying to comfort her wounds. She had a vivid scarlet line across each cheek. Obviously, she saw nothing quaint in her use of an old cliché. For good measure, she had added, "And if you use that horrible thing on me again, I'll make sure you regret it."

Hetty had used it again, and June had stamped an angry foot, jangling her shackle. “Stop it!” she demanded. “I told you not to do that. What is this place, a madhouse?”

Hetty smiled as she recalled how the three women had explained to their first captive what the I.S.G. was and what it would expect of its inmates. She remembered how lovely June had been when they stripped her and fastened her to the whipping cross. It was not until then that the outraged girl had faced reality and her own situation one to merit prudence.

“You’re not going to whip me, and all bare like this? Don’t be absurd!”

For Hetty, June’s progression had been sweet. The girl had listened in pure dismay as they explained the reason—or lack of one—for the whipping she was shackled for, there had been the maiden protests, merging into howls of anger and shock until they too died and Hetty found herself possessed of a sobbing nude, hugging the wood for what protection it would give, gazing at the uniformed women without seeing them through a haze of tears. It would not be correct to say June Travers was broken, but it was the first step. Today the same girl was a mature young woman, reconciled to lifetime captivity, accepting the I.S.G. logic of unearned punishment and making the best of it. Hetty resolved to give the dear girl a whipping or some other punishment before the day was done. It had been a long time.

Anne Menton stirred restlessly to claim her owner's attention. The pillory was difficult, holding her so she could neither stand nor sit. She must remain bowed in humility in front, and bent and vulnerable in the back. She could not read Hetty's thoughts, but doubted they angered well. One more, as she so often did, she thought back to freedom and the utter improbability of what was happening. She could almost feel her owner's speculative regard encompassing her fleshly curves, unnaturally postured by the stocks. Quite probably the woman was judging those parts of her exposed nakedness, her curves and crevices, into which the flagellum could be snapped for maximum effect. Anne was uncertain which was worst, the flagellum or the crop. Abruptly, the mistress demanded, "Do you remember a girl named June Travers? You should have met her in the yard."

"She's a blonde, about twenty-six?"

"Right. I think you'll find her interesting. I'll be right back."

The naked girl, clamped within the wooden yokes, knew herself indeed a captive audience. She waited without patience for whatever the show might be. Anne had little hope of it not hurting. When the blonde captive clinked her shackled way into view, there was the faintest exchange of raised eyebrows. It was all they dared.

"I'm putting June through her paces for your benefit, Anne.

You should be flattered." The mistress consulted her watch. "I'll leave you alone together for a few minutes. You have permission to talk, and I won't be listening on a monitor."

The locking of the door was emphatic. It sounded like Hetty's admonition to be good girls while she was gone. June Travers turned her attention to the wistful features of her pilloried companion. "I expect she'll torture me a bit for your edification when she comes back," she said casually. "I'm sorry I won't provide drama. I'm sickeningly well behaved."

"Isn't there ever any hope of getting out of here?"

"I've never seen one, and I've been here longer than any other girl." June clinked her handcuffs and kicked at the chain connecting her feet. "We're always ironed like this. It's part of our dress, like these obscene little T-shirts. If someone showed us a way over the wall, we couldn't take it."

"But why? What does she get—"

"Hot pants! Power! Lesbian homage! I see she's got a dildo up inside you." June made an expressive gesture with chained hands.

"I could easily unstrap the harness if you wanted, but it's best that I don't."

"She'd whip us to bits, I know. No, never mind. But thanks anyway."

“I can’t get you out of the pillory. I’d need a key.”

“I’m sure she didn’t bring you in here to let me loose,” Anne acknowledged. “Do you know what she has in mind?”

“See how we’re owned? We’re dependent on any whim she has. We’re helpless. We’re always helpless.” The blonde girl laughed. “Sure, I know what’s on her mind. She’s going to hurt me while you watch and see how beastly humble I am and how I ask for more. It’s nauseating. But what you’ll be doing is seeing yourself a couple of years from now.”

“But I already obey.”

“Well, okay, you’re obedient, but you’ll have to watch me anyway. I can tell you right now I’m not a bit proud of the things I’ll do.”

“She makes you do this often?”

“Sure. I’m nicely broken. I don’t act broken, but I am. Scared little new girls get the picture of what’s expected of them. I’ve never thought it helped them much. I think it scares them more.”

The sound of the lock was the beginning. The nude captive of the pillory watched, enthralled. At the first sound, June fell on her knees, legs wide, and extended her arms forward and up while she bowed her head. It was Anne’s first glimpse of ritualistic submission.

“Watch this girl, Anne. She’s a honey.” Hetty unlocked the

cuffs from the extended wrists and sharply ordered, “Strip!”

It was so easily done. The covering scrap slipped over the bowed head without a change of pose. June had a beautiful body. In exquisite immobility, it awaited its mistress’ command.

“The trapeze bar, dear.”

The response was instant: a flash of blonde, the rattle of chain. In moments, June had lowered the fatal bar and stood, paying it the docile tribute of her wrists within the looped straps at either end. Hetty’s smile was enigmatic as she buckled them tight.

“Do you want me to whip you, June?”

“Oh, yes, ma’am, of course! Please whip me hard.”

Anne recognized a superb performance. The absurdity of what they did and said turned both participants into actors, each in command of her own role. Hetty was glowing. “June dear, I’d like you to tell Anne what I will do to you and why. I won’t fully stretch you yet.”

The blonde statue was breathtaking as it stood taut with arms held high. Its voice was warmly informative and without a tremor. “Our mistress will whip me, Anne. I am naked and available to her whip. I cannot get away. She does not whip me for a fault, but because it pleases her to whip my naked skin. Since it pleases her, it pleases me.”

“Wasn’t that sweet!” Hetty looked around for approval, but neither of her charges could clap. Anxiously, she inquired, “Anne, are you sure you have a good view of June being punished?”

“Yes, ma’am, thank you. I can see fine.”

She had been whipped herself, but never witness to another girl’s agony. It was still the craftily fashioned leather of the flagellum that would mark the waiting back and bottom. Hetty became fluid motion as she swung. The slap of leather filled the room. Across one of the curved lower cheeks of the strapped girl there sprang to life the rapidly reddening imprint of the limber instrument in her mistress’s hand. The lovely nudity tensed, tight and erect. It gasped. Then, slowly, the blonde head turned and smiled back over a bare, pinioned shoulder. The tone was unconcerned.

“Thank you, ma’am. You do it so well. Please whip me again.”

Hetty planted a similar imprint on the other cheek of the pliant girl. Then, abruptly, she lowered the captive arms and set them free. Her voice was honeyed. “Anne will wish to know what we do now, June dear. Explain.”

The freed hands sought the punished cheeks, but they did not linger to comfort them. They fell to hang passively as their owner intoned brightly, “That’s one method of whipping me, Anne. Now you will watch another as I voluntar-

ily bend and touch my toes to stretch the skin of my bottom so the flagellum will hurt me more. I must not move."

It happened. Without order and without bonds, June bent and touched her toes, knees stiff and bottom reared to show a peeping pussy in its crease. The flagellum struck once and then again. But the punished girl moved not at all until her mistress ordered. "You did well, dear. Now the bench. Tell Anne about the bench."

The hurt girl's speech was even and controlled, but Anne could see the hurt in the blue eyes as one more humiliating recitation ran its course. "I have been punished with the flagellum, Anne. Now our owner will use the riding crop. Because it hurts me more, she is kind enough to strap me to the bench so l do not disgrace myself. She is very kind."

Once more the pliant positioning, and the zestful tugging and buckling of straps. When it was done, June lay horizontally with rump obscenely reared. Her strapping into the desired postures was a punishment in itself. Once more the eager young voice spoke.

"I am strapped so I cannot move, Anne. I am stretched much more tautly, and my pussy may receive the crop as well as my bottom cheeks. I am sure it must protrude." Without pause, she turned to the waiting woman and innocently requested, "Please crop me, ma'am."

So quaint a term: crop me! The wicked wand sliced air and cut its scarlet across both cheeks. The pain must have been

atrocious, but the voice was still controlled. “That was magnificent, ma’am. Again, please?”

Hetty’s eyes gleamed. She cut again, then turned to the head and hands protruding from the pillory. “She’s wonderful, isn’t she? Think you’ll ever do it this well?”

The question was rhetorical. The immobilized girl had a fleeting vision of herself in several years time. Mechanically, she responded, “She’s amazing. I couldn’t possibly—”

“Now, June, I want you to pick your next punishment and explain it to dear Anne.” Hetty’s tone was vibrant with expectancy.

“Well, ma’am, there’s the horse. It hurts terribly right from the start. We could pull it over to where Anne could get a good view.”

“Capital idea! Here, I’ll give you a hand.”

Anne watched, her own dolor forgotten, as the contraption was pulled and pushed for her benefit. It was very close. Above it dangled a rope and hook. She watched in genuine admiration as the naked girl about to be tortured stood tautly erect, her back to her mistress and her wrists crossed ready to be bound. While Hetty busied herself with cord, June conversationally explained the mechanics of what she was about to suffer.

“It’s a pedestal on a base, Anne. You can see. There’s a crosspiece on which I sit. My feet are tied way out to either

side so all my weight rests squarely on my crotch—or my cunt, if you prefer. Then our owner will hook my wrists and raise them to make me bend and sit in the most painful position, that's all. If you look at the bar on which I must sit, you will see why it's such a terrible punishment."

Anne looked and quailed. It was actually a plank on edge. The edge might be two-inches wide. It would be a horrible perch on which so sit without support of hands or thighs or anything at all. Breathlessly, she watched while June's shackles were cast aside and replaced by leather anklets. Each anklet had a ring. Then, quite undramatically, the mistress placed a box on each side and the girl about to suffer pain stood on them, facing the pillory with its watching head and futile hands. Searching the lovely face, Anne could detect no signs of apprehension. June's features were serene. But there was now a difference: she no longer smiled.

"Let yourself down gently, dear. I want you properly placed." The mistress was intent and absorbed in what was obviously a labor of love. "Here, I'll guide your pretty pussy as you sit."

The blonde girl didn't say a word. She had done this before and would do it again. When she caught a glimpse of Anne's stricken gaze, she returned a glint of a smile. June was going to suffer pain, but she was totally composed. The girl in the pillory's clutch envied such control.

Hetty peered and positioned the sentenced flesh. Satisfied, she ejaculated, “Now!” In two swift flashes of speed, she anchored June’s feet tautly to either side and hooked the bound hands. The naked girl now sat full astride the plank’s edge, her features reflecting its cruelty. All that remained was for the tractioning and positioning of the bare bound arms. As they rose, their owner bent forward until her lower lips were precisely on the wicked edge. Hetty nodded, satisfied. She backed away to where she could watch both girls.

“I can’t describe this pain. It’s too terrible.” The statement left June’s lips in a pained monotone, interspersed by gasps of pure anguish. “I am close enough for you to see how my sex is crushed. I can’t move—I simply can’t move.” The hurt young voice trailed to silence, but suddenly revived in haste. “Thank you, ma’am, for allowing me to show this punishment to Anne.”

The scene was grotesque, yet possessed its own terrible beauty. Anne could not move. She was forced to look at the lovely body and bowed head of the girl astride the so-called horse. June was wracked and wrenched, and the softness of her crotch was penetrated by the compulsion of her own weight until her pubic bush itself seemed bisected by the relentless wood. June’s bare legs, tautly stretched to either side, were a ballet dancer’s split.

The tableau would have been silent had it not been for the labored breathing of the horsed girl. Anne longed to cry

out against what she saw, but dared make no sound. She supposed she too might one day sit as June now sat. The thought diverted her concern to the same place within herself to make her aware of a rising tide of heat as though the strapped dildo was the horse and she shared June's agony. To her horror and disgust, the pilloried maiden realized the sight of June's stressed posture had sparked a flame. She shifted uneasily, but the flame continued to grow. Sight of Hetty's amused gaze mantled her in shame. But the enemy within would not be denied. Anne blazed into climax and added her own gasps and moans to those of the punished girl. She writhed and heaved against the pillory but scarcely moved.

"Wonderful, Anne! I'm so pleased you're responsive. I abhor cold wenches." Hetty smiled indulgently. "I'll just add a final touch."

It was useless to protest. Anne endured the savage slice of the crop across her buttocks, incorporating its effect with that of her orgasm. The two were surprisingly similar. In a guilty curiosity she realized the dildo was not entirely to blame for her fleshly response. Even if it had not been for the prong and its straps, she would still have discovered this terrible heat from beholding the sufferings of another girl. But it was not June's agony alone. There was also the exquisite picture before her eyes, a picture she must observe since she was powerless to move. Anne stared and stared, knowing the insidious heat was gathering again.

“Can’t have Anne climaxing herself to death, June.” Hetty’s voice was heavily amused. “I’d better dismount you.”

“Thank you, ma’am.” The young voice was still in control.

Hetty took her time. Having disposed of June’s foot tethers and lifted her wrists from the hook, she lifted the still bound girl to slide her from her painful perch and gather her in her own arms to stand her erect. “You okay, sweetheart?” she asked anxiously.

“Yes, ma’am, thank you.”

“I’ll get your leg irons back on.”

The naked June stood, hands still tied behind her back, while her feet were fettered once again. The ironing was as casual as the replacing of a pair of shoes. Snubbed steps were endemic to the I.S.G. When the rope was peeled from her wrists, she immediately proffered them for the metal cuffs. Safely handcuffed, her hands sought her crotch and tenderly massaged that part of herself punished by the plank’s cruel edge.

“Oh, damn! Give me your hands.” Hetty unlocked one cuff and handed June the I.S.G. jersey. “Forget this. Put it on.”

June obeyed, her hands once more joined. “I’d keep you girls properly naked all the time. Damn shame to cover the breasts and bodies I’ve collected here. But it gives us something to take off when you’re going to be punished, and those jerseys don’t cover your cunts. Well, not often.”

June stood, awaiting orders. She caught Anne's sympathetic eye and smiled. Her own ordeal was probably over. It had been a routine infliction of pain for Hetty Coppick's pleasure, but Anne was still tightly locked in the pillory and might stay there for a very long time. The mistress patted the wealed bottom and kissed the lush young lips. "Run along, June dear. Pick up on whatever you were doing."

Obediently, June took her short, snubbed steps to the door and disappeared. Anne could hear the clink and rattle of shackles down the passage. She knew she had witnessed something remarkable.

"I'll whip you into coming just once more, dear. It's such fun!"

The mistress's blithe announcement made Anne long to scream. Hers was the very essence of helplessness. Hetty could use her as she pleased while she herself simply stood. For Anne, the pillory had become a live enemy, holding her with ease for the cut of whips or the thrust of prongs. She could imagine it sharing Hetty's laughter. But indignation was no counter to the glow within strapped loins. Anne guessed what she felt now was what she was intended to feel: the knowledge of being owned and used and punished for a whim. Thinking of her total dependence on her mistress's will flamed her heat again. She knew herself on center stage—that for Hetty Coppick and Joshua Bristow she was their greatest wish come true. She

had become a girl punishment could inflame. Simply, she said, “Thank you, ma’am,” and let it go at that.

It was the flagellum. Anne realized the whack of its impact must give the mistress pleasure. It hurt bad with its own beastly kind of hurt, but not as bad as the crop. She separated her feet and braced hard against the prisoning yoke. Perhaps the immense dildo deep within would come to her aid. Too many strokes from the flagellum could drive her heat away. But did it matter? She was a girl owned.

The crack of Hetty’s blows across the innocent skin was shrewdly spaced, each successive impact catching a girlish writhe at is crucial point, inflicting not only pain but also the eroticism Anne had come to recognize. It took only seven blows to cause explosion of the heat and to spasm the captive girl in such ways as to bring a contented smile to Hetty’s face. Hetty stood, the supple strap dangling from a careless hand, and drank deep of maiden suffering and maiden joy. The maiden herself was far distant in the multi-hued land which claimed her at such times. Her bottom blazed.

It was a gorgeous incandescence.

5

Gift Girl

ANNE MENTON TROD A STRANGE PATH: her cell, the room of punishment, the exercise yard and its brief communion with others. Sometimes there came a special summons to Hetty Coppick's own imperial splendor in an apartment widely divergent from the rest of the prison in which she housed her captive girls. There would be an hour or a night in which Anne would apply the lesbian craft the I.S.G. taught. Then back to the little cell and the bars. She was always chained. No girl was allowed freedoms from which to engender ideas and hopes. For the girls of the I.S.G. there was no hope. It was the paramount lesson the prison taught.

Each girl knew herself a plaything. They were the pretty playthings of Charity and Amity too. The mistress did not spread herself too thin. Moreover, she was not always in residence. But each girl was punished every day regardless. It was the rule. If the path of pain led to Anne being suspended naked by her thumbs, that was her hard luck. Tomorrow it would be one of the others who hung as she hung now.

Anne had sobbed her way through the first hour. It was a hateful thing to do to a girl. She had never become inured to it. She hung limply now, her toes a few tantalizing inches above the floor. Her head was bowed in hopeless

resignation. If they left her hanging long enough, she might lose consciousness. But she was still alert to every agony. She dared not move. The slightest motion added to the torment of her thumbs.

“This girl is suffering a most charming punishment. As you can see, she is suspended by her thumbs.” Hetty’s voice had the conversational cadence of the lecturer. “Take note of how exquisitely she resigns herself, Stacey. I am very fond of Anne.”

The girl was young, not yet twenty. She was naked, her hands crossed and tied behind her back. She was obviously being given the grand tour of the I.S.G. by its proud owner. She stared in pure horror at Anne and Anne’s predicament.

“We give each of you girls a diversion such as this each day, Stacy,” the lecturer continued. “It fights morbidity and makes you more content with your cell.” To the suspended nudity, Hetty said, “Stacey is new. I just got her today. I haven’t whipped her yet, but I’m sure she’ll enjoy it.”

Anne’s heart bled for the novice. It was so wrong that bright-eyed nubile flesh in the flower of its youth should be put in prison and daily punished. Stacey’s only crime was to be a beautiful girl. The suspended girl could guess what was to come.

“Dear Anne, I think it would be nice if you told Stacey how happy you are to belong to me. You can add a few details about the pleasure of hanging by your thumbs. She’d like

that."

Anne doubted the youngster's pleasure. Stacey was little more than a nymphet and obviously scared to death. She remembered June. Today it was her turn. Concentrating her will against agony, she made her tone bright and welcoming.

"Hello, Stacey. You'll love the I.S.G. Please don't be frightened. Our mistress is charming. I'm glad to belong to her. Any girl who is owned and put in the I.S.G. is lucky."

Anne hoped she hadn't laid it on too thick. These ritualistic confessions were absurd. No girl could take them seriously, but they pleased Hetty. She glowed beneath their tribute. Anne now recognized and expected the heat within her sex engendered by this total submission to the woman by whom she was owned. There was no self-interest in what she said. Her feet would not reach the floor a moment sooner no matter what her humility. It was part of being a prisoner to the I.S.G. You went along. For this false cheerfulness her thumbs would hurt neither less nor more.

"You see, Stacey. Isn't she a delightful girl? She bears no animosity for what she suffers. She is glad of it to please me. Isn't that right, Anne?"

"Of course it is, ma'am. I'm hurting terribly, but it's a privilege to give you pleasure. Please don't let me down. I wish to hang here for as long as you wish."

It was rubbish. But it was the I.S.G. Wide-eyed in disbelief, Stacey looked from the woman to the suspended girl. Her plea was tremulous. “I don’t understand any of this. I think it’s horrible. Please let me go. Please untie my hands.”

Hetty took the young bare arm. Her grip was firm. “Come, dear, let us walk slowly around Anne’s lovely nakedness and observe the way it’s enhanced by her punishment. See how firm and high her breasts become and how flat her tummy. See the slight separation of her thighs so we can see her lips behind the hair. Would you like me to free your hands and give you permission to play with her?”

“I’d like my hands free.” The young eyes were suddenly hopeful. “But I want to go home. I don’t want to do anything to that poor girl.”

“But, darling, you’re a prisoner. You won’t ever go home again.”

The young captive wept. Anne knew how she felt. Any words she herself now uttered would sound hypocritical. But she caught Hetty’s eye and did her duty. “Come and rest your cheek against my breasts, Stacey. Cry all you like. I don’t mind. There was a time when I cried too. All the new girls cry. It’s all so strange to us, and we haven’t yet discovered how lucky we are to be owned. Honest, I can’t imagine a life in which Miss Coppick didn’t own me.”

It was allowed to happen. Anne’s breasts were suddenly wet with tears as the newly sequestered maiden dried wet

cheeks against first one and then the other. It was cruel to the noosed thumbs, but the cause was kind. Stacey had no arms, but availed herself of flesh on flesh. When her sobbing ceased, she was led away. The last the suspended Anne saw of her was crossed, bound wrists with fingers feverishly working for release.

After leaving Anne suspended for two and a half hours the I.S.G., in the person of Amity, decided she should not be bored by simple incarceration in her cell. She was handcuffed and leg-ironed as always, but with a difference. She had hung, and now she would stand. Her arms were raised and her wrists attached to a bar above a crosspiece. There was no strain or stress. She simply had to stand there with arms raised and captive fingers playing with the bars while she surveyed an empty passage.

“Makes for a bit of a change,” Amity suggested slyly.

“I’d a lot sooner sit on the cot, Amity. Please let me sit down. I’ve had a rough day.”

“You’ve had a rough couple of hours, that’s all. Don’t be so fussy, dear. I could just as easy have you stand on tiptoes.”

“All right! I’m sorry. I’ll be grateful for this. Thank you very much.” Anne and her wardresses had reached the familiarity which tolerates latitudes of teasing. “I’ll enjoy the view through the bars.”

“You could also enjoy a sore ass,” Amity warned. “You look

real sweet like that, and it doesn't bother your tender thumbs. Was that real rough on them?"

"It's awful! You know it is! Please, Amity, don't hang me up like that for a long, long time."

"Gave you a wet cunt, honey?"

"Oh, that! You always harp on that." The cuffed girl discovered she could partially turn without hurting. She did so to the rasp of chain. Anne sniffed. "You've got me conditioned. You keep telling me I should get hot when I'm punished, so now I do. I refuse to be responsible for my secretions."

"Spread 'em, honey. I'll show you."

It had become a familiar ritual, a joke between them. Anne flushed but did as she was told. She flinched and gasped only slightly as her puss was palmed. Amity came up with the usual exhibit. "Look at that, sweetheart. You're positively wet."

"No, I'm not. It's only damp, and you had to rub a lot to get that."

"Make you horny, honey?"

"You're always making me horny and then doing nothing about it. It's most unkind, and the way you've got me handcuffed now I can't touch a thing."

"If I tell your mistress you want to play with yourself, she'll

make sure your hands are behind your back for the rest of your life." Amity shook at admonitory finger. "Be thankful you're mostly cuffed in front."

"Oh, I am—really! Amity, what's the program for tomorrow?"

"Never you mind."

"Well then, can I have a girl in with me tonight?"

"Sure, you can—if you both want to stand the way you are now all night."

"Amity, don't be mean!"

"Or I can put a girl in with you and make you both wear locked gags."

"Forget it. Sorry I asked."

"You're welcome, dear. Got to go now."

Pouting, the prisoner watched the wardress depart for as far as the bars allowed. The cell was still ringing from the clang of its door and the snapping of its lock. Fastened as she was, the door could have remained open and she would have been a safe captive. No girl ever wriggled out of handcuffs, especially as tight as Amity clicked them on young wrists. Turning to more comfortably thrust her breasts against the bars, the captive Anne supposed she was still being punished. She had not been given back her

jersey and was still naked from suspension. She shrugged. What did it matter? The jersey was only a tantalization anyway. But Anne felt like shedding tears. Her cot looked inviting, but it was as far distant as the Statue of Liberty. She rubbed an itching nose against a bar.

Anne had lost count of her captivity. The days had turned to weeks and the weeks to months since that happy day she had driven to her make-believe inheritance and John Lennox's bondage. It was incredible that her life could be so sundered. She did not deceive herself, nor did the I.S.G. deceive her either. Her real life was gone utterly into limbo. In its place was this stark building with its chains and bars. The only reason every girl in it was not in screaming hysterics or a morbid bundle of unresponsive flesh was the humor of the wardresses, the constant changes of punishment, interspersed by the quiet serenity of their individual cells, and their frequent contact with the mistress herself, she woman who owned them. They were owned as surely as a farmer owned his domestic animals.

Anne had come to realize that the I.S.G.'s preoccupation with her sexual responses and secretions were an individual attention not given to others. She knew, too, this was because of Josh Bristow and what he was. But he, like her former life, had partially dissolved with passing time. If she allowed her mind to dwell on him, she felt again the yearning for his great virility and the safety of his arms. But Hetty Coppick's prison diminished everything except the flesh and the pain of the girls behind its bars. She had

just asked Amity about tomorrow's pain. She was more concerned with it than with Josh Bristow. It was far more certain and immediate. Probably by now Bristow had forgotten her and she belonged entirely to Hetty and the I.S.G. The naked Anne sighed and changed tension on her wrists, shifting pressure from a bar from one breast to its twin. She had become an experienced and professional prisoner. She bent with the wind. In the I.S.G. a girl did what she could to find comfort in her chains.

Time had long ceased to matter, except in punishment. It may have been one hour or two before the girl against the bars heard the steps and Hetty came within her limited view. Hetty was amused. Her first act was to playfully pinch a nipple Anne had allowed to protrude beyond the bars. "You've got lovely breasts, Anne. Boy, have you ever!"

"Thank you, ma'am."

"Always polite, always careful not to get your little ass switched. How'd you like to be released from prison, darling?"

Anne tensed. Hope flooded, but she fought it down. Hetty would never let her go. This was a bit of Coppick humor. Dutifully, she exclaimed, "Yes, please! But it won't ever happen."

"How do you know it won't?"

"It simply doesn't, does it? Not for any of us. You've got us

for life. Please don't tease me."

"You're forgetting something, love."

Hope flared again. It was silly, but Anne couldn't help it. She remembered Sally and the box with the straps. Dully, she asked, "What am I forgetting, ma'am?"

"My birthday presents."

Anne knew it a dream, but such a beautiful wonderful dream. Dazed, she asked, "Me?"

"Why not!"

Hetty was enjoying herself. Here was power! She had Anne aquiver with hope, a hope she could fulfill or dash futile to the ground. This was the stuff for which the I.S.G. was made. A lifted eyebrow accompanied the question. "What would you give to be free, Anne?"

"My life… anything!"

"Don't be absurd. You can't offer your life. You might as well stay here. I'm prepared to make you a prize for a very lucky person. I hate to part with you."

Anne was no longer passive in her bonds. She stirred and shifted within the tolerance of the steel around her wrists. "But are you going to? Do you really mean it?"

For answer, Hetty reached up and unlocked one of Anne's cuffs. The tired arms lowered gratefully, but the order was

immediate. “Put them both through here.”

Tightly handcuffed once again, Anne felt a return to normal. At least she was getting no worse off. She watched Hetty unlock the cell door. Despite doubts, her pulse was racing. She dutifully hastened hobbled steps after Hetty’s beckoning hand. It led her to the room and to the box.

“Remember Susan, honeybunch?”

“Yes! Oh, yes.” Anne was almost breathless. “You’re making me a birthday present? Are you really?”

“Happy?”

“Yes! Oh, yes.”

“Whoever it is may beat the tar out of you.”

“I think you’re teasing. I don’t think you’d give me to anyone like that.”

She was suddenly enveloped in loving arms. She was kissed and kissed again. “Like I said, I’m giving you away,” Hetty said breathlessly. “If you want to come back, you’ll have to let me know.” Hetty paused for effect. “Don’t you want to know where you’re going?”

“Of course I do.”

“It’s Josh Bristow’s birthday. You’re my gift.”

Anne was still chained, but she fell to her knees at Hetty’s

feet and clasped as much of her mistress as handcuffs allowed. She was crying with relief and happiness. The mistress played tenderly with the hair of the bowed head. “You’ve been ready for quite awhile,” Hetty said. “But I’ve waited for his birthday. He hasn’t the faintest idea of what he’s getting. Here, let me unlock those expensive bits of jewelry.”

Handcuffs and leg irons fell before the key. Anne stepped into the box, placing the various bits of herself where she supposed they should go. When Hetty finished strapping her tight, she could move only her head. “It’s going to be spooky when you put the lid on,” Anne said without a qualm. “Oh, Hetty, you’ve made me so happy.”

“I’ll have Josh loan you to me for an occasional weekend,” the mistress promised dourly. “Keep you knowing what a lucky girl you are.”

“Yes, please. I don’t want ever to lose sight of you.”

The lid closed upon Anne’s ardent declaration. In semi-darkness, unable to move, the still captive girl wondered if it was Hetty who was pounding in the nails. But the nails did not matter. What mattered were the straps. They held her motionless. She had forgotten to ask if they were to prevent escape or to act as safety belts upon her journey. Pulse pounding, the naked captive knew she had been picked up and carried from the room. She was not even gagged, but then perhaps Hetty had forgotten.

There were motions and sounds. She and her crate were being carried and transported. Now she could at last anticipate the strength and ardor of Bristow's arms. Soon she would be held in them. He was certain to insist on something dramatic like whipping her, but Anne did not care. Whatever would please him she would give. That she had no choice in anything did not matter. Anne refused to consider it. She had belonged to Hetty and would not belong to Bristow. That was her life. It was a life delightfully free of decision.

The rumble of the vehicle by which she was transported made a fitting accompaniment to dreams. The crate shivered excitingly. Anne found a zestful anticipation in the surprise on Bristow's face when he raised the lid. But perhaps he already knew about Hetty's crates and their helpless nude freight. But it did not matter to Anne Menton. She was going home.

There were stops. The strapped girl remembered the distance. It was not a short ride. She wished she could sleep, but in her excited state that was impossible. Finally, the vehicle stopped in finality. There were appropriate sounds. The crate, with her inside, was picked up and carried, then deposited with a thud. There were voices, but Anne could not pick up what they said. Then a silence in which she and her crate were allowed to sit. Anne was breathless in the dark. But soon she sensed a presence. Someone was standing close. Suddenly a tool was being used and nails screeched as the lid was levered up. Anne blinked in the

sudden light as her covering was wrenched entirely free. In amazement and dismay she stared up into the face of John Lennox.

Anne's hands were tightly tied behind her back. Her ankles were bound. She had been dumped like a sack of corn into an ample armchair. Across from her, John Lennox also sat, appreciatively sipping a martini and viewing Anne's nakedness with approval. "You're just as beautiful as before," he said warmly. "But why not—it hasn't been that long."

"Hetty didn't give me to you," his prisoner said decisively. "How did you manage to get me?"

"Does it matter?" Lennox shrugged diffidently "A simple matter of diversion, a holdup in which no one was hurt."

"Hetty Coppick will jump on you like a ton of bricks!"

"Perhaps. If she finds me—or you." Lennox winked over his glass. "There are a lot of ways of killing a cat, you know. I expect to have you safely sold ahead of the hue and cry. By the way, would you like a drink? I'm afraid I'm a rotten host."

"Yes, I would."

"Have to hold it for you. But I'm sure you're accustomed to the no-hands principle."

“You don’t have to keep me tied this way. Can’t we talk in a civilized fashion without me being helpless?”

“Bet they didn’t have you running around loose at the I.S.G.”

“You know everything, eh?” Anne glared up at the handsome smiling face as she hastily gulped alcohol. “If you don’t turn me loose, you’re going to have both Bristow and Hetty Coppick jumping on your tail. I’m no longer just a stray girl.”

Anne’s kidnapper surveyed her flushed nakedness with a kindly eye. “I like you. I think you’re a nice girl. If I can manage the time, I’ll fuck you before I pass you on.” He laughed. “Should be a nice change from that lesbian preserve.”

“Don’t be beastly. I don’t understand how you know—”

“It’s my business to ferret things out, Anne. That’s how I make my living. I saw this wonderful chance to sell you all over again—getting you free of charge, of course. You’re a profitable young woman. But I like you. I’d keep you myself if I could afford it.”

“You just said you got one for nothing.”

“Ah, yes, but think what I can sell you for! That’s what counts.” John Lennox smiled and sipped again. “I like the way I’ve got you tied. Suits you. You make a lovely picture.”

The tied girl twisted uncomfortably under John Lennox's stare. A man hadn't looked at her nakedness since Bristow. It was as though she had reserved a store of blushes for just this occasion. She used one now, not because she wanted to but because John Lennox's regard was warmly personal and inclined to dwell on her more obvious assets. He was an attractive man, just as she was an attractive girl. It was a pity things were not different. Lennox was easy to like. She did not hate him now as she felt she should. In spite of his outrageously nefarious method of making money, he was likable. He had a way about him. But the ropes he had bound her with were tight and hurting and made her feel untidy. She so ardently longed to possess her limbs once more.

"Mr. Lennox, it won't hurt you to untie either my hands or my feet. I'll still be helpless. Please?" Anne made her plea as earnest as possible.

Lennox nodded. "You said that well. Everything about you is perfect. Tell you what, let's go to bed for an hour. Then I'll put you downstairs with the others until the buyer arrives. I'm pretty sure he'll take you."

"You've still got a basement full of chained girls?"

"Of course. Got to have an inventory, you know."

Anne swallowed hard. She made her words as ugly and brutal as possible. "Fuck me and sell me—that's it, ah?"

“Of course! What else is there?”

“It had hoped… Oh, never mind.” She blinked back a tear. “Get on with it. Fuck me and chain me and be damned!”

“You miffed!” Lennox sounded surprised. “Not all that bad, is it?”

Of course it was bad! She wanted to be loved, not used and sold and kept under restraint. But he was a man and would not understand. Stiffly, she retorted, “I’d assist you in my rape, but you’ve still got me tied so I can’t move.”

“Oh, for God’s sake!” Lennox came closer and started untying her ankles. “Look, sweetheart, be as mad as you like, but there’s what we do. First, we go upstairs and have a comfortable fuck. Then we go downstairs, and get you a chain and collar. Going to behave?”

“If you call me being a subservient worm behaving, yes, I’ll behave. Oh, and thanks for untying my feet. It feels good.” Anne sneered. “And I suppose it’s practical, considering what you’ll make me do with them.”

Lennox laughed at her sulkiness. “You really are cheesed off,” he conceded genially. “Come on, I know you can walk now, but I’m going to carry you to the bridal bed.”

To be picked up and carried by a man was a pleasant sensation after months of female breasts and buttocks at the I.S.G., but Anne was determined to give Lennox no satisfaction. She was indeed miffed by his effrontery in kid-

napping and selling her twice. It was probably some kind of record. Her hands were still tied behind her back so she lay passively in the strong male arms and gazed about her wistfully at the mellow old house she had once supposed was hers. “Do you own this place?” she asked irrelevantly.

“Yeah. Had it willed to me.” He chuckled. “Same as you.”

Anne let it pass. When Lennox tossed her on the bed, she crossly reminded him, “I hope you’ve noticed my hands are still tied.”

“Sure, I noticed, and they stay tied, sweetheart. You won’t be the first girl to get herself fucked with her hands tied behind her back. Damn good way to have a girl.”

They would never set her free, none of them. It would always be the same. Even in this so-called act of love she was to remain bound. Ruefully, Anne was thankful for the softness of the bed into which she could bury her helpless arms. She lay still on them and watched her very temporary owner undress. John Lennox had a good body, was unquestionably virile. Anne Menton spread her legs and paid her female tribute to the male. She was angry at how much pleasure she received. It was wrong. It was shameful. But when it was done, she was glad to discover it would start all over again. She wished she had her hands, but supposed a kidnapped girl had to be grateful for what she got.

“You’re good.” Lennox looked down at the ravished nudity

with approval. “Like I said, I’m going to be sorry to sell you.”

“Don’t sell me. You’re good too. Keep me.”

He laughed. “Thanks! I didn’t know you cared. Wouldn’t be much of a life for you, sweetheart—always collared and chained down there with the inventory.”

“At least I’d have company when you weren’t ravishing me.”

“Rape to ravish, eh! I’ve been promoted.”

“Go ahead and laugh,” Anne sniffed. “But I wish you wouldn’t sell me. I bet you don’t have to. Aren’t I worth more than a bit of cash?”

Lennox laughed down at her earnestness. “You girls!” He shook his head. “You can get a man feeling guilty so damn easy.”

“Well, so you should, the way you’ve treated me—and what you’re going to do with me now.”

“But, sweetheart, you’re only one of—well, quite a number.”

“That makes it worse. Please give me back my life. You easily could.”

“No, I can’t. Don’t you see? If I let any of you girls loose, I’d be in jail the rest of my life.”

“I wouldn’t tell. I’d be so grateful.”

“You think that now. You’d think differently in a week’s time. We’re both of us trapped. No matter how much I wanted to let you go, I wouldn’t dare. It was the same with Bristow and Hetty Coppick. Sorry, sweetheart.”

She saw his point. That point was her true prison, far more than rope and chain. Her plight was hopeless. With Lennox’s cautious grip firmly on her arm, Anne was led downstairs. She wanted to weep for this lovely old house which had been both a lure and a prison to so many like herself. If only she could be alone in it with John Lennox!

The same dreaded door opened. The same eager young faces faced her. They wore the same collars and bore the same tethering chains. She shook the male hand away from her bare skin and marched to the closest empty space. Disdainfully, to a surprised maiden, she requested, “Put the collar on my neck, please. Then untie my hands and give Mr. Lennox back his piece of rope.”

Lennox nodded. It was quickly done. The door thudded shut to leave Anne in the company of three naked girls she had never seen before. She fingered the metal band around her neck to find it securely locked, its chain equally unyielding.

“I’m sorry, but he’d have whipped me if I hadn’t made the lock snap.” It was the hesitant apology of the girl who had done as asked. “He seems terribly strict about obedience.

I've only been here a couple of days. We're all chained just the same."

Anne kissed the distressed lips, laughing. "I've been here before," she informed. "You're right. John Lennox is free and easy with his riding crop. I've had a few stripes myself."

Her hands went back to her neck. There was something compellingly symbolic about the iron collar and its links. Locked around her throat, it made Anne less than a person. Until she was sold, she was much the same as an animal in a zoo. She was on view, and those who viewed her were made safe by the collar and its chain. She was not ironed to inhibit escape. The locked door did that. But she was ideally restricted for inspection. She should have kicked Lennox while she had the chance.

Learning her status, Anne was gazed upon with awe by her three fellow captives. Each was as naked as she herself, each hungry for information.

"He won't really sell us, will he? He's just fooling, right?"

"He's given me a couple of awful licks. He won't really whip us bad the way he says?"

"He hasn't done you-know-what to us yet. But he's sure to do it, isn't he?"

"Has he done it to you?"

Anne did her best. Only half of what she told them was believable. Her stock fell. None of the three had been there more than four days, but all had witnessed sales of girls now gone. Here, surely, was something Anne should know.

“Do they buy us because of our pussies?”

“Or do they torture us?”

“You must have been sold. What happened?”

Anne was still striving to cope with the feminine onslaught when the door opened and Lennox returned. His set features spelled bad news. Without preamble, he snared one of Anne’s wrists with a handcuff and unlocked her collar. Within a minute she had been dragged up the stairs and out into the back garden of the beloved house. She was being led by the half of a handcuff in Lennox’s hand. If she struggled, it hurt. She did not struggle. Without understanding, she found herself sharing her captor’s perturbation.

“Hetty Coppick’s figured it out,” Lennox whispered urgently. “She’s on her way. I can put her off by allowing her a free search.” He chuckled. “Maybe I can sell her a girl.”

“But this?” Anne rattled the cuff on her wrist. “What are you doing with me?”

“There’s a bit of woodland back here. I’m going to have to take a chance. Come on—quick!”

Anne ran with him. Afterwards she wondered why. But run she did, as though spurred by the same urgency. She supposed her compliance arose from fearing an enforced return to the I.S.G. with its punishments and solitudes of a cell, its female curves and female scents. Given time, she might prevail on Lennox to keep her for himself, or maybe set her free. Careless of abrasions, she kept pace with the man who intended to sell her for a profit.

“Good enough. You can scream. Nobody will hear. Back up, sweetheart. This tree will do fine.”

It was swift and wickedly final. Anne’s arms were dragged around behind the trunk, the handcuffs clicked on her unresisting wrists. She had become as much a part of the tree as one of its branches.

“Someone will find me.” She was breathless.

“Nobody ever comes here, not even kids.” Lennox was totally assured. “And anyway, they couldn’t unlock you without a key.”

“But how long?” Anne had visions of the dark.

“Damned if I know. Couple of hours maybe.” Lennox kissed her but only on the cheek. “I’d best run. She could come by any time.”

The male vanished rapidly in the trees. The female leaned back against the tree trunk to which she was attached. She had a suspicion she would become very tired of the slender

maple before her handcuffs were unlocked. At the best, she faced a couple of hours of boredom. At worst, she could be found by some unsavory creature far less to be desired than Lennox or Hetty. She tested the cuffs about her wrists uneasily. They were plenty tight. She need chafe no skin in trying to slip out of them. She looked around. It was a pretty scene if a girl was only walking through. At night it would harbor goblins and strange sounds.

Resolutely, the prisoner sought optimism. After months of brick and concrete and bars, she was in open air, alone in a sylvan glade. It was not exactly a glade, but the word sounded good and the spot was certainly sylvan. In addition, she was less restrained than was the case at the I.S.G. There was also the hope of working on Lennox in a way she would never dare with Hetty or Bristow. Sure, she was helpless and naked in a lost bit of woods, but her predicament held more hope than a prison cell. Compared to her cell in the I.S.G., where she had been handcuffed and leg-ironed and locked behind bars, this was almost freedom. The handcuffs on her wrists were a mere trifle.

After an hour, Anne knew the handcuffs were not to be ignored. They held her with her back to the maple more surely than a coil of rope. It was frustrating and infuriating to be kept prisoner by such a trifle, but, in spite of knowing better, she had abrased her skin by tugs and twistings and by one panicky mindless surge against the steel. But she was securely held. Lennox knew what he was doing.

Anne knew, with absolute certainty, she did not want to be sold. She knew also the paucity of open options. If Lennox sold her, it was unlikely she would find another Bristow or I.S.G. Terrible as the latter may have been, it still possessed concern for the prisoners it held. The fact she faced was that unless she could escape she was doomed forever to ropes and chains and bars. As she stood against the tree, she was a hopeless prisoner. She had to escape—she absolutely had to! She could recall no chance she had missed. There had been no chances.

There had been no sound. But, suddenly, she was not alone. Anne gasped and gazed at a gamin face, blue jeans, and sneakers. She guessed their owner might be thirteen. She was gazing at her discovery in absorbed delight, her voice breathless. “Gosh! Jeepers! My name’s Jenny. What’s yours?” Scarcely waiting for an answer, she stated the obvious. “You don’t have any clothes on. Oh, wow! I bet it was bandits, huh?”

For the captive of the tree, the youthful summation was as good as any. “Yes, it was bandits. There were two of them. I’m sure glad you came along. I was afraid.”

“Oh, I often walk here.” The young eyes were alight with enthusiasm. “I’ve always had a dream about finding a girl tied to a tree by villains. It’s that sort of place, isn’t it?”

“I’m afraid I’m not tied; I’m handcuffed.”

“Really? Oh, boy! Say, before I get you loose, would you mind if held your breasts for a moment?”

“Help yourself.”

“You are helpless.” Jenny’s hands were worshipful of Anne’s captive breasts. “I bet they raped you before tying you up. Did it feel good? I’ve always wanted to be raped.”

Since Jenny mainly answered her own questions, they were easy to cope with. Anne was unconcerned with what the child thought. It did not matter. Jenny spelled freedom. If Jenny could not cope with handcuffs, she could at least carry a message and summon help. Anne had been hoping for Lennox’s swift return, but that was now the last thing to be desired. If he came at this moment, he would be compelled to kidnap Jenny to stop her from advertising his activities. No doubt a thirteen-year-old, washed and brushed and stripped, would find a ready market. Tense in breathless hope, the handcuffed girl endured the small exploring hands so enamored by mature nudity they now cupped the captive sex and played in awe with the lushness of a pubic bush. “You should hurry and get me loose,” Anne suggested urgently. “There’s always the chance they may come back to… well, you know, do it to me again. Then, if they catch you—”

“Oh, wow, wouldn’t that be something! But I don’t think I want to be fastened to a tree all night like you are. I expect I ought to look at your handcuffs.”

Anne felt Jenny's fingers exploring the steel as they had explored her sex. The teenager was enraptured with every facet of her find. Anne cursed the handcuffs heartily. If only Lennox had used rope, she could now be free. Jenny could have dealt with rope. She was about to give hasty instructions about getting the police when her possible rescuer came around the tree to face her with shining eyes and an exuberant exclamation.

"Gee, aren't they beautiful! I mean, the handcuffs on your wrists. So tight and shining, and I bet you couldn't get out of them in a hundred years."

"No, I can't. I'm afraid you'll have to get the police. They'll have a key, and I'll need to tell them my story. Please hurry."

Jenny was scornful. "You really want the cops? They'll see you all naked with your breasts and stuff. I don't figure we need them."

"But how—"

"I read a book, and I saw it on TV. There's a way of doing it with a bobby pin."

"But I don't have—"

"I do! Just you wait a minute while I go to work."

It was impossible. I couldn't possible happen. Anne was breathing heavily and thrusting back to give this mere

child all the slack she could. Hope was agonizing. She felt the busy hands upon the steel. The captive of the tree knew if Jenny got her free, she could fondle her breasts to her heart's content. But not here!

"It has to be a flat bobby pin, and that's what I've got." Jenny's voice, absorbed, came from the rear. "There's a little space you push it into and it does something to the lock. Oh, wow, here's the space!"

Anne looked at her had in stupefied amazement. That a brat of a girl could give it back to her so easily was wonderful!

"I'm working on the other one." Jenny's preoccupied voice held all the assurance of the very young. "It's a good thing I didn't have the round kind. Ahhh, there you are!"

Anne rubbed her wrists with a thankfulness beyond words. She was free, free, free! She poured out heartfelt thanks as Jenny returned from her work. The youngster was engrossed with shining steel.

"Jenny, you're wonderful! Oh, thank you!"

"Oh, that's okay. See! This is the way it's done. Can I keep the handcuffs?"

"Sure, you can. They aren't mine anyway. You're welcome __"

"She is not welcome. Those handcuffs are mine." John

Lennox snatched the cuffs from a surprised hand and grasped Anne's arm, all in one motion. "And I'll soon have them back on a girl who's mine too. Stop struggling, Anne. You'll only get hurt."

It was a short engagement, but undoubtedly one of the decisive battles of history. Lennox had thrown Anne to the ground and had his knee in her back ready to again lock her wrists when Jenny picked up a dead tree limb and hit him on the head. The branch broke, but the impact was enough to stun.

"That'll show him!" Jenny said without a qualm. "Come on, the path is over here."

The two girls ran.

Reaching a road, they paused for breath. Jenny had retrieved her handcuffs and was fingering them lovingly. "I'm going to put these on Christy Fetlock," she said with firm conviction. "I'll pretend it's just to fun, but I'll fix her to a tree like you were. I can charge the boys—"

"I wouldn't play with those awful things," Anne cautioned. "They'll only get you in trouble. Look, I'm still naked—"

"Those guys sure did have a time with you." Jenny was palpably envious of rape. "Stole your clothes as well as your money, huh?"

"I'm afraid so."

“Well, my folks are out for awhile, and our house is just up the road.” Jenny giggled. “Mom would throw a fit. She’d think your were a slut! Let’s run before anybody sees us.”

They ran once more. For Anne, each leaping stride was pure joy. Yesterday she was behind iron bars.

But now Anne Menton was free.

6

Sweet Liberty

EVERYONE WAS KIND: Anne's neighbors, her co-workers, her friends. With only the slightest lifting of eyebrows, they accepted her jumbled admission that there had been a man, and that she had been very silly, and that it was all over, and that she didn't want to talk about. She knew herself fortunate to so easily pick up the pieces of her life.

Anne at no time seriously considered going to the police. She felt certain Hetty Coppick and Joshua Bristow were above the law, and that John Lennox would have removed all evidence from the lovely old house. The girls, the collars, and the chains would all be gone. Lennox would have reverted to being a reliable young man in real estate. Anne had no belief she could get the best of him.

But she wrestled with guilt. She could have filed her story with the authorities and let them bury it at will. She could have done her duty. Anne told herself that if she truly believed she could free the girls of the I.S.G., or those others who bore Lennox's collar and chain, she would have done so. But in her heart and in the dark of night she faced the truth.

The truth was she loved three people with the strangest kind of love a girl could know. Within herself she accepted shame and confessed absurdity. She would be horrified to

be again imprisoned in the I.S.G., but for Hetty Coppick she felt only a heat of passion. Or was it devotion? She did not know. For Joshua Bristow, she felt only what she called plain old love. With Josh it was simple. If she went back to him, it would be to a different kind of imprisonment than the I.S.G., but equally implacable. Sure, she could now feel heat at the thought of being ironed or bound. She knew herself eligible for membership in the strangest of clubs. But she now had freedom. And freedom was best.

John Lennox was something else again. Anne curled up inside at what she saw as silly feminine infatuation with a male of the right age, a male who was far too good looking and far too insouciant to be trusted. Moreover, he was a man who made his living kidnapping pretty girls and selling them for profit. She had no doubt that if she allowed herself within his reach, she would soon wear the weight of his collar and chain, facing a dismal future. But there was something about John Lennox—something she could not name.

Being brutally honest with herself, Anne faced up to her own carnality. With Bristow and Lennox she had made discoveries about herself and sex she trade never dreamed of before her first kidnapping. If their virile maleness made her slave to their phalluses, so be it. She saw it only as a fact of life, complicated by there being two of them, dissimilar types but possessing her in an erotic enslavement each in his own way.

Somewhere in the mix was Hetty Coppick. There was nothing enigmatic about the owner of the I.S.G. Hetty simply got what she wanted. She was one of the lucky ones. But her Institution for Sequestered Girls was frightening. The impossibility of escape from it was daunting, dissolving hope and courage. Anne frequently relived its chains and bars. In spite of her affection for its owner she knew she could never be dragged back there except in a state of screaming hysterics.

The I.S.G. had put its mark on her. So had the two men. Anne now felt separate and apart from her friends and the girls who worked around her in the office. Often she would pause and assess the girls who did as she did and sat as she sat, their fingers busy and their minds elsewhere. She discovered a faculty for seeing them naked and in prison. She speculated on how they would endure what she had endured, wondering if they had ever been pierced by a phallus the size of Bristow's, and about the shape and nature of their pubes, the neatly parted little crotch planted so demurely upon their office chairs. Erotic thoughts came naturally to girls their age, but not from the Olympian height of her own experience. She could view them as children in the craft of being female.

Anne Menton was lonely. It took a little while for this knowledge to become concrete. During the first part of her freedom she had, figuratively speaking, kicked up her heels in a joyous abandonment to movement and motions unrestrained by chain or cord. She found herself striding

out beyond her normal span in defiance of leg irons no longer locked upon her feet. She delighted in the stretching of her arms and reaching up to top shelves without the snub of handcuffs on her wrists. It was a happy time of rediscovery of a freedom she had never recognized until it was lost to her.

It was about ten days after her escape when she became aware of being watched. She told herself it was silly, a suspicion shared by all pretty girls who walk in loneliness. There was nothing she could put her finger on or go to the police with, but she knew she was being watched. The man or woman would turn away when she stared back. Her car had been recovered from wherever Lennox had abandoned it and had been restored to her by a bored policeman. Now, when she drove alone, there would be a car in suspicious attendance at a discreet distance. She never saw its driver. Anne assured herself it was all her imagination, and perhaps it was. But it led her to revive an acquaintance with George Simpson.

George was the model young clerical type, entirely correct and completely bland. Anne had amused herself with him before being kidnapped. Now she didn't tell him he was an experiment and a prospective presence. George himself was too polite to mention her long absence. It was an unexciting reunion.

Her adventures had robbed Anne of inhibitions. Even the ordinary pretenses with which we clothe our sins and

mask vulgarity seemed not worthwhile. She was still thinking in the unfeigned directness of her owners. On the third dine and dance George paid for, she asked, “George, don’t you want to sleep with me?”

She would think of him from then on as “poor George.” The man simply blushed, and she felt tense. “I would have got around to asking you,” he said stiffly. “I didn’t realize I was being that slow.”

“We only live once, George. Let’s make it my place, okay?”

“Very well, Anne.” She realized George was bracing his courage. Probably he was debating whether to ask her to marry him before or after. “When did you have in mind?”

“Right now.”

She could see it was a blow. George was not a self-starter. To George, the trial balance would always be vital. Quite soon they would have computers named George and Cedric and Hilary. Mischievously, she informed her escort, “I’ve got hot pants, darling. I need to be fucked.”

She saw him flinch, and it made her feel like a bitch. What she was doing was most unkind. But if George could take her to the rainbow land where her captors had taken her with such ease, then maybe she should marry him and enjoy his security, along with her own glorious freedom. She blamed her mood on the wine with dinner.

“You don’t have to get down in the gutter to talk to men,”

George said in offended dignity. “We are not all animals.”

“You should be,” Anne retorted. “Women are. I learned a lot while I was away.”

“So I’ve noticed.” In spite of promised delights of a woman’s body, George was still stiff. “I’m not sure I approve.”

“We can call the fuck off, darling. I’m sure I can find someone else.”

“Anne, I don’t want you talking like that, and we won’t call anything off. You know I’m in love with you. You’re simply way ahead of me.”

“Then let’s get with it right now, George. Gives us lots of time.” She pinched his cheek. “Don’t forget we both go to work tomorrow.”

Anne thrust guilt aside. She was testing one world against another.

It would be so lovely and easy and safe if George should win. Immediately after arriving at the apartment, she lost no time in mixing a drink. George ran true to form.

“You don’t have to get me tanked, Anne. I can manage.”

“But perhaps I can’t, darling. I’m only a girl, you know.”

“You’re a very wonderful, very special girl,” George said with deep sincerity. “And I’m certainly not going to hold

you to your—”

“Stop being so fucking noble!” Anne complained. “Down that drink and start undressing me. I want to be stripped and fucked!”

George downed the drink. He obviously needed it. But its potency was not enough. “I think it would be much nicer if we both undressed ourselves. One of us could use the bathroom.”

Anne thought of Bristow. She did not bother to answer George. She tossed her clothes in all directions and leaped onto the bed. Without a pause, she arranged her nakedness comfortably, lifted her knees, and spread herself invitingly. “Here I am, George. Stop wasting time.”

George Simpson gulped. His shocked gaze found refuge in her smile. He studiously ignored Anne’s blatant offering, his focus centering above her breasts. Relentlessly, she probed again. “If you’d like to tie my hands and feet, I won’t mind.”

“Tie?” George was floundering in a plethora of mischievous femininity. “Why on earth would I tie you? I’ve never heard of such—”

“Lots of people get a charge out of tying up a girl. Just thought I’d offer.”

The naked George was not displeasing. However, his equipment was no more impressive than his convictions,

but what it lacked in dimension it amply made up for in rigidity. Anne had heard somewhere that the small ones were best. Presumably, she would soon know. But, upon his return, George had found himself confronted by his hostess's pubic hair and her neat appurtenances thereto. He appeared mesmerized, staring in a trance-like fixation.

"Isn't she a sweet little thing, George? Put your hands on it."

George did not move. He remained rigid in more ways than one.

"Don't just stand there, George. Play with me."

"Play with you!" This was a term he understood. "But I thought we were going to—"

"George!" Anne laughed in comprehension. "You've never seen one before, have you? Go on, put your hand on it."

"Why would I do that?"

"You're supposed to want to. George, haven't you done this before?"

"Not really, I'm afraid. I was waiting until I got married. I mean, you and me. Can't be too careful, you know—disease and all that."

He was just a big bashful boy, a puppy dog who had only sniffed and wagged its tail. Anne's heart went out to him,

but mischief still provoked her. “George, you’re a virgin. Why didn’t you tell me? Gosh, this makes me the luckiest girl! Leap on me and ravish the willing maiden.”

“Ravish? I’m not sure—”

“Fuck me!”

“Anne, you shouldn’t…”

They stared at each other, miles apart. Then, with a gesture of do or die, George plunged to his doom. But the waiting girl saw his features convulse and the spasms rack his pale maleness from head to toe. She felt his hot ejection on her groin.

“I—I’m terribly sorry, Anne.” He was bereft.

“It doesn’t matter. Don’t worry about it. Here, I’ve got a towel.”

They dabbed and sponged in silence. George’s maleness shrank in shame. Anne fled to the bathroom. When she emerged after her shower, George was gone.

Anne knew she could make a funny story out of it, or she could shed a tear, or she could even try again. But she did none of these things. George Simpson was simply a tiny chapter in her life, as embarrassing to herself as to him. She knew she could get other, more virile and enterprising males, but she had gone that route before. There would be nothing to learn, and she found herself loathe to enter a

relationship which might mature into something more than carnal fun.

So what was it she wanted? Anne knew she wanted Bristow. Her feeling for the big man had remained constant throughout her time at the I.S.G. It was constant still. Half the time, she devoutly wished she could be rid of the feeling, but the other half she longed for him desperately. Under this compulsion, she made the phone call.

“Hello, honeybunch.”

“Josh, how did you—”

“Just figured. Time’s about right. You coming back?”

“How can I! Josh, the way you use girls—I’d have to be crazy to enter life imprisonment.”

“Hetty gave you to me.”

“But none of it’s legal!” Her voice rose to a wail. “Oh, Josh, you make it so difficult. What would you do to me?”

“Same as before. Hetty says you’re okay now.” His chuckle reached over the line. “Hetty sends her love. Says she’ll take you back any time I say.”

She was breathless at the sound of Bristow’s voice, and she was annoyed by her breathlessness. She was already considering how easy it would be to go to him and offer her wrists for rope or chain. Heat flared at the thought.

Hetty was right: she was conditioned to give Bristow pleasure, and he would concede neither conditions nor terms. He would demand only total surrender. As though reading her thoughts, his voice continued.

“Figure it this way, girl: if I was a pauper, you could cook and wash and mend. But I’m rich, so you don’t do any of those things. Sure, you could do them, but they wouldn’t be valid. You’d feel and look like a fool. Rich men’s wives are simply high-priced whores. I will make you a lot more than that.”

Anne was suddenly aflame, wondering if she had heard right. “Josh, did I hear you right?” She was absurdly breathless. “Did you say wife?”

“Sure did.”

“But you never said—”

“You never asked.” Bristow sounded impatient with a minor item in their discussion. “Look, I’ll get around to marrying you when I’m in the mood and have the time.”

“It doesn’t take long, Josh.”

“Don’t nag. When are you coming home?”

“If I come, would you chain me and tie me and put me in the dog cage—all that?”

“Of course. What else?”

“Then I’m not coming.”

“Enjoying yourself the way you are?” She heard him snort in derision. “When was the last time you got your ass warmed and your cunt fucked?”

“That’s got nothing to do with—”

“It’s got everything to do with this phone call. You’re horny. What you need is a good rape scene with all the trimmings.”

He was right. But there was no way Anne was going to admit it. At any rate, not yet. With Joshua Bristow, she would always be fighting to keep some small portion of herself alive and conscious. It might not be possible, but she had to try. Cautiously, she suggested, “Why don’t you come and visit me? We could talk.”

“You know why. The girl comes to me, and on her knees. Understand?”

Anne understood. She was talking to the man who had been her master. Probably she should mind her Ps and Qs —just in case! Stalling, she inquired, “I suppose you know about John Lennox?”

“Sure, I know. Got there after you’d escaped. I kicked his ass and Hetty took his girls. He’s likely out hunting for more now.”

“I think I’m being watched and followed. Josh, would that

be him'?"

"Hell no, that's me! Had a tail on you the whole time. If you don't have enough sense to come back here, I'll simply have you picked up. But Hetty and I both figure a bit of time off the chain will do you good."

"Josh, I'll go to the police."

"Sure, sure—just like you've been doing." Bristow's tone was heavy with derision. "Hell, girl, I'm offering you a face-saver. If you don't come back on your knees, you'll arrive some other time like a trussed-up turkey."

For moments Anne was speechless, hunting for the right words to vent her anger. True, thoughts of being repossessed by the master flared her loins. But she was becoming accustomed to this I.S.G.-sparked reaction. But she refused to give way to what she saw as a feminine weakness. So they would give her a bit of time off the chain? Bristow would have her casually picked up? Or she could choose to be trussed up like a turkey. In fury, she snapped, "Thanks for nothing!" She then slammed the receiver down hard.

She was instantly sorry. Bristow's voice was magic, and becoming Mrs. Joshua Bristow was not something for a girl to slam receivers down on in a moment of pique. She realized his offhand mention of this intent had changed her life. What did a bit of rope matter compared to such a dazzling prospect? She thought of phoning back but pride forbid.

Bristow did it for her. When she answered, he cheerfully said, “Hiya, honeybunch!” Anne could picture the sardonic curl of his lip as he delivered his terse message. “That’ll cost you, sweetheart. Twenty hard ones first time you show.” This time it was he who cut them off.

Anne was panting. Now there was apprehension and vexation mixed with her fury. Bristow’s promise of the twenty strokes was as real to her as if she was getting them within the hour. Men simply had no consideration for girls. He had used his masculinity to lead her halfway to surrender, then made the act of returning to him on her knees doubly impossible by a promise of an unkind punishment. Had she returned to Bristow days ago she would have expected to be sure of it. But this formal sentencing was simply the last straw, the stripping her of face and pride. It would also be abominably painful. She would have loved to kick herself in her loins for the heat engendered there by the thought. Men—bah!

Anne’s shadow was now only slightly more obtrusive than before. There was a man and a woman, taking turns. No doubt their employer had told them of her awareness. It also occurred to the semi-fugitive that Bristow’s concern might include a watchful eye against her being kidnapped by someone else. She had laughed about being kidnap prone, but she did not laugh now. If John Lennox was still in operation, she would be a prime target for abduction, and he had a score to settle for her escape and the knock on his head. Anne felt certain she would get whipped there

too if he laid his hands on her.

Chagrined and still angry, Anne accosted a watcher and spat out a demand for him to tell Josh Bristow hello. But the man had seemed genuinely surprised and muttered, “I’m afraid you’ve got the wrong man, miss.” Then he turned and walked away. The incident left her puzzled. If they were not Bristow’s folk, then who were they working for? She saw Lennox was a real possibility, but did not rule out Hetty Coppick. Fond as she might be of Hetty and her two wardresses, Anne shrank in horror at the thought of an enforced return to the I.S.G. She wanted no more of prison, and she would undoubtedly be whipped there too on arrival. There was also the possibility of some other sinister agency having an interest in her body and making plans to possess it. She felt ill-used and more than a little fearful for her hard-won freedom.

Her work suffered. It was hard to concentrate. Miss Livy, the supervisor, had a talk with her. But while she listened, Anne was seeing a mental vision of Miss Livy naked in suspension, her pubic hair blatant and her breasts stretched tight. There were scarlet lines. It was the same with her co-workers. A girl would suddenly lose her clothes and starkly stand in a punished pose as they spoke of office gossip. Anne tried the movies to take her mind off her captivities, but found the heroines insipid and the heroes posturing buffoons. Bristow would make mincemeat of the whole lot. Desperate to come to grips with an elusive readjustment to life, she phoned Hetty Coppick.

“When are you coming back to us, dear?”

So matter of fact! So assured of compliance! Anne was both repelled and intrigued. Tartly, she demanded, “Aren’t you afraid I may go to the police?”

“Don’t be silly, Anne. That’s the last thing you’ll do. We’ve kept your cell for you. No girl has been locked in there since you left.”

“But why do you want me back? You gave me to Josh.”

“Seems you don’t want Josh, dear. You haven’t gone to him. You easily could. Another year at the I.S.G. will get you nicely conditioned as my gift on his next birthday.”

“You mean, be a prisoner for a whole year!” Anne was aghast. “Why not, darling? It still wouldn’t make you the oldest inhabitant.”

Anne knew herself talking to another world, a world into which she had integrated more than she knew. Hetty Coppick’s voice was insidiously maternal, its affection undoubted. The errant girl asked the fatal question. “If I came back, what would you do to me?”

“Whip you first thing, darling.” The love in Hetty’s voice was unmistakable. “Then you’d simply carry on where you left off.”

“All those punishments…?”

“Conditioning, dear—rehabilitation.”

Anne Menton knew she could never get the best of Hetty Coppick. The older woman’s voice was already generating an erotic heat which made the prospect of a return to prison—Hetty Coppick’s prison—entirely plausible. But the bedeviled maiden thrust the heat and the visions from her mind, and reverted to the main motive of her call. “Please, Hetty, what should I do about Josh?”

“Go back to him.”

“But he’s promised to punish me!”

“Of course he has, you little idiot. What else do you expect?”

“Well, yes. I wouldn’t mind just the once, but it’s going to go on and on and on. He’ll keep me chained and caged all the time.”

“He’ll also marry you.”

“Yes, I know. That would be marvelous, but he’d still keep me chained in a cage.”

“How lucky can a girl get!”

Anne was close to tears of frustration. But she heard the mistress chuckle and recognized a change in tone. “Sweetheart, you have to realize something about yourself, something I thought you knew but did not want to admit. I think

you do know it in your heart." The maternal chuckle came once more. "Anne, you're a submissive. You're a natural. You're the most kidnappable female I've ever met, and I've met a lot of girls. You're not really safe walking around the way you are. Somebody is going to pick you up. You have no idea how easy it is to pick up a girl. I've done a lot of that too."

There it was again: pick her up, like a bundle of laundry. She refused to countenance the word submissive as applied to herself. On the other hand, why was she phoning Hetty if she was so damn self-sufficient? Weakly, she demanded, "Who do you want me to go to, you or Bristow?"

"I gave you to Bristow; you are his. Hustle your butt back there, and let him beat the tar out of you and iron you so you'll never be free again. Damn it, girl, stop worrying!" The line went dead.

Submissive! Kidnappable! Easy to pick up! The words and phrases tumbled about in Anne Menton's mind in an angry mix. If they were true, they were true only because of her original kidnapping. If John Lennox had not snatched her from life, none of them would apply. They were valid now only because of her captivities. The punishments and imprisonments of the I.S.G. had changed her. She knew they had. But she was still not a doormat to be trodden on. Thinking of John Lennox sparked resolve. Anne Menton picked up the phone.

“Well, well, so it’s my missing merchandise.” John Lennox sounded as insouciant as ever. “Drive on down. I’ll whip your ass.”

Anne’s sex flamed fire. But this was now something to be expected. Acidly, she inquired, “Surely you don’t offer that as an inducement?”

“To you, yes. If you start out now, I can have your back and behind a nice even scarlet before I take you to dinner.”

“Do you seriously suppose a girl you’d just whipped would go out to dinner with you?”

“Why not, sweetheart? Or do you prefer the collar in my basement? It’s still there waiting for you.”

“Can’t you ever be serious about anything?”

“You know I can.” Lennox’s voice became serious. “What can I do for you, Miss Menton?”

Once more the fury of frustration. Anne did not know what John Lennox could do for her apart from taking her in his arms and making romantic love in the bedroom of the dear old house. She fell back on her usual question. “If I came, what would you do with me?”

“I told you: whip your ass, then take you to dinner.”

“But after?”

“Fuck you, of course.”

“Yes, I’m sure you—”

“Don’t pretend you don’t want it. You want it so damn bad —”

“All right, so I want you to fuck me.” Anne’s voice became plaintive. “But after all this… what then?”

“The collar, the chain, and the basement.”

“You’d sell me?”

“You’re worth too much to keep.”

“Surely you don’t suppose I’ll drive down into that prospect?”

“You’ve phoned, haven’t you? What else?”

Anne knew it time to call a halt. John Lennox was impossible. But he was also a voice from that other world where she was more at home than in the apartment and the office. Surely the dolt could realize, couldn’t he? “I’ve been through an outrageous adventure, and all because of you,” she complained. “I can’t talk about it to just anybody, and I need to talk about it. I’d think you’d feel grateful I haven’t gone to the police.”

“Oh, I am—believe me.”

“Then why can’t I drive down and have dinner and a talk without all the other nonsense about being whipped and sold?”

“Simply because you’re you, sweetheart.” Lennox laughed companionably. “You’re so eminently whippable and saleable I can’t resist.”

Once again Anne slammed down the receiver with emphatic force. She had made three calls, and not one of them had treated her as a grown woman. Come home and be whipped like a naughty girl—that was the substance of what each had said. Then, as a sort of consolation prize, they had offered her life imprisonment as well. She picked up the receiver and slammed it down again as though all three were listening.

The following day, a Friday, she was walking to the elevator after parking her car in the underground garage when she was grabbed from behind. There was no reeking rag, only two rough strong hands. Anne screamed and fought, but was slowly being dragged to a waiting car when lights came on, focusing on her struggle. A horn blared. Her assailant vanished as quickly as he had come. The car with its lights drove past her crumpled figure without stopping. A tattered and bruised Anne staggered to her apartment, a sadly frightened girl.

Anne doubly locked her door. She made herself a drink. She did not phone the police because the more she considered the incident the more convinced she was the assault had been an act. Someone wanted to scare her. Someone wanted to scare her and prove how easy it could be to kidnap her any day they chose. Had that someone wished, she

could now be tightly bound and safely gagged in the trunk of a car. It was humiliating. It was infuriating. It was frightening. She felt wickedly alone.

Anne reached her decision in the night and, having made it, slept. In the morning she held to her resolve, rejecting pros and cons and second thoughts. Driving her little car in the direction of Joshua Bristow's summer house, she was quivering with excitement. She would see him again and hear his voice, and they would talk like civilized people. She would not grovel on her knees or make abject surrender. Hungry for his arms as she might be, she would not throw away her liberty. She thought of Bristow's dog cage and Hetty Coppick's cell. She could almost feel the handcuffs on her wrists. Anne shuddered. There would be no more of that.

Anne was well aware of risk. To place herself within reach of Bristow's hands was a shocking hazard. With the greatest of ease, he could grab her and subdue her utterly. Within minutes she could be bound or chained and safely inside his cage. Bristow would probably inflict all three to reaffirm authority, and there was also her inevitable rendezvous with Bristow's whip. But she steadfastly refused to believe he would treat her thus. He would desire subtleties, and he had spoken of marriage. Surely a prospective bride did not discuss her marriage from behind the bars of a cell! Or did she? It was entirely practical. Angrily, Anne shifted on the seat as though to dislodge the small fire burning in her loins.

Nothing about the cottage had changed. Bristow, when he stood in the open doorway, was very much Bristow: sardonic, amused, wary.

“Took your time about coming, eh? Began to think I’d have to come and get you.”

“Hello, Josh.”

They stared, each of them waiting. It was less a lovers’ meeting than a deployment to battle. In a manner Anne could not define, she knew the big man held the initiative.

“Hello, honeybunch. Aren’t you forgetting something?”

Anne drew a deep breath. This was it! “If you’re thinking of me groveling at your feet, please forget it, Josh.”

“Never mentioned groveling. How the hell do you grovel! Just a plain simple kneel is all I ask, sweetheart.”

“There’s nothing plain or simple about a girl kneeling before a man. It’s total abnegation.”

“My, my, such big words!”

“Well, I’m certainly not kneeling on your doorstep!”

“Come and kneel inside. Nice and private.”

“Josh, if you’d only leave me a little pride! Well, I’m staying out here where I’m safe.”

“Hell, girl, you’re not safe out there. I could pick you up before you got to the gate. Want to try it?”

Anne’s breasts were heaving. She wanted the big man’s arms around her so damn bad. But in love, not to make her captive. She was painfully conscious of his sardonically amused regard. He was making her feel like a naughty little girl. He had a gift for it. She used some of her small store of ammunition. “I’d hoped we could have a talk. I mean a sensible talk.”

“Sure, let’s do that. But get on your knees first. Here, you can put these on yourself.”

Anne caught the handcuffs Bristow tossed. Their shining steel felt smoothly familiar. They sent a shiver up and down her spine as well as feeding her fire. She tossed them back.

“If putting me in chains is all you want,” she said disdainfully, “we might as well not bother. You’re making me sorry I came.”

Bristow laughed at her dolor. “I could really make you sorry, and don’t you forget it. I’m not a guy to stand on my own doorstep and take lip from a snippet of a girl like you.”

His words fanned the fire between her thighs. Anne shivered. She did not want to be dragged, fighting and kicking, through the door. He was being more impossible than ever. She was about to deliver a broadside when Bristow

consulted his watch. “Aimed to take you to lunch,” he said gruffly. “There’s a decent place down the road a ways. But first you’ve got to get on your knees and snap on them cuffs.”

“You surely don’t imagine I’m entering any restaurant with handcuffs on my wrists!”

“I’d take them off by then. Like the bended knees, they’re symbolic.”

Bristow’s maleness was reaching out. Anne could feel it. If only he would settle for less than unconditional surrender, she could be in his huge, comforting arms and feel safe. But was the lunch a compromise or was it bait? She had to know.

“After we’ve had lunch, what then?”

“We come back home and you get the whipping I promised. Twenty strokes, wasn’t it?”

He was so damn casual, so self-assured, as though being terribly whipped after lunch would not hurt and was something a girl would look forward to. Anne felt herself forever taking deep breaths, seeking patience. She took one now. Her tone was bitter. “I suppose you’d whip me naked?”

“Only way to have a girl.”

She was holding on tight. She must not stalk away mad. But

she also must not sink to her knees and grasp Bristow's legs while rubbing her cheek comfortingly against his pants. The urge was nearly irresistible and let what happened happen. She looked into his knowing grin, then enumerated.

"I kneel. I handcuff myself. Then you take me to lunch. When we return, you make me naked and whip me twenty strokes." Anne's tone was one of disbelief. "Is this really your offer?"

"Yes, it is."

"Goodbye, Josh."

"Bye, honeybunch."

Anne Menton turned and walked to the gate. Her legs were trembling, and she momentarily expected two huge arms to pick her up and sweep her back into captivity, but she reached the gate in safety and a small but persistent disappointment. Turning to look back, she found Bristow gone and the door closed. She was sure he would be laughing and expecting her to return and accept his terms. She assured herself Josh was being mean in not taking her by force, as she knew he could have done. But that would have made things too easy for her and give her something to complain about afterwards. It would relieve her of decision. Why the devil hadn't he been chivalrous enough to do his masculine thing instead of insisting on her total abnegation? She sniffed angrily and got back in her car.

Anne's hand was trembling as she started the motor. Her emotions were jangled and she shivered with cold. She had not expected Bristow to affect her thus. But he had been like a powerful shot of a potent drug. All the yearnings she had cherished for him the I.S.G. had beset her compellingly. She was certain he knew and felt the same way himself. But he was so strong, such a Rock of Gibraltar. Above all, he was so sure of his dominion over her. It was scary to think that if Josh did not want her for himself, he would certainly return her to Hetty Coppick to keep her, as it were, in the family. She was most terribly owned.

It took Anne a slow fifteen miles before she turned the car around and headed back towards Bristow's cottage. It took all her courage to walk back up the path to his door. When no one answered her repeated rings, she walked around back to the garden patch where Bristow, following some ancient rustic ritual, grew vegetables. She found him busy with a hoe between rows of rutabagas. She would have preferred a more stable spot on which to kneel, but she passed one by and must now make the most of the damp rich soil of the garden. Without a word, she knelt ahead of Bristow's hoe, bowed her head in submission, and extended her arms for the ironing of her wrists. When metal clasped them and clicked tight, she made no sound, but her breathing was fast and her heart thudded hard enough that surely the man must hear.

"Okay, sweetheart, up on your feet."

They wasted few words. Anne was clasped most satisfyingly within two strong arms. She was lifted and soundly kissed. She did not know she wept until she felt a tongue lick dry her tears. If the handcuffs felt as comfortable as the arms, she refused to be annoyed. If her fire had been rekindled by what she had done, well, good luck to it! She nestled against a sweaty shirt and sniffed her master's scent.

"I'm glad you came back, sweetheart. I want you bad."

Were there ever sweeter words? If there were, Anne had never heard them. In a muffled voice, she said, "I want you too. Oh, Josh, I've wanted you so bad!"

"Seems like we've both got it made, honeybunch."

The breathless girl rested her cuffed hands against the male chest beside her cheek. Liberty seemed a much overrated commodity and her concern with freedom almost deviant. Comfortably, she admitted, "All that time at the I.S.G. I thought about you every day, and I was so mad you sent me there."

"Good place for a girl who needs her fire lit."

"Mine's burning like crazy, Josh."

Josh Bristow picked her up and carried her to the cottage.

Anne Menton was content.

7

Whipped & Caged

“DO YOU EVER FORGET I bought and paid for you, Anne?” Bristow slid his car into the vacant space in the restaurant parking lot. “Sure, it ain’t no way legal, but it used to work in the old slave days.”

“For the first month, sure, I did. I thought of you as my owner. But you sent me away, and Hetty sort of took your place.”

“Hmmm, give me those hands. Guess it’s time.”

She had not dared ask. If Josh Bristow wanted to take a chained girl into a restaurant, she had decided not to complain. But Anne extended her hands gratefully and watched the shining steel fall away and be slipped into her owner’s pocket. Arm in arm, they walked in to lunch.

“Talking about Hetty, how about us driving over to see her tomorrow? I got me a notion.” Bristow mused thoughtfully over the salad. “She’d be glad to see you.”

Anne was about to retort that Hetty would be so glad she would lock her in a cell with every possible chain locked on her. But it would sound ungracious, and Hetty had more sense. Instead, she asked doubtfully, “You mean I have freedom of choice?”

Bristow laughed at her doubt. “Sure, but with me holding the power of veto.” He chucked her under the chin. “Don’t sulk. There’ll be times when we actually agree.”

“Okay. Let’s go see Hetty. But please don’t let her lock me up.”

“Don’t trust her?”

“I’m fond of her, Josh. But I’m scared of the I.S.G. She’s created a monster. The I.S.G. gets hold of girls and doesn’t let go. When I was in prison there, I used to feel the buildings made prisoners of us all, Hetty, Amity, and Charity included.”

“That’s the place Hetty wanted, and it’s what she got.” Bristow speared a roll. “I was aiming to take you over to have you whipped.”

Anne froze. “But you’re going to whip me when we get home, aren’t you?”

“Sure, that was the deal, but Hetty’s got the post and the manacles and the whole bit. Amity or Charity will make a better job of those twenty stripes than me.”

So Bristow was fond enough of her not to want to do the actual whipping of her back! Anne got the message. She glowed, but was wise enough not to put it into words. Instead, she tried to be casual. “I think that’s a lovely idea,” she enthused. “Thank you.”

“You mean that?”

“Of course I do.” Anne twinkled across the table at her owner. “I’m not saying I want to be whipped—I don’t—but I know I’ll get the twenty strokes you’ve sentenced me to, so we go to Hetty’s place, and I get them there along with all the spine-chilling subtleties of preparation.”

“She got that good a ritual going?”

“The mere sight of that post thing curls me up inside.”

“Huh! You just said it was a lovely idea.”

“Well, it is. It won’t hurt me a bit more than if you whip me here, and we’ll all be glad to see each other.” Anne widened her eyes in appeal. “But please, Josh, don’t leave me in the I.S.G., not even overnight. Hetty’s prison scares me more than being whipped.”

“That bad, huh?” It was Bristow’s turn to grin across the table at his possession. “Shall we go to the I.S.G. right after we’ve eaten, or do you want me to take you to the cottage and fuck you some more? Could put in the rest of the day at it if you wanted.”

“I’d like to be fucked.”

He was delighted by Anne’s forthright admission, but his response was vintage Bristow. “In that case, honey, I’ll take you right over to the I.S.G. I can fuck you anytime, and it’s better if you’re laying on a whipped back.”

Anne expected the heat. It was becoming predictable. But she was unprepared for the intensity with which it now possessed her loins. It was as though its incandescence formed her words. “Josh, you’ve made me so damn horny!”

“Wouldn’t have donned once.”

“It’s your fault,” she pouted. “You and the I.S.G. started a fire between my legs, and I can’t put it out. When you say something like you just did, it burns me up.”

“So don’t knock the I.S.G., sweetheart. Did you a powerful lot of good.” Bristow reached across and patted her head. “Watch out you don’t ever need a refresher course.”

They understood each other. Both were pleased. Anne still wanted to know about the afterwards which was probably the whole of her life. Would Bristow keep her a firm prisoner? When would he marry her? There were so many questions, but she was sure this was not the time to ask them. Questions would seem like quibbling. She had made her choice. The seeming freedom of the restaurant was a chimera. Reality lay with the handcuffs in Bristow’s pocket. Soon again they would be locked around her wrists.

It was a beautiful, wonderful, shivery ride, during which the eyes of man and girl met often in amused awareness of each other’s thoughts. The girl, in anticipatory dread, was envisioning the I.S.G.’s whipping post more often than she

desired. Each minute took her closer to the pain of Bristow's sentence. Bristow himself was vicariously enjoying the quivers of apprehension she could not hide. Both were equally aware of the tight handcuffed wrists held sedately in her lap.

For Anne, the real unease came with the sign with its blatant lettering: Institute for Sequestered Girls. Hetty Coppick's conceit was all the more deadly for its ambiguity. "That sign ought to read: Abandon hope all ye who enter here," she said to Josh with certainty. "Even though I've got you on my side, I'm still scared. Look at it: a monolith of stone and brick! Grrrr!"

Their welcome was warm enough for any girl: hugs and kisses, then drinks in Hetty's lounge. The handcuffed girl felt sure the older woman knew of Bristow's intent to marry her. There was a glint in Hetty's eyes. Women sense these things. The warmth of the highballs was matched by the fervor of catching up on gossip. Their mission was not mentioned.

Charity and Amity took over. There were more greetings and more hugs. Tenderly, they took her cuffs and stripped her naked. Each held a bare arm as the small procession wound its way past bars and gates and doors down to the lower room where Anne was to be whipped. It was solemnly done, and it had been prearranged, for there were girl prisoners in the cells they passed, watching in wonder the state of confusion in which they had no part.

When they caught Anne's eyes, there was sympathy exchanged.

It was exactly as she remembered. The grim structure was waiting. It seemed endowed with life, its open manacles bidding her welcome, inviting the slender wrists for which they were expressly made. The wardresses had the naked maiden back against the wood and were lifting her arms before Anne grasped their intent.

"But I'm the wrong way around!"

"No, you're not, sweetheart." Hetty was complacent. "You've been sentenced to twenty. That makes ten for each tit."

The awfulness of what was to be done to her gave Anne strength to break from restraining hands and fling her nudity at Bristow's feet. Her plea was from the heart. "Josh, don't let them! Please not my breasts! Don't have them whip my breasts!"

His big hand caressed her hair. His words were for Hetty. "Made a deal with the girl. Never said nothing about her tits. We'd best pass on that one."

Hetty's laugh was derisive. "Chicken! The little darling's got herself under your skin."

"It's my skin," Bristow said gruffly. "If she gets out of line, I'll send her back to you quick enough. But right now I don't want her with a pair of purple tits. We're catching up

on our loving, and I want her front in good shape."

"What you want is a well-wealed little ass to bounce on," Hetty retorted callously. "You're not being all that kind to the sweetheart, you know. Using my special tit whip will hurt her a lot less than twenty on her back and rump."

"Another time, Hetty." Bristow lifted Anne to her feet, one arm pressing her to him at her back, his other hand gently patting her bottom, soon to be whipped. "Can't figure why you didn't whip her tits when you had her here, if whipping them means that much."

"Pure thoughtlessness," Hetty admitted cheerfully. "If you won't go for her tits, how about her cunt? Just five to warm her up? We can use the same little whip."

Anne listened to the exchange, her flesh crawling, but finding comfort in the strong arm and patting hand. The scared girl wanted to add her own protest, but she guessed it could do more harm than good. She guessed there was a chance Hetty was teasing, but she most passionately did not want her breasts whipped before their lovemaking when Josh got her home. She snuggled close to the big man as Hetty complained.

"Damn it, Josh, it wouldn't hurt you to let me have a little fun! I love the child too. She's the most whippable wench I've ever had here."

"Hell, you got a dozen others," Bristow grunted. "Line them

all in a row and you'll have twenty-four tits to snap away at. But there'll be no tit-whipping for Anne today."

"All right, you big bear. Will you loan her to me for a weekend sometime?"

"How'd you like that, honey?" Bristow tightened his grip.

"If you want me to," she whispered weakly.

"She's fond of you all, but the I.S.G. gives her the willies, Hetty. Damned if it don't make me shiver myself. Give the little sweetheart time to get tired of being reamed and she'll be glad to spend a couple of days with you." He gave one final pat to Anne's bare bottom. "Get yourself against that post, girl, and be sure you get turned the right way around."

Anne was certain no girl had ever approached a whipping post with greater gratitude. On the way she paused to kiss Hetty's cheek and whisper, "I really do love you, but I'm just so scared." Then, with a flash of bare skin, she sought the waiting wood and thrust her much discussed breasts hard against the rough surface. Without pause, she raised her arms and placed her wrists within the manacles. It was suddenly all very familiar.

"She's a sweetheart, Josh. You're a lucky man."

Heat burned anew as Charity and Amity clasped the metal bands tight. Anne was now helpless, like a slender white bird with widespread wings. But she could not fly. She

could not do anything except stand still to be whipped. She flexed her wrists within the tight circlets. She flexed her arms. Strangely, all she felt now was relief.

“The girls will give her ten apiece,” the mistress informed her male visitor. “They’ve each got their own style. Amity, you may as well start honeybunch off. Remember, all the pain you can manage, but no blood.”

This was it! The pinioned nakedness clenched her teeth and thrust hard against the rough surface to which she was attached and from which she could not escape. She heard the snicker of sound as the thong cut the air, then gasped as it impacted across the center of her naked back. She supposed the agony was no worse than the times before. But it always seemed worse each time it was done to her. With number two Anne emitted a small cry of desolation but bit it back. She knew that if they had now been whipping her breasts, she would be screaming for the lash to stop, stop, stop. But this was different. Bristow had sentenced her to these twenty strokes, and she had returned to him with that knowledge. In a sense, it was a pact. All she was concerned with was not to scream too loud. But that was hard, hard, hard!

“She marks beautifully, Josh. Look at those lines.”

“Everything about her is beautiful.” Bristow was breathing hard.

Amity had moved down to Anne’s bottom, but the pain was

no less. With each stroke the tip of the thong snapped across a writhing hip with a venomous bite. From one side, then the other. The nakedness could not shield itself. It could not escape.

“My two girls are so clever with a whip,” Hetty said, sounding breathless herself. “See how Amity has the darling’s motions figured. She cuts the skin perfectly every time.”

The words came to Anne through a fog of agony. She was losing count, but Amity was still whipping her. That meant she was not yet halfway. Yesterday she had sat sedately typing in the office, and today this! If the girls could see her, they would not believe it. She would not believe it herself if the pain did not tell her it was true. She had allowed this to happen by her own choice. She must have been crazy. But for Bristow she would submit her flesh again and again. She knew herself an idiot who deserved what she was getting. Cut wrists added their quota to her sum total of anguish.

“Just one up between her legs, Josh? It won’t kill her.”

“Oh, all right.” Bristow was peeved. “Damn it, Hetty, you sure do nag a man. But one and only one!”

“Your last stroke, Amity dear. Make her open up her legs and straddle as far back as she can.”

It did not matter. Nothing mattered. She was hurting so

much now that the thong up within her crotch would blend with all the rest. Anne shifted back as far as her manacles would permit. She spread her legs and held her breath. The slash, when it came, was awful, awful, awful! It was far more horrendous than she had hoped. Over and above the sounds she herself made she could hear Hetty's exultation.

"Just see the way the darling thrust against the post! And look at her kick! She'd do a dance for us if her hands weren't held."

Anne looked back fearfully to see the whip change hands. It was now Charity's turn to inflict her ten strokes. The whipped girl knew she was only halfway through. One by one, the three women kissed her cheeks and assured her she was wonderful. Anne was fastened too tightly to kiss them back, but she turned and caught Bristow's eye. What she saw there was better than a kiss.

"Ten to go, love. Give them to her slow, Charity."

Slow or fast—did it matter? Anne supposed slow was best, but it dragged out her agony. Hetty's comments were a mirror she could not see as Charity etched fresh scarlet between Amity's ridged weals.

"The girl would make a fine dancer. Watch her movements after each stroke. The bands around her wrists confine, but she gets the damnedest mileage out of those writhings. I've never seen anything more exquisite."

“Yeah, she’s special.” Bristow sounded awed.

“I whip a lot of girls here, but this one’s in a class by herself.” Hetty also sounded reverent. “Tell you what, Josh: Buy yourself another girl from Lennox, and sell Anne to me. Come on, be a sport!”

“Hell no! You buy your own.”

“I’ve been enjoying those three I took from Lennox. I’ll trade you all three for this little lovely.”

“Not for your whole damn flock, woman. My god, I’d have to build a prison myself!”

“Charity, you’re slipping. That last stroke was weak. Give it to her again.”

It was all too crazy. To be loved and whipped, and by the same people at the same time! Anne was able to look back over a bare shoulder and see her audience, but she could also see Charity and the flashing whip, so she contented herself with the sounds and motions of anguish and the cheerful voices coming to her from another world, a world in which there was no pain. All she was concerned with was the knowledge that the cutting impacts would eventually stop. Ten sounded like so little, but they went on and on. Because her arms were vised and spread, there were moments when the lash tip snapped home within the hollow of her armpit. She was exquisitely postured for the thong.

When the twentieth stroke had left its mark upon her skin and Charity had cast aside her whip, Anne was so deeply immersed in pain she supposed it was just another pause in the punishment to which her master had sentenced her. But as her responses slowed, she ventured a hesitant glance. Those who had given or watched her pain had discreetly tiptoed from the room to leave her alone, still shackled to the post but free to vent emotion without eyes to see or ears to hear. Thankfully, she rested, allowing her ironed wrists to take some of the stress. Against the whip, their pain seemed minimal.

Anne waited in weary thankfulness for release. She had paid her dues, but this standing in her bonds was a ritual thing everyone seemed to enjoy. Even she herself found a comfortable relief in remaining where she had received her pain, but with the pain now gone. She tried to blank out everything from her mind except for the ecstasy she and Bristow would enjoy when they got home. She could almost succeed in this except for the one small cloud of a question mark. What would Bristow do with her now? She was back to square one.

The coffee was so very good, as were the sandwiches, the cake, and the company. It was just the three of them: Anne, Bristow, and Hetty. It was like an intimate coffee clatch with herself as the center of interest. Anne had recoiled in fear from the I.S.G. jersey offered when she had been unshackled from the post. She had seen it as a return to prison. But they had laughed and told her to stay as naked

as she was. The whip marks on her skin would visually enhance their social hour. Anne did not mind. Grateful to be done with punishment, she made certain her motions would adequately display her weals. Now that they were etched in her flesh she had become proud of them. Within her sex the fire reminded her it had not been quenched.

“So what do you do with her now, Josh?” Hetty asked. “If you’re only going to punish the poor child everyday, you might as well leave her with us. I can do it for you.”

“Never give up, do you?” Bristow emptied his cup and handed it to the waiting hand. “I’ll have a refill. But, no, the little sweetheart is not coming back here for a while yet. She and I have a lot of screwing to do.”

“Just keep her on a chain so she’s handy for when you come home, eh?” Hetty laughed. “How delightfully domestic. Watch out that the little darling doesn’t fox you into letting her loose again.”

“What do you mean again? Never did let her loose. It was that young asshole Lennox who let her get away.” Bristow laughed. “Should visit and see if he’s built up another inventory.”

Anne was becoming accustomed to a listening role in conversation. The coffee and food were heartening, and she was finding a mischievous pleasure in turning this way and that to let her companions enjoy her multicolored pain. So far as the big question went, she could leave that

to Hetty's prodding and probing.

"If you ask me, Josh, this fool notion you've got about marrying Anne is pure bullshit. What do you need to marry her for? You've got her. You can do whatever you like with her, same as me and my convict girls. If you marry anybody, it ought to be me."

Bristow's laugh was unflatteringly loud. "Hell, you need a man like a fish needs a bike! These little tricks you've got cooped up give you everything you need. You don't need a man."

"A girl gets a hankering for a strong arm and a shoulder to cry on. That doesn't mean I'd give up my little sweethearts."

The whipped, naked girl sat happily, nibbling and sipping. Before the food, she had felt depleted, but she was now on a rising tide. She listened to her companions' repartee in an amused awareness of hearing an old tune often replayed. They may have been chattering for her benefit. She couldn't care less. For the moment Anne was content.

The sun was warm. The nude girl in the cage sat crouched in a corner, idly debating if it was worth the trouble of trying to rid herself of the ropes by which she was bound. Anne was finding it increasingly attractive to sit and snooze against the wall. Getting herself untied was by no

means freedom. The cage door was heavily locked. She suspected the kennel's original canine occupants also would have slept. But they, of course, were not subject to Bristow's admonition.

"I'm tying your hands behind your back, honeybunch, and then I'm tying your ankles. I'm using nice soft rope, and I figure you've got all day to get loose. I'll expect to find you walking around when I get back."

"But, Josh, you know I never manage to get loose from any of your ties."

"Want me to give you an incentive?"

"Not really. I can imagine what it would be."

"Okay, sweetheart, no handcuffs or chains, but I'll expect to find you loose and hanging on the wire when I get home."

Anne knew the pleasure it gave Bristow to find her in that pose. She had memorized a list of the poses and postures which gave him an erotic thrill. She was no longer annoyed to find herself in a sexual arousal over them too. It had become a fact of life. This was reality. That other time, long since, was now only an anemic facsimile.

On the day after Anne had been whipped and brought back to the cottage from the I.S.G., she and Bristow had discussed the unmentionable in a manner impossible back when Lennox had first kidnapped her. Now, carelessly naked and with her back attractively striped, impeded only

by a pair of handcuffs on her wrists, they had discussed her disposition while they ate a very late breakfast.

“Damn it, girl, if we keep screwing like last night, there’ll be nothing left of either of us,” Bristow had boasted. “You okay, honey?”

“I’m more okay than I’ve ever been in my life. Oh, Josh!”

“Whipping not bothering you?”

“You rubbed the pain away in bed. You can have me whipped everyday if that’s my reward.”

“Huh! Don’t ever knock the I.S.G. It turned you into a real live girl.” Bristow dragged over her joined hands and kissed them. “What I want to pin down right now is how you’re going to feel if I use you the way I did before. We could call it punishment for a day.”

“It’s okay with me. I understand it now. I’ll even enjoy some of it.” Anne pouted and shrugged. “I suppose I’d prefer being a free girl, but I honestly don’t know what I’d do with myself if I was. Am I crazy?”

“Not in my book. The world out there doesn’t count.” Bristow wrinkled his nose at her in a wry grin. “There’ll be times when I’m mean and it will hurt.”

“So, okay, you’ll be mean, but sometimes it rains out there, or the supervisor is mad at me, or the car won’t start.” Anne twinkled at her owner. “It all evens out.”

“I’m going to marry you, but in my own time. I don’t want to be nagged about it. Okay?”

“All right, it’s a subject I’ll keep quiet about.”

Their understanding had been tremendously comforting. Anne had seen it as similar to the way other girls lived and planned after the engagement. But she and Bristow evidently did not bother with such frills. He would use her as he pleased, and when he was ready he would take her to the altar, quite probably still handcuffed. She laughed at the vision. What happened to her after the wedding was something she refused to be disturbed about.

On the first day Bristow had tied a very naked Anne to a tree and left here there for the day. It was understood that if she could get free, she could do as she pleased about staying as his prisoner or going back to her life in the city. It added spice. Anne had not managed to get loose. Her reward, in bed, had been so much more than satisfactory that she had pleaded to be tied to the same tree again and in the same way. But this her master had denied.

“Got to keep you on your toes. I get a charge out of you having just the faintest chance of freedom. It’s rough out there where I go everyday. Thinking of you trying to escape gives me a kick.” Bristow squeezed her tight. “Coming home and finding I’ve still got you is the best part of the day.”

Anne was in rave. Secretly, she was enraptured by the

prospect of being wife to this big man who took her so much far granted because he had bought and paid for her. But since this was something she must not talk about, she endured the punishments Bristow thought up for her in an amused anticipation. The second day had been spent handcuffed to a derelict tractor out in the yard. She had felt certain someone would come and there would be a fuss, but this had not happened. She had still been handcuffed and helpless on her master's return. Secretly, she had been glad about that too. The third day was now.

Once Anne would have been frantic to free her hands and free, but now it did not matter. If she did not struggle, the ropes did not hurt. Had it not been for Bristow's obvious wish for her to find a limited freedom within the cage, she would probably have been content with her bonds and quietly slept the day into oblivion. She had got accustomed to being tied up, and since her nights were strenuous, she would have preferred the bite of rope to the travail of striving for a freedom in which she did not truly believe. The padlocks on the door mocked her, and she did not wish to escape from Bristow anyway.

It was an hour since she had been bound and locked in the dog kennel for the day. Anne knew that it would be wise to start her fight against her bonds before drowsiness overtook her completely. Bristow would probably be able to tell if she had or had not tried to free herself. She had little expectation of not paying a penalty at the end of the day. But she would at least show willingness.

The captive's hands were crossed behind her back, neatly and tightly tied. She could find neither slack nor knots; her seeking fingers found only air. So much for her hands. The bound maiden knew she could never free them unless she could fray the rope against an abrasive edge. To do that she would need her feet so she might explore the cage. Unhappily, she drew up tied ankles within reach of the searching fingers of a tied hand. It was an unrewarding effort. She would have preferred to sleep and stay tied.

Her ankles were a disappointment. The naked girl had truly expected to untie them, not immediately but within an hour or so. However, with them too she could find no knots, and the cords were bowstright tight. Pinkly fuming, she struggled to her knees to seek more scope, but the knots still mocked from where she could not reach. In a desperate contortion, she fell over on her side and lay there panting and angry. Thoughts of spending the whole day in such a painful, profitless pursuit were banished. Bristow could come home and find her still lightly tied and punish her all he liked for her failure. Anne assured herself she did not care. In the meantime, she would sleep. She edged her nakedness awkwardly to her favorite corner and crouched in such comfort as a tied up girl might find. She would nurse the fire between her thighs and dream.

"Look at that, would you? Beauty bound and caged! Damn pretty picture."

The habitually cheerful voice of John Lennox jolted the

sleeping prisoner into full awareness. Anne stare in disbelief.

“I’m making the morning delivery,” Lennox continued brightly. “Bristow’s a good customer. He deserves the best of service.”

Anne blinked and tugged at her tied hands. Regarding her with interest through the wire mesh was the owner of the voice and a naked girl. The girl was Jenny. Her hands were tied behind her back in the same manner as Anne’s, her mouth was most adequately gagged, and a rope leash ran from its encirclement of her neck to Lennox’s hand. She did not look the beast bit frightened.

“Figured you’d enjoy company, Miss Menton. Very considerate man is Joshua Bristow. I’m putting Jenny in the cage with you.”

“You can’t. Look at these locks.”

Lennox held up three keys. “I’m flattered by the trust, and I won’t abuse it,” he assured with unusual seriousness. “You’re nicely trussed, and I could pick you up and have you sold by evening, but I don’t think Bristow would be too pleased. Don’t think I’m not tempted, though. You really are a dish.”

Anne watched him leash Jenny to the mesh, then use the three keys. She thrilled to the realization of her owner’s power. If Lennox respected it, it must be potent indeed.

When the metal cage swung open, she made her tone as casual as possible. “While you’re inside, you may as well untie me, if you don’t mind.”

“I do mind. Last time I meddled with you it cost me a lump on my head and the only three girls I had in stock.”

“I’m not asking you to let me out, just let me loose.”

“Sorry, love. You and little bright-eyes here can likely manage something.”

“You really are a bastard, John!”

“Alas, yes.” His ready agreement oozed mock sorrow. “What I need is the love of a good woman to reform me. Like I said, if you weren’t so damn expensive, I’d marry you on the spot.”

“Doesn’t it occur to your conceit that I might say no?”

“The thought had crossed my mind.” Lennox grinned confidingly. “But all I’d have to do is whip you until you say yes. Simple, right?”

Anne sighed. It was simple and so true. If he took her now, tied as she was, he could do as he pleased with her. She sighed again. It was easy to see how the total ownership of a girl could be achieved. Thought of Lennox carrying her away as a bound and naked prize inflamed her heat. Anne longed for a devastating retort, but since none was there, she watched the white slave dealer remove Jenny’s leash

and push her inside the wire. The child was obviously aching to talk, but she couldn't make a sound. The three padlocks clicked home most chillingly.

"Supposed to be a nail on a tree over here." Lennox looked around. "Ah, here we are!" He hung the keys on the trunk where they would mock the inmates of the cage. "There, that little job's done. Prime merchandise and prompt, safe delivery—that's the ticket."

Anne struggled back up on her knees. With this young man nakedness never seemed to matter. If he could now see her pussy, well, good for him! Bare skin had long since ceased to be a shameful novelty. The man and the prisoned girl stared without illusion.

"I'd best be going." Lennox lingered awkwardly. "If I stick around, I'll use those keys again and do something I shouldn't. Bye for now, you devastating temptress."

The first thing to notice about Jenny was her marked skin. The child had been cruelly whipped. The second realization was of Jenny's budding womanhood. She was young, but all the contours were in place and proclaiming their identity. The girl made an innocent nude. Item three was Jenny's ardent desire to speak. Her head shakings and eye rollings were so vigorous as to make Anne laugh.

"All right, Jenny, get yourself down to where my fingers are and maybe I can undo the buckle. I'm just about helpless myself."

The youngster obeyed with alacrity. A couple of minutes later her mouth was free and so was her tongue. “I thought you escaped, Miss Menton.”

“I was recaptured. Never mind now.”

“That guy Lennox—boy, he was mad about that knock on the head! He kidnapped me and whipped me half to death.” She giggled cheerfully and turned around. “Look at the marks on my skin! I thought I’d die.”

“Gosh, Jenny, it’s all my fault. If you hadn’t helped—”

“Ain’t nobody’s fault except that Lennox guy. Jeepers, Miss Menton, you’ve been whipped something awful too!”

“I’m afraid girls in our situation often get whipped, Jenny.”

“Well, it’s sort of nice when it’s over,” Jenny said surprisingly. “I had the most marvelous come! I used to get real juicy when Daddy whipped me, but it was nothin’ like this.” Jenny produced her gamin grin. “This whole thing is a real gas!”

“I’m glad you think so. But look, you live so close. Your father—”

“Oh, him!” Jenny was disdainful of parental help. “Daddy will figure I’ve run off with some guy. He won’t even bother to look. Say, Miss Menton, did you get put down those girls and get a collar around your neck?”

“Sure, I was chained to the wall down there and treated like a piece of merchandise.”

“Golly, I never had so much fun! Those girls were real upset about the whole thing, though. They said I was a horny little tramp.” Jenny’s eyes glowed. “Wasn’t it a real pussy-perker when guys came to buy you? Oh, wow!”

“I didn’t enjoy it the way you seem to. Jenny, do you think you could work on my hands and get them loose?”

Jenny appeared not to have heard Anne. Her voice became dreamy. “When Mr. Bristow came and bought me, I was so proud, and the other girls were all jealous, especially when I told ’em how rich he is.” The young voice became faintly anxious. “He will give us lots of money for doing this, won’t he?”

“I don’t think so. Why would he? He owns us. Jenny, about my hands—”

“But my hands are tied too, Miss Menton, the same as yours.” Jenny was away in dreamland. “Say, what you just said, is that right? I mean, that he really owns us and we have to do what he says. Wow, that makes me horny as all get out!” The youthful eyes beheld enchantment. “If he owns us like that, he can screw us all he wants.”

“Well, yes, but you’re far too young to—”

“I’m not either!” Jenny was indignant. “I’ve been screwed lots at school. I mean, god, I am fifteen! Has he screwed

you?”

“Yes.”

“I bet he’s got a big one!”

“Well, yes, he has.”

“Gosh, you’re so lucky!” The nymphet sighed ecstatically. “This is a hell of a lot better than Daddy’s place. Will he fuck me this evening? I mean Mr. Bristow, not Daddy.”

“I have no idea what he’ll do.”

“You’re jealous, I can tell.” Jenny was delighted. “Every time Mr. Bristow sticks it into me means one less for you. Right?”

“Jenny, please stop drooling and untie my hands. I’m sure you can.”

The excited teenager reluctantly turned her attention to their bonds. “You’re a lot more clever than me,” she affirmed. “Untie mine first, okay?”

“Oh, all right. Hunch down where I can reach. My ankles are tied so I can’t stand.”

“I’ll untie them for you first thing,” Jenny promised. “Isn’t this fun!”

Anne made no answer, but sent her fingers to their task. It was by no means easy. She was thinking of using her teeth

when the first strand fell loose. A few minutes later Jenny was free.

“Oh, Miss Menton, you’re so sweet, and I’m so grateful.” Jenny kissed Anne exuberantly. “Now I’ll untie your feet.”

It was good to see the ropes peeled away to leave behind only the red ankles which might last for an hour. Gratefully, Anne got to her feet and stretched her legs. Then, taking her motion for granted, she turned her back to her companion and extended her still bound arms, fingers wiggling for attention.

“I’m not going to untie your hands. I like them the way they are. You look so sweet and helpless.”

“Jenny!”

“Don’t shout. You have to be nice to me and do what I say. If you make a fuss, I’ll pinch your nipples.”

“Jenny, please?”

“It’s not the end of the world, you know. If I don’t untie you, I’m sure Mr. Bristow will when he gets around to it.”

“But I untied you!”

“Yes, and I’m so grateful. If you’re not grateful for me untying your feet, I can always tie them up again—tighter.”

“Never mind,” Anne said hastily. “I really am grateful about my feet. If you don’t want to untie my hands—well, never

mind."

"I sort of kicked myself about not playing with you the time I had you handcuffed to the tree. Remember? It's going to be lovely to play with a full-grown girl who has everything the proper size. Wouldn't you adore me playing with you?"

"Not really. I'm not sure if Mr. Bristow would like—"

"We don't have to tell him."

"I would anyway."

"Spoilsport! Here, I'll show you."

It was useless to run, and a kick would bring reprisals. Sulkily, Anne allowed her nipples to be grasped by a pair of avid thumbs and fingers. It was something she hated. Bristow, yes! But with this bundle of mischief, decidedly no! Irritably, she said, "I know you can hurt me, Jenny, but please don't. I've never hurt you. We need to be friends."

Surprisingly, she was kissed and her nipples released. Young hands transferred to her hair. "Down on your knees, Miss Menton. I can make you, if you won't do it."

Jenny was so young, but her hands were compelling in the captive hair they held so cunningly. Against her will, Anne did her bidding and found herself staring at a bush of maiden fluff and a pair of plump, tight lips. "Go on, Miss Menton. You have to. You can't get away from me, I've got you tight." The hands shook the unwilling head command-

ingly. “You can’t tell me you haven’t eaten pussy before. Everyone tells me mine is delicious.”

Anne’s wrists were chafed in their futile revolt against Jenny’s dominion, but she knew herself helpless. Her hands were as tightly crossed behind her back as when Bristow had tied them. She supposed she could do what Jenny ordered, but her maturity rebelled against coercion by a nymphet lithe more than a child. She played her last card.

“But, Jenny, you’re forgetting! We’re both of us owned. We can’t do this dining you want unless Mr. Bristow tells us to. If we do, we’ll be terribly punished.”

“How terribly?” The hands shook hard again.

“Ohhh, please, Jenny! That hurts! He’d whip us both.”

The hands relaxed a trifle. “Yes, but how hard and how many?”

“Hard is all he knows. Oh, Jenny, nooo! He’d give us a least twenty each.”

The hands fell away. “Oh, shit!” Jenny’s voice mourned relinquished joy. “All right, Miss Anne Menton, you may as well stand up. Here, I’ll help you.”

Anne silently gave thanks. It would have been disastrous for Bristow to come around the corner and find her busy between the nymphet’s thighs. She consolidated gain. “We have to remember always that we don’t own ourselves any

more. We long to Mr. Bristow. Even if we are free—the way you are now—we can only do what he's told us to do. Don't forget there's other ways of punishing a girl besides the whip. How'd you like to hang by your wrists all afternoon?"

"Honest? He would do that?"

Anne sighed again. This fifteen-year-old was an erotic experience. The damn girl was hungrily quivering with sensation. Even though there was something appealing about Jenny, she would have preferred to be the only prisoner he owned. Wickedly, she wondered if this glowing child might not be sluffed off on Hetty Coppick. The I.S.G. was just about right for Jenny. Crossly, she retorted, "Yes, he would! It's no fun either, not the way you think. A girl simply hangs and hangs and hurts and hurts. All you long for is to get your feet back on the ground."

"Jeepers, I'd like to try it sometime. I don't weigh as much as you, so it wouldn't hurt so bad, would it?"

"Jenny, you'll get punished enough. Don't go looking for it."

"You sound like a mother hen clucking away," Jenny reproved.

"Want me to untie your hands?"

"Gosh, yes, would you?"

"No, I won't, but I thought I'd ask. You really do want to get loose, don't you?"

“Why wouldn’t I?” Anne complained petulance. “I spend most of my life tied up or handcuffed. A little freedom in the cage here would have been nice. You just wait till you’ve been tied up for weeks and weeks.”

“Oh, yummy! Is that what Mr. Bristow will really do—tie me the way you were when I came?”

“Of course he will. It’s his thing. That’s why he bought us.”

“But he’ll fuck me as well, won’t he? He won’t be silly like you and think I’m too young?”

“I really don’t know,” Anne said wearily. “You’d best take the matter up with him yourself. After seeing what he’s got, you may not want—”

“Oh, wow, is it that big!”

“Bigger. It’s enormous.”

“But he gets it up inside you, Anne.”

“Well, yes. I suppose—”

“That’s okay then.” The teenage voice had lost its anxiety. It became confidential. “I’ve been surprised what I’ve been able to take up there. I mean things, not just guys.”

“All right, so you’ve got a big thingummy. But remember, Bristow will do what he likes with you regardless.” Anne looked at her exuberant fellow prisoner with wry concern. “Jenny, if you get a chance to escape—”

“But I don’t want to escape. This whole thing is so cool!”

“Sure, I know! You’re horny. But suppose you weren’t! Look, Jenny, are those three padlocks all snapped tight?”

“Sure, they are.” Jenny tugged and pulled demonstratively. “See? No way out. But if there was, I’d let you go and stay in the cage myself for Mr. Bristow.”

The child could not be defeated. There was about Jenny a hearty concupiscence, the treatment for which could be only satiety or a sound thrashing. Anne would have chosen the latter for a youngster who was mean enough to keep her tied for pure mischief. She looked at the glowing young curves and was once again jealous. She had heard that such nymphets had an irresistible appeal to older men, and it was Bristow who purchased the little so-and-so. Anne devoutly wished John Lennox had sold her to someone else, or had kept her collared and chained with the other girls but whipped her daily.

“You think I’m pretty and you think I’ve got a nice body Mr. Bristow will like.” Jenny made it almost an accusation. “Isn’t it lovely being naked? Girls ought to be always naked. We’re so much fun that way. Gosh, you’re groovy with all those curves and breasts and your hands tied behind your back! Having hands tied behind the back really does something for a girl.” Jenny’s eyes sparkled with visions. “I’m going to ask Mr. Bristow to let me look after you—keep you well tied and properly punished and well behaved.

That would be such fun!"

"Don't you dare!"

Anne was surprised by her own vehemence. She was annoyed. Jenny had picked up her concern and would be encouraged thereby. Outrageous as the moppet's inspiration might be, Anne could well envisage Bristow picking up on it. The piquancy would appeal to his sardonic humor. Right now her tied hands told her all too clearly of Jenny's competence to fill the role. Jenny might not be too cruel but she would be merciless. The child was laughing at her now in delight.

"You're scared he might do it, aren't you, Miss Menton? I think it's a super idea."

"Don't be silly. It won't work." Anne wished she did not always sound cross with this girl. "You'd have to be free, and you don't think Joshua Bristow paid all that money for you just to let you walk away whenever you want."

"But I wouldn't. I love it here."

"You'll have a hard time convincing him of that."

"Not after he's fucked me and found out how nice I am." The precocious nymph turned dreamy eyed. "I've just had the most wonderful idea. If Mr. Bristow is scared of me taking a powder, all he has to do is lock those things—don't they call 'em leg irons?—on my ankles and then I couldn't run." She grinned happily. "But I sure could do everything

else."

"Ask him to send you to the I.S.G.," Anne suggested in desperation.

"What's the I.S.G.?"

"I'll tell you if you'll untie my hands."

"I won't untie your hands, Miss Menton. You look so sweet with them behind your back and that sulky expression. Look, if you won't tell me, I'll pinch your nipples until you do. You're awful dumb, ordering me around as though you had your hands."

It would pass the time, and if she could get Jenny sufficiently...! The older girl leaned her bound arms back against the mesh and told of her time as Hetty Coppick's convict girl. Jenny listened, enthralled.

"But, Miss Menton, if you had to eat all those women in that place, I don't see why you can't eat me."

Anne moaned inwardly. The girl had a one-track mind. He main interest centered between her legs. Wearily, Anne repeated, "I've told you, Mr. Bristow—"

"I don't believe that any more. I bet he wouldn't mind at all."

"Yes, he would. It depletes a girl, and he doesn't want his girls depleted."

“I don’t know what that word means. But you’re going to do it for me, and right this minute—unless you want your tits hurt.”

Anne gazed around the cage, she tugged at her still tied hands. She was helpless, Jenny could hurt her as she pleased. Resigned to the inevitable, she surrendered. Her concern now was to get the job over before Bristow’s return. “Have it your way, Jenny.” Her tone was joyless. “I’ll do it for you. You don’t need to pinch my nipples or pull my hair.”

“I will if I want.”

“All right, I know you can. But I’m asking you, please don’t. I’ve decided to do it for you. I thought you’d be pleased.”

Jenny surprised her captive with a repentant kiss. Her hands pressed down on bare shoulders. Anne knelt between the teenage legs and again confronted the teenage sex. Hands clutched her hair demandingly and thrust her face hard into the redolent crotch. She went to work.

“You girls enjoying yourselves?”

Josh Bristow’s voice was the knell of doom. Anne moaned desolately and fought back against the hands in her hair, hands that now fell nervelessly away. Hair was in her mouth, and when she guiltily turned to face her owner, she knew herself suffused by a blush to end all blushes. Jenny was a frozen statue, stricken in dismay.

“Hungry, eh? Couldn’t wait for supper?”

“Oh, Josh, I—I’m…”

Anne trailed into silence. What could she say! She had been caught in the act. Bristow would have no choice but to believe what he had clearly seen. An outburst of plaint and accusations against her fellow prisoner would only demean her, it would be far better to be punished. But Anne was certain her punishment would be dire. Jenny had stepped away, but the guilty girl remained kneeling where she was. Anne bowed her head in shame and because she could not meet Bristow’s eyes and see the hurt in them.

“It’s my fault, Mr. Bristow. I made Miss Menton do it. I pinched her tits until she didn’t have a choice. She didn’t want to one bit.”

“Well, well. That’s a good honest confession from a young pullet. Tell me more, young lady.”

“I didn’t think it was bad. Us girls eat each other all the time at school, and sometimes the teachers…” Jenny paused uncertainly. “But I guess it’s different with gentlemen. I’m terribly sorry, Mr. Bristow.”

Kneeling, blushing, bereft, Anne wondered if teenage ingeniousness could save them both from Bristow’s wrath. Most probably it would save Jenny but not herself. Josh would consider her old enough to know better. He would

never have experienced the agony of pinched nipples, so he would not consider them an excuse. Anne Menton felt friendless and alone. Bristow's voice came heavily.

"And you're going to be a lot sorrier, young woman. You have to learn you're owned. I bought and paid for every bit of you, particularly that facility Anne was so busy nibbling."

"You mean my cunt, Mr. Bristow?"

"You don't have to use four letter words around me, Jenny my girl. I don't admire 'em."

"I can call it my pussy, Mr. Bristow." Jenny was yearning to please. "If you want, I'll call my boobs breasts and my tits nipples."

"All them things you've just mentioned is going to be mighty sore if you don't shut up." Bristow was eyeing the bright-eyed moppet in dour amusement. "I'll get around to you and them nice parts in good time. But first I'm going to deal with Miss Honeybunch who's kneeling there and feeling so sorry for herself."

Two pairs of feminine eyes followed their master's movements in anxious concern as he dealt with the three locks and opened the gate. He beckoned to Jenny. "Over here, my pretty."

Jenny's delight was dampened when she was turned around and thumbcuffs snared her thumbs. It was obvious

they were a convenience with which she was not acquainted. She yelped as they clicked shut below her knuckles, and then twisted and turned her slender nudity in an effort to get a good look. “Mr. Bristow, those things hurt!”

“Good!”

“But I can’t get my hands apart!”

“So I noticed. Now get yourself over to the back of the cage.”

Sulkily, the nymphet did as she was told, her hands and fingers working in disbelief at tight clamped thumbs. Bristow fumed his attention to the still kneeling penitent. “For Pete’s sake, girl, get up on your feet. Or are you waiting for little Miss Muffet to stick it in your face again?”

Flushed and untidy, and hating the whole affair, Anne obeyed. She stood and looked at her owner in mute questioning. Bristow noted her still tied hands. “Little Jenny refused to untie you?”

Little Jenny embraced martyrdom eagerly. “I’m afraid I was real mean to Anne, Mr. Bristow. I was enjoying a full-grown girl having to do what I told her. I really am sorry.”

Bristow ignored the gush. He beckoned to Anne with a terse thumb. “Outside, honeybunch.”

Anne stood and watched Jenny secured by the three locks once more. Jenny herself took the opportunity to get in one more plug.

“Even if you left the door open, Mr. Bristow, I wouldn’t run away. I like it here.”

“That’s real good, little girl. Let’s hope you enjoy what I’m going to do to your little ass.”

Despite her own impending punishment, Anne felt sorry for the young features on which apprehension had replaced ebullience. Poor Jenny had much to learn about being owned by an exceedingly masculine male. She herself had no doubt about impending pain. Her mind was busy speculating in what form it would be dealt her cringing flesh. She did not have a leg to stand on. Bristow took her arm and led her from the kennels to the cottage.

“I wish I could make you understand how desolated I am by what you saw, Josh.”

“Tough going, eh?”

“I’m not trying to get out of being punished. I know you have to punish me. I did what I did with my eyes open, so I’ll take my punishment the same way. But I wish I could get you to understand.”

“Twenty more strokes on your back and bottom about cover it?”

“Sure, whatever you wish. I won’t complain.”

“Sweetheart, I understand more than you think. I was standing there out of sight and listening to the two of you. You’re not going to be punished, but little Miss Muffet is. I’ll tan her ass but good.”

Bristow’s arms were refuge after the storm, safe harbor from the gales of unkind chance. The girl with tied hands nestled within their embrace with a great thankfulness. Over and over, she whispered in the male ear, “Thank you, oh, Josh, thank you. I was so scared.”

Anne Menton was kissed and kissed again. She would have endured a hundred Jennys for moments such as this. It seemed only natural and proper that she be picked up and carried to their bed. Bristow seemed more immense and ardent than ever. Anne was grateful with the gratitude of a much loved kitten. She belong to this huge man and she gloried in the belonging. She had been ravished several times before she remembered her hands were still tied behind her back. But tied hands did not matter any more than anything else mattered. Miss Anne Menton was tremendously content to be loved by Mr. Joshua Bristow. It was not until they had slept that conversation resumed.

“Thought the kid would be company for you, honeybunch.”

“Josh, you’re sweet. But, honest, I could do without her.”

“She’s young, she’ll learn. You can teach her.”

“Not with my hands tied and hers free.”

“Wasn’t figuring on that. Won’t happen again.”

“Josh, there’s something else you’re not figuring on. That little girl is going to push her cunt in your face every chance she gets. She isn’t just fifteen the way you think. She’s every woman since Eve, and with all their guile. I bet she’s already married to you in her mind.”

“Nah, she’s just a kid. I’ll let you whip her ass.” Bristow chuckled. “Nothing like whipping a girl’s ass to get acquainted.”

“Josh, please! Jenny’s a menace. I’m scared of her. She’s simply aching to spread her legs for you.”

“Jenny? Hell, that little girl’s had a few feels copped on her twat at school, the rest is talk. Damn it, Anne, my cock’s bigger than she is.”

“She’ll adore every inch of it.”

Bristow gave his female possession a more serious attention. “Look, honeybunch, you’re seeing what ain’t there. There is no way that little filly can take all of me.”

“She can and she’ll love every inch. I didn’t think I could take you either, but you showed me different. Remember?”

“You’re different.”

“We’re both females. Josh, get rid of her… please!”

“I paid a lot of money for that little trick.”

“She’s not worth it; she’s trouble.”

“Hell, you’re just jealous.” Bristow guffawed, then kissed Anne’s nipples. “Begrudge a man a piece of tail?”

“Don’t I give you all you need?”

“Honeybunch, that ain’t the point. No matter how a man loves his own girl, he’s gong to look elsewhere once in awhile. Men are made that way.”

“I think it’s horrible. If you stick your thing inside that little mink, don’t ever expect to do it to me again.”

It was not until the bitter words were out that Anne realized the enormity of her offense. She would have recalled them gladly, but they had been said. The silence could be felt before Bristow darkly inquired, “What was that you said?”

“You heard me, Josh. I’m sorry now I said it. I was hurt and angry. I guess I still am. I expect I earned a punishment?”

“You sure did.”

“I love you, Josh.”

“Any girl who loves me has to put up with stray tail.”

“Jenny isn’t stray. You bought and paid for her. Jenny is permanent. She’s as much yours as I am.”

Bristow kissed her nipples, then her lips. Anne did not respond. They lay there naked in their bed, encompassed by waves of female hostility. He chucked her under the chin. "You sure are mad, honeybunch. You're piling up punishments in a lovely blaze of self-righteousness and martyrdom. You want to be hurt so you've got something worthwhile to cry over."

"So, okay, I'm a masochist."

"Think of that little gal out there in the cage, and with thumbcuffs behind her back. She won't be feeling any too happy right about now."

"What she's thinking about is your cock and getting her little ass tanned the way you promised. Both those things are meat and drink to Jenny." Anne sniffed. "Why don't you send her to the I.S.G.?"

"We ain't married yet, sweetheart."

"We're not likely to be if you keep buying yourself hot little whores."

"How'd it be if I send you to the I.S.G.?"

Anne froze. She knew herself hopelessly in the wrong. She was maligning Jenny, who at worst was only a mischievous nymphet, and she was piling up punishments for herself in a masochistic orgy or resentment. She could not punish Jenny so she would punish herself. Her hands were still tied behind her back. She knew if they were free, the

would have long since been around her master's neck and she would be sobbing contrition on his chest. Anne longed for her hands with every fiber of her being. She was desperately frightened of Bristow's threat of the I.S.G. If he became convinced of her need for another imprisonment there, she would certainly get it. Thoughts of chains and a cell while Jenny was here to beguile her beloved was just too much to bear. Her sincerity was as humble as she could make it.

"Josh, please forgive me."

"I can forgive you, honey, but you still have to be punished."

"I accept that. Punishment I understand. But don't stop loving me."

"That I won't. But the way you've acted over this little filly puts a crimp in things. I'm sending you back to Hetty Coppick."

Anne Menton went berserk. Forced by bound hands to flop and flounder like a seal, she threw her nakedness upon the man who owned it and implored, "I can't bear it! Josh, don't punish me more than I can take. Please don't send me back to the I.S.G. and keep that little bitch here to climb all over you while I'm in a cell."

"Sweetheart, the I.S.G. ain't that bad."

"It is! Whip me instead. I beg you, Josh."

“Damn it, girl, don’t take on so.” Bristow was as disturbed as Anne herself. “Talk of crawling all over, what do you call this?”

“My hands are tied. I can’t love you properly.”

“Honeybunch, you’ve earned a punishment. You’re going to get it. Sounds simple to me.”

“But please not there!” Anne searched for the ultimate agony. “Josh, whip me and have your little girl there watch me get it, I’ll hate that so damn bad.”

“Nice idea, but you’re presupposing Jenny’s all bitch and I’m all bastard. You sure you’re right about that?”

Anne ceased her ineffectual attempts to embrace her master. She rolled back on her bound arms in defeat. Was she indeed making too much fuss over a punishment that would come and go? But the damage was done. She had spoken the wrong words, and Bristow had sentenced her. But her most bitter gall was knowing Jenny would stay here and be the sole beneficiary of their master’s favors. Sure, Jenny was in for a thrashing, but it would do no more than heat her sex for the act to follow. Bristow might consider the child too young, but Jenny would seduce him. Anne was sure of it. She wept.

Bristow showed only male annoyance with her tears. He wanted them stopped. Grimly, he took the shortest course, and in the space of minutes Anne found herself suspended

by her hands. Her toes were only inches from the rug. They could just as well have been a mile. She swung unhappily, knowing she was getting what she had asked for. When her master tethered a thumbcuffed and wide-eyed Jenny to the wall, Anne Menton's cry of bitterness was full.

"Keep quiet, you," Bristow ordered the nude nymphet. "Watch Anne get herself a thrashing. Your turn next." He selected a crop. "Both of you, just your ass. No big deal."

It was briskly impersonal, the infliction of pain to teach a girl a lesson. As the whippy horror sliced away at her twin cheeks, Anne longed to keep still. But she swayed like a pendulum and kicked the air in ineffectual anguish. Her bottom had been cropped many times. But never with a delicious moppet drinking in each painful stroke. Her punishment was Jenny.

Then the I.S.G.

8

The Scarlet Breasts

IT HAD BEEN A MATTER OF MUCH DISCUSSION as to whether Miss Anne Menton was eligible to the I.S.G.'s gift to new arrivals, the ritual whipping. Hetty Coppick had lovingly drawn out the pros and cons with her wardresses while the handcuffed and leg-ironed subject of their debate stood meekly by. There was never a doubt in Anne's mind she would be whipped. It was simply a case of how many and how hard.

"The poor darling's already been whipped a couple of times recently."

"Yes, but on her back. Her front's still virgin."

"Isn't Mr. Bristow being a bit mean to our sweetheart?"

"I still think ten on each breast would be about right. We don't have to cut her skin."

"Well, yes, and Mr. Bristow didn't leave any special instructions about how she's to be whipped."

Anne wondered why she was not more horrified. They were going to whip her breasts! But she was numb with dejection. She could not deny the warmth of her welcome. Hetty, Amity, and Charity had kissed and hugged her in delight. But none of their affection would save her a single

stroke on shrinking flesh or make her chains weigh less. She bore now only the I.S.G. regulation irons, but they weighed a ton.

“We must get her the hour alone against the post.”

“It will be a nice change for the darling to have her back against the post as though she was the wrong way around.”

A nice change indeed! They had brought Anne to the familiar room, stripped her of the prison jersey, then thrust her back against the post and shackled her wrists to spread her arms wide. They told her how beautiful she looked like that, and all three kissed her ardently before leaving her alone. One way and another she was a very mixed up girl.

Above and before all other concerns, Anne was vividly aware of her breasts. They appeared to have doubled in size and prominence against the tug of outstretched arms. She could not move them enough to matter. They could be whipped at the convenience of anyone who wished to mark them. Hetty could talk all she liked about the little whip, but the girl at the post was deathly afraid of it.

Disparagingly, Anne did all the usual shiftings and tuggings. She even indulged in a frenzied struggle to get free. At the end of it, she had changed nothing, but she felt better. She supposed she might get used to facing whoever whipped her. They would be face to face. If she wanted to, she could look down and watch the thongs splay out and caress the rippled curves she could do nothing to protect.

This time there would be no fearful glances back over a bare shoulder. This time she was herself the most privileged member of the audience beholding her punishment. She wondered if they would allow her to close her eyes.

The I.S.G. had repossessed her with the utmost naturalness. The punished girl felt the almost personal grasp of its stone and brick and bars. But neither Bristow nor Hetty had told her the length of the sentence she must serve. All she had to hope for now was Jenny's absence if and when her master took her back. Thoughts of the moppet moaning in delight beneath her master's thrusts were more than she could bear. She hoped Hetty's whip would excise the vision from her mind.

The three women paid their prisoner the tribute of rapt attention. Anne could have no doubt she and the whipping of her breasts were something to be adored. She was shown the little whip. It was not as small and innocent as she had hoped. It was in a class by itself: nine braided silken thongs. Playfully, they frictioned it across her nipples to leave them erect and their owner panting. It did not occur to Anne to plead for mercy. It would have seemed a social gaffe.

Charity braided the prisoner's hair, then tugged the heavy plait back down behind the crosspiece of the post and fastened it to leave Anne staring at the ceiling, her head bent tight back. The effect was to restrict her view of the proceedings and to further extend her breasts for punishment.

She could move but very little. The leg irons were still on her ankles. She could not kick.

“That’s nice,” Hetty approved judicially. “Charity, give one of her breasts a stroke. I want to see how much she can struggle.”

It was done. Fire blazed upon Anne’s left breast. She made an inarticulate sound and surged in involuntary revolt against the shackles and the braid, an ankle snubbing itself against its chain.

“That’s just right. Much better than having the little dear immobilized. She can move just enough. May as well continue on. Whip her slowly, go from breast to breast.”

Charity whipped as she was told. The girl whose breasts received the thongs was unable to see them impact on her skin. The plaited hair dragged her head back too compellingly for that. But she could see Charity and the wide sweep of the short lashes destined for her own flesh. Anne cried aloud her new fear.

“My nipples! Oh, please don’t cut my nipples!”

The scorching lash stopped only long enough for reassurance.

“We’ve tested the whip, dear. It absolutely will not injure those pink little tits of yours. Not that they’re so small any more. Breasts hate being whipped, but tits adore it.” Hetty’s voice was tender. “Carry on, Charity. A trifle harder than

you've been doing."

It was happening. The dreaded punishment was under way. Anne's whipped breasts bounced and burned as each stroke painted their scarlet curve with a fresh scald. She abandoned herself entirely to her pain. Anguish was all! Anguish was everything and she could escape none of it. Her wrists and ankles warned her she was struggling far too hard. Her stretched back scalp added its own complaint.

But the nine lashes ignored them all. They splatted fire and burn and hurt in a regular rhythm upon and across the twin curvatures exposed to a penalty they had not earned. It was ironic, but Anne well knew this suffering as nothing more than the I.S.G.'s way of saying, "Welcome home."

Ten strokes of a whip across each of a girl's breasts cannot last forever. Anne had lost count and had to grope her way back to a world without pain by herself after the last stroke had scorched and scalded its path upon her skin. The stress of her tugged back scalp made it hard to relax. For the same reason, she could not look down when she felt the busy fingers freeing her ankles from their irons. When one ankle was noosed, then drawn high and off to one side to leave her strained upon a single foot, the girl with whipped breasts could guess what was intended. Gasping, she pleaded, "Don't whip my pussy! You don't have to whip my pussy!"

The three women kissed and fondled their nude plaything. Lips were soft on tender nipples and harsh against a hot and fervid mouth. The pussy they were about to punish was wracked awry and unkindly stretched in blatant exposure, but feminine hands and fingers found it lovingly until its owner was breathing heavily and gasping towards climax.

“Don’t take her over the brink, girls. Let the whip do it.”

She was captive. She was owned. She was controlled. Even her climax to be nicely gauged with appropriate pain. Anne knew that in the owner of the I.S.G. she had a mistress par excellence. Gasping in the discomfort of a tractioned foot, she awaited impact of the thongs within and upon her most secret place.

Anne climaxed instantly. The wet splat squarely upon her sex was more than stressed nerves and palpitating flesh could endure without a blossoming. Every inch of Anne screamed in an ecstasy of release. She mingled her own screams in with them as Amity cut blow upon blow within the same cleft of sex. Probably a dozen strokes were delivered to the damp, exposed orifice before the last of the spasms and moans of the orgasm gave way to genuine sounds of agony. When it became obvious the pain was fresh and new the whipping stopped.

“Your second welcome to the I.S.G, dear. It’s over.”

Anne wanted to peal delight and express a hundred grati-

tudes for cessation, but it was not until her plait was freed and her breathing had returned to normal that she managed a fervid, “Thank you! Oh, thank you!”

“Why the thanks, sweetheart?”

It was a good question. Anne realized the thanks were for ridding her mind of everything but the moment that was now. Her miasma of doubt and fear had been exorcised by the cut of thongs. Why not say thanks! Why not indeed!

Anne’s pussy throbbed and rekindled its fire when her tractioned foot was returned to normal. It was not until then she gazed down upon her breasts and was enthralled. She now possessed two scarlet spheres, the red and crimson interspersed with purple. There had been little overlap. It was as though the two breasts had been painted with a pigment she could not erase. The women spoke her thoughts.

“Burn beautifully, don’t they, darling?”

“We should whip them everyday to keep the color.”

“Damn it, look at her nipples! I’ve never seen such beauty!”

They left her there for the hour demanded by their rules. This time she did not struggle. Instead, she rested against the post and bowed her head in weariness above her scarlet breasts. Her second term of imprisonment had officially begun. Her outstretched arms ached and her wrists were chafed within their shackles. But it did not matter. Nothing

mattered any more.

The memories and fears flooded back. Fastened as she was to the post, she could not sleep. Everything she did not want to think about returned. Wryly, Anne supposed her only relief from anxiety was to be constantly whipped. But that was silly. She wondered if Jenny was in bed with Bristow or locked in the cage. She had no way of knowing.

It was Charity who once more ironed the whipped girl's feet. She unlocked the shackles to release the hands, but immediately handcuffed the unresisting wrists. "Like old times, love." Her fingers were strong but loving on a bare arm.

The cell had not changed. Why should it! The barred door clanged shut at her back, the lock snapped. Anne fumed and exchanged a rueful smile before the wardress blew a kiss and went her way. The convicted maiden did not bother to test the door or clutch the bars. In the I.S.G. she was ten times a prisoner. Such motions were futile. She clinked her way to the narrow cot and sat down, blinking back tears. This was day one, and it still had far to go. She lay down and was instantly asleep.

Hetty brought the supper tray, letting herself into the cell but freeing no part of her prisoner. While the ironed maiden ate and sipped, the mistress probed.

“You and Josh make it okay in bed, honey!”

“Do we ever!”

“Keeps you mostly in that dog kennel place?”

“It’s a cage, and anyway, I’m always tied or chained.”

“Think he’ll marry you?”

“I wish he would. I love the big hunk. But now he’s sent me back to the I.S.G. I’m not so sure. Oh, Hetty, I’m so unhappy. I don’t see why Josh had to go and get that Jenny creature.”

“I’ve talked to Josh. Says he got her for you.”

“She’s just a palpitating pussy. No man’s safe with her.”

“Hmmm… haven’t seen her. When you’re through eating, I’ve got something you should see.”

The ironed captive clinked her steps dutifully beside her mistress. The room was familiar. So was the wooden crate. For a moment Anne’s heart beat high, but the big box was firmly nailed down. It was not for her. When the two wardresses appeared with tools, she watched with little interest. What did one more new girl matter in the I.S.G.? When the lid was pried open with a screech of nails and Amity had struggled with internal straps, Ann stood, transfixed. The naked female standing bound inside the crate was Jenny. Dazed with joy, she read the scrawl in Bristow’s hand which Hetty held for to see: “Life sentence.

No remissions. Whip weekly."

"Feel better, sweetheart?"

It was pure euphoria. Jenny was bound tight at wrist and elbow. She was strapped into a gag which utterly defeated her obvious anxiety to talk. Her eyes were riveted in delighted amazement on Anne's scarlet breasts and striated loins. Anne's whole being was alight with happiness. But she pleaded the obvious. "Please don't lock her in a cell with me."

For answer, Hetty proffered one more slip in Bristow's writing. What she read made Anne the happiest girl alive. It said: "I know you'll whip Anne's tits. But I owe you. She'll have to put up with it! Then send her back here—pronto!"

"That pronto means he loves you, Anne." Hetty turned to Amity. "Leave the new one gagged, but take her for her welcome whipping. Bristow's tanned her ass, but he's left her back for us, and we can always turn her around." To Charity, she ordered, "Get Anne's leg irons off. She's got to get in this box."

It was one of the awkward moments. Ruefully, Anne said, "I didn't want to come. Now I don't want to go." Manfully, she said, "But I expect he'll send me back to you sometimes—when he's mad at me."

"I'll make certain he does, honeybunch. We'll whip you a lot better than he can. Get your little ass in that box."

Anne got in the crate. She was kissed and kissed again. She sat down and was tight strapped. Miss Anne Menton was on her way to serve a life sentence.

Bristow was waiting.